

Annual Report of
Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity 2016 and 2017

At the beginning of the year 2016, Executive Manager of association Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity, developed two projects - Nationwide magazine "Other Side" (in printed form) and the project "Activities and membership in a foreign organization Mental Health Europe (MHE)", which were submitted to the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic in January 2017. Both projects were approved, but budget of both projects was significantly reduced.

In March, was restored the original website of Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity. The new web-master manages a new domain.

Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity in 2016 supported the human rights of people with mental illness, helping them develop skills and taught them to solve their problems of everyday life and gradually integrate back into society, as usual.

Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity focus on realization of the Patient Advocacy project in 2016. In April 2016, company Johnson & Johnson financially supported the innovative project "Patient advocacy as a tool for reducing the stigma of people with mental disorders". The project was realized by the teams of patient advocates at psychiatric departments in Prievidza, Michalovce, Zilina Považská Bystrica and Bratislava. It was focused on defending of the rights of hospitalized patients and and their relatives. The aim of project was to contribute the degradation of the environment of mistrust towards psychiatric patients, especially during first hospitalization. We have tried to contribute to improve the legal awareness of patients and their families about mental disorders, about need of treatment and active cooperation with medical staff. Patient advocates also assist the hospitalized patients in dealing with social and legal problems. From the funds of the project was issued guidance material, which the patient advocates (PA) used at their work. Patient advocates teams exchanged their experiences in a joint workshop in Bratislava (22nd – 24th, August), which was also attended by Chairman of the Columbus in Bohemia. Familiarize participants with the form of patient advocacy in the implementation in Bohemia. In the magazine Neuro, was published an article of the National Coordinator of the project (distribution for the psychiatry and neurology departments in hospitals in Slovakia). In the future, Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity plans to consolidate the existing network of teams of patient advocates and gradually expand to places where work well the member associations of patients.

From May 2016 to January 2017 Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity Executive Director, worked on coordination of the ESF project of the League for Mental Health (LDZ), entitled "Education of the leaders of civic associations, patients and relatives" and helped LDZ with their realization. Under this project will also educate the group of 50 patients, members of the regional associations of Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity. They acquire the theoretical information and practical training focused on the successful presentation of associations, promotion of their work, how work with volunteers, organization management and social issues. Training consisted of four three-day cycles and one week training at the Šachtičky, close to B. Bystrica, respectively in Liptovská Sielnica.

For the first time, since obtaining membership in an international organization Mental Health Europe (MHE), representative of Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity has attended the General Assembly in Brussels (11th – 13th, June).

In October Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity traditionally worked with LDZ, on coordination of the campaign "Days of forget-me-not" and public collections in its member associations in the regions of Slovakia. Executive Director of Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity became in 2016, the most successful volunteer group coordinator (secondary school students) involved in collections in Bratislava.

Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity in the year 2016 jointed the administration of incentives for the amendments of laws relating to patients with mental disorders. It was accomplished mainly through the Government Council for Disabled People and the National Council of Disabled People (NROZP), of which is Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity member. During the year, Executive Director of Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity actively participated in meetings of Council of Mental Health at the Ministry of Health, where represents the interests of associations of patients with mental disorders and their relatives and interprets their requirements.

In November, the national coordinator of the project patient advocacy, participated at the XIV. Czech - Slovak Psychiatric Congress at Tale, where presented the realization of PA project in 2016 in five cities in Slovakia by a poster.

At the end of the year 2016 joined Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity activities "Coalition for Change", which aims is to continuously collect suggestions for changes in legislation in relation with suspense of legal effects. The initiator of the creation of the Coalition was the Association to help people mentally affected (ZPMP in SR). Executive Director of Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity made a contribution at the conference of the ZPMP and looked experiences of people with mental illness with the Institute of suspense of legal effects.

Executive Director of Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity also in the year 2016 actively spoke at meetings of the Council of Mental Health (RDZ) at the Ministry of Health, where represents its local member organizations of patients and relatives. Similarly, represented regional associations on the Board of the League for Mental Health of SR, where it regularly informed about their activities and needs at local level. Executive Director of Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity represented people with mental illnesses and their relatives on the meetings of the National Council of Citizens with Disabilities of SR.

At the end of November, four representatives of Biswabharati Mahila Handicraft Samity participated in a seminar at the National Council by the opportunity of "The Day of persons with Health Disabilities", held under the auspices of the Chairman of National Council.