

The set of articles comprising this supplement of Escola Politécnica de Saúde Joaquim Venâncio's journal *Trabalho, Educação e Saúde* represents the scientific production of professors and is the product of a few essays selected from among the students of the Professional Master's Degree in Family Health organized by the Northeast Network of Training in Family Health (RENASE, in Portuguese), formed by the association of Northeastern universities under the academic coordination of Fundação Oswaldo Cruz – Fiocruz Ceará.

RENASF is an association of educational institutions located in the Brazilian Northeast, which was formed initially by the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, the Acaraú Valley State University, the Ceará State University, the Federal Universities of Ceará and Maranhão, and Fiocruz, which formed the main core, accompanied by several other member institutions. This consortium allowed the opening of the first Professional Master's Degree course in Family Health, in 2012, offered to a student body of 100 students. RENASF came into being as a result of the confluence of several factors: From the experience of working with primary care in the state of Ceará in the work done by health agents combating child mortality, which inspired the creation of the Community Health Agent Program (PACS); from the massive implementation of the Family Health Strategy in the Northeast, which included universities engaging in training health professionals, and from the successful experience of the Northeast Biotechnology Network (RENORBIO, in Portuguese), which was an inspiring model for this network of training in Family Health.

The conceptual theoretical model that guided the pedagogical organization of the course was referenced in education by skills, combining the knowledge and abilities necessary for the performance of the activities required at work, focusing on problem situations to be resolved. In the teaching and learning process, active methodologies suitable for training adults who already have substantial life experience when becoming students are prioritized. This methodology, which focuses on the development of creativity, was emphasized insofar as the ethical commitment of health professionals in relation to the users of the Unified Health System (SUS) in primary care are concerned.

In line with the collaborative work proposal that characterizes RENASE, all teaching materials were developed in a collaborative manner by the professors and used simultaneously by all training centers. This allowed a critical review and improvements in the process due to an ongoing evaluation of the results attained by different groups. The wealth of discussions and learning resulting from this process is also expressed in the horizontal relationships that were developed the management work done for the course, which took place collectively.

Of the 100 students enrolled in 2012, 92 percent have defended their dissertations, and the success of this work can be assessed both by the increase that has taken place in the list of nucleation institutions, which in 2014 added up to nine, and by the increase in the number of openings to train new students, which rose to 130.

Two major lessons can be learned from this experience: the first has to do with the enriching possibilities of a collaborative and horizontal work done among the academic partners and the multiplying power of the shared work in the teaching and learning experiences carried out with proper planning and the professional competence of actors from different institutional cultures; the second is related with the arrival of Fiocruz in a new local scene, such as this of the State of Ceará, which, by creating a new regional unit, may become a unifying pole of the initiatives that are already underway in the region, playing the role of joining processes in progress and enhancing the best local capacities.

It is with great joy that I present this special issue, which is the outcome of a very successful effort made by the various institutions involved in the process of training in Family Health to collaborate in building and strengthening our National Health System.

*Maria do Carmo Leal*

Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública Sergio Arouca, Departamento de Epidemiologia e Métodos Quantitativos em Saúde

*Virginia Alonso Hortale*

Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública Sergio Arouca, Departamento de Administração e Planejamento em Saúde

Guest Editor