

December 2022

MeetingDem Newsletter



The MeetingDem Newsletter is an edition of the MeetingDem Network (www.meetingdem.eu). This newsletter is disseminated among the network of interested stakeholders and Meeting Centres for people with dementia and carers worldwide. Sign up for this newsletter at www.meetingdem.eu or by sending an email to meetingdem.eu@gmail.com.

Dear MeetingDem friends,

2022 was another year with a huge increase in the number of Meeting Centres in different parts of the world. Many new centres were set up in the UK, where 50 centres are now in operation or funded and soon to open, in the Netherlands, where there are now 192 centres, and in Singapore with two new centres. Very impressive is the explosive growth of Meeting Centres in Japan, where more than 100 centres based on the Japanese model are now operational thanks to great efforts of our colleague Dr Tomoyuki Yabuki, director of the Dementia Care Research and Training Centre in Sendai, and associate professor at Tohoku Fukushi University. We are deeply touched by the initiative of Clementinah Rooke, Senior Lecturer in Mental Health Nursing at the University of Huddersfield in the UK, who started a Meeting Centre in Zimbabwe in their family home after her mother who had dementia passed away, inspired by the desire to immortalise her mother.

This newsletter gives an update of developments of Meeting centres and their activities in Europe, Asia, Australia, South-America and Africa. Some highlights: Meeting centres were well represented at the UK Dementia Congress 2022. A seed fund of Age Scotland's About Dementia Project supported further dissemination of Meeting Centres in Scotland, in Wales five Meeting Centres were funded by the local Social Value Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund. The Netherlands campaigned to further spread the individualised Meeting Centres Support Programme, including volunteering for people with dementia in line with their interests and talents. In Emilia Romagna in Italy several Meeting Centres now also offer support in rural areas. In Milan Atelier della Mente opened a fifth Meeting Centre and organised the third Meeting Centres course for coordinators. In Poland (MC Wroclaw) many joint activities were undertaken varying from physical activities to making music with students of the Academy of Music and a scientific conference on the occasion of the seventh anniversary of the Wroclaw Meeting Centre.



In Spain the Spanish Online Course for Pioneers of Meeting Centres has been made available for free. In Japan the Meeting Centers as a service are officially adopted by the long-term care insurance system which helped, and will help, to disseminate the centres throughout the country. In Sydney, Australia, unfortunately the Meeting Centre had to close because of funding problems, but they are trying to get funding to reopen again. In South America, Aruba and Surinam, the Meeting Centres are still very active. In Surinam, Stichting Wiesje started informal carer support and support groups. Last but not least, this year a new initiative started with preparations of Meeting Centres in three cities in Ecuador.

We thank all those who supported the implementation of the Meeting Centres for people living with dementia and their carers in 2022 and wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2023!

Prof. Rose-Marie Dröes, Chair MeetingDem Network

Farewell professor Dawn Brooker and professor Rose-Marie Dröes

This year, two colleagues who have been crucial to the spread of Meeting centres in Europe and beyond for many years have retired, Prof Dawn Brooker and Prof Rose-Marie Dröes, resp. member and chair of the MeetingDem Network's executive board

Dawn Brooker retired in March as director of the Association for Dementia Studies at the University of Worcester, but continues to work on a number of projects as professor emeritus in dementia studies. Dawn has worked for more than 20 years at the interface



between the experience of people living with dementia, those developing care practice and those undertaking research. She is internationally recognised for her work on person-centred care. We are very grateful that Dawn has led the translation and implementation of the Meeting Centres model for the UK with such great enthusiasm and success since 2014. We wish Dawn all the best and hope that she will contin-

ue to be involved with the Meeting Network in the years to come.

Rose-Marie Dröes, developer of the Dutch Meeting Centers Support Programme in the early 1990s, and chair of the MeetingDem Network Board retired in August as professor of psychosocial care in dementia at the Department of Psychiatry of the VU University medical center in Amsterdam. Rose-Marie will retain a part-time appointment for the next year to complete several projects and will remain active in the MeetingDem Network. Rose-Marie is internationally recognised for her research into psychosocial support for people with dementia and carers in adjusting to and coping with the consequences of dementia and maintaining quality of life as well as for successfully implementing innovations in practice. At her farewell on 11 October she received the Frans Banninck-Cock medal from a representative of the city of Amsterdam (Mrs Flora Breemer) for her great commitment to people with dementia and family carers for 40 years and the global spread of the Amsterdam model of Meeting Centres.



Prof Rose-Marie Dröes and Mrs Flora Breemer

Meeting Centres in Europe

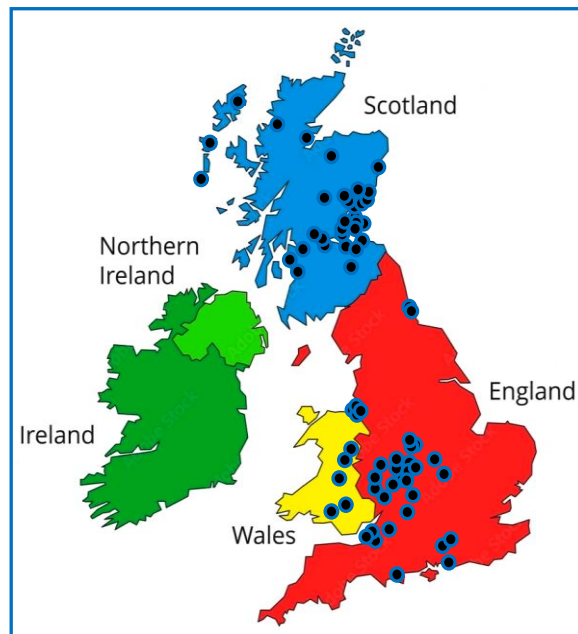
Further growth of Meeting Centres UK in 2022!

It's been another bumper year for Meeting Centres UK with lots of activity going on across England, Scotland and Wales. It's amazing to think that (compared to 40 Meeting Centres in 2021) there are now around 50 Meeting Centres funded and/or up and running across the UK, with further exciting developments in the pipeline.

England

In early November the UK Dementia Congress took place in Birmingham and Meeting Centres had a strong presence. The Meeting Centre symposium was

standing room only, and brought together a mix of established, new and emerging Meeting Centres to share experiences and spread the word. There has been new growth in Bristol and the South West, Hampshire and Liverpool.



Scotland

There are now 11 Meeting Centres opened across Scotland, with more on the way soon due to a seed fund specifically for Meeting Centres funded by Age Scotland's About Dementia Project. This seed fund will support the development of another 5 new centres. Moves are also underway to formalise Meeting Centres at a national level in Scotland with the formation of a new Scottish Meeting Centres Network charity.



Wales

Following a period of delivering a weekly Virtual Meeting Centre and online activities during the pandemic, four Powys Meeting Centres reopened in October 2021, funded by the local Social Value Fund that also funded the opening of a 5th Meeting Centre in

Welshpool in March 2022. The 5th Powys Meeting Centre was soon successful, with support from local community groups and organisations and a good number of people attending. We have an average combined attendance of 80 Members and Carers and are supported by 22 Volunteers. Ongoing funding has been secured via The National Lottery Community Fund and grants, however, long-term sustainability remains an issue.

In the beginning of December the Association for Dementia Studies broadcasted the webinar ‘Standing on the shoulders of Giants’ in which we presented the developments of the Meeting Centers over the past decades, more specifically in the UK over the last 8 years, as well as the research that has been done so far and plans for the future. Find a summary and the recording of the webinar by clicking the following link: <https://meetingcentres.org/2022/12/08/standing-on-the-shoulders-of-giants/>

Dr Shirley Evans, Association for Dementia Studies, University of Worcester, UK

Dissemination of iMCSP in the Netherlands

In the *Netherlands*, with funding from ZonMw, also in 2022 several activities were undertaken to further disseminate the new *individualised* Meeting Centres Support Programme (iMCSP). As we reported in the previous newsletter, this programme is offered in addition to the regular MCSP, and consists of volunteer work for people with dementia (DemenTalent), and telephone coaching (Dementelcoach) and STAR e-Learning for carers. Several iMCSP courses were provided for personnel of Meeting Centres. New videos with examples of different types of volunteer work and experiences with Dementelcoach and STAR e-Learning were published on the YouTube channel ‘Ontmoetingscentra 3.0’ (do take a look!)

(<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCI3kRVVTGHf4ZX0Ly-7s0Wg>).



Volunteer working in the kitchen of a Meeting Center

The manual for working with volunteers with dementia was further disseminated to support organisations willing to work with volunteers with dementia. In total

60 Meeting Centres participated in the iMCSP courses and part of them started implementing one or more of the new interventions in 2022 or intend to start these in 2023.

We also continued approaching managers of Meeting Centres, the responsible municipal officials in the cities and villages where Meeting Centres are operational and all health insurance offices in the country with information on iMCSP and the results of our effectiveness and cost-effectiveness research (iMCSP proved also cost-effective!). Because the dementia strategy 2021-2030 of the Ministry of Health is encouraging municipalities to promote further dissemination of Meeting Centres and other meaningful activities, such as DemenTalent, prof. Rose-Marie Dröes was invited as plenary speaker at the National Dementia congress on 31 October, organised by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports, to talk about the new iMCSP programme.

In 2022, twelve new Meeting Centres opened their doors in the Netherlands. In total there are now 192 Meeting Centres in the country. Almost all Meeting Centres were open as usual this year, some had still problems because of staff or participants being ill because of COVID. Also this year all centres used a lot of creativity to restart group and individual activities in and outside the Meeting Centre.

Prof. Rose-Marie Dröes, Department of Psychiatry, Amsterdam UMC, location VUmc, The Netherlands

Meeting centres in Italy in 2022

A new meeting center “Circolo del Melograno”, the 18th meeting center in Italy, will be launched on the 18th of December 2022 in the northern area of Modena (Regione Emilia-Romagna). In this region there are now several meeting centres and the MCSP approach is also used in rural areas (also in Vignola, Zocca, Castelnuovo Rangone) to meet the needs of people with dementia and their caregivers.

After the Covid pandemic it is the second meeting



centre to be launched in the area of Modena. This meeting center serves a large rural area and involves

public health and welfare agencies, Alzheimer Associations and municipalities.

In the area of Rimini there are now six meeting centers coordinated by the welfare agency and the Alzheimer Rimini Association, spread across the area, in Riccione, Rimini, Morciano, Cattolica, San Giovanni in Marignano, and Santarcangelo

(<https://www.alzheimerrimini.net/i-progetti-nei-centri/centri-dincontro/>).

After the COVID pandemic all meeting centers resumed their activities even if there are still some limitations in access in terms of number of participants and activities.

Prof. Rabih Chattat, University of Bologna, Italy

In 2022, the four Milan Meeting Centres activated by the municipality continued their activities with the usual programme. Many social events were organised, such as outings and parties, which were much appreciated by users after the long period of isolation due to COVID.

In May, the course for staff of Meeting Centres (the third in Milan) was completed. 15 new coordinators/workers were trained!



In April, the association Atelier della Mente, which is active in spreading the MCSP in Italy, opened a new Meeting Centre in an area of Milan where there were no meeting centres yet. It is open two days a week in the premises of the Casa del Tempo (a well-known meeting place for elderly people in the area). In this Meeting Centre, Atelier della Mente has introduced an innovative element that is proving very welcome and useful for its users: cooking! At 11.30 am, a group of people with dementia prepare lunch for all participants together with a staff member.

In addition, Atelier della Mente has published the Italian version of the guide to setting up a Meeting Centre. The guide is available on the association's website (www.atelierdellamente.it).

Leonora Chiavari Atelier della Mente, Milan

Dr. Elisabetta Farina, Fondazione Don Gnocchi, Milan

Meeting Center in the Day Care Center "Na Ciepłej" in Wroclaw, Poland 2022

The year 2022 resulted in many joint activities, meetings, conversations. In January, we participated in the outreach activities of the international COGNISANCE (CO-designing dementia diagnosis and post-diagnostic care) project, as part of which therapists conducted webinars for informal caregivers of people with cognitive impairments and for professionals who work with people with dementia and their families. During this month, we also celebrated Grandmother's and Grandfather's Day with the participation of preschoolers, whose visits always bring joy and emotion.



On February 9, we held a grand Sports Gala, which concluded the "I catch the day" campaign of the European Association for the Promotion of Physical Activity 50+. The aim of the campaign was to involve seniors in physical activity in accordance with the latest WHO recommendations. During the Gala we were accompanied by Olympic shooting champion Renata Mauer-Różanska (1992, 1996, 2000, 2004) and Paralympic canoeing champion Jakub Tokarz (2016).

During several months, we also participated in the by the European Social Fund financed project "Activity of seniors is their fitness and health". As part of this we participated in lectures, IT workshops, physical activities and fitness tests conducted by teachers of the Academy of Physical Education in Wroclaw. The project ended with a joint trip to the Arboretum in Wojstawice, which was also attended by departments of home care DDP "Pogodna Jesień".

As part of the "Passionate" project, every month we invited interesting guests who gave lectures, workshops or recitals on various topics, such as a meeting with a sailor, an author's concert by Mr. Rafał who works with preschoolers on a daily basis, workshops on making mini-presentations, and a meeting "In the old cinema". The head of our centre received funding for the implementation of a micro-grant with a medieval theme. We were able to learn medieval dances, bread baking, making soaps with our own hands, archery, and listened to medieval music performed by

the band Freaks. The culmination was a great event for seniors called "Archipelago of Kindness", which was part of Wroclaw Senior Days in September and October. The event included performances, kindergarten children, senior dance groups, demonstrations of medieval costumes, concerts with live music, fire show and Senioriada - sports games, which consisted



of such competitions as driving a nail into a trunk, throwing a horseshoe on a stake, etc. It was an amazing event integrating the community of Wroclaw seniors with the participation of many aid organizations that accompanied the event.

We should also mention the frequent visits of stu-



dents of Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Cosmetology from AWF Wroclaw, who turned our centre into professional therapy rooms and SPA. Our time is also enlivened by students from the Wroclaw Academy of Music, who developed our skills in listening and experiencing and creating music, experiencing playing instruments and singing. One of our music therapists, with funding from the Wroclaw Academic Center, organized a day-long music therapy workshop outdoors with the participation of our seniors and invited guests. Discovering the talent of one of our participants' wife from the Meeting Center, we prepared a vernissage of embroidered works combined with needlepoint embroidery workshops.

This year the theatrical group of our centre staged two plays "Wife Candidates" and "The Little Prince"

directed by the head of the center. The scenery, costumes, and live music elevated the plays to a high level, which was admired by the invited guests.

One of the most important activities of the Meeting Center in 2022 was the organization of a scientific conference with workshops on the occasion of the seventh anniversary of the Meeting Centre. This included eight lectures (three of them in remote form) given by specialists, including those from outside Poland. The conference ended with a concert of sung poetry performed by the "Direct Relations Team".

As you can see, there is a lot going in our centre... We are grateful to be back at the centre, to meet with each other, talk, have fun, and sometimes experience difficult moments together. Tomorrow we will dance at the St. Andrew's party, hold hands and augur for the future, and in December we will sit together again at the Christmas Eve table, without distance and masks....

Katarzyna Bulińska, coordinator, Dorota Szcześniak, Katarzyna Lion, Joanna Rymaszewska from Wroclaw Medical University, Dept of Psychiatry, Poland

A new start for the Meeting Centre in Spain

In February 2022, the Meeting Centre in Zamora, Spain, started remodeling after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The needs of the elderly in the area, the location of the centre and the programme of activities needed to be reassessed. During this process, we identified several obstacles related to the inappropriate location, transport needs and financial resources. Now we are still in the process of restructuring, trying to overcome the different barriers, but with a stable group of members that are very satisfied with the activity programme. We are open on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9.30 am to 12.00 am, and we are rebuilding the programme together with the members of the Centre. Our activities still involve a combination of



psychomotor activities, cognitive stimulation, reminiscence and reality orientation through recreational activities and technology. The group started to do walking tours around the neighbourhood and have coffee at a coffee shop in the community, aiming to return the sense of community to the members.

We are also aiming to extend the Meeting Centre activities to rural areas by implementing technologies,

In this context, we have developed an online platform to support carers of people with dementia. and we expect to make it public in early January 2023. As part of this initiative, we are happy to announce the availability of the *Spanish Online Course for Pioneers of Meeting Centres* which was developed as part of a secondment for the DISTINCT Network on Technology to promote social health in Dementia, funded by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Networks (MSC-ITN) action under the European Commission's Horizon 2020 programme. The course is now free available at:

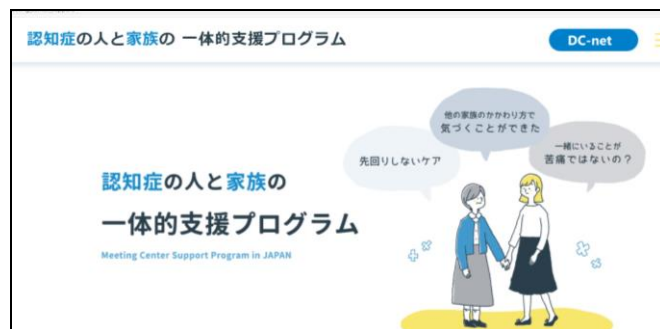
<https://e4you.org/es/moocs/implementacion-de-centros-de-encuentro-para-personas-con-demencia-y-sus-cuidadores>. We hope this will further spread and implement the Meeting Centre's programme in Spanish-speaking countries, especially in Latin America. *Mauricio Molinari Ulate, Meeting Centre Zamora, Spain / Early Stage Researcher, DISTINCT Network and PhD candidate University of Salamanca*

Meeting Centres In Asia

Explosion of Meeting Centers in Japan!

In Japan, an empirical study on the application of Meeting Centers began in 2019. The first task was to make an inventory of available activities in the country similar to Meeting Centers. There had been several similar activities in Japan before, but they did not have a pillar idea and were not specialized. As a result, there were issues of continuity and dissemination. We collected similar examples and studied the ideal meeting center in Japan based on the principles of the Amsterdam MCSP model. The result was the Japanese version of the Meeting Center, which was launched in five regions in 2020. We conducted an effectiveness evaluation, and by 2021, we had 10 meeting centers in Japan. Then, we completed the handbook.

Through this process, the Meeting Center was officially adopted by the long-term care insurance system in 2022. From now on, municipalities will take the initiative in promoting the system. In order to promote the use of the system, a website has been created and online training sessions have been held. We have also created a manual (the design is based on the Dutch design).



https://www.dcnnet.gr.jp/support/research/center/meeting_center_support/

The Japanese version of the Meeting Center is based on the Dutch Amsterdam model. However, there are differences. The frequency is once or twice a month, and the location is to use a public place like a community center. The most important philosophy is based



on the solution-focused approach of family therapy. Currently, the number of meeting centers in Japan has exceeded 100, and when the number of those in the planning stage is included, the total number will reach 350. We are very grateful to Dr. Dröes for her appropriate and careful advice, which has allowed us to spread so widely in such a short period of time. Thank you very much.

Tomoyuki Yabuki PhD, Director Dementia Care Research and Training Center Sendai, Associate Professor, Tohoku Fukushi University, Japan

Two new Meeting Centres in Singapore

2022 was an exciting year! In addition to the 2 pilots started by Dementia Singapore in 2020, we opened another two Meeting Centres, in collaboration with two other social service agencies, Salem Welfare Services, and Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities. The two new Meeting Centres are now supporting a total of 11 families. Both Meeting Centres show the true community spirit, with other seniors living in the same community joining as volunteers, to befriend and support the members.

Testimonial

I am so glad that my mum joined this programme organized by Dementia Singapore & Salem Welfare Services.

After my dad passed away, my mum refused to step out of the house except for medical appointments. It is still difficult to get her out weekly, but once she started coming for the 2-hour long activities, she has since immersed herself totally into it. I noticed that she feels very happy joining other members in exercising, playing games, doing arts and crafts, sing-along etc.

I am very grateful & thankful for the tenderness and loving care from all the staff & volunteers who made this programme really relevant and helpful to my mum. In fact, I too, have enjoyed those happy moments together with my mum.

Kudos to everyone who help with this programme!

Contribution by Serene Tan
(Daughter of Mdm Soh Geok Choo)



burden in their caregiving. Here are what they say about the Meeting Centre:

Members:

"I have someone to talk to when I am here, if not, I will be all alone at home."

"The centre is welcoming, and we share with others our experiences and aspirations."

Carers:

"At the Meeting Centre, moral support is given to caregivers to be themselves and we acknowledge each other's emotions. We "grow" together, share our experiences and let other caregivers learn the signals of the possible progression of the dementia."

"Everyone is going through their own journey, and you could find something that would suit you/your loved one. It is also a chance for the caregiver to get a bit of respite, be it chatting with someone else, or sometimes taking a time out whilst your loved one is getting some attention from the staff/someone else."

Dementia Singapore will continue to work with other agencies to implement new Meeting Centres in 2023.
Ivy Ho, Dementia Singapore

Meeting centres in Australia

3Bridges' forced to close Meeting Centre in Sydney Australia in 2022

Prior to Covid-19, the Australia MCSP won the national award in innovation and service design due to its effectiveness and the feedback we received from the members' families. However, Covid-19 had a major impact on our MCSP and all other operations that we run, particularly in the years of 2020 and 2021.

With no government funding, we had to apply a mix of fee structure that included fee for service, and small Councils' grants. This was insufficient to sustain the MCSP and the centre from which it operated. Therefore, 3Bridges committed to supporting this program from other surplus generated by other social enterprise programs.

Unfortunately, as so many other organisations in Australia, many programs had to be suspended due to several lockdowns imposed by the Australian Government. This resulted in a large financial deficit in the last two years. Therefore, we had no other option but to make the very hard decision of closing the MCSP and the individual support at home that we developed during the lockdown.

We lobbied the government. The families of the MCSP members wrote letters that we sent to the local Members of Parliament about the impact of the clo-



Meeting Centre@Thomson Hills Drive (by Salem Welfare Services)



Meeting Centre@THK645

"The programme allows carers to have some respite, exchange ideas, and to observe how other carers and staff engage their loved ones." Carer from Meeting Centre@THK645.

The two first pilot Meeting Centres

With the further easing of COVID-19 safety measures, the two pilots are supporting more families. While we discharged some members as their conditions progressed, we continue to receive referrals of new members into the two pilots.

New activities such as monthly sharing session for carers, visits to museums and art gallery, are all well appreciated by the members and carers.

In our first year of programme evaluation, improvements are shown in members' feeling of positive quality of life and life satisfaction, and carers feeling less

sure on the lives of the members and their families. However, all efforts to attract financial support were unsuccessful.

Prior to ending our support, we ensured the members are transitioned to other dementia specific programs run internally and externally.

Despite the above, we managed to attract government funding to provide centre-based day respite for people living with moderate to advance dementia. We run this program at a centre called Mary Potter House. A beautiful facility that was designed for purpose at which some of the previous MCSP trained staff are working. Their MCSP training has been greatly beneficial in applying a person-centred approach in care delivery, similar to the MCSP.



I am also personally involved in applying for a Government's grant to support people with dementia and their carers. This opportunity has three streams, one of them is an innovative way to support people with dementia and their carers. I will be using the MCSP as a model of care in my application and I am hoping that I will be successful in attracting much needed funding to enable me to reinstate the MCSP.

Amal Madani, Meeting Centre Three Bridges, Sydney, Australia

Meeting Centres in South America

Aruba Cas Marie

Team CasMarie was happy to be able to get back to work with our clients in 2022. Since the clients had spent a lot of time indoors over the past 2 years, we started the year with various trips. Like sitting together under the trees on the beach. Our clients really enjoy this. We also assisted people with dementia in doing their grocery shopping. During the year we tried to reflect as much as possible on official holidays together with our clients and to organize as many cultural activities as possible.

Involving the family and paying attention to art are also an important aspect of our activities.



At the beach

We celebrated our native language, by giving our clients the opportunity to express themselves through poetry and sayings. Carnival was also celebrated extensively, and we proudly reflected on the celebration of our national anthem and flag on March 18. Everyone with a nice Aruba t-shirt. The celebration of King's Day was also not skipped.



A kids camp was organized during the summer holidays, where young children could spend time with the elderly.

The founder of CasMarie, Mr. Boy Escalona (left on photo below), was surprised by the fact that he was



officially recognized by the Minister of Elderly Affairs as one of the people who meant a lot to the elderly in Aruba.

CasMarie also received the good news that the subsidy has been extended and that from October 2022 we will be able to open our doors 5 days a week instead of 4. We look forward to 2023 with renewed energy, ready to welcome our clients with a loving heart!
Yvonne Escalona, Chair CasMarie Foundation, Aruba

Wiesje Suriname Residential Care Foundation

As director, sometimes it's weighing and prioritising. This year we are coming out of COVID-19, happy that the infections are much less now. Therefore, we have started to further expand meaningful day care by linking activities to functional domains (such as language, acting, memory, senses, motor skills). Two to three activities per day are done daily and staff work with a weekly schedule. Björn Hekke, intern from the



Hogeschool van Amsterdam in The Netherlands, is doing a 5.5-month internship at Stichting Wiesje. His task as Coordinator is, among other things, to further develop and implement the above.

Also the project *Maak Contact Met Mij* [Make contact with me] continues steadily: every Monday, for instance, we have a *Joya* teacher in the house. This year we also started informal care support and support groups. However, this still needs further development. The basis is essentially giving information about dementia or Neuro Cognitive Disorders and coping with (Major) Neuro Cognitive Disorders and mutual emotional and social support between informal carers. In 2023, the aim is again to put the informal carers at the centre alongside the clients and, apart from the informal care groups, to start an Alzheimer's meeting point. This is a form of Alzheimer's café.

Staff training is progressing, in 2023 other care institutions will also have the opportunity to participate.

All in all, Stichting Wiesje is well on its way to making a name for itself in the field of quality dementia care in Suriname. We are still the only facility that focuses on psychogeriatrics and works according to the Experience-based approach. We can be found online at www.Woonzorgwiesje.com

Mavis Leter, director Wiesje Foundation, Paramaribo

Experience of an intern at Day centre Wiesje in Surinam

My name is Björn Hekke (37). I have been working in elderly care in the Netherlands for 20 years, now as day centre coordinator. As part of my Bachelor of Social Work training at the University of Applied Sciences of Amsterdam, I chose an internship in Suriname as a future professional. As coordinator, I work for 5.5 months at the day centre of Stichting Wiesje in Paramaribo. The foundation participates in the MEETINGDEM Network and has a residential home, knowledge centre for carer support and day centre for elderly people with dementia based on an experience-based care model.

Since 10 years, dementia has been increasingly recognised and diagnosed as Major Neurocognitive Disorder in Suriname. Through development and professionalisation, taboos are slowly disappearing and dementia is becoming discussable.

My assignment is to train day centre staff in experiential care according to the theoretical framework with cognitive domains within dementia linked to activities. The domains are language (T), praxis (P), memory (G), sensory activation (Z), motor (M), numeracy (N) and social memory (S). Examples of activities are: Proverbs and sayings (T), independent sandwich making (P) baking activity (Z), ROT question game (G), movement activities (M), number game (N), group discussion on Independence Day in Suriname (S). I deploy my knowledge and experience in these activities.

I implement, professionalise and direct the structural programme of activities, informal care contact and multidisciplinary collaboration. I take the intercultural care and service from a collective society in which family, food, music, faith and rituals are essential back to the Netherlands. Domestic excursions have taught me a lot about history, diversity and cohesion between population groups. On a daily basis, I experience the downside of a developing country with complex social problems and challenges. I work from basic needs. I experience all events as learning experiences and life lessons that I can integrate back in the Netherlands into daily practice.



Meeting Centres in Africa

Meeting Center AaroHelm in Zimbabwe

AaroHelm Meeting Centre (AMC) is a Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO) registered by the Private Voluntary Organizations Act (Chapter 17:05) of Zimbabwe, founded against the backdrop of the overt minimal to nil current services designed to meet the needs of those living with dementia in the country.

Inspired by the desire to immortalise the founder/director's mother, Helminah Ndhlovu (16.05.1931-07.09.2017; Primary School teacher), and heavily underpinned by the principles of the Meeting Centres Support Programme, the centre is primed to provide a person-centred service to the less affluent communities of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Helminah enjoyed first-class person-centred dementia care in the last 10 years of her life whilst living at home. Her two daughters, both dementia specialists working in the United Kingdom, remotely supervised and guided Helminah's live-in carer to ensure that a person-centred approach was maintained and



upheld up to the day she died. Following her death, the family home was repurposed to provide an exemplar of person-centred dementia day care.



Zimbabwe is a low-income country with a population of approximately 15.1 million composed of multi-ethnic communities with diverse religious and traditional practices. Its cultural and faith-based practices have been known to guide the people of Zimbabwe on how to deal with and solve common challenges. In the case of dementia and associated challenges witchcraft and demonic spirits are strongly indicated. Quite often people feel overwhelmed and confused about where to go for help. This means that:

1. family carers and their loved ones gravitate between culture and faith-based care services for explanation, treatment, and healing
2. there is considerably very little knowledge of dementia, its effects, and the professional ways of how to care and manage prevalent cases.
3. those living with dementia are not accessing adequate and relevant information/services therefore prone to poor quality of life and at risk of dying

The 2020 WHO statistics indicate that Zimbabwe recorded 768 Alzheimer's and Dementia related deaths which is 0.71% of the total deaths in Zimbabwe. Unfortunately help and support for families and people affected by dementia is fragmented in Zimbabwe.

The AaroHelm Meeting Centre is well positioned to challenge current thinking through research and providing appropriate training and education to carers, services users, policy makers and healthcare professionals.

Clementinah Rooke, Senior Lecturer in Mental Health Nursing, Department of Nursing and Midwifery, School of Human and Health Sciences, University of Huddersfield, UK

Meeting Centres in development

Ecuador Meeting Centers

In our last newsletter of December 2021 Cinthia Vallejos reported that in April 2020, the Meeting Centers (MC) project in Ecuador was socialized with professionals with training in the area of dementia, and that the "VENCIENDO FRONTERAS" foundation was established.



The "VENCIENDO FRONTERAS" foundation reached cooperation agreements with public and private institutions in 3 cities in Ecuador (Ibarra, Quito and Cotacachi). In the city of Ibarra a physical space was provided by the Pontifical Catholic University, in the city of Quito agreements were underway with the San Francisco University of Quito, and in the city of Cotacachi the mayor of Cotacachi wanted to collaborate with an appropriate physical space, and provide the necessary personnel to develop the MC in the summer of 2022.



Space for Meeting Center in Ibarra

The foundation also formed an initiative group with representatives of different public and private institutions with which an analysis of facilitators and barriers for the adaptive implementation of the Meeting Center in Ecuador was carried out with the guidance of Mauricio Molinari Ulate, psychologist and PhD student at the University of Salamanca in Spain.

At the level of public institutions, the project was socialized with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) and the methodology of the MC was accepted by the MIES. A meeting between the Minister of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) – Econ. Esteban Bernal, and prof Dröes of the VU University medical center (VUmc) in Amsterdam, and prof Manuel Franco from the University of Salamanca in Spain, was being prepared. Unfortunately at that stage, on 26 April 2022, totally unexpected, the initiator of the Meeting Centres project in Ecuador and president of the Fundacio Venciendo Fronteras, Cinthia Vallejos, suddenly passed away. We were shocked and very sad that this happened. We would like to once again express our condolences to her family, friends and colleagues for this great loss. We wish the members of the foundation all the strength, energy and motivation to continue the work of Cinthia Vallejos who was determined to improve the care and support for people with dementia in Ecuador.

Chile

The Fundación Kok-Berkhoff in Chili reported in December 2020 that due to the COVID-19 situation in

Chile all activities for the preparations of Meeting Centres and educational activities had to stop unfortunately. We did not receive any updates since then.

In Memoriam of Cinthia Vallejos

We regret to inform you of the passing of Cinthia Vallejos, President of Fundación Venciendo Fronteras. Cinthia was a young, bright, and very enthusiastic person, a responsible and committed professional, and a kind friend. Cinthia was leading the implementation of MeetingDem Ecuador and was very adamant about making the project known, especially in the public social system, and getting the government's support for its implementation. She made great advances to begin the project, so we, the former Fundación Venciendo Fronteras members, shall make our best efforts to carry on with her dream of making it possible.

*Paloma Sotomayor and Valeria Macías,
Fundación Venciendo Fronteras, Ecuador.*

Ohio (USA)

Though there were plans to start a Meeting Center in Ohio in August 2020, these plans had to be cancelled because of lack of funding and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Elizabeth Lokon (University of Miami), who led the initiative, intends to find new opportunities for a Meeting Center in Ohio.

We congratulate

Iris Hendriks

At 17 June 2022 Iris Hendriks, junior researcher at VUmc in Amsterdam during the MeetingDem project



2014-2017, received her PhD at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam after an excellent defence of her thesis titled: *The art of personalizing psychosocial interventions for people with dementia; development, evaluation*

tion and implementation. Her supervisors were Prof Rose-Marie Dröes (VUmc), Prof. Debby Gerritsen (Radboudumc) and Dr. Franka Meiland (VUmc). We congratulate Iris on her title of Doctor in Philosophy and wish her all the best in her career.

MeetingDem products and publications

The MeetingDem project ended in 2017. Since then the consortium members published various publications on the implementation, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness of the Meeting Centres Support Programme offered in different countries in Europe (see also www.meetingdem.eu).

In 2020-2022 the following articles and books were published:

Evans, S., Bray, J. and Brooker, D. (2021). How Meeting Centres continue to support people affected by dementia: Report on UK Covid-19 impact. *Working with Older People*, 25(4):283-293. doi: [10.1108/WWOP-12-2020-0060](https://doi.org/10.1108/WWOP-12-2020-0060)

Gerritsen, D., Van der Roest, H., Evans, S., Leontjevas, R., Prins, M., Brooker, D., & Dröes, R. (2022). The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Well-Being of People Living with Dementia. In M. Vandenbulcke, R. Dröes, & E. Schokkaert (Eds.), *Dementia and Society* (pp. 193-210). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781108918954.011

Henderson, C., Rehill, A., Brooker, S., Evans, S.C., Evans, S.B., Bray, J., Saibene, F.L., Scorolli, C., Szcześniak, D., d'Arma, A., Urbanska, K., Atkinson, T., Farina, E., Rymaszewska, J., Chattat, R., Meiland, F.J.M., Dröes, R.M., Knapp, M. (2021). Costs and Cost-Effectiveness of the Meeting Centres Support Programme for People Living with Dementia in Italy, Poland and the UK: The MEETINGDEM Study. *Health and Social care in the Community* 29(6):1756-1768. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13281>

Hendriks I, Demetrio R, Meiland FJM, et al. Value of Personalized Dementia-Specific Quality of Life Scales: An Explorative Study in 3 European Countries. *American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease & Other Dementias*. ePub January 2021. doi:10.1177/15333175211033721

Hendriks I, Demetrio R, Meiland FJM, et al. (2021). Value of Personalized Dementia-Specific Quality of Life Scales: An Explorative Study in 3 European Countries. *American Journal of Alzheimer's*

Disease & Other Dementias, 36:1-9 ePub January 2021. doi:10.1177/15333175211033721

Iris Hendriks The art of personalising psychosocial interventions in dementia care; development, evaluation and implementation Academisch proefschrift, Amsterdam UMC,

Lion, K.M., Szcześniak, D., Evans, S.B., Evans, S.C., Scorolli, C., Saibene, F.L., d'Arma, A., Farina, E., Brooker, D., Chattat, R., Meiland, F.J.M., Dröes, R.M., Rymaszewska, J. (2021). Does the Meeting Centre Support Programme decrease the experience of stigmatization among people with cognitive deficits? *Aging & Mental health*, 25(1):160-169 doi: [10.1080/13607863.2019.1683815](https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2019.1683815).

Szcześniak, D., Rymaszewska, J., Saibene, F.L., Urbańska, K., d'Arma, A., Brooker, D., Evans, S.B., Evans, S.C., Chattat, R., Scorolli, C., Meiland, F., Hendriks, I., Dröes, R.M., Farina, E. (2021). Meeting Centres Support Programme highly appreciated by people with dementia and caregivers: a European cross-country evaluation *Aging Ment Health*. 25(1):149-159. doi: [10.1080/13607863.2019.1683814](https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2019.1683814)

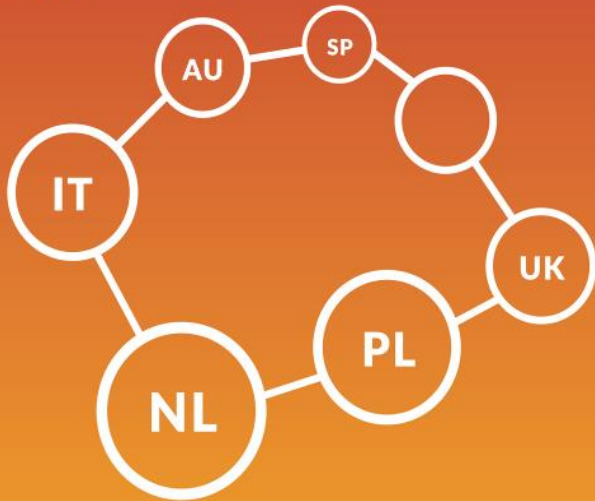
Van Haeften-van Dijk, A.M., Meiland, Hattink, B.J.J., Bakker, T.J.E.M., Dröes, R.M. (2020) A comparison of a community-based dementia support program and nursing home-based day care: effects on carer needs, emotional burden and quality of life. *Dementia, the International Journal of Social Research and Practice* 2020;19(8):2836-2856.. doi: [10.1177/1471301219861767](https://doi.org/10.1177/1471301219861767).

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FURTHER DISSEMINATION OF THE CONCEPT OF MEETING CENTERS

Stimulation of dissemination of the proven effective combined Meeting Centres Support Programme across Europe and beyond.



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

On effective post-diagnostic care and support for community-dwelling people with dementia and their carers.



EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES AND VIEWS

In different cultural, geographical, economic and organisational contexts.



INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IN APPLIED RESEARCH

Into post-diagnostic care in dementia on a European level.

**TO A BETTER MENTAL AND SOCIAL HEALTH FOR
PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA AND THEIR CARERS**