



Sharing of Experiences around the Globe!

User involvement in WAPR - my experiences

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WAPR is the first organization, that I can remember, that incorporated the presence of users in a real way, for a long time. The vocation of establishing ties with WAPR user organizations is old. During the years I've been in WAPR, I've noticed how the incorporation of first-person voices is increasing. This fact comforts me and makes me hope that mental health and psychosocial rehabilitation are converging towards a more realistic vision focused on our rights and on who we are the only true protagonists: we, the users.

The involvement of people with lived experiences in research, education, service development and in organizations is by no means new. There are good reasons for being impatient and expect more fundamental changes. Both WHO and United Nations have increasingly stressed the need for acknowledging lived experiences and the involvement of service users members. "Nothing about us without us". In the WAPR context, with the presidency of Gabriele Rocca, changes are currently intensifying. The recent creation of a committee on human rights, coordinated by Michaela Amering, in which we are two people with user background, is a great step forward. I invited Solange De Vidts, who is a lawyer from Chile to be part of it. Another good news is

the WAPR's engagement in the WHO QualityRights Initiative. The online courses provided are free and easily accessible. They are developed in close collaboration with service users around the world, and are of fundamental relevance. Fostering them among partners and making them known is essential. Looking back, I was also included in the organization of the world congress in 2018 in Madrid. The former president of the WAPR, Ricardo Guinea, who asked me. Especially in inviting user organizations from all over Spain to participate, was important. Included in the program was a workshop with the title: "Nothing about us without us. Different perspectives on the same struggle". It was one more occasion to strengthen ties. I had the honor of being part of the plenary on Human Rights at the congress. The title of my presentation was: "Human Rights: From Sick to Citizen". It was a personal and professional success for me to get Tina Minkowitz, a key world activist, to attend, which was a great effort for WAPR.

In the panel there were:

Chair: Michaela Amering. (WAPR) Vienna. Tina Minkowitz. Mind Freedom. USA. Natalie Drew. (WHO) Geneva. Guadalupe Morales. Madrid, UE Finally, together with Marianne Farkas, I had the

privilege of participating in a symposium on RECOVERY.

Chair: Marianne Farkas, Larry Davidson, Guadalupe Morales.

At the next congress at XIV World Congress of World Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation (WAPR) and 7th Abu Dhabi International Mental Health Conference 9.-11. December in 2022, there were two participations.

Keynote: "Nothing about us without us! The voice of the protagonists". Guadalupe Morales Cano, Spain- And a Symposium: "Recovery – a human right?"

Chair: Dr. Michaela Amering, Austria. 1. Dr. Helen Herrman. Role of rehabilitation for recovery 2. Dr. Dainius Puras. Implications of the CRPD for the field of psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery; 3. Guadalupe Morales Cano Is Recovery a human Right? The point of view of organizations of people with lived experience.

A framework for collaboration with associations and

groups of users and families will hopefully be implemented in all the regions that the WAPR operates. It is an initiative that has not yet taken its first steps. It is intended that the regional vice-presidents establish contact and develop collaboration with service users and relevant organization in their geographical area. My proposal is to be the link between WAPR and the users, together with the regional vice-presidents. This will be an important step forward for our organization. There is wholesome knowledge and experiences about user and family members' involvement in WAPR. Let us use our skills, experiences and networks and move forward.

For my movement, WAPR's conviction that the motto "Everything about us, with us" appears consolidated. This pleases me and encourages me to continue fighting so that our voices are listened carefully to, and our participation is significant and makes a difference.