

Palliative care/hospice

81 LIFE BEFORE DEATH: LIVING WELL, LEAVING WELL

10.1136/bmjspcare-2011-000053.81

P W Lee, *Lien Foundation, Singapore*

The 'Life Before Death' initiative is conceived and spear-headed by a Singapore philanthropic foundation to advocate and create greater awareness of the need to improve care for the dying.

First conceived as a local campaign in Singapore in 2006, 'Life Before Death' has evolved as an ongoing social experiment that harnesses unconventional online and offline initiatives to break the taboo of death and to foster 'die-logues' or conversations on end-of-life matters.

The Singapore initiative reached out to the terminally ill and their caregivers using print advertisements, radio talk shows,

newspaper editorial features, TV documentaries, and a caregiver's diary. A national street poll on death attitudes was conducted to spur 'die-logues' on end-of-life issues.

Today, the initiative works with diverse partners to reach a wider global audience through social media, films, photography, cartoons and art, enthusing the public to view life and death differently. A recent project, 'Happy Coffins', allowed people to personalize coffins for themselves or a loved one, and by so doing, overcome the stigma of death.

The Foundation commissioned the first-ever global Quality of Death index that ranked 40 countries on their provision of end-of-life care. In the pipeline is an international feature documentary that examines the global crisis of untreated pain and end-of-life care. Shot in 10 countries, the film has attracted diverse participation from 40 nationalities.

This initiative demonstrates how a ground-up non-profit effort can create conversations and greater awareness of end-of-life care, as well as spur advocacy for better care for the dying.