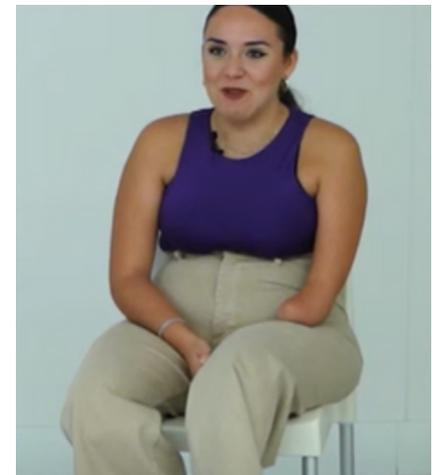


World Meningitis Day: Spain

5th October 2022



Alerting Spain to the dangers of meningitis and building a community of people affected.

For World Meningitis Day, Asociación Española contra la Meningitis (AEM) lit up 60 landmark buildings in green, ran a children's book signing with Dr Lucia and held a meet-up event for survivors of meningitis.

To reach people who may know nothing about meningitis, AEM lit up 60 institutional buildings in green to raise awareness of the infection and their organisation this World Meningitis Day.

The various foundations and building facades shone green to remind the Spanish communities that meningitis remains a threat around the world and in Spain.

Organisation:
Asociación Española contra la Meningitis (AEM). Spanish Association against Meningitis.

Location:
Spain

Background:
AEM is a volunteer run organisation working on meningitis-related health issues in Spain.

Contact:
Elena Moya, Vice President

Change objective:
To raise public awareness about prevention and the disease. To empower people affected by meningitis and their families in Spain.





Alongside this, people were interviewed on the street about their knowledge of meningitis to create a video for the public. The video demonstrated how little people know about meningitis despite the severe impact it has on so many communities.

AEM also launched a book signing for their children's book, *Valentina Superheroína*, with ['Lucía mi Pediatra'](#) (Lucia my pediatrician). The fairy tale empowers children with the knowledge that, while getting vaccinated can be scary, doing so means being a superhero and protecting those around you.

A meet-up for meningitis survivors saw many friendly faces share emotional stories and show each other solidarity and support. Almost 50 people gathered, including AEM ambassadors, people affiliated

"Son momentos muy especiales porque sientes como una conexión con gente que han pasado lo mismo que tú." - Cristina Regojo, President of AEM.

Translation: "They are very special moments because you feel a connection with people that have gone through the same thing as you."

with the organisation for a long time and some new faces, all with the collective drive to defeat meningitis. Together, attendees shared a meal and some shared their story with the group, many of whom had similar experiences. Attendees had access to group therapy and also also heard an update on meningitis. Meningitis continues to be a considerable public health

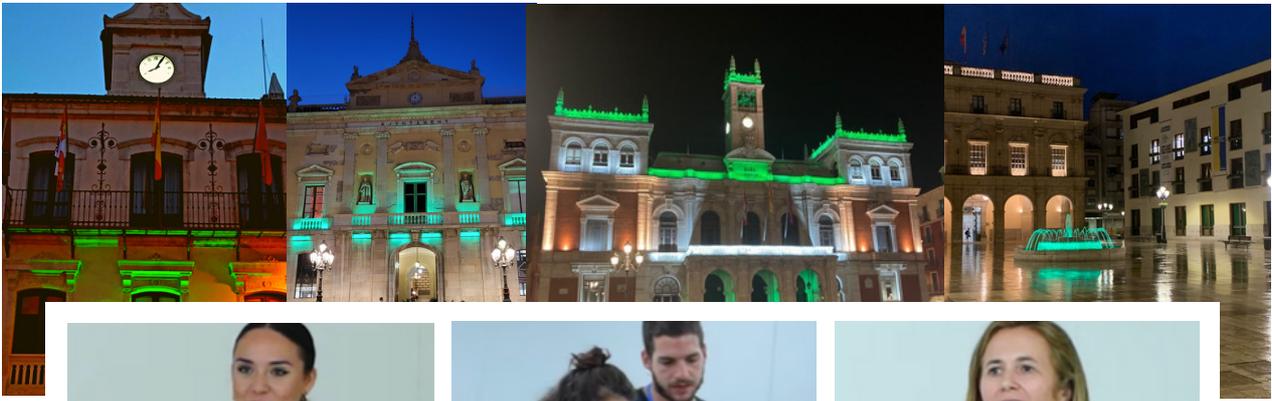
challenge but Spain has made some amazing advances recently as a result of AEM's dedicated work. This includes the introduction of the MenB vaccine in the national immunisation programme, protecting future generations of children.

Result and impact

Combating fears around vaccines and connecting people with similar experiences generates a lifelong impact for their beneficiaries but is one that is hard to measure. However, they did see their online community grow as a result of those activities, including:

1. An increase of 729 followers
2. A reach of more than 20,000 people.





Key learnings

1. Involve Public

Administrations and City Halls. Choose a colour that resonates with your organisation or cause and ask public administrations and city halls in your country to light up their buildings for World Meningitis Day. Organisations have done this in Spain, Canada and Australia for many years to reach the media and general public regarding meningitis and the WHO's Global Road Map to defeat it.

2. Create a fairytale. Many NGOs communicate their cause using fairytales to great success. These can be sold or given as a gift to members, stakeholders, or patients.

3. Reunite people affected by your cause. AEM recommends organising several fundraising events a year to gather enough funds to cover the costs of a face-to-face meeting.

This event could bring together people and families affected by meningitis in your region, community or country. It can be to share a meal, or even just drinks one afternoon.

Further resources:

- [Asociación Española contra la Meningitis website](#)
- [Valentina Superheroína book signing with 'Lucía mi Pediatra'](#)
- [Meningitis awareness video](#)
- [Meningitis meet-up video](#)

Contact details:

Meningitis Research Foundation
www.meningitis.org



Advocacy tip!

Build a community of patients and families. Patient groups may want to reunite as many survivors as possible; you can reach them via social media. Instagram is an excellent platform to reach young parents.

If an in-person meeting is not possible due to budget or public health restrictions, you could alternatively organise online meetings and share relevant information (e.g. psychotherapy sessions, disease updates, treatment updates etc.)

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