**Iron sharpening iron - The European Bioethics Course 2016**

This year’s advanced European bioethics course sought to stimulate deliberation on suffering and death as essentials of human existence and on challenges surrounding end-of-life care. Over 40 participants representing 24 nationalities came together at the Radboud University in the over 2000-year-old city of Nijmegen to meet, discuss and exchange ideas.

The program and methods of this well organised course harnessed the creative and cultural potential of this diverse group in the contemplation of these difficult issues that continue to challenge a world where medical progress is increasingly turning many illnesses from terminal to chronic, without necessarily improving the quality of life.

The keynote lecture exemplified well what this course was about. Dr. Richard Harding made a compelling argument not just for the globalization, but also for an evidence-based, qualified diversification of palliative care. He demonstrated, from his extensive research background in intervention development and palliative care in various settings, areas of need and exciting steps that are being taken to meet this need and to integrate lessons learned from other parts of the world in standard palliative care in the West.

Other speakers further explored various ethical, philosophical, sociocultural and theological aspects. The parallel group discussions, in which cross-cultural learning came to the fore, were particularly effective in bringing out the structural difficulties in end-of-life care in different settings and countries.

We look back at this week in Nijmegen with satisfaction especially since we were also inspired to collaborate, do the work, research and use existing structures to make ideas effective and bring them in a systematic manner to palliative patients and aid them in the final phase of their lives.

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