

MINUTES

General Assembly of WNUSP 17th – 21st July 2004 in Vejle, Denmark

(see Appendix A for delegates, see Appendix B for all participants)

Iris Hölling from the board welcomed the second general assembly in WNUSP.

I am very happy to find you all here at this second WNUSP conference and General Assembly in Vejle, Denmark.

First of all I want to thank the organising committee from LAP who set this conference up for us and the rest of us in the organizing committee.

It is my task to start with the board report.

For those who are attending a WNUSP conference for the first time, I will go back into history a little bit.

WNUSP began as World Network of Psychiatric Users (WFPU) at the WFMH conference in Mexico. At the time it was a loose network that met biannually at the WFMH conferences since there were always a number of users and survivors present at these conferences. In 1997 the name was changed to WNUSP – World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry. In 1999 we received initial core funding from the International Disability Foundation to plan an international meeting in Santiago, Chile. In 2000, the secretariat was established in Odense, Denmark. In July 2001, WNUSP held its first general assembly in Vancouver, Canada, where it was founded as an official organisation, the statutes were adopted and a board was elected. At that conference 34 groups from 12 countries were present.

Looking at the fact that we have 150 participants from 50 countries at this second conference in Vejle, it is clear that we have come a long way towards becoming an organisation representing users and survivors of psychiatry all over the world.

It is my task now to tell you what happened since our last General Assembly, our founding conference in Vancouver in July 2001 – 3 years ago.

The situation was very difficult for WNUSP – before the conference in Vancouver WNUSP had received initial funding from the international Disability Foundation for 6 months. Thereby we could pay Eva to be the secretary, meet to prepare the conference and run the conference. After the conference, there was hardly any funding left. Eva Rasmussen offered to work voluntarily for the secretariat, later on, LAP allowed her to work for WNUSP in her job for LAP. Thanks to Eva and her continuous, committed and very efficient and professional work for WNUSP.

Funding

Funding was a crucial issue, we tried hard to find funding writing proposals, but were not very successful until LAP managed to receive funding from the Danish government so that we could plan the General Assembly which we are starting today. This is one of the successes we owe a lot of gratefulness for to LAP, especially Karl and Eva.

Another difficulty we faced – also linked with the lack of resources – was the fact that we could not have any meeting in person except for the preparatory meeting for this conference a delegation of the board attended in Denmark in February this year.

A long term funding strategy is a task that remains to be done, but we did what we could with our limited resources. Any ideas to find long-term funding for WNUSP are more that welcome as well as help with realising them.

Otherwise, all communication was either by e-mail or through telephone conferences, sometimes difficult, too, because of the different time zones, for some people attending meant to be on the phone in the middle of the night. Running an organisation without meeting personally is quite a challenge.

Situation of the board

The other difficulty we faced was that we lost contacts to parts of the board elected in Vancouver: After thorough reflection we asked the board members who did not respond to e-mails and did not attend telephone conferences to resign, since we felt, we needed an active board and people capable of putting some energy into the organisation. Helen Connor from Australia and Masaji Koganezawa from Japan resigned. Mari Yamamoto from Japan was adopted to replace Masaji. Gisela Satori from Canada also resigned due to personal reasons, Liz Thor Larsen who was her deputy also resigned due to other priorities after a little while.

It was necessary to put the work to more shoulders – that is why we adopted Tina Minkowitz who was the principal activist in the UN convention process as a board member and Sylvia Carras as a consultant to the board.

Another task the board had was to find board members from regions not yet represented. This task was very difficult, too, but we finally succeeded and were very happy to adopt Moosa Salie from South Africa and Bhargavi Davar from India this year.

In Vancouver, we elected 2 co-chairs, Judi Chamberlin and myself and Karl Bach as the treasurer. Since Karl represented the organisation a lot, we decided to be three co-chairs.

As I told you, the work of the board was not easy given that we could not meet and that we all have full time jobs or occupations in our own countries that keep us busy, too, so that we had to set up priorities.

Organizing this conference and making it a real world conference was one of our priorities and I am really happy that we succeeded in making it come true and that you all managed to come here. I am very happy that we finally managed to have people from non-Western countries attend this conference although travel expenses were a big problem. Welcome all of you here and I really hope that we can learn from each other and have fruitful exchanges and make the new board more representative of all the regions of the world.

Promoting human rights – Networking

Another priority of the work of this board was Lobbying for international legal recognition and implementation of user/survivor rights with the UN and other international organisations. To that respect, we succeeded quite well.

WNUSP has worked on the Panel of Experts to Monitor the Implementation of the UN Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunities for persons with disabilities. Mary O'Hagan represented

WNUSP on that Panel even before WNUSP was founded as a registered organisation. The panel continued to work.

Report Mary O'Hagan 2001.

WNUSP became a member of IDA, International Disability Alliance and went to their meetings regularly and got a good standing for our issues.

Report Mary O'Hagan 2001, Karl.

A continuous and very important activity was the work on the UN Convention for the human rights of people with disabilities.

Here I want to use the opportunity to thank Tina Minkowitz for her enormous and brilliant work she did on the convention. She wrote very many position papers on behalf of WNUSP, kept everybody well informed, got a lot of people involved into the process, created discussion lists, suggested strategies and went to all the Ad Hoc committee meeting where the Convention was debated. WNUSP owes a lot of its influence on the convention to Tina's Work. We will not report in detail about the convention now since Tina will have a speech about it tomorrow.

Report Tina and Keynote, report Mary O'Hagan on Bangkok meeting, Thailand Oct. 2003

Global workshop on Universal Electoral Rights of People with Disabilities, Sept. 2002, Sweden, Mary O'Hagan

All these activities have also served the purpose of promoting WNUSP as the international voice of users and survivors.

We applied for accreditation at the UN.

WNUSP has gained more forces and more allies also through the convention process we managed to spread our networks to other parts of the world.

There is still a lot to be done.

I am looking forward to learning from users and survivors from other parts of the world, such as Moosa Salie's keynote tomorrow and Barghavi Davar's workshop and speech etc.

We have talked about capacity building workshops for promoting and developing the self-organisation of users and survivors everywhere. We did not have enough resources to write funding proposals and realize these ideas. I hope that dialogue at this conference will give us clearer ideas about how to focus on this important issue to make our network stronger and more representative. Maybe, we will be able to plan the next steps and to set directions for the new board.

Continental networks might be an aim to focus on to strengthen the influence of those already organised and to facilitate the creation of more organisations.

We all think that this is a crucial issue, but without any money to travel and to meet people where they are and to find contacts this task is hardly impossible to fulfil.

Another task was to publish a regular newsletter and the website.

We succeeded in doing the website and in putting more and more information on it. Via e-mail and mailing lists, communication of members with internet access is possible.

Due to our limited resources we have to apologize for not having succeeded in producing the newsletter. It is still an important means of communication and could be sent electronically and then be printed to save money. Maybe there is an organisation volunteering to do this job in the future so that not all the burdens lie on the secretariat.

I think we have finished the board report. It is time for your questions before we turn to discussing and planning our future.

I want to thank everybody on the board for working so well together and for respecting our different opinions and accepting each other's time outs.

Financial statement WNUSP 2003:

There has been very little movement in the bank account of WNUSP, which amounts to 368 US Dollars.

The Danish Organisation LAP has contributed financially to allow the board to make some telephone conferences and maintain its website, and mainly in giving the secretariat hours.

This arrangement is however not very satisfactory, LAP is a small organisation and cannot contribute this much for a very long time. Both finances and manpower are limited.

COMMENTS ON THE BOARD REPORT:

Maths Jespersen, Sweden: Interested in having the global perspective on the psychiatry in Africa and Asia. What can be learned about alternatives? Maths visited India and was shocked to see patients in cages. WNUSP should protest, write letters, support our brothers and sisters.

Joseph Rogers, USA: It is important to become clear, what we are for – not always against. Find the positive perspective in the work. In USA small centres free of drugs are being established. Funding must be made available everywhere to create places of hope.

Gabor Gombos, Hungary: It is great that Tina Minkowitz's texts are positive in their language. But certain things are only negative. Protests are needed – there are terrible places in the world. The industrialized countries have alternative new sorts of coercion, not so visible, not so interesting for the media, but as harmful as physical force.

Judi Chamberlin, USA: We need time to talk about the psychiatric systems in all parts of the world, to sharpen the work of WNUSP.

Tina Minkowitz, USA: The convention work will be detailed in tomorrow's key note speech. But the work has put WNUSP on the map, and made the network know and respected in the UN.

Erik Olsen, Denmark: A pity there is not enough time to hear the stories from all the countries represented at the conference.

Mari Yamamoto, Japan: WNUSP has made a letter to the Japanese government, that made a difference. The solidarity is essential.

Chris Hansen, New Zealand: Suggests call to action via UN. Become one voice.

Laurel Ahern, UK: Expressed gratitude to Karl Bach.

Mary Maddock, UK: Thankful for being present.

Marissa Guillen, Costa Rica: Was glad to be able to be here and stand up to help others.

Jeff Williams, Wales: All the members of WNUSP must go to their own governments with their complaints. Make your influence locally.

George Hoogervorst, The Netherlands: Was very happy to be here – talked about the forced treatment in Holland.

Jan Vergaerht, The Netherlands: Thanks the organisers. Some places in Africa the animals in the zoo have better conditions than psychiatric patients. Pay attention to the poor people. Mak use of the internet to improve communication. Publish the newsletter and stories of coercion in your own countries.

Sarah Carr, UK: Has brought brochures to the conference about services that made a difference.

Sylvester Katontoka, Zambia: Very happy to be here. This conference brings hope to African countries.

Sylvia Caras, USA: Communication is a human right. We should all participate in the global discussion.

Sveinn Runar Hauksson, Iceland: It is good being here, feeling the strength and inspiration. Don't use the hard language.

Peter Munn, UK: United voices will be heard, drugs are not the only way.

Daniel Mwesigwa, Uganda: Has due to 13 years of anxiety been excluded from his work and society. When together we are strong and will be capable of fighting for ourselves.

The general assembly voted for the following resolutions

Ron Carten, Canada:

Whereas funding for the future of WNUSP is needed, be it resolved that a fundraising committee be created to address the organizaion's financial needs.

Whereas WNUSP must rely heavily on information technology to accomplish its goals, be it resolved that a committee for information and communication technology be created to develop the use of current technology by WNUSP.

Moosa Salie: Let it be known that the African countries will form an Africal Groups of users and survivors of psychiatry.

For the funding committee Ron Carten volunteered and will find other members. Karl Bach suggested to work for making USD 200.000 within 6 months.

for the IT committee Sylvia Caras volunteered and will find other members.

The USA organisation will also work to make an American Group.

It is OK for both the African and American group to use the WNUSP logo.

Maths Jespersen, Sweden:

The relation between ENUSP and WNUSP is a non-competitive relation

ENUSP accepts that WNUSP represents the users and survivors at the world level.

WNUSP accepts that the ENUSP represents the users and survivors at the European level.

[Veile Declaration](#) [1]

**approved by the General Assemblies of ENUSP & WNUSP
July 21, 2004**

How we propose to deal with each other

In all organisations we should:

- build a constructive, welcoming, friendly, attractive atmosphere, respectful of all the opinions of others, not trying to decide what is good for them and support each other in developing our individual and creative capacities
- underline the importance of transparency, good governance and responsibility in financial matters
- integrate minorities in a proactive way and combat any discrimination, whether is based on origin, gender, age, disability, economy, religious or sexual orientation
- be patient to each other, try to see the whole person behind the label and emotional and physical problems and not to judge others
- be careful in the election of representatives and consider their experiences and prevent ourselves and our colleagues to burn out and subsequently leave the organisation
- appreciate the work of all people who honestly try to improve psychosocial treatment as well as those who work to establish alternatives to psychiatry and we resist any unilateral approach to the understanding of mental health problems
- respect the work of volunteers and recognize the need for paid jobs as well as we are looking for allies, because we face a vast and complex task.
- demand that psychosocial services are made for the users/clients/survivors/people in recovery, under our influence and with respect to our equal rights as citizens in a democratic society.

[1] The idea for such a declaration goes back to an [idea by Kalle Pehe](#), Germany, from 1999. Kalle Pehe could not attend at the Veile conference, because at this time he worked as teacher, and in his town the summer holidays started one week after the conference. Participants of the workshop, who together developed the Veile declaration, were Olli Stålström (Finland), Olga Riabova & Yakov Kostrovsky (both Russia), Jan Verhaegh (The Netherlands), Mari Yamamoto (Japan), Dominique Laurent (France), David Bonde Henriksen (Denmark) and Peter Lehmann (Facilitator, Germany). Later on Mary Nettle (England) helped to optimize the English translation.

Resolution on the Disability Convention passed

After a break Iris Hölling informed about the possibility of getting travelling expenses refunded, the possibility of paying the membership fee and become new members. The procedure of voting delegates was explained.

Election of the board:

Nominations and number of votes. The names in **bold** got elected to the board:

Asia:

Mari Yamamoto, Japan - 47

Chris Hansen, New Zealand - 47

(requests adopted member Bhargavi Davar, India)

Africa:

Janet Amegatcher, Ghana - 46

Moosa Salie, South Africa - 45

(requests adopted member Daniel Mwesigwa) (deputy to the board)

Americas:

Ron Carten, Canada - 34

Tina Minkowitz, USAn - 32

Judi Chamberlin, USA – 11 (deputy to the board)

Sylvia Caras, USA - 9

Marissa Guillen, Costa Rica – 17 (deputy to the board)

Europe and Russia:

Piotr Iwaneyko, Poland – 11 (deputy to the board)

Martijn Kole, The Netherlands - 6

Ron Woodall, Wales - 5

Stephanus Binder, Austria - 3

Karl Bach, Denmark - 36

Peter Munn, UK – 7 (deputy to the board)

Iris Hölling, Germany - 34