

# BRASILIA CONSENSUS 2013

The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) and the Ministry of Health of Brazil convened the "1st Regional Meeting of Users of Mental Health Services and their Families", on October 15-17, 2013, with the objectives of: (i) promoting the sharing of personal and institutional experiences on the autonomy and empowerment of users of mental health services and their families in the Region of the Americas, so as to promote their social organization and involvement in decisions related to mental health policies; (ii) promoting discussion and reflection on mental health public policies in the region, particularly those being developed in Brazil; and (iii) empowering family members and users to assess the quality of mental health services and their respect for human rights.

Representatives from Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ecuador, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, and the United States – mostly delegates of associations and organizations of users of mental health services and their families – took part in this meeting. Representatives from the World Health Organization, the Pan American Health Organization, the General Coordination for Mental Health, Alcohol, and other Drugs and the Department of Specialized and Thematic Care of the Secretariat of Health of the Ministry of Health of Brazil, and the Office of the Secretary for Human Rights of the Presidency of the Republic of Brazil were also present.

## NOTING

International agreements, conventions, and treaties related to mental health and human rights, such as the Declaration of Caracas, approved within the framework of the Regional Conference on the Restructuring of Psychiatric Care in Latin America—PAHO/WHO (1990); the Brasilia Principles (Guiding Principles on the Development of Mental Health Care in the Americas—PAHO/WHO) (2005); the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006); the Agreement of Lujan (2006); the Panama Consensus (2010); and the Buenos Aires Consensus (2011); and

The debates and discussions that took place at the "1st Regional Meeting of Users of Mental Health Services and their Families";

## RECOGNIZING,

That a large portion of users of mental health services and their family members are deprived of autonomy, empowerment, and access to citizenship rights;

That, in recent years, new developments and progress have occurred in the field of community mental health in the region;

That the World Health Organization developed guiding principles to advance the improvement of mental health care at the global level, with the recent approval of the Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan in 2013;

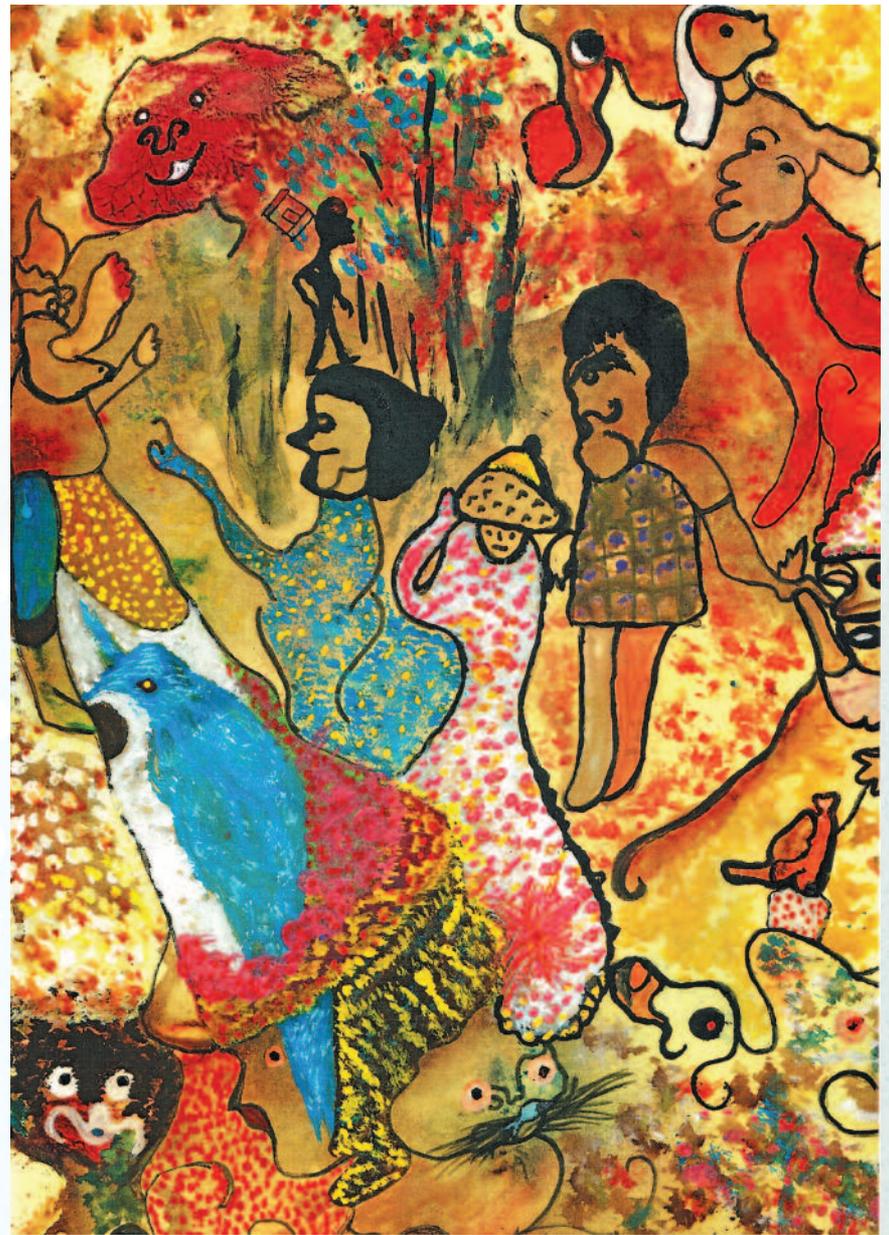
That the Pan American Health Organization approved a *Regional Strategy and Plan of Action on Mental Health in 2009*, highlighting a political and technical commitment of governments, in terms of positioning mental health in the public agenda and clearly defining strategic areas of action.

That, the progress in legal frameworks achieved in some countries of the Region and the presence of successful experiences in public policy and mental health services notwithstanding, serious limitations still persist, and it is necessary to: undertake efforts for the continuity of psychiatric care and mental health reform, overcoming the psychiatric hospital model and creating mental health services at the community/territorial level that respect freedom and human rights and promote responses to the needs of people affected by mental disorders, including those associated with alcohol and other drugs. In addition, the development and enforcement of legislation that is consistent with international human rights instruments is also essential;

That, culturally, the users of mental health services are not recognized as rightsholders and experience various forms of human rights violations, stigma, discrimination, and invalidation.

## CONSIDERING,

That States have a commitment to ensure, promote, and protect the full exercise of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of users of mental health services, with the adoption of necessary actions for equality of opportunity; for the exercise of legal capacity; for protection against torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; for the prevention of exploitation, violence, and abuse; for inclusion in the community and access to all public policies;



Mundo cão: os rejeitados, Maria do Socorro Santos, © PAHO-WHO

That users of mental health services be ensured, on equal terms, the right to the city and the right to full citizenship, with specific emphasis on access to housing, work, education, culture, transportation, and leisure;

That the participation of the users of mental health services and their families in the process of formulation, implementation, management, and assessment of public policies regarding mental health be ensured, and that their participation in intersectoral policies be encouraged;

That the participation of the users of mental health services and their families is essential for the development of laws that ensure, promote, and strengthen the human rights and citizenship rights of people affected by mental disorders and disorders associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs; and

That the participation of the users of mental health services and families is essential for effective implementation of guaranteed access to community-based/territorial-based care, to promote emancipation and the access and full exercise of human and citizenship rights ; we hereby

## PROPOSE

### Regarding Human Rights:

1. To encourage, support, and disseminate legislation that fosters citizenship and human rights;
2. To promote mental health care that does not deprive users of their liberty;
3. To ensure access to legal protection, technical protection, and other instruments against involuntary hospitalization due to mental health problems;
4. To encourage countries in the region to promote actions that enable users of mental health services to fully exercise their civil and political rights;
5. To put a spotlight on spaces where human rights violations against users of mental health services occur and to employ institutional and State resources for complaints and protection;

## Regarding Mental Health Policies and Services:

6. To assess the mental health network in an intersectoral manner and, on the basis of this appraisal, to validate the practices of these services, so as to ensure a network of care that replaces the institutional model, does not deprive users of liberty, and operates at the community and territorial level, from the perspective of health promotion;
7. To support the implementation, funding, and oversight of mental health services that replace the institutional model, such as community-based services and therapeutic housing facilities;
8. To encourage the creation of laws and public policies that promote the organization, strengthening, and sustainability of associations of users of mental health services and their families;
9. To ensure the right to therapeutic housing or similar to all those that require it.

## Regarding Participation:

10. To support, through inter-ministerial actions, the creation and the institutional, political, economic, and social strengthening of associations and organizations in the Region of the Americas and their participation in the implementation of mental health public policies;
11. To promote permanent spaces, both virtual and physical, for coordination and communication of associations of users of mental health services and their families;
12. To ensure the participation of users of mental health services and their families in the construction of public policies and in the management and assessment of said services (through the Quality Rights tool, for instance), with particular emphasis on collective decision-making spaces, in order to modify and expand the conditions necessary to ensure the citizenship and human rights of users of mental health services;
13. To ensure the participation of indigenous populations that use the mental health network, as well as populations living in rural areas;
14. To strengthen the leadership role of associations of users of mental health services and their families in the development of citizenship projects, by means of partnerships with the public and private sectors;
15. To encourage said associations to diversify their activities, acting on the basis of the needs of users of mental health services and their families in the defense of human and citizenship rights, with particular emphasis on access to health, education, sport, culture, leisure, work, transportation, and social security;
16. To create registries of associations and organizations of users of mental health services and their families for the countries of the region and for the region as a whole;
17. To promote more opportunities for sharing of experiences among associations of users of mental health services and their families in the Americas;
18. To hold periodic regional and subregional meetings of users of mental health services and their family members in the Americas.

## Regarding Education and Training:

19. To disseminate international documents on psychiatric reform, mental health, citizenship, and human rights among users of mental health services, their family members, professionals, managers, and civil society;
20. To promote human rights-focused continuing education and training policies for associations and organizations of users of mental health services and their families;

21. To produce and disseminate, through the communications, media and advertising channels, campaigns to raise awareness of the need for construction of a new approach toward mental health among State and civil society actors, with particular emphasis on mental health professionals and users of mental health services and their families;
22. To promote training of users of mental health services, their family members, health care providers, and professionals in the fields of education, social welfare, law enforcement, justice, and management, with a view to raising awareness of and compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD);
23. To use creative strategies to facilitate the dissemination and incorporation of the CRPD in accordance with local culture;

## Regarding Work:

24. To strengthen public policies for social inclusion through work that are conducted outside institutional settings;
25. To promote and ensure the autonomy and empowerment of users of mental health services in work spaces and environments;
26. To promote the solidarity economy and the cooperative movement as principles that promote citizenship;
27. To ensure interministerial actions that encourage, regulate, and fund cooperatives and solidarity economy projects, ensuring investment in equipment essential to the activities of the collective economy;
28. To fund professional training and qualification activities for mental health services users;
29. To coordinate intersectoral partnerships with universities and social movements that establish conditions for the development of collective economy and cooperative movement projects, so as to become public policy makers;
30. To encourage the creation of cooperatives outside the mental institutions environment;
31. To propose affirmative action policies (tax incentives, quotas, etc.) that encourage inclusive, diversified actions by public and private enterprises;

## Other Proposals:

32. To urge governments to revise and adapt their legislation in light of the CRPD, by means of the creation of committees to oversee compliance with the Convention; (stress that persons affected by mental disorders and users of mental health services are covered by the CRPD);
33. To develop strategies to ensure that the results of assessments of the mental health services promote improvement of the quality of these services and protection of the rights of their users;
34. To promote advocacy of legislative projects that strengthen the organization of users of mental health services and promote their rights; and

## COMMIT

To the broad dissemination of this Consensus Document;

To undertake efforts for the effective implementation of the international principles of mental health and human rights;

To promote the establishment and strengthening of associations of users of mental health services and their families; and

To support the creation of a regional network of associations of users of mental health services and their families, establishing a committee of representatives of various countries that participated in this Meeting.