

Stronger Together: Charting the Course to Navigate the Future

Vasco da Gama Movement

Valorise, promote, win, and move!

The Vasco da Gama Movement (VdGM) is the WONCA Europe network for those in Family Medicine/General Practice training and in the first five years of Family Medicine practice. The 5th VdGM Forum will take place on January 26th-27th, 2018 in Porto, Portugal. Let us share with you our experiences within the VdGM.

Ana Nunes Barata

2012 was the year when it all “carried on” - that was the moment when I started my residency training programme in Family Medicine. Having had the opportunity of knowing different teaching methods in Portugal and having had the chance to study in international institutions throughout my life, I looked into possibilities of continuing with this enriching experience. Without forgetting personal differences, we were encouraged to actively share our experiences, to look out for new challenges and to value team work. On this path, I’ve discovered the Portuguese Association of Family Medicine (APMGF) and the VdGM.

I went on gathering more experiences: during my residency training programme I included rotations in international institutions, participated in clinical exchange opportunities in different countries and also collaborated with VdGM and WONCA Special Interest Groups such as “EQUIP”, “Equally Different”, and “Family Violence”.

All the dynamics and the enthusiasm I’ve felt in these groups, as well as the feeling of personal and professional enrichment, inspired me to develop the existing exchange programme network so that it would reach a global scale. This was how in 2013, thanks to the collaboration of the seven regional WONCA Young Doctors’ Movements (Al Razi, AfriWon, Polaris, Rajakumar, Spice Route, VdGM, and Waynakay), the “Family Medicine 360^o” exchange programme was launched. This programme allows young family doctors to participate in exchanges all over the world.

In 2015, I became the representative for Portugal in the VdGM Europe Council and, in 2016, I was elected “WONCA Young Doctor Representative” where I have been striving to develop strategies that promote an effective global collaboration and also allow the development of Family Medicine around the globe.

I believe we may still find ways to improve Primary Healthcare services that are being provided, while finding answers to global, emerging problems, so that we strive to fulfil World Health Organization’s goals.

So, do not miss the chance to participate in the #5VdGMf - we wish for it to be an excellent opportunity for you to experience all this enthusiasm and dedication first-hand!

Luís Pinho-Costa

We live in a global society, yet mindless of other cultures. This absent-mindedness and cultural illiteracy is visible in the attention paid to trivialities at local, regional, and national levels, compared to the issues that put at risk the planet and human kind, be it the grotesque violations of fundamental human rights or the inequities that still affect millions around the world.

As family doctors, we are not exempt from this phenomenon. Facing unrealistic performance goals, short consultation times, and an increasingly contentious population - the frustrated outcome of modern life -, we spend most of our time “trapped” in our workplaces, seldom venturing to think of solutions at local, regional or national levels, and rarely and hardly bringing a broader, macro level vision into discussion.

Challenging this status quo was what led me to join VdGM and to engage with the other Young Doctors’ Movements. I started to attend its scientific meetings, undertook exchanges and joined international/global working groups. Later, I became a member of the VdGM Executive and, as of 2016, a member of the host organizing committee of the 5th VdGM Forum. “Think globally, act locally”, the motto I memorized early on in my VdGM journey, inspired my subsequent participation and/or leadership in international projects, presentations, and scientific publications. But most importantly, I built an international network of colleagues and friends which has allowed me to deepen my cultural awareness - the most important asset I carry daily while interacting with patients and co-workers, friends, family, and co-citizens.

I challenge you to become part of this network, the VdGM family, in its next meeting in Porto, January 2018.



Above, from left to right: Luís Pinho-Costa, Rita Coutinho, Mariana Leite, Maria João Nobre, Beatriz Figueiredo, Ana Luísa Cabrita and Luís Monteiro.
Below, from left to right: Vera Silva, Ana Barata and Nina Monteiro.



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Nina Monteiro

I came across the VdGM fortuitously in 2013, during the 20th Wonca World Conference, at a session which included professional testimonies of colleagues from different countries. The possibility to share experiences with international colleagues and thus development myself as a family doctor was the trigger that led me to join the VdGM.

The 1st VdGM Forum, which took place in Barcelona, Spain, the following year, was a turning point in my involvement in the VdGM, from both personal and professional standpoints. Since then, I have joined all the VdGM Forums, coming home every time more motivated to keep contributing to the development of Family Medicine, at my workplace as well as in a broader context, namely by joining several VdGM working groups, with European and worldwide impact.

Gathering motivated colleagues and creating an environment which fosters the sharing of innovative ideas, as well as doubts and concerns, make the VdGM Forums privileged professional development platforms for young family doctors.

After the 1st VdGM Forum and enthused by the hosting of the 19th Wonca Europe Conference in Lisbon in 2014, we have since then strived to bring the VdGM Forum to Porto. The enthusiasm of the organizing team and its efforts towards hosting a dynamic event, with a rigorous and in-depth scientific programme and a social programme focused on strengthening bonds between participants, let us believe this will be another successful forum.

Join the 5th VdGM Forum and be a part of the VdGM family!

Vera Pires Silva

Former VdGM Forums have been known to gather dynamic, motivated, and enterprising young family doctors. The Forums foster an energetic ambiance, which allows for the development of new projects with both national and international colleagues. The opportunity to pitch ideas in a welcoming and multicultural setting allows for new, enriched and broader perspectives in several thematic areas.

Then what makes these events unique? Their participants! Honour the 5th Forum with your presence, get infected with the VdGM "virus" of wanting more and better, and share your opinions, projects and ideas. Come enrich this event, as the 5th Forum is yours and for you!

