

December 2023

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,

We are truly impressed and grateful for the huge increase in the number of Meeting Centres for people with dementia and their carers in different parts of the world by 2023. A milestone was reached in the Netherlands, with 203 Meeting Centres, many new centres were set up in the UK, where more than 70 centres are now operational or about to open, and in Singapore, three more centres were set up this year, bringing the tally there to seven Meeting Centres! Very impressive is the rapidly growing number of meeting groups in Japan, where about 300 Japanese-model Meeting groups are now active.

This newsletter provides an update on the developments of Meeting Centres and their activities in Europe, Asia, Australia, North and South America and Africa. Some highlights: the Dutch version of the Meeting Centres pioneer online course is currently being developed and will soon be freely available on the MeetingDem website. In the UK, the Alive Meeting Centre Team (Bristol region) received the 2022/23 Hennell Award for Innovation and Excellence in Dementia Care. Meeting Centres have been included in the new Scottish Dementia Strategy, leading to a further increase to 18 Meeting Centres in Scotland this year. In Italy, several new Meeting Centres were started in Milan (now six MC operational!) and in the province of Modena. In Rimini one of the Meeting Centres is dedicated to people with young onset dementia (YOD). In Poland (MC Wroclaw), many joint activities in and outside the Meeting Centre were undertaken, such as during the European Day of Music Therapy. In South America, the Meeting Centres in Aruba and Surinam are still very active. In Aruba a television series on dementia was produced sharing experiences and the vision of MC CasMarie. Finally, good news from Zimbabwe where the Meeting Centre continues to develop with a steady participant group. We thank all those who supported the implementation of the Meeting Centres for people living with dementia and their carers in 2023 and wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2024!

Prof. Rose-Marie Dröes, Chair MeetingDem Network



Meeting Centres in Europe

Milestone reached in the Netherlands!

In 2023, eleven new Meeting Centres opened their doors in the Netherlands. This means that, 30 years after opening of the first two Meeting Centres in Amsterdam, the milestone of more than 200 Meeting Centres has finally been reached! In total, there are now 203 Meeting Centres in the Netherlands, the majority of which are located in the western part of the country. To encourage further dissemination of the centres to other regions, we



developed a Dutch version of the online pioneer course for setting up a Meeting Centre. Like the Spanish and English versions of the course, the Dutch version will also be made freely available on the MeetingDem website

www.meetingdem.eu/publications/publicatons-mcsp/

This year some new initiatives were launched by

Meeting Centers in the Netherlands, like a Meeting Center specifically for Indian people in Haarlem, a mobile cuddle farm, bringing animals to the Meeting Center, a 'freebooter' club for Meeting Center participants who enjoy being outdoors and are still very mobile, and a high-tea for informal carers during the national day



for informal carers.

In addition, experiences were exchanged with colleagues from abroad who visited the Netherlands, such as from *Canada* (Dr. Arlene Astell, Director of the Dementia Aging Technology Engagement lab in Toronto who visited two Meeting Centers with a group of students from Toronto), from *the UK* (Dr Shirley Evans, Association for Dementia Studies at University of Worcester and Graham Galloway from Kirrie connections in Scotland who visited a Meeting Center in Amsterdam), from *Sweden* (Anna Lena Andersson who visited a Meeting Center with a group of social work managers in August) and from *Japan* (Prof Tomoyuki Yabuki, initiator of Meeting Centres in Japan who vis-

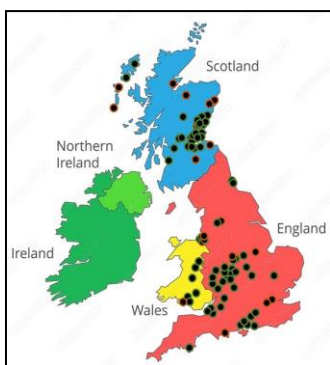


ited two Meeting Centres in the Netherlands in September).

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

Further growth of Meeting Centres UK in 2023!

The spread of Meeting Centres has continued at a pace in the UK during 2023 with over 70 now operating or about to open, and ongoing interest and momentum from a number of different organisations both large and small. A few Meeting Centre-related highlights from the past year are covered below.

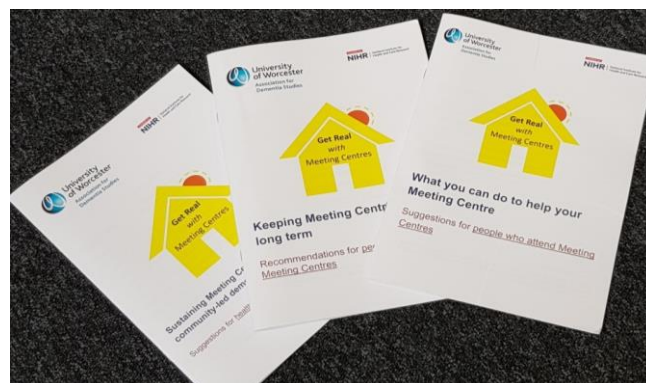


Meeting Centres have been included in the new Scottish Dementia Strategy, [\[https://www.gov.scot/publications/new-dementia-strategy-scotland-everyones-story/documents/\]](https://www.gov.scot/publications/new-dementia-strategy-scotland-everyones-story/documents/) and more information is available in the update from Scotland.

To celebrate the culmination of the 'Get Real with Meeting Centres' research project, a launch event was held in July. Several project members shared the key findings from the research and there was a premiere

of resources relating to various factors that can affect the long-term sustainability of Meeting Centres. The resources comprise a series of booklets for different audiences and short videos to disseminate the findings in an accessible and easily digestible way.

[\[https://adsdementiablog.wordpress.com/2023/07/20/get-real-with-meeting-centres-launch-event/\]](https://adsdementiablog.wordpress.com/2023/07/20/get-real-with-meeting-centres-launch-event/)



There was a strong Meeting Centre presence at the UK Dementia Congress in November. First there was a symposium on National Strategies, Perspectives and Developments. Then the Alive Meeting Centre Team who operates Meeting Centres in and around the Bristol area received the 2022/23 Hennell Award for Innovation and Excellence in Dementia Care. This



award celebrates the achievements of an individual or team who have shown their ability to implement positive change for people living with dementia, and the Alive team was eligible after attending the Meeting Centres training delivered by the Association for Dementia Studies.

[\[https://adsdementiablog.wordpress.com/2023/11/30/a-bumper-year-for-the-hennell-award/\]](https://adsdementiablog.wordpress.com/2023/11/30/a-bumper-year-for-the-hennell-award/)

Finally, the Meeting Centres UK family blanket (see photo next page) was displayed for everyone to see. Meeting Centres across the UK were invited to create and send in squares to form a patchwork quilt style blanket, and they did not disappoint!

[\[https://adsdementiablog.wordpress.com/2023/11/02/the-meeting-centres-blanket-is-growing/\]](https://adsdementiablog.wordpress.com/2023/11/02/the-meeting-centres-blanket-is-growing/).



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

Integrated Meeting Centre pilot in Huddersfield

A collaborative venture between the University of Huddersfield (UoH) & Kirklees Council to establish Integrated Meeting Centres (IMC) for citizens with mild to moderate dementia in Kirklees was successfully launched on the 2nd of October 2023 as a pilot to run for 12 weeks. The pilot served as a placement hub for 18 mental health students who received training in innovative person-centred approaches and engaged in public health promotion focused on brain health. Using Meeting Centres (MC) as a placement hub is an innovation given that MCs are generally managed by activity coordinators and volunteers. The merits/worthiness of extending the concept of MCs in its current form to that of IMCs serving as a hub for: student placements, implementation of state of the art care techniques, public health promotion and research are currently being measured. Early indications suggest that the proposed model is viable and that IMCs can be appropriate for other undergraduate healthcare students and in addition to fulfilling the requirements of a Meeting Centre they are capable of delivering the provision of:

- person-centred dementia care supported by an appropriately trained workforce. Carers, volunteers, and students would receive training in Focused Interventions Training and Support (FITS) dementia programme to become Dementia Care Coaches and in applied drama techniques to acquire and/or enhance their caring, management, and communication skills.

- a local hub for the dissemination of public health messages on brain health and other relevant subjects
- a practice placement hub for UoH undergraduate healthcare students where they can gain work-force ready skills through real time interfacing with service users living with dementia.

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

Scotland

2023 has been a year of many exciting developments regarding Meeting Centres in Scotland. There are now 18 centres open nationwide, across a diverse geographical reach—from our most remote islands to the largest cities. This expansion from the first Meeting Centre, which opened in 2019, signifies a substantial increase in accessibility and support for individuals living with dementia in Scotland. This positive momentum is set to continue, with additional centres having secured funding and scheduled for opening in 2024.

Meeting Centres have also received recognition in the recently unveiled new [Scottish National Dementia Strategy](#). The inclusion of Meeting Centres in this strategic framework underscores how important Meeting Centres have become in the Scottish dementia landscape. Encompassing a 10-year horizon with 2-year implementation windows, the strategy sets the stage for a comprehensive approach to dementia care in Scotland. The imminent publication of the first 2-year implementation plan in early 2024 is eagerly anticipated, with an understanding that community support, exemplified by Meeting Centres, will play a pivotal role in driving the strategy's success.



In a significant milestone, Meeting Centres Scotland has attained the status of an official national charity. This pivotal organisation is positioned to offer essential support for the ongoing growth and development

of Meeting Centres throughout Scotland. The establishment of Meeting Centres Scotland reflects a strategic and collaborative effort, ensuring the sustained success of Meeting Centres across the country. As we navigate these transformative steps, the future holds the promise of continued growth, additional centres, and an enduring positive influence on the lives of those touched by Meeting Centres.

Graham Galloway, Chief Officer – Kirrie Connections

Meeting centres in Italy in 2022

By 2023, most Meeting Centres across Italy have been restarted. Activities have been launched and new Meeting Centres have been developed. The most recent is the MC "Melograno" , municipality of San Prospero, in the province of Modena together with "Officine della memoria" in the municipality of Formigine. Another MC is planned for 2024 in the city of Modena. In the Rimini region, all Meeting Centres have been restarted and a model has been developed for rural areas, as in the Vignola region.



There is also a Meeting Centre dedicated to people with young onset dementia (YOD) in Rimini and this was co-designed with people with YOD, informal carers and health and welfare institutions. Meeting Centres dedicated to people with YOD give them the opportunity to share their experiences with like-minded people and involve them in planning and developing activities. Other Meeting Centres in the region and in other regions are under development.



The Meeting Centre in San Prospero is part of a dementia-friendly approach and offers the opportunity to involve schools and other social contexts, such as farms or stables, to promote social inclusion and awareness of dementia and also involvement in natural activities.



In Formigine, several organisations are involved that offer specific activities such as music, dance or physical activity and volunteers.

In Rimini, a specific dance-movement activity (Metodo Hobart) is also offered in several Meeting Centres.

The participation of people with dementia

is growing and suggests that more MC are needed. Moreover, MC offer the opportunity for people with memory problems to connect with care and welfare services in a less stigmatising way, as people have free access to the MC and can then be referred to the needed services.

Prof. Rabih Chattat, University of Bologna, Italy

In Milan, Atelier della Mente association continues its commitment to supporting families caring for individuals with dementia and promoting the MCSP model. In October, we proudly inaugurated a new Meeting Centre, adding to the one established in 2022.

Located within Municipio 2, a district previously lack-



ing such facilities, this new Meeting Centre is an integral part of the Adriano SiCura project—a neighborhood service network dedicated to the well-being of the elderly. This expansion brings the total number of Meeting Centres in Milan to six.

Leonora Chiavari Atelier della Mente, Milan

Meeting Center in the Day Care Center "Na Cieplej" in Wroclaw, Poland

Nestled in the heart of Wroclaw, the Meeting Center has become a second home for people living with dementia, offering a refuge where community, compassion, and shared experiences intertwine. This year once again we considered the unique needs of individuals living with dementia, painted a portrait of resilience, connection, and celebration of life.

Throughout the warm summer months, the center's courtyard echoed the laughter of individuals taking leisurely walks, and creating bonds that surpassed the boundaries of memory. In these shared moments, the power of community and the joy of companionship was evident, bringing solace to those living with dementia and their caregivers.

September's "Senior Days" were a poignant tribute to the wisdom and experiences of our seniors. Amid shared stories and laughter, a sense of belonging permeated the atmosphere, creating an environment where individuals felt seen and cherished.



The "Archipelago of Kindness" initiative, documented on social media, illustrated the center's commitment to nurturing a culture of kindness. In a space where understanding and empathy thrive, these small acts of kindness created ripples of joy and formed an intricate web of support and compassion.

Music emerged as a powerful therapeutic tool at the center, with students from the Music Academy engaging in sessions tailored to the unique needs of those living with dementia. European Music Therapy Day on November 15th was marked by an engaging workshop and a soul-stirring concert by the Big Band, providing a sensory-rich experience for participants.



The winter season unfolded with the enchanting St. Nicholas' concert, featuring the soothing sounds of bandura. Amid the festive ambiance, the community embraced the moment and created a space where

memories were not lost but found in the shared melodies and heartfelt connections.



These events, shared on social media, offer a window into the rich tapestry of life at the Wrocław Meeting Center, a space where those living with dementia find understanding, connection, and joy. Beyond the activities, it is the collective spirit of resilience, the shared laughter, and the sense of togetherness.

Katarzyna Turek and Katarzyna Bulińska (MCSP coordinators)

Dorota Szcześniak, Wrocław Medical University

Joanna Rymaszewska, Wrocław University of Science and Technology

New Meeting Centre Peromato in Zamora, Spain

The Meeting Centre in Peromato (one of the Intras Foundation's Day Care Centres in Zamora) has 8 participants who come three times per week and spend most of their mornings there.

During the morning, participants have time to talk, and have coffee if they wish, in order to improve relations between the participants, talk about current news, stories about their lives, or even have debates on certain topics.

We use some time to work on cognitive skills with the Gradior app on individual tablets, this is the time in the morning when participants can focus on their personal progress and get feedback on it.

And, of course, we introduce activities for them to work in groups and interact with each other while working on skills such as language or attention, with activities like board games, exercises with typical words from our region, exercises that involve music, reminiscence activities.





The atmosphere we have created ensures that we have a really comfortable and enjoyable experience every time we come together. Although there are differences between all participants, everyone is involved in every activity and support each other. We think this is because the importance we have always attached to the time we spend interacting with each other, so we must continue to encourage the inclusion of these moments in our programs. We would also like to emphasise the value we have to give to participants' autonomy, letting them do things themselves rather than taking over as facilitators. This is something we are really aware of and we have noticed very positive changes.

Claudia Serrano, coordinator Meeting Center Peromato, Zamora

The Spanish Online Course for Pioneers of Meeting Centres is free available at the e-Learning platform of the University of Salamanca:

<https://e4you.org/es/moocs/implementacion-de-centros-de-encuentro-para-personas-con-demencia-y-sus-cuidadores>.

We hope this will stimulate further dissemination and facilitate implementation of the Meeting Centres programme in Spanish-speaking countries. Since the launch of the course in 2022 a total of 203 people have registered to take the course, 70 of whom have also taken the exam to receive the course certificate.

Meeting Centres In Asia

Japanese Meeting Centre on the move!

This section provides information on Meeting Centres in Japan today. Meeting Centres were officially adopted by the long-term care insurance system in Japan in 2022. However, implementation is left to the decision of the municipalities. For this reason, they have only just started. At present, about 300 municipalities have started.

The programme is based on the Amsterdam Meeting Centres Support model in the Netherlands and adapted to the Japanese culture: The participants meet with a frequency of once a month (some of them have started to meet every week). The centres are run by a dementia coordinator. Importantly, the programme is proactively determined by the persons with dementia and family members participate together as much as possible. Participation is free or at approximately actual cost. In Japan, there is not enough post-diagnostic support. Therefore, the meeting centre is expected to be a place for high-quality post-diagnostic support and a meeting place.

The photo below shows the people with dementia and carers of the Meeting Centre at Kochi University, which I started in October 2023. In this meeting also student volunteers were present. Group members discussed what they would like to do in future meetings and then their wishes were implemented.



In order to promote the use of the long term care insurance system and Meeting Centres, a website was created and online training sessions were held. Also a Meeting Centres manual (of which the design is based on the Dutch design) was published.



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

Tomoyuki Yabuki PhD, Associate Professor, Kochi University, Japan

Seven Meeting Centres in Singapore

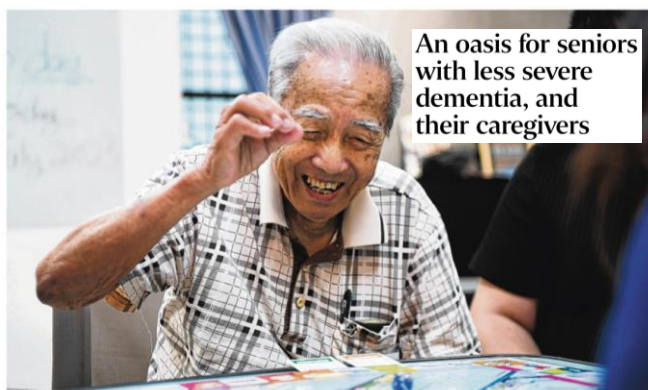
Meeting Centres continue to expand in Singapore, with three new ones being set up in different parts of Singapore in 2023 in collaboration with various community partners. Currently, there are seven Meeting Centres in Singapore.

Meeting Centres in Singapore have proven to be a low-cost model in the local community, leaning on existing infrastructure and dedicated volunteers for support. Drop-out rate remains low and in the second year of programme evaluation, and we continue to see how Meeting Centres improve the quality of life of members with dementia and reduce their caregivers' stress.

Meeting Centres is also gaining popularity in Singapore. As more families testify of Meeting Centres' effectiveness and how they have been supported in their journey, others become more willing to step forward and share their experiences as well. This is true for Mr



Teng and his daughter Jacqueline as they shared their stories in the local newspaper (Full story: [Meeting Centres an oasis for seniors with mild to moderate dementia, and their caregivers | The Straits Times](#)) and the Dementia Hub (an online resource portal): "Jacqueline is the primary caregiver to her father, Mr Teng, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2021. A retiree in the mild stage of his dementia, Mr



Mr Teng Hock Bee goes to the Meeting Centre at Oneness Village in Kebun Baru a few times a week. There, he socializes with others and engages in activities to stimulate him cognitively. The Meeting Centres programme also runs support group sessions for caregivers. ST PHOTO: AZNE ATHIR

Teng lives rather independently and spends his time reading the papers, going on long walks, and attending weekly activity programmes organised by the Meeting Centre near his home. However, like many others with mild dementia, he has trouble initiating activities, handling his finances, and remembering people's names and faces.

When planning their Chinese New Year celebration, Jacqueline takes into consideration Mr Teng's daily routine, strengths as well as weaknesses to eliminate any stress or anxiety leading up to and during the festivities." (Full story: [Making Festive Celebrations Dementia-Friendly - DementiaHub.SG](#))

In Singapore, one in 10 seniors aged 60 and above has dementia. And with Singapore's rapidly ageing population pushing this figure up, increasing awareness and education about dementia among youths to support this population is even more urgent. One of the Meeting Centres organised a workshop targeted at youths who learned about dementia through games, videos, and discussions. One of the participants shared that gamifying education and using interactive methods to learn about dementia helped him understand his grandparents' diagnosis and found greater empathy towards them. This workshop can be easily replicated in other Meeting Centres if the demand increases.

Most Meeting Centres in Singapore are running at their maximum capacity, and Dementia Singapore is continuing to work with community partners to launch new Meeting Centres in 2024.

Ivy Ho, Dementia Singapore

Meeting Centres in Australia

Meeting Centre in Sydney Australia

In our last newsletter of December 2022, we announced that the Meeting Centre offered by 3Bridges in Sydney unfortunately had to be closed, like so many other programmes that had to be suspended due to various lockdowns imposed by the Australian government. As soon as we have information about new Meeting Centres initiatives in Australia, we will share it in this newsletter.

Meeting Centres in South America

Aruba Cas Marie

CasMarie is a meeting center where both individuals with dementia and their caregivers come together, aiming to stay active and engaged in society for as long as possible. The CasMarie team has worked hard over the past year to offer a variety of enjoyable and meaningful activities. Special attention has been given to the cultural celebrations of Aruba, with music and dance groups attending festivities alongside clients. Additionally, a television series on dementia was produced with the collaboration of CasMarie's founder, Mr. Boy Escalona, staff, the memory clinic, and a family member, sharing experiences and the vision of CasMarie.

On special occasions such as Mother's Day and Father's Day, clients were treated to music, haircuts, and shaves.



Visits from the National Library, participation in a gospel concert with clients and caregivers, and involving children and young people in activities showcased the diversity of the program. This year's summer camp was a great success, with children and clients going on tour together.



October was dedicated to Alzheimer's, marked by an Alzheimer Awareness Walk organized by CasMarie, where even our clients and caregivers participated. Efforts are also underway, in collaboration with a local family and the Minister of Elderly Affairs, to establish a branch with the aim of assisting even more people with dementia and their caregivers from the first quarter of 2024. Furthermore, CasMarie is actively working to relieve and support caregivers, activate clients through engaging activities, and inform the community about dementia.

Jeanine Nicolaas-Leijdens, Coördinator Welfare, CasMarie Foundation, Aruba

Wiesje Suriname Residential Care Foundation

The day center has been open from January 2020, but due to COVID-19 we were only able to start our activities with a few clients in September 2021.

The small group has now been expanded. There are more clients, about 25 a day on average, and also more employees. The activities are based on 9 functional domains, such as memory, praxis, social cognition, numeracy, language, motor skills, and so on. This has to do with the Make Contact With Me project, which allowed us to divide and deepen the activities. It took some perseverance, because the work had to be very planned and creative. In February 2024, an HBO-intern from the Netherlands will come to test exactly how far we have come and what still needs more deepening. Within our target group of people with dementia, we now also have some people who cannot speak due to language impairment or a stroke, but who do want to participate in activities. One of the questions now is how to tailor our activities, such as Reminiscing and language exercises and games, to this target group. There are also people who, in addition to their Major Neuro Cognitive Disorder, have a psychiatric condition such as psychosis, delirious or neurotic behavior. How do we determine their needs and how can we make their days just as meaningful. The Make Contact With Me project funded by Foundation the RC Maagdenhuis has now ended, but we will continue.

Our Knowledge Center still offers training courses in Dementia and dealing with Dementia for employees and informal caregivers. The informal care support groups with the neuropsychologist are still running as usual. We have managed to raise our profile this year by opening up even more to visitors from outside.

There have been larger activities from the Alzheimer Meeting Point project that will take us into the new year. Some examples are:

The Puppet Theater performance of Wensly Pque in the house. Performance by Liesbeth Peroti and group on our new piano, a gift from the Piano Museum in the Netherlands. And the two-



week project with the MImakkers, for broadening the empathic capacity, imagination and a new, deeper way of the Experience-oriented approach, our methodology.



We are moving up to a new, exciting and promising year in which the construction of the semi-detached house, the new building, will start.

Cheers, Merry Christmas and best wishes!

Mavis Leter, director of the Wiesje Foundation, Paramaribo Suriname.

Meeting Centres in Africa

Meeting Center Arohelm in Zimbabwe

Arohelm Meeting Centre based in Zimbabwe has a consistent membership of 5 attendees who show up three times a week except during times when public gatherings are suspended by the state such as in the cases of general elections and pandemic outbreaks.



The activities coordinator Blessed Nyathi writes:

‘The Centre is a platform where they can come and be who they really are, they can shout, they can sing, they can dance and they can be silent without judgement or question if it is who they are, for the majority of them; they can be young again’.

One of the most innovative activities to date has seen each member being assigned a tree that they will learn to nurture and grow and plant in the yard at a designated place. This appears to have given the members a great sense of responsibility... *‘It is, in its*



own way, like having a baby all over again for them’ (Blessed Nyathi).

Challenges detailed below have threatened progress.

1. Training needs identified: ‘At times we find ourselves at a dead end, where both the facilitator and the members of the centre have no idea how to go about a question asked or concern raised’ (Blessed Nyathi).
2. Functional television for video lessons and activities that require hearing or use of sight.
3. A printer: hard copies of chosen activities are more user friendly for the elderly.
4. A solar system that would counter the excessive load shedding Zimbabwe is currently experiencing.
5. A functional refrigerator to keep drinking water. Water shortages are a consistent problem.



At the time of writing this report 2, 3, 4 and 5 have been achieved and 10 people are currently receiving virtual Focused Interventions Training and Support (FITS) to become Dementia Care Coaches delivered by Dr Clementinah Rooke.

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 newsletter of December 2021 Cinthia Vallejos (+26 april 2022) reported that in April 2020, the Meeting Centers (MC) project in Ecuador was supported by professionals with training in the area of dementia, and that the "VENCENDO FRONTERAS" foundation was established.

The "VENCENDO FRONTERAS" foundation reached cooperation agreements with public and private institutions in 3 cities in Ecuador (Ibarra, Quito and Cotacachi) and formed an initiative group with representatives of different public and private institutions. The project was also communicated with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) and the methodology of the MC was accepted by the MIES. Unfortunately, after the death of initiator Cynthia Vallejos, the Meeting Centres project was discontinued and the foundation disbanded in 2023.



Chile

The Fundación Kok-Berkhoff in Chile 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.

Ohio (USA)

In our last newsletter of December 2022 we reported that there were plans to start a Meeting Center in Ohio in August 2020, but that 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, informed us this year that after the pandemic they discontinued their efforts in developing a Meeting Center at Miami University. They are now focused on launching a dementia-friendly virtual platform for people to connect intergenerationally through the arts. For more information look here: [ScrippsAVID – Connecting generations through art. \(scrippsoma.org\)](https://scrippsoma.org).



We congratulate

Dr. Mauricio Molinari

On 20 September 2023 Mauricio Molinari, early-stage researcher of the Marie Skłodowska Curie funded DISTINCT network, who co-developed the online course for pioneers of Meeting Centres in Spanish during his secondment at the VU University medical center in Amsterdam, and was coordinator of the Meeting Centre in Zamora in 2022/2023, was awarded a PhD cum laude at the University of Salamanca after an excellent defence of his thesis titled: *'Psychosocial applications of technology*



for health and Wellness Coaching of Older adults with dementia and Mild Cognitive Impairment and their Carers in Rural Areas.' His supervisors were Prof. Manuel Angel Franco and Dr. Henriëtte van der Roest. We congratulate Mauricio on his title of Doctor of Philosophy and wish him all the best in his 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 2020-2023 the following articles and books were published (in alphabetic order):

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

Evans, S., Evans, S., Brooker, D., Henderson, C., Szcześniak, D., Atkinson, T., Bray, J., Amritpal, R., Saibene, F. L., d'Arma, A., Scorolli, C., Chattat, R., Farina, E., Urbańska, K., Rymaszewska, J., Meiland, F., & Dröes, R. M. (2020). The impact of the implementation of the Dutch combined Meeting Centres Support Programme for family caregivers of people with dementia in Italy, Poland and UK. *Aging & mental health*, 24(2), 280–290. doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2018.1544207

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. (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 Academic thesis, Amsterdam UMC,

Lion, K. M., Szcześniak, D., Bulińska, K., Evans, S. B., Evans, S. C., Saibene, F. L., d'Arma, A., Farina, E., Brooker, D. J., Chattat, R., Meiland, F. J. M., Dröes, R. M., & Rymaszewska, J. (2020). Do people with dementia and mild cognitive impairments experience stigma? A cross-cultural investigation between Italy, Poland and the UK. *Aging & mental health*, 24(6), 947-955. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2019.1577799>

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.

Mahmoudi Asl, A., Kouters, S., Castro-González, Á., Van der Roest, H., Franco Martin, M., & Dröes, R. M. (2023). Potential Facilitators

of and Barriers to Implementing the MINI Robot in Community-Based Meeting Centers for People With Dementia and Their Carers in the Netherlands and Spain: Explorative Qualitative Study. *Journal of medical Internet research*, 25, e44125. <https://doi.org/10.2196/44125>

Szcześniak, D., Rymaszewska, J., Saibene, F.L., Urbańska, K., d'Arma, A., Brooker, D., Ev-ans, 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

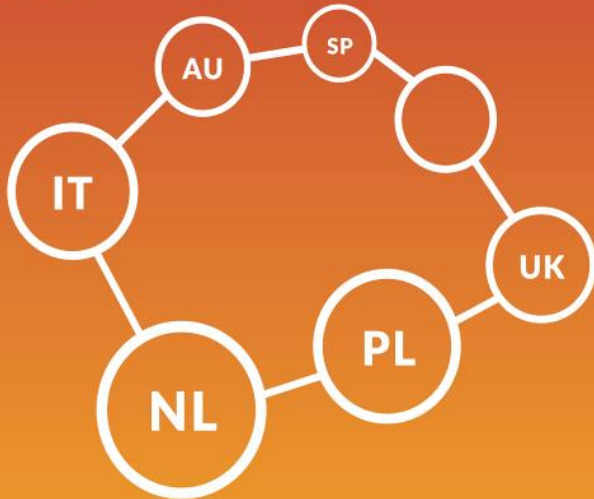
Van Haeften-van Dijk, A.M., Meiland, Hattink, B.J.J., Bakker, T.J.E.M., Dröes, R.M. (2020) A comparison of a community-based dementia support program and nursing home-based day care: effects on carer needs, emotional burden and quality of life. *Dementia, the International Journal of Social Research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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The MeetingDem project was a European Joint Programme Neurodegenerative Disease Research (JPND) project which aimed to implement and evaluate the innovative Meeting Centres Support Programme (MCSP) for community dwelling people with dementia and their carers. The project was supported through the following funding organisations under the aegis of JPND: Italy, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education; Netherlands, ZonMw; Poland, NCBR; UK, Economic and Social Research Council.



HELLO. JOIN US!



SHARING EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORT IN DEMENTIA

WWW.MEETINGDEM.EU
MEETINGDEM.EU@GMAIL.COM

THE MEETINGDEM NETWORK GOALS



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**

From 2024, the MeetingDem Network, in collaboration with the Association for Dementia Studies, University of Worcester, UK, is hosting an interactive online session to bring together representatives from Meeting Centres from around the world to exchange knowledge, experiences, thoughts and ideas for collaboration.

The first online meeting will take place on **1 February 9-10h CET**.

For more information email meetingdem.eu@gmail.com

The meeting will be held via Zoom <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83263839659>