

December 2016

MeetingDem Newsletter

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MeetingDem project almost finished

After almost three years of hard work, the MeetingDem project approaches its end date of 28 February 2017! With 12 new Meeting Centres in Italy, Poland and the UK and interest in setting up Meeting Centres from in and outside Europe, including China, Japan, Australia, Chili and Mexico, we can conclude that the project was very successful! We look forward to soon presenting the results of the evaluation of the Meeting Centre Support Program. We will keep you informed and thank you for following our progress! Please also stay updated about the MeetingDem project by visiting our website www.meetingdem.eu.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy 2017!

Droitwich Spa First Year Anniversary Celebration

Friday 25th November 2016 was the date for the first year anniversary celebration at Droitwich Spa Meeting Centre with around 80 people attending. Members of the community, including those involved in the Advisory Group some of whom had signed the Meeting Centre pledge a year ago, and most importantly those who attend the Centre were welcomed to the event by Alzheimer's Society Manager Gill Read.

It was wonderful to hear from members and family caregivers about their experiences over the year, some of who were not sure about the Centre at the start but who have since found it to be a very valuable and important source of support, friendship and enjoyment – ‘the friendship it brings to all of us is marvelous.’ Professor Dawn Brooker, Director of the Association for Dementia Studies at the University of Worcester, spoke about the MeetingDem project, how far we have come and how we might move forward with a sustainable funding model. There is a vision for a Centre in every town.

We also heard from Colin Capper, Head of Research Evaluation and Development at the Alzheimer's Society about how the society will help support Meeting Centres in the future.

Gill introduced Sam Arnold, the Meeting Centre Manager who together with his amazing team of staff has spearheaded this innovative and essential service. Many people were thanked during the event and it has been a fantastic team effort but at the end of the day it is all about the members, they are the people who make it what it is.

Proceedings were rounded off with a welcome cup of tea and coffee and cake. It's hard to believe we have been open over a year already. It has been an exciting and challenging journey but I wouldn't have missed a minute of it. May there be many Happy Returns!
By Shirley Evans



MeetingDem presented at Alzheimer Europe conference in Copenhagen

Franka Meiland (VUmc Amsterdam) presented a poster on the process evaluation of the implementation of the Meeting Centre Support Programme in Italy, Poland and UK at the Alzheimer Europe conference in Copenhagen 1-2 November. She compared the implementation of the programme in the three countries with the previous implementation in the Netherlands and found several general factors of influence, such as enthusiastic and qualified staff and good collaboration with other organisations, while other factors were experienced as relevant in some countries only, such as social integration possibilities in the Meeting Centre. These insights will help to prepare

and guide future successful implementation of MCSP in these and other countries across Europe. At this conference, also Katarzyna Urbanska (WMU, Wroclaw) presented a poster on the results of her study on stigma as experienced by people with dementia visiting the Meeting Centres.



Prof. Rabih Chattat, dr. Franka Meiland, prof. Rose-Marie Dröes and Katarzyna Urbanska at the Alzheimer Europe Conference

Exchange of PhD students: Visit to University of Worcester

In September, Iris Hendriks, PhD student at VUmc and member of the Dutch MeetingDem team, visited prof. Dawn Brooker and her team in Worcester. She was received very warmly by the UK colleagues and reports in this newsletter on her experiences:

"During my stay I spent a morning in the Droitwich Spa Meeting Centre. After some tea and biscuits all members were asked to take place in a circle and newspapers were handed out. Everybody could pick one or more news items they would like to discuss. We talked about steam railways in England and we even had discussions about the BBC presenters haircuts! After this it was time for some movement. Gordon arrived to give a Tai Chi lesson. When he played the song 'that's amore' by Dean Martin, everybody started to quietly sing along. All members were very much involved. During the exercises they could use attributes and some people really showed off their skills! After the Tai-Chi everyone was quite thirsty and hungry. Luckily meanwhile some of the staff members had been preparing hamburgers in the kitchen! It was very nice to meet the members of the Meeting Centre. And since I normally work on the 'research and management' side of MeetingDem it was very nice and inspiring to see the Meeting Centre in practice. Apart from visiting the Meeting Centre I joined the UK researchers to the Tandem Conference about Arts and Dementia and participated in a very interesting 'Poetry for people with dementia' workshop by Gary Glazner. Visiting the Association for Dementia Studies

at UW was a great experience and although my stay lasted only ten days I learned a lot. Especially I obtained insight in their working methods, which were very inspiring!"

By Iris Hendriks

Exchange of PHD students: Visit to VU University Medical Center

Katarzyna Urbanska, PhD student at the University of Wroclaw in Poland and working on the MeetingDem project visited the Dutch MeetingDem team in October. She reports on her visit:

"In October, I received a great opportunity to visit Amsterdam, the home of the Meeting Centres Support Programme since it began in the early 1990s. I was amazed by the city's canals and atmosphere - but even more from the very warm welcome by the whole team lead by prof. Rose-Marie Dröes working in the Department of Psychiatry Amsterdam VU Medical Centre and visiting places supporting people living with dementia.

It was a great experience to see and participate in a week of work in VU Medical Centre. I met researchers from the "Care and Support in dementia" group and I had an opportunity to discuss my PhD thesis plan about stigma in dementia. The meeting and discussion was very fruitful and gave me the chance to think about my topic from different perspectives. I really enjoyed visiting places where people living with dementia can get support like Meeting Centre in Amsterdam and The Care Farm in Heemskerk. I hope there will be more places providing support for people with dementia in a similar way in Poland. I had a great week and I only regret that those few days in Amsterdam went so quickly."

By Katarzyna Urbanska



Save the dates!

Be sure to save the dates for the final MeetingDem symposiums! These will be organized

- in Milan (Italy) at the Sala Cardini - Fondazione Don C. Gnocchi Onlus (Via Capecelatro 66) on 19 January 2017;

- in Wroclaw (Poland) at the Meeting Centre (15b Ciepła Street) on 27 February and at the Main Conference Room in Wroclaw Medical University Library (2-6 Marcinkowskiego Street) on 28 February 2017, and
- in Worcester (UK) at the University of Worcester Arena (Hylton Rd, Worcester WR2 5JN) on 21 March 2017

What to expect the coming period?

The MeetingDem project ends 28 February 2016. In the last months of this project the data collected in the Meeting Centres and control groups will be analysed to study the (cost)effectiveness of, and satisfaction with, the Meeting Centres Support Program. We already analysed the interviews with stakeholders on the different phases of the implementation process and will submit a manuscript on this in December 2016. Besides scientific and professional papers, implementation materials will be made available via the MeetingDem website, such as a practical guide in different languages (Dutch, English, Italian, Polish) on how to set up a Meeting Centre.

Where to find the Meeting Centres in Europe?

For contact details and more information on the Meeting Centres in the different EU countries, we invite you to visit our website www.meetingdem.eu.

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