

Fri inkommet artikkel

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The Leadership Course of the European Palliative Care Academy (EUPCA)

An overview of the course and personal experience of a EUPCA alumnus

palliasjon, lederskap
Palliative Care, leadership

Siden 2013 har den såkalte European Palliative Care Academy (EUPCA) utdannet 59 fermtidige ledere med et spesielt leder program. Bare to av deltakere kom fra Skandinavia. Noen deltakere har startet prosjekter som har ført til praktiske forbedringer i det palliative felt i Europa. Kurset og noen alumni prosjekter blir beskrevet. Et alumni nettverk som skal være en Europeisk think tank har blitt introdusert i 2019.

Since 2013 the European Palliative Care Academy (EUPCA) has educated 59 future leaders using the Leadership Course; only two of the participants came from Scandinavia. Some participants have established projects that have resulted in improvement in the Palliative Care field in Europe. The Course and some alumni projects are described. In 2019, an alumni network, which shall be a European palliative care think tank has been established.

Introduction

As in every other field the implementation and organization of palliative care services needs leaders and the leaders need leadership skills. Some years ago, there were no specific leadership programs tailored to the needs of palliative care leaders. The Leadership Course of the European Palliative Care Academy (EUPCA) was initiated in 2013 by the Robert Bosch Stiftung in Germany and four European education centers for Palliative Care: University Hospital of Cologne, Germany, King's College London, Cicely Saunders Institute, United Kingdom, Nicolaus Copernicus University Toruń, Poland, and Hospice Casa Sperantei, Brasov,

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Figure 1: EUPCA Education centers

Romania. It has a close collaboration with the European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC). Figure 1 shows the locations of the EUPCA education centers and the Robert Bosch Stiftung. It is a cooperation of four different countries from western and Eastern Europe.

The EUPCA Leadership Course

The course addresses future leaders and understands leadership as enabling pioneers in the field of palliative care (1). The aim of the leadership course is:

Week 1 (23/09/2019- 27/09/2019)	Week 2 (03/02/2020- 07/02/2020)	Week 3 (14/09/2020- 18/09/2020)	Week 4 (07/06/2021- 11/06/2021)	Observation (after 1 st and before 4 th Module)
Cologne, Germany	London, UK	Gdansk, Poland	Brasov, Romania	Place t.b.d. by participant
Personal Development (longitudinal)				
Project Management (longitudinal)				
Intro to Project Management	Research	Teamwork	Advocacy	Observation
Local Best Practice (longitudinal)				

Figure 2: EUPCA program 2019–2021 (4th generation)

The overall aim of the European Palliative Care Academy is to enhance palliative care in Europe by contributing to closing the gap in further education. The aim of the course is to support future leaders to develop the necessary skills, abilities and expertise to advance palliative care across Europe and to address future challenges in the field. The European perspective is considered as an integral part of the course. It also offers vast opportunities for informal learning through the exchange with people who come from different countries and professions.

(From1)

The course curriculum is based on a survey about the European training needs from King’s College London (1). The curriculum was developed by a group of internationally recognized multi-professional experts including the EUPCA steering committee (Raymond Voltz, Christine Kuch, Piotr Krakowiak, Daniela Mosoiu, Malina Dumitrescu, Jonathan Koffman and

members of the Advisory Board (Philip Larkin, Sheila Payne, Frank Ferris and Mary Callaway). The core of the course consists of four teaching weeks plus an observation week in a European Palliative Care institution of choice (in total 5 weeks of 40 contact hours). The course comprises approximately 950 hours within a period of 1.5 years, including students work at home and their personal project. This enables the students to complete the course in part-time, besides continuing their work in palliative care (1). The course language is English. Figure 2 shows the current program for the 4th generation of the Leadership course from 2019–2021.

The course is held at the Master of Science level and is certified by the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) with 38 ECTS. Figure 3 provides an overview of the educational structure of the curriculum contents.

During the course the participants shall obtain a detailed knowledge and understanding of the challenges involved in developing palliative care in dif-

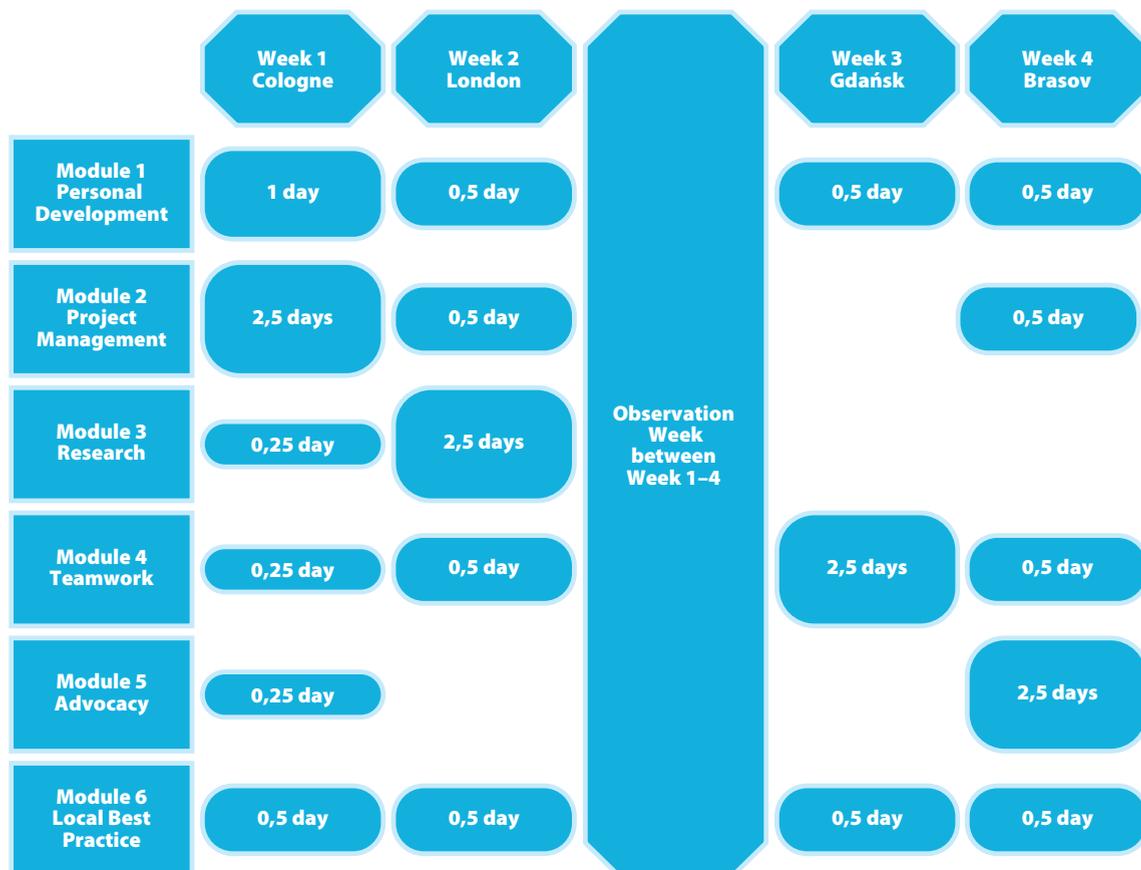


Figure 3: Overview of Modules, Weeks and Sessions (S)

ferent countries and different cultural surroundings. Despite reflecting leadership roles, leadership styles and organization, the following learning objectives were included (1):

1. To critically examine the development and organization of palliative care and policy across different settings and countries.
2. To apply the principles of service organization and management theory to the development and delivery of high-quality palliative care.

At present there are only two Scandinavian alumni, one from Denmark and one from Iceland.

Many professionals working in specialized palliative care in Scandinavian countries have not yet heard about the leadership course or probably consider it as not suitable for themselves because they are already specialists in the field and are already leaders. Some of them might underestimate the benefit of the course for them and their organization.

My personal experience with the EUPCA leadership program started in 2017. As a consultant in Palliative

“The aim of the course is to support future leaders to develop the necessary skills, abilities and expertise to advance palliative care across Europe and to address future challenges in the field.”

3. To affect positive change through the development and implementation of policy nationally and internationally.
4. To demonstrate critical self-reflection upon personal and professional development in order to enhance leadership skills.
5. To be able to interact effectively and confidently with a range of professions and agencies both nationally and internationally.
6. To critically evaluate current research and contribute to extending the evidence base in the development and evaluation of palliative care services.
7. To enhance capacity and confidence for decision-making in unpredictable and complex situations.

Medicine, I had been the medical leader for a palliative care team and a hospice in South Denmark for about one year when I applied to participate. At that point I had a lot of medical education and postgraduate training including research experience and both a Master’s degree (MAS) and a Ph.D. in Palliative Care but no formal leadership training. By participating in the EUPCA Leadership course, I wanted to gain more theoretical knowledge about leadership and to get insights into the different European perspectives on leadership in palliative care.

My personal project: Last Aid International – The Last Aid Movement

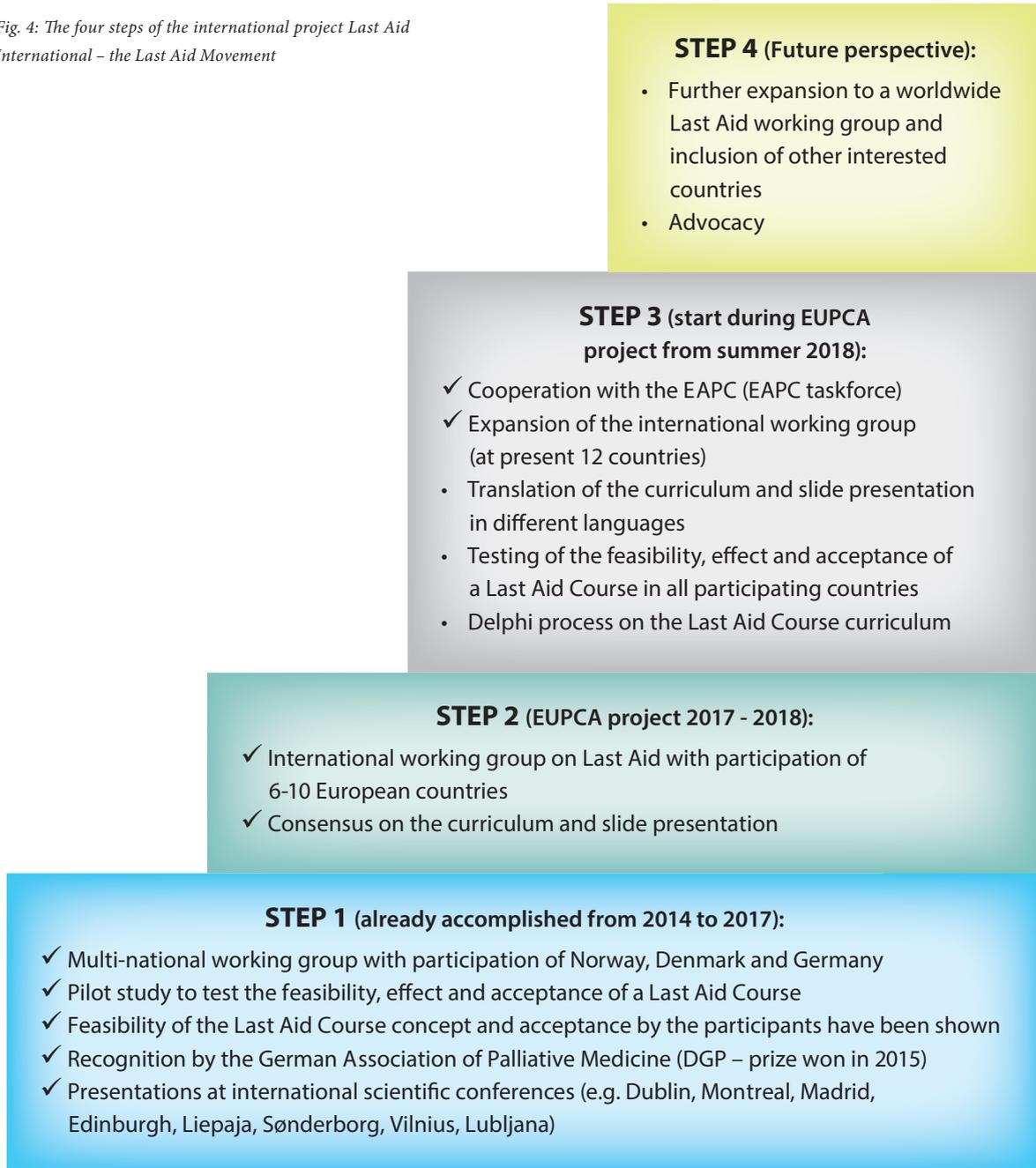
The aim of my personal EUPCA project was to work further on the international development of the already successfully piloted Last Aid Course (3–6), and to establish a Network of national organizations to spread Last Aid Courses in their respective countries in order to educate and enable all citizens to participate in Palliative Care within their Communities. My vision is that all citizens should have knowledge about Palliative Care and will be able to care for dying people. Figure 4 shows the different steps of the implementation of Last Aid International. One aim is to pave the way for establishing Compassionate Communities in the region of Southern Jutland in Denmark and to combine Compassionate Communities, Last Aid and Telemedicine to make dying at home more feasible. During my observation week I was visiting Highland Hospice in Inverness, Scotland to learn about the provision of Palliative Care and the inclusion of telemedicine in rural Scotland.

The accreditation agency FIBAA concluded: “An international perspective is the overall basis of the course. Therefore, participants definitely are enabled in acquiring knowledge and developing skills to competently handle international projects. The further career of participants is sustainably promoted.” An accreditation is currently strived for as a full joint degree Master’s program with 60 ECTS. More information about the leadership course can be found on the homepage of the European Palliative Care Academy (2).

Personal experience from participation in the EUPCA Leadership course 2017–2019 (by Georg Bollig)

So far there have only been a few participants from Scandinavian countries who are EUPCA alumni.

Fig. 4: The four steps of the international project Last Aid International – the Last Aid Movement



Lessons learned

The EUPCA course provided a great learning opportunity for me. I was really inspired by the different course contents about leadership and the reflections with the group both during the course and in the evenings. The acquired knowledge has since served as a framework to reflect on and discuss leadership. During the reflections

and discussions, I understood the leadership practices I had already used before without being able to name them and the ones I probably should work on in order to become a better leader. Both theory and reflections will serve me well in the future to analyze work situations and to solve problems concerning teamwork and leadership. In my opinion, EUPCA has absolutely

achieved its mission to be a platform for future European leaders in Palliative Care. Our group has become an active network supporting each other's projects and working together in present and future European projects. Together with some fellow EUPCA students, we have been working on the EUPCA Alumni network to become a meeting platform and European Palliative Care Think Tank (7).

Leadership is relationship

When I started the leadership course, I thought that people do have leadership skills and become leaders through appointment by the management. During the course I have changed my perception and now think that leadership is about relationship, communication as well as certain skills that can be trained. Probably leadership can be seen like life itself; it has upsides and downsides. Sometimes leadership is like dancing – one has to be engaged in something and to find a common rhythm. My leadership journey is still ongoing.

In conclusion, the course has increased my leadership knowledge, my reflection about leadership and

and their caregivers in the Slovenian language. She has worked very successfully to improve palliative care in Slovenia especially by these dissemination activities.

Dr Juan Pablo Leiva, who currently works in Manacor (Spain), conducted focus groups with firefighters in Malaga in order to understand their needs when dealing with death and dying (Leiva 2018). Firefighters have to deal with death and dying but often feel underprepared. Therefore, he developed a curriculum for a training program in order to improve their skills related to self-care & resilience, teamwork competencies, and leadership. Due to its success, the course was additionally sponsored by the Firefighters of Consell de Mallorca in the Balearic Islands, making this program a requirement for firefighters applying to become sergeants and corporals.

Dr Anna Janowicz, Alumnus and steering committee member from Gdansk in Poland had analyzed the needs of family caregivers during the EUPCA course. Afterwards she coordinated many local and nationwide charitable and educational projects in home palliative care, for example the nationwide educational cam-

“Many participants of the leadership course have initiated national or international projects that will influence the future practice of palliative care.”

has supported the international expansion of my Last Aid project. In addition, it gave me access to a wider network of European palliative care leaders for further discussion and future cooperation. At present, Last Aid International cooperates with partners from twelve European countries. Negotiations with further countries about participation in the Last Aid project are ongoing.

Implications for practice and future perspectives

A number of participants of the leadership course have initiated national or international projects that will influence the future practice of palliative care:

Dr Maja Ebert Moltara addressed with her “Project Butterfly” a very important issue in Slovenia (as well as in other countries): the lack of any written information about palliative care for patients and relatives in their native language. After her project, along with other experts she published palliative care brochures with a wide range of topics, launched the first webpage about palliative care (www.paliativnaoskrba.si) for patients

paings “Hospice is also a life”. Furthermore, she was selected as the President of the Board of the Hospice Foundation in Gdansk and is now responsible for the Father Dutkiewicz Hospice in Gdansk.

In 2019, some EUPCA students joined forces and started the EUPCA Alumni Network (7) as meeting place for former EUPCA participants, to discuss leadership and the European Palliative Care Think Tank. The first international meeting of the network will be held in Malta in March 2022.

Conclusion

The EUPCA leadership course is a unique possibility for future leaders in palliative care. It enables participants to develop and implement innovative ideas into their practice on a local, national or international level. The participants' personal and professional development is significantly promoted by this course. Furthermore, they become part of an international leader network that enables further learning, discussion and cooperation in order to further develop palliative care across Europe. For example, Last Aid International cooperates

currently with partners in twelve countries; negotiations with further countries are ongoing. The EUPCA Alumni Network will surely become an important platform for education, reflection and cooperation for European leaders in palliative care.

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