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Institute of Collective Health of the Federal University of Bahia: 30 years of contributions to Public Health

The Institute of Collective Health (ICH) of the Federal University of Bahia (FUBA) was created in 1994 as a proposal to build new paradigms for research in collective health and the training of professionals for the Unified Health System, stimulating the adoption of social and health practices guided by the ethical principle of the universal right to health.

ICH/FUBA aims to produce rigorous scientific and technological knowledge to contribute to meeting the population's health needs; train teachers, researchers and technical staff in Public Health; contribute to the general training of health professionals in various undergraduate courses; and develop extension and technical cooperation projects, aiming to improve health practices in communities, the Brazilian Unified Health System and the global health.

Its academic structure comprises integrated research, teaching, and technical cooperation programs that involve teachers, researchers, technicians, and postgraduate and undergraduate students. This model encourages interdisciplinarity and teamwork, in addition of promoting the search for collaboration with other teaching and research centers and with Brazilian and international governmental and non-governmental organizations. Currently, there are eight Integrated Programs: Epidemiology and Impact Assessment of Public Policies on Population Health; Health Policy, Planning, Management and Assessment; Community, Family and Health; Training and Assessment of Primary Care; Gender and Health; Economy, Technology and Innovation in Health; Environmental and Worker Health; Health Surveillance and Age, Society and Health. In addition to the Integrated Programs, the ISC has the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Mental Health and the Center for Teaching and Research in AIDS and Other Infectious Diseases.

The Congregation, made up of the coordinators of the integrated programs, the coordinators of the collegiate bodies of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and representatives of the technical-administrative employees and students, is the highest management body of the IHC. Furthermore, an academic coordination organizes and supervises the activities common to all teachers and technicians. The administrative direction of the ICH is exercised by a director and a deputy director, who are elected for a four- year term by teachers, technical-administrative employees, and students. The ICH also has a Scientific Technical Council with the mandate to think about long-term institutional development, formulating proposals for improving the institution. At the end of each year, the Institute holds its evaluation and planning seminar in which institutional issues are discussed and deliberated.

In the Integrated Programs, the main lines of research under development include the impact assessment of the programmes and policies on the population health; analysis of health policies in Brazil; socio-cultural and health-illness-care processes; analysis of mental health programs; evaluation of primary care and health promotion; gender inequality, health financing; digital health; environmental health and climate change, Brazilian worker health; analysis of health surveillance policies; epidemiology of communicable diseases and nutritional

deficiencies; epidemiology of chronic non-communicable diseases; child development and health of older people.

ICH/FUBA has collaborated with international centres on many research projects. There are ongoing projects in collaboration with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, University College London, the University of Glasgow, Yale University, the University of North Carolina, Georgia State University and Brown University, the University of Porto, the University of Coimbra, the National Center for Sociology in Paris, the René Mendes University in Grenoble, the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Barcelona Institute for Global Health, the National University of Lanús, the National University of Rosario, and the University of San Francisco of Quito, the Uganda Research Unit on Aids, the Queensland University, and the Indian Institute of Public Health in Hyderabad.

Several extension and technical cooperation activities are developed through partnerships with the Ministry of Health, the Pan American Health Organization, the World Health Organization, the Health Secretariat of the State of Bahia, and the Municipal Health Secretariat of Salvador. There are also several partnerships with social movements, including civil society organisations that are active in defending the right to health, particularly for vulnerable segments of the population such as *quilombolas* (black people living in communities that resisted slavery), homeless people, app workers, domestic workers, and victims of environmental disasters.

Regarding teaching, ICH offers its own undergraduate course in collective health and curricular components of several other undergraduate courses at FUBA. Each year, ICH receives 45 collective health students and around 2000 students from other FUBA undergraduate courses, teaching the subjects of Epidemiology, Introduction to Collective Health and Health Policy in Medicine, Nutrition, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Nursing, Sanitary Engineering, Psychology and Bachelor's Degree in Health.

In addition to graduation, ICH/FUBA offers residency courses in collective health, with concentrations in health planning and management, epidemiology, and early childhood development. By 2023, 261 residents had been trained.

ICH also offers postgraduate courses (master's and doctorate) in collective health, with concentrations in epidemiology, health planning and management, and social sciences in health. In addition to academic postgraduate studies, the Institute offers professional master's degrees and a doctorate in collective health aimed at people involved in managing health services, notably within the scope of the Unified Health System. By 2023, the ICH has trained 589 masters and 198 doctors in collective health. The ICH/FUBA Postgraduate Program has received the highest score and has been recognised as a program of excellence in successive evaluations by the Ministry of Education.

ICH/FUBA has 36 full-time teachers, with another ten teachers from other FUBA units and other universities accredited in its postgraduate studies program. It also has 30 technical-administrative employees dedicated to its management. In 2024, the ICH had enrolled 606 students in its own courses, of which 202 were undergraduate students, 59 residents, 98 academic master's students, 172 doctoral students and 75 professional master's students.

In terms of infrastructure, the ICH is based in a building with an area of 1,540 m² in a privileged location, close to the Unified Health Library and the University Chancery. Its offices are equipped with individual computers with Internet access, including workstations for students. There are five classrooms, five meeting rooms and an auditorium with a capacity of

100 people. In addition to its own building, ISC has classrooms in the Canela Classroom Pavilion on the same campus.

The ICH Computer Laboratory has six rooms, two of which are training rooms – the first, with 25 computers and the second with 12 computers, all connected to the UFBA network, with access to the internet and various applications for use in the collective health. The IT Park is made up of 200 microcomputers, 50 printers, 10 datashows, 10 scanners and 1 plotter, distributed across the Institute's various teaching, research and administration spaces. The ICH also has a Health Learning and Knowledge Technologies Center, which is a digital media production space. In addition to having a website, ICH is present on X, Facebook and Instagram.

Finally, the Institute of Collective Health of the Federal University of Bahia has been developing, for 30 years, teaching, research and technical cooperation activities, always guided by the search for academic excellence and a commitment to social justice. The ICH is proud of the intensity of its activities and the recognition of the quality of its work by its peers.

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