

Last Aid – from idea to international project

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Most people would prefer to die at home. The demographic change will lead to an increase of the number of elderly and multimorbid people. More people will need Palliative Care at home. In order to provide Palliative Care for all in need compassionate communities should be established and citizens should learn basic knowledge and skills in Palliative Care.

The idea of a Last aid Course for citizens has first been introduced by me in 2008. An international working group from Norway, Denmark and Germany designed a short basic Last Aid Course with 4 modules (each lasting 45 minutes) in 2013-2014.

After a slow progression in the years from 2008-2014 the project became more known from the year 2015 when it received an award from the German Association of Palliative Medicine. Today more than 26000 citizens have participated in Last Aid Courses in different European countries and more than 2000 instructors have been educated. Most Last Aid Course participants appreciate the course and talking about death and dying in a comfortable atmosphere and would recommend the course to others.

At present 16 European countries participate in the project and the International Last Aid working group. An EAPC Taskforce Last Aid and public palliative care education has been started to review current knowledge relating to palliative care education to support the development of a consensus guide on the optimal curriculum and content of public courses. In 2019 the Last Aid Research Group Europe (LARGE) was established. More innovations are to come.