



Brief Overview of EAPC Task Force on Volunteering Meeting held at EAPC 8th Research Congress in Lleida, Spain 5 June 2014.

This is a brief summary of the first meeting of the Task Force since the discussion at the Symposium Colorful Lives of Volunteers in Europe at the EAPC Congress in Prague in May 2013.

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The meeting consisted of a number of presentations on different aspects of volunteering and opportunities for discussion of the way forward.

Leena Pelttari opened the meeting with an overview of the background of the Task Force, the aims and progress so far and explained that the first year was spent gathering information and developing plan. She concluded by identifying the next steps and highlighting plans for a symposium at EAPC-Congress in Copenhagen 2015.

Professor Lukas Radbruch gave a presentation on the progress of developing a survey as part of the work of the Task Force. It is planned that the Task Force survey is carried out in conjunction with the African Association for Palliative Care. There are three questionnaires: one for the national palliative care associations in each country, one for volunteer managers and one for volunteers.

Professor Anne Goossensen followed with a presentation on her recent review of the literature in volunteering in palliative care looking at how we frame the meaning of what volunteers do. Anne summarized by saying that her findings from the literature indicate that it is the relational aspect that motivates EoL volunteers and that this needs to be further explored.

Presentations were followed by country updates from the Azores, Ireland, Austria, the Netherlands, Italy and UK

Ros Scott then led a discussion on a proposal to collect stories about volunteering from volunteers and volunteer coordinators/managers in Europe. One approach was to develop a collection of stories in the voices of the volunteers and volunteer coordinators which would illustrate the findings from the survey and give an additional way of learning and sharing ideas.

Jos Somsen concluded the meeting with a discussion about plans to develop a Position Paper on why we believe volunteering in hospice and palliative care is important. She led a discussion around a number of statements and to collect feedback from the group. It was agreed by the group that volunteering was important to people at end of life, their relatives, volunteers themselves, professionals, the field of palliative care and also to society.