

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF INVENTORS' ASSOCIATIONS

## WIPO REPORTING ABOUT WOMEN INVENTORS

In April 1997 WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization) sent an inquiry to the national industrial property offices concerning the situation of women inventors in their countries. Several countries have sent statistic information. On the basis of this information WIPO reports among other things:

Depending on the country, women seem to represent generally anywhere from one to seven percent of the total number of inventors credited with a patented invention. This percentage can vary enormously from region to region, and may be as high as 10-12%. These modest figures, however, seem to be growing, both in actual and proportional numbers. Moreover, another trend can be perceived: women are inventing in ever-increasingly wider and more varied fields.

Historically, it would seem that women, as a group, start inventing in areas mainly related to child, home and beauty care. At a second stage, women seem to advance into practical or "nurturing" kinds of inventions, for use outside of the "home", with a variety of mechanical and safety-oriented inventions and inventions in the health and medical fields. Finally, women seem to strike out into a variety of areas which may not be associated with traditional stereotypes, such as chemistry and heavy industry as well as high-technology fields. For example, women seem to be successful in large numbers as researchers and inventors in biotechnology, including genetic engineering.

### Do you want to be one of us?

IFIA-WIN, the only international women inventors network, welcomes you to join the group of extraordinary women. We are from 39 countries around the world. Our members represent various fields of creative and innovative work. It is IFIA-WIN that makes women inventors internationally known to the world and to each other.

Membership fee: US\$ 50 for two years, developing countries US\$25 only.

Inquiries: IFIA, Geneva (see page 4 bottom)

## WOMEN INVENTORS NETWORK

July - December 1998

## NEWS SENT BY IFIA PRESIDENT Farag Moussa

### Argentina: Award

Ms Diana Connie Alisio, medical doctor from Argentina, was honoured during a special ceremony on October 2, 1998, by the Municipality of her town, Rosario, with the award "Distinguished Woman Inventor of the City of Rosario". Ms Alisio had received a Gold Medal at the Geneva International Exhibition of Inventions in April 1998, for her "Emergency mouth-opening, tongue holding and throat-disobstructing device to be used in epileptic attacks or traumatic shocks". Congratulations!

### Poland: First Prize winner

In our last issue (page 1), it was announced that *Professor Alfreda Graczyk* was the laureate of the Maria Skłodowska-Curie Award. Here is a picture of her when receiving the award on December 15, 1997.



Prof. Alfreda Graczyk

### Brazil: Award

Ms Sheila Martins Lopes received the IFIA prize for her "ecological tricycle", protected by a Utility Model. This was one of the awards offered by IFIA in the framework of the 1998 contest organized by the Brazilian Institute of Inventors in Rio de Janeiro.

### USA: Projects

Four women, two from New York and two from Oklahoma, are actively promoting the creation of women inventors networks. The president of IFIA provided them with material and information. Hope to give more information in our next issue.

(Continued on page 2, column 1)

## Yugoslavia: Conference

Dr Stanislava Acin Singulinski, Professor at the Faculty of Economics in Subotica, University of Novi Sad, and Managing Director of the project "Women Inventors", organized a two-day conference on October 8 and 9, 1998. The first day was devoted to the promotion of women's creativity from "Idea to implementation", including the role of creative education in this process. The theme of the second day of the conference was Innovative Management, based on personal experiences of successful women. The proceedings will be published in the language of the conference, which was Serbian.

## United Kingdom: Contest

In 1998, PFWN (Professional Family Women's Network) promoted the first national competition in the UK for women inventors, and provided the winner and two other laureates with the opportunity of exhibiting their inventions free of charge at the London International Fair, on September 24-27. Thank you, PFWN, for this excellent initiative!

Congratulations, also, to Iris White, winner of the British Female Inventor of the Year Award 1998 for her "Talking Potty". This well developed and commercially viable project assists parents in the toilet training of their children through encouraging messages recorded in their own voices, or other sounds of praise and applause.

## Swiss TV-film

The well-known NZZ Format TV producer in Zurich mounted an excellent 20-minute documentary which was first shown end of October 1998 on Swiss television. Farag Moussa, IFIA President, is interviewed in this film, which also features British and Swiss women inventors as well as the WIPO exhibit (see below).

## WIPO Exhibition

"Women invent" is the first exhibition presented by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) from September 8 to March 31, 1999, at its new Visitors Center. Most of the girl inventors and women inventors who figure in this portrait gallery are award winners. For the occasion, a booklet was published listing 82 women and girl inventors from 33 countries who have received the WIPO Gold Medal. A large majority of the material and information submitted to WIPO came from several industrial property offices, and the president of IFIA also contributed to the collection with information and photographs.

## MENTORING PROJECTS FOR WOMEN - A SUPPORT SYSTEM TO HELP WOMEN INVENTORS?

"Mentor" is a generally well-respected and learned person whose function is to responsibly bring up and advise a younger, less experienced person. Mentoring is a process in which one person, the ment- or, supports the career and development of another person, the mentee, outside the normal superior-subordinate relationship. Mentoring is a sheltered relationship that allows learning and experimentation to take place, and personal potential and new skills to flourish. Mentoring also involves the mentee maximising her performance by putting her own and her mentor's experience to good use. The mentee with her fresh knowledge helps the mentor bring her expertise up-to-date.

Mentoring is an ancient method, which is frequently used in the modern management and development programmes. The American literature on mentoring was well received in the UK and the Scandinavian countries in particular. The idea of mentoring lives in practice in these countries in the form of several programmes for the support of women in employment. In the other European countries, however, mentoring as a method for the advancement of women is still largely unknown. In 1997 there were mentoring programmes for women in Germany, Finland, the UK, Ireland, The Netherlands, Austria and Sweden.



Mentoring involves coaching, advising and assisting. In view of women's typical behaviour patterns, it seems that mentoring would be especially suitable for women. They are more oriented towards communica-

tion and one-to-one relationships and they are used to sharing knowledge, feelings and experiences. Mentoring can be adapted to network activities and to project work where practical experience is needed. Considering networks of women inventors, this strategy seems suitable for women inventors in particular.

Information on the strategy: Irene Hoffman-Lun, Simone Schönfeld, Nadja Tschirner  
DJI, Deutsches Jugendinstitut, Abteilung Mädchen und Frauenforschung  
Nockherst. 2, 81541 München, Germany

For the attention of inventors' organizations in the EU-countries European Union is launching the 5th programme with innovative development objectives covering the years 1998-2002. It is time to plan innovative national / international women inventors programs and search for partners from other countries. The programs and the objectives favour women's development projects, grass root level participation, network, training, environment, innovative projects of small and medium size enterprises. There are keywords like "innovative products, methods and organizations". Start planning!  
Contact the EU-authorities of your country for consultation. Submit your suggestions!

## WOMEN INVENTORS ASSOCIATION IN FINLAND STRENGTHENING ITS ROLE

The Foundation of Finnish Inventions has promised to help financially the Women Inventors Association in Finland in three fields: exhibition projects, courses on creativity and inventions as well as European Union innovative women projects.

The association aroused attention by organizing recently two seminars to improve the co-operation between innovators and the authorities receiving suggestions from citizens. The first seminar in the auditorium of the Patent Office was on the theme "How society can help innovations of the citizens to become realized". This was 5th June in Helsinki. The second seminar took place in Turku 26th September 1998 on the theme "Do good ideas vanish in the institutions of power?" The association is now speaking in publicity about "a good practice of handling ideas" in order to establish such a practice.

### Looking for partners in EU-countries

The Women Inventors Association in Finland together with the Foundation of Finnish Inventions is open for cooperation with inventors' groups that are ready for a women inventors project as partners.

Please, contact: Ms. Kristiina Annala  
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## WANTED: CHARLOTTE GABEL Who was she? Who has information on her?

Born 1906, father a Danish France ambassador, mother, Lene Gabel, one of the first female Danish physicists and the only foreigner whom Marie and Pierre Curie invited to work in their laboratory in Paris. Charlotte made her PhD in Physics 1926 in Sorbonne on "Past time by the quantum measurement". She worked as a researcher in the Institute of Theoretic Physics in Copenhagen and came back to Paris 1929 to make scientific experiments supported by a huge grant from Ministry of Commerce and Industry of France. Only a few researchers in Denmark and Germany knew about her secret tests. How did this brilliant scientist, whose talent astonished even Niels Bohr and Albert Einstein, vanish? What happened to her? Why is her name missing even in the best encyclopedias? Charlotte lived before her time. Her time would be right now to make intuition understandable for the new age thinking.

(The above information is from the book of Peter Hoeg: "A Study on the durability of love", series Foertällingar om natten, Copenhagen 1990.

## THE SWEDISH WAY: CASE INEVA, NETWORK FOR WOMEN IINNOVATORS

The Swedish company INEVA AB (Ltd) was founded to build a network for female innovators and to develop their know-how. The QUIS group in Stockholm was the first cell of the network. The second group was found in Hallan in December 1996 and the third group in Göteborg in March 1997. Next month, April 1997, INEVA was asked to found five further regional groups.



Irene Jansson

Irene Jansson, who conducted a study on women inventors in Sweden 1996 and initiated the company, tells about their activities:

" We expect that we shall have active networking and an efficient Internet system to serve women inventors in all the 23 regions of Sweden within three years. In the future effective communication Irene Jansson transfer will become more and more important. It is

im-portant, too, that women innovators are able to use the database, internet and electronic newsletters, in a professional way.

When starting our work we got financial help from the Communication Department for Internet Development but there is still much to do. So far the homepages are only in Swedish but we intend to translate some few pages into English. The conference page will be the first one to be translated. It will offer a page where anybody can come up with her questions and opinions.

When we started our work many people, both men and women, questioned our activities. Today we have good feed back and all of them want to be with us and give us a hand. We have become a noteworthy partner and the network out in the different regions has gained status and local influence".

Besides SUF, the inventors association, INEVA cooperates with SIC, Foundation Innovation Center. The foundation will invest 2,5 million SEK (US\$ 310.000) in a year to encourage women inventors and to increase the number of applications from women. The INEVA project is one of the 16 European Union NOW-projects (New Opportunities for Women) in Sweden.

The next step of the network will be to start innovation training, a new type of training for women, in early 1999. No innovative background is required for participation.

## INVENTION CORNER

### Hong Kong

Women inventors are active in Hong Kong. HKIA, The Hong Kong Inventors Association, reports that female inventors are as active as male inventors in Hong Kong, and the ratio is practically the same. Asked about the recent inventions of their female inventors HKIA introduces Ms. Ching-Sze Li and Ms. Ching-Sze Li Ms. B.K.Lam.



Ms Li's patented invention involves applying artistic designs to the inside wall of transparent containers, where the hand cannot directly reach. This method consists chiefly of filling the container to be decorated with a liquid, and then inserting a decal cellophane lined with a backing paper. The final products possess special characteristics of elaborate workmanship, long-lasting decoration, and resistance to water, alcohol and heat. It is suitable to be applied on perfume bottles, lamps and vases, etc.



Ms. B.K.Lam

The invention of Ms. B.K.Lam is the "Mama Mia" educational wordgame. Words are made by putting one or more letter cards from a Player's hand after the last letter of the preceding player. The first player getting rid of his cards is the winner. The game teaches quick observation, reading, writing and languages.

## CANADIAN WOMEN INVENTORS PROJECT

### A new Guide: Who is missing?

The most recent project of the Canadian Women Inventors Project, WIP, has been extremely well received. It is their new "Practical Guide to Including Girls in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics". This 20 page educational guide, "Who is missing?", is prepared for anyone who works with girls and recognises the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) for young people. There is a need to ensure that the early experiences of girls and young women give them the opportunity to succeed in STEM.

The guide offers eighteen practical, easy to implement tips on ways to talk to, debrief and encourage girls in the participation and involvement in STEM. When introduced by WIP, it will help to dispel the idea that STEM is for nerds, unlock the door to a whole new world of experiment and confidence for girls, change attitudes, and encourage girls to seek the opportunities that STEM offers.

WIP has written this guide to be used by all people working in formal or informal education settings with girls and young women. If the practical tips in this guide are used and implemented, then the opportunity for girls to succeed in science and technology will be improved, promises the WIP.

For further information, contact:  
Women Inventors Project,  
107 Holm Crescent, Thornhill, ONT L3T 514,  
Canada, Tel. 905-7310328, Fax 9319691

## ROLEX AWARDS 2000 - AN OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN INVENTORS

Anyone of any age or of any country can apply for a Rolex Award. Past winners have ranged from taxi drivers and housewives to plastic surgeons and theoretical physicists. The five top winners will each receive US \$75,000 and up to ten other entrants will each receive US \$25,000. The contest is for people breaking new ground in areas that advance human knowledge and well-being. An international panel of judges will be looking for new unrecognized talent and, above all, for an exceptional spirit of enterprise.



The areas for suggestions: Science, Environment, Technology and Innovation, Cultural Heritage and Discovery.

Termination dates for the applications:  
Europe, Middle-East, Africa - April 30, 1999  
North and South America - July 31, 1999  
Asia and Pacific - October 31, 1999

Information: The Rolex Awards for Enterprise  
P.O. Box 1311, 1211 Geneva 26, Switzerland  
or visit the website at: [www.rolexawards.com](http://www.rolexawards.com).

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