

HIV- POSITIVES HELPING THEIR DOCTORS

(the **X. GNP+** Conference,
Trinidad & Tobago, X. 2001)

(translated from Latvian)

As a global network of PWA, **GNP+** has its branches in each continent (ENP+ in Europe). Conference was organised by CRN+ (Caribbean Regional Network) in this small Caribbean island country (Tobago once was a Latvian (duchy of Kurland's) colony). Local PWA NGO was among its organisers. The conference showed that even a smaller country than Latvia can successfully implement such a global event.

Speaking of **logistics**, the conference could not have happened without volunteers' (including local PWAs') input. An interesting fact: even the army was involved (soldiers helped packing delegates' luggage in lorries at the airport etc.).

Logically, the most of **delegates** were from Caribbean and L. America. At the conference closing, African participants protested with their usual persistence the small percentage of their delegates. Similarly, almost non- represented E Europeans could have raised the same claims. But that's the way it goes – this conference rotates – each time in a different region of the globe.

The sole reproach to the organisers from my side goes to the jury concerning elections of the bi- annual "Miss GNP+". A Latino guy, humorously disguised and most applauded, got elected. It seemed discriminative towards participating girls - their feelings in such matters could be very sensitive, and I pitied the attractive Miss Tobago – for her, representing a small nation, this maybe was the only chance to get some international attention, be it just a fun it was.

Regarding conference forums, panels and workshops, here are some glimpses:

GFATM. A TWG (Transit WG) has been established and our congratulations went to a TT representative elected its member. TWG will enable the openness of Fund's activities to its target population – PWAs and their organisations. The funds will be allotted to countries (their programmes). AGIHAS should get involved in creation of the Latvian programme. As a member of UNAIDS Theme Group, AGIHAS could follow the programme implementation, so that no money stops somewhere, as was the case with our AIDS department manager in the beginning of 90-ies.

The Red Cross. To my knowledge, this was the first AIDS conference where it participated. Previously in Latvia, we have heard of the Youth RC AIDS activities. From now on, we could cooperate with the RC itself (world's oldest NGO) as well.

Access to ART. During the conference a sad fact was revealed to us that the only treatment available in TT is AZT for pregnant women. To my disappointment, the GNP+ leaders did not see it appropriate to write a petition to the TT government on this issue. Compared to Latvia, TT has much greater natural resources and lots of tourists, so it should be capable to provide ARVs. Seems, there are more corrupted governments than ours.

Not to finish on a sad note, here are some interesting evidences from conference delegates:

New Zealand's pharma companies are providing medical experts – PWAs may have their consultations, unlimited in time.

Nigeria's AIDS activists sometimes are “teaching” their doctors by informing them on latest achievements in the field. Compared to activists, doctors have less opportunities to attend different conferences.

U.S.A. A positive HIV test result is someplace being announced by HIV+ activists. Doctors get spared of this psychological burden and an early professional burn- out.

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