

## INGRID ELSÉN: A PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND HER DEDICATION TO THE STUDY OF FAMILY CARE

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**ABSTRACT:** This is a socio-historical study aimed to historicize the career of Ingrid Elsen, a nurse, teacher and Brazilian researcher. Data were collected through semi-structured interview, on the third and tenth of March 2013, with the nurse Ingrid, applying the method of oral history and documentary research. The following themes were highlighted based on a thematic content analysis: being a nurse, the early challenges; being a teacher and researcher, new directions; being the protagonist in the creation of groups related to family care; and being experienced, social recognition of her professional career. Results show an important contribution for the practice and the nursing science in health care, education and research. Pioneer in the line of research related to the health of families; in the formation of family health research groups and family and violence, printing a competence mark for the construction of knowledge in the area, from an interdisciplinary perspective.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Education. Family. Biography. History of nursing.

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## INGRID ELSÉN: A TRAJETÓRIA PROFISSIONAL E SUA DEDICAÇÃO AO ESTUDO DO CUIDADO ÀS FAMÍLIAS

**RESUMO:** Trata-se de estudo sócio-histórico, cujo objetivo foi historicizar a trajetória profissional de Ingrid Elsen, enfermeira, docente e pesquisadora brasileira. Na coleta de dados foi realizada entrevista semiestruturada, dias três e dez de março de 2013, com a enfermeira Ingrid, utilizando os métodos da história oral e pesquisa documental. A partir da análise de conteúdo temático, foram evidenciados temas: Ser enfermeira: os primeiros desafios; Ser docente e pesquisadora: novos caminhos; Ser protagonista na criação de grupos relacionados ao cuidado à família; Ser experiente: o reconhecimento social acerca da sua trajetória profissional. Os resultados revelam importante contribuição para a prática e a ciência da enfermagem nos serviços de saúde, no ensino e na pesquisa. Pioneira na linha de pesquisa em saúde das famílias, na formação de grupos de pesquisa em saúde da família e violência, imprimiu uma marca de competência na construção do conhecimento na área, a partir de uma perspectiva interdisciplinar.

**DESCRIPTORIOS:** Educação. Família. Biografia. História da enfermagem.

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## INGRID ELSÉN: LA TRAYECTORIA PROFESIONAL Y SU DEDICACIÓN AL ESTUDIO DEL CUIDADO HACIA LAS FAMILIAS

**RESUMEN:** Estudio socio-histórico cuyo objetivo fue historicizar la trayectoria profesional de Ingrid Elsen, enfermera, docente e investigadora brasileña. Para la recolección de datos fue realizada una entrevista semi-estructurada los días tres y diez marzo 2013, con la enfermera Ingrid, utilizando el método de Historia Oral y Pesquisa Documental. A partir del análisis de contenido, se evidenciaron los temas: Ser enfermera: los primeros desafíos; Ser docente e investigadora: nuevos caminos; Ser protagonista en la creación de grupos relacionados al cuidado de familia; Ser experta: el reconocimiento social sobre la trayectoria profesional. Los resultados revelaron la importante contribución para la práctica y la ciencia de enfermería en los servicios de salud, enseñanza e investigación. Pionera en la línea de pesquisa relacionada a la salud de familias, formación de grupos de investigación en salud familiar, familia y violencia, imprimiendo un sello de competencia en la construcción del conocimiento en la área, a partir de una perspectiva interdisciplinar.

**DESCRIPTORIOS:** Educación. Familia. Biografía. Historia de enfermería.

## INTRODUCTION

The history of nursing practice in the Brazilian State of Santa Catarina started being systematically recorded in the beginning of the 1990's by the members of the Study Group on the Knowledge History of Nursing and Health (as per its acronym in Portuguese GEHCES). This group is linked to the Nursing Graduate Program (as per its acronym in Portuguese PEN) of the Federal University of Santa Catarina (as per its acronym in Portuguese UFSC). Initially, the GEHCES used to develop studies on the production of knowledge on the nursing area based on the Annals of Brazilian Nursing Congresses,<sup>1-3</sup> as well as on the nursing practice in Brazilian hospitals and in medical facilities located in the city of Florianópolis.<sup>4-6</sup> Additionally, there was an initial concern regarding the history of the creation of the first Nursing Undergraduate Course in Santa Catarina launched in 1969, offered by the UFSC.<sup>7</sup>

More recently, the members of the group have been broadening the scope of their research not only regarding the nursing practice in a general perspective, but also concerning the powerful role of nurses in the major medical institutions of the state<sup>8</sup> and histories of epidemics, such as tuberculosis and AIDS.<sup>9-10</sup> Guided by the axle of the new history, the interest of the GEHCES was also directed to the history and biography of leading characters in the Brazilian nursing setting.<sup>11-15</sup> Ingrid Elsen, one of these remarkable nurses, has been providing precious contributions to the visibility of the nursing practice.

Ingrid Elsen is a broadly known and respected name in the nursing world. Her brilliant life story stands somewhere between dream and reality and brings about many ideas born from her daily professional activities. Based on such activities, Ingrid designed and established strategies toward transforming ideas into real practices. Over time, she revealed an inventive spirit and an extraordinary interest in the advancement and development of the occupation, as well as in the comprehension of human care, especially in the Family Health area.

Ingrid's capacity of aggregating people toward a group work, her attention to each one's points of view and her strong decision-making attitude turned her into an outstanding leader. She shared such leadership, exerted in a broad variety of functions and assignments, with all members of her work groups in past years. Ready to cope with the challenges stemming from her beliefs in the professional and personal life, Ingrid Else became

a visionary leader of a family-centered nursing practice. Her restless, innovative spirit led her to firmly cope with many obstacles, at any time, even those located beyond the academic world, but always with an attitude permeated by intuition and social sensitivity.

The aim of the present study is to depict a few facets of the pathway of this singular personality and to historicize her professional career, describing some aspects of her biography and leadership in the scientific field of the nursing practice in Santa Catarina (SC) and in Brazil, as well as to point out her contributions to the comprehension of the family nursing care.

## METHODOLOGY

The present social-historical study stands out as a qualitative research. Data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews carried out with the nurse, professor and researcher Ingrid Elsen, using the oral history method. This interview was scheduled by telephone and carried out on two days, March 3<sup>rd</sup> and March 10<sup>th</sup> of 2010. Each part of the interview took one hour and thirty minutes and was guided by a previously elaborated draft comprised of questions regarding the biographical information of the interviewee, her professional career and social recognition. In the beginning of the interview, carried out at *Casa Vida e Saúde*, in Florianópolis, SC/Brazil, Ingrid Elsen was educated on the type of research, her right to either confirm or deny her participation in the research, the secrecy of some of her information, the use of photographic images and the recording of the interview, the possibility of interrupting the interview in order to ask for clarifications, and her option to quit the process at any time. Following the clarifications and the agreement of the interviewee to participate in the study, she was asked to sign a Free and Informed Consent Form. After the end of the interview, the recording was transcribed, transcribed and submitted to the interviewee for content validation purposes, in compliance with the method of Oral History. Together with the validated material, nurse Ingrid signed the Concession Agreement of the content of her verbal testimony.

The study also employed consultations to and readings of secondary documental sources, such as scientific articles, the Lattes curriculum and chapters of books that helped subsidize the theoretical foundation of this research and enabled a contextualized analysis and interpretation of the

information. Resulting data were analyzed using the content analysis method<sup>16</sup>. The structure of the data was initially composed of nurse Ingrid's biographical information; later, the data were analyzed at the light of the context experienced by her and distributed in the following analysis categories: being a nurse, the early challenges; being a teacher and researcher, new directions; being the protagonist in the creation of groups related to family care; and being experienced, social acknowledgement of her professional career.

The present research was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Santa Catarina under protocol number 374/2008, in accordance with Resolution CNS 196/96 of the Ministry of Health.<sup>17</sup>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ingrid Elsen is a descendant of German immigrants. She was born on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1940, in the city of Rio do Sul, SC/Brazil. Her father, a German citizen but later naturalized as a Brazilian, Johann Hans Elsen, was nearly 20 years old when he arrived in Brazil; her mother, Zigrun Grete Büchler Elsen, was a from SC/Brazil. Ingrid lived in her hometown with her parents and two sisters up to five years old. In 1945, the family decided to move to city of Blumenau, SC/Brazil, where her third sister was born.

### Being a nurse: the early challenges

In the city of Blumenau, Ingrid attended elementary school at Colégio Sagrada Família and later at Colégio Santo Antônio, where she finished high school. Her desire to take the nursing course was awakened very early in her life; she was a teenage when she read a chronicle on the life of Florence Nightingale: *I liked very much to read. I read everything that came to my hands. Once I read about the history of Florence Nightingale on Reader's Digest and I was amazed at it! Then, I decided that I would be a nurse. I did not know anything about nursing, nor had I heard of it before, but I decided that I wanted to be a nurse just like Florence.*

Charmed by the work of the forerunner of the nursing practice, she talked with her parents about her desire of becoming a professional in this area. Her mother, however, believed that her daughter should know what nurses did in the real world before making a final decision on her professional career. Therefore, her first contact with the occupation took place between 1956 and 1958, when she got to know the routine of the nursing practice at

the Elsbeth Kohler maternity and at Santa Isabel hospital, both located in Blumenau, SC/Brazil. Her first assignments at the maternity occurred in the laundry department; later, she helped taking care of premature babies. At the hospital, she started cleaning the physical space of the institution and learned to carry out specific nursing care procedures, such as giving bed baths and injections.

The experiences of the daily nursing practice contributed to reaffirm her professional choice even more strongly. In 1959, she took the entrance examination at the Nursing School of the University of São Paulo (NS/USP) and was approved as a student in the second group of the four-year nursing undergraduate course. This course was comprised of theoretical and practical classes. The curriculum of the first year brought basic disciplines, such as Physiology, Anatomy and Pharmacology, all delivered by professors of the Medical School and counting on the steady follow-up of a nursing professor. From the second year onwards, the course brought specific nursing disciplines, in which the theoretical content of pathologies was delivered by doctors and the nursing care was supported by nurses of the Nursing School. The practical activities were performed at the Clinics Hospital and Psychiatry Hospital of the University of São Paulo, both located in the city of São Paulo. The Public Health internship was carried out in the city of Araraquara, located in the countryside of São Paulo State, where students remained for several months working in the community. During the morning and afternoon shifts, the nursing practices were performed in several different scenarios of the city, such as hospitals, daycare centers and public health outpatient facilities.

Since the early nursing years, after the creation of the Nursing School of the Public Health National Department in 1923 – currently the Ana Neri School – the practice of the internship has been developed concurrently with or right after the theoretical content of each discipline of the course. With time and in compliance with the determination of countless curricula normatized in this period<sup>18</sup>, both the practice and the theory underwent several changes.

After graduating in 1962, Ingrid embodied the social commitment of returning to her State. Therefore, she sent a letter to the Secretary of Health of Santa Catarina and reported on her desire to contribute with her services to the State's population. The Secretary of Health immediately hired her to work at the Public Health Department



(PHD) in Florianópolis, SC/Brazil. In this department, Ingrid started her professional activities in the maternal-infant nursing ward and remained there up until 1965. Some of her activities were to provide orientation to mothers, to administer vaccines and to qualify the nursing personnel, including a course for midwives in the community.

Ingrid returned to São Paulo in 1966 in order to work at the Pediatric ward of the Clinics Hospital, where she remained for approximately one year. Immediately after this period, responding to an invitation made by USP's professor Nahida Veloso, she worked as a Pediatric Nursing instructor in the nursing undergraduate course up to 1967. Subsequently, she began to work as a nursing assistant at the pediatric ward of Santa Casa de Misericórdia, and also started teaching at the Nursing School of that institution.

In 1970, she finished the specialization course on Pediatric Nursing at the Nursing School of USP. Following the birth of her daughter, her permanence both in São Paulo and in the hospital's work became very difficult due to the absence of a day-care service and the enhancement of the working time at the hospital, now reaching eight hours a day. For these reasons, she decided to move back to Blumenau, Santa Catarina. In that occasion, [...] *it was not at all easy for me to leave Sao Paulo. I enjoyed my work at Santa Casa very much. However, my priority was to remain close to my daughter.*

In Blumenau, Ingrid received the invitation of a nurse, Sister Fidelis, to work at the Blumenau, SC/Brazil Nursing School and at the newly inaugurated Children's Hospital. Concurrently to the activities in the school, she actively participated in the meetings of the Brazilian Nursing Association, Santa Catarina section (as per its acronym in Portuguese - ABEn-SC) in Florianópolis. In 1971, due to her contributions to the Public Health area, she was invited to take up the position of Public Health Advisor in the State Health Department of Florianópolis, by the hands of professor Eloíta Pereira Neves, who worked both at the ABEn-SC and at the Nursing Department of the UFSC. In this period, she worked with a multidisciplinary team that planned and implemented the regionalization program of health services through the creation of seven units of the Health Regional Administrative Center (HRAC). These units replaced the twelve sanitary control centers so far existing in the state. The HRACs were envisioned to implement, at an intermediary level, a technical-administrative structure aimed to ensure comprehensive health

care by advising and executing health services in the local and regional levels. The centers were gradually implemented and in 1975 they were established by a decree issued by governor Colombo Machado Salles.<sup>19</sup> Each unit counted on a multiprofessional team that included a nurse.

Aiming to guarantee a high quality nursing public health care, Ingrid made her best efforts so that nurses could be inserted into the Qualification Program designed by the State Health Department and attend the specialization course promoted by the Public Health Faculty of USP, counting on a scholarship.

In 1972, Ingrid was elected as Chair of ABEn-SC. In her administration (1972-1976), she actively worked toward building an association that could dialogue with its partners, thus diminishing geographical distances and disparities of ideas, and eliminating gaps between institutions and professionals by carrying out decentralized meetings in different cities and institutions, as well as in the creation of state-wide events.

Since its inception in 1926, the ABEn sought to mobilize resources and efforts toward integrating nursing teachers, assisting nurses and nursing students, aiming to discuss and consolidate an educational project that could meet social demands. For this purpose, the entity invested, and still invests, in the promotion of meetings, debate forums, workshops, as well as national and regional seminars, aiming to stimulate the participation of all those who are interested and involved in the nursing education area.<sup>20</sup> As Chair of the ABEn-SC, Ingrid was also indicated by the Federal Nursing Council to coordinate the commission that created the Regional Nursing Council of Santa Catarina (COREn-SC) in 1985.

### **Being a teacher and researcher: new directions**

As she concluded her activities in the State Health Department, Ingrid took an examination to the position of teacher at the Nursing Department of UFSC in Florianópolis. After being approved in the examination, she began her pedagogical activities by teaching the discipline "Foundations of Nursing" in 1974 and subsequently the "Pediatric Nursing" discipline, in which she developed contents related to the advancement and development of the Nursing practice counting on practical activities carried out in a public health unit of the PHD.

Although her entrance in the teaching area was not her main aspiration, Ingrid believed that

teaching was part of being a nurse, according to her own words: *nursing teaching, care practice and research production are indivisible. A teacher should not only teach, but also experience the practice and, at the same time, analyze it and propose changes whenever necessary.* Such statement, and the inter-relation of these three axes – teaching, practice and research – expresses her broad vision of the profession. In her perspective, the nursing practice should be grounded on knowledge built and anchored on ethical and social-cultural values, as well as on the nursing science.

Ingrid's professional performance caused her to face a new challenge: *in the beginning of the 1970's, the administrators of nursing courses in the Southern region of Brazil, led by professor Eloíta Pereira Neves (UFSC), realized that it was time to qualify and broaden the educational development of their professionals. Initially, they thought of creating a specialization course; however, the group finally decided to create a Master's degree. Thus, it was up to the Nursing Department of UFSC to execute the necessary actions toward the achievement of those objectives.*

The board of the Nursing Department invited Ingrid to take part in the commission that implemented the Master's Degree on Adult Health under the administration of professor Roberto Mündell de Lacerda as a dean. He fully supported the project from its inception, as he recognized the course to be critical to the qualification of the teaching body. Ingrid, then, took up the first coordination of the program in 1976, while other professors in the department would take the Master's Degree at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). The participation of teachers invited from several courses at UFSC and visiting doctors from other Brazilian universities and from one American university led to the creation of the first Master's Program group. After the return of the first master from UFRJ, professor Maria Albertina Braglia Pacheco, Ingrid became part of the second group.

Ingrid's keen interest in understanding the complexity of the family health care began when she worked in the hospital's pediatric ward. She realized that the orientations offered to mothers on the necessary care toward their children were often delivered after their discharge from the hospital. She also observed that not only the mothers were responsible for the home care provided to the children, but that the process should involve the whole family. Her professional experiences in this area led Ingrid to comprehend that the nursing care toward the children should not be designed outside the family context they were inserted into.

Counting on the orientation of Ph.D Lúcia Hisako Takase Gonçalves, as well as the collaboration of doctors Wanda Horta (NS/USP) and Olga Eidt, from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Ingrid developed her Master's Degree dissertation on the "Actions performed by mothers during their visits to hospitalized children". And she reinforces such need, as observed in the following statement: *as I carried out the research methodology to the dissertation, I felt how difficult it was to collect data only through observation processes. I thought it would be relevant to interview the mothers in order to understand the reasons that caused them to act/talk with the nurses and other mothers during the visits. This uneasiness with the method, experienced in a participatory observation with families in a community of Sul da Ilha for six months, certainly had a strong influence on my future options concerning the Doctor's Degree.*

The desire of digging deeper into the family issue motivated Ingrid to take a doctor's degree abroad. The idea, at first, was to take it either in Canada or in France. At this moment in time, there was no Nursing Graduate Program in Brazil and the existing French program was not yet officially recognized here. She then decided to go to the United States (US). She sent letters to universities in California, Texas and Pittsburgh. After several endeavors and plenty of efforts, she was approved in the two first universities. Counting on the recommendation of her English language teacher, she decided to go to the University of San Francisco, California.

Only one day after defending her Nursing Master's Degree dissertation in 1979, Ingrid traveled to the US in order to begin her doctor's program. There were two programs in that university, one of them focusing on the nursing practice and the other on family nursing: *the opportunity of participating in a course focusing on nursing practice and families was the perfect occasion to improve my conceptions on what family nursing really was. To care for families means to get to know, apply and expand theoretical, methodological and ethical knowledge concerning the family system. The family field stands out as interdisciplinary, as it articulates knowledge and practices originated in various disciplines, including health and nursing practice.*

For this reason, Ingrid sought to broaden her knowledge by engaging in several Sociology, Health Anthropology and Psychology disciplines, which contributed to her educational development in qualitative methodologies toward the production of family research.

Concepts of health and illness and related behaviors among families living in a Brazilian fishing

village<sup>21</sup> was the thesis she defended in her doctor's degree, in which she reflects on health concepts and practices concerning families living in a fishing community in Southern Brazil by applying a qualitative approach. This research triggered the production of knowledge recorded in a variety of works of her own authorship, as well as in publications of tutored students, group participants and study forums.

In 1984, at her return to Brazil, the scientific community showed a deep interest in getting to know her experiences concerning the development of qualitative research. Ingrid was then invited by several Brazilian universities to teach in courses and events in this area. The socialization of her knowledge on this type of research throughout the teaching activities carried out in the Graduate Course of the UFSC generated new directions in the application of methodologies employed by students in the production of final papers, thus providing a new way of thinking and putting the nursing science into effect.

Ingrid's teaching skills, especially on the family area, amazed the students. Whenever she transmitted her knowledge, she addressed them in such a way that students were motivated to share and reflect on the ideas and concerns generated by the taught issues. Ingrid personally oriented several monographs, dissertations and graduate theses. She regrets the fact that during her years at UFSC the undergraduate level lacked a specific discipline focused on the family. Nevertheless, whenever she approached this field in events and courses, students were charmed and later personally looked for work groups on the issue.

Ingrid's intellectual and academic records show a broad array of activities regarding family-centered issues. She published dozens of full articles and abstracts in journals and annals and participated in the organization of specific books in the area. She also elaborated a number of book chapters, exposing ideas and experiences resulting from group works and from the production of countless final papers oriented by her in undergraduate and graduate levels. She was engaged not only in building knowledge, but also in the socialization of such knowledge. She also coordinated a large number of local, national and international events. Her innovative spirit and desire to share knowledge empowered each and every work and activity she was involved in.

The interest of the nursing practice, as well as of other occupations, in developing studies addressing the family as a fundamental care focus fomented the creation of research groups centered on

issues related to family care and research. Among these groups, we highlight the Care, Research and Education Group in the Family Health Area (GAPEFAM) personally coordinated by Ingrid Elsen and inspired on her doctor's degree thesis at the Nursing Department of UFSC in 1984, a time when not even a word was mentioned about governmental proposals involving the family health area in Brazil. This group brings together many professionals from very different areas in Southern Brazil by means of the Laboratory Network of Interdisciplinary Studies on Family and Health (LEIFAMS).<sup>22-23</sup>

In the beginning of the 1990's, Ingrid started coordinating the nursing area of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (as per its acronym in Portuguese - CAPES), while also performing as a consultant. In this same period, 1992 to be more precise, professor Ingrid was one of the professionals responsible for the creation of Text & Context Nursing Journal (PEN/UFSC). She actually became the first editor of the journal. The decision for releasing the magazine was a response to the drastic reduction in the production of national dissemination, consumption and socialization journals resulted from Nursing Graduate Programs. The turning point of the magazine, in comparison with other journals existing in the country, was the thematic approach of the material.<sup>24</sup>

Ingrid was permanently focused on the qualification of nurses. She used the GAFEPAM to mobilize group professors and other Nursing Department professionals toward creating the specialization course on Family Nursing. She deemed the family nursing care to be a social practice that should be built on scientific, technical and humanistic cornerstones.

Ingrid retired from UFSC in 1995, after 33 years working in several of the university's institutions. She realized that the environment at UFSC had become quite bureaucratic, controlled and amassed with routines. She ended up realizing that UFSC was not her place anymore. Nonetheless, she kept performing research activities at GAPEFAM and helping coordinate the Southern Network of LEIFAMS. After responding positively to an invitation to participate in the Expanded Master's Degree on Nursing of UFSC in the universities of Concórdia (SC) and Erechim (RS), she resumed her teaching activities and remained two and a half years working in this project.

In 2002, she started teaching at the Interdisciplinary Professional Master's Degree in Health in the Family Health area of University of Vale de Itajaí



(UNIVALI), located in the city of Itajaí (SC). In this institution, Ingrid created an extension project, the *Univali Mulher*, which integrated both undergraduate and graduate students. The project aimed to prevent domestic violence against girls and adolescents. She remained in this university up until 2008, when a health problem interrupted her activities: *It was a wonderful experience to participate in UNIVALI's Interdisciplinary Master's Degree. I could fulfill my greatest dream: to integrate a multidisciplinary team that sought to learn and practice an interdisciplinary approach both in their teaching and in their care practice with families.*

### **Being the protagonist in the creation of groups related to family care**

Ingrid's real desire was to research about and work with families. The main goal of her aspiration was to participate in the construction of knowledge on the family; additionally, she wanted to instrumentalize the health team toward caring for and building spaces to the discussion of family issues and elaboration of public policy proposals related to this knowledge field.

In 1984, when she returned to the Nursing Department of UFSC, besides taking up the coordination of the graduate program, she also decided to continue the research initiated in the thesis defended in her doctor's degree. Her plan was to develop studies about care knowledge and practices that could be used in such a way that the families from Santa Catarina, as well as the State's vast scope of ethnical groups, could be provided with support. For this purpose, she invited professors, healthcare professionals and students to integrate the GAPEFAM. From this moment on, and for over two decades, the GAPEFAM, comprised of various participants, could count on her personal and committed leadership.

The integration among research, practice and education was the axis of the work carried out by the members of the group. The dynamic history constructed throughout the years reveals a career that generated and disseminated great amounts of knowledge on family resulting from scientific productions and the organization of scientific events.<sup>25-27</sup> Furthermore, motivated by Ingrid, the members of the group also mobilized toward developing a specialization course on Family Health Nursing at UFSC, thus qualifying many professionals that would work with families.

Ingrid pioneered the launch of the group and projected the creation of new groups and new

research on family and health in Southern Brazil, such as the groups created in the State University of Maringá, Federal University of Paraná, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Federal University of Pelotas, and Federal University of Rio Grande, which gave birth to the South Research Network on Family and Health, sponsored by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (as per its acronym in Portuguese - CNPq). This interdisciplinary network maintains a steady flow of national and international articulations, aiming to build platforms that propose and develop interdisciplinary teaching, research and care technologies for families that experience health/disease processes – the LEIFAMS.

In 1998, Ingrid helped launch the non-governmental organization (NGO) called *Centro Crescer Sem Violência*. The NGO was born as a result of a problem observed in an extension project carried out by GAPEFAM. The search for a solution encouraged the members of the group, and also the members of two other study groups at UFSC, to take the specialization course on Violence – the LACRI/USP, in Sao Paulo. The purpose was to instrumentalize professionals to cope with the challenges of the families experiencing domestic and intra-family violence situations. Some members of GAPEFAM are also part of the *Centro Crescer sem Violência* and play quite a relevant role in the promotion of events and in the development of specific care actions. Ingrid is quite committed toward promoting this exchange. The *Centro Crescer Sem Violência* also promoted the creation of the ARTEMIS project: Empowering Women, Mothers and their Children. This project was composed of nurses, psychologists, social assistants and psychology and nursing female students. At the UFSC, GAPEFAM renamed this project to Family Health and Citizenship Promotion program, later transformed into an institutional funded project. This extension project integrates research and education and is carried out by two UFSC professors and five fellows.

In recent years, Ingrid has directed her efforts toward coping with intra-family issues. She deems violence to be a family, health and human right issue that needs to be understood and dealt with based on a bio-psycho-social-cultural-political viewpoint. Currently, Ingrid believes that the opportunity of contributing to the insertion of the family health issue into a broader interdisciplinary, intersectorial matrix articulated with public policies is right in her path.

## Being experienced, social recognition of her professional career

Ingrid Elsen's professional career has been marked by enormous challenges and special moments of overcoming obstacles. The role she played together with other professors in the implementation of the Nursing Graduate Program at UFSC was a milestone to the development of scientific research activities in the nursing area in Santa Catarina and in Brazil.

Ingrid was awarded several times by her achievements in the nursing area. In 1971, she was awarded the ABEn's Edith Magalhães Fraenckel medal for co-authoring the research coordinated by Eloíta Pereira Neves (UFSC). In 1990, she co-authored the Laís Neto dos Reis Prize and received a Merit Award. In 1995, she received the Merit Award of the Health Sciences Center of UFSC. In 2004, she was awarded the title of Honorary President of the International Symposium on Families in Risk Situation, granted by the Foundation of the Federal University of Rio Grande. In 2005, she received the Merit Award granted by the Nursing Undergraduate Course of University of Vale do Itajaí (SC). In 2007, in acknowledgement of the health services rendered to the population of Florianópolis (SC), she received a Merit Award of the Municipal Health Council, Florianópolis Health Department. In 2008, she received a tribute of the Master's Degree Program in Health and Labor Management of University of Vale do Itajaí (SC). In 2010, she was awarded the Ingrid Elsen Prize to Education Researchers at the 12<sup>th</sup> Pan-American Colloquium on Nursing Research, held in the city of Florianópolis (SC). In August 2011, as Chair of LEIFAMS, she received tributes in two family nursing events at University of Maringá by each of the events' organizers: the Nursing Department and the Nursing Graduate Program. The tributes were a result of the relevant works she carried out toward the educational development of family nurses and family health professionals in Brazil.

These tributes show the recognition of the significant legacy Ingrid Elsen leaves to the nursing teaching, research and extension in Santa Catarina and nationwide.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ingrid Elsen's biographic writings show that her professional career is permeated by achievements and innovations. Her competence and knowledge, her idealism and broad vision of the

elements that comprise the human experience made her a pioneer in the Brazilian family nursing practice.

Her avant-garde development of qualitative research revealed knowledge and paradigmatic changes toward the comprehension of health problems, especially those focused on the family care, and family and violence resulting from social vulnerability conditions. Ingrid signaled new pathways that went beyond the nursing environment itself, always addressing the possibility of generating interdisciplinary actions. Care and culture have been both the axles and the pillars of her ideas whenever she shared knowledge and created study networks on family care issues.

Ingrid crossed the edge of the mere creation of a family-centered interdisciplinary research group. Her visionary organization of an Interdisciplinary Study and Practice Network on Family and Health inspired the creation of a number of research groups based on the same premises throughout the country, thus revolutionizing/transforming the research in this area.

Ingrid's fruitful, unmatched professional performance is the trademark of her leadership. Endowed with a creative intelligence and an aggregating spirit, as well as recognized in the way she proposed challenging goals and mobilized/motivated groups toward the achievement of new projects, her leadership was easily embraced in group works. Ingrid stands out as an amazing character that helped build the history of the Brazilian nursing practice. She actively participated in the advancement and development of professionals, in the creation of graduate programs in Santa Catarina, in the formation of study groups and teaching-research-education networks, as well as in the establishment of associative entities.

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