Evolution of a young Mental Health Service Users Association: EMILIA Barcelona

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We describe the evolution of the EMILIA Association Barcelona, since its formation (2009) as a part of the European EMILIA Project, until the current involvement in healthcare policy councils.
The follow-up has been possible thanks to its relationship with the Centre Forum, where the social headquarter is located and whose professionals have supported and assisted to the monthly meetings.
The association appeared as a result of the participation of a group of patients in the European EMILIA Project. Since then, the association has been involved in different activities providing training, information and knowledge promotion. The association has participated in a variety of contexts: healthcare, education and/or community. This has been possible due to the fact that its members are users trained in recovery and empowerment that have become experts by experience.

The Catalan Health Plan (2011-2015) has promoted the participation of people with chronic illness. The EMILIA Association Barcelona has been part of the Patients Advisory Council of the Catalan Government, where it has advised the government on healthcare policy.
This involvement in policy making follows the change of paradigm in the relationship between patients and healthcare services. Until recently, the patients' view of its own role was as a receptor of services; now the patient has more presence and is involved in the services.
In our presentation, we describe the main actions developed, the action fields and the collaborative synergies that have appeared with other associations.

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