

December 2018

# MeetingDem Newsletter



The MeetingDem Newsletter is an edition of the MeetingDem Network ([www.meetingdem.eu](http://www.meetingdem.eu)) and evolves twice a year. This newsletter is disseminated among the network of interested stakeholders and Meeting Centres for people with dementia and carers worldwide.

## MeetingDem Network launched

In this last month of 2018 we look back on a very exciting and fruitful first 'post MEETINGDEM project' year.

The dissemination of Meeting Centers in Europe went well beyond expectations. In the Netherlands there are now 155 Meeting Centres. Recently eight new centres started in Eindhoven, Rijswijk, 's-Gravezande, Bunnik, Doorn and Wijk bij Duurstede. Also in Italy, Poland and the UK several new centres were set up. Outside Europe there were of course already centres in Aruba and Surinam, and since 2017 also in Australia. Great news! This year a first Meeting Centre started in Spain (Zamora). At the moment preparatory activities take place to initiate the first Meeting Centres in South America, in Chile! In this Newsletter several countries and initiators provide an update on these developments ([www.meetingdem.eu](http://www.meetingdem.eu) - 'countries').

The BestCare4Dem congress in Amsterdam, organised by VU University medical center in collaboration with the MeetingDem consortium and the Meeting Centres3.0 project was a great success with more than 280 delegates from 13 different countries, including professionals, scientists, policy makers and people living with dementia and carers. We were very proud that on this 25th anniversary of the Dutch Meeting Centres the international MeetingDem Network was officially launched. This network aims to further disseminate the Meeting Centres Support Programme in Europe and beyond, to share effective innovative support methods and strategies via these centres and to collaborate in research into post-diagnostic care. Read more about this network on our website [www.meetingdem.eu](http://www.meetingdem.eu) and feel free to contact the Network if you are interested to set up a Meeting Centre yourself. We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy and inspiring 2019!

## BestCare4Dem congress in Amsterdam

The BestCare4Dem congress which aimed at sharing effective community-based support for people with dementia took place on 7 and 8 June in Amsterdam. On the first day there were interesting plenary lectures on integrated post-diagnostic care by prof. Rose-Marie Dröes (Dept. of Psychiatry, VU University medical center) and prof. Dawn Brooker (Director of Association for Dementia Studies, University of Worcester), a dementia-friendly city by Mr Maarten Poorter, representative of the City of Amsterdam, and a collaborative presentation of the results of the MEETINGDEM project on the adaptive implementation and evaluation of the Meeting Centres Support Program in Europe by the MEETINGDEM consortium.



In ten parallel sessions many inspiring examples of effective psychosocial interventions for home-dwelling people with dementia and their carers were presented varying from art, music, cognitive stimulation and movement activities to DemenTalent, shared decision making, technological tools and e-learning. During lunch international films on innovative care methods were shown and there was a wonderful Poetry and art exhibition of work made by people with dementia. The winners (Meeting Centre De Vijver from the Netherlands and Meeting Center Riccione from Italy) were awarded with a plaque and check. In the afternoon the International MEETINGDEM Network ([www.meetingdem.eu](http://www.meetingdem.eu)) was launched by Mrs Jacqueline Hoogendam (LLM) of the Dutch Ministry of



Health, Welfare and Sport and member of the Board of the Joint Programme Neurodegenerative Disease Research. During the launching event which started with an historic film on the development and dissemination of the Meeting Centres from 1993 until 2018 also the 25th anniversary of the Meeting Centres in the Netherlands was celebrated which became a very festive event with all representatives from Meeting Centres in the different countries.



### **New Meeting Centres 2018 Italy.**

During 2018 a new meeting centre opened its doors in Villa Ricca (Naples), managed by Amnesia (local Alzheimer Association). Near Rimini, where already 2 Meeting Centres were operational since 2015, a third Meeting Centre was opened in Cattolica. The concept of the Meeting Centres Support Programme has also been used to offer support to people with dementia and their carers in rural areas, such as several villages in the area of Vignola (Modena).

On the 18th of September we had an informative meeting on the Meeting Center Support Programme in Formigine (Modena) and an initiative group is now preparing a new Meeting Center which will be managed by the local welfare agency in collaboration with the local Alzheimer Association. The Center is expected to open in February 2019.

On the 16th of November another informative meeting took place in Alberobello (Bari) in the South of Italy where the local Alzheimer Association is interested in setting up a new Meeting Center. And Finally, in January 2019 an informative meeting is planned in Cesena where the local welfare organization is interested in setting up a new meeting center.

*Prof. Rabih Chattat, University of Bologna, Italy*

### **Current state of play of the UK Meeting Centres**

This is a very exciting time for Meeting Centres in the UK. During the MeetingDem project two Centres were set up: in Droitwich Spa in Worcestershire and in Leominster in Herefordshire. These are both national demonstrator sites for the Big Lottery Funded UK Meeting Centres Support Programme (UK MCSP) as described below. Leominster is having to open for an extra day, i.e. 4 days a week, to accommodate all the members and carers. A high percentage of carers (over 60%) attend for most of the time.

Apart from Droitwich Spa and Leominster six other Meeting Centres are Ross-on-Wye (also in Herefordshire), three in Powys in Wales (Brecon, Ystradgynlais and Llandrindod), one in Lutterworth and one in Northampton (both in the East Midlands) plus another about to open in Kirriemuir in Angus, Scotland.

To help increase the number of Meeting Centres in the UK the Association for Dementia Studies (ADS) at the University of Worcester has been awarded a National Lottery grant from the Big Lottery Fund. The project runs from September 2018 to August 2021. The aim is to help establish 15 to 20 new Meeting Centres



The congress was closed with an impressive dance performance 'Contact by dance' of people with dementia from Meeting Centre De Pijp in Amsterdam who danced with the Czech ballet dancer and choreographer Petr Veleta, and Joke Bos and Mariska Atmodimedjo, coordinator and activity supervisor of this Meeting Centre. The performance ended with an invitation of the public to join the dancers on stage.

At the end of the first congress day Prof Dröes, who organised the congress, was awarded with the title Officer in the Order of Oranje-Nassau by the vice-mayor of Amsterdam in name of the King of the Netherlands, because of the national and international scientific and societal impact of her research and other activities in dementia care for 35 years.



*Prof. Dröes and Mrs Kukenheim (vice mayor of Amsterdam)*

On the second congress day delegates could join site visits to one of the Meeting Centres in Amsterdam, Care farm Reigershoeve or the Odensehuis, or participate in the workshop How to set up a Meeting Center?

in different parts of the UK. There has been considerable interest from across the UK and a number of Information Meetings have been or are being set up in areas which include East Lothian in Scotland, Liverpool, Manchester, Oxfordshire, and some locations in the West Midlands. The source of interest ranges from private individuals, including people affected by dementia, to sports clubs, extra care providers and Dementia Action Alliances.

Apart from new Centres other outputs include: -

- A UK MCSP National Reference Group –representatives from a range of organisations including people affected by dementia, guiding and informing the national programme and disseminating the learning from Meeting Centres.
- A Community of Learning and Practice to include the demonstrator sites and early adopters.
- Accessible information, training, skills development and on-going support on how to set up and sustain a functioning Meeting Centre in the UK.
- Evaluation of demonstrator sites and early adopters during Year 2, benefits and cost-effectiveness.
- Development of a self-evaluation tool to enable Meeting Centres to evaluate the benefits for people with dementia and carers and the wider community and their cost-effectiveness.

If you would like to find out more about the project and/or Meeting Centres in the UK please contact [meetingcentres@worc.ac.uk](mailto:meetingcentres@worc.ac.uk) and visit <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/uk-meeting-centres-support-programme.html>

*Shirley Evans, Association for Dementia Studies, University of Worcester*

### Activities in the Wroclaw Meeting Centre Poland

The Wroclaw Meeting Centre had a great 2018 year with many great activities. We celebrated birthdays, holidays and organized special events like days of knowledge about Japan and Italy. As every year, we actively joint the annual senior days in Wroclaw.

However, the most memorable moments are connected with creating the pieces of art from recycled materials. Clothes prepared during these activities were sent for the Poetry and Art Contest for People with dementia. Wroclaw Meeting Center participants won the second award during the BestCare4Dem Conference in Amsterdam in June this year.

We also celebrated the 3rd anniversary of the opening of the Meeting Center together with our friends from Wroclaw Medical University, Municipality representatives and members of the local community. It was a very nice and emotional event for all of us.

As always, the year was full of many little joys and emotional moments. *Katarzyna Lion, WMU, Wroclaw*

### Meeting Centres in Spain

The Orillas del Duero Meeting Centre started autumn 2017 in the medieval city of Zamora. The centre is open every work day (9-18h), transport service is provided on request. Most users spend three to six hours per day in the centre doing various activities. Orillas del Duero adopted the model of the Amsterdam Meeting Centres developed by Rose Marie Dröes and her team, but included special Spanish features. The role of the centre in Zamora is very important, as it fulfills a need which was unmet for many years. Also because the proportion of older people in Zamora is one the highest in Spain and Europe.



This year several workshops for people with dementia and carers, such as on animal therapy, crafts, games, dance, sensory psycho-stimulation, cooking, sewing, music and use of new technologies, were organized, that also gave many opportunities for social contact. Most popular was the reminiscence workshop in the History and Ethnographic Museum of Zamora. Here sessions of cognitive stimulation (1,5 hour, 2 days a week) were conducted on the different stages of life through the senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. People were excited and relived their first love, first day at school, song of youth...



The Meeting Center has also established social places for the main activities. Psycho-stimulation and sharing experiences with society was one of the main goals in 2018. This first year of the Meeting Center in Zamora is a good starting point for next challenges. We hope more centres will be set up in Spain. They are a sustainable and efficient way for improving the quality of life of older people.

*Prof. Manuel Franco, Esther Parra, Juan Luis, Muñoz*

## The Meeting Centres of 3Bridges Australia

3Bridges Community is a not for profit organisation in Sydney that provides programs to support



vulnerable people from young to old. In 2017, 3Bridges successfully acquired funding from the Dementia and Aged Care Services Funds from the Department of Health to pilot MCSP for the first time in Australia in partnership with Sydney University.

From the early beginnings in September 2017, 3Bridges Community has received 119 referrals for the MCSP. Most of the referrals came from the Dementia Advisory Service provided by Dementia Australia. The majority of referred clients were not willing to participate in the research or were ineligible and as a result, referred to other community care programs.

Despite the successful implementation of the program, the team faced several challenges: securing an appropriate venue available three days a week from which to deliver the program; establishing and maintaining the advisory group and recruiting the required number of dyads for the research control group.

Currently, 44 participants actively attend the two centres. Feedback from members and carers have been overwhelmingly positive, especially from people diagnosed with Younger Onset Dementia (YOD) and their carers as the practical engagement with activities and meal preparation seems to be supporting the need for purpose and meaning. Below is one of many testimonials we received from the carers:

*"Since joining your dementia program, I have seen profound changes in my husband's behaviour, temperament, communication skills and most importantly his ability to recall. Where he once needed encouragement to eat, shower, shop, socialise or engage in conversation, he now needs much less motivation. He is up in the morning, showered and dressed before 9am eagerly awaiting the time to leave home and join his new support community. The team at 3Bridges are more than a service- providing activities, meals and fun, you have become his new family. (...) My husband is doing okay. His doctor is happy with his progress. His memory has improved by two points. His anxiety level seems to be lower. He seems to enjoy attending 3 Bridges with his mates on Tuesday."*

*Amal Madani, Meeting Center Three Bridges, Sydney*

## Meeting Centres in development in Chili

In August 2018, we founded the "Fundación Kok-Berkhoff" in Coquimbo (Chili), a port city 500 km north of the capital Santiago. The board consists of Peter Kok, Miriana Juan-Oliver and Arthur Berkhoff.

In collaboration with the municipality of Coquimbo, we are conducting discussions to set up a pilot meeting center for Alzheimer patients and their informal carers, in which we could realize the application of an educational plan.

With an expert physician, we will form a medical team, in which we will investigate the instruments needed in terms of medical, coordinating and accompanying activities. Recently we visited a number of elderly meeting centres, to



inform us and to get a better impression of the current situation and needs of these elderly people in Chile. Discussions showed that there is still a long way to go and that there is an urgent need for improved care, especially for people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

Our foundation "Kok-Berkhoff" Chile is committed to develop this. And with the help of local authorities, such as municipalities, companies with their donations and many other people who are concerned about the situation of "their" elderly, we hope to be able to set up several of these centres in different parts of Chile within a few years. As it is legally required in Chile for charity organizations to have an approval from the Ministry of Justice, before being allowed to open an account for obtaining funds from donations, and a registration as charity organization, this process is currently hampering our activities.

However, an important publicity campaign for radio, press and TV is already in the planning and an initial version of our website, [www.fundacionkokberkhoff.cl](http://www.fundacionkokberkhoff.cl) is already on the internet.

*Kok-Berkhoff Chile Foundation*

## MeetingDem products and publications

The MeetingDem project ended in 2016. Since then, several publications on the implementation of the Meeting Centres in the different countries in Europe, on the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of the Meeting Centres Support Programme compared to usual care were prepared and published. Besides scientific and professional papers, implementation materials and films are available as well as a practical guide in different languages (Dutch, English, Italian, Polish, Spanish) on how to set up a Meeting Centre.

More information: [www.meetingdem.eu/publications](http://www.meetingdem.eu/publications) and the MeetingDem websites in the different countries.

### Where to find the Meeting Centres in Europe?

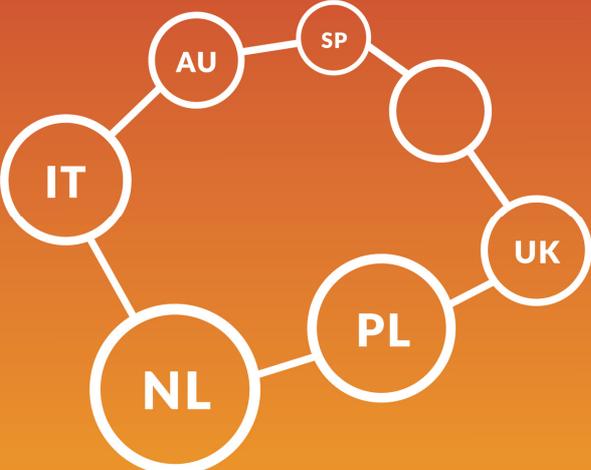
For contact details and more information on the Meeting Centres in the different EU countries, we invite you to visit our website [www.meetingdem.eu](http://www.meetingdem.eu) or contact us by email: [meetingdem.eu@gmail.com](mailto:meetingdem.eu@gmail.com)

### 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.



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SHARING EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORT IN DEMENTIA

[WWW.MEETINGDEM.EU](http://WWW.MEETINGDEM.EU)  
[MEETINGDEM.EU@GMAIL.COM](mailto: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**