



YOUNG

Interview with Evelyn Chimfwembe, society affairs manager at ESTRO



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What is your name and where are you from?

My name is Evelyn Chimfwembe and I am originally from Zambia.

What are your responsibilities at the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) and how long have you worked at ESTRO?

I joined ESTRO in 2008. I was employed to manage EU-funded research projects in which ESTRO was a partner. I was additionally tasked with some society affairs activities, such as coordination of Board meetings and some committees and providing assistance with communications.

As ESTRO governance grew, my responsibilities were extended in 2011, to include both scientific and stakeholder councils. More changes came along later but I am currently responsible only for the Groupe Européen de Curiethérapie (GEC)-ESTRO and physics committees, plus the newsletter.

What is your background?

I have a life-sciences background in biology, immunology, and molecular biology & biotechnology. I gained a BSc in biology/chemistry from the University of Zambia in 1978; an MSc in immunology from Birmingham University, UK, in 1989; and an MSc in molecular biology & biotechnology from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium, in 1999.

Where did you work before joining ESTRO?

Before joining ESTRO I initially worked as a researcher with the Tropical Diseases Research Center in Ndola, Zambia. I later moved to Belgium and worked with a science information company. From there I joined ESTRO.

How did you end up working for ESTRO?

By chance really. I was looking for opportunities to work in the area of health sciences, as this is what interests me the most.

How do you coordinate the different wishes, tasks and projects of all the committees?

It requires a lot of planning ahead and anticipation of tasks that stem from ongoing activities of the committees and the Society as a whole. What also helps is having committee chairs that are responsive and on top of their game. The collaboration of colleagues in the office is also of the essence. Overall the job requires a lot of tact and sensitivity.

What did you know about radiation oncology before you started at ESTRO?

Not much, only that it involved the treatment of cancer with radiation, which sometimes led to necrosis of healthy tissue. But of course, now that I have worked at ESTRO for so many years I have better knowledge on the subject and how it has advanced and offers more benefit to the patient than it did before. Most of the knowledge I have acquired is from reading loads of articles on radiotherapy that have been published in the newsletter, and from listening to discussions held in committee meetings.

With how many other ESTRO staff do you liaise with?

Presently, ESTRO has 27 staff, and I liaise probably with 20 of them.

What are the exciting new projects that you are looking forward to at ESTRO?

Just seeing the way the Society is growing in its activities and the future shape of its governance.

