



International Network of Women Against Tobacco A Program of the American Cancer Society

From the President, Margaretha Haglund

Thanks to the long, light nights we have in Sweden in the summer, I have had some time to reflect on what has happened with INWAT over the years. First and most important, with all your help, INWAT has made great progress. It seems the time has come for us to think more actively about what we would like INWAT to be in the future.

With our very busy schedules, we will certainly have to consider how we can manage to cope with the increased demands on us! We are a Network with members who devote their free time to the organization and we have minimal funding.

Just to start a discussion, I will declare my vision, which is that someday in the near future we will be able to set up an INWAT resource center on women and smoking. Our small office, which is staffed by Bonnie, is a good start, but we will absolutely need more funding to increase our activities. Thanks to my employer, the Swedish Institute of Public Health, the European Union, the Centers for Disease Control and the American Cancer Society, we can survive today. But in order to grow and to keep continuity I think INWAT has to make sure that our survival is not dependent on only a few devoted members.

Now what's new in the international arena? As I wrote in my last column, we all have great expectations for WHO and its new Director General. For the first time in its 50 year history, WHO is exercising its constitutional mandate to negotiate a Convention on Tobacco Control that will limit the global spread of tobacco and

tobacco products. "It seems only right that we focus on tobacco — at the turn of a century packed with achievements in science and medicine, tobacco stands out as an area of appalling neglect," said WHO Director-General, Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland at the World Health Assembly in May where 191 members of WHA unanimously backed a resolution calling for work to begin on the Framework Convention. A working group will soon begin to work on proposed draft elements of the Convention.

By 2003, WHO and its Member States are planning to have the Convention process completed. The success will certainly depend on all of us who are passionate about tobacco control. My dream here is that many INWAT members will be in the forefront of creating guidelines on *Strengthening Women's Leadership Role in Tobacco Control*. An important objective is to maintain the low smoking prevalence rates of women in many developing countries. Such guidelines will also be a good indicator of our progress.

I am also assured that the timing couldn't be better as even women's organizations are supporting us. Most of them have, until very recently, acted as the sleeping beauty! The real breakthrough came when the UN Commission on the Status of Women, which oversees compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, recommended several actions. Among them: governments, the UN system and the civil society should design, implement and strengthen prevention programs aimed at reducing tobacco use by women and girls; investigate the exploitation and targeting of young women by the tobacco industry; support action prohibiting tobacco advertising and access by minors to tobacco products, including warning labels; support smoke-free spaces; and develop gender sensitive cessation programs.

This recommendation was formulated at the UN Women Conference in New York in March. I was very pleased to be

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INWAT Seeks Tobacco Advertising

In order to make our slide/overhead/presentation collection one that reflects INWAT's membership, we need magazine ads from all over the world. We have a substantial collection from the US, but nothing from other countries. Please contribute to this effort by clipping tobacco ads and sending them to

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Your help is greatly appreciated.

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INWAT News

INWAT Member of INGCAT

In April, INWAT became a member of INGCAT, the International Non-Governmental Coalition against Tobacco. INGCAT, based in Paris, is run by Karen Slama and has over 100 member organizations. INGCAT gets most of its funding from UICC, the International Union Against Cancer, IUATLD, the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease and WHF, the World Heart Federation. In May, just before the World Health assembly, INGCAT arranged a meeting in Geneva about how non-governmental organizations can support the International Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. INWAT Vice President, Patti White, represented INWAT at the meeting and chaired a discussion group on women resisting the tobacco industry.

New Book on Tobacco and Women's Health

In 1994, Hannu Vierola, a Finnish specialist on gynaecology and obstetrics, published a book on women and tobacco. The book became very popular in Finland and also in Sweden, where an updated version was released last year. Hannu Vierola's book has been translated into English and is called; *Tobacco and Women's Health*, (ISBN 951-884-236-1). According to the author, the objective of the book is to provide comprehensive insight into the effects of cigarette smoking especially on women's health. Margaretha Haglund has written the introduction, *Smoking -an important feminist issue*.



Women and Tobacco Conference in Kobe

The World Health Organization is currently in the planning stage for the *WHO International Conference on Tobacco and Health: Making a Difference to Tobacco and Health; Avoiding the Tobacco Epidemic in Women*. The Conference, which is supported by the Ministry of Health and Welfare in Japan, Hyogo Prefecture and Kobe City, will be held in Kobe November 14 - 18, 1999. The Conference will focus particularly on Asia and the Pacific region.

The four-day meeting will bring together women leaders, nongovernmental organizations and the media, health scientists and policy makers in an effort to make a breakthrough in the tobacco epidemic. The meeting will highlight the role of women as leaders in tobacco control and the importance of dialogues between multiple stakeholders. Expertise will be drawn from a broad range of disciplines including public health, health sciences, anthropology, gender studies, environmental health and economics. Several INWAT members will participate. A preparatory meeting was held in Tokyo at the end of July. For more information, contact Soon Young Yoon, via e-mail: Syyoon@aol.com.

Smoke-Free Miss Sweden Could Influence Miss Universe

Some of you might remember that a couple of years ago I wrote about our Smoke-Free Miss Sweden project. For those who do not remember here is a short summary of the project:

In 1995, the organizers of the Miss Sweden contest joined the fight against smoking. In particular, the effort was made to reach out to those girls most at risk of getting hooked on smoking, especially "working-class girls." Since 1996, all candidates entering the contest must be totally smoke-free. Also, the finalists (one from every province, 28 in all), receive special training by the National Institute of Public Health. After the training, as a part of the competition, all the candidates travel to their own provinces, to visit schools discussing smoking with pupils, predominantly in the 4th-6th grade (11-13 years of age). Since the project began, the candidates have met more than 80,000 pupils all around Sweden.

Teachers and pupils alike have given the project a very high score. Our objectives have been reached far better than we could imagine. One of the most important objectives was the publicity of these very unexpected tobacco control advocates.

The project has received tremendous attention by the media, both in print and on TV. The value of it has been estimated to be more than 15 times more than we are paying for

the project every year. Most of the press has been very supportive, especially the local press.

There has, of course, been lively discussion about the pros and cons of the project from ethical and ideological viewpoints. Some members of the more active women organizations in Sweden have asked as a Swedish saying goes "for my head on a plate!" But I have always defended myself from the perspective that if the tobacco industry is wrapping their deadly products in gold and purple how can we then dress ourselves in sackcloth and ashes and wear only comfortable shoes?

Sweden has inspired other countries like Iceland where Miss Iceland became smoke free two years ago. Miss France will be smoke free next year. Even the organizers of Miss Universe, the biggest beauty competition in the world, have approached us and invited us to present the project at next year's Miss Universe final!

Now it would be nice to discuss this project with you. for instance, is it really satisfactory to co-operate with the devil himself? Is smoking really so exceptional that you are allowed to make choices like this? Please feel free to comment directly to me (e-mail:margaretha.haglund@fhinst.se) or in

the next issue of *The Net!*

—Margaretha Haglund



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What INWAT Can Do

Although we all struggle to prevent young girls from smoking almost all over the world, we do not share enough information. I hope INWAT can pool the information, and supply data, knowledge and experiences on women and tobacco via the internet.

A WHO conference (WHO International Conference on Tobacco and Health in Kobe Nov.15 - Nov. 18, 1999) will be held in Japan. Its theme is *Making a Difference to Tobacco and Health: Avoiding the Tobacco Epidemic in Women and Children*, and INWAT will be very involved in the conference.



Perhaps we could send members a questionnaire and publish the results on our website or on GLOBALink.

The information we would gather could be, for example,

1. Smoking rates by sex and age (now and changing trend during past 10 years if possible), the cause of women's mortality, the major health problem of women

2. The names and contents of prevention and cessation programs for women developed or used in their country (how to

get the program if possible), and any evaluations that exist?

3. The means to send information to a specific group of women and how to deliver the programs to these women

4. What problems must be cleared.

What do you think? Do you have other ideas about what information we should collect? Please contact me regarding the questionnaire:

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President's Message

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invited as a speaker at a seminar on women and smoking, organized jointly by WHO and the Global Alliance for Women's Health. After the seminar more than 90 organizations from all around the world signed up as WHO partners on this issue. Very soon there will be a special publication from the Seminar. As a follow-up, I was also invited to speak at the Soroptimist International World Conference in Helsinki in July to 1500 enthusiastic women, many of whom wanted to join INWAT. Things are really moving in the right direction!

Our European section is also developing. And as reported in the last issue of *The Net*, in June INWAT-Europe arranged, in co-operation with the Health Education Authority in England, an Expert Seminar to follow-up the Paris Conference on Women and Smoking. In August there will be a report ready from the meeting. This document is aimed at European policy makers, on the national and regional level and will hopefully be used to stimulate discussion leading to the adoption of gender sensitive tobacco control strategies—strategies that are so far very rare in Europe as well as in the rest of the World!

Preparations for the next World Conference in August 2000 are in a more intensive phase and I have indications of our success with the list of names of members that we suggested for the organizers. From what I have seen so far, the representation of women at the Conference will be as good as in China in 1997, and perhaps even better. I really hope to meet many of you next summer in Chicago.

Finally, we Swedes are very nationalistic and in my many trips abroad, I have noticed that Sweden is often mixed up with Switzerland, may I suggest you try this and you will never mix us up again! On a globe, cover North America with your left hand and Russia with your right and you will find Sweden with no difficulty by letting your gaze wander northwards over the European continent towards Scandinavia. Our nearest neighbours are Norway to the west, Finland to the east and Denmark to the south. If you are passing by just give me a ring and I will give you a guide in my beautiful hometown Stockholm, that is actually called the Venice of the North!

Find INWAT on the web at <http://www.inwat.org>

Check it out and send us your comments and suggestions.
What would you like to see on our website?

Please contact Bonnie Kantor,
by email at bonnie@inwat.org,
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with your ideas.

The website has back issues of *The Net*, as well as English and French versions of INWAT-Europe's newsletter, in PDF format. All you need is Adobe Acrobat to view or print it.

You can send a suggestion or comment directly from the website.
Just click on "*Let us know what you think*"

News from INWAT Europe

The INWAT European project is now reaching the end of a two year pilot project. Before planning the next stage, we will be evaluating progress. The project's aims are to contribute to the reduction of tobacco use among women in Europe by developing the International Network of Women Against Tobacco in Europe, and using it

- to promote communication and exchange
- to develop consensus on the main elements of a women-centered tobacco control strategy for Europe
- to raise awareness of women's tobacco control issues in Europe

We have been working hard towards these aims: here is a short progress report.

1. Developing the network. We now have nearly 140 members in over 20 European countries, ranging from the founding nations of the European Union, to Iceland in the far north, Malta, and Bulgaria in eastern Europe. We are still seeking new members, particularly to ensure a better spread throughout the 15 countries of the European union and beyond. We promote the network at meetings and conferences, and through our publications and increasingly by electronic means: a big task for which we need resources is to make effective partnerships with international organizations and women's groups of all kinds at the European level. And then many of our members, for example in Germany and Spain, are working hard to build up national networks. There is a lot still to do!
2. Promoting communication and exchange. We are now busy preparing a second, expanded edition of the INWAT Europe directory. (All INWAT Europe members are also members of global INWAT.) We publish two newsletters each year, and send out frequent requests for information and help to our members. As the project has developed, it has become clear that electronic communication is increasingly the key to effective networking, and we are encouraging our members to make use of email and the internet, and to use Globalink. A new Globalink conference on women and tobacco has recently started; this is open to all Globalink members and we hope it will be used by anyone interested in the issue.
3. What do people from such diverse cultures and language groups have in common? We keep a great deal of information about our members on the project database, and find that they do have many interests and experience in common. INWAT Europe members are most likely to be public service workers, or workers in health care or health promotion. There are also a significant number of teachers and workers in the voluntary sector. So far we have not recruited any creative artists! Members have a wide and varied experience in tobacco control for women, and represent an important resource for policy and program planners. A large majority of INWAT Europe members have a professional involvement in tobacco control, and most of them work or

have worked on topics related to women and tobacco. The commonest topics they work on are women's health and tobacco, children/ families and tobacco, smoking prevalence and trends, and helping women to stop smoking. But significant numbers say that they are involved other tobacco control topics, i.e. poverty, low income and tobacco, taxation and smuggling, tobacco promotion, policy development, advocacy and legal issues. Nearly 40% of INWAT's members are or have been involved in research projects relating to women and tobacco. INWAT members have wide experience in all areas of tobacco control in their own countries, but many fewer are working at the European or international level.

Overall, members think that the most important priority in their own countries is to develop woman-centered programs on tobacco or health, closely followed by prevention/education programs for girls, and a ban on all forms of tobacco promotion. Cessation for women, raising public awareness, and promoting action to improve the social and economic status of women are also major priorities.

The biggest priority in Europe for our members is to ban tobacco promotion, followed by the development of woman-centered strategies and programs, and promoting networking and exchange. There is some indication that priorities may be different among different professional groups and also in different countries. It will be valuable to look at these differences in more detail as membership grows and becomes more evenly spread throughout Europe.

The 11th World Conference on Tobacco OR Health will take place August 6-11, 2000 in Chicago, Illinois. Planning is well underway for this trendsetting international event. The themes of the conference include: Are We Winning?-- Appraising Progress and Celebrating Success; Nicotine: the Present and the Future; and Advocacy in Action.

While always an event for tobacco control advocates to attend, great efforts are being made to include less traditional allies. Another major objective is to build the capacity of the tobacco control infrastructure for the future. As a result, a number of fellowships are available for promising tobacco control advocates from developing and newly developed countries.

For more information about the conference, please contact Anne Jenkins, Conference Manager, 11th World Conference on Tobacco OR Health, 515 North State Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610 USA; 1-312-464-5159 (voice) 1-312-464-4111(fax); 11thwctoh@ama-assn.org (e-mail). INWAT will play a major role in planning the conference program. We also will have meetings, deliver the first INWAT award, and guide members and colleagues through the conference. If you are interested, please contact Bonnie Kantor :(voice) 732-549-9054 or (email) bonnie@inwat.org

INWAT Europe Expert Seminar

INWAT Europe's major initiative this year was a seminar attended by over 20 invited experts who met in London in June for two hard days of presentations and discussion. Following up the ENSP conference last November, the aim was to review what we know about the problem of women and smoking, identify gaps in knowledge and policies, and to explore the implications for the development and implementation of tobacco control strategies. Special workshops looked at data collection and research prioritization and design, and how to promote gender-specific tobacco policies. The seminar ended with a look beyond the millennium, at tobacco industry strategies and how to combat them.

The seminar report will be ready later in 1999. It will summarise the proceedings and suggest strategies for managing culture and language barriers and building partnerships with international organizations and women's groups. It will set out action points and recommendations, create a basis and strategy for INWAT Europe's work in future, and provide essential support for our members' work.

Generous sponsorship from the Health Education Authority in London enabled us to increase attendance and to appoint a consultant, Lyndsay Mountford, to help prepare the program, facilitate the seminar and write the report. They also offered administrative support. Thanks to the HEA, and specially to Paul Lincoln, Patti White, Steve Woodward and Paul Whiteley for all their help.

—Alison Hillhouse

- **INWAT Europe** now has members in all corners of Europe, from Iceland to Malta, and from Israel to Ireland. But we still need members in some EU countries, and to improve the spread throughout Europe.
- **Congratulations** to three INWAT Europe members who were recently awarded WHO medals for their work in tobacco control: Liisa Elovainio, secretary general of the Cancer Society of Finland; Dr Ann McNeill of the HEA in London for her work on addiction and cessation, and our advisory group member Martina Potschke-Langer for her tireless work in Germany.
- **Spain.** INWAT's last news letter was sent to 250 women's organizations, and in Catalonia, SCAPT is running 15 courses on women and smoking with the Catalan Women's Institute.
- **Germany.** Martina Potschke-Langer is part of a European partnership program on nicotine dependence, and she is using this, and the German tobacco control coalition, to integrate INWAT Europe activities in Germany. Her organization, the German Cancer Research Centre, provides a press service for German speaking countries and this is producing results - for example an hour-long program on "Mona Lisa," the most popular German TV show for women.
- **Denmark.** The first national conference on women and tobacco took place in Copenhagen in June 1999.
- **Italy.** The first Italian national conference on tobacco will take place on September 15, 1999.
- **England.** The HEA has undertaken a major media campaign on young women and smoking.
- **Bulgaria.** Welcome to the new Bulgarian movement "Women against Tobacco," whose chair is Associate Professor Liliana Tsoneva-Penceva.
- **WHO Europe.** Margaretha Haglund represents INWAT on the new WHO committee for a Tobacco Free Europe. It met for the first time in June 1999.



The deadline for the fall issue of *The Net* is October 1
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