



# Bereavement support groups in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark

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**Bereavement support groups in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark (ELCD), is a two-year project (start May 2013).**

## Aims:

The project aims to

- 1) provide the relevant non-therapeutical bereavement care,
- 2) document and improve the quality of existing bereavement support groups in the ELCD, and
- 3) prepare the launch of more church-based groups nationwide.

## Approach taken:

The project has gathered and explored data from support group leaders and participants via questionnaires and interviews, and has published the results in the report *'Når sorgen bæres sammen'* (When Grief is Carried Together). The report describes both the positive experiences and the perceived challenges in working within this field. The findings have been integrated in a website for bereaved people and support group leaders [www.sorggrupperifolkekirken.dk](http://www.sorggrupperifolkekirken.dk) and in education programs for current and future group leaders.

## Background:

In Recommendations for Palliative Care (2011) Danish Health Authority focused on care for the bereaved and recommended that the National Health Care System, relevant organizations, and the ELCD identify and support people in need of bereavement care.

In 2013 83 percent of all who died in Denmark were buried with the assistance of an ELCD minister. This indicates that bereaved people to more than 43.000 deceased were in contact with a minister at the time of their loss and farewell. Thus the ELCD holds great responsibility for people in need of bereavement care.

## Results:

### A. Website

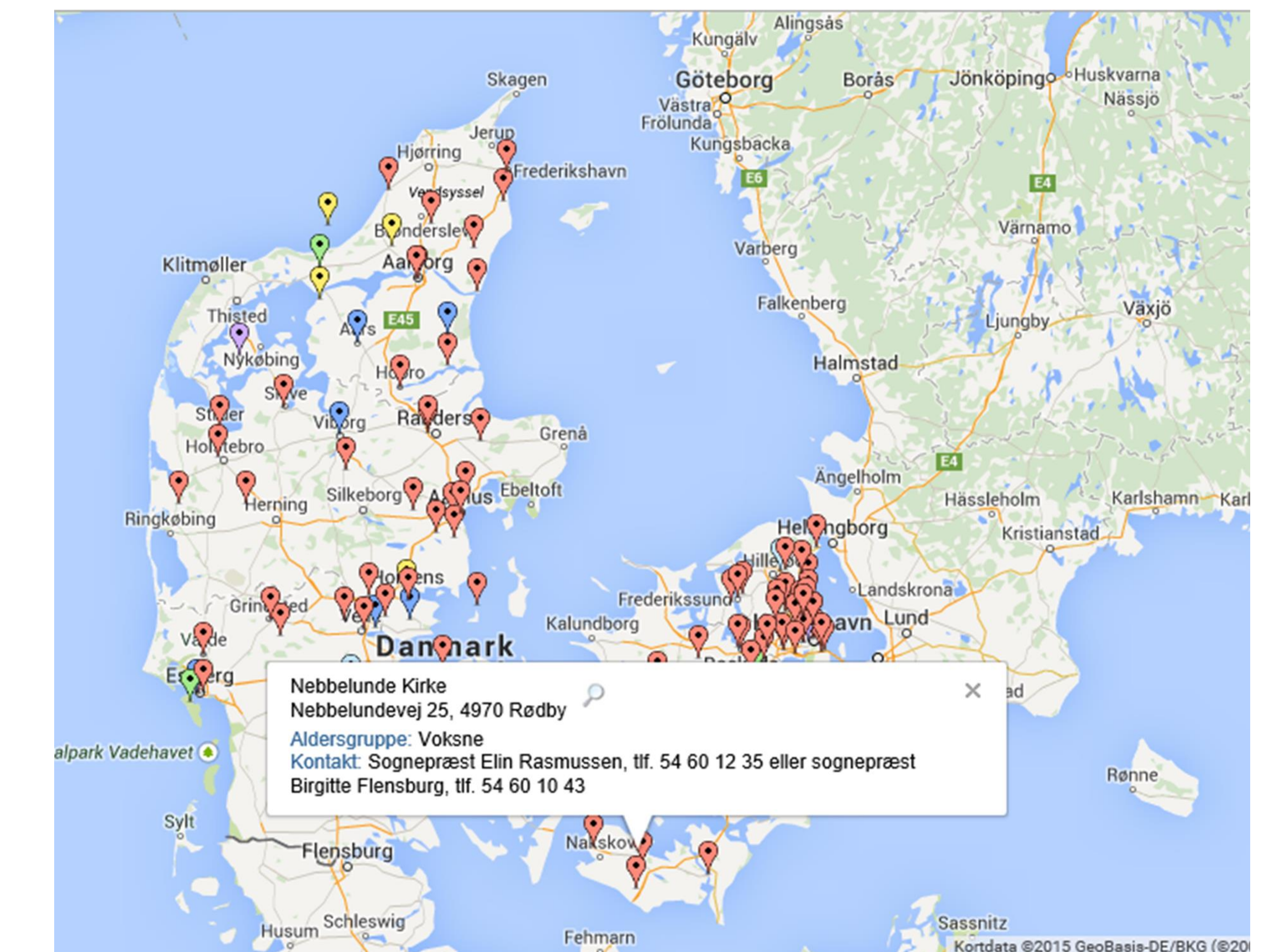
A website has been created aiming at providing information for the bereaved and for current and future group leaders of bereavement support groups:

For bereaved people the website provides:

- information on bereavement support groups and how to find a local group
- Information on bereavement
- Information on literature

For leaders of bereavement support groups the website provides:

- How to plan, organize and develop bereavement support groups
- Information on bereavement
- Information on literature
- Resources for the work in the bereavement support groups



Map from the website showing the Bereavement Support Groups in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark and an example of contact informations

### B. Courses

The Project has arranged a 3-day-course for current and future group leaders in each of the 10 dioceses in Denmark. The courses aimed at:

- Supporting the creation and development of bereavement support groups
- Educating in bereavement support

More than 200 persons have participated in the 3-day-course in the 10 dioceses.

### C. Supervision

Supervision groups in each of the 10 dioceses in Denmark has been formed.

### D. Number of groups

The number of bereavement support groups is rising:

*Before project start approx. 100 groups  
Now approx. 145 groups and rising.*

## Conclusion:

We have provided a framework for expanding the number of bereavement support groups (presently approx. 145 groups) and are working towards improving the quality of the groups.

Before end of the project period we can detect a rising number of bereavement support groups in the ELCD and a growing interest of participation from bereaved people.

## Funding:

The project is funded by:

- TrygFonden
- Chr. P. Hansen og Hustrus Fond til Almenvælgørende Formål
- Edith og Godtfred Kirk Christiansens Fond.



## Conference on building bereavement support groups.

170 bereavement group leaders og coming leaders participated in a one day conference on building bereavement support groups. May 2014.



## Pricewinning project 2014

Bereavement Support Groups in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark won the Initiative price for the best initiative in the church 2014 The Price is founded by the national journal 'Kristeligt Dagblad'.