

## **LAST AID in Slovenia**

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In 2019, 20.588 people died in Slovenia. Insofar if each of them had at least 4 individuals who were more or less involved in his care at the end of his life, we can simply calculate that approximately 80,000 people in our country were affected in the last farewell event. We should not forget those who are chronically ill and dependent on foreign aid and are trying to make their days meaningful. So, we quickly get to the number of 100,000 individuals who meet people who need help, care, or just simply someone to help them through the most difficult period of life.

During my training at the European Palliative Care Academy (EUPCA), I had the opportunity to meet the author of the LAST AID program - Georg Bollig. I like the answer he gave when I asked him: "What is LAST AID or LAST HELP? We all know first aid and the chain of survival. It does not matter if we are health professionals or just passed the driving test. In both cases, knowledge of first aid is expected of us. We all think it is important that we are prepared for possible action, which does not necessarily happen to us. Analogous to this LAST AID project was born, where the essence of the program is detabuization of death and raising public awareness about palliative care.

As certain as birth is also death in our lives. But it is difficult to talk about it, it is even harder to accept it and we are all afraid of it in our own way. Knowing that we can do a great deal to preserve our own dignity and the dignity of the one who is saying goodbye at this period of life is very important for all of us.

How to behave in such a situation, who to turn to, can we expect help and where to find it? What we can do ourselves, how we listen and hear the wishes of those affected, are just some of the content offered by the workshop.

In Slovenia, we started the program in May 2019 at the Institute of Palliative Medicine and Care at the Medical Faculty in Maribor. So far, around 300 people in Slovenia have attended the training. Some of them have finished a workshop for instructors and are already conducting field workshops. Members of LIONS clubs help us in the local communities at organization topics. HOSPIC volunteers are also very active. Slovenia is a small country, but it is divided into regions, so we found a coordinator in each region, who is included in the narrow committee of the Slovenian LAST AID group.

This year, with the permission of the authors, we translated the manual for instructors in Slovenian language, prepared leaflets describing the program for the lay public and a website about the program at the Institute. In the future, we plan to run the course in sign language and online. This year we are hosting the 2. international conference, which is unfortunately in online form due to the pandemic.

We hope that LAST AID program will contribute to raising public awareness about the importance of palliative care and empower individuals to be skilled and able to be present in the last days of their loved ones.



One of the instructors group at the Medical Faculty Maribor