



## Vasco da Gama Movement

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The name of the great Portuguese explorer, who discovered the sea route towards India almost five hundred years ago, has been employed by the Vasco da Gama Movement (VdGM), the working network within WONCA Europe, dedicated to trainees and junior Family Doctors. As they set out for their own exploratory voyage in the discipline of General Practice / Family Medicine (GP/FM) in Europe, the Movement functions as a communication platform and encourages their first steps by providing support and information.

Since its inception in Lisbon in 2005, links have been established with most GP/FM associations to create a European Council of representatives. Each year VdGM hosts an international meeting, known as the '**Pre-conference**', which takes place a day prior to the WONCA Europe conference.

The Movement has five working theme groups (*Education & Training, Exchange, Research, Beyond Europe and Image*) that constitute the pillars of its initiatives. These often work in collaboration with their equivalent WONCA Europe special interest networks. Some of the activities of the theme groups include the improvement of the quality of GP/FM training programmes, the establishment of a network for research projects and the promotion of Rural Medicine.

Moreover, the **Junior Researcher Award** has been launched following the movement's continuous effort to promote a new generation of Family Doctors that combine clinical work and research. VdGM also offers the unique opportunity for trainees and juniors to spend two weeks with a GP/FP from another country through the *Hippocrates Exchange*

*Programme*. The most formative exchange experiences are awarded with the *Hippokrates* and *Claudio Carosino Prizes* each year.

Furthermore, our Movement has established the **VdGM Fund**, which was born from the observation of the unbearable inequalities and the on-going economic crisis, which afflict our continent and prevent many colleagues from joining international activities. Thanks to generous donations, VdGM has managed to offer bursaries in support of young and future colleagues.

Finally, we believe that the trainees and junior Family Doctors need to create a real network. For this basic reason, yet fundamental reason, we are planning to launch a separate PanEuropean Conference for trainees and junior Family Doctors. The **1st VdGM Forum** will take place in Barcelona on 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> February 2014. Our objective is to strengthen the relationships between our members, provide a true platform based on continuity and offer a tailored scientific and cultural programme.

All in all, our mission is a global one and entails the foundation of a forum for collaboration to improve GP/FM. Through our activities we aim at empowering the future generations of Family Doctors to lead the development of primary health care at a regional, national and international level.

For more information on VdGM activities, please visit [www.vdgm.eu](http://www.vdgm.eu) and follow us on Twitter ([@vdgmEU](https://twitter.com/vdgmEU)), Facebook ([www.tiny.cc/facebookvdgm](http://www.tiny.cc/facebookvdgm)) and LinkedIn ([www.tiny.cc/invdgm](http://www.tiny.cc/invdgm)).