



*Women's Organisations
Committee on Alcohol and Drug Issues*

NordAN Women's session

Tallin, Estonia

2013-10-12

**"BellaNet International –from basement floor to
EU:s Top Ten Story"**

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WOCAD/KSAN (Sweden)

WOCAD's statutes

WOCAD is the Swedish women organisations' collaborative body for issues concerning alcohol and other addictive substances. We classify narcotics and certain other drugs as addictive substances.

1. AIMS

WOCAD wishes to contribute to a social environment without harm and abuse as a result of alcohol, drugs and other addictive substances such as sleeping pills and tranquilisers.

WOCAD is primarily involved in preventive activities in these subject areas from a woman's perspective with the following aims:

- Disseminating information
- Increasing understanding of the connection between use and harm
- Stimulating debate
- Influencing attitudes and values
- Following and supporting research
- Working with these issues at national and international levels



We thought in the beginning of 1990's that:

- girls should meet to discuss issues relating to lifestyle, identity, courage and self-esteem.
- girls should be given the opportunity to realize their potential, develop their decision-making capacity and train preventive action.
- girls may need help to strengthen their identity and take pride in themselves as girls.
- Girls need training to identify and reject violations of their rights.
- It is stimulating to work with girl groups.



Different reasons for focusing on girls

- Meeting at the crossroads
- Reaching out to **all** teenage girls
- Various studies of risk behavior among young girls
- Girls' leisure activities
- Quiet girls
- Drunk and aggressive girls
- Increased number of girls at risk



History of Rubble and Roses

- WOCAD has educated about 7000 girl group leaders in Sweden since 1994, in all of Sweden's 21 counties.
- WOCAD has educated in other countries, Iceland, Romania, Belarus, Finland...



Why girl groups are drug preventive

Research show:

- the importance of developing independence and self esteem as young girls
- the need and ability of setting boundaries and healthy limits
- changes in alcohol and drug behavior after testing solutions to everyday conflict situations - life coping skills
- the importance of dealing with stress
- 3 out of 4 girls change their drinking habits after attending a girl group



Interactive methods for influencing attitudes, self-confidence and group development

1. Value clarification exercises

- Reflect and take stand
- Express their opinions
- Justify their standpoints
- Be listened to and listen to others
- Reflect and revise attitudes

2. Reflection

- A new element
- The effects of exercises on earlier held standpoints
- No debate
- No hierarchy

3. Forum Play

- Drama and theater often appeal to girls
- Provides healthy training in taking action
- Quiet girls are given the opportunity to play expressive roles
- Develops communication abilities and strengthens self-confidence



Examples of value clarification exercises

- The hot seat – standing up for your beliefs
- Stand-on-a-line – allows you to polarise issues in a dramatic way
- Dilemma/4-corner-exercise – based on a question or problem on which the participants must formulate an opinion
- Unfinished sentences – the leader formulates unfinished sentences and participants complete the sentences spontaneously with whatever comes to mind

How do we reach teenage girls?

Bella –Rubble & Roses 2

- Material for leaders of girl groups
- Interactive methods and techniques designed to influence attitudes and change behavioural patterns
- Reflection





More girl groups needed!

A project from 2002 - 2004 for

- Implementation
- Evaluation
 - politicians
 - girl group leaders
 - 600 girls
- Action





What did the girls think?

- A sense of sharing
- Greater tolerance
- Understanding – empathy
- Increased self-confidence

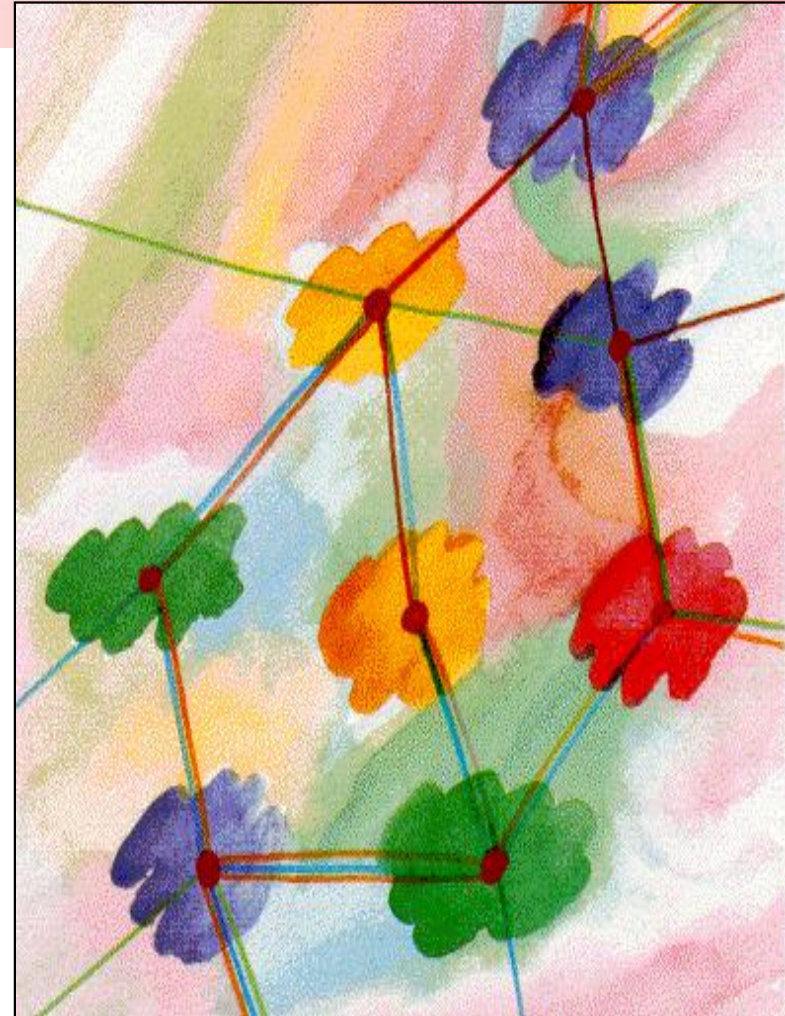


What did the girl group leaders think?

- The focus on girls is important
- Their own need of :
 - support
 - supervision
 - sharing experiences
 - drug education
 - training and developing group leader skills
- WOCAD started a project – a National Network For Girl Group Leaders – BellaNet on Internet
- WOCAD employed a project leader in November 2005, Britt Frendenman

Network for girl group leaders - BellaNet

- National Network for girl group leaders
- Present project, since 2005
- Rooted in all 21 counties in Sweden and since 2009 also international members
- Purpose: to strengthen, stimulate and develop methods for working with drug preventive girl groups





BellaNet

- www.bellanet.se
- A website and a forum for practicing girl group leaders.
- Apply for membership at www.bellanet.se or info@ksan.se
- Objective: to exchange knowledge and experience
- National and international reference groups

EAD – European Action on Drugs



- WOCAD's drug preventative work with girls and young women in focus, *BellaNet*, was recognized 2009 by the EU Commission as an EAD-activity (European Action on Drugs).
- The EAD objective is to enhance information and awareness levels about the risks of drug use among youth.
- EAD embraces NGOs, local and national bodies, individuals, schools, universities, companies etc.
- www.action-drugs.eu

European Action on Drugs (EAD)

WOCAD

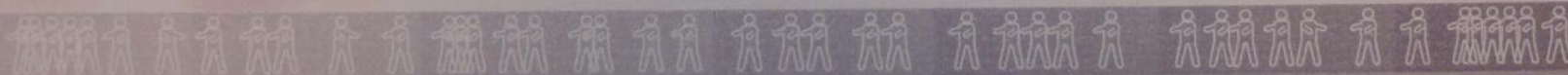
has made a voluntary commitment to engage
in practical action to support the EAD.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND SECURITY



EUROPEAN ACTION ON DRUGS





WOCAD Commitment



EUROPEAN ACTION ON DRUGS

- **Opening up WOCAD's national network for girl group leaders in Sweden (www.bellanet.se) to those in EU interested in gender specific drug prevention.**
- **The international network will raise awareness of drug-related issues and aim at preventing the use of illegal drugs among teenage girls in all EU countries.**
- **The Swedish network will support new international members and together develop and exchange methods.**
- **www.bellanet.se will be open 24 hours a day from 26 June 2009.**
- **WOCAD will introduce two persons from each EU-country in methods of starting drug preventive girl groups with the "Bella-method":**
Girls meet in groups to perform values clarification and forum plays around various life topics. After a period of regular meetings their self-esteem grows and also their awareness of their own power.



WOCAD in Romania

2-4 June, 2010

- **WOCAD and EURAD/Europe Against Drugs.**
- **Two-day-education course in gender specific drug prevention, in Gura Humorului in Romania, June 2-4, 2010.**
- **Over 30 professionals from seven different countries.**
- **All participants were invited to join BellaNet International.**





Examples of newly generated projects where WOCAD's method is used:

A) Project *Equal Opportunities for an Inclusive Community* targeting 500 Roma women from rural communities. Bella-method is being used as a stepping stone for promoting non discriminatory factors and alcohol preventive behaviour in 3 girl groups among 39 young Roma women aged between 16 and 30.

B) Project *Addiction between Necessity and Spirit*, focusing on teenage girls' risk behaviour, aged between 16 and 18, who have been abandoned by parents or are orphans.

C) Joint project of Romanian and Moldavian girls "*Younger club*", aimed at developing self esteem skills and preventive behaviour among young women between 18 and 24. The target group consists of slightly mentally disabled girls and those infected with AIDS and HIV. There are 25 girls involved in the project so far.

D) Association of *Suceava teachers together with 5 organisations from Belgium, Spain, GB, Turkey, Greece and Denmark* are using the method to develop communication skills concerning prevention in discussions with children among teachers and parents from rural area communities. The target group comprise almost 1000 women. By now 2 groups of 20 mothers and women teachers are formed.

E) Project *Women: beggary and poorness* – focused on informing about how to prevent violence against women and preclude alcohol and drug consumption. The project is being implemented in the area of wine production. Alcoholism is a great problem for many there, including women. The project embraces around 100 women and girls.



WOCAD in Finland

April, 2013

- WOCAD with Naistenkartano r.y
- Kick off for BellaNet Suomi and education for girl group leaders in Helsinki





BellaNet Iceland

20 aug ,2013

- BellaNet International grows in Iceland in cooperation with NGO Blatt Afram in Reykjavik since 2009





Certificate of recognition

- WOCAD submitted BellaNet International to the European Drug Prevention Prize 2010, organized by Pompidou Group, Council of Europe.
- WOCAD's BellaNet International received a special "Certificate of recognition" for innovative work in drug prevention with the active involvement of youth.





BellaNet International EU:s Top Ten Story

**Gender specific drug prevention –
investment for life:**

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/anti-drugs/ead/stories/story-sweden_en.htm



Examples of future collaborations

Finland: BellaNet International, Bella Training Day 2 in Helsinki, in collaboration with NGOs Naistenkartano 2013.

Latvia: BellaNet International, Bella learning concepts, in cooperation with SOS Children's villages and Youth Temperance Union in Latvia 2014.

Additional requests for cooperation and learning concepts, issued by the Kampala in Uganda and Senegal in West Africa through various partnerships 2014.



New challenges when working with gender specific drug prevention

- WOCAD's work with gender specific drug prevention is always evolving as new challenges face those who work with prevention.
- WOCAD continually informs BellaNet International with updated news about topics related to girls and drug prevention.
- WOCAD works with different projects, e.g. about Marketing of tobacco and alcohol, and Girls and pills – BellaNet International receives information about WOCAD's projects.



Conclusions

- Targeting teenage girls is an ongoing project
- Drug preventive education an ongoing project
- Inspiration to focus on health, happiness and sisterhood
- Training girl group leaders as leaders and role models
- BellaNet: 24 hour access to building drug preventive capacity, both national and international
- Approximately 40 million European teenage girls are waiting for us!



Thank you for your attention!

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