

First and foremost I would like to say thank you for inviting me here and giving me the opportunity to speak on this particular subject.

It is a topic which has had a great influence on me over the years both professionally and privately.

Before I jump into this topic, I will give you a brief presentation of myself and what grounds I have to bring you my views and opinions regarding this exciting topic which should have the great interest of politicians and government officials alike.

My name is Vivi Aakjær. Since I was a young girl I have had a great interest in inventions and new ideas.

It started when I was 12 years old and was listening to a radio broadcast about the man who invented the Ice Cube Bag. We all know him as Erling Vangede Nielsen – he became my idol and source of inspiration from then on. Today, I have the privilege of calling him my friend.

As you all know there are no specific higher learning courses available to be an inventor, so instead I pursued an education in business. I took my Upper Secondary Education with focuses on business and socio-economic disciplines in combination with foreign languages. Furthered my education within the Ministry of Taxations and Tax administration and followed that with an education as an Academy Profession Graduate.

The years went by and with all my gained knowledge within the business world, my goal with all of this was still to become a self-employed, self-sustainable inventor!

Finally I took a leap of faith to give myself a chance to free up my brain for ideas. I quit my well paid job as an export responsible and right hand for the founder of the company Urtekram, which is the biggest supplier of organic products in Scandinavia.

I started my own business buying and selling nice used children's clothing using my own house as a home office base for sales. All the while I started playing with my ideas and they quickly took flight. So much that I soon sold my children's clothing concept with a profit so I could focus on my ideas and inventions whether it was ice-cream, bicycles, laundry bags, double loop hair bands, concepts etc...

When I started I must admit I was venturing on thin ice. At that time the word Innovation was not yet a buzz word or for that matter calling yourself an inventor... What did you invent?... The deep saucer??...

To be an inventor today is a job like being a smithy, farmer or MSc (Master of Science), and who says a woman or even a child for that matter can't be an inventor?

To be an inventor is to try and find new ways, new solutions, to be creative and perhaps find new concepts that fulfil new needs constantly created in the industrial world, agriculture, fishing, hospitals or maybe even in our own homes.

Today, pretty much everyone is an inventor, even children/young adults have inventions in school... innovation... while I'm thinking, "That's a piece of cake – but very far from my reality"!!

When do children start playing dentist or doctor.. Hocus Pocus.. Now you're able to pull out a tooth so you're practically ready to start your own practice... Or what??

Even better!

Teaching creativity and innovation whether it be in grade school or university, competitions are now held around the world; who has the best and the brightest students? Devotedly countries spend millions on innovation. Consumer driven innovation, social driven innovation and soon recycling innovation. One government after the other in collaboration with civil servants have worked persistently at spending money and channeling them to schools, universities with the sole purpose of becoming the world's most innovative country... We are certainly doing well!! Applaud applaud.... But this is where I ask... Where is the return profit? How many inventors can live off of their ideas?

We need to start focusing on the sub groups – The private inventors, those who fight bravely every day to make an earning from their inventions and ideas. It is comical though, if we take a look at the Swedish statistics. It shows that the majority of all funds devoted towards helping innovators and new ways of thinking is directed towards the universities whom are already funded in so many other areas...

Never has there been given so much money away. Never has there been so much focus on this particular area - innovation.

There is research made like never before at the universities. Right now it is Green Innovation.. Prior to this it was Nano technology, or IT. In the future it may be physical contact that will become a rare commodity since everything is practically done over the internet, whether it be online buys/sales, finding a girlfriend, hang out with friends and so on... We live in an antisocial world and we no longer take any responsibility.

Fact is, the main part of funds go to the universities and big corporations. They have an organisation backing them up to take care of lobbying, applications and so forth, which the general inventor can't find head nor tails in.

Innovation ( EU rapport )

But the real fact is completely different.

As with a driver's license, where you learn about laws and rules, it would be great when universities, other educational institutes and even politicians are educated in the Patent laws, protection of design, licence agreements and so on. And most importantly, to create a livelihood.

What is the difference between a scientist (researcher) and an inventor..? One gets his ideas financed, the other has to pay for it himself and does not make a living from his ideas.

I would like to point out that it is good that research is being done, whether it is within the medical – or technological world and such, and I have a positive view on the funds being channeled out to these groups as well. But I certainly believe that our most important

commodity is being forgotten ... our brain, and that goes for any kind of trade you choose in life, whether it be masonry, carpentry or hairdresser... People who through their daily work for instance, come up with ideas that can contribute to growth and more jobs for the country.

This group, like myself, has been neglected. Our work conditions haven't changed since Gutenberg made his invention that made knowledge accessible to everyone.

Better work conditions.

To be an inventor is a job that should be taken seriously like any other type of job. For any completed work you want to receive a payment or salary. Naturally, the same wishes goes for the inventor.

Often, he or she has been working for months, maybe even years and spent the equity of the house or has knocked the credit limit in the bank through the roof, just to get his or her idea through to patenting. A patent which is expensive to get issued and maintained through the years.

Therefore the inventor wants a salary or payment for his efforts and can achieve this by selling his patent or get royalties of his idea.

But it is a frightfully long and hard road from the first realization of the idea to get payment for the finished product in today's reality.

When the light bulb is turned off.

Not only is it a long and hard process, but as it is now, it is almost a rule that the better an idea is, seen from an economical perspective, the more copy cats and idea thieves there will be on the scene. What this leads to of law suits, money consumption, psychological terror and family tragedies is hard to describe; But this is the naked truth. Inventors don't have the legal rights they should be entitled to.

There are horrible examples about inventors having their ideas copied and stolen from big capital asset concerns.

Successive law suits - some running more than 30 years - have milked inventors who have had their ideas copied or stolen for economical and human resources to the extent that you would think these cases could be brought to the Court of Human Rights! Like in the movie "Flash of Genius" with Tom Hanks it seems the conditions haven't changed!

All the while we tell our dear children, youths and adults.... Invent, be creative!..

Trustingly, these aspiring inventors seek council with teachers, professors, consultants, patenting agents, whom all have the comfort of a steady job, while the inventors' own debt is only growing in the attempts to realize their idea... because as things seem to be today, the inventor's working conditions are NOT fruitful.

How many of you are teachers / inventors?

How many are employed?

How many has a patent?

How many of you....?

I absolutely think we should stick to our policies in article 2 that clearly states what the purpose of IFIA is. Which precisely is, to make terms better for inventors!  
And I seriously believe that work needs to be done to make politicians, government officials etc., aware of this challenge that exists around the world.

As it is right now, funds mainly go to the universities, and again I want to point out, I have nothing against universities or researchers, but we as an association are obliged to stick to our policies and secure our members, and for that very reason, we should and must make people aware of this big pending challenge.

I will compare it a bit to the horse racing sport, which I know is a big industry in Sweden. In Denmark this industry has more or less immigrated to Sweden. Why?.. Because of working conditions and salaries. In Sweden you can deduct your investment, not in Denmark. Now that we are in the world of sports, this would mean the same as if the Ministry of Culture exclusively funded and spent money on professional football players who already have a steady source of income. All the while there are an abundance of talented unfunded inventors, who could contribute to their country and secure growth and development in the future.

It has to be IFIA's crystal clear goal to create better working terms for its members rather than it is to secure the inventor's suppliers, let's say WIPO, with more jobs.

With that said...

And the politicians...

I see it as a distinguished duty as an inventor to inform of the importance of making all IFIA members understand WHY we have to change our working conditions and terms.

To protect the inventor.

To protect ideas.

To protect a future income.

By IFIA putting a focus on the great challenge that comes with being a private inventor, we contribute to both present and undoubtedly future inventors being able to reap the fruits of ideas created now and in the future none the least.

I hope with these words, I have sown a seed for IFIA and for good opportunities and future prosperities for our children and our mutual posterity.

## **Concretely, what must be done? Suggestions to what can be done.!!**

Obstruction up to the universities. – Side line companies. Examples of employee's insider knowledge concurrently. Competitiveness – the ombudsman.

Patenting bureau – driver's license - patent and trademarking - issuing... enforcing.

Create jobs.

A monkey with a degree is simply a monkey with a degree. A monkey with an invention can make it to the moon!

Education doesn't meet a need. Education is a standard. Meeting a need, is grounds for invention.

Politicians talk about entrepreneurs... and that's okay. But it is like comparing a carpenter with a doctor.... What they all want is to start a company.. That's also okay.... But before an inventor can be an entrepreneur, he or she has to invent and have it patented and paid for, find companies and suppliers to support the product/invention etc.... and then somewhere down that path he becomes an entrepreneur....