

— Final Report

# Carrying the Message of A.A. in the Digital Age



**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
27TH WORLD SERVICE MEETING**

An Online Event | October 1-6, 2022



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**THE PURPOSE OF OUR SERVICE:**

# Carrying the Message of A.A. in the Digital Age

27th World Service Meeting 2022

An Online Event

## Final Report

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# Contents

## THE 27TH WORLD SERVICE MEETING

### Carrying the Message of A.A.

#### in the Digital Age . . . . .3

WSM Overview . . . . .3

Keynote Address . . . . .6

### Presentations . . . . .8

International Literature Fund and  
World Service Meeting Fund Report . . . . .8

International Literature Fund Receipts . . . . .9

WSM Fund History. . . . .10

Licensing and Translation. . . . .10

### A.A. and New Technologies . . . . .12

Do Digital Platforms Strengthen or  
Weaken Our Communication Today?  
Do They Broaden A.A.'s Accessibility? . . . . .12

A.A. Literature on Digital Platforms . . . . .14

Technology and A.A. —  
Reaching All Generations . . . . .15

### What is Our Attraction? Unity, Service . . . . .16

Unity — We Are a Diverse Fellowship  
with a Singleness of Purpose . . . . .16

Service — Passing It On. . . . .18

### The Seventh Tradition:

#### Fully Self-Supporting in the Digital Age . . . . .18

Passing the "Basket" on Virtual Platforms . . . . .18

The Spiritual Significance of Being  
Self-Supporting . . . . .19

### Our Nonalcoholic Friends . . . . .20

PI and CPC Committees Reaching Professionals  
on the "Frontlines" . . . . .20

Does A.A. Literature Attract and Encourage  
Professionals to Refer Clients to A.A. . . . .22

### Alcoholics Anonymous

#### Has Already Come of Age . . . . .23

Has the Global Pandemic Taught Us Lessons  
to Better Inform Our Twelfth Step Service? . . . . .23

"Young People" in A.A. . . . .24

How to Incorporate Online Groups  
into Our Service Structure. . . . .25

### How to Invest in the Future of A.A. . . . .27

Learning From Our History and  
Stepping Out of Our Comfort Zones. . . . .27

Keeping the Fellowship United . . . . .28

### Country Service Highlights . . . . .29

### Committee Reports . . . . .63

Agenda . . . . .63

Literature/Publishing . . . . .63

Policy/Admissions/Finance. . . . .66

Working with Others . . . . .69

### Workshop Reports . . . . .73

I. Encourage Seventh Tradition during  
Pandemic/Isolation at all Structure Levels . . . . .73

II. Virtual Groups: How Can They Be Integrated  
into the General Service Conference structure? . . . . .74

III. A.A. in Society: Relationship with Networks  
and Social Media. . . . .76

### Zonal Service Meetings . . . . .78

14th Asia Oceania Service Meeting (AOSM) . . . . .78

21st European Service Meeting (ESM). . . . .79

21st Meeting of the Americas (REDELA). . . . .81

10th Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting (SSASM) . . . . .84

### Evaluation Survey Summary . . . . .86

### 27th WSM Images . . . . .88

### 27th WSM Delegates . . . . .89

### GSOs and Literature Distribution Centers. . . . .93

### WSM Accounting History . . . . .89

### 27th WSM Committees . . . . .93

### The Twelve Traditions . . . . .94

### The Twelve Concepts of World Service . . . . .95

#### Anonymity-Protected Digital Edition

This edition of the 27th World Service Meeting Final Report has been formatted to protect the anonymity of A.A. members (who are represented by first name and last initial only). Our many nonalcoholic friends, trustees and employees may be noted by their full names.

*About the Artwork:* The artwork used to illustrate this report was provided by individual members of the World Service Meeting, showing photos of their workspaces and the areas around them. Delegates and support staff were asked to provide photos that could be used to illustrate the report and many complied.





## Carrying the Message of A.A. in the Digital Age

With record high participation, 75 delegates from 49 countries and regional service structures met for the 27th World Service Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous from October 1-6, 2022. They gathered via videoconference in a virtual world that spanned time zones and languages and, appropriately, focused on the theme: “Carrying the Message of A.A. in the Digital Age.”

The World Service Meeting (WSM), established in 1969, serves as a biennial forum for sharing the experience, strength, and hope of the assembled delegates in carrying the message of A.A. and can represent an expression of the worldwide group conscience. The 27th WSM participants looked at how new technologies have affected A.A. — both through the lens of how they might broaden access, reach, and inclusiveness, but also how they might threaten anonymity or dilute the A.A. message. Lovingly joined in service toward offering hope to the still-suffering alcoholic wherever they may reside and wherever they may be, the delegates challenged themselves and

each other on A.A.’s continued relevance and ability to adapt to a changing world. “This modern digital path has drawn a lot of newcomers to A.A., mainly young people, but not only. The Fellowship members can attend A.A. meetings in every part of our globe whenever they want to. This is what the digital era gave us,” Tadeusz C. of Poland said in his keynote address. “How are we doing with all of this? I believe that we will have the opportunity to discuss it in this meeting.” The question — vital across the entire A.A. world — reverberated in much of the communication among delegates throughout the week.

Originally planned as an in-person event to be hosted by Japan, the delegates agreed in December 2021 to meet via a videoconference coordinated by the U.S./Canada General Service Office (GSO). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the previous 26th WSM took place in September of 2020 on a digital platform for the first time in the gathering’s history. It featured a shortened, three-day agenda as delegates and organizers

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worked out the logistics of the novel online format. Two years and many virtual service meetings later, a majority of the attendees had some experience meeting via videoconference. A professional tech team was also on hand to provide numerous prep sessions and on-the-spot troubleshooting to allay any fears or challenges that the participants encountered.

The meeting opened with a roll call and orientation where delegates could see and hear the depth and breadth of A.A.'s reach around the world. Some of the tech barriers were evidenced at the roll call, for example with the delegate from Cuba, Orestes S., experiencing power outages due to a hurricane. Thanks to support from GSO staff and the tech team, he was later able to take part via a pre-recorded video of his country highlights in Spanish that was broadcast by screenshare and via updates to a cell phone on a charger in his car. By the end of the WSM, delegates were recognizing the complex accessibility considerations of these online platforms and digital apps that, as many delegates noted in their country reports, had increased A.A.'s reach because those seeking help could access A.A. meetings at any time of day and perhaps in their own language despite living in a remote area or with other limiting factors.

At the WSM, one delegate noted that due to recent illness they would not have been able to participate had it not been online and was grateful to be able to join in through A.A. in the digital age. Participation may have hit record highs because more delegates could access the meeting. But this technology presented other hurdles for delegates in countries or locations with power outages, internet restrictions or other constraints. There seemed to be an awareness of accessibility, in the spirit of gratitude and A.A. love that infused the event, and that grew throughout the WSM as delegates observed members struggling to connect. "It's a testament to the great lengths that these trusted service members will go to bring back the experience, strength and hope from the international sharing about unity, service and recovery to their service structures," one delegate observed in the Evaluation Survey, echoing many similar comments.

Simultaneously translated into English and Spanish, the two official languages of the body, the WSM was also heard in Japanese, Mongolian and Persian by interpreters provided by their local structures. Mongolia participated as a country for the first time, with their delegate Tserennyam D. expressing an enthusiasm for taking part that lifted hearts across all language barriers. While many countries with long-established A.A. service structures have been participating in the WSM for many years, attendance varies with each meeting. Bulgaria, Greece, El Salvador and Guatemala were represented for the first time in 2020 and returned again in 2022 with some attending as second term delegates. At the breaks between the focused business of the WSM, these delegates joyfully greeted each other and rekindled those special friendships formed from A.A. service that traverses time and distance. The first term participants got to know one another through multiple opportunities to communicate with their fellow trusted servants throughout the week. Peter R., representing Slovakia as a first term delegate, said: "I felt at home on the committee and at the workshops. I learned about myself and received helpful information I could bring back to my country." Some voices spoke to the value of in-person service meetings and how it was easier to build those personal bonds with one-on-

one chats in the hallways and shared meals. However, the 27th WSM delegates, many of whom had met for the first time at the 26th online meeting, celebrated their connections across the globe by dancing in front of their laptops to lively music, exchanging personal news via the chat function, and inviting fellow delegates to see their living spaces and share a meal.

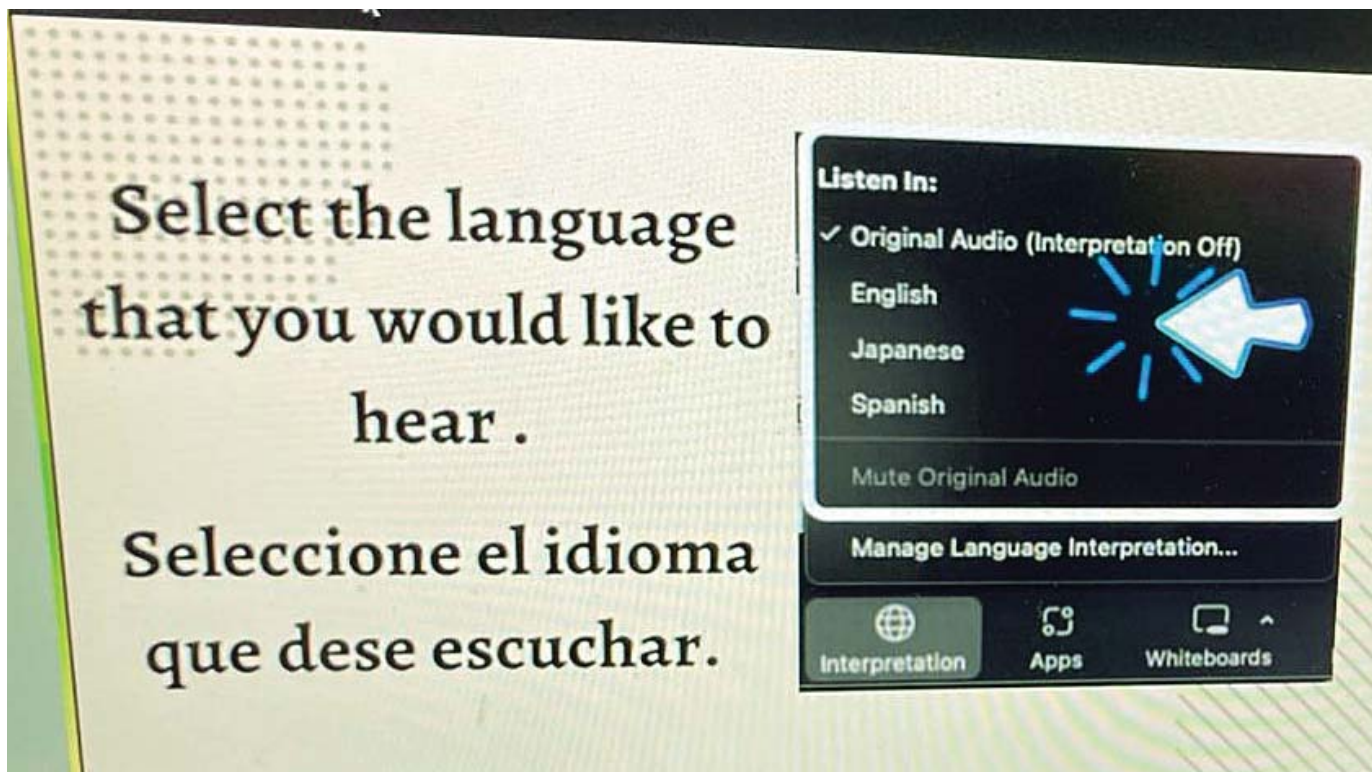
In a number of sessions spanning the six days, delegates heard service highlights from each country or zone with brief A.A. histories and news of current structures and activities. They also heard 16 presentations that covered a range of topics about new technologies and their effect on A.A. unity, recovery and service, including one that inspired much sharing — how do we make the circle wider and increase participation? In this presentation, Juan José O. of Chile suggested that a diverse A.A. group was more likely to succeed than a group dominated by one line of moral thought. "A group with different visions, perspectives, ways, and experiences has a greater chance of conveying the message to those who seek help. We never know which message will reach the newcomer's mind," he said.

Throughout these reports and presentations, participants heard the words of diversity; how everyone in attendance was looking for the opportunity to speak together about A.A. literature, inclusion and broadening their reach — some countries talked about how they were currently incorporating online groups into their structure, some in preliminary discussions, others moving at a swifter pace, and others not making it a great priority. A first term delegate from Hong Kong, Alexandra S., reported on how the country's A.A. service structure was consciously trying to reach the local people, where there was cultural resistance to admitting problems such as alcoholism and to speaking about personal issues. "Carrying the message across the cultural divide is becoming easier as we translate literature and incorporate Cantonese-speaking groups into the HK Intergroup service structure," she said.

Delegates shared about how accessibility can come from being able to receive the A.A. message in one's own language — and the magic that occurs with a new translation or with the ability to get literature printed locally or made available through an e-book or audiobook, the latter particularly helpful for those with reading limitations. With regular shipping methods disrupted due to the pandemic, much of the discussion focused on changes and improvements being made by A.A. World Services (AAWS) to offer more access to translation and licensing. David R., AAWS publishing director, reported that there had been "an astonishingly steady increase in the amount of international translation and licensing queries and requests" — sometimes reaching 300 percent per year. To address this growing need, he announced a major remediation effort at GSO with a new administrative department devoted solely to translation and licensing, along with new technology and systems designed to address the needs of about 100 countries working on translation and local publishing projects.

Delegates representing Zonal Service Meetings, which are gatherings of the general service structures of whole sections of the globe held in the years when there is not a WSM, reported on publishing alternatives and how countries helping other countries was becoming very important for accessing A.A. literature. Zonal meetings have been particularly helpful for emerging countries beginning to get involved in A.A. be-





yond their own borders. Countries and groupings of countries are encouraged to take part in zonal meetings before applying to participate in the World Service Meeting.

In addition to the sharing during the presentations, participants met in three workshops. They discussed the topic of encouraging the Seventh Tradition during a pandemic isolation at all structure levels; how to incorporate virtual groups into the General Service Conference structure; and A.A.'s relationship with networks and social media. There, while many acknowledged the benefits of technology in reaching new populations of alcoholics, along with the professionals and institutions that encounter alcoholics in need, some delegates expressed fears about social media and its impact on the A.A. message and Traditions. These were themes that delegates considered throughout the week with many coming to understand that they were building service experience around the world that would allow them to walk through the fear and find faith on the other side of the tech barrier. During his presentation on "Learning From Our History and Stepping Out of Our Comfort Zones," Daniel G. of Peru spoke about his initial resistance to technology until virtual platforms materialized in his recovery and that of others. "I realized that the new at times paralyzes us," he said. "Sustaining our Fellowship is a collective task; it has been demonstrated since the beginning of our history that the sum of our efforts ensures the future of those who are yet to come."

The four World Service Meeting committees (Agenda, Literature/Publishing, Policy/Admissions/Finance and Working with Others) also met during the week, and reported their conclusions to the body, which deliberated and voted on their recommendations. These decisions set policy for the WSM itself and are not binding on any participating country.

As the meeting neared its end, delegates shared freely in general sessions, expressing their gratitude for the entire ex-

perience of the World Service Meeting. "Thank you for the open debates and loving manner that all delegates handled with such importance even when we disagreed," Varoshini N. of South Africa said. Bob W., U.S./Canada GSO general manager, noted in his closing remarks that there was a freedom in the principle of autonomy that allowed each structure to adjust to wrap A.A. principles around each culture. "The spirit of this WSM has been so strong. I've heard so many of you share about what you've learned; so many things that have just come to your mind for the first time here and you are the legacy of Alcoholics Anonymous," he said.

Racy J., GSO international staff coordinator, invited all present to say the Serenity Prayer in the language of their choosing. "We talk about literature opening doors to the A.A. message, the light that goes on when we hear it in our own language; you are here because you received the message in your own language," she said before calling out 29 languages from Belarussian to *te reo Māori*. After each, the WSM delegates paused to listen to the Serenity Prayer spoken in that language. "Just give us a moment to sit with what just happened," Racy said afterward, before the tech team unmuted all participants and they repeated the Serenity Prayer together in the language of their choice.

In two years' time, delegates will come together in person in New York, October 27-31, 2024, with the theme: "The Three Legacies in the Digital Era: Our Great Responsibility to the Alcoholic Being Born Today." Scheduled presentations include topics on reaching the still-suffering alcoholic in local communities, paths to embrace innovation, the home group, service as a debt of gratitude, diversity in A.A., and country-to-country sponsorship. The sharing that awaits is certain to enrich A.A. yet again and further extend the hand of A.A.'s truly worldwide Fellowship.

## Keynote Address

*Good morning, good afternoon and good evening, everyone! My name is Tadeusz C., and I am an alcoholic, sober and relatively sane today. All credit for that goes to the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. My sobriety date is March 10, 2010. I am the second term WSM and ESM delegate from Poland. Thank you very much for the invitation. It is a great honor and privilege to deliver the Keynote Address at the 27th World Service Meeting. I'm deeply touched by this, but mainly I regard this invitation as a gesture of appreciation for the whole Polish-speaking Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. Best regards from our Board of Trustees and GSO staff in Warsaw.*

### Carrying the Message of A.A. in the Digital Age

When I first had a close look at the main topic of this meeting, I was a little bit scared, especially of the second part: digital era?! And me? I remember from my childhood that the only "digital" item in my home was the abacus on my grandfather's desk. But A.A. taught me not to say "No" when I'm asked to do some service here. Let's go then.

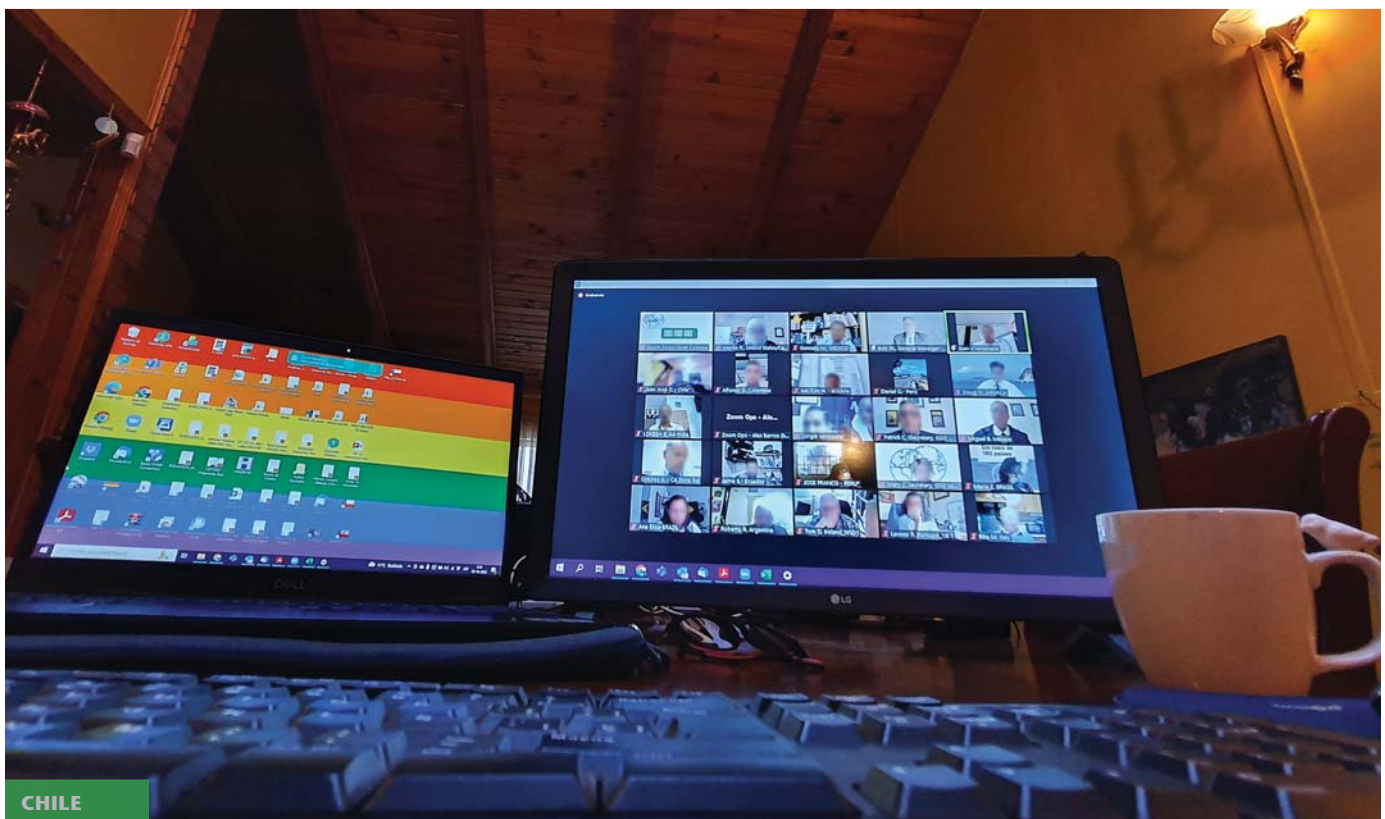
Our main, and the only job, which we must do in Alcoholics Anonymous, is carrying the A.A. message to those who still suffer from this fatal disease. We do it directly as the 12-steps, sponsors, speakers, or group members around the globe. We do it modem-to-modem or face-to-face, through phone calls or Skype or the other digital platforms available nowadays. We will get to the "digital" part of this talk in a moment. And we also do it indirectly through our service structure, literature and numerous other activities we are committed to in our service work.

### What is the A.A. Message?

What are we carrying? The message of hope? Definitely. But not only. It is worth emphasizing that the A.A. message is the message of recovery from alcoholism. The message that helps newcomers solve their main problem — lack of power. The power not to pick up the first drink, the power to live, the power to be a decent human being, to be a wife, a husband, a son, a daughter, a father, or a mother. Each one of us can add something to this list. The power to be useful to God and our fellows. The power of integrity, which is bigger than the power of disintegration, as our co-founder Bill W. described in one of our pamphlets. It is not a small thing. I'm trying to remember that each day. I'm a lucky guy from Poland who was able to hear this message. What a treasure we have got here.

### The Digital Era

The landscape in the communications field has changed dramatically in recent years. The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is not immune to those changes. First, I would like to share my personal experience to illustrate how fast it accelerated. At the time I lived in one of the biggest cities in Poland. It was a few months before the pandemic. A few people from the A.A. group I used to attend came up with the idea of having a hybrid meeting (in person plus on Skype at the same time). What a heated discussion with a lot of questions I got a chance to witness! People debated whether or not that idea was in line with our Traditions, there were fears around breaking anonymity, etc. No real answer was given and at the end of the day, the group conscience decided not to proceed with meeting in such a format. A few years have passed, and no one even thinks about asking these questions anymore. It has become the reality in our beloved Fellowship.





**In the U.S. and Canada, helpful resources can be found, such as the service piece “Anonymity Online” and the Conference-approved pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity.” It is worth mentioning the extract from the presentation titled “A.A. and Social Media.” It touches upon the private Facebook groups and acknowledges that “with advancements in technology, anonymity is a principle that will constantly need to be revisited.”**

One of my favorite expressions describing what is going on in A.A. is: “Everything is new, and nothing is new at the same time.” Let’s look at our history. A.A. came to life with the use of technology. Bill W. used a phone when he was looking for another alcoholic. A little bit of technology gave birth to the program of recovery from a hopeless state of mind and body for millions of alcoholics. For more than 87 years A.A. has been using technology to carry its message.

Let’s now take a look at Bill W.’s quotes from the annual General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1960:

- “Nothing matters more to A.A.’s future welfare than the manner in which we use the colossus of modern communication. Used unselfishly and well, it can produce results surpassing our present imagination.”
- “Our lives have depended upon communication. Our unity depends on communication. Our functioning depends on communication. This Conference is a great network of communication.”
- “Our Twelve Steps probably won’t change. Our Twelve Traditions? Not at all likely. But our manner of communication, our manner of organizing ourselves for service — let us hope that this goes on changing for the better, forever.”

It has surpassed our present imagination. It has already happened and is still happening right now in front of our eyes. Across the Fellowship thousands of online A.A. meetings have come to life and numerous online groups have been formed. They successfully carry the A.A. message to the people who are looking for help. At the beginning of this digital “movement” some of us asked questions like: Are these real A.A. groups? Are these real A.A. meetings? And after a while most people stopped questioning this kind of activity. The question now is how to incorporate those groups into our service structure. This modern digital path has drawn a lot of newcomers to A.A., mainly young people, but not only. The Fellowship members can attend A.A. meetings in every part of our globe whenever they want to. This is what the digital era gave us. Such a wide spectrum of exchanging recovery-related experiences between the groups and members has never been done on this scale before. Countless online workshops, on almost every aspect of service, can help us to do our job in A.A. in a more efficient way. How are we doing with all of this? I believe that we will have the opportunity to discuss it in this meeting.

### **Opportunities and Challenges**

We must mention the most popular social media here: YouTube, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc. The use of social networking has opened up new opportunities for us.

YouTube and LinkedIn are widely used in some countries as the “Information Board” with some basic info about Alcohol-

ics Anonymous. These communication channels can help our Class A trustees reach professionals. The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous met in January 2019 to discuss a few topics, which are also going to be discussed during our sessions: “Unity and the Social Media” or “Anonymity and the Social Media.” I believe we are all talking about this extensively in our countries. Let’s share our experiences in this field.

The Internet and social media should and can be seen as opportunities, we must take chances to be in tune with the present time. Facebook and Instagram are widely used by individual members and A.A. groups. No doubt many newcomers came to A.A. thanks to those channels. Opportunities? Yes! But challenges as well, mainly regarding anonymity.

In the U.S. and Canada, helpful resources can be found, such as the service piece “Anonymity Online” and the Conference-approved pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity.” It is worth mentioning the extract from the presentation titled “A.A. and Social Media.” It touches upon the private Facebook groups and acknowledges that “with advancements in technology, anonymity is a principle that will constantly need to be revisited.”

Now, a couple of words about service. In my view, our Fellowship is adapting very well to the digital era we are living in. At almost every level of service, a conference call system is being used. Such systems allow calls between multiple computers as well as between computers and telephones, so it can be an ideal way for remotely located members to engage in various discussions. Members can meet more often if necessary. Conference calls and Internet communication may also be considered as a way of reducing the costs of service meetings.

I hope that this short talk can set the tone for all of us and will help us to discuss these and many more issues in our main sessions. I am aware that what I have just shared was very general and I strongly believe that much more will come to the surface and will be analyzed in more detail over the next few days.

Let me finish with Bill W.’s words, partly mentioned above, but here in the longer form:

“Therefore, nothing can matter more to the future welfare of A.A. than the manner in which we use this colossus of communication. Used unselfishly and well, the results can surpass our present imagination. Should we handle this great instrument badly, we shall be shattered by the ego demands of our own people — often with the best of intention on their part. Against all this, the sacrificial spirit of A.A.’s anonymity at the top public level is literally our shield and our buckler. Here again we must be confident that love of A.A., and of God, will always carry the day.”

*Thank you for your attention! And thank you all for keeping me sober today.*

*Tadeusz C. — Poland*

# Presentations



## International Literature Fund and World Service Meeting Fund

Since the inception of the International Literature Fund in 1990, the impact on the increase of the reach of our literature into the hands of hopeless alcoholics is incalculable. The generous contributions from around the world since that time are truly amazing — approaching three million dollars.

In 1992, the Literature/Publishing Committee of the World Service Meeting agreed that the International Literature Fund should be under the purview of the World Service Meeting Literature/Publishing Committee. The committee also suggested that "A.A. World Services (AAWS) use proceeds of (the) International Literature Fund to offset AAWS's expenditures for foreign literature assistance, and to reimburse similar expenses incurred by other overseas A.A. offices or boards." They further noted that "AAWS should have the latitude to prioritize the use of these monies based on the need as expressed by each GSO and World Service delegate."

Since that time, the General Service Office of the U.S./Canada has carried out the administration of this fund. Over the years the activity levels of assisting other countries with the cost of translating, producing and distributing literature has been very robust. To illustrate this point, when the idea of the fund was born in 1990, the Big Book was translated into 17 languages and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* into three languages. Today they are translated into 72 and 51 respectively. And that's only the translation of two books! There are so many other titles and pamphlets that have been through the same process. You can imagine the hours and efforts that went into making this possible. Without this fund, we wouldn't have been able to come close to this achievement.

In 2016, the 24th World Service Meeting expressed the

need for more detailed accounting of the ILF. The increase in detail the last few years has been notable, however, the accounting of the fund has, in my opinion, fallen short. Our reporting has been strong regarding contributions received, but the detail of the use of the fund has been lacking. When I was hired as general manager, I committed to infuse A.A.'s principles embodied in our Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts, into the operations of our office. To this end, we have taken an inventory of our administration of this fund and realize we have fallen short. For this we offer our sincere amends and commit to more transparency as we move forward.

We have taken steps to draft detailed guidance to apply to all opportunities when these funds are utilized. We have instituted new accounting procedures that now allow us to better account for both inflows and outflows of the fund in full detail. As we took our inventory, we noted the accounting of receipts to the fund have been accurate. Although we have been lacking in accounting of financial outflows, based on the many activities related to the international literature assistance we provided to other structures for literature, we are certain costs have been well in excess of the funds received. Of particular note is our investment in new computer systems to track translation and licensing activity, which allows us to assist countries more efficiently.

Moving forward, our new accounting and governance policies will allow more detailed and transparent reporting. These policies are just now being implemented, including a new separate bank account dedicated specifically to the International Literature Fund. This is a key step to allow for regular reconciliation of all activity within the fund. We will be prepared to provide interim reports to each of the zonal meetings next year and a full accounting of the activity between this and the next WSM in 2024.

I also wanted to share some thoughts regarding the World Service Meeting Fund. It was created just four years ago during the 2018 World Service Meeting and is recent enough that we have full and transparent accounting. Similar to the International Literature Fund, we are creating a separate bank account specific to this fund. Attached to this report, I have included a preliminary accounting for this World Service Meeting as well as the previous seven (back to 2008). As you can see, our structure has underwritten approximately \$198,000 each year to hold these meetings. The virtual format of this and our last World Service Meeting has allowed each of them to be nearly self-supporting. The format has also undoubtedly attracted more participation

as we have 49 countries represented this year, which is the highest in history.

The decision to meet virtually this year was a very difficult one and largely based on the uncertainties of the pandemic but also out of prudence toward our own finances. Like many of you, our structure is dealing with the challenges from the pandemic and the economy. Reductions in our literature sales and revenue combined with inflation have contributed to a significant deficit this year and are probable next year as well.

I believe there is great benefit to meeting face to face and it is my hope that we will be able to do that again in the future. I recognize reaching the goal of self-support will be challenging as we move back to this format, but I have faith we can find a

### INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE FUND RECEIPTS

Country/World Service Meeting Zone	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Argentina	\$50		\$200		\$200			
Australia	\$4,235	\$862	\$2,940		\$2,688		\$3,390	
Austria								
Belgium (Dutch-Speaking)				\$2,250	\$(3,697)	\$6,414	\$1,748	\$212
Belgium (Flemish-Speaking)				\$2,061				\$2,800
Brazil	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,954	\$1,958	\$2,000
Central America Northern Zone (El Salvador/Guatemala/Honduras)	\$285							
Chile				\$200				
Colombia	\$798			\$880			\$862	
Czech Republic	\$1,000		\$200	\$1,000	\$1,000			\$1,000
Denmark					\$10,603		\$12,937	\$7,169
Ecuador						\$200		\$100
Finland				\$1,680	\$3,420		\$1,583	
French-Speaking Europe (Belgium/France/Switzerland)	\$3,668		\$678	\$550	\$467	\$1,949	\$559	\$1,060
German-Speaking Europe (Austria/Germany/Switzerland)	\$7,661		\$6,482	\$6,742	\$7,034	\$6,093	\$8,679	\$6,615
Great Britain		\$33,661			\$20,457	\$12,200	\$6,869	\$7,547
Hungary			\$9,342					
Iceland						\$1,020		\$1,010
India				\$300				
Ireland				\$3,277				
Italy	\$6,960			\$1,648		\$2,209	\$2,108	
Japan	\$716	\$2,000	\$2,983	\$1,983	\$2,983	\$3,000	\$2,984	\$389
Latvia	\$200		\$116	\$(214)		\$208	\$165	
Lithuania	\$284	\$659	\$1,140		\$1,107	\$1,140	\$2,078	\$876
Mexico	\$2,000	\$3,980		\$(1,606)	\$2,095	\$7,551		\$215
Mongolia	\$100							
Netherlands							\$712	
New Zealand/Aotearoa	\$933	\$12,653			\$2,643	\$1,541	\$4,532	
Norway	\$1,000		\$1,100	\$1,810	\$2,178			
Paraguay	\$50				\$50			
Peru	\$310		\$405		\$345	\$360		
Poland	\$2,000		\$1,000	\$2,000		\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,014
Portugal	\$100		\$155	\$108		\$114		
Romania							\$200	
Russia			\$124					\$20
Slovenia			\$1,070		\$550			
Spain	\$10,266	\$2,272		\$2,169	\$2,219	\$2,262	\$3,745	
Sweden	\$6,748			\$11,583	\$11,775	\$13,906	\$6,533	\$2,847
Switzerland	\$1,955		\$2,109	\$6,280	\$5,575	\$6,936	\$242	\$8,835
Turkey								
Ukraine		\$181						
Uruguay								\$100
A.A. Online								
<b>ANNUAL TOTAL</b>	<b>\$53,319</b>	<b>\$58,268</b>	<b>\$32,043</b>	<b>\$46,699</b>	<b>\$75,691</b>	<b>\$70,055</b>	<b>\$62,885</b>	<b>\$44,808</b>
<b>TOTAL SINCE INCEPTION</b>	<b>\$1,981,020</b>	<b>\$1,927,700</b>	<b>\$1,869,433</b>	<b>\$1,837,389</b>	<b>\$1,790,690</b>	<b>\$1,714,999</b>	<b>\$1,644,944</b>	<b>\$1,582,059</b>



way. All of us hold equal Seventh Tradition responsibility to the World Service Meeting Fund. The fund is a key component to achieving self-support.

The most important aspect of the Seventh Tradition is participation. Contributions to each of these funds, no matter how small, all hold equal spiritual value. With this in mind, I want to express my sincere gratitude for the sacrifices so many countries around the world have made to participate. They have assisted so many counties in carrying the message to the still sick and suffering alcoholic.

Thank you very much.

Bob W. — General Manager, GSO U.S./Canada

## Licensing and Translation

### Update on International Translations Management

My name is David R., and I am an alcoholic. I currently serve in a professional capacity as the publishing director of A.A. World Services, Inc. and some folks call me “the publishing guy.” I have been working at the GSO office since 2014, and I have held this position since July 2016. I bring you greetings from my publishing department colleagues, and on behalf of our international translations and licensing team of Rosa Rodriguez and Gesi Cinari.

I am delighted to be together with you today and to share with you a brief overview and update on our current efforts extending the hand of A.A. around the world to the next sick and suffering alcoholic and helping those who help alcoholics — via our literature.

What continues to overarch all of our shared work, despite every obstacle we are facing in these challenging times, is our commitment to our important work together.

We are immersed in dozens and dozens of translation and licensing projects moving forward in efforts to ensure that the message of hope that our program of A.A. offers can be most effectively shared. Our co-founder Bill W. called our literature “our greatest asset.” And he often described its effect in helping people get sober the whole world over as “incalculable.”

**Surge in Translation and Licensing Activity:** This marks the fourth World Service Meeting I have attended. As I have

been reporting over the years, there has been an astonishingly steady increase in the amount of international translation and licensing queries and requests handled by our office, with year over year upticks exceeding 300%. Think about that: That reflects a lot of translation work afoot across the globe — with more than 100 individual countries making connections with our office for this work.

I do not need to remind us of how painstaking this work is. Bill W. said we take these pains to ensure that our message is never “garbled,” that the integrity of the spirit and sense of our lifesaving literature is retained. You all know the painstaking diligence your literature committees and translations teams have undertaken — and continue to undertake in these efforts. And — we all know there is more work to be done.

**Overcoming Challenges:** We also know there have been snags and disconnects over the years. Particularly over the past few years facing the challenges of the Covid-19 era, we have been challenged by disruptions in communication, disconnects in correspondence, and obstacles in sharing licenses for signature and master print files via Outlook, to highlight a just a few of the real problems we have faced together.

We have felt great shared pain in not being able to meet the needs of our International publishing partners with expedience. It pains us too! We know all too well the backlogs in addressing requests and the communications disconnects we have faced. All that said, we have heard you, we have learned from your feedback to work together so the office may better serve you.

We apologize for our inefficiencies of the past. We now are looking to a hopeful future!

**A New Centralized Translations and Licensing System:** I am delighted to share with you today what we in the office have been doing since January of this year to make things better. To better meet the needs of our International A.A. Fellowship.

**A Major Prioritized Remediation Effort:** As our General Manager Bob W. has communicated, we in the office — with major assists from our tech services department along with trustees at large Trish L. (Canada) and Marita R. (U.S.) — have prioritized efforts to catch up on backlogged requests; actively attend to communication and file-sharing disconnects; and craft a new streamlined system to serve you.

## WORLD SERVICE MEETING FUND\*

### Summary History Since Inception

YEAR	CONTRIBUTIONS	WITHDRAWN FROM FUND	BALANCE
2018	\$1,000.00	\$0	\$1,000.00
2019	\$10,028.08	\$0	\$11,028.08
2020	\$27,853.09	\$9,600.00	\$29,281.17
2021	\$4,326.64	\$8,361.00	\$25,246.81
2022	\$35,682.25	\$24,359.51	\$36,569.55

\*The World Service Meeting Fund was established by the 25th WSM in 2018 as a way for countries to contribute funds to provide financial assistance to countries that request funding and to support the World Service Meeting. The World Service Meeting Fund will be maintained and administered by A.A. World Services under the purview of the WSM Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee.

**One-on-One Zooms:** We have held more than 50 one-on-one Zooms with individual countries since we last met to help move our translations and licensing projects forward.

**Highlight — One Particular New Big Book Translation-in-Progress:** There are too many translation highlights to share here, and I know many of you assembled are sharing these in your country reports. One stand-out: Our Zoom meetings with a helper named Warren W. and a local Rwanda group that formed to review and polish a first-ever Kinyarwanda Big Book translation in process has just successfully submitted for review text to be reviewed by our independent translation-evaluation service. Stay tuned!

We invite literature and translation contacts from each country to continue to request these useful one-on-one Zooms.

**A New Centralized E-Mail Address:** This is IMPORTANT information.

- All International translation and licensing inquiries and correspondence and request for Zooms should now be addressed to TL@AA.ORG.

**Independent Audit:** For our process, we enlisted the help of a leading international publishing business consulting team to review and audit our current state of internal (in-office) translation and licensing staffing, volume of correspondence, workflows, project management tools, backlogs, license execution, and reporting. They compared our work with industry best practices. As a result, clear professional suggestions for increased efficiency resulted — notably using technology to leverage significant changes. Good-bye to disconnected files of spreadsheets and hello to leveraging the wonders of a unified technology platform! We also enlisted top technology consultants, well-versed in our new officewide unified tech system (NetSuite)'s native capabilities and easy customization capabilities to guide us as we move forward.

**New Administration Department:** One direct result of our best-practices research: A new administrative department in the office has been formed, now reporting to the general manager. Therefore, I am henceforth in process of passing the baton — with every confidence that locating this important work in this new department will best serve the International Fellowship.

From this point on, all translation and licensing activities will be handled by this specific, dedicated new administration department — with technology and employees tailored to swiftly address international translation and licensing requests. Our in-office professionals Rosa Rodriguez and Gesi Cinari, whom many of you are in contact with, continue in their roles as the seasoned professionals — solely focused on this administrative work, and they report to an experienced senior legal administrator who has been recently hired to manage this department.

**Note:** These activities will no longer be managed by the Publishing department under my direction — but they are ever dear to my heart, as you well know.

**New Technology-Assisted Tool:** The major tech project using NetSuite has been set in motion for the past six months, with dedicated diligent workgroups in the office working closely and with the aid of tech specialists to craft, implement, test and use a streamlined, centralized project-management tool. To fully manage correspondence, file exchange, license

signatures and countersignatures, and record-keeping — all in one place.

This new system is now up and running internally and has been in a series of user-testing and modification stages for more than three months. With ongoing data input and data correction, system process polishing, and a focus on accessing accurate reporting capabilities now the focus of our work.

**An Update on First Signs of Success:** To date, as of this report in mid-September, the new international translation and licensing centralized NetSuite tool has been utilized for the express handling of 61 requests. Nine requests have been managed from start to completion with attentive and helpful collaborative efforts from the General Service Offices and representatives of A.A. Ecuador, India, Mexico, Poland and South Africa. We extend much gratitude for this shared success!

Also, our team has been in ongoing communication with Croatia, Germany, Israel, Japan, and Venezuela exclusively through the new NetSuite tool as we progress their requests forward.

## Next Phases of Moving International Translation and Licensing Forward, Together

Here are the next priorities for our team:

**Accurate and Deep-Dive Reporting:** As the team continues to use the new centralized tool, performing data clean-up and project-management adjustments, a focus on extracting accurate reporting is afoot. When reliable data is available, this will be shared. These include the number of requests received (per week, month, year); signed licenses completed (by type and by item); correspondence awaiting resolution, and so forth.

**International Portal:** Also, now moving into active work-group development is a portal that our international A.A. literature contacts will be able to access and personally use to provide requests and to help manage and view progress.

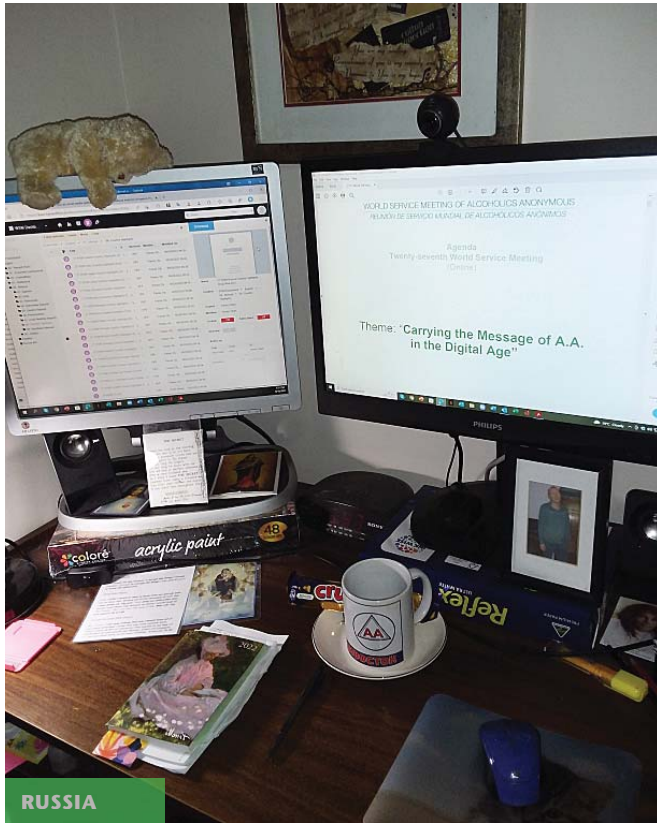
Similar to our new popular NetSuite-based “Fellowship Connection” portal that area registrars and trusted servants in the United States and Canada now access, an interactive portal for the international licensing and translation project workflow is in development.

This portal will include:

- A web-based translation and licensing request intake form, with easy-to-navigate drop-down menus
- A visual and narrative text process diagram/timeline that clearly walks through the stages of the translation and licensing process, and that shows progress points
- Easy to understand Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- And more!

**Introduction and Training:** When the new portal is ready to be shared, our international licensing and translations contacts will be invited to Zoom introduction and training sessions. We will look forward to your input to making it work for you (as our office has done with “Fellowship Connection.”) We look forward to 2023 for this work to be undertaken together.

**License Exchange, Signature and Countersignature:** Another innovation in the works is transitioning from relying on Outlook to share licenses for the signing process. Best-practices research has led us to plan to integrate the use of DocuSign to expedite these processes.



**Sharing of Master Print Digital Files:** An important part of the process, which has shown many painful disconnects and obstacles over the past few years, is the sending of master print files. Many locality-specific Outlook e-mail systems have imposed security barriers, we have found. We are exploring how this can be more easily achieved via DropBox and other means. Stay tuned!

**License Renewals:** As you know, most of our licenses carry the term of 10 years. We are well aware of the current backlog in issuing renewals. Solutions: Our new centralized NetSuite-based tool will have the capability to track and alert us to licenses up for renewal, by country.

Also, along these lines of increasing efficiency, we have consulted with our independent intellectual property legal experts on the matter of renewals, and the real possibility of having our international licenses automatically renew unless directed otherwise is being actively considered. We invite and encourage your opinion on this.

**Conclusion:** Together, we make for a massive international publishing partnership — unified in the deep spiritual work of carrying A.A.’s profound message to the next sick and suffering alcoholic — and those who help them. Working together — with the help of the latest technologies and skilled project managers and the best-practice systems we are implementing — *the future is bright!*

We can truly be the “able helpers” whom Bill W. referenced when he wrote *A.A. Comes of Age*, published in 1957:

*“Good translations of A.A. literature are ever more urgently needed. But able helpers have always turned up to meet the need.”*

Thank you.

David R. — Publishing Director, A.A. World Services

## A.A. and New Technologies

### Do Digital Platforms Strengthen or Weaken Our Communication Today? Do They Broaden A.A.’s Accessibility to All Backgrounds, Genders, Ages, Socioeconomic Demographics and Geographies?

The evolution in the use of technology has occurred at an accelerated pace in recent years. At the turn of the millennium, few people imagined that in just two decades the world would evolve so much. The Internet became popular and became accessible to much of the population. Biometrics, facial recognition, artificial intelligence, and other technologies are no longer “futuristic things” and have become part of our daily lives.

We have just entered a new decade. The world is getting faster and faster, and we are witnessing a real transformation, mainly in our society. At the beginning of the year 2000, technological progress was just becoming visible.

In 2017 our A.A. structure created a chatbot character called “Friend Anonymous,” a messenger chatbot that helps people who connect to it identify characteristics of alcoholism. By sharing a story of someone dependent on alcohol, “Friend” invites people to reflect on their own experiences with drinking and describes the Twelve Steps to recovery. Using a call-to-action button, the chatbot also indicates the nearest support groups, using the location provided by their device, and provides an emergency button (for those who are at risk of relapse). Part of the success achieved by Friend Anonymous is related to the anonymity and non-invasive approach of the bot, which only responds to people who start conversations with it. Thus, those interested can learn about alcoholism and recovery without exposing themselves, and without being disturbed in moments or situations when contact is not convenient.

During the pandemic it was necessary to reinvent ourselves in various ways, both in learning to use technologies that until then had gone unnoticed, and even giving greater attention and calling for adaptations for the moment we were going through. The vast majority of these have been implemented with such ease that it has surprised all those who had an alarmist point of view towards these new technologies and had worried about their effects on the good of the Fellowship.

This era of the pandemic, despite the anguish we have gone through with so many losses, has been historic in the advancement of technology. The year 2020 brought with it the great paradigm of the Coronavirus pandemic, the world stopped, and we needed to continue and so our A.A. Fellowship had to reinvent itself. Before 2020, we already had members participating in online meetings, however, the unexpected thing we saw was an accelerated race toward “high tech.” We went from WhatsApp meeting groups to meeting platforms where we could see each other and feel each other and get to know each other all over the planet.

In the strengthening of these online meetings, it facilitated access to literature meetings and with this, also resulted in a greater dissemination of the literature of A.A. During the two years there were daily study meetings of the Big Book of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts, and our literature in general. This made it possible for both new participants and existing members of A.A. to get to know the program. The pandemic and online

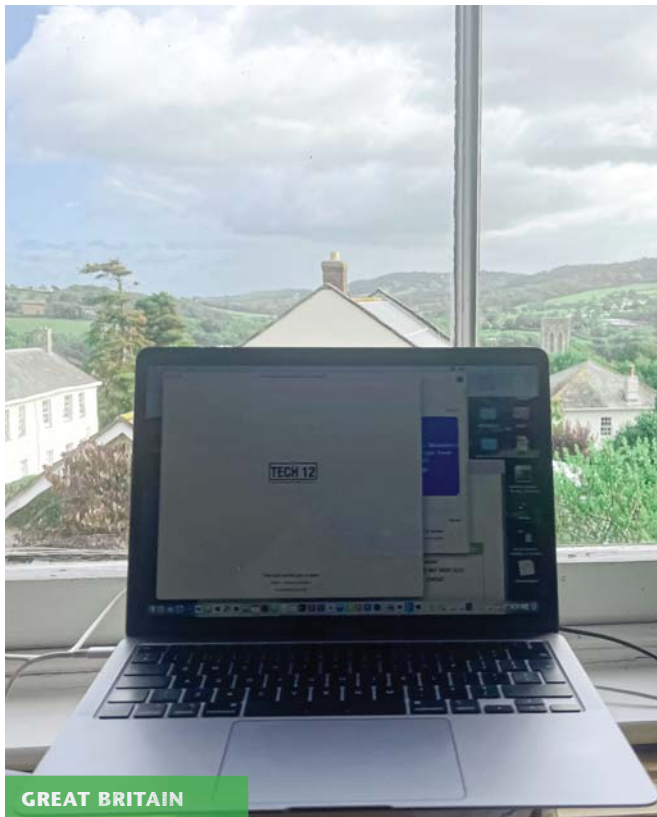


meetings also enabled people to attend study meetings during the day, which would have been impossible to get to in person, because of work, distance and all of the other logistics.

Members of A.A. are joining the Internet in growing numbers in a way that could not have been imagined 10 years ago. Online chats among members around the world has become commonplace, and one can get a great quantity of information about alcoholism and A.A. with the click of a mouse. But with this expansion of the Internet comes challenges, and preserving the Traditions of A.A. within this online universe is an important issue for all of us in the Fellowship.

Officially launched in Brazil on October 5, 2020, Pix (an app for payments and bank transfers) is the newest technology to arrive in our daily lives. Imagine being able to make electronic payments or bank transfers at any time during the day.

In recent years, the digital transformation has taken over the world, changing how technology is used across generations. At first there was some fear or even difficulty in thinking about the inclusion of the elderly in this new scenario. But older people have gained more and more space within the digital world and with technological innovations. That's for a few reasons. On social media, older people have a great presence. It is estimated that the elderly makes up one quarter of all Brazilians on social media. Technologies advance and transform social structures, connecting societies, and that would not be different from our Society of A.A. Technology is present in our daily lives and society is increasingly connected to the digital world. Technology, which until a few years ago was something futuristic presented in science fiction movies and books, has come on so fast, that for me I sometimes think that that these changes cannot be real. I imagine Bill and Bob living with us today, men who proved how futuristic they were.



Currently, the digital world is erasing borders in many ways. The whole world is accessible with these advances and the time is now optimal to solve some entrenched problems through these devices available in the palm of our hands. This world of technology affected us in very positive ways during the pandemic and in ways that we could not have imagined. These new resources have transformed our daily work lives in ways that have been quite noticeable and enriching. We had to reinvent ourselves and revolutionize ourselves in the use of certain tools, a process that has just been accelerating since the arrival of this new technology. We went from holding a few service meetings at the group level to a World Service Meeting online. We can host Public Information meetings with organizations around the world and participate in A.A. meetings inside prisons in a hybrid manner. And all of this is quite real.

The interesting thing is that hybrid mobility allows us to increase the participation of people in meetings, as well as to increase our range of engagement with the participation of everyone, noting the important presence of alcoholic women. It allows, for example, participation from fellows for whom it would probably be impossible from the face-to-face point of view.

As technology has been entering our A.A. way of life, and it's been happening faster and faster, it's been gathering people miles away, gathering families online, friends who haven't spoken for years! Nowadays it is possible to talk by seeing and listening to people who are in another city, another state, and another country instantly, and this makes it much easier to share with each other.

However, it's worth noting that it is necessary to have the proper support of our fellows who have greater technological knowledge and who can help in the process of training everyone. Thus allowing more and more members of our community to integrate into the environment and facilitating the dissemination of the message of A.A. with tools to reach the potential alcoholic like the use of a QR Code in literature, as well as digital books and an online store for easy access.

One of the areas of concern is the issue of online anonymity, particularly with respect to networking sites and social media, which has led us to take a closer look at the A.A. literature and how A.A. Traditions can best be applied to these popular media. On a personal level, anonymity provides protection for all members identified as alcoholics, a security safeguard, often of crucial importance to newcomers.

As for the specific question, "What about anonymity online?" The A.A. Guidelines on the Internet say, " ... an A.A. website is a public medium, and, therefore, requires the same safeguards that we use at the level of press, radio, and film."

One problem that we are facing at the moment, is that of the social isolation due to the pandemic, which hinders access to support alternatives for alcoholism, such as therapy and self-help groups. According to this A.A. representative, some groups seek to adapt to the new routine, by changing certain procedures, such as avoiding handshakes and proximity between individuals, reducing the number of meetings, and performing the whole hygiene process. On the other hand, certain groups have adopted contingency plans, involving keeping in touch by virtual platforms such as phone, email, social networks, or video meetings. Although the second option is the most common, it reinforces the notion that regardless of the solution, each member is responsible for their own decisions.

**Accessibility:** On July 6, 2015, the Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Law 13.146) was enacted, which requires access to Internet websites maintained by companies with their own business or commercial representation in the country or by government agencies.

**“Chapter II: On Access to Information and Communication.”**

- To comply with this requirement of the law, the General Services Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Brazil (JU-NAAB) took the initiative of implementing technology capable of transforming articles published on its website into Voice or Read Aloud.
- To access the feature, go to the JUNAAB website and on the right side of the page you will find an icon for Read Aloud. Click on it and select the text. To hear the text on the page, scroll to the end of the page and you will find the bar that will read aloud.
- Disseminate this novelty that will allow full access to audiences with different needs, whether people with disabilities; elderly people or even anyone else who wants a friendlier site.

It is always possible to arrange contributions through bank deposits to the treasurer’s account or through electronic funds transfers. What is not possible with bank deposits is keeping the contribution anonymous.

The collective consciousness must evaluate and decide on this. But it’s doable.

To continue with A.A. service, even during the quarantine, groups have resorted to the use of technology and have found in video calling applications an alternative to the face-to-face meetings that the approximately 5,000 groups from all over the country had offered until the Coronavirus arrived in the country. Technology has allowed us to overcome distances, keeping us close at a difficult time. Many of the Internet users who came to one of the rooms of A.A. through the organization’s website had never thought of attending face-to-face meetings. Some people have felt more comfortable online, as they don’t need to turn on their cameras or even use their real names, resulting in the discovery that digital tools have proven to be effective and safe, as long as they have observed the group’s recommendations.

On the A.A. website, you can access an online meeting that takes place every day at 8 p.m. and is open to anyone. The required software can be easily accessed by computer, tablet or smartphone. In addition, many groups in many cities have created their own digital meeting spaces, including through WhatsApp.

**A statement from a newcomer:** “I joined two years ago, I haven’t been to a face-to-face meeting yet, my recovery is all online. And I was able to attend four to five meetings daily for eight months. I bought a lot of books and scripts. I studied the program together with fellows and companions from all over Brazil. We created a study group on WhatsApp. I could never have done it if it weren’t for online meetings. I know the importance of face-to-face. But technology arrived to add to, to help in a period that, otherwise, many more groups would be closed. And I’m sorry that A.A. has come together to welcome the new ones, keeping the veterans continues the whole legacy.”

Those who have attended a face-to-face group miss it because friendships develop between people. Staying sober is a big challenge. Online service meetings have only made it

easy; these tools have proven indispensable to our growth. Because before, we needed to travel long distances due to the size of our areas to meet our service companions and attend various A.A. assemblies. Today our time has been reduced and optimized for the meeting. And the agendas are much more dynamic. We resolve several issues with an unimaginable gain of time. Always keeping our responsibility for our anonymity, our protection, present and of concern: to attract and not to promote as the base for the growth of our Fellowship: Alcoholics Anonymous!

*Maria Z. — Brazil*

## **A.A. Literature on Digital Platforms**

*Hello everyone. My name is Masaya. I’m an alcoholic, and very honored to have received this loving invitation to present at the WSM.*

Who among you here does not have a smartphone? The iPhone was first introduced in 2007. In just 15 years, smartphones, high-speed Internet access, and a variety of new technology-based services utilizing smartphones have become an integral part of our lives. This WSM is also being held online, and the pandemic forced A.A.s worldwide to take advantage of new technologies. In Japan, an online meeting portal site was immediately launched in the spring of 2020 with the support of the General Service Board, something that had not been possible before. Through trial and error, we received lots of know-how from countries, areas, and groups that were having success. Throughout this pandemic, many new fellows worldwide discovered A.A. via online searches and started getting sober by participating in online meetings.

For publishing, the decline of paper media and the shift away from books is a worldwide trend, not limited to A.A. The advantages of paper books and their need will not change in the future, but as we all know, there are many excellent aspects of e-books. The ability to read any book whenever and wherever you want on a single small device that fits in your pocket is a magical thing that was unthinkable 20 years ago. It is not just a mere portable convenience. Considering our primary purpose in Tradition Five, it is a vital asset for those in remote areas or who have physical disabilities or learning challenges. E-books allow our message to be accessible because they offer voice reading and magnification functions and can be available online. Various countries’ GSO websites and GSO New York’s website can serve as a model for the rest of us on how they use digital platforms.

In Japan, we added the “Concepts Checklist” to our website last year. We also posted some back issues of *BOX-916* (our national magazine) for reading free of charge during the pandemic, along with some audio readings of several articles. We are preparing to upload service guidelines and other service materials on our GSO, what we call JSO, website. Additionally, we are preparing to enable an audio-streaming version of the Japanese Big Book on our website.

Speaking of e-books, we contacted AAWS in 2018, when AAWS was in the process of validating test cases in A.A. Germany. In March 2019, AAWS agreed to grant e-book licenses to the other countries’ GSOs upon request, with the exception of the English, Spanish, and French versions, and Japan was able to proceed forward. We started working on *Living Sober*, which

is popular for beginners, and will release it on Amazon Kindle by the end of 2022. This will mark A.A. Japan's first e-book in Japanese.

The possibility of publishing e-books and selling through Amazon or other sites raised two primary concerns with our GSB. First was the potential of enormous book inventories. We must order in large lots to keep the book's price reasonable. If the volume of paper books sold dropped, the JSO and central offices would be stuck with the inventory for a long time. The second concern was that local offices rely on literature sales for additional income, and the sales of e-books would benefit JSO as a publisher but could cut off revenue for local offices.

Thankfully, when Japan's WSM delegate returned from the 25th WSM in Durban, he shared Inmar's presentation from German-speaking Europe about how the German Big Book's paper-to-digital ratio was about nine-to-one, and that creating the e-book resulted in a 10 percent increase in overall books distributed. The impact on the local offices was negligible. We thank German-speaking Europe for sharing that experience.

We know that Brazil also publishes their books as e-books in Portuguese, and we would like to learn about the effect this has had. As we continue to consider how the use of technology will affect future book publishing, we hope to share our experience with you.

Based on my experience with e-books in Japanese, in addition to accessibility, I feel that e-book utilization and print-on-demand reduce inventory risks and lower production costs. Of course, we must be sensitive to the "digital divide" amongst our members, but these formats are more effective for producing literature in countries where the membership is still small and can seek the help of the International Literature Fund to publish their first A.A. literature.

Ten years from now, I am sure that many of the 73 languages of our Big Book sold today will be readable from a smartphone or other devices. That is a welcome change that will serve our primary purpose. Thank you very much.

*Masaya O. — Japan*

### **Technology and A.A. — Reaching All Generations**

*My name is Amanda and I'm an alcoholic and chair of the General Service Board of A.A. Great Britain (AAGB) and English-speaking Continental Europe.*

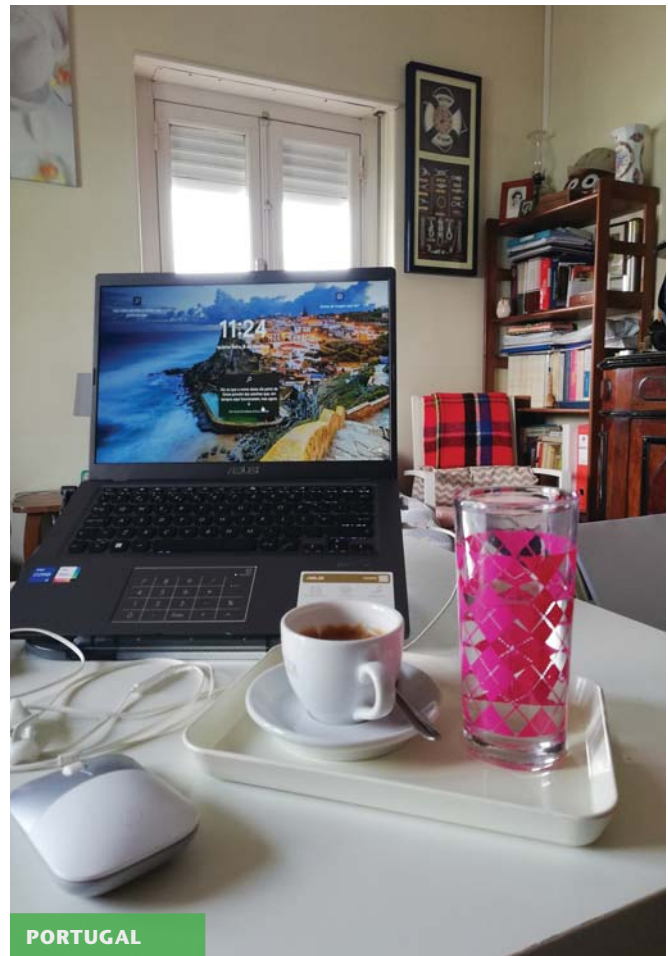
It's a privilege to be asked to share here as a second term delegate at the World Service Meeting (WSM) on "Technology and A.A. — Reaching All Generations."

When the global pandemic hit in March 2020 and all of the face-to-face meetings had to close because we were in lockdown, A.A. did what it does best and found a solution.

In fact, how each group responded and found a way to meet, by using technology and taking their meetings online was really quite remarkable.

At the General Service Office in York, staff, who were working remotely, were updating the meeting finder daily to let the still-suffering alcoholic know that we were still here despite the world closing down, that Alcoholics Anonymous was still open for business.

I personally had never been to an online A.A. meeting before this time. The words from the Big Book's Spiritual Experience: "There is a principle which is a bar against all informa-



tion, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance — that principle is contempt prior to investigation" applied to me when it came to online meetings. I didn't like them even though I'd never attended one.

But rather like when I entered A.A. 18 years ago, the gift of desperation got me to my first online meeting. I had to be willing to give it a try because I couldn't get to my face-to-face meeting and there was nothing else.

What I discovered was a new world opening up to me — the meeting was amazing, not only was I able to connect with my home group members at our Beckenham Tuesday night meeting but we began to get visitors from all over the world. Parents who could not make the meeting because of childcare issues were suddenly able to do so, my friend Benny, who was in his 80s and 55 years sober, but too unwell to travel to a meeting was also able to attend.

We started to get to know Frodo the cat and Dexter the dog as they would pop up in the background in a member's home. In a time when the world was in fear of the unknown and people were lonely, A.A. kicked in and through the technology we were able to maintain our sobriety and pass on the message of recovery to new members.

In Great Britain we saw a big rise in the number of people seeking help in lockdown, we saw new groups that had never met in person start up.

People who had never ever been to a face-to-face meeting



found their way to the online meetings. It helped those who may have not had the courage to physically walk through the door of an A.A. meeting to seek help.

Many of our new members formed friendships and sought out sponsorship from people they were not able to meet in person. Meetings had to organize their service roles to take in the technology — when service positions such as teamaker were not needed anymore new roles, which included security and the newcomers' hub after the meeting so we didn't let anyone fall through the net, were created. People were sponsored via online platforms, doing their step work by video call. They hadn't even met in person, but they found a way to work the program.

Miracles happened and lives were changed, friendships were formed. The Higher Power came in and it just worked.

We had to move our telephone helplines out of offices and online and all of our service meetings went online as well.

Our Conference consultation on safeguarding online meant that we were able to reach those in regions who would not have been able to take part before, so an added bonus.

As well as technology being able to connect us to meetings, in AAGB we have used technology through videos to reach people in schools, universities, the armed services and in prisons, as well as reaching out to diverse communities.

Our *Young Peoples* video is aimed at helping those in their late teens to early 20s to identify. Through the powerful images and the use of the technology there may be those whose lives may have been saved because although they were young, they could see that they were not too young to come to A.A.

We have also set up the "Chat Now" and online responder service. Chat Now has become popular with young people who may have been fearful to pick up the telephone — they can message a responder and get an instant reply.

Had there been no global pandemic then perhaps we may not have known how A.A. would be able to embrace technology and become available to all generations. While many meetings have moved back face to face a fair few have remained online to this day. Technology has given us the freedom to

bring A.A. around the world and make it accessible to all.

Sometimes it takes the gift of desperation to be able to be willing to try something new and what wonderful gifts come from us being able to embrace change.

*Amanda S. — Great Britain*

*(Read by 2nd Term alternate delegate Stephen S.)*

## What Is Our Attraction? Unity, Service

### Unity — We are a Diverse Fellowship with a Singleness of Purpose

*I would like to thank you for the opportunity and invitation to share this topic with all those attending this 27th Virtual World Service Meeting. I believe that my Higher Power gave me the opportunity to develop this topic, because, as you will realize later in my talk, it is a topic that touches very closely on my own experience as a member and servant within the community.*

First, let me make a brief reflection on the question of the main topic. "What's our attraction?" I think the issue of attraction is very much linked to anonymity in its deepest sense. Those who know us and applaud our work are amazed at the willingness not to stand out from others and to be publicly recognized. To that attitude of apparent humility, who doesn't want to stand out, to be seen as selfless and virtuous? Alcoholics wanting to practice humility? When in our passage through the A.A. program we understand the value of anonymity, it is when we are really willing to serve and sacrifice our self-centeredness for the benefit of others and the survival of A.A. Ultimately, when we have attained something of a spiritual awakening, we discover that all that sacrifice is primarily for our own growth and benefit.

My name is Juan José and I am an alcoholic, a member of the Fellowship for 12 years and five months (at the time of this meeting). Undoubtedly, to refer to the subject assigned to me,



I would like to recall the impressions I had when I arrived at my home group. I think it is necessary to clarify that my first meeting with A.A. was a year prior to my definitive arrival. On that first occasion, I remained six months without drinking, followed by a relapse that kept me out for six months of drinking in greater quantity and frequency than before, showing me the progressive nature of the disease in such a resounding way that in that short period of time I hit a bottom that made me return desperately looking for help.

I come from a traditional Chilean family, made up of my father, my mother and my two sisters (I am the middle brother). I grew up under the protection of my family, with a lot of love and development based on the values of the Catholic religion, instilled "the old-fashioned way," with severity and a strong hand. I am sincere in confessing that what I see today as a privilege, I considered for a long time as my downfall, especially during my childhood and adolescence. Ever since I was a child I realized that I was different from most of the children around me. I did not like to play the same games, I had a special closeness with girls and, as a result of those differences, I began to harbor and reinforce in my mind the idea that my nature was an unfortunate exception. As I grew older, early in my adolescence, I began to become aware of my homosexuality, an issue that at that time in Chile (early 90s), was strongly stigmatized, even by those closest to me. If I could describe my emotional and mental state during my later childhood and adolescence, it is "stress and anguish."

I started drinking at about age 18. I remember that the feeling of relaxation and carefreeness that it produced was so pleasant, that, seeing it in perspective, I immediately got hooked on alcohol. For the first time in my life, I felt my tribulations drift away and I could laugh and enjoy myself without thinking about the drama of facing my family and my friends as an openly gay person. After 10 years of active drinking, I was able to "come out," which meant a great family drama. However, I was able to pursue a professional career in the scientific area and start my doctoral studies very successfully. I was a student and an alcoholic, until I reached a crisis stage and I had to abandon my studies.

It was in the wake of a couple's crisis that I approached A.A. for the first time. I remember that in my first meeting, without any prior knowledge of what the A.A. program was about, I was hopeful that I would be taught how to drink without losing control. My first disappointment was that this program was for "alcoholic" people. I hardly considered myself an excessive drinker, and certainly not a sick person. They told me that to recover I had to maintain absolute abstinence, "no matter what." The drinking experiences shared by my group members were deeper and more dramatic, I had not gone so low. It all seemed like an exaggeration to me. I refused to accept myself as an equal. The Twelve Steps seemed to me a manifestation of religious devotion that I was unwilling to adopt in my own life. Despite my resistance, I stayed six months without drinking, sporadically attending meetings.

Looking back at this first experience with A.A., what I found least attractive were the Twelve Steps that A.A. suggested I needed to recover. The idea that one day I could drink without losing control was deeply ingrained in my mind and was what led me to relapse six months later. But there was something that did catch my attention. It was the Twelve Traditions, especially the one that read:

"You are an A.A. member, if *you* say so. You can declare yourself in; nobody can keep you out. No matter who you are, no matter how low you've gone, no matter how grave your emotional complications — even your crimes — we still can't deny you A.A. We don't *want* to keep you out. We aren't a bit afraid you'll harm us, never mind how twisted or violent you may be. We just want to be sure that you get the same great chance for sobriety that we've had. So you're an A.A. member the minute you declare yourself."

This meant that no one could be denied entry. No one? A truly inclusive society. A utopia come true, expressed by those who attended the meetings: scientists, peasants, homeowners, engineers, plumbers, merchants, students; people of all different backgrounds, ages, socioeconomic classes, atheists and believers (Catholics, evangelicals, Hare Krishna); etc. I, who bore the stigma of homosexuality, was immediately attracted to the Third Tradition. No one could prevent me from entering.

Diversity is not a concept alien to my professional activity; I am a biologist by profession. In nature, a diverse ecosystem — that is, with a greater "variety" of organisms — is a "healthy" ecosystem. A greater number of biological interactions prevents the dominance of a species, the consequent collapse of that ecosystem and the services it provides. Especially in A.A., a healthy group is one that maintains a diverse representation in its members. In fact, this is embodied in one of the suggested questions for the inventory of the groups within the booklet "The A.A. Group ... Where it all Begins:" "Does our group attract alcoholics from different social and professional backgrounds? Do we see a truly representative sample of our community?"

What is the effect of a diverse group within A.A.? From my point of view, a group with different visions, perspectives, ways, and experiences has a greater chance of conveying the message to those who seek help. We never know which message will creep into the newcomer's mind. The more diverse a group, the greater the chances of success for its own survival. On the other hand, a group dominated by a line of moral thought can lead to failure, since, without a doubt, all of us are fallible in our morals and our judgment, especially among those who suffer from the disease of alcoholism. The challenge is to reach the so-called well-informed "group conscience." The way to achieve it, as the early members of A.A. well knew, is always intense and hard. It tests us to keep an open mind and accept the majority's decision, even when I disagree with it.

The practice of the Third Tradition for me has been a unique and powerful experience. It has forced me to keep an open mind toward those who are different from me, and has extended into my personal and professional lives, making them much richer and healthier since I came to A.A.

How the singleness of purpose focuses us within this apparent chaos of opinions, visions, and perspectives is the key to our unity. When A.A.s focus on carrying the message to the alcoholic who is still suffering, it is the time when our differences and neurotic personalities calm down and unity arises. It's what I've seen in my own group and it's my own experience as an emotionally ill person.

*Juan José O. — Chile*

## Service — Passing It On

*My name is Reza, and I am an alcoholic. Thank God that after 23 years of drinking alcohol, the message of the Alcoholics Anonymous Fellowship reached me through the older members, and now I have been sober for 10 years and two months.*

In this Fellowship I am serving myself, my family and others. I believe that Alcoholics Anonymous was started in 1935. It started from the Twelfth Step, that is, when Bill W. realized that in order to maintain his sobriety, he must send a message to another person, and so to maintain his sobriety, he found the next person, Dr. Bob, through the billboard of a hotel where he was staying and rushed to help him. Those two people managed to convey the message of recovery to a third person, and so, too, did all the subsequent people.

Gradually, those two initial members realized that in order to preserve this group, they had to provide something in writing. They started writing and printing the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* from 1936. It was completed in 1939 and became available to everyone in 1946. After that, the Twelve Concepts for World Service were formed. The Twelve-Step proposal helped us to get to know ourselves so that we could bring the self-discovered God into our lives. And in Twelve Steps, I realized that this is our religion for the future of the Fellowship; that I should prioritize our public welfare; and that I should keep our association united. I have to because the life I have, and those who will come in the future, depends on the unity of the Fellowship. Whenever someone reaches out for help, I want the hands of A.A. always to be there and for me, be-

cause I am also responsible, and this is my understanding of the Third Concept.

Up until 1950, services such as meeting places, hospital cooperation and intergroup offices, including pamphlets, books, and appropriate advertisements, etc., were the responsibility of a small number of senior members of the association, Bill and Dr. Bob and a few non-alcoholics. Finally, a Conference consisting of representatives of members and countries was formed by the founders of the association, so that the responsibility of overseeing the Traditions of the Fellowship and guiding the main service matters was entrusted to the servants of Alcoholics Anonymous.

These services whether they are provided by individuals, groups, areas, or community groups, are absolutely vital for our existence and development, and therefore we ask a question about every service, "Is this service really needed?" Therefore, we must maintain it. Otherwise, we will fail in our mission to help those who need these services and are looking for this Fellowship. Finally, I would like to point out that for all these services and the message by its founders of the Eleventh Tradition, which is the clear definition of the Eleventh Step — to keep it anonymous — was and still is an attraction of the heart for me. And I thank God for his constant presence in Alcoholics Anonymous.

*Reza V. — Iran*

## The Seventh Tradition: Fully Self-Supporting in the Digital Age

### Passing the "Basket" on Virtual Platforms

The resistance to change or the fear of breaking paradigms are characteristics that condition and limit us from venturing into the digital age. If we add to this the ignorance in the use and correct application of new technologies, our barriers are even greater. Despite this our world does not stop and our wonderful program for life in Alcoholics Anonymous continues advancing, and we either adapt or we will be doomed to disappear.

We had to live through and suffer what will surely be the new evil of the century; the global pandemic caused by the Covid-19 virus that from March 2020 forced us to stay at home. The federal government of Mexico decreed and published in the official gazette of the federation the security provisions and protocols, scope and definitions among others, about the initial and unknown "pandemic."

What was essential as an activity and what was not, what measures we should take, and so on. For our A.A. community (throughout Mexico) the behavior to follow was totally unknown. Since there was no known behavior or health problem, what should we use as a reference? All we were obliged to do was obey the guidelines and directives of the health authority. All this so as not to incur contempt and to take care of our health and that of others.

As an office (OSG) we were never going to order what should be done or not and we simply suggested that we abide by the provisions given by the authorities. It was argued that our activity was essential (as groups) and on the other hand it was argued that we were not.

Our districts, areas and our own Central Mexicana service office, remained open (only with preventive measures) and for





a while its staff was working “from home.” I repeat “only with preventive measures,” and no one was infected, no one. But we only had to have one person catch it and from there it continued, even I suffered it myself. All through this time, more than a year, we received news in the office of fellows from all over the country who had succumbed, including delegates, trustees and many more. How terrible! Not being able to pay vigil to or say goodbye to our colleagues and friends.

Faced with this situation, both donations and the purchase of our products (literature) obviously decreased. Likewise, face-to-face sessions, and even with a virtual component, were barely happening.

We turned our homes into groups. Cyber and digital platforms in all their forms became fashionable. Even our Conferences were about to develop them (online spaces), but it was not to be. But... one of them was only three days. Fortunately, the last two of our Central Mexican service meetings had already happened in person and apparently everything sorted itself out.

The A.A. groups, for their own operation and to maintain the service structures they have created, do not need large amounts of money, and so it is customary in the meetings of A.A. “to pass a basket” in which each alcoholic anonymously puts in the amount he wishes to contribute.

But in the various virtual groups that were created there were, and prevail, limitations to passing the basket and collecting Seventh Tradition contributions. Initiatives have arisen in some virtual groups that meet using platforms such as Zoom or Meet and these appoint a coordinator or a treasurer who shares at the end of each meeting an account to which you can transfer the amount that can be voluntarily deposited and this in turn gets distributed to the service centers of the districts, areas, and structures of the countries or groups participating in these meetings.

Today and in the face of contingency measures that continue because the virus is here to stay in some entities or countries, “virtual platforms” such as Zoom, WhatsApp groups, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, among others, continue to operate — and from home or in cyber space, there are still virtual meetings.

A bank account to receive electronic contributions was created in the name of our Central Mexican General Services of Alcoholics Anonymous SA organization.

Finally, and as a result of agreements from the last Conference, several items regarding contributions have been repealed and instead an “annual donation plan” is proposed that in essence suggests:

1. The donation for the anniversary of the group or of a member be made directly to GSO and
2. The donation of \$1 (one peso) per day or making a greater effort for \$410 (four hundred and ten pesos) per year, that if achieved would allow us to be fully self-supporting.

Hopefully we make a true conscience and solidify this objective to return the gift “united, for those who are still to come” with particular emphasis on personal and group contributions across our structure or by directly making use of the ability, which today allows us, without leaving home, to make contributions by bank transfer, and immediately receive a receipt from GSO.

Gratefulness and gratitude have to go hand in hand for the sake of those who are yet to come, to ensure that the message of Alcoholics Anonymous reaches the one who is still suffering and who has not yet heard our message of life; that is why spirituality and money must be go together, remembering that all of our services throughout the structure are directed toward this sole objective of Alcoholics Anonymous. Glory is a spiritual value that transforms people into “Great Souls,” who have built this foundation where Recovery and Unity are written; whose tower we have topped with a dome that bears the name of Service and that always points upwards — toward God.

In conclusion and despite the resistance of many, as long as the global health problem remains, we can and must continue to make rational use of digital platforms. We can create accounts through responsible trusted servants where bank transfers are paid to keep our structure running. The amount will be left up to the capabilities and gratitude of each individual member, and for each virtual meeting we attend, we can offer our donation, because “hands that give, will never be empty.”

*Gonzalo M. — Mexico*

### **The Spiritual Significance of Being Self-Supporting (to myself, to my group and to my local A.A. entities)**

*The Seventh Tradition states: “Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”*

While contributions cover each group’s rent and other expenses, the Seventh Tradition is essential at every level of A.A. service. It is both a privilege and a responsibility for groups and members to ensure that not only their group, but also their intergroup/central office, local services, district, area, and the general office remain self-supporting. This keeps A.A. free of outside influences that might divert us from our primary purpose — to help the alcoholic who still suffers.

The amount of our contribution is secondary to the spiritual connection that unites all groups around the world. Many A.A. members feel that the only way they can donate is to give. Some give their time and skills but most give money.

***The Spiritual Significance of Being Self-Supporting to Myself:*** It is gratifying for me to feel that my humble contribution to A.A., doing service or contributing financially, can help to save a life. The moment I put money in the Seventh’s basket, I feel that it is going to help the alcoholic who still suffers.

One day I shared with my general practitioner doctor that I thought I had a problem with alcohol, and she gave me the contact of an A.A. member who went with me to a meeting. That was my first unknown contact with the spirituality of the Seventh Tradition, because I went to a meeting room that was open by the contribution of A.A. members.

It was that gesture that allowed me to see a light at the end of the tunnel and feel that it was possible for me to stop drinking.

So, to me today, all contributions that anonymous A.A. members make mean:

- It was that gesture that made me reborn and be the person I am today.
- It was that gesture that allowed published literature to exist, which I acquired, and which helped me to understand what the disease of alcoholism is.

- It was that gesture that made me want to be a better person, to daily take an inventory of myself, and to change myself.
- It was that gesture that made me feel that it was possible to feel the best feelings in the world, from others towards me, with no interest other than helping me.
- It was that gesture that made me start to have a way of life that makes me an emotionally balanced person, happy even in the least good moments and living life with joy.
- It was that gesture that made me now, from the bottom of my heart, say that: "Here, even sadness leaps for joy."
- It was that basket that made me realize that if all this was and is possible for me, then I really want to help other people who suffer by making them feel that it is possible to stop suffering.
- It was that basket that made me one more member of this community and wanted to understand how it worked.

I then felt a great need to do, to give of myself and, when in my group they proposed that I do my first service, serve coffee and clean the room, I accepted. I was already contributing to something else. It was that gesture that gave birth to the spirit of service in me, and I am very grateful to A.A. and to all of you for helping me to be what I am today. And this is the meaning of spirituality, of self-sufficiency, for me.

**The Spiritual Significance of Being Self-Supporting to My Group:** Also, to my home group, the feeling is to carry the message, and, for that, its existence and continuance is important, as well as for the purchase of literature and other materials.

In my group, where the meetings are physical, the basket passes and, after all expenses are paid (rent of the space, literature, coffee and other expenses approved by group conscience), the treasurer sends the monthly contribution to the area and GSO and keeps a small amount in a prudent reserve.

The experience of the online groups is a little bit different. The bank account number of the treasurer person is shown on the screen in a section of the meeting dedicated to service announcements (where members who want to contribute send their contribution). Members are also given the suggestion that they send contributions directly to the GSO. The committees that do A.A. work need money to function. It is also important to keep A.A. Portugal in contact and in unity with European A.A. and with World A.A. The annual Conference needs funding and the GSO needs money to work properly.

**The Spiritual Significance of Being Self-Supporting to the Area:** Regarding the area (local A.A.), contributions are used for the maintenance of the space, for PI actions at hospitals, treatment centers, schools, universities, factories, etc., and also to support other expenses such as, for example, travel by PI servants, expenses for service worktables, etc., and, at the end of the year, the remaining surplus is also sent to GSO, after decision of area assembly.

The area treasurer is responsible for managing and controlling, according to the decisions of the area assembly, the funds that the community in his area has. When the area assembly or the committee wants to carry out an activity that involves costs, he must find out whether there is money to carry it

out and inform the assembly or the committee about it. The treasurer periodically informs the groups about the area's accounts. This is also the person who should know how to transmit to the groups the spirituality of the Seventh Tradition.

**Conclusion:** Both groups and areas contribute to the General Service Office and these transfers are made through digital platforms. In Portugal, during the pandemic, the way contributions were sent, from groups and areas to the GSO, was always through digital platforms.

Currently, and taking into account that society's trend is towards digitization, also in A.A., making a contribution is just a "click away."

The Fellowship is aware that it has to maintain its autonomy and independence without receiving any external contributions and the money necessary for A.A.'s survival has to come from the members.

Putting money in the basket is proof of our gratitude for what we have received and is priceless and proof of our desire to carry the message. In fact, money and spirituality are mixed.

*Leonor P. — Portugal*

## Our Nonalcoholic Friends

### Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community Committees Reaching Professionals on the "Frontlines"

*Good morning to all my fellow delegates to this 27th WSM of our community of A.A. My name is Alfonso O., an alcoholic in recovery belonging to A.A. in Colombia. I thank my Higher Power for sharing with you the honor of speaking on this important subject that you kindly assigned to me.*

In our history, we recognize the importance that nonalcoholic people have had, among which there are a variety of professionals who were, are and will be fundamental in being part of the first contact with the alcoholic patient with whom they have to deal daily. We remember with gratitude, among so many in the field of medicine, Dr. William Duncan Silkworth, who identified the nature of our illness and in his love for drunkards helped Bill W. in taking the first steps toward finding sobriety. In the same way, he provided us with the tools to puncture our alcoholic ego, describing the mental obsession that compels us to drink and the physical allergy that condemns us to madness or death. Bill W. said of Dr. Silkworth, "When I wanted to go to work with alcoholics, [he] led me to them right there in his hospital, and at great risk to his professional reputation." This good doctor did a Twelve-Step job with some 40,000 alcoholics, plus to this excellent Dr. Silkworth we owe the eternal and brilliant introduction to our basic text.

On the part of religion there have been many who contributed and continue to help our community, inviting us to hold our meetings in their basements and social halls, without ever interfering in our affairs; others speak in their sermons of the A.A. solution, send us candidates, and marvel at their progress. It is worth recognizing of everyone, one of them, the Reverend Dr. Sam Shoemaker, since as Bill W. said, "Sam, he offered us the cup with life-giving water for the drunkards, we drank from it, without forgetting to pass it on to others:



we give our gratitude to our Higher Power whose grace keeps the cup always full and to Sam Shoemaker, who was the first to offer it to us.”

There are a lot of other professions that have helped us and that will continue to be of the highest importance in carrying the message, so we take into account journalists, film and television producers, press editors and today programs with serious content of articles, forums and Internet pages. In this regard Bill W. noted: “Many experiences with the men and women of the press, radio and television clearly show us what their dedication has meant. In almost all of the cities where A.A. is growing today, we see our media friends following in the footsteps of Jack Alexander and Fulton Oursler.”

In academia, there are directors of universities, colleges, technology centers who, together with their roster of professors, are also transmitters of the help that A.A. can deliver to people who may have the disease.

There are also other important fronts to consider among which are prison directors and guards who have contact with the prison population that may be serving sentences as a result of crimes committed by alcohol abuse.

In every country there are police entities, armed forces, security forces, surveillance companies, transit agencies, fire departments, houses of justice, institutions for the protection of children and the family and other volunteer entities that have directors and workers who constantly encounter people with alcoholism problems and help us to direct them to our groups.

Another special case is made up of treatment facilities with doctors of different professions, psychologists, psychiatrists, and nurses, to whom many alcoholics owe the first information and subsequent referral to A.A. groups.

Within the commercial sector there are professionals in charge in the departments of community relations and safety at work, who also constitute a bridge between workers and A.A.

To do effective work with the professional community regarding public information and cooperation, we A.A. members must take into account the preservation and spirit of our

Twelve Traditions but taking that into account we must not be rigid in our positions. Each case must be properly considered without falling into affiliation; and to make it clear that we are not the only solution to alcoholism. We present the solution provided by A.A. and we do not enter into controversies.

Professionals and entities other than A.A., do not have the obligation to submit to the Traditions of A.A., these exist strictly as a guide of A.A. but it is of vital importance for a more effective cooperation to make a good example so that these people become familiar with the Traditions and understand their meaning. We must observe as members of A.A. that we will never be able to professionalize PI talks or Twelve-Step work and we must always keep in mind the uniqueness of purpose of our Fellowship in terms of carrying the message to the alcoholic who is still suffering.

It is of fundamental importance, to seek and work with professionals who are daily encountering people who suffer from alcoholism, since despite computer science and new technologies many of them do not know what alcoholism is and have misconceptions about what Alcoholics Anonymous is. Our moral duty is to fulfill our First Concept of service, to our Fifth Tradition as a community and to our Twelfth Step in a personal way in informing and publicizing the solution of A.A.

**Purpose of local or area CPC committees:** Members of such committees inform those working in the field of alcoholism about A.A.: where groups are located, what we can do, and what we cannot do. An attempt is made to establish better cooperation between the members of A. A. and professionals working in these fields. PI managers from the area committee, districts or groups depending on their jurisdiction will give informative presentations, upon request, to organizations. Sessions can be tailored to their specific needs. A typical program may include information through lectures, presentation of corporate videos, films, etc., to workers in companies, hospitals, universities, institutions of other types and all professionals and establishments that request it, which can be the link between A.A. and the alcoholic patient with whom they may have contact, and then a presentation can be made by one or more



members of A.A. about “What A.A. Is and Does and What It Isn’t and Doesn’t.”

How the local and area CPC committees are launched: in the area, district and group committees, the coordinators of the TF, CPC, and PI are usually elected by vote, they in turn train a team of volunteers to prepare them with the guidelines they have to properly carry out this service.

The CPC Workbook, available at the General Service Office, will be very helpful in working with professionals in your area, state, or community. It is suggested that you work with one group of professionals at a time. When a list of professionals, both individuals and organizations, has been compiled, members of CPC committees may:

- a) Make the initial contact (by letter, by phone, by personal interview).
- b) Offer to visit the professional to inform them about A.A. or offer to give a CPC presentation to a group of professionals.
- c) Offer to take the professional to an open meeting of A.A. in the area.
- d) Provide literature describing A.A.’s recovery program.
- e) Highlight the real desire of A.A. to serve in the community as a resource to help the alcoholic recover from the disease of alcoholism.

The areas also organize meetings with professionals who, if they are interested, are then asked for the contact details to register them with GSO, which will then send them the newsletter for professionals and additional information that they may request through the A.A. website. From these meetings some professionals become interested in the A.A. community and can, after giving them appropriate and detailed

instruction on our legacies and principles, render us invaluable service as Class A trustees.

During the pandemic, in most parts of the world, the presence of CPC and PI services was lost, with the professional community maintaining some of them virtually. But now we begin post-pandemic to make new contacts where we emphasize personal presentations and face-to-face contacts. These have more human warmth, and you can interact and better explain the scope of our recovery program and the specific objectives that we hope to achieve with the professional. We save the virtual world for the advancement of contacts with those at a distance or for scheduled meetings specific to that service.

Finally, we express our eternal gratitude to all the professionals who in the past were instrumental in helping our A.A. community flourish around the world; to those who in the present have become the bridge that saves lives by directing alcoholics who are within their reach to our groups; to all those who have done for us, are doing for us and will do for us in the future, the selfless service as Class A trustees in the structures in countries where A.A. is present.

*Alfonso O. — Colombia*

### **Does A.A. Literature Attract and Encourage Professionals to Refer Clients to A.A.? Do We Speak “Their Language”?**

*Some 1,000 years BC, Solomon wrote, in Proverbs 23-31, a very powerful description of alcoholism, as did Bill W. in the 20th century AD; the effects of alcohol and the behavior of alcoholics hasn’t changed much over the last 3,000 years.*

The analogy Solomon used, “swaying on the top of a mast,” and Bill’s description of passengers in an ocean liner, were both relevant and relatable to people of the day. They do not have the same relevance in most societies today. So, while the content of our message is as pertinent as it ever was, it may help to keep our literature updated with changes in our modern-day society and cultures. However, I do not believe that “speaking their language” is as important as the way we present or *carry the message*.

What has changed over the last 20-30 years? It may be simpler to ask what hasn’t changed? Solomon’s “top of a mast in a stormy sea” may still have been relevant at the time A.A. was founded, but since then humans’ knowledge, our advances in technology, industry, transport, health, in fact, every aspect of human life, has exploded like never before. It has come to the point where it is almost impossible to keep track of this seemingly endless deluge of information. It is estimated that information available to humans has doubled over the last seven years. We live in an age of information overload; in order to keep up, many professionals have had to narrow their specific field of expertise. In most cases professionals simply do not have the time to get involved with any “outside issues” that, while they may be important, are not specific to them.

Thirty years ago, your general practitioner was, in most cases, the only healthcare professional you needed to see. Go to a doctor today, for anything beyond the run of the mill, and chances are you will be referred to a specialist. We have lawyers focusing on very small niche aspects of the law, there are courses and degrees available to students that did not exist, in a standalone form or any form at all — the list goes on.

Very few aspects of human life have changed as much,



though, as the way we communicate with each other. Instant access to information, direct communication with anyone, anywhere, has changed so quickly that trying to keep up is a full-time occupation. So, the question has to be: "How, in this day and age of limitless information — and access thereto — do we get professionals to listen to our message and act on it?"

Firstly, I believe, that if we need to get professionals to give up valuable time, we need to make it worth their while. As with most countries, in South Africa, professionals are required to provide proof of continued academic study or development to remain up to date in their chosen profession. This is measured in the form of Continued Professional Development (CPD) points. In order to maintain their practice license, professionals are required to earn these points every year (in the U.S. I understand this is referred to as Continued Professional Education or CPE credits.)

If we, as A.A., could develop courses or seminars/webinars for relevant professionals and have these certified as counting for CPD/E points, I believe we would greatly improve the chances of professional participation.

In South Africa we have had great success carrying the message to social workers and other healthcare professionals through a series of seminars and webinars done in cooperation with a local university. The theme of these seminars is "Alcohol Abuse," with members of A.A. having a session to offer a solution. One of the main attractions, for the healthcare workers, is that they are awarded CPD points for attending. The certification of the course for CPD was arranged by the university, with no affiliation to A.A. Most of these events have been oversubscribed.

Another project was discussed with the foremost Medical Aid/medical insurance company in South Africa. This company invites doctors and other medical professionals from all over the country to attend a day of presentations on updates in various aspects of the health industry. We were offered an hour session to present "the A.A. message." More than two thousand participants registered. Again the "carrot" was CPD points.

Unfortunately, there is some concern over our participation in this particular event as it seems the medical company is expecting some form of recognition from A.A., and we are concerned about affiliation rather than cooperation. We are holding off until we can get clarity on this aspect.

This brings me to a second point; if we are to hold these seminar/webinars who should present?

In this day and age of information sharing, public speaking has become an important aspect. Professionals expect the presentations to be slick, to be on point, to be clear, concise, pertinent, and well-presented. While there is nothing so powerful and convincing as hearing someone sharing their own experience, not many A.A. members are good at public speaking outside of A.A., so, while I believe that it should be members making the presentations, we need to be selective as to who.

Another illustration of both the above points is an annual presentation made to fourth-year medical students at Pretoria University. This is the premier medical university in South Africa and what better way is there to get this information to future medical practitioners?

However, the demands made on students studying for this degree are massive, with very little free time and here they

are being asked to attend a two-hour session in their already hectic lives, time that counts nothing towards course points and has no relevance in their exams. Immediately participation is reduced to maybe 50 percent or less, then a couple of members from local groups get up and share their stories, which might be fine in an A.A. group amongst fellow alcoholics, but which is lost on most students who are not alcoholics and cannot relate. The speaker, who is not getting the expected reaction from the audience, becomes more disjointed and hesitant, less, and less appealing to the students who start to doze off or play on their phones. It is not the fault of the speakers; they simply do not have the experience nor training.

Be professional when talking to professionals!!

The question was about our literature and is it relevant? While the message contained in our literature is relevant, dropping off a pamphlet, sending a short YouTube video or asking busy professionals to read some of our literature, is not effective, it's not going to increase the referrals we seek.

We spend a lot of time in contact with treatment facilities, rehabilitation centers and prisons, and that's all good, here we find people who may already have reached "rock bottom," who have got to that point of desperation. What of the people who have not yet recognized that point? People who have no idea that they could have a disease. People who are afraid of the perceived stigma? What if we could help alcoholics, and their families, before their lives are completely destroyed?

I think that is where we could be most helpful — speaking to the normal working person, that person who has no idea that they are alcoholic, doesn't understand how and why they react the way they do, and simply becomes more and more confused and more and more determined to hide their problem, until forced to go to a treatment facility, hospital, or even prison before they get help.

In order to reach people before they wash up against that last steppingstone as it were, we need to improve our contacts with professionals. They can provide an intervention long before the helpline call — they should be the first line of defense for the still-suffering alcoholic. But they are not! Who is responsible for that?

Does A.A. literature attract and encourage professionals to refer clients to A.A.? Do we speak "their language"?

Keep the message, but maybe, in this instance, we should shoot the messenger.

*Frank G. — South Africa*

## **Alcoholics Anonymous Has Already Come of Age**

### **Has the Global Pandemic Taught Us Lessons to Better Inform Our Twelfth Step Service?**

*My name is Greg B., and I am an alcoholic. I am a member of the Steps and Traditions Group that meets on Saturday morning at Forster, New South Wales on the eastern coast of Australia. My sobriety date is October 2, 1976, and I have been actively involved in Service in A.A. for the past 46 years. At present I am the World Service delegate (second term) for Australia.*

My talk concerns any lessons A.A. may have learned from the pandemic that has swept the world for the past two years in our efforts toward carrying the A.A. message. Before I sug-

gest these lessons, I would like to comment on the main heading, which questions the danger that A.A. may be getting too old. The inference here is that as time passes and A.A. ages, it may become irrelevant to the modern world. This of course neglects the fact that with old age comes wisdom and resilience.

I believe the basic tenets of A.A., in particular the Twelve Steps, will never grow old because they contain this thing we call truth and truth is eternal. The Twelve Steps fulfill a deep need (which is in every human being) to become fully human and lead a happy, successful life. We alcoholics are indeed fortunate people in that the cure for our disease takes us down this fulfilling path. The divinely inspired philosophy contained in the Steps will not change but the way they are presented will change and *must change* as the community they serve changes. One of these changes has been brought on by the global pandemic and the very necessary “discovery” of the virtual world by A.A. around the globe. Our adoption of digital technology has helped us to maintain our life-saving communication with each other.

Surely this is one of the main lessons that we have learned from the pandemic. That despite a major crisis that crippled the world, we were able to adjust our recovery program and continue to function. When Covid struck and restrictions were imposed, many members experienced panic at the possibility of not being able to meet with fellow alcoholics to maintain their sobriety. It was indeed heartening to see the Fellowship solve the problem by switching to the virtual world almost simultaneously in all countries. In Australia we thought we were very smart to go virtual only to find every other country was doing the same. The virtual world was a lifesaver, and it actually widened our field of experience, strength and hope by allowing us to join other meetings, particularly overseas ones. A.A. members in remote areas could now attend as many meetings as they desired. Once again, we brought strength out of powerlessness.

However, the virtual world brings its own challenges. For example, we have A.A. members now who have more than 12 months sobriety but have never been to a face-to-face A.A. meeting. Now that the pandemic and its restrictions have largely passed, we have some A.A. members who remain connected to A.A. virtually and have no desire to return to face-to-face meetings. Is this a problem to be faced or is this a sign of things to come? We older sober members may be disturbed by this, but the virtual world is here to stay, and the Fellowship needs to embrace it if we are to continue to reach the suffering alcoholic, particularly the young. (I understand other topics in this segment will deal with young people and with the need to incorporate online groups into our structure so I will not comment further.)

Today in the virtual world, there is much on social media promoting assistance for those with a drinking problem. Although we do not wish to pass comment on these nor go into competition with them, nevertheless it would be wise to examine their strengths and weaknesses and apply any positive results to our own online material.

Another lesson we learned from the pandemic was our reliance on literature sales to support our general and central service offices. With the closure of face-to-face meetings, literature sales plummeted depleting funds in these offices. If we truly are to be a self-supporting organization, then our offices

should be supported by group and member donations and not be reliant on the commercial sale of literature.

It might do well here to quote from Bill W.’s letter in the Foreword of *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*. He says:

“In reality, the expression ‘comes of age’ is used by us in a very different sense. We simply say that we have arrived at the time of life when adult responsibilities have to be faced and dealt with as best we are able. To this end we do try to rely upon ourselves — and upon God.”

Again, we can draw from our experience of the pandemic to see “when adult responsibilities have to be faced.” The pandemic brought government requirements for wearing masks, social distancing, and signing in, to meetings. These instructions could have been met with childhood rebellion but were generally accepted by the Fellowship with adult responsibility.

Allow me to digress for a moment about this topic of A.A. getting too old. I have often heard at meetings “I hope A.A. never changes. I want it to be the same when I leave as when I joined.” As previously stated, I believe the Steps, Traditions and Concepts may never change but the Fellowship that they serve does change. When I joined A.A. in Australia 46 years ago, A.A. was in its infancy, there were very few Steps and Traditions meetings, and the Concepts were something written in a book that not too many people had read. The Fellowship (certainly in Australia anyway) is maturing and today discussions on Traditions are an integral part of A.A. meetings and the Concepts are often referred to for clarification of service matters.

We may have “come of age” in 1955 as we “received from its founders and old-timers permanent keeping of its three great legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service” (*A.A. Comes of Age*, p.1) but one suspects we are still in the prime of life and have a long way to go before we reach old age and fully unpack Bill W.’s vision.

Greg B. — Australia

### **“Young People” in A.A. (potential members, members and participation in service)**

*A.A. has already come of age. Is there any danger that it may get too old?* In my opinion there is, if nothing is done to attract young people to the Fellowship. Unfortunately, this issue has not been dealt with in our country for a long time.

The first meeting of an A.A. group in Belarus was held on May 12, 1990. The name of the group was coined “Hope.” Since then, the number of groups in our country has increased to hundreds, and thousands of people suffering from alcohol have received hope and a chance for healing. But how young is our community? On average, these are people 40-60 years old. There are people 25-35 years old, but their numbers are much fewer. And there are very few people under 25 years of age.

*Why is this happening?* I think because so far too little attention has been paid to the issue of working with youth. A lot of A.A. work in our country is carried out in prisons. Members of the community not only visit prisons with ideas, but also become sponsors for people serving sentences, who in turn become sponsors for their cellmates. A.A. meetings are organized in several colonies. Meetings are also held in rehabilitation centers. We have established close and strong contacts with medical institutions. There is interaction with representatives of religious denominations. Round tables are organized.





But until recently, there was no interaction with educational institutions and other youth organizations.

With regard to work with youth, this is still a weak link in Belarus. To attract young people, an important point is the presence of peers, people with whom young people can communicate in the same language. There are not so many people from 20 to 30 years of age in the A.A. Fellowship of Belarus, so our main task is to keep them. For this, it is important not only to involve them in committees, but also to organize various events such as forums, discos, field trips, etc.

Fortunately, in the last few years the youth issue has become a priority in our community. One of the most important areas today is work with young people. Young members of our community have organized a musical group “Your Row” (Svoi Ryad) in Minsk and they perform at various city events, including those aimed at preventing the problem of alcoholism. We work in educational and social institutions — informing employees who work directly with young people about our community and the Twelve-Step program.

We are establishing contact with medical and psychology colleges so that our speakers can talk directly to young people there. Work in this direction has led to the first results with A.A. speakers already conveying ideas to students using both online opportunities and a real presence. For example, A.A. members may meet face to face in Minsk at the A.A. headquarters in Belarus. Meanwhile, the students are in another city, in the assembly hall of their institute. This is the first such experience of working with youth, but we hope that it will bear fruit and give impetus to our further development in this direction.

Also, the work with the media is getting better and better. On regional channels and national television, A.A. members take part in TV shows, and a video of A.A. Belarus and videos with recovery stories of members of the Fellowship of A.A. Belarus are broadcast. Young people take part in these productions with pleasure. In addition, with the advent of the pandemic, active work began online, which began to attract more young people. First, it is a modern way of communication. You can also go to your first meetings for the sake of interest with your video off, which makes it possible to feel safe and not reveal your anonymity at first, even within the community.

### **How can we make A.A. more attractive to young members?**

This issue was raised at last year’s European meeting, where the following recommendations were made:

- A younger participant shares experience with a young beginner;
- Ask a young novice to help with technical issues;
- Encourage young people to participate in the service structure and translate leaflets for young people;
- Use online tools, for example, to create podcasts;
- Exchange lists of young people’s meetings with other countries;
- Organize events for young people both physically and online;
- Share your experience of a happy life without alcohol (in the sense of not moralizing and not how bad everything is, but about the joy of being sober);
- Exchange phone numbers; and,
- Encourage sponsorship.

All these recommendations were transferred to the A.A. Fellowship of Belarus. We try to follow them and hope that thanks to this our Fellowship will grow younger. And the danger that A.A. may become too old will be minimized.

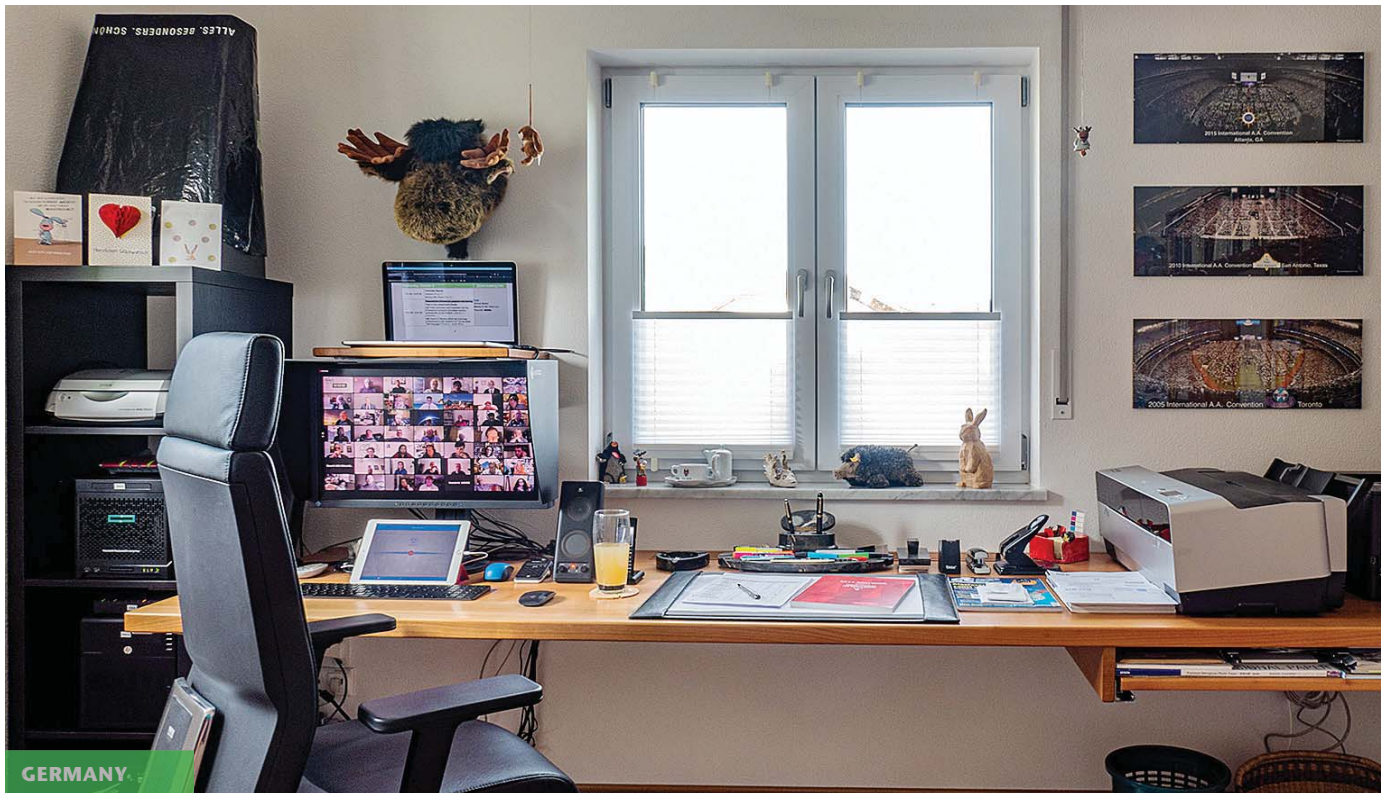
*Ekaterina G. — Belarus*

### **How to Incorporate Online Groups into Our Service Structures**

*While our literature has preserved the integrity of the A.A. message, sweeping changes in society as a whole are reflected in new customs and practices within the Fellowship. Taking advantage of technological advances, for example, A.A. members with computers can participate in meetings online, sharing with fellow alcoholics across the country or around the world. In any meeting, anywhere, A.A.s share experience, strength, and hope with each other, in order to stay sober and help other alcoholics. Modem-to-modem or face-to-face, A.A.s speak the language of the heart in all its power and simplicity.*

*—Forward to the Fourth Edition of the Big Book, xxi (2001)*

**Background:** Long before the recent global pandemic, we had already acknowledged within A.A. in our literature that



online meetings were a part of our Fellowship and structures. For many A.A. members, online meetings have been a norm for decades and incorporating these meetings into our service structures has not been an issue. For example, for some time now, I have been attending the English-speaking online meetings in the Central European Region, a long established intergroup of the A.A. Great Britain structure.

The first A.A. online meetings in 1986 used digital bulletin boards while the first online A.A. group, the Lamp-lighters, was formed in 1990, and has met by email continuously since then. There are hundreds of A.A. groups with thousands of members connected through the Online Intergroup (<https://aa-intergroup.org>) and they use a variety of apps such as video conferencing, phone conferencing, message boards, email listservs, and chatrooms. Since the mid-90s, the growth of the World Wide Web has encouraged scores of online A.A. groups to open up. In Russia, due to the geographic expanse, online meetings have always been the only option for many members.

**The Surge of Online Meetings during the Pandemic:** Despite this history, the pandemic took A.A., like many other parts of society, by surprise. The resilience, initiative and quick thinking of our members prompted us to go online for our survival. It was not easy for every country, however. At the 2022 WSM we heard how our Venezuelan delegate had to cross the border to get a steady signal as there were limitations in his country on the online time allowance for some apps. The Ecuadorian delegate talked about how this time almost destroyed their A.A. when a group broke off and formed their own structure. That painful experience took time to heal. In Brazil there was a complete resistance to online meetings becoming part of the structure.

During this WSM we have heard how countries have found ways in the last two years to integrate online meetings along-

side physical meetings into their structures. However, as recently as the 2021 European Service Meeting, many countries were still unsure as to what integration into our structures might look like. So, what does it look like and what has helped countries navigate this transition?

**Subcommittees:** For some countries the creation of ad hoc committees has been a valuable way to address concerns and work towards incorporating online meetings into their structures. In Ireland, for example, in response to calls from the membership for guidance, we created a subcommittee for online meetings at the 2021 General Service Conference. After we met a few times, we recommended to Conference that as online meetings were not outside the structure, we don't need to bring them into the structure. We created guidelines and a suggested meeting format for safely conducting online meetings and we incorporated this conference-approved material into our General Service Handbook.

**Making Online Meeting Details Accessible:** Most countries have successfully integrated online meeting details with physical meeting details in the "Find a Meeting" sections of their websites. Our GSOs and boards are to be commended for their heroic work in updating websites with the constantly evolving details. Some countries are choosing to make online meeting details available without identifying the app that is being used on their official A.A. website. On the French A.A. website, for example, there is an option to select a Video Meeting (Reunions-Visio) with no identifier to the app that is being used for that meeting, just a direct link into it. There is an array of sophisticated, easy-to-navigate drop down menus in almost every global A.A. website that I viewed from New Zealand to Iceland, Lithuania to Japan. In some countries, the links to online meetings are not made public but you can write to a group's A.A. email box and request the link. This policy has al-



leviated privacy concerns for some groups. As we continue to evolve and integrate, some useful guides for good practice in conducting A.A. meetings can be easily found online (Online & Telephone Meetings | Alcoholics Anonymous - Great Britain (alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)).

**The Question of Geographic Location:** The ad hoc committee on participation of online groups in the U.S./Canada service structure asks a very pertinent question in their recent report: “Has A.A. Now Outgrown a Solely Geographic Structure” (OnlineGroups)? The majority of countries identify online meetings by geography, be it Brooklyn or Paris, Riga or Cape Town. This suggests that these online groups evolved out of an existing physical group. However, when a newly formed online A.A. group has a diverse international membership, how do we incorporate this into our traditionally geographic based structures? And where does the meeting fit within our traditionally geographically based directories and meeting finders?

In my own country we have asked newly formed online groups to identify with one of the geographic areas within our structure so that they can be part of the service structure and the geographical listings in the meeting directory. However, some groups may want to have a virtual identity rather than a geographic one, in which case, we like other countries will have to consider a Virtual Area within our structure to accommodate this. And perhaps globally we may even have to think about a virtual area that is beyond country. And how would that exist within our current geographic based structures?

**Our New Virtual Reality:** I am a member of a meeting that has up to four meetings a day, both physical and online. We are a large well-organized group with an international membership, something we always had due to being located in the center of Dublin city. What started off for our survival in the pandemic has become embedded in our A.A. way of life; most of us move fluidly between physical and online meetings. We are no doubt all learning from each other this week and can hopefully bring back positive lessons to ensure that our new virtual reality of online A.A. meetings is respected and reflected within our different structures.

*Moira S. — Ireland*

## How To Invest in the Future of A.A.

### Learning From Our History and Stepping Out of Our Comfort Zones

My name is Daniel and I am a recovering alcoholic. When I was sure that I was not going to have to participate again with a presentation at the WSM, I got this one. It seems that I will be permanently confronting the stage panic that affects me every time I have to share before a certain number of people. At times I thought I had to be a reference book with tremendous responsibility, but reading the invitation letter over and over again, I felt that some friends were asking me with a lot of love to share how little or much I have been learning in A.A. It is curious to talk about our history and not feel tied to it. Having as a sobriety date June 10, 2004, the A.A. dates are very symbolic and important in my recovery. That first day, when

many people repeated to me that I was the most important person in the room, people who tirelessly offered me the benefits of the program, they were celebrating at that same time, the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the message of Alcoholics Anonymous in Peru (the message of A.A. arrived in Peru on June 10, 1954).

My first day, at the end of the meeting, I was able to participate with only a few hours without drinking in the countdown for years of sobriety. The oldest member of those times in our country, Julio M. with a little more than 40 years of sobriety, stood by me. That same Julio M. had participated in November 1979 in the First Latin American Meeting of General Services (REDELA), held in Bogotá, Colombia. In 2019 in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina, 40 years after the participation of Julio M., and proving that the ways of God are inscrutable, I was able to participate as an international delegate in the 21st Meeting of the Americas (REDELA).

Rarely have I felt my sobriety threatened. Forging discipline and obedience has been and is an exercise one day at a time (for a guy like me who was always used to doing what he wanted), and the exercise has had its good results.

Participating in structured service has strengthened my recovery, living with different points of view, with different personalities, with different ways of understanding and practicing our principles tests the summary of what our recovery program means: “love and service.” Going through the service positions in the different service bodies has been quite an adventure, even though my first time at an area meeting, the experience was totally disappointing. I had a few months of sobriety, I arrived, I started the meeting with the discussions, the confrontations, the threats, and I ended up telling myself: he never returned! Five years later I was elected GSR, and I returned to the place that I definitely did not plan to return. I assumed responsibilities, I continued as coordinator of Public Information (remember my stage fright), training me, doing oratory practices, always with the desire to carry our message with certainty.

It would have been easy to stay in my group, but I didn't. My future was at stake, and comfort does not serve my recovery. I am always challenging myself, facing my complexities, my fears, my shame (if you only knew how difficult it is for me to capture my feelings with this writing — I never had a habit of reading, much less writing). Alcoholics Anonymous has allowed me to believe in myself and grow. My sponsor once told me: Alcoholics Anonymous has no ceiling, you can achieve everything you set your mind to, but remember, everything will always be based on what you are willing to do.

In our country, the first case of Covid-19 was registered on March 5, 2020. On March 15 the mandatory quarantine began. That forced many members to look for ways to meet, to maintain, despite any circumstance, that of doing everything that is necessary to recover. After a month, showing an initial resistance, I made use of technology, virtual platforms began to be materialized in my recovery and that of others, and I realized that the new at times paralyzes us. Sustaining our Fellowship is a collective task, it has been demonstrated since the beginning of our history that the sum of our efforts ensures the future of those who are yet to come.

Thank you for allowing me to share the little or a lot of experience that I have been accumulating over these years.

*Daniel G. — Peru*



## Keeping the Fellowship United

*A Declaration of Unity: "This we owe to A.A.'s future: To place our common welfare first; to keep our Fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives and the lives of those to come." (Declaration of the 35th Anniversary International Convention, 1970, Miami, Florida.)*

The unity, the effectiveness and even the survival of A.A. will depend upon our continued willingness to give up some of our personal ambitions and desire for the common safety and welfare. Just as sacrifice means survival for the individual alcoholic, so does sacrifice mean unity and survival for the group and for the entire A.A. Fellowship.

"[Gradually we saw that] the unity, the effectiveness, and even the survival of A.A. always would depend upon our continued willingness to give up our personal ambitions and desires for the common safety and welfare. Just as sacrifice meant survival for the individual, so did sacrifice mean unity and survival for the group and for A.A.'s entire Fellowship."

—*Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, pp.287-88

"A.A.'s Twelve Traditions apply to the life of the Fellowship itself. They outline the means by which A.A. maintains its unity and relates itself to the world about it, the way it lives and grows."

—*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p.15

The Traditions serve as a guideline or manual that defines the internal operations and helps us to maintain "unity" in the Fellowship. I have learned that I must sacrifice some of my personal traits for the good of Alcoholics Anonymous and as a result, I have been awarded with many gifts. My foundation for recovery and unity is based on sacrificing self. My participation in A.A is to help me stay sober and grow. I must always be of service without recognition by other members. This helps me to practice a genuine humility more easily.

If it had not been for the fierce determination of our founders, Alcoholics Anonymous would have quickly faded like so many other so-called good causes. I look at the hundreds of meetings weekly in the city of Bangalore where I live, and I know A.A is available all 365 days a year with approximately 150 groups scattered all around the city of Bangalore within a radius of 45-50 kms. The meetings take place quietly every day, discreet gatherings in the basements of churches, a spare room at the local school, government hospitals, BBMP clinics, backs of cafés, etc. But members of Alcoholics Anonymous found the doors quickly shut during the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

What happened next is one of those creative cascades the virus indirectly set off. Physical recovery meetings moved online, almost overnight, ensuring that not only hundreds but thousands of A.A. meetings are taking place on different digital platforms. Most of the A.A. members in fact virtually everybody in A.A. leapt in, transforming this opportunity into a daily ritual that many credit with saving their lives.

The A.A. members I speak to are well beyond the initial fascination with the idea that they are looking at a screen and thank many digital virtual platforms for their individual survival. The survival of A.A. depends on all of us finding a way to get along. The welfare of the group is more important than me and my comfort. I must remember that I am not recovering on my own.

Going back to the history of A.A Traditions way back in April 1946, Bill W. wrote an article for *Grapevine* entitled "Twelve Suggested Points for A.A Traditions." This was an early presen-

tation of what would become known as the Twelve Traditions. With his usual foresight, Bill realized that the growing organization needed more guidance. It was important to preserve A.A.'s unity and singleness of purpose during this growth.

To reach more alcoholics, understanding of A.A and public goodwill towards A.A must go on growing everywhere. We need to be on still better terms with those in medicine, religion, and employees, governments, courts, prisons, mental hospitals, and all organizations in the field of alcoholism. We need the ever-increasing goodwill of editors, writers, television, and radio channels.

Last but not least, I would like to quote a phrase from the Big Book, page 561: "...no society of men and women ever had a more urgent need for continuous effectiveness and permanent unity. We alcoholics see that we must work together and hang together, else most of us will finally die alone."

Just as the Twelve Steps of A.A are written in a specific sequence for a reason, so it is with the Twelve Traditions.

The First Step and the First Tradition attempt to instill in me enough humility to allow me a chance at survival. Together they are the basic foundation upon which the Steps and Traditions that follow are built. It is a process of EGO deflation that allows me to grow as an individual through the Steps and as a contributing member of a group through the Traditions. Full acceptance of the First Tradition allows me to set aside personal ambitions and fear and anger when they are in conflict with the common good, thus permitting me to work with others for our mutual survival.

Without Tradition One, I stand little chance of maintaining the unity required to work with others effectively, and I also stand to lose the remaining Traditions, the Fellowship, and my *life*. Each group is a part of a greater whole, and each group is autonomous. Therefore, I have an even a greater responsibility to live within the spirit of the Traditions. I am to ensure that my actions do not harm the group, and the group's actions do not harm the A.A community.

In Alcoholics Anonymous we are brought together by one common bond. We are suffering, in pain, and are looking for a new way of life. In Alcoholics Anonymous we unite as a whole, work the Steps and then the Traditions, and soon enough we discover this new way of life. We learn the absolute miracle of how this program functions and stays alive, which is through nothing more than UNITY.

There is a saying that I really like: "Stay in the middle of A.A." When we come into Alcoholics Anonymous, we see all the faces and happy people and we may feel as though we don't belong, that this is not for us. We might even feel resentful because we are suffering and in pain and everyone here seems the opposite. That is when the gift of service plays a huge role in sobriety. Getting involved, going against our instincts of isolation. Pushing through to meet new people. Listening, talking and learning to relate to others until eventually we are making friendships, and staying sober through the unity of those friendships. Identifying with other alcoholics.

False pride can be inflated through prestige but by living Tradition Six, I receive the gift of humility instead. Cooperation without affiliation is often deceiving. If I remain unrelated to outside interests, I am free to keep Alcoholics Anonymous autonomous. Then the Fellowship will be here, healthy, and strong for "generations" to come.

Lokesh B. — India

# Country Service Highlights



**Argentina:** Over the past few years, from Conference to Conference, our Fellowship has been incorporating various parts of the U.S./Canada *Service Manual*, with some adaptations to our language, our legal context and various operational peculiarities. Among the recent highlights, we can mention the following:

- For the first time ever in Argentina, we have had a woman as the chair of our GSB: Lic. Corina Carbajal, Class A trustee, was the third nonalcoholic in a row to rotate in as chair of the board.
- We have established two boards of directors, the General Service Board of Directors (JDSG) and the Board of Directors of our national magazine, *El Sendero*.
- Our trusted servants are relying more on virtual means of communication (email, WhatsApp, Internet, Zoom). All committee work is being done virtually, while voting takes place during face-to-face plenary sessions.
- We have signed agreements of collaboration without affiliation with various sectors of society, in the areas of health, religion, corrections, cultural institutions, etc.
- We participate in international service: we have attended the WSM and the Meeting of the Americas (REDELA), as well as Conferences, meetings and WWO activities in other structures.
- Argentina had a presentation at the 22nd REDELA (October 3-7, 2021) in Guatemala, on the topic "Joining Our Borders with Those of Our Neighboring Countries and Working to Carry the Message to Others."
- We developed a special 70th anniversary edition of the

book *Alcoholics Anonymous* for the 2022 National Convention.

- We had full participation of all of our trustees in Argentina through videoconferencing. Regional trustees improved their communication and participation in board committees.
- Sponsorship took place at the area level and in the service structure as a whole.
- We had sponsorship and exchange activities with our neighboring structures and we formally sponsored the Uruguayan structure.
- Our technology department provided crucial support to service activities at the Conference, the GSB and GSO.
- The technology committee gave workshops at areas and committees about how to take advantage of technology and communications tools.
- We streamlined online contributions, enabling automatic payments using credit or debit cards, QR payments, bank transfers and other payment options.
- We carried out the first Region VI (Argentine Patagonia) Forum with four countries participating: Chile, U.S., Canada and Argentina
- We participated in the North/South Connections Forum on Remote Communities, together with the U.S./Canada and Chile service structures. There was a great degree of enthusiasm among A.A. members in remote communities, who are now interested in joining the service structure.



## Argentina and its Service Structures

- We hold three regional forums per year.
- We are preparing for our 10th National Convention in the province of Córdoba (central Argentina).
- We celebrated the 69th Anniversary of the arrival of the A.A. message in Argentina, virtually, in 2021.
- We are preparing to hold our 70th Anniversary of A.A. in Argentina as a face-to-face event.
- We have, for the first time, incorporated Class A (nonalcoholic) trustees from all over the country.
- As part of our 59th Conference we met online over a period of 14 days: we had our joint GSB and GSC committee meetings over eight days and celebrated our first day of the Conference proper as an online event (an open forum open to the worldwide Fellowship; we had six visiting structures). The Zoom session on the first day lasted four hours.
- We started having joint sharing sessions for GSB and GSC committees, which diminished the traditional dominance of some areas and the GSB.
- We developed a new YouTube channel project.
- Our website: aa.org.ar
  - > Ongoing communication with the entire Fellowship
  - > Country-wide telephone directory
  - > Online meeting directory
- We have been fostering the development of new leaders at all levels of service.
- GSO
  - > We hired an alcoholic manager.
  - > We created a press department with a communications professional as an ACM.
  - > Renewal projects are underway.
  - > We are implementing a better accounting and financial management program with the capacity to generate monthly financial reports, with the following advantages:
    - Faster and more cost-efficient.
    - This investment fosters the well-being of the Fellowship and together with the admission of errors, has improved the relations between the areas and the GSB.
    - Our general manager, trustees, nontrustee directors and our finance trusted servant have been trained on the use of this management program.
    - Financial reporting transparency leads to sustained and ever increasing contributions despite the pandemic and Argentina's inflationary economy.
- The current level of group and member contributions is about 60%; the rest of the funds come from literature sales.
- We are investing heavily in literature production. We are currently printing 108 items and keep these items permanently in stock.
- The Fellowship is showing signs of maturity. We see the application of principles and procedures.
- Mexico's sponsorship is producing good results.
- We worked with the entire Fellowship on regularizing our legal situation. We are now able to operate at all

levels, within the framework of our legal system and our Traditions.

- We enlisted the help of our professional members to update and correct the errors in the A.A. bylaws in Argentina.
- The Report and Charter committee selects the material for the GSB final report and provides it to our national magazine.

We have a lot of room for improvement, especially with regard to our structure and internal operations. However, we have a single purpose in mind: to have every city, town, locality or remote place in our country have A.A. meetings at hand, today and tomorrow, so we can carry the message of experience, strength and hope to the alcoholic who needs it.

So be it, if it is God's will.

*Roberto R.*

**Australia:** Unfortunately for the A.A. Fellowship in Australia during 2020 and 2021, Covid caused many disruptions with the biggest being that the General Service Conferences for that period had to be held as online events. The National Convention in 2020 also had to be a virtual event with the Convention planned for 2021 having to be cancelled. So perhaps these were not highlights but rather "low lights" for A.A. in Australia. On the upside, the internet allowed many meetings to continue and enable members to reach out and establish contact with members from other countries and build friendships that have continued to this day. Like other countries, the financial



AUSTRALIA



impact was felt due to the absence of the normal face-to-face meetings because the basket was not being passed around at meetings. However, many members did avail themselves of the online donation system.

Alcoholics Anonymous had its beginnings in Australia in the month of March 1945 but Australia's first contact with Alcoholics Anonymous in the United States began in 1942. Because of the war years it meant mail was very slow and none of our modern communication systems of today were in play. The year 2025 will mark 80 years of continuous A.A. within our country. As this is such a momentous occasion, the early planning has commenced for a national celebration. We hope many overseas visitors will make their way "Down Under" to join us for all the activities to be held during this time.

During the previous two years, due to Covid, our monetary contributions raised for the International Literature Fund and Sponsorship in the Asia Oceania Region suffered severely. We are glad to report that this year has seen a huge improvement. This money is traditionally collected in the week of Founders Day and is symbolized by a brown paper bag and the collection is known as the "Brown Paper Bag Appeal." The amount collected this year was far above the amounts from the previous three years.

"Professional Awareness Luncheons" were held at various places, where permitted, due to Covid restrictions. Rather than calling them "A.A. Public Information Meetings" and instead of focusing on using the adage of A.A. speakers but instead having one person talking about some of A.A.'s Guidelines on what A.A. is and what it is not then presenting the YouTube video called "The Cochrane Report on A.A." This has been well received by the medical and allied health staff. This report gives more support and credibility to A.A. than what could be provided by A.A. members. This year this technique was used in some very remote Australian towns and the response was excellent. The impact of A.A. on members' lives is shared with the guests as we have the meal. Wednesdays have proven to be the best day (middle of the week) with a time frame of 12 noon to 1:30 p.m. fitting in for most workers.

The showing of the "Cochrane Report" was also used in an area of the state of Queensland — first in the largest hospital in that state to first-year medical students with many asking for information about the link so that they could watch it again at home. It was also shown to some staff at a local substance abuse clinic and once again received glowing feedback.

At present the General Service Board is conducting a national A.A. Survey. Details will be available soon. Great news for the Asia Oceania Service Meeting (AOSM) in 2023 as it will be hosted by Fiji with sponsorship support from Australia and New Zealand. This will be very good for Alcoholics Anonymous in the Pacific Region.

*Brian F.*

**Belarus:** For the first time in Belarus a nonalcoholic was included in the Board of Trustees. He is an employee of the Department of Corrections. Regular cooperation with the penitentiary system began in 2010 with a visit to a women's open facility. For 12 years of this cooperation, the number of Alcoholics Anonymous members engaged in this service has increased from three or four to 40-60 people. We visit open-type correctional institutions, correctional institutions for alcoholics, and pre-trial detention centers. Since 2016, visits to closed

correctional facilities have been allowed. At the moment, we are cooperating with almost 22 correctional institutions, including women's correctional institutions, a juvenile detention center and others. Public awareness and cooperation with the department of corrections is being continued. There are meetings in penitentiaries, in some facilities groups work on a regular basis. Funding for the committee comes from individual group donations.

The trustees have assisted A.A. groups in the organization of their group email boxes on the hosting site. The Fellowship site is updated more frequently, and the information is more diverse.

We print the Big Book and *Living Sober*, the rest of the literature is purchased in Moscow. There is active cooperation in sales with one of the major bookstores, Akademkniga. The funds of the Literature committee are partly used to purchase literature and to expand the range of souvenirs. The rest of the funds are spent on the Fellowship's development.

The administration of the Minsk City Clinical Narcological Center initiated the participation of A.A. members in awareness activities organized for healthcare professionals. Public Information work is also carried out at universities. Due to the increase of the events aimed at enhancing cooperation both within and outside the community, similar events were also held in the regions.

Several TV projects were presented during the past year, including a five-episode broadcast on the state channel.

The relocation of the office simplified the logistics and helped to provide space for meetings for one more A.A. group.

Financially, the Fellowship has managed to achieve some stability. Despite this, we are still far from full independence at the international level. For the first time in the history of the A.A. Belarus, a donation to A.A. GSO headquarters in New York was made.

During this past year, A.A. Belarus received three letters expressing the positive results of cooperation:

- From the Coordinating Center of the Belarusian Orthodox Church for counteraction to drug addiction and alcoholism in honor of St. Boniface of Tarsus;
- From the Vitebsk Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church in the Republic of Belarus; and
- From the Department of Corrections of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Republic of Belarus.

Also, on behalf of A.A. Belarus letters were sent to:

- The rector of the Belarusian State Medical University and the head of the Department of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology at the same university; and
- The chief physician of the Minsk City Clinical Narcological Center.

*Dimitry K.*

**Belgium (Flemish-speaking):** The Coronavirus has ensured that new means of communication have been introduced. Email traffic became an important means of keeping in touch with the members of the group. Zoom meetings were also widely used to keep in touch with each other.

After the crisis, this way of communicating itself continued to exist. For example, members have the opportunity to participate in a Zoom meeting every day. This form of service

provision was therefore included in our structure as a separate group. For many groups, the open-air meetings (A.A. Walks) have taken on a permanent character during the Covid crisis and are still in use to date.

The Literature committee has subjected our range of recognized literature to a thorough revision in terms of modern language use and presentation. The front pages were also immediately given a uniform look. A team of nine people is working on the translations of literature that we do not yet have into Dutch.

The Financial committee further elaborated the software in order to achieve a uniform flow between the provinces and the general services council and simplified the forms to claim costs.

The biennial General Services Conference attempted to host a Zoom meeting and was technically fully ready. However, it could not go ahead because many members do not have sufficient technical skills.

Due to all these new possibilities of electronic traffic, it also turned out that our permanent employee was no longer sufficiently profitable. The telephone permanence could be maintained thanks to a team of voluntary employees.

The Public Information committee contributed to their presentations to come out with the same new uniform look as the literature. PI is also actively engaged in a thorough overhaul of the website.

Hoping to have been of service to you.

*Claude D.*

## **Bolivia:**

### ***Literature, Magazine and Communications:***

- Bolivia imports literature from neighboring structures in small amounts. In 2021, with the support of the areas — which paid for their purchases in advance — we were able to finance the printing of 1,000 copies of our basic text, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, as well as *Living Sober* and *Daily Reflections*.
- We have not yet been able to restart production of our A.A. Bolivia magazine, *Volver a Nacer*. We are working towards complying with the advisory action that established the creation of our General Service Board and its committees — including Literature and Publications — as well as the creation of an Editorial Advisory Board for our magazine, that can work on restarting its publication.
- Despite some health-related issues, our office has been able to maintain communications with world services and their leaders in the U.S./Canada.
- Despite its limitations, our website continues to be an important means for many people to contact our office. We direct inquiries to the various area committees in Bolivia's departments (provinces): <http://www.alcoholicosanonimosbolivia.org/>.

**Services:** Work with the professional community and institutions and all activities for carrying the message outside the Fellowship are carried out through area committees with the support of local group trusted servants, Class A and Class B trustees. This work is being done both virtually and face-to-face.

- Public Information in all kinds of media using various formats
- Cooperation with the Professional Community
- Cooperation with Treatment and Correctional Facilities

The Board of Trustees does not have a set budget to generate a policy of action for supporting WWO committees through GSO.

### ***Weaknesses:***

1. Lack of trusted servants in our service structure and lack of knowledge about how our service structure works.
2. Communication failures between various parts of the structure and the Fellowship, in both directions.
3. Although there has been an improvement, contributions to support our structure are still low.

### ***Strength and Hope***

1. The theme selected for the 2023 Conference, "In the Spirit of National Integration," reflects a need of the Fellowship and the challenge and commitment that the current service leaders have set as their goals. They are well aware that our 36 principles are the ones that enable personal transformation and growth, which then get reflected in the collective. By practicing these principles, trusted servants will avail themselves of the spiritual values that make it possible to have the love and tolerance needed to relate to other A.A. members and trusted servants, despite differences of opinion, as they become aware that the spirit of service that is kindled in their hearts to reach the primary purpose of our Fellowship, can only take hold when we stay united in action for our own sake and that of those to come.
2. 2023 Strategic Plan: It is geared toward achieving sustained growth in our Fellowship by fostering awareness and the practice of our Three Legacies.
3. Country-to-country Sponsorship: Colombia's sponsorship of Bolivia will continue playing a major role in achieving changes in the way our service structure operates, based on our principles and on our *Service Manual*.
4. The knowledge we have obtained at REDELAs and WSMS is very valuable in terms of helping us overcome weaknesses and adopting new and effective ways of doing service.
5. The participation of trusted servants from the U.S. and Canada and other brotherly service structures at our XXIV National Convention (whose theme is "Love and Service") will be a powerful motivating source for members and trusted servants. It will aid in the understanding of our principles and foster responsibility towards our Fellowship.

*Milton H.*

### **Brazil: "75 Years of A.A. in Brazil"**

Public information work has benefited greatly from all the new communications tools at our disposal. We had some tough times during the Coronavirus pandemic: we saw groups close and virtual meetings open. However, we are gradually seeing how our groups have come back to normal and are holding face-to-face meetings again.

We never ceased in our attempt to increase A.A.'s visibility *vis-a-vis* the professional community and society as a whole, fostering awareness about the unique role that Alcoholics Anonymous can play in helping other alcoholics, by sharing our experience of recovery from alcoholism through the practice of A.A.'s spiritual principles.

At the last two General Service Conferences — in 2020 by videoconference, and in person in 2021 — three new areas were approved. At the 2021 Conference, the Agenda and Host Committee approved the following recommendation: "That JUNAAB study and prepare a proposal so that our structure may apply to be the host of a World Service Meeting in 2026."

We currently have 4,569 groups, 566 districts, 79 local service offices (ESG in Portuguese), 46 areas, six regions and our General Service Office. The latter has operated in the district of Tatuapé — in the city of São Paulo — in a four-story building, with ample space for the work of the board, the office, and our committees since August 2015.

We are receiving proposals for covers for our 47th GSC 2023 Report. The theme of this Conference is: "A Good Leader Does Not Govern; He/She Serves with Love, Tolerance and Responsibility."

The 46th GSC 2022 will take place on August 21-26, 2023. All the procedures for our 47th GSC 2023 will start shortly after the end of our 46th GSC 2022.

**Literature and Publications:** We currently publish 20 books, 49 pamphlets and 10 service material items. We recently translated the book approved by the 2020 Conference, *Our Great Responsibility*. We have an online store for the purchase of literature, e-books and our digital magazine.

**Vivência magazine:** Our magazine will celebrate its 37th anniversary in November 2022. It is published every two months and has a print run of 6,300 copies, which are mailed to all our subscribers. The magazine covers current issues such as "The Elderly in A.A." or "Young, Sober and Free" (Issue 199, September 2022). Our magazine is our meeting in print, open to the public, featuring a wide variety of current experience with the legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service. Aside from the printed version, our magazine also has a digital version and a dedicated website: [www.revistavivencia.org.br](http://www.revistavivencia.org.br).

**A.A. in Brazil Official Website:** This site has a modern design and lists all groups in our country. In 2021, we had 1,524,154 page views and almost 140,000 more visitors than in the previous year (2020). Our website provides instructions on how to find a group, with a map, as well as a list of virtual meetings, with their days and times. There is also a link that allows Internet users to talk to A.A. members. During this conversation, A.A. members may direct Internet users to an A.A. group. If needed, they may also invite visitors to participate in the program as Loners. Volunteers take turns in talking to Internet users through our website. Literature may also be purchased directly through our website. Our greatest challenge is to keep all our group information up to date. Some groups close or change their meeting times without letting us know. We feel sorry whenever a person picks a group from our list and finds its doors are closed.

From January to December 2021:

- Our website received 314,000 users in 612,000 sessions.
- We were visited by people from 149 countries.

During this time, the pages with the most visitors were:

- Start page: 262,090
- The Twelve Steps: 148,101
- Online meeting: 93,087
- Group and office searches: 73,195

**International Events:** We attended the 26th World Service Meeting by videoconference, which was the first virtual experience of this kind that our world service trusted servants had. Over the past two years, we attended the Conferences of Argentina, Uruguay and Peru virtually. We attended the U.S./Canada GSC in person, as well as the U.S./Canada General Service Board meeting following the 72nd GSC. Our International Committee also attended various online meetings around the world. They were unforgettable experiences.

We participated in sponsorship efforts in Paraguay, holding literature-related events. At the 2021 Conference, Paraguay formally requested to be sponsored by Brazil's Area 17 (Paraná), with the goal of getting help in the creation of service areas. Every month, we participate at the videoconference meetings of the REDELA, and we attended the XXII Meeting of the Americas (REDELA), held October 3-7, 2021, virtually. It was a fantastic experience. We all came together to meet our primary purpose using a hybrid format.

We normally contribute US\$ 2,000 to the International Literature Fund every year in the month of December.

**Public Information:** Public Information work in Brazil has benefited tremendously from the use of communication tools in these trying times. We carried out various seminars organized by our 46 areas, geared at health care, corrections and education professionals.

We always distribute newsletters to all professionals who are registered in our database, as well as to our friends, to carry the message on various subjects. We also provide links to our online store and our e-book catalog.

We currently have official social media accounts for Alcoholics Anonymous Brazil: Twitter with 176 followers; Instagram — 5,890 followers; Facebook — 3,577 followers, and YouTube — 6,080 subscribers.





**Groups Throughout Brazil** (as of July 1, 2022):

Total number of groups: 4,569

Open: 3,764

Temporarily closed: 802

Meetings per week: 9,660

Ana Elisa L.

**Bulgaria:** A.A. Bulgaria expresses its great gratitude for the opportunity to participate for the second time in the World Service Meeting, represented by our first and second term delegates.

**History of A.A. in Bulgaria:** The first meeting was held on December 5, 1989, in the capital Sofia in one of the halls of the Psychiatric Clinic. The Twelfth Step program itself was introduced fully in 2005 by a Bulgarian — a member of A.A. living in Australia.

**Structure:** Currently, A.A. in Bulgaria has 32 groups that hold live meetings in three regions and six online groups. Meetings are held in 18 cities in the country. There are currently three English-speaking groups. Meetings are held in two state psychiatric clinics.

**Conference:** Due to the pandemic situation, the Fourth Conference, to be held in 2020, was postponed twice, finally being held live in June 2021. In June this year, our Fifth General Service Conference was held and an entirely new composition of the Board of Trustees was elected due to the expiry of the four-year term of service of our former Class B trustees, first elected at the Conference in 2018.

Composition of the A.A. Conference in Bulgaria: members of the General Service Board, nine delegates with voting rights and nine delegates without voting rights, observers from Bulgaria and abroad.

**General Service Board:** The General Service Board consists of five Class B trustees, two Class A trustees, an international delegate, and a site moderator.

**General Service Office:** We do not yet have a General Service Office, but we have a postal address to which the correspondence of A.A. Bulgaria is sent. Through the provided national email address, as well as through the contact form on the website of A.A., Bulgaria operates a so-called “virtual office.”

**National Telephone Number:** At the beginning of this year, a national number of A.A. in Bulgaria was activated. This is already located on our site, as well as on the world website of A.A. — aa.org.

**Literature:** Thanks to a team of A.A. members with knowledge of English, the pamphlets “A.A. as a Resource for the Medical Profession,” “Young People and A.A.” and “Twelve Concepts Illustrated” were translated.

**Finance:** According to reports of the treasurer and the Finance committee presented at this year’s Conference, the amount of proceeds from the Seventh Tradition has almost halved, due to the uncertainty of holding live meetings, as well as instability in the implementation of the Seventh Tradition for the online meetings.

**Public Information:** In the period between the two last conferences, service in this area remained the responsibility of the individual regions. A lot of activities can be noted at the regional level.

**Prisons Service:** There is a request for a deferred (due to the pandemic) seminar on “Service in Prisons” — the third in a row, which invites employees from different institutions in different cities from the Penitentiary System to the General Directorate Execution of Punishments.

**Service Handbook:** At this year’s Conference, the text of the first *Service Handbook of A.A. Bulgaria* was voted for unanimously. In April this year, a seminar was held to get to know and explain the content at stake. The program of this seminar advocated an expanded acquaintance with the Twelve Concepts of Bill W.

**Website:** In August 2020, the completely renovated website of Alcoholics Anonymous in Bulgaria was launched. The domain is saved from the old one — www.aa-bg.info.

**National Convention:** The annual National Convention of A.A. in Bulgaria, in which A.A. members from different countries take part, with a pass of one year in 2020, was held in 2021, as traditionally, on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast without the participation of foreigners.

**Relationship to Other Countries:** Bulgarian A.A. maintains very good fraternal relationships and sharing of experience with the A.A. Fellowship in Poland and Great Britain. This year’s international observer at Conference was a second-term delegate from Poland, who shared his personal and his country’s valuable experience.

Nevena B.

## Central America Southern Zone

### Costa Rica

**Composition of the GSB:** 12 Class B trustees and four Class A trustees.

**Standing GSB Committees:** Literature, Nominating, Finance/Institutions, Conference, PI/CPC, Congresses and Conventions, and General Policy.

**Commissions:** Finance: *National Action* magazine, Institutions: gratitude activity, Conference: archives/website, Congresses and Conventions: training and information for trusted servants, World Services, Policy and Admissions: *Service Manual*.

**Areas and Groups:** Costa Rica is divided into 10 areas. The total number of groups that are currently meeting in the country is 434. The first four areas are metropolitan areas, whereas the remaining six are regional areas. Costa Rica has general service trustees, trustees-at-large and regional trustees. One trustee position is vacant, as the regional trustee from Area 6, Puntarenas, was not approved at the last Conference (45th annual meeting of the GSC).

Although no formal census of the A.A. population of Costa Rica is carried out, we estimate a total of approximately 6,500 members of Alcoholics Anonymous. The theme of the 45th GSC was “A.A. Taking Action on Behalf of Those to Come.”

On March 29, in a meeting via Zoom, we transferred our responsibilities and chairpersonship of the Southern Zone to the international delegates from Panama, as stated in Minutes #1, dated March 29, 2022 and ratified on April 26, 2022, so that the latter may represent us at the 27th World Service Meeting, to be held on October 1-6, 2022 (virtual WSM).

**Costa Rica themes:** 1. "Responsible Use of Technologies in A.A." 2. "Leadership of Women in Alcoholics Anonymous" 3. "Alcoholics Anonymous without Borders" 4. "Alcoholics Anonymous in Unity Forever."

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### Nicaragua

- We have improved our collaboration with the court system and with government institutions. Citizens who have broken the law under the influence of alcohol are being referred to A.A. groups.
- There is less resistance on the part of some members to accepting court-mandated users.
- We are now taking advantage of technology (the Internet), with a website that can be accessed by everyone wishing to do so.
- Communication of A.A. members with GSO and the various areas of the country is handled through email and WhatsApp.
- We have started working with the professional community through our brand-new CPC committee. We have been well received by universities and professionals in our country.
- We recently updated our guidelines for cooperating with government institutions.
- We also redesigned and redid our website.
- In the wake of the economic crisis brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, the GSB decided to cancel the 39th Central America Convention in the year 2020, a decision that was not well received by the five areas in Nicaragua. The situation was such that we needed to call the General Service Conference to address it. Two thirds of the Conference confirmed the decision made by the GSB regarding the cancellation of the event and the disposition of the contributions that had been raised for the same.
- We had to postpone the celebration of the VI National Convention in 2021 because of a new Covid-19 wave.

- We are currently working on the celebration of our VI National Convention, on September 14 and 15, 2022 in the Estelí area at the FAREM-Estelí University campus, with the theme: "A Road to Unity."

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### Panama

**Our A.A. Fellowship:** According to the last Conference (April 30 to May 1, 2022) there are 560 A.A. members and 80 A.A. groups in Panama, spread across three zones: A, B, and C. In Panama, we have eight functioning areas and two that are undergoing a process of restructuring. We have been creating districts; there are currently seven in our structure.

**Sponsorship Committee:** It was created recently and its goal is to sponsor people by studying, learning and applying the 36 spiritual principles of A.A. With great enthusiasm, the committee holds sessions in areas and groups and assists trusted servants in our Fellowship, with the goal of fostering growth, and improving their number and quality.

**Public Information Committee:** We have solid Public Information activity geared at schools, factories, health facilities, community authorities and justices of the peace, a primary locus for dealing with family and community issues. We are gradually increasing our work with the Panamanian police, as well as national psychology and psychiatry associations. Our Class A chair is a member and the chair of the Panamanian Psychiatric Society. We do public information through radio, press and television. We are also paying visits to private companies and we are organizing day-long public information events.

We are carrying out coordination work with CONAPRE, the National Council on Addiction Prevention, in order to cooperate without affiliation. We have excellent relations and cooperate with the Humanities Department of the University of Panama.

**Corrections Committee:** We do service in prisons and jails. We provide support to correctional institutions by giving talks about alcoholism geared at young offenders at the country's penitentiary centers.

**Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee:** We also cooperate with the professional community by receiving people who are sent to A.A. by institutions. We also provide services (sponsorship and literature) to the Special Center for Addiction Care (CETA) Hospital.

**Magazine Committee:** We stopped producing our magazine, *Recuperación*, after issue #15 for obvious reasons. Our monthly bulletin is still being distributed digitally.

**Service Activities Committee:** Starting in February we had cultural, family and sports-oriented activities that have been enthusiastically supported by the Fellowship. At these events, we offer talks and information about our recovery program. Areas A-3, B-4 and A-6 have hosted these events. On July 17 of this year, we carried out the first of the 32nd Forum on General Service activities, with the topic: "Public Information Work."



NICARAGUA

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**Finance Committee:** Financial contributions are being handled through online banking, and managed by a dedicated expense control team. This has enabled us to exit the pandemic without any debts. The last two Conferences and other minor events were held online. As a country, we participated at the 22nd REDELA in Guatemala in 2021. We are now doing everything we can to represent the Central America Southern Zone, which includes our partner countries of Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Thank you.

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Orestes A.

**Chile:** The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Chile had 104 registered groups on our website, [www.alcoholicosanonimos.cl](http://www.alcoholicosanonimos.cl), as of July 2022, with about 1,300 members. Ten of these groups meet exclusively online and some others have a combination of in-person and online meetings. However, most groups continue meeting face to face only.

We were adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020. Our health authorities forced us to stop holding in-person meetings for about seven months. Both our groups and our service structure as a whole went through a period of uncertainty. However, our LIM meeting (RIS, in Spanish) had already been operating on Zoom for two years before the onset of the pandemic. Based on this experience, we reconvened our committee and group work by taking advantage of this technology and we started meeting online.

We currently have 10 fully structured groups (with elected trusted servants and GSRs who are associated with an area of the group's choice) that function exclusively online and are the product of this adaptation to a new reality. Most of our in-person groups converted their face-to-face meetings into online meetings; several groups failed to adapt and stopped meeting, but new groups created by trusted servants also appeared. These trusted servants achieved and maintained sobriety exclusively through online meetings and they founded in-person groups both in the far north (Arica) and the far south (Punta Arenas) of Chile, where we previously had no A.A. groups. The LIM meeting, managed by GSO and the Service Subcommittee of the A.A. General Service Board of Directors (JDSG), started to hold daily meetings and became the home of many people who otherwise would have no access to A.A.

We celebrated our XXXIII General Service Conference 2022 via Zoom, and we also had a number of online events organized by GSB committees (Archives, PI, Events, etc.), by the JDSG, our national magazine, *Renacer*, and by some areas. For instance, the GSR Congress in 2021 was held in person by the La Serena Area and included a Zoom component.

Financial contributions to GSO from groups experienced a steep decline. Out of the total number of groups that used to contribute on an ongoing basis, two thirds stopped contributing. Therefore, it became necessary to access our Reserve Fund. Our goal is to replenish those funds as soon as possible.

Groups have started meeting again in person by following health authority directives. As of March 2020, the total number of groups registered at our GSO was 104. In July 2022, the total number of groups registered at our GSO was still 104, as

verified by the A.A. General Service Board of Directors (JDSG), GSO and our webmaster.

Our service structure currently includes one territory, which covers the entire country and does not have a trustee, and three service regions (A, B and C), each one with an active regional trustee. Besides those three regional trustees, our GSB has three Class A trustees and five general service trustees designated by our GSB chair to chair and participate in the various committees. Our GSB meetings have been held continuously once a month via Zoom.

We have 10 service areas and three districts. We currently have nine area central offices in operation. Our General Service Conference was held via Zoom — for the third time in our history — in May 2022, with normal attendance and a full agenda. Our Mexican sponsors and an international delegate from Peru attended as guests. We had delegates from the entire country, who were assigned to the various Conference Committees, as well as our trustees, who make up the GSB standing committees. We also hold three joint meetings every year in order to review our progress or make any adjustments regarding the fulfillment of the advisory actions that are approved by the yearly meeting of the Conference.

The A.A. General Service Board of Directors (JDSG) is functioning well and has been operating since 2012. The process of learning and understanding its functions and role in the development of general service has been gradual, but we have learned from our mistakes. This committee is made up of three Class B general service trustees (including the chair of this same board), three nontrustee directors and our GSO manager. The JDSG focuses on working closely with the GSB and supports the management efforts of the trustees of the GSB and GSO.

In 2021, we restarted the Board of Directors of *Renacer* magazine, which is made up of two Class B general service trustees, one Class A trustee, one nontrustee director and the executive editor.

The paid staff at the General Service Office are the general manager and the secretary. GSO is the clearing house for the nonalcoholic community and attends to the administrative and operation needs, group and area information, as described by the *Service Manual*.

We have not been able to restart the projects that were underway as of October 2019, but the incoming trustees this year are planning to go back to certain projects that were halted, such as court-mandated visits to A.A. meetings for persons who committed offenses while under the influence of alcohol. The work that we had been doing twice weekly at the most important psychiatric facility in Chile (Addiction Disorders Stabilization Service — SETA) — where we invited patients to continue their recovery in A.A. groups — will be restarted as soon as conditions allow it.

During the course of this year, we reached important milestones in our committee work. Through their work, general service trustees are attempting — definitely and for the first time, with total clarity — to meet the responsibilities of Twelve-Step work in treatment and correctional facilities, with properly structured committees.

We have a website ([www.alcoholicosanonimos.cl](http://www.alcoholicosanonimos.cl)), which provides clear and precise information. Also, through this platform, our Fellowship is informed about activities and events scheduled throughout the country. The Chilean Fellowship is





currently being sponsored by the Mexican service structure in a permanent and effective manner. We think this has enabled us to move forward towards our development in an orderly fashion. Our Fellowship currently has fewer members and groups, which results in a certain financial weakness, but our intermittent participation at REDELA and the WSM, starting in 2007, has allowed us to incorporate measures geared at our development and the improvement of our service structure, based on Bill W's service manual.

We would like to send warm greetings to all members of this meeting and express our gratitude to the organizers of all the WSMs who, through the years, by their inclusive decisions and actions, have made it possible for us to participate on behalf of Chile's A.A. members.

*Juan José O.*

**Colombia:** We currently have five regions, called A, B, C, D and E, which include 51 areas (42 of which are active), with 718 groups and 10,113 members, out of which 1,382 are women and 8,731 are men. We also have seven intergroup offices in the largest cities of Colombia. Areas with an odd number elect their delegate in odd years, while areas with an even number elect their delegate in even years. This makes it possible to have an equal number of first and second term delegates in our Conference. These delegates are elected at area assemblies, which are made up of group GSRs, district DCMs and area committee members.

**General Service Conference:** Our 58th General Service Conference took place at the La Salle retreat center in the city of Rionegro (Antioquia) on April 28 to May 1, 2022 with the theme "Sponsorship Helps Strengthen Our Structure." The GSC was attended by 42 delegates (70%), 11 trustees (18%), four nontrustee directors (7%) and three GSO staff members (5%), all with a voice and a vote. We also had guests from countries that we sponsor: a trustee-at-large from Peru and a general service trustee from Bolivia. At our 58th Conference we presented the results of the plan to strengthen our structure; there were sharing sessions, workshops; we elected three Class B trustees; we ratified a Class A trustee and four non-trustee directors. We also launched our national events (XII

National Convention, to be held in Medellín in June 2024). We also reported on our commitment to host the XXIII REDELA, with the theme "Unity and Diversity in A.A.," in the city of Medellín, scheduled for the month of October 2023.

**General Service Board:** According to our General Service Board bylaws, the board should have five Class B (alcoholic) trustees representing each of the five regions; a Class B (alcoholic) general service trustee; two Class B (alcoholic) trustee-at-large, one per territory (north and south), making a total of eight Class B (alcoholic) trustees and four Class A (nonalcoholic) trustees; therefore, the Board has a total of 12 trustees, but we are currently missing one Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee, due to a resignation. Class A (nonalcoholic) trustees are selected by the General Service Board and ratified by the Conference for a period of three years, which can be extended by another three, for a total of six years of service; Class B (alcoholic) trustees are elected through a vote at the Conference, for a single four-year term. The General Service Board meets quarterly, for a total of four meetings a year. The Board committees get together with nontrustee directors to carry out follow-up activities and implement policies geared at the fulfillment of Advisory Actions approved at the Conference and to execute all the necessary actions for dealing with the matters that may come up during the year.

The General Service Board of Directors is made up of seven directors: two Class B (alcoholic) trustees, three (alcoholic) nontrustee directors, a paid staff member from GSO and the GSO manager. This board meets six times a year to go over agenda activities, such as preparing budgets for service and publications operations, reviewing new and revised publications, GSO service activities, implementing Conference and General Service Board recommendations, and dealing with copyright issues and authorizations to reprint our literature.

**General Service Office (GSO):** They are located in the city of Medellín, at Calle 50 No 4-36, Suite 310, Edificio Furatena. Phone: +57 42517887. Toll-free number in Colombia: 018000510522 E-mail: [aaserviciosgenerales@gmail.com](mailto:aaserviciosgenerales@gmail.com). Our GSO helps resolve group problems and keeps groups informed. They also provide free literature to new groups within their first six months, help groups that meet in treatment and

correctional facilities, provide public information and cooperation with the professional community; they foster and motivate self-support plans; they cooperate on remedying anonymity breaks; coordinate logistics for carrying out the Conference and develop an Internet portal, among other functions.

**Website:** We currently have the website [www.cnaa.org.co](http://www.cnaa.org.co), but we are working on the design of a new site called: [aacolumbia.org](http://aacolumbia.org). With this new design, which will be up and running towards the end of 2022, we will try to include more services for visitors to the website, for our members and service entities from the various levels of the structure, with up-to-date information about everything related to the Fellowship.

**Finance:** We have several self-support plans, aside from our income from literature sales. As of December 31, 2021, our prudent reserve amounted to about US\$40,000, our magazine *El Mensaje* has a print run of 2,500 issues every quarter, and we also have a newsletter for our members and a bulletin for professionals.

**Country-To-Country Sponsorship:** Our trustee-at-large from the northern territory attended both General Service Conferences in the countries we sponsor: the Peruvian GSC was held virtually on June 3-12, 2022, and the Bolivian General Service Conference was held in person in Santa Cruz de la Sierra on July 21-24, 2022.

We would like to express our gratitude to the U.S./Canada structure for inviting us to participate at the 27th World Service Meeting, which will be held online October 1-6, 2022, with the theme "Carrying the A.A. message in the digital age."  
*Alfonso O.*

**Cuba:** Warm greetings to my fellow delegates at this World Service Meeting, celebrated by the grace of God and our own efforts. My country, as part of our Fellowship's worldwide structure, makes a huge effort to achieve growth and development in our own structure.

We have just finished producing our first book on our first 22 years of A.A. in Cuba and have distributed it throughout the country. We have made the book available to our professional friends as well as to some institutions and it has been well received in our Fellowship.

Our chair had several meetings with our counterparts in the government (the Cuban Ministry of Public Health), and we now have a bank account, a milestone in this first stage of maintaining relations with this ministry.

Unfortunately, we had to postpone our Fifth National Convention because of Covid-19. We will have more information after next year's Conference.

Our GSB was able to complete its rotation online, meeting all the established procedures and fulfilling a big part of our board's services.

I just wanted to thank you all for your service, rendered with so much love and dedication.

*Orestes S.*

**Czech Republic (Czechia):** A.A. activities were significantly hit by the pandemic, resulting in a state of emergency and lockdown declared by the Czech government in the spring and again during autumn 2020. The situation did not improve much in 2021, and we are waiting with trepidation for autumn 2022. There are currently 69 active A.A. groups in 47 cities in

the Czech Republic, altogether counting approximately 1,000 members. Most of the groups are smaller, having one meeting per week. In general, Covid-related restrictions caused new online meetings to be formed.

**General Service Conference (GSC):** Our GSC is held annually, usually in January, and lasts three days — if in person. The last conference was online and took two days. In 2019, the GSC approved the first *Czech Service Handbook/Manual*. At the same time, the Articles of Association in accordance with Czech law and A.A. Traditions (this was discussed with an external lawyer) were approved.

**Board of Trustees and General Service Office:** The General Service Board (the Board of Trustees) consists of seven alcoholics and two nonalcoholics. The Board of Trustees cooperates closely with all the committees and is responsible for A.A.'s financial policy, publishing and distributing literature, copyright, and publishing of a magazine *The Road* (issued four times a year, 32 pages). The Board of Trustees meets monthly via Skype and as a rule twice a year in person — at the A.A. convention and, of course, at the General Service Conference. Czech A.A.'s General Service Office (GSO) is located in Hradec Králové (established in 2015). In 2019, GSC approved the very first paid employee of Czech A.A. The position is part-time for a few hours a week, though the current employee is a great help with the office work and the bookkeeping.

**Public Information (PI):** The number of PI committee members has varied between five and 12 over time. PI members meet on a monthly basis online, and twice a year in person. Current and former PI members started to actively attend the Czech Addictionology Conference (AT). We have become partners to doctors, alcohol-addiction specialists, and social workers. PI activities (including the AT conference) planned a long time ago were afflicted by Covid-19 security precautions. Nevertheless, long-term cooperation with hospitals, rehabs, schools, clergies, prisons, and probation services continues, and we aim to develop the spreading of the message at the regional levels.

**Prisons:** The Committee for Prisons emerged out of the PI committee, which was approved at GSC in 2019 as a result of a growing effort to work in this area. The committee consists of nine members and meets regularly once a month via Skype (like all the other committees). However, our Cooperation with Prison Facilities was interrupted by pandemic restrictions. Many activities had to be postponed for the future.

**Finance:** The Financial Committee was established at the beginning of 2017. Its main purpose is to create a financial budget for the following fiscal year and support the Board of Trustees in making decisions related to unexpected expenses. The very first official budget was created for the fiscal year February 2018 – January 2019. The budget is regularly approved in January at the national GSC. See below how the percentage of annual income develops (and the effects of the pandemic):

Czech Republic	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Seventh Tradition	39%	40%	57%	37%	48%
Literature	61%	60%	43%	63%	52%
<b>TOTAL CR (ca.USD)</b>	<b>11,900</b>	<b>12,200</b>	<b>15,600</b>	<b>11,000</b>	<b>12,000</b>

We hope once the Covid-19 crisis ends, our financial situation will improve further. Despite the pandemic, in 2020 we were able to donate contributions to the European Fund as well. Fortunately, we are able to cover our international delegate's fee of USD 1,000 for the virtual World Service Meeting (WSM), as well as a Literature Fund contribution in the same amount this year.

**Literature:** The current state of affairs in the Literature Committee is as follows: Audio version of the Big Book was finally published through the Audioteka service, which is capable of protecting the mandatory copyright. Electronic versions of A.A. literature are in the process of preparation. After several years we finally got the result of an independent review from the U.S. and a green light to publish the following titles this year: "A.A. for the Older Alcoholic," "Frequently Asked Questions about A.A.," "This is A.A.," and "Young People and A.A."

The Literature Committee's activities have been also affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Communication with the GSO seems to be luckily and finally reestablished.

**Relations with Other Countries:** Some of our members are regular attendees of foreign conventions and conferences, and we also keep inviting members from other countries to our conventions. We feel we have good and solid relationships with friends in Poland, Slovakia, and recently also with the UK, Russia, Bulgaria, and Portugal — we are successful in deepening the relationship and cooperation with these countries. We really appreciate continuous global support from the A.A. structures, and the opportunity to participate in the European Service Meeting and the WSM, which helps us to develop the A.A. Fellowship in our country.

René F.

## Denmark

1. **Participation:** We have a lot of meetings in our country but very few groups with a group conscience. As a result of that the General Service Conference is a reflection of the few, rather than the Fellowship as a whole in our country. Do you experience the same in your countries and what can we do to turn it around?
2. **General Service:** We experience less interest for General Service. Both at the regional level and at the national level. What do your countries do to keep people involved in General Service?
3. **Service Structure:** Are there experiences with online meetings forming their own intergroup/region in your country?
  - Does the desire for this come from themselves or are we obligated as responsible servants of the Fellowship to offer them democratic rights, and help them create this platform (read: intergroup/region)?

Asger J.

**Dominican Republic:** Development has been very slow but constant and continuous, with ups and downs, of our A.A. service structure in the Dominican Republic.

The pandemic left many gaps. Some groups closed. Our last Conference with participation from delegates was held in 2018; in the following years three assemblies were held. Due to a lack of delegates, we currently have had a transitional

management committee from November 22, 2021, with the aim of restoring our service areas and holding a Conference this coming December 2022, to reconstitute our minimally structured General Services Board.

These are the main achievements this year:

- Reopen the general service office that was closed.
- Channel the purchase and sale of literature to groups since we did not have GSO in existence.
- Conduct two Conference workshops for the two North and South territories.
- Proposed a collaboration agreement with the Ministry of Public Health to provide informational talks on alcoholism to pregnant women.
- We have drafted communications in order to establish collaboration agreements with the following institutions:
  - > Attorney General's Office of the Dominican Republic
  - > General Directorate of Land Transport Security — DIGESETT
  - > National Police
  - > Ministry of Public Health
- As a result of the pandemic, we proceeded with the creation of WhatsApp groups.
- We worked on the creation, design and content of the official website for A.A. Dominican Republic [www.aadominicana.org](http://www.aadominicana.org), in order to establish an official online presence with the information of A.A. Dominican Republic as a whole, including the areas of the country, and which has been fed with the most updated contacts for all groups.
- Creation of official accounts of A.A. Dominican Republic on the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram and YouTube:
  - > <https://www.facebook.com/aadominicana.org>
  - > <https://instagram.com/aadominicana>
  - > <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgkWWWm0QUnOTSyFtjr4lw>
- We enabled WhatsApp accounts for messaging service and updated directories with information about all groups, contacts and their respective meeting times for the district of Greater Santo Domingo and the area "two" of Santiago.
- We are trying to ensure that most areas that have mobile telephone service have a similar format.
- We collaborate to enable the inclusion of promotional spots from the Greater Santo Domingo district of the southern territory and the Espaillat area of the northern territory our YouTube channel.
- We are working so that our Class A trustees can provide a message about the A.A. Dominican Republic Fellowship to nonalcoholics to be shown on this channel.

We are taking determined steps towards sustained growth as a structure and that is why interest has been aroused among our members to continue supporting and working on the development of organized A.A. services in the Dominican Republic. That is why we decided to participate in this global meeting; the conditions were not the best, but we must deal here with our problems, receive good suggestions and not waste the shared experience of the structures represented here. This



will help us to guide our services and in the strengthening and growth of A.A. in the Dominican Republic.

*Pennina A.*

**Ecuador:** We send a greeting from our entire structure, Ecuador, in the hope that this World Service Meeting will be as successful as the previous ones. Below, we will report on the service highlights of our country.

**General Service Conference:** The most recent Conference was held in April this year. In attendance were two delegates per area, the delegate chair and the alternate, the members of the GSO, the directors of SENAAE and the trustee for *Sobriety Magazine*, as well as the class A and class B trustees.

The results of the XXXIV Conference were very favorable for the corporation, which rigorously followed procedures. We also had sponsorship from the structure of Mexico.

The Conference Committee reports that the report has been printed for the XXXIV Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous Ecuador, which reflects the analysis work and projection of actions aimed at achieving our objectives and maintaining unity.

**Sobriety Magazine:** Despite current circumstances, *Sobriety Magazine* is trying to be self-supporting economically and while we are achieving that goal, from January of this year volume 24-1 and volume 24-2 have begun to be produced and distributed to all areas of Alcoholics Anonymous Ecuador. There has been a big change for the magazine in quality, texture, content, general departments and professional articles. On September 24 we will celebrate our 24th anniversary, with an in-person event for the entire A.A. membership.

“Our fundamental purpose is that *Sobriety Magazine* serves as one more instrument to fulfill our Fifth Tradition, as a fundamental tool to spread our message and establish a bridge of understanding to the alcoholic who still suffers, through this magic carpet called: *Sobriety Magazine*.”

**Literature:** We would like to report to the Fellowship on the growth of our literature being offered: *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, *Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*, *The Language of the Heart*, *Came to Believe*, and the book *Our Great Responsibility*, as well as pamphlets.

We have at our disposal a range of literature made in Ecuador, thanks to the fact that we have been licensed by our sister structure U.S./Canada. This helps us achieve favorable growth. Using the literature that the office has, we have done workshops with slide presentations, videos, and advertising spots, in order to reach the alcoholic who still suffers.

**National Events:** The General Service Board is doing thematic programming in the organization of national and local events so that A.A. members are connected. A calendar has been drawn up based on different themes: January as the month of the Steps, May month of the Concepts, June month of literature and November, as the month of the Traditions of A.A. In addition, we will celebrate on the 26th of that month our gratitude dinner at the Sheraton Hotel in Guayaquil, for the entire membership of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Organizing Committee is preparing for the 24th National Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous Ecuador 2023 together with Area Committee No. 18, Region F, with face-to-face or virtual meetings for planning.

**General Service Board:** The General Service Board is composed of regional trustee members, northern and southern territorial trustees, general service trustees, Class A and B trustees, three nontrustee directors of *Sobriety Magazine*, and two nontrustee directors of SENAAE.

The General Service Board meets in person every three months on a regular basis and if there are important issues for the Fellowship, it is done in extra meetings, which can be face-to-face or virtual. The board currently has the following committees: SENAAE General Services, *Sobriety Magazine*, Events, Literature, Public Information, Legal Affairs, International Affairs, Financial Affairs, Conference, and Nominating.

**Public Information Committee:** The GSB Public Information Committee has been working to comply with the actions recommended by the Conference. For this reason, it holds meetings on Tuesdays virtually. It was possible to print 3,000 leaflets with information from Alcoholics Anonymous, in order to maintain a single language of A.A. This was achieved with the support of the GSB and two groups from area 20 of Loja. In accordance with an action recommended by the Conference, a video was edited, *What Is Alcoholics Anonymous*, which has audio and subtitles.

Meetings were held with the Public Information Committee of Mexico to review the guidelines for Public Information for third parties. This committee makes available the Public Information slides for third parties to be printed and distributed to the A.A. community, complying with the recommended action.

**International Affairs Committee:** We accepted an invitation from Guatemala to attend their 54th Annual Conference meeting. We proceeded to send a communication to A.A. World Services to help us cover half of the fee of the trustee for this online GSM.

We want to provide statistical data concerning the members of our structure.

**Financial Affairs Committee:** We continue to try to achieve the unity across all areas in order to link everyone in the activities of the corporation. We also continue to make progress in keeping our accounts up to date, payment of staff, payments of social security forms (IESS), proof of the internal income service and lease of the premises.

**Groups, Areas:** Our latest records estimate around 68 active groups and 1,425 members.

**Sponsorship:** The General Services Board thanks the structure of Mexico for the regular meeting for literature training, a task that, from now on, will be taken on by the General Service Board of Ecuador. Our board, engaged in hard work, is happy to request sponsorship from other structures for the favorable growth of the structure of Ecuador, and thus fulfill its objective to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

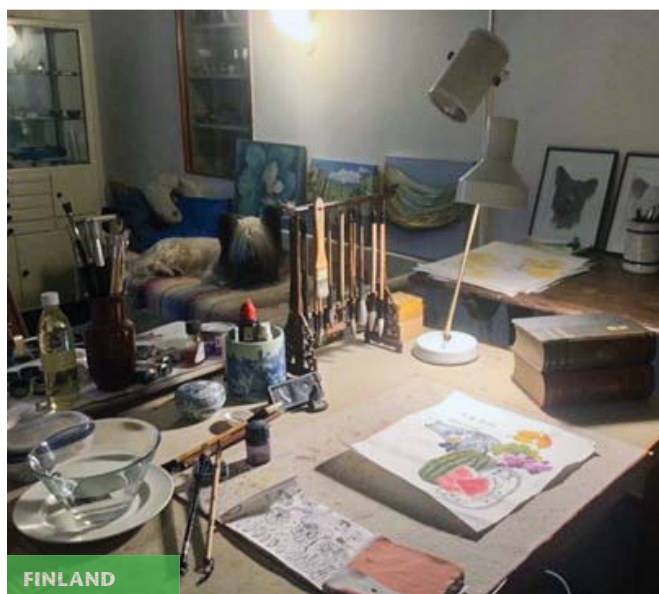
*Bolívar R.*

## **El Salvador**

- As of May 2018, the structure of El Salvador became independent from the Central America Northern Zone and as of 2020 has participated independently with our own World Service delegate.
- Some of the contributions received by the General Service Office of El Salvador are earmarked for REDELA and the World Service Meeting.

- We keep our 14 areas informed about what happens at the World Service Meeting.
- A space is reserved on our Conference agenda to report on the highlights of the World Service Meeting.
- According to the last A.A. survey conducted earlier this year, there are approximately 1,410 groups (15 in prisons and five in hospitals) and 17,641 members, including 684 women.
- The relatives of Eddie and his wife have initiated legal proceedings to have the rights to the mausoleum for him, as the founder of the A.A. movement in El Salvador, turned over to the General Services Board.

Miguel P.



## Finland

*The Theme of the Year 2021 was “Seventh Tradition — Our Mutual Interest.”*

There has been a lot of talk all over the world about the economic deficit Covid-19 has caused. Of course, it has also affected A.A.’s economy — “A.A. should remain poor” — but we have survived and have been able to keep up, for example, the service office in Helsinki with two employees. Nowadays it would be possible to have a virtual office, but as there are daily visitors to the office, and as it has been seen that it’s also mentally important that we have a place with real people, it has been decided to keep the office as it is. Thanks to the donations in the “hats” we can also keep up the helpline (founded 50 years ago), which receives approximately 6,000 calls a year (Finland has circa 5.5 million inhabitants and 8,000-10,000 A.A. members).

The A.A. in the Helsinki (our capital) district finances a monthly broadcast from a local radio station, where A.A. members tell their stories with their own voices, but their names have been changed. When started in 2012, these broadcasts remarkably increased the phone calls to the helpline. The A.A. programs are still the most popular ones on this local radio station.

Covid-19 caused the doors of many groups to close down, but many of the groups luckily started Zoom meetings. This brought Finnish A.A. into a new era. The meetings on the Internet, which were underappreciated before, are now here to stay, although reduced in number when face-to-face groups start again. Zoom groups are gladly welcomed in the sparsely populated areas of Finland. Before, the Internet meetings were international ones, and criticized for the danger that the anonymity of the participants could leak. Then these local Zoom meetings started, where people could participate with local Finnish A.A. groups with personal code numbers, and they felt it to be safer. It was also noticed that some newcomers of the younger generation felt it easier to attend a Zoom meeting as their first A.A. meeting.

The mean age of people in A.A. is increasing and a matter often spoken about here is how to get more young people in A.A. Also, the times have changed and brought more misusers not only of alcohol, but also of medicine and drugs. In addition, there is the fact that these products are easier to get now than before. There is no recipe to draw people into A.A., but it is a matter that we have constantly in mind.

*The Theme for the Year 2022 is “Toivoa On” or “There is Hope.”*

The theme was like an omen as the groups could open their doors again. Some groups still have a Zoom meeting going on simultaneously or as an alternative once a week. The Zoom meetings were generally seen as provisory and there was a sigh of relief when the face-to-face meetings could start again. We could have our annual General Meeting for the first time in three years with about 800 participants this year (we have about 8,000-10,000 A.A. members in Finland divided into 600 groups.) There is always a whole-day program for Al-Anon Family members in the annual meeting as well as in the conventions held regularly in summer and autumn. Covid-19 forced many people to work remotely and some of the drinking problems, which before could be somewhat hidden, came to light, as family members lived together 24/7. This has also been noticed by the increasing number of phone calls to the helpline.

The summer convention held in Kuopio this year (a smaller town in East Finland, which also celebrated 70 years of A.A. there) had about 600-800 visitors in July, which shows A.A. members being happy to move around again. These conventions held in summer and autumn have a whole-day program to follow, but people mainly come there to meet each other and to feel the A.A. Fellowship (and to drink a lot of coffee, eat donuts and grilled sausages with mustard as is common here in A.A.!).

Laura K.

**French-Speaking Europe (FSE):** Consists of three countries.

**France**—Union of Alcoholics Anonymous (UAA) totals 527 groups (30 have been closed in the last two years but many groups have opened online) including between eight to 14 online meetings per day and one telephone meeting a week.

- French A.A. is divided into 22 service regions aligned with the 22 territories of France (including Corsica). In 2021, France accepted a territorial reform and now has 13 regions. The project to merge the A.A. regions remains a project on which the regions are working.
- A new communication campaign has been approved by the 2022 conference.

FSE Delegate Terms	2021-2022	2023-2024	2025-2026	2027-2028	2029-2030	2031-2032	2033-2034
Country A Switzerland	A	A		A	A		A
Country B Belgium		B	B		B	B	
Country C France			C	C		C	C

**French- and Italian-Speaking Switzerland** — Alcoholics Anonymous of French and Italian-speaking Switzerland (AASRI) totals 58 groups (which is an increase from two years ago) including five online meetings plus one online meeting every two months to study the Concepts.

- Carried out successfully and jointly with the A.A. English-speaking, a big yellow billboard campaign.
- Held a one-day video conference to celebrate 65 years of AASRI.
- Conference accepted a project for a new website with a different server.
- In 2021 AASRI held a survey and about 22% of our members participated.

**French- and German-Speaking Belgium** — General Services Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (CSGAA) totals 201 groups (the situation remains stable) including three to five online meetings per day.

**Action “We Meet Again”:**

- Was born because the sales of literature were problematic following the health situation and nothing had been organized in our country since the beginning of the pandemic.
- For one day, literature was on sale on the GSO premises.
- The same day, training, in the form of role-play, was given for the people who answer the telephone helpline, and a reflection on the future of the A.A. structure in French-speaking Belgium was held on the premises of the group “Jambes.”

**Website:**

- The website and intranet are still managed by a group of A.A. members that should become a committee at the next Conference. The “Member’s Space” (intranet) is operational and is useful for literature orders.
- The internal site is being rewritten. It will be operational before the end of 2022 and more user-friendly.

Our three General Service Boards consist of four Class A trustees in France, two in Switzerland, one in Belgium and eight Class B trustees in France, 10 in Switzerland, and nine in Belgium.

**General Service Conference:**

- Switzerland held online video Conferences in 2021 and 2022.
- France held an online video Conference in 2021 and an in-person Conference in 2022.
- Belgium had no Conference in 2021 and an in-person Conference in 2022.

**Covid:**

- Restrictions have gradually been lifted and all groups can now meet again without any restrictions.
- Work is now launched for a global reflection on how to integrate the A.A. online groups into the current A.A. structure.

**CEFE:** Our three countries make sure to nourish a privileged relationship among themselves through the French-speaking European Crossroad of Exchange (CEFE). This entity collaborates closely on different projects. Trustees of the GSB of all three countries meet at each of our Conferences.

- In 2022, successfully ran the European French-Speaking Service Forum after having waited for two years.
- Asked each person already involved in service to bring a person not yet involved in service.
- Will organize it again in the future.

**Projects of the CEFE:**

- Dropped the common project to have sign language translation in the meetings of the three countries for deaf or hard-of-hearing people because all the French sign languages are different in each of the three countries even though we have a common spoken language.
- Will explore other possibilities such as translating texts in Sign language and posting them on the websites.
- Will look for ways to make Belgium’s “Loner’s program” (le bureau des isolés) a common project by making it known to all three countries.
- Will look to harmonize the A.A. vocabulary to have a common language within French-speaking Europe when referring to service positions, Concepts and principles of the program.

**Editions AAFE:**

- Manage together a joint publishing company (which is regulated under Belgian law).
- Was recently recognized as a separate entity from the GSO of all three countries by WSO.
- Purpose is to edit and publish national Conference-approved literature.
- Copyrights are granted by AAWS and Grapevine to AAFE, on behalf of the three countries.
- Responsible for managing the purchase, the printing and the distribution of A.A. literature.
- Goal is to achieve scale economy. This collaboration is fruitful and reflects the unity of our three countries.
- Helped by French-speaking Europe who loaned their publishing company some money to pay the rent.
- Pays the money back as literature orders are coming in



again and as the situation is returning to normal.

- Will publish an electronic version of “The Best Of” that will be posted in the Members’ area of the three countries’ websites.
- Will also publish the “Dictionary of Moderation” (Dico de la modération). This dictionary lists 22 moderation themes. It collects and lists all the pages where citations on these themes can be found in 18 different A.A.-approved pieces of literature.
- Plans to write a common pamphlet for the three countries that will contain “testimonies of women and men in uniform” (police, firemen, soldiers, etc.).

**Harmonization Scheme for the European and World Delegate Service Position:** Since 2021, the principle is to have two international delegates to represent our three countries. This service position has two terms of two years each. One term involves a European Service Meeting, a World Service Meeting and participation at the yearly Conference of all three countries.

**Treasury:** Seventh Tradition and the sale of literature were down in 2021, but thanks to our tradition of strict financial independence and the mobilization and responsibility of all our friends, the contributions have been generous, helping stabilize the financial situation.

**National Helpline:** Offers a 24/7 possibility of calling the A.A. helpline. All three countries share some of the same difficulties in finding A.A. members to staff the helpline.

Marie-Paule M.

### German-Speaking Europe

- Number of face-to-face groups/meetings in Germany has almost halved
- Reduction of the liquid funds by one third at the end of 2021

- Up to 290 newly founded online meetings during the Coronavirus pandemic
- Two face-to-face conventions cancelled; two big online events happened
- General Service Conference was cancelled twice, and finally held one and a half years later as a hybrid conference in September 2021
- Webstore online for two years now
- German A.A. Big Book now available as audiobook
- *DACH* magazine (counterpart to *Grapevine*) now available as digital media edition
- Austria will have a new homepage
- There will be a convention in Munich (Germany) and Wels (Austria)
- New *Service Manual* for the German-speaking zone is on the way

Guido H.

**Great Britain:** The A.A. Great Britain (AAGB) service structure responded to, and weathered, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. As noted at the WSM 2020, our Fellowship adopted Zoom and other online platforms with enthusiasm and to great effect, and although most groups have returned their meetings to a traditional face-to-face format, many online and hybrid meetings remain. Current registration with AAGB across its 16 regions (including the English-speaking Continental Europe Region, or CER) is just under 5,000 groups.

In resuming our normal activity, we have striven to keep members and staff safe. Visitors to our GSO in York, as well as our Northern Service Office in Glasgow and the Southern Service Office in London, are required to show a negative Lateral Flow Covid test. Our online experience has encouraged us to seek new ways of working and many service meetings across the structure are now taking place hybrid or online.



GERMANY

Our General Service Conference in 2021 was conducted online, with much assistance from GSO staff, and a full agenda was worked upon. This was particularly important after the postponement of our Conference in 2020. Following much debate, Conference 2022 took place face-to-face in April, in York, with a hybrid option for those unable to attend in person. One committee was given hybrid accessibility, as were all plenary sessions. It was decided that hybrid attendance should be possible for all committees at future Conferences.

Our finances have remained stable. A dip in contributions was balanced with a reduction in our activity due to the pandemic, and we emerged from lockdown in good shape to continue our primary purpose work, albeit with a higher prudent reserve than usual, as this is always calculated on the previous year's expenditure. Resumption of activity across our service disciplines will reduce this "surfeit" in short order.

A major piece of work on "Safeguarding" was approved at Conference 2022 after extensive consultation with lawyers and with members, including workshops at most of our constituent regions.

Our Fellowship decided not to follow the U.S. and Canada decision to modify the preamble, and we retain the "men and women" wording much loved by many members. However, each group is autonomous, and some have chosen to change. Conference did direct the GSB to consider language sensitive to non-binary and gender-fluid members in its literature, and a review is currently underway.

Conference 2021 asked that greater consideration be given to attracting members from more diverse communities. This has led to the commissioning of three short films addressing women, the LGBTQIA+ community and persons of color. Additionally, an online seminar will be held in October: "Race Today: Who's Not in The Room?" A General Service Board workshop in July 2022 addressed diversity and inclusion and its importance in all that we undertake.

Our Conferences approved two new videos: *Animated Twelve Concepts* and *Gratitude in Action*, a 22-minute celebration of 75 years of A.A. in Great Britain. Both are available on the AAGB website and are being used widely for education of members and in Public Information work.

The latter film was premiered at a celebratory convention in Leeds, held over June 10-12, 2022 (including Founders Day) that attracted more than 3,200 members. Our 75th anniversary stems from the small gathering at The Dorchester Hotel on London's Park Lane, initiated by Grace O., which has led to the vibrant Fellowship from which we all benefit today. The convention featured a historical walkway of the development in the intergroups and regions across our structure and the service disciplines via which we conduct our primary purpose work. Additionally, a Young Persons Archive display and a display from the professionally curated A.A. Archive Collection (now kept at the Borthwick Institute) were among the many highlights of a well-received weekend. All convention goers received a welcome pack that included a *History of AAGB* in book form, which documents where we came from and where we are now. (Available from the AAGB online bookstore!). Media interest was piqued by the event, and we have cooperated on a BBC program on AAGB's first 75 years, now in production and which will air this autumn/fall.

Our other national conventions have resumed, as have our parliamentary events, wherein elected representatives sponsor

an event at one of our three Parliaments, in Edinburgh, Cardiff and London, to which other elected representatives and interested professionals are given a presentation on what A.A. is and what it does. Lived experience shares are always a highlight of these events.

Our publications continue to engage and educate: *SHARE* for the whole AAGB membership, *Roundabout*, focused on the Scottish Fellowship and *A.A. Service News*. The last has been transformed from its long-standing paper format into a digital publication for easy access and forwarding to all those interested in A.A. service.

The General Service Office now employs a web manager, and a review of our website and the needs of our Fellowship and still-suffering alcoholics is underway.

The resumption of our service functions after the hiatus caused by the pandemic has led to a shortage of members experienced in some roles, and as requested by Conference 2021, we are preparing a new pamphlet on "Sponsorship into Service," so that we can continue the work started in our first 75 years.

*Justin T.*

**Greece:** The first groups in Greece started in the middle of the 70s, taking place on American bases for the American soldiers and any English-speaking alcoholics. The Greek-speaking groups started in 1981 in Athens, and in time spread all around the country.

**A.A. Groups in Greece:** Nowadays in Greece, 23 Greek-speaking and 19 English-speaking groups are running. In Athens, there are nine Greek, three English, one Russian-speaking and one Polish-speaking group, most of them online since March 2020 due to Covid-19. We have established three women's groups through Skype and as a result five online meetings are still being held.

**General A.A. Structure:** A.A. groups in Greece take part in the Greek Intergroup with representatives they elect themselves. The Intergroup consists of five members of the Greek GSO and the group representatives. It holds meetings six times a year, every two months.

Every year a five-member Board of Trustees is elected and holds separate online meetings six times a year, every two months, open to all members. In the last three years there has been no stability in the Board of Trustees. Some trustees get involved in conflicts and quit. As a result, there is no willingness for participation on the board.

Regularly and repeatedly both the Public Information committee and groups in Athens and all over Greece hold local activities for the service of our primary purpose. Some of these activities are:

- Presentations and providing information about the A.A. program to radio, TV programs and institutions, such as hospitals, prisons, schools, authorities etc. Publications and interviews in press, radio, TV and the Internet.
- As a result, new groups have been created and the authorities are starting to consider alcoholism and the help provided by A.A. in the application of the legislation.
- Thanks to online groups a large variety of workshops and marathon meetings (all day sharing) have been held.
- In our last Conference, the Public Information Committee had invited representatives from all health depart-



ments of the country, psychologists and psychiatrists, and for the first time, a representative from the Health Ministry attended our Conference.

- We have established three women's groups through Skype and to date, five online meetings are running.

**Finances:** Every group has its own treasury, supported by the contributions of the members who can afford a small amount of money. Every group spends its money on activities supporting its primary purpose of A.A, as well as on the running needs of each group.

**Internet and Websites:** For almost 15 years, we have had a registered website with all the relevant information under the address [www.aa-greece.gr](http://www.aa-greece.gr), which has been included in the list of the Municipality of Athens and the Ministry of Health. At this time, some new books are being translated. The committees of the Central Office inform the groups and members after each meeting of the Greek GSO and its committees through email.

**Literature:** The recovery guides of A.A. handed out in Greek are: *Alcoholics Anonymous*, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, *Living Sober*, *As Bill Sees It*, *Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*, *Forming True Partnerships*, "Twelve Concepts" and several leaflets, as well. For the first time we translated *Daily Reflections* into the Greek language, and it was published this year, 2022. *Stamatina C.*

**Guatemala:** On October 3-7, 2021, Guatemala hosted the 22nd Meeting of the Americas with the theme: "REDELA: America United Under the Three Legacies," which was held in the city of Antigua Guatemala, notable in that this activity was carried out for the first time in a hybrid way.

It is estimated that we currently have 950 groups nationwide, with an approximate membership of 20,000 members, including 500 women.

Next year (2023) the 50th National Convention is being planned. It is important to mention that this convention was interrupted during the last three years, due to the circumstances worldwide known to all. Last year a regional convention was held on the dates on which it is customary to have the national convention. This year, 2022, several regions will hold regional conventions in order to carry out the tradition on a larger scale.

The Second Edition of *The History of A.A. in Guatemala* was published, which was expanded and corrected, with the aim that new generations know the history lived by our fellow predecessors in the early years and the development of the structure in our country.

In 2022, the Committee on Cooperation with Professionals started, which works together with the Public Information Committee.

At a meeting of the General Service Board, the next delegate to REDELA was elected, who will participate in Colombia in 2023.

Due to problems we had with our previous website, we found ourselves in the need to acquire another one, which is: [www.aaguatemala.org.gt](http://www.aaguatemala.org.gt) and the new email is: [osg@aaguatemala.org.gt](mailto:osg@aaguatemala.org.gt).

*Jorge I.*

**Hong Kong:** Hong Kong has a culturally diverse population, and this is reflected in the membership of the A.A. Fellowship. The Hong Kong group structure hasn't grown much in the last two years, but it continues to diversify and divide into more autonomous groups. Groups include two English-speaking women's groups, a Cantonese-speaking women's group, a mixed Cantonese-speaking group, an agnostic group, an LG-BTQI+ group and a group hosted in one of the local Hospital Authority's substance abuse units. The Fellowship comprises 18 autonomous groups, which host 52 meetings a week for a Fellowship of several hundred.

Hong Kong continues to learn from our participation at the World Service Meeting (WSM) and at the zonal, Asia Oceania Service Meeting (AOSM). As we learn, we refine our service structure and benefit from stronger connections to our neighbors. We are raising awareness among our fellows of the value of participating in service structures at the global and regional levels and we're seeing greater participation.

Our greatest challenges are (1) the transient nature of the ex-pat community and (2) carrying the message across the cultural divide to the local community. The transient nature of the ex-pat community, coupled with a lack of awareness of the Twelve Traditions, means that we have found it difficult to nurture a service-oriented mindset. To help remedy this, we have run three Traditions workshops within the last 18 months. Carrying the message across the cultural divide is becoming easier as we translate literature and incorporate Cantonese-speaking groups into the HK Intergroup service structure. However, the cultural resistance to admitting problems such as alcoholism and to speaking about personal issues does inhibit the growth of the Fellowship among local people.

Hong Kong's group conscience is to endeavor to select a Chinese-speaking delegate as one of our international delegates to the AOSM and as our primary delegate to the WSM. We expect this to support the outreach into the Chinese community as those delegates share their experience of service at the global and regional levels.

After many years of persistent effort, HK Intergroup has recently achieved the status of a tax-exempt entity. This means that the Fellowship, led by the HI/PI committee, can carry the message at lower cost, for example on public transport and via government channels. With support from the Fellowship in India, our HI/PI committee continues to carry the message to ethnic minorities and asylum-seekers by translating literature and by displaying it at community centers. We have also placed all three versions of Big Book (English, Traditional Chinese, and Simplified Chinese) in all public libraries in Hong Kong. We have also established lively relationships with professional associations such as the HK Psychological Society and the Family Law Association, as well as valuable relationships with universities and international schools. We invite students of psychology to our open meetings to witness the role of spirituality in the treatment of alcoholism. Fellows often share their experience, strength and hope at schools.

Hong Kong's annual convention continues to attract speakers and participants from all over the world. We conducted a hybrid convention in 2021 but the continuing uncertainty around government Covid restrictions means that a convention in 2022 is unlikely.

*Alexandra S.*



**Iceland:** During 2019 to 2022 there was a drop in members attending in-person meetings due to Covid-19. In the same period Zoom meetings went from a few meetings to 80 meetings weekly. However, there has been a good recovery in 2022, although Zoom meetings are still a big part of the total meetings, or around 60 Zoom meetings out of more than 300 meetings weekly (total population approximately 370,000).

The General Service Board in Iceland is responsible for an open meeting on Good Friday every year to commemorate the arrival of A.A. in Iceland on that day in 1954. The last two years the meeting has been cancelled due to Covid but this year it was on again.

During 2020 and 2021 contributions to A.A. decreased drastically but have recovered well in 2022. Direct bank transfer contributions at meetings are now more than 20% of total contributions and in some meetings 50%.

Work on the Icelandic version of the Big Book is finished but the re-publication will probably be published in 2023. Other publications have been few due to the work with the Big Book.  
*Karl S.*

**India:** India is a unique country, with a 1.3 billion population and a considerable presence of A.A. With 29 States and seven Union Territories, 22 major spoken and written languages, more than 20 minor languages and countless more dialects, India in itself is a mini — United Nations.

Thus A.A. India not only has the challenge but also the opportunity to carry the lifesaving message of A.A. in many different languages to a highly and densely populated audience.

Consequently, A.A. India as a Fellowship is not only one of the largest outside the U.S. and Canada (with more than 2,300 groups and an estimated 52,000 members), but is also one of the most diverse of the Fellowships with literature in 14 languages. Indian GSO publishes in many languages: Big Books in 13 languages, pamphlets in 26 regional languages, excluding English, and going forward, the number of languages is bound to increase.

We have a healthy and robust service structure with the General Service Board comprising of 18 Class B trustees and nine Class A trustees. Though this may seem large, it was necessary in view of the diversities of the country where the dialect changes every 50 miles, and the language changes every 100 miles.

In the last five to six years, after achieving a reasonable reach in terms of the number of groups as well as A.A. members to do the service, it is being concentrated on carrying the message of A.A. as a resource to relieve alcoholism.

Towards this end concerted efforts are being made at the local, state and national levels creating helplines all round in multiple languages so that the suffering alcoholic of any state, any language and any ethnic group gets the message of A.A.'s availability. Working with friends of Alcoholics Anonymous in medicine, public life, administration, and law enforcement, we are trying to reach out through various media — be it press radio, television or public media.

Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO-South Asia) communicated with A.A. India and requested the production of a video film for four to five minutes about A.A. India and the help A.A. renders to the still-suffering alcoholics. A.A. India obliged, and an A.A. volunteer, called "Elderstatesman," was approved by the GSB. Keeping our principle of anonymity in-

contact, the video recording was done by WHO and uploaded on their website.

In 2021, the GSC-52, the Public Information (PI) committee of delegates and trustees' committees unanimously approved MASS PI, where a two or more language-speaking public gatherers for a social cause, the GSB approved free service literature worth INR 50,000 (US \$700).

**Our Vision:** Every citizen of India should be able to define and describe Alcoholics Anonymous and every problem drinker who wants to, should be able to find the hand of A.A. within reach. We also want to offer services to neighboring countries in Asia, the way the U.S./Canada Fellowship is catering to the needs of World Service.

**Fellowship:** The road ahead is tough, and our tasks often seem difficult. A.A. in India has only a few carriers of the message and many a suffering alcoholic waiting for the lifesaving message. Our GSC theme for 2022 is "Unity Through Service." To achieve this, we are encouraging every group to practice Tradition Five to start new groups across the country, eventually doubling the membership every year.

As part of this initiative, we have started to sponsor a neighboring country, Nepal, by contributing sufficient A.A. literature. Though much is achieved, a lot needs to be done with the kind of population and for the potential suffering alcoholics we have, which will definitely be the largest number in the world.

As it is said "More shall be revealed" — by the grace of Higher Power.

*Lokesh B.*

**Iran:** Iran is grateful for the opportunity to participate in the 27th WSM — the second virtual WSM in the history of A.A. The message of A.A. arrived in Iran more than three decades ago, yet there was no active group to be known. After years, the first meeting was started in 1994 in the house of some fellow Iranians who used to live in the U.S.

Today, the A.A. program is very active in Iran. About 230 in-person and online groups in 17 areas are allied to the service structure of A.A. Iran. Before the pandemic, there was only one online Skype meeting. But now we have more than 20 online groups on Skype, FreeConferenceCall and Zoom that hold more than 50 meetings a week. We estimate our membership to be more than 4,000 members.

A.A. Groups include men only, women only, and some groups that welcome both men and women together in their meetings.



The meetings are held in different formats and times. The community's efforts to build a service structure has had positive outcomes — we now have a well-established PI Committee, Translation and Website Committee, Correctional Facilities & Treatment Settings Committee, Treasury, Literature, Workshop and an International Service Committee as part of the Iran's service structure.

Our General Service Board is made up of nine trustees, seven of whom are alcoholics (Class B trustees) and two of whom are nonalcoholics (Class A trustees). In some areas we hold meetings in prisons, clinics and rehabs, however after Covid-19 we faced a lot of challenges and limitations about these meetings.

**Literature:** Some A.A.-approved literature other than the Big Book and "Twelve and Twelve" are translated into Persian. Three pieces of literature were translated into Persian this year and sent to the [tl@aa.org](mailto:tl@aa.org) email for obtaining the license to publish:

1. A.A. in Correctional Facilities
2. Questions & Answers on Sponsorship
3. Twelve Concepts Illustrated

**International:** By the grace of God, we were able to participate in the 27th WSM.

Iran A.A. continues to foster friendships and welcome members from all around the world. We need more inter-communication with AAWS and AOSM providing a sound A.A. message to those who still suffer.

As you may know there is another A.A. structure with a central office in Mashhad that continues to publish A.A. literature without license; however, we are friends personally but unfortunately separated in structure. Although we really hope someday that is not too far off to have one allied A.A. in Iran that respects all A.A. principles, for now we prefer to focus on our own job.

All in all, our knowledge and connection with the greater A.A. community needs to be reinforced, strengthened and to grow, to a much greater extent as we better comprehend the Twelve Steps, Traditions and Concepts of A.A. and transfer it to others.

Meanwhile, we should mention that although we really miss the opportunity to visit and support each other with warm hugs, we thought it was a good opportunity to have a new experience, so our new Online Committee decided to make an effort for a new unimaginable action. By the grace of God, we were successful and recently we had our second Transnational Convention. It was on a virtual platform, and we had speakers from all over the world. It was a brilliant experience. We are really grateful for this chance and many thanks to all who supported us in this our experience.

*Nabi A.*

**Ireland:** Groups all over Ireland responded to the pandemic by starting online meetings, which provided a vital connection for the maintenance of members' sobriety as well as for the many newcomers. Although there has been a general return to physical meetings, many groups have also continued with online meetings and some area, intergroup and Conference business meetings are still being held virtually.

**Website:** The GSB operates the only official A.A. website in Ireland, which is for the use of members as well as serving as an aid to Public Information.

Our freshly updated site displays times and venues for group meetings and includes maps giving the location of groups. The site includes many new features, including an online payment system, which is particularly availed of by members all over the country in the evolving and everchanging situation of the pandemic. Group information can be updated online, which also has been very useful in recent times. Also





displayed is a calendar of events from around the country and an online store with price lists and order forms for literature available from GSO.

Minutes from Conference meetings are made available in a member's area and links to all officially required information, including a list of directors, annual accounts and company reports are included on the homepage. This all ensures that there is transparency at the level of service in the Fellowship and publicly. There is an area for professionals in correctional or treatment facilities and healthcare fields and our film *The Road Back* is freely available to view and download.

**Literature:** A *Service Handbook for Ireland* was first published in 1978 and since 1992 has been updated to reflect Conference of Ireland decisions on a yearly basis. All Conference of Ireland decisions are updated into the *Service Handbook for Ireland*. Considerable work was put into updating the current handbook at Conference 2021 and it is now available online on the A.A. Ireland website.

**Service:** In meetings, physical and online, members are encouraged to get involved in the service structure firstly in their own group and then by attending area meetings. All groups have official alcoholicsanonymous.ie email addresses. Each group appoints two general service representatives (GSRs) to attend area which, in turn, appoints four delegates to attend the intergroup meeting and from intergroup four delegates are appointed to attend Conference.

**Finance:** Through the generosity of our members following the Seventh Tradition, Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland is financially secure with a prudent reserve. We are 85% self-supporting from member contributions; the remainder comes from the sale of literature and convention surpluses. The audited accounts up to 2021 indicate clearly that although there was a dip during the initial period of the lockdown, there has been a balancing out. In addition, as area, intergroup, Conference and board meetings were held virtually for almost two years, expenses for travel and sundries have been considerably reduced. Many groups have set up online banking facilities to allow for members' contributions, which are then passed through the service structure. Contributions can also be made directly to the GSO.

**Conference Subcommittees:** At the 2021 General Service Conference of Ireland, four subcommittees were formed to deal with pertinent concerns amongst members. Each subcommittee met over a period of six months and brought proposals back to a Special Meeting of Conference in September 2021 where they were passed. In summary:

1. Relevant literature and pamphlets will be amalgamated into a pack to help GSRs;
2. A young person's liaison officer (YPLO) post will be created for first time in Ireland. The YPLO subcommittee will continue to meet to provide parameters and guidelines;
3. Guidelines for Digital Online Meetings and an updated Meeting Format to include online meetings will be published in the green *Service Handbook*;
4. In the green *Service Handbook*, emphasis will be placed on retired Conference delegates to return to home groups to serve as officers.

Tom B. / Moira S.

**Italy:** Hello everyone, my name is Rita, I am an alcoholic and I am representing Italy in this virtual World Service Meeting. For those who haven't noticed, I am not the international delegate, I had the honor to do that service a few years ago and I am proud to have been chosen to be here to represent Italy while the Council is waiting to find a new international delegate.

Let me begin with a warm welcome to you all from Italy, this year is our 50th birthday! After two years without our annual convention, this year we will celebrate with two special guests from the World Services, they are Bob W., our General Manager U.S./Canada and Marita H.R., trustee at large U.S./Canada. The theme will be: "It begins with Me: Sponsorship, Empathy and Responsibility." It will take place September 23-25, 2022, at Rimini.

For this convention, we will have a re-edited copy of our Big Book. The Literature Committee has been working on this project and has had the permission from World Services for the printing of the book.

One of the problems we are having is the continuous decrease in the number of groups in Italy, which now stands at 436, and an increase of online groups, which are now 25. The problem is that these online groups don't send contributions to our General Services and take the enthusiasm from the physical sharing in home groups. The lockdown and limitations to red zones in Italy cut the presence of many alcoholics unfortunately, but we have our Higher Power who guides us through hard times, and I am sure that he will help us through during this dark period.

ITALYPAA held their convention in June this year and, judging from the results, it was a success. We always hope to have a one and only Fellowship that helps the people who are still suffering and pass the one and only message of hope for sobriety.

Just as the groups are decreasing, the same is for people in service. As a matter of fact, our council is missing two trustees, one is the international trustee and the other is our trustee at large for the northeast part of Italy. We have Doctor Paolo Civitelli as our Class A trustee, who has his hands full with his service and we appreciate him because he is spreading the message to new friends.

As I have mentioned, our General Services are suffering for the lack of contributions, but slowly things are getting better. This year the Conference was held at Rimini, another important occasion that had been online with Zoom meetings for the past two years. There is still very much work and service to be done with the help and collaboration of everyone. One day at a time, working for our 24-hour program and giving our efforts to make a better tomorrow for A.A.

To conclude these highlights, I will tell you all that I am honored to talk to you virtually, to share our experiences both positive and negative, to have met new friends and to bring the beautiful and joyful message of this meeting back to all Italian friends.

Wishing you all the best through the grace of our Higher Power, living our 24-hour program one day at a time and thanking you all for your attention.

Rita M.



**Japan:** A.A. in Japan currently has eight areas and 604 groups with approximately 5,800 members. The number of groups stopped growing around 2015 and has leveled off. The General Service Conference recommended that online groups be registered with the Japan GSO (JSO) and consider how to incorporate them into the service structure.

The General Service Conference (GSC) comprises 20 delegates from eight areas, plus 13 General Service Board (GSB) members. The GSC is held over three days every February. Due to Covid, the GSC in 2021 was held online for the first time, as was the GSC in 2022.

Our first ever (online) Western Japan Regional Service Forum was hosted by the GSB in December 2021. This year's will be in eastern Japan. A "GSB Orientation & Inventory" was held in March 2022 during rotation.

The 2022 GSC recommended creating a PI video about A.A. Japan and consider using YouTube. Members carry the message into 37 prisons and 26 other related institutions. A National Corrections and Institutions Forum will be held annually on a rotating basis in the eight areas.

A Translation Committee was formed to review the Japanese translation of the Big Book, which took two years to complete. The 2022 Conference approved 53 translation updates. The 42 "Personal Stories" from the U.S./Canada Fourth Edition Big Book were translated over a 10-year period and published over time in seven booklets. We hope to publish *Living Sober* as our first Kindle e-book in 2022.

Japan's GSB has been operating in the black for the past two years; JSO's reserve fund is at three months' operating expenses. Despite lower group contributions and literature sales due to Covid-19, record individual contributions in 2020 and 2021 sustained our General Services. Online contributions have been possible through JSO's website since June 2022.

The GSB Tech Committee established in 2020 has been a great resource to the Fellowship, including providing hosting support for the 2021 AOSM and forums.

After the 2020 WSM, Japan was excited to host this 27th WSM. We hope we can someday host the WSM in our beautiful country.

The A.A. Japan 50th Anniversary Convention is scheduled for March 28-30, 2025. We look forward to welcoming all of you, and we can finally meet face-to-face! (There is another big convention four months later in Vancouver ... so let's save our pennies so we can meet at both!)

*Masaya O.*

**Latvia:** In 2021, the Conference voted to initiate a restructuring process and established the Latvian General Service Board consisting of nine trustees. This was a step forward from the previous arrangement where the central service body consisted of two board members and six committee chairs, all of whom were directly elected by the Conference. From now on, new trustee candidates will be selected by the board and presented to the Conference for approval.

Another key change is that trustees' committees are no longer formed, nor their chairs directly elected by the Conference. Instead, the Conference has delegated the board the right to form their own committees to better respond to current service needs and challenges.

**The Conference Adopts Its Charter:** The Conference of 2022 has adopted its own charter outlining its scope and responsibilities. According to the charter, the Conference membership will now include GSB trustees, serving international delegates, the manager of the GSO, and the editor of the Latvian national A.A. magazine. In addition, the charter also defines, in general terms, the scope of the board and its committees. As with many similar charters around the world, it includes the six Warranties.

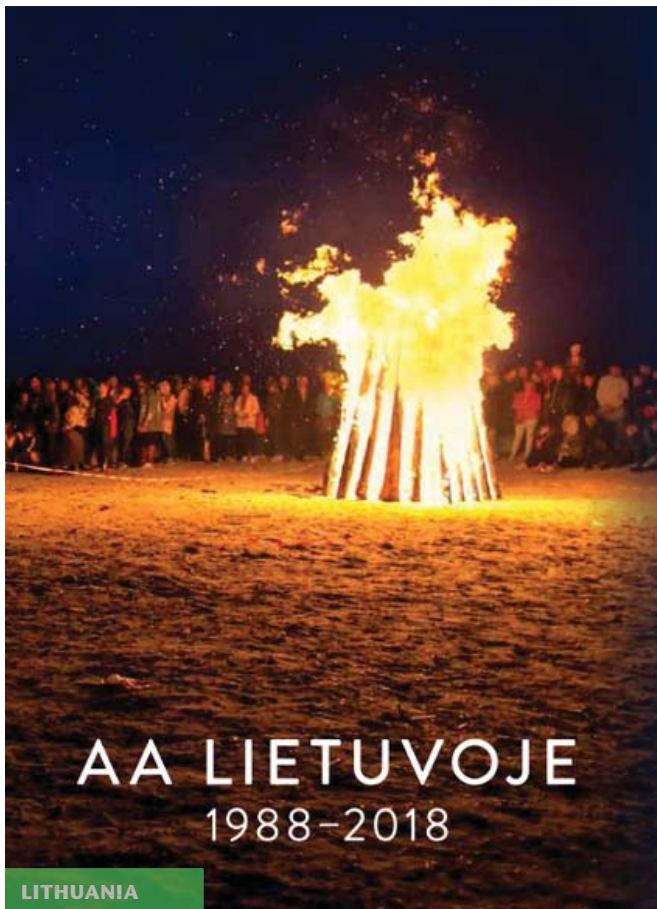
**International Delegates Go to Europe and the World:** Starting from the spring 2022, the Conference will now choose the Fellowship's international delegates who are going to repre-



sent Latvia both in the European Service Meeting as well as the World Service Meeting. This was done to facilitate continuity in these vitally important service positions.

**Big Book Translation Revisited:** The Big Book first appeared in Latvian in 2004. Since then, the translation has been slightly re-edited and published again in 2018. The trustees' Literature Committee has begun working on another re-edit of the translation to bring the book's message even closer to the original basic text from 1939.

Andris K.



**Lithuania:** The A.A. Fellowship in Lithuania was established on June 30, 1988. On July 1, 2023, A.A. in Lithuania will celebrate its 35th anniversary.

There is currently a total of 140 A.A. groups in Lithuania. A.A. meetings are held not only in Lithuanian, but also in Russian, English and Polish. There are three A.A. groups located in prisons, 17 Lithuanian-speaking groups are in foreign countries (United States, England, Ireland, Sweden, and Norway). Open A.A. meetings are organized by 20 A.A. groups. A.A. meetings for A.A. members with hearing impairments are held twice a month. Open A.A. meetings are held regularly in hospitals, detox-centers, addiction disease centers, psychiatric facilities, and other types of hospitals. We collaborate with the police, probation/criminal justice services, prisons, the army corps, and other various social service workplaces.

The current service structure was approved in 2008. A.A. groups in Lithuania are divided into seven regions. The General Service Board consists of seven trustees, one from each

of the regions, the chairperson of the Board of Trustees, the vice-chairperson, the treasurer and the manager of the A.A. service office. A.A. in Lithuania hires two employees — the head of the office and the accountant. The Lithuanian A.A. service structure is described in the *Service Manual*, created in 2008 and updated annually.

The Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference takes a very important place in the A.A. service structure. Usually, the Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference is held each year in November, for two days. Voting members are: the Board of Trustees, five delegates from each region, a representative of Lithuanian-speaking groups abroad, the editor of the A.A. magazine plus our ESM and WSM delegates. Also, we invite guests, usually from neighboring countries. The Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference work is assigned to several committees: Finance, Internal, Public Information and Literature/Publishing that prepare recommendations for the Board of Trustees.

In 2016 it was additionally decided to hold a convention of all Lithuanian A.A. group representatives, just as it had been done before in 2008. This convention meets in the spring, when most representatives of A.A. groups meet to share their group experience.

The A.A. service office in Lithuania publishes General Service Conference-approved A.A. literature. The Third Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, updated with stories from Lithuanian A.A. members, was published in June 2022. So far there have been published and distributed 18 A.A.-copyrighted pamphlets/brochures and eight books. Our periodicals are: the quarterly magazine *The Fifth Corner* (*Penktas kampas*) and a service leaflet *Dawn* (*Aušra*), after the name of the first A.A. group in Lithuania. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of A.A. in Lithuania our service office published the book *A.A. in Lithuania in 1988–2018: Thirty years of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Lithuania (AA Lietuvoje 1988-2018)*.

Currently the Fourth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* is being prepared (translating all original stories). The pamphlets "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated" and "Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings" should be released shortly.

In January this year we launched the new website [www.aalietuvoje.org](http://www.aalietuvoje.org). We are delighted to finally have a filterable list of A.A. meetings, an e-bookstore of A.A. literature, extensive sections for members, newcomers and professionals.

### Today's Challenges

1. The current composition of the Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference does not fully correspond to the concentration of A.A. groups in the regions — some regions have many A.A. groups, and new ones are established, in other regions the number of A.A. groups has been decreasing. The disproportionate distribution between A.A. groups and elected delegates to the Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference no longer ensures equal representation of A.A. groups. In order to implement the changes that will ensure a more equal representation at the Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference, very careful preparation in good faith by all A.A. groups is required. A working group has been set up for this purpose, which is drafting proposals for changes and communicating the proposals to A.A. groups. The latest results and proposals of the working group will be presented at the A.A. Service Conference in November 2022.



- The procedure for nominating/electing Class A trustees was approved at the Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference a few years ago, but we still have no candidates for Class A trustees. The challenge consists in the novelty of the question and a lack of experience.

Elena S.



**Mexico:** The general service structure has 1,345 districts, 13,241 registered groups, and 107,703 members, of which 11,582 are women, 92,119 are men, 1,908 are members with special needs and 4,924 are newcomers. There are 507 groups in correctional institutions, 217 in health institutions, 53 in educational institutions and 41 in workplaces.

The 56th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Mexico, with the theme: “Service: Gratitude for Those to Come,” was held at the Holiday Inn Plaza Dalí Hotel in Mexico City from April 10 to 16, 2022. It was composed of 123 voting members (83 delegates, 17 trustees, six non-trustee directors, a GSO manager and a PO *Abundance* magazine (*Revista Plenitud*) manager, as well as 15 staff who served as secretaries.

Work is underway with “The Annual Donation Plan”; and national meetings of finance coordinators and treasurers are being held online.

The remodeling of the National Museum of Alcoholics Anonymous, “Our Roots,” was carried out in order to better appreciate our historical heritage.

We’re also developing a training meeting on Historical Archives, as approved by Conference.

We changed a committee name to the “Treatment and Accessibility Committee.” The video *Hope* was subtitled. A national training meeting has been planned for coordinators of Treatment and Accessibility committees, and the 13th National Alcoholic Week for Treatment Institutions and Settings will be held October 24-30, 2022.

In the CPC service area, we carried out online training in February with CPC area coordinators on using the CPC Workbook. The Second National Information Symposium is about to take place. The National Survey of A.A. Members is conducted every three years; the next one will be published in 2023. As for Public Information, the 87th anniversary of A.A. was held on June 10; the 13th National Radio Information Week, with the slogan “A Message on Air,” which was addressed to the women’s sector was held; the 10th National Week of Alcoholics Anonymous for Youth will be held September 19-25, 2022 throughout the country, with the motto “I am A.A. and You”; and the 23rd National Information Week “Sharing Efforts” will be held from January 23-29, 2023 throughout the country in collaboration with participating institutions.

The 20th National Week of Alcoholics Deprived of Liberty took place June 20-26, 2022, with the theme: “United Toward an Integral Freedom” and the motto: “A.A.: a Path to True Freedom”; and the first meeting of Correctional Institution area coordinators was held on June 17 of this year.

The next National Convention will be held for three days in the city of Guadalajara, March 3-5, 2023.

Mexico currently sponsors seven countries: Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Ecuador, and also other countries through REDELA.

Miguel B.

**Mongolia:** Mongolia faced the airborne pandemic infection Covid-19 from November 11, 2020, although it started worldwide in 2019. During this time Mongolian A.A. hosted virtual A.A. meetings with their own Zoom ID and passwords. Mongolian A.A. had meetings every night for more than two years.

According to the Seventh Tradition, the A.A. groups supported the general Zoom room. For more than two years A.A. members actively participated in this online meeting. Day by





day A.A. members increased their computer knowledge and began to visit other international Zoom rooms. The pandemic showed us that the A.A. world is unlimited. We speak in same language of the heart. We participated and celebrated A.A.'s 86th anniversary online with other members from around the world on June 10, 2021 (see image below):

The Mongolian A.A. women members actively shared their own experiences with members all around the world, too:

Apart from these virtual meetings, Mongolian A.A. held their XI, XII and last XIII Conferences virtually. The XI Conference elected new trustees, who worked hard on the *Mongolian A.A. Service Manual* for more than two years. Finally, the *Service Manual of Mongolian A.A.* was ready.

During the pandemic our service A.A. members translated and made available, the "Twelve Traditions Illustrated" pamphlet. After this pamphlet the unity was reborn among the A.A. groups.

Over the past two years, the number of groups increased by 20, including four women's groups.

Mongolia is one of the most successful countries to have passed through the pandemic, having vaccinated the population more than three times, including A.A. members too. This point showed up in Mongolia's A.A. Fellowship, which started returning to in-person meetings and anniversaries in May 2022.

The IX Convention was held August 13-14, 2022, in the Janjin Convention Hall with 350 A.A. members. When the north border opened, Mongolian A.A. members visited Russian A.A. conventions in Khabarovsk in June 2022, and in Buriatia Ulan Ude in August 2022.

Next July 7-8, 2023, Mongolian A.A. will celebrate our 25th Anniversary with the theme "Love & One World!" Welcome! *Tserrenyam D.*

**New Zealand (Aotearoa):** Aotearoa New Zealand is an island country in the southwestern Pacific Ocean, with a population of about 4.7 million people, comprising of two main landmasses — Te Ika-a-Māui the North Island, and Te Waipounamu the South Island — and around 600 smaller islands. Traditionally in January we hold an annual A.A. Convention (usually attended by more than 300 members plus AI-Anon) that rotates between the North and South Islands in our summer. January 2023 will be our first in-person since the Covid pandemic. Our borders are open and international visitors are most welcome!

**Public Information:** The Conference Public Information Committee (PIC) coordinates the national public awareness of Alcoholics Anonymous in New Zealand.

To create a message of longevity, the NZGSO Service Conference has approved a proposal put forward by the PIC committee to implement a rolling bimonthly awareness campaign that started in October 2021 and has rolled over into 2022. This awareness campaign had more than two million impressions in the first six months and over the Christmas/New Year's period the online ads were viewed more than a million times. This led to a corresponding increase in visits to the New Zealand A.A. website.

This rolling bimonthly awareness campaign continues to develop with the creation of two new poster designs that center around the phrase "Over Drinking."

As with many countries we wrestle with online social media with our Fellowship, and we are very interested to hear how other countries manage this space within our Traditions so we can share your experiences back to the New Zealand General Service Office board and serving delegates.

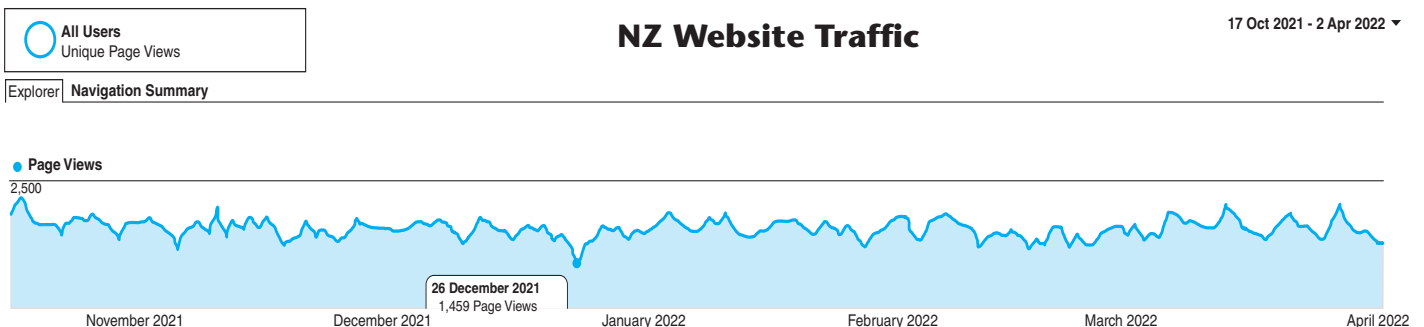
**Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC):** Since 2014, the Conference CPC Committee has facilitated A.A. participation in the Cutting Edge addictions annual conference. In September 2022, this conference will resume after having been postponed in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. At this conference, the public awareness campaign advertisements will be shown, themed around "Over Drinking." In addition, we will be submitting a workshop presentation to this conference on "Demystifying A.A."

Other initiatives include a campaign to "Adopt a Doctor" aimed at groups to engage with their local community general practice and medical centers as well as reaching out to their local schools.

**Corrections (TCF):** Regular A.A. meetings in the 19 prisons in Aotearoa New Zealand have been affected in some instances by Covid and differing rules around volunteer visits with staff shortages as well. There is movement within the correctional institution space to reestablish meetings, however this is very slow.

The TCF Committee created a specific publication that captures New Zealand prison inmate stories around alcohol use. As we continue to source new stories for a second publication, the New Zealand General Service Conference has approved the purchase of 150 copies of the prison edition of *Grapevine* to distribute throughout New Zealand correctional facilities.

**Alcoholics Anonymous New Zealand Website:** The trends of visitors to the New Zealand website continue to remain steady with an average of 1,600 visitors per day with numbers peaking between 2,000-2,500. In context, we were averaging 500 per day before the Covid-19 pandemic.



NZ A.A. Website Visitors	Oct 2021	Apr 2022
New Zealand	86%	77%
United States	6%	11%
Australia	2%	2.5%
Canada		1.5%
South Africa		1.1%
UK	1.2%	1.1%

We closely monitor where our website traffic is coming from. The below data shows that there has been an increase in overseas visitors to the site from 9.2% in October 2021 to 17.2% in April 2022. The biggest increase has come from the United States, Canada, and South Africa.

Christine H.

**Norway:** Norway has about 5.5 million inhabitants. That translates to about 14 inhabitants per square kilometer, or 36 inhabitants per square mile. The city of Barcelona has the same number of inhabitants as our whole country. Norway currently has 180 home groups, plus six groups abroad, with a total of 2,000 members. This makes for great distances between A.A. groups in some areas, and from time to time, difficulties in getting the service structure to work properly. It is a particular problem maintaining the structure in the northern part of the country.

**Historical Summary:** The first group of Alcoholics Anonymous was established in Norway in 1947 in Oslo, the capital of Norway. One year later a group was established in Bergen in the western part of the country. Norway was the second country in Europe to introduce the A.A. program to a suffering alcoholic.

For the start in 1947/48 to the middle of the 50s, there was an enormous increase in members and groups from two to three groups counting 200 members to 50 groups counting approximately 2,000 members. The visit of Bill W. and his wife Lois in May 1950 was obviously a great inspiration to growth and resulted in establishing many new groups in most parts of the country. The establishment of several alcoholic clinics in the 50s and 60s resulted in an increase of members in A.A. groups.

The "Clondyke-period" in the 50s and 60s is definitively history. The number of members is approximately at the same level today as it was 30 years ago, while the number of groups has increased to 180. The result is difficulty in maintaining the enthusiasm and will to do service in groups with just a few members. In rural areas, we have noticed some groups closing down.

However, the pandemic situation when Covid-19 resulted in the lockdown of most groups, many groups established digital meetings, not only for their own members, but which made it possible for members in every part of the country to find a meeting. The lockdown of the country has resulted in thinking differently on how to reach a suffering alcoholic.

**Structure:** Group (180 groups): Each group has a group representative (GR) elected for two years by the A.A. members. The GR represents the group at the district meetings; District (21 districts): The district representative (DR) with at least three years of sobriety, is elected by the groups in the district for a period of three years and represents the groups in the district at the annual General Service Conference; Region (five

regions): The DRs and the members of the General Service Board representing the region meet to pass along information and discuss matters of importance. The DRs and the groups are responsible for finding the right candidate to be launched as a member of the General Service Board.

**General Service Board:** The General Service Board consists of three Class A trustees and seven Class B trustees, one of those as an alternate. The GSB Class B members are responsible for a committee: Finance, Literature, Public Information, Policy, and Communication within A.A.

The General Service Board chooses from among at least two candidates, the new candidate to be a member of the GSB for a period of five years. GSB members are responsible for carrying out the decisions made by the General Service Conference, which is arranged once a year in April/May.

**General Service Office:** The General Service Office is located in central Oslo with one full-time general manager. The opening hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. five days a week.

Our service manual, *Handbook for A.A. in Norway*, contains the most current information needed for doing service at any level in the A.A. structure. The Literature Committee is working on a new edition of this manual.

**Finance:** Financially, we have a current budget of NOK 2.0 million (USD \$335,000). Roughly half our income derives from Seventh Tradition self-support and half from the sale of literature.

The pandemic situation resulted in less income last year, both in Seventh Tradition self-support and the sale of literature, even though many groups have a digital service for payment.

**Literature:** We have translated most of the relevant, approved literature. The Big Book is now also published in a pocket size without any reduction in the regular-size Big Book sales. The Literature Committee is working on a new translation of the Big Book and most of the literature has been recently updated and given a modern layout. We also have audio editions of the Big Book and the "Twelve and Twelve."

*Box 205 (Boks 205)*, our national *Grapevine*, has its own author and a print run of 800 copies.

**Telephone and Internet:** Technically, we are well equipped both to inform and to communicate. Our website [www.anonymealkoholere.no](http://www.anonymealkoholere.no) is continuously being updated and improved.

Our national service phone, which is operated by local groups on a rotating basis one month at a time, is working satisfactorily but a new and better organization of this service will be launched autumn 2021.

**Service and Information:** The intergroups and groups around the whole country are doing service and setting up meetings in hospitals, treatment centers, prisons, schools and other institutions that may have an interest in and the possibility of reaching a suffering alcoholic.

**Relations to Other Countries:** For the last two years, the Cooperation within the Nordic Countries has been cancelled. Lack of obvious items in common resulted in an agreement to take a break.

The Swedish international delegate has now taken the initiative to set up a digital meeting to discuss the future cooperation among Sweden, Denmark and Norway as a start.

Julienne L.L.

**Paraguay:** At the General Service Board of A.A. Paraguay (JUNSGAAP), we are experiencing positive changes in the actions of the Fellowship, both internal and external, which strengthen the Fellowship. From the collective conscience regarding the Seventh Tradition, today we have seen improvement through different efforts in that important aspect for the good development of the program.

**Website** — <http://www.alcoholicosanonimos.org.py>: This website is fundamental for the communication of board news. It has more than 5,000 visits per month and literature is available through links to the website of the GSO of New York (with prior authorization of use). We believe that social networks and digital communication have an important contribution to make with the new generation, since information flows much more actively and dynamically in that space. For example, in the way to search for groups, we now can use different applications.

**Vya'pave Magazine (Infinite Joy in Guarani):** The magazine has been completely modified with a relaunch and has been a very useful tool through its various functions. It is used for literature, sharing, welcome material, the Twelve Questions quiz, a calendar of activities, and the directory of groups, among others.

**Border Meetings:** Meetings where the regions unite. Organized meetings where each of the participants shares about their situation referring to recovery and service in A.A.

**Two Meetings — Supported by Each of the Structures:**

- Brazil (Parana State), Argentina (Missions Province), and Paraguay (Department of High Parana).
- Argentina (Formosa Province) and Paraguay (Central Department).

**Service Manual:** By determination of the group conscience of the last GSC, since March 2019 the annual U.S./Canada *Service Manual* been implemented, adjusted to the needs of our structure. The modifications were approved through an extraordinary meeting held on August 10 in the city of Encarnación, Paraguay, with a printed version available already.

**Areas of Cooperation:**

- National Senate
- City Capital
- Ombudsman's Office
- Central Department Government

The areas of cooperation were determined mainly by the identification of different institutions and their positive contribution made according to the organization chart of Alcoholics Anonymous. This was received very positively since it was pending matter for several years.

*Rodrigo B.*

**Peru:** Since the last World Service Meeting, which was held virtually in November 2020, we celebrated our XXXII and XXIII General Service Conferences, with the themes: "The Home Group: Where Service Leadership Is Born," and "Alcoholics Anonymous: Unity and Service in the New Reality." Both Conferences were held online.

To date, we have been working on updating the registration of new board members in our National Public Registry.

Also, we have registered our name ("Alcohólicos Anónimos del Perú") and the circle and triangle logo, with the legend: "A.A. — Unity Service Recovery," with the Peruvian Intellectual Property Institute (INDECOPI).

So far, our structure has failed to comply fully with the spirit of the Seventh Tradition. The cost of delegate and trustee travel to General Service Conferences (including registration), service events and meetings is partially covered by areas or regions. However, at the last REDELA, we were able to cover some of the costs of our delegate. In other words, we still have a lot of work to do in order to become responsible for our services. Within the structure, change is taking place slowly. Areas are paying for part of the expenses of their delegates when they are invited to events. In most cases, however, trustees must defray their own travel-related costs, both within Peru and abroad (REDELA, WSM, invitations from other structures).

Peru currently has 241 groups (the number of groups has grown very little over the past few years). Lima, the capital, has about 50% of our groups, whereas the rest is spread throughout the various departments (provinces) of Peru.

We have seen growth in public information activities. A.A. members, especially newcomers, are reading more; delegates come better prepared to the General Service Conference. It is important to highlight that over the past few years, there has been positive growth in terms of participation at regional events, conventions and forums.

We still have a lot of CPC work to do and this is reflected in the few nonalcoholic friends we have. At our last Conference meeting we were able to elect two new nonalcoholic trustees.

This year we have been working on communicating via social networks, which has enabled us to reach more places in our country. The result has been an increase in calls for help reaching our General Service Office.

Over the past few years, our structure has consistently participated at the WSM and the REDELA, as well as at the General Service Conferences of Mexico and Colombia, to which we were invited. It is very important that we stay focused on the world vision of Alcoholics Anonymous and the sharing of experience.

Our GSO has three employees: our manager, a nonalcoholic administrative assistant and a nonalcoholic employee who is working in the technology area. Our GSO basically supports itself through literature sales. GSO has been striving to broaden and improve services to groups and members.

We opened an account for our Reserve Fund and we continue to make contributions to the International Literature Fund.

The General Service Board has developed a Strategic Plan, which was approved at our Conference in 2021. This Strategic Plan is being carried out in order to meet our goals, which are geared at fulfilling our primary purpose and the vision and mission of A.A.

We are working towards having our areas be the ones in charge of submitting proposed recommendations before the Conference, so that groups may feel that they are truly engaged in the General Service Conference. At the last two Conferences, we received recommendations from all active areas in our structure.

We still need to do more work on strengthening the authority and responsibility of our Conference Committees.

*Daniel G.*



**Poland:** The Poland A.A. service structure has approximately 3,000 groups within its 14 regions and covers the territory of Poland and Polish-speaking meetings in Europe. Our Board of Trustees consists of 14 alcoholic trustees, one from each region, five nonalcoholic Class A trustees, and two national delegates. Each of the regions sends four delegates to our yearly General Service Conference. Because of Covid, in 2020 the Conference was postponed until April 2021. Our Fellowship is supported by the General Service Office in Warsaw.

The A.A. structure in Poland is self-supporting with 39% of the costs of the GSO activities coming from members' contributions and the remaining 61% covered by literature sales. During the pandemic, sales of the literature went down by more than 60% but the response of the Fellowship in those difficult days was magnificent. The Seventh Tradition contributions went up more than 100%, and our prudent reserve remained untouched.

The new book *Our Great Responsibility* and the third edition of our Service Manual were published. On our website, we began to post two Guidelines, the first one about Public Information service, and the second one about Accessibility to A.A. will be posted shortly.

Our Fellowship received an invitation to participate in the Congress Society of Polish Psychiatry. It was a great opportunity to spread the word about A.A. to our current and future friends in this field.

For more than 30 years we have been carrying the A.A. message into correctional facilities. In the case of the Covid 19 pandemic, there were no meetings in person in prisons. Instead, many groups moved to the Internet. Since the beginning of 2022 many A.A. meetings have returned to the prisons.

The upheaval brought on by the pandemic has brought almost to a standstill our extensive activities in the country-to-county sponsorship planned for this year. However, our A.A. structure has been blessed this year with thanks from the A.A. structure in Kazakhstan (a former republic in the Soviet Union) for our assistance in finalizing the registration procedure needed to set up their foundation, which is the legal representative of A.A. in that country. Our international delegate took part in the Fifth General Service Conference in Bulgaria.

A new form of electronic communication between GSO, GSB, and the Fellowship was established. The *Freshmail* newsletter is getting more subscribers every day.

Our GSO maintains an official A.A. website that receives more than one million hits a year. The IT trustees' subcommittee is working on the new website.

In those difficult days of the pandemic, A.A. groups moved their meetings to the Internet. Since the beginning of 2022, most of the groups went back to meetings in person. Currently, most groups meet in a face-to-face manner, including regional assemblies and intergroup meetings, as well. Those difficult pandemic times have had a positive impact on communication between the members, the service structure, and



the general public in the Public Information field.

The second survey among our A.A. members will take place in 2023, and in 2024 we will celebrate our 50-year anniversary. The Jubilee Convention will take place in Poznań, the city where A.A. in Poland was born in 1974.

In August 2022 Warsaw hosted EURYPAA — Young people in A.A. across Europe.

In bullet points that is all. You will find more information about A.A. in Poland in our country report.

*Izabela A.*

**Portugal:** The formal A.A. service structure in Portugal has existed for 23 years. The First General Services Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous of Portugal was held in Colares, from April 30 to May 2, 1999, under the motto "To Serve United to Grow." This Conference recommended that the National Day of A.A. be celebrated on March 19, the date when, in 1994, all groups of Portugal were gathered for the first time in a service meeting.

**Structure:** Due to the pandemic, gradually the groups were closed and most of them began having online meetings. It was fantastic how quickly the community managed to overcome the difficulties caused by the pandemic, holding together so that we can continue to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Many newcomers arrived at the meetings and some, fortunately, have stayed sober to this day and are already doing service in their groups, despite being online.

Currently we have 91 groups listed in Portugal, with the GSO aware of 80 opened, 58 with face-to-face meetings, 14 exclusively online and eight in both formats.

Last June at our Conference, it was decided that online groups will be integrated into the structure and how it will be done. It was decided as well, how these groups will work in what concerns Public Information.

**Internet and Websites:** In 2021, an app for mobile devices, called "A.A. num Clique" that provides direct, quick and easy access to some of the most useful materials on our website was developed by A.A. Portugal, through the Internet and Websites Committee.

**Other Services:** The head office trustees manage the General Service Office and the five national committees, which are

the following: Answering Service, Events, Literature and Publications, Public Information, Institutions and Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Internet and Websites.

**Relations with Other Countries:** Due to Portuguese members' participation in the European Service Meeting and the World Service Meeting, new bonds have been established that have allowed us to have the presence in our events of members of other A.A. structures who have kindly accepted our invitation to speak about World Service.

A.A. Portugal has maintained regular contacts with the groups of Angola and Mozambique, offering to sponsor in the possible ways, considering the geographical distance and political situation in those countries.

Ivo C.

**Russia:** There are 765 groups registered in Russia. Basically, groups exist in big cities, but A.A. groups have expanded to small towns and the countryside as well. Some of them hold their meetings every day. Around 37 groups have online meetings (Zoom, Skype, and Telegram). The first A.A. group in Russia for people with hearing problems has been registered.

The General Service Conference is held in Moscow in April and lasts for four days. For 2021 and 2022 it was decided to form two new committees.

One for the development, support and coordination of the activities of A.A. Russia to convey the ideas of recovery in the online space. The Online Committee promotes the formation and development of Russian-speaking online groups and the unification of Russian-speaking online groups in the delegate district of the Conference on General Services for A.A. Russia.

It develops thematic content in social networks, messages that correspond to the Traditions of A.A. with a link to the official website of A.A. Russia. It also populates and modernizes the site, etc.

The other that was founded is the Archival Service Committee. The purpose of the work is to preserve the A.A. experience of the Russian Commonwealth for future generations.

In February 2022, a positive decision was received on the registration of the combined trademark "Alcoholics Anonymous." The goal is to protect licenses for publishing literature and reduce the risk of damage to the reputation of A.A. in Russia.

In addition to the main popular publications of Fellowship literature, the following books and booklets were published in 2020-2022: "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated" plus a questionnaire on Traditions from *Grapevine* magazine, the two A.A. Guidelines for carrying the message to alcoholics in correctional facilities and to those in treatment and outpatient settings, the pamphlets "Let's Be Friendly With Our Friends," "Women's Stories" from the "Is A.A. For You?" cycle, "Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings," "Women in A.A.," "The A.A. Member — Medications and Other Drugs," and "A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues."

An information leaflet for groups about working according to the Seventh Tradition and a postcard for a beginner with empty fields have been developed. Assistance was provided in printing the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* in the Tatar language (*Anonymous Alcoholclar*) at the expense of the A.A. of Tatarstan. The print run was 500 copies.

The pamphlet "A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic," was translated and the text has passed the expert evaluation of the copyright holder.

In 2021, members of the Commonwealth of A.A. of Russia took part in the All-Russian Forum "The Health of the Nation is the Basis of Russia's Prosperity," in the Congress of the Russian Narcological League.

In 2021, in one of the regions of Russia, an agreement was reached with the Federal Penitentiary Service on the creation of a library on prison grounds, also on conducting broadcasts on the regional penitentiary radio with A.A. speakers and the organization of A.A. meetings within the penitentiary system.

The 32nd A.A. Forum of Russia in December 2021 was held online for the first time in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia. The forum was held for three days.

The Russian GSB is in contact with the A.A. structures of Moldova, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Kirgizstan, Estonia, and the UK. The Russian GSO also provides service for Russian-speaking meetings in Kishenev (Moldova), Pavlograd (Kazakhstan), Ulan-Bator (Mongolia), Mogilev (Belarus), Haifa (Israel), Stockholm (Sweden), Helsinki (Finland), New York (U.S./Canada), and London (Great Britain). We stay in constant in contact with the GSO in New York.

Presentations were prepared for the Commonwealth of A.A. Donetsk and A.A. Spain. Assistance was provided to A.A. Spain in the preparation and selection of materials for the creation of a website of Russian-speaking A.A. members living in Spain.

Workshops were held with foreign speakers about ministries and the structure of service. On the Zoom platform, webinars with talks by A.A. members were held on various

5-7 АВГУСТА 2022  
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Сергей К.

RUSSIA



topical subjects, for example, the experience of the group inventory or the use of Traditions in solving conflict situations at the group level or the service structure.

Anastasia A.

**Slovakia:** Central Europe, 5.3 million inhabitants, capital city: Bratislava. A.A. has been in Slovakia for 32 years. A.A. Slovakia has 450 members, 52 GSO-registered groups. There is a women's group and a men's group working well. We have groups with meetings in English, Hungarian and Russian. All structures are in place: groups-intergroups-conference-board. Plus, supervisory committee. All governed by the *Service Manual*. Sobriety requirements are applied whenever possible.



**GS Board:** meets quarterly, has 22 members, including Class A and Class B trustees, as well as committee chairs. There are six permanent committees: Literature, Organizational, Service Manual, Public Relations, Online Communication and Financial. We have two ESM/WSM delegates, who are members of the GS Board.

**GS Conference:** held annually. In 2021 held online, the 2022 Conference held in person, as traditionally.

**Service Manual:** governs all services and bodies in the Slovak A.A. structure. Updated regularly and approved by the GS Conference.

**A.A. Service:** provided in six hospitals, three prisons and three rehabilitation centers. A.A. members attending professional seminars and conventions to share our experience strength and hope.

**Sponsorship:** is on the rise but mostly concentrated in larger cities. Newcomers from rural areas are often being sponsored online.

**Pandemic Crisis:** a rise of online meetings via Zoom and Skype. Online meetings and online sponsorship have been saving and preserving sobriety in this difficult period. A significant number of newcomers found A.A. thanks to online meetings. Many of them went through the Steps solely online.

**Relations with Other Countries:** Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland — reciprocal attendance of conventions, GS Conferences, workshops. Also, the UK and the U.S. — speakers at conventions and seminars.

**Internet:** we have an official website [www.alkoholici-anonymni.sk](http://www.alkoholici-anonymni.sk) including information on and location of the groups and advice for newcomers.

**Newsletter Water Spring (Pramen):** 20 years of service. Published quarterly. Contains articles from members, features on Steps and Traditions, and information on events and groups throughout the country.

**Literature:** All essential literature and pamphlets available. 'Pass it On' — its first Slovak translation to be published in late 2022.

Peter R.

**Slovenia:** Slovenia is a country with a population of two million. The first A.A. group in Slovenia was established on November 6, 1989. As the membership and number of groups grew, there was constantly a need for some sort of connection between groups that had to be organized. An intergroup was established with an aim to exchange experience between groups, first of all concerning new members, public relations and anonymity. Soon the intergroup was too weak for the growing membership and in 2002, a decision was made to establish a democratic organization as it is in the U.S. and Canada, adjusted for possibilities, circumstances and conditions in Slovenia.

**A.A. Structure Today:** Today (August 1, 2022) there are 42 groups in person and 10 groups online in Slovenia with approximately 500 members. In other words, the Covid-19 pandemic eliminated 13 in person groups and established 10 online groups, yet the number of all active members (participants) decreased from approximately 600 to 500. This data is changing as is the pandemic situation in the country almost "a day at a time."

**General Service Conference (GSC):** takes place once a year. Each group elects one GSC delegate from among its members. All delegates gather at the Conference, listen to committee reports from the previous year and discuss the following year's program. Every second year, the delegates elect one third of the GSB members. Administrative and technical tasks for the Conference are done by GSO.

**General Service Board (GSB):** is responsible for all the activities accepted at the Conference. It consists of nine members. One third are nonalcoholics, who promote the management of alcoholism in various fields in society and support the activities of A.A., and two thirds are alcoholics who are sober for at least five years, know well the functioning of the structure of A.A., are able to serve with their knowledge and have the capacity to lead and connect people. The members of the GSB are: the chairperson, who is a Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee, the secretary, two nonalcoholic members and five alcoholic members, who are also leaders of one committee (Public Relations, Publications, Finances, Electronic Communications, and A.A. Meetings). Each committee consists of three members with a four-year term. Past, present and future leaders rotate out of their posts every two years (past delegates cooperate with but are not members of GSB).

**General Service Office (GSO):** is formed by the GSB members. They function also as administrative workers of the board. We don't have professional employees in GSO. The 24-hour service for the still-suffering alcoholics is covered by A.A. members.



**Finance Committee:** takes care of the planning, disbursing, and reporting to Conference about finances once a year. The Covid crisis reduced the one-year budget of the Fellowship to less than 8,000 € (versus before Covid 10,000 €). The main sources of income are from contributions (75%) and literature (25%). During the last two and a half years — just the opposite).

**Relations with Other Countries:** runs mainly through the connections we established with our cooperation at ESM and WSM meetings. Past delegates supply our Fellowship with information and encourage members and our structure to make international connections and ask for experience. We are especially close to members in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Montenegro (we meet daily via Zoom meetings).

- Online meetings make it particularly possible to have relations with other countries, more maybe for members from other countries.
- From 2012, we have organized an International A.A. Convention in Gozd Martuljk-Kranjska Gora, which is growing and is increasingly welcomed among members.
- In 2022, the convention will take place in spite of a possible pandemic situation (of course — with regulation measures).

**Committee for Electronic Communications:** All information for the alcoholic who is still suffering is available by telephone: +386 69 665 478. There is also the website [www.aa-slovenia.si](http://www.aa-slovenia.si) with relevant information and the list of meetings in Slovenia.

**Email addresses:**

[info@aa-slovenia.si](mailto:info@aa-slovenia.si)  
[international@aa-slovenia.si](mailto:international@aa-slovenia.si)

Zdravko Z.

**South Africa:** A.A. South Africa has proudly celebrated 75 years since its first meeting in 1946. A.A. in SA has six regions. Geographical considerations have meant that some of the regions are broken down into more manageable areas, so we have eight area offices. These serve a total of about 526 groups and an estimated 6,213 members, nationally.

- Details of the historical development of A.A. in South Africa is well documented on our website: [aasouthafrica.org.za](http://aasouthafrica.org.za).

Unfortunately, this healthy, vibrant Fellowship does not extend to all parts of our country. To understand the context of South Africa, there are nine provinces in South Africa, which comprises an area twice the size of Texas, with 60% of the population living in close proximity to urban centers, it is difficult for delegates traveling large distances to reach outlying districts. Poor access, by the population in rural areas, to basic amenities, means that many areas face electricity blackouts and poor internet connectivity. This affects initiatives to carry the message of A.A. into these areas. Consideration should also be given to the cultural values, issues of diversity and indigenous practices as help-seeking is sometimes seen as taboo, and alcohol abuse or misuse is considered a western concept.

Overcoming these problems remain our major focus:

- On an administrative level, we are currently reviewing the regional structures.
- On a more practical level our Class A trustees continue to hold workshops and webinars for health workers directly involved in these areas.
- Vision 2020 is an outreach program designed to promote A.A. in rural communities with a view to changing perceptions of both alcoholism and A.A., opening of more meetings, and standardizing the message we send out across the country. Unfortunately, the pandemic meant the project had to be put on hold. At Conference 2022 it was decided to revitalize this project as Vision 2025.

To address the diversity of South African culture and its 11 official languages, AASA has translated the Big Book and some pamphlets into isiXhosa, isiZulu and Afrikaans.

English is still the preferred language, so we are extremely grateful to World Services, for giving us permission not only to print the Big Book — which we have done since 2016 — but now, in addition we can print the “big five” books locally. The first copies have come from our printers, at much the same time as the delayed shipments from AAWS came in, and we have healthy stocks of literature currently.

While being able to print our own literature has not meant a big cost reduction, with the volatility and relative weakness of our Rand, it has given us a consistency of both supply and price. Thank you A.A. World Services!

**From Conference 2022:** The annual General Service Conference met on May 20–23, 2022. It was an in-person meeting only. The cost of the meeting as opposed to an online platform was debated. Delegates, some of them third year, had never participated in a Conference in person. The overwhelming majority felt that, despite the extra costs, meeting in person added an interaction and dynamic that exceeded expectation and that could not be achieved on an online platform. The 2023 Conference will be an in-person gathering.

**Seventh Tradition:** A brief update on post-pandemic finances: we have always been very successful at sticking to the principle of “corporate poverty,” but while income from contributions declined with the pandemic, so did expenditure and we have found that with the increased literature sales, we are in a fairly healthy financial situation. This has meant that we were able



to allocate increased budgets to the various service arms at Conference 2022. While the Covid pandemic and lockdown restrictions on face-to-face meetings had affected our ability to actively operate in the CF, TF, CPC, and PI spheres, we are starting to see some return to normality.

**Archives and Admin:** Over the last two years a subcommittee of this committee, has worked hard on the updating of our *Service Manual*, where it is now more relevant to the South African A.A. structure. Much of the old manual was a “cut and paste” from the American version. The manual is now online and will be treated as a dynamic document that can be updated or changed if and when necessary.

**Literature and Publications:** As well as finalizing the printing of approved literature locally, we will be rolling out a new printing of the Welcome Booklet that has been so successful — it will be printed in five of the most commonly used languages.

**Information Technology:**

- Our electronic communication options are being revisited and updated.
- Our National Helpline is being moved to a VoIP system. In a trial period performed in one of our regions, we were attending to 86% of all help calls received — on the analog system there was no way of establishing exact figures, but we estimate that the number was less than 50%.
- We are adding an e-commerce capability to our website so we can sell literature online.

**Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting:** South Africa is part of the Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting (SSASM), with world service delegates also serving as delegates to this meeting. Currently GSO SA provides administrative support to this structure. The 2022 Convention decided that, over the next two years, AASA should withdraw from the administration and effective organization of the SSA Service Meetings. We shall participate as a member only.

Our other service arms are re-establishing projects that lost momentum during the pandemic.

We Would Like to Raise the Following at the WS Meeting:

1. The changing of the A.A. preamble by GSO NY seems to have been done without consultation with the Fellowship worldwide. Is this perception correct? If so, why?
2. We are grateful to have been granted license to print literature. The difficulty in getting literature is not unique to South Africa A.A. We have received inquiries from regional countries who are also desperate for literature. In terms of our license, we cannot supply them. Can this be resolved?

Frank G.

**Spain:** The service structure in Spain is currently made up of 24 areas, divided into four regional zones, with 613 groups. Out of these, 30 groups are located in correctional facilities. We have 9,800 members, nine loners and nine Spanish-speaking groups in other countries (three in Germany, two in the UK, two in Switzerland, one in Belgium, one in Australia and one in France). The General Service Board is made up of two Class A trustees and eight Class B trustees, four of whom are



located in the city where our headquarters are based, and one per regional zone.

We stay in touch with non-Spanish speaking groups in Spain, so we can work together and provide them with information, as well as the possibility for them to join the Spanish service structure, if they wish to do so.

Due to Covid-19, our 2021 Conference was held online, via the Zoom platform. In 2022 we were able to go back to an in-person format, which was a true joy. We were able to carry out the normal activities of a Conference, in addition to sharing experience, strength and hope with our fellow delegates from all over Spain.

On October 9 through October 12, 2021 we celebrated the “XI National Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous in Spain” in Matalascañas (Huelva), with the theme: “Our Principles, a Guarantee for the Future.” Given the circumstances, with the pandemic still ongoing, we can state that the event was successful (by way of comparison, the previous National Convention, held at Benicasim without any restrictions, was attended by 1,200 people). Having 600 participants at a convention such as this is satisfying enough.

We are still seeing a great increase in the number of visits to our website, which makes it possible for us to answer any queries made by people who are interested in our recovery program, or their family members, swiftly, and to refer them to areas or groups.

GSO publishes *Akron-1935* our bimonthly bulletin, available by subscription to all interested persons (professionals, ordinary persons or institutions), as well as *Compartiendo*



(*Sharing*), a newsletter geared at members of the Fellowship. In 2021, we ended the year with 1,444 subscriptions, out of which 347 *Akron-1935* bulletins are sent to nonalcoholics.

A copy of the two publications is sent freely to all groups, whereas the *Akron-1935* bulletin is sent to 135 professionals on the Board's mailing list.

We continue to contribute to the International Literature Fund.

*Agustín S.*

**Sweden:** In 2021 the Swedish Service Conference was held virtually due to the Coronavirus. In April 2022, we were able to have our Conference in person again. Most of the Swedish people are now vaccinated, and our A.A. meetings are up and running in person as well, although you can see a slight



decrease in the number of people at meetings. Of the many virtual and hybrid meetings that started under the pandemic most of the hybrids are gone but some of the virtual groups are still up and running.

The General Service Board launched a Restart Campaign to encourage the groups to attract members to come back to meetings in person.

The Cooperation among the Nordic Countries is now operating again after they have been postponed for a couple of years. So far, we have met virtually for a Nordic Theme Meeting every third month (give or take) and are attending our respective Service Conferences in person sharing our experience, strength and hope with each other.

Books and booklets are translated on a regular basis and the latest booklet edited and printed this year was *Our Great Responsibility*.

Our national meeting, which had been postponed for two years, is finally going to be held on July 29-31 this year in Luleå in northern Sweden.

A new website with the latest technology built for the future is expected to be introduced in late September 2022.

After a dip in the voluntary contributions in 2020 and 2021, which caused some concerns, the first six months of 2022 indicates an increase in voluntary contributions.

World Service delegates, who used to be members of the General Service Board two of their four-year terms as delegates, are now serving in the GSO all four years. During this

period, they participate in various committees. Sweden is also trying to have two nonalcoholic trustees. Currently we have only one, but the search for a second one is continuing.

There has been ongoing work by a Structure Committee to oversee our main structure. Swedish A.A. has not been growing since the mid-90s and the current structure is considered to have one level too many. In Sweden we now have group — intergroup — region — Service Conference — GSO — Alcoholics Anonymous Association / Monthly Magazine *Bulletin* (*Bulletinen*). The latest Conference voted for a suggestion to exclude the region level. The Structure Committee is currently working to investigate the pros and cons and present a proposition to the 2023 Service Conference.

The Big Book is currently being converted to Mp3 files and is scheduled to be up for sale later this year.

And finally, in 2021 Swedish A.A. was able to contribute 65,000 Swedish crowns to the International Literature Fund.

*Lars D.*

**U.S./Canada:** Our service structure has more than 68,000 listed A.A. groups with nearly 1.4 million members. Our structure is divided into eight regions, six in the United States and two in Canada. Within these regions are a total of 93 delegate areas, with each area electing a delegate for a two-year term. The delegate terms are staggered so that there is always one half with experience and leadership positions while the other half bring new enthusiasm and energy to the discussions.

Our General Service Board is made up of 21 trustees, 14 of whom are classified as Class B (alcoholic) and seven Class A (nonalcoholic). They serve staggered terms and are elected by the General Service Conference as a slate of candidates. The General Service Board is the principal service provider of the Conference and has custodial oversight in the routine conduct of policy and business of its two service corporations, A.A. World Services, Inc., and A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

Each year in the spring, we hold our General Service Conference in New York, with approximately 133 voting members, at least two-thirds of whom are delegates. The balance is made up of 21 trustees; six non-trustee directors of the corporate boards; and management and selected staff members of our General Service Office and the Grapevine. In addition, we can have up to three countries as observers to our Conference. Although we had our share of Covid issues, the Conference this year had many robust conversations with a full agenda of items for discussion.

AAWS is responsible for group services, which include the operations of the General Service Office, and the publication and distribution of A.A. literature.

Grapevine publishes and distributes the monthly *Grapevine* magazine. It also publishes *La Viña*, a bimonthly publication for Spanish-speaking A.A. members. Both corporations publish books and other related materials.

Our Publishing department has initiated a new virtual tracking system for all applications for licensing of literature for our partners. It has been long overdue, and we hope that you have begun to see an improvement in our service to you.

In addition to our print books and e-books and pamphlets, the Conference has approved several communication channels. We are now using the following:



### Social Media Channels:

- Alcoholics Anonymous World Service (AAWS) YouTube
- Alcoholics Anonymous Grapevine (AAGV) YouTube
- AAWS LinkedIn to connect with professionals with regular/relevant messages
- AAGV Instagram to connect with people across a new channel

### New Channels:

- Use of new point of care Public Service Announcements (PSAs) distribution channel (private pharmacies and doctor's offices)
- Meeting Guide app news section allows us to direct people to AA.org
- Google Ad Grants for non-profits where we can create short public service messages (for the public and professionals guiding them to our content)
- Claimed Online Business Profiles to ensure accurate information about A.A.
- Creating a content calendar to plan strategic communications across channels
- Discussion about the concept of paid placement of public service messaging on streaming platforms

### Traditional Channels:

- Six annual press releases using awareness and holiday months as guides
- Two new videos and more than 20 audio Public Service Announcements in English, French, and Spanish languages.

As we continue to make our message available in both traditional and new formats/channels, it is always important that we remain true to whom we serve. Using our Third and Fifth Traditions as our guiderails, we hope to clearly communicate our message of hope and recovery from alcoholism, regardless of the format, or channel we communicate through.

As the world has returned to our new normal, we are attempting to do the same in our structure. Our employees have returned to the office two days a week and the delegates had an opportunity to visit the office after the completion of our in-person Conference this year. We are hoping to open the office further in the coming weeks. In addition to online and hybrid, groups are coming back in person, creating what has been an extraordinary opportunity for change in Alcoholics Anonymous in the U.S. and Canada.

We are excited to be hosting our 16th International Convention celebrating 90 years of sobriety attained through Alcoholics Anonymous in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada July 3-6, 2025. The excitement is building within our Fellowship to come together after these difficult years of isolation and change. A virtual option for the "big meetings" and the flag ceremony is being explored, in addition to all the on-site events and meetings being planned.

We hope you can join us as we enjoy the language of the heart.

Marita H. R.

**Ukraine:** This year we are celebrating the 33rd anniversary of A.A. in our country. At present there are about 120 active A.A. groups in Ukraine. They are attended by about 1,500 A.A. members. For the time being some groups are conducting their A.A. meetings online on Zoom, Skype, etc.

There are five functioning regional service structures: Kyiv, Volyn, Western Ukraine, Poltava and Prydniprovyia.

February 21, 1989, is recognized as the day A.A. was born in Ukraine. On that day Leo K., an A.A. member from the U.S. met with four patients undergoing treatment at a psychiatric hospital in Kyiv. By May the number of A.A.s in Kyiv grew to 20. Later that year A.A. meetings were also held in Lutsk and Odessa.

Our 24th General Service Conference was held on Zoom on August 14, 2022 (the 23rd Conference was held in Dnipro). Participants in the Conference included five trustees representing five A.A. regions, the international delegate to the World and European Service Meetings, delegates to each of the four Conference committees, acting chairman of the "Pravlinnia" (the committee overseeing the General Service Office), the office worker at the General Service Office, and the temporary editor of A.A. Ukraine's publication, *Dzherelo*.

Certainly, a one-day Conference held online does not allow for personal and up-close contact among the Conference participants, but a lot of important questions were dealt with and resolved and newly elected trustees and delegates assumed their service positions, while those whose terms were up rotated out.

In August 2021, the newly printed *Service Manual of A.A. Ukraine* was presented at a seminar in Poltava: "Service at



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All Levels of the A.A. Structure.” The manual was developed based on manuals of several A.A. structures, including U.S./Canada and Poland. Our aim was to have our own service manual, which describes the service structure in Ukraine, in order to inform those already active in service work, while also attracting other A.A. members to become involved in service.

We have completed our work of collecting A.A. recovery stories from members in Ukraine. These 27 stories will be published as a separate book. The Literature Committee and volunteers are currently working on the translation of the book *Daily Reflections* into Ukrainian.

Our A.A. magazine, *Wellspring (Dzherelo)*, is published twice a year and is distributed mostly among A.A. groups and A.A. members in Ukraine. At the last Conference, it was decided to publish the *Dzherelo* only in Ukrainian.

Over the past two years, much work has been done to produce audio and three video clips to inform the public about A.A. These videos are broadcast as free public service announcements on TV and radio (FM stations).

Now we can only carry A.A.’s message to the prison in Drohobych, in Western Ukraine. All other prisons are closed to A.A.

We interact with the A.A. service structures in Poland, the European office in the UK and the GSO in New York. Often (after the Covid-19 lockdown) members of our national and regional service structures regularly take part in service conferences and conventions in neighboring countries.

As mentioned earlier, our international delegate participated in the 21st European Service Meeting in London, England (via Zoom), in October 2021. The meeting was chaired by our previous international delegate.

*Oleksandr S.*

**Uruguay:** It is a pleasure and a blessing to be able to share some updated information about our Fellowship. Our GSO assists approximately 140 groups in 19 areas, which are organized into four regions. We also have eight virtual groups: three that meet through Zoom, three via Skype and two via WhatsApp. We estimate that about 3,000 members attend A.A. meetings in Uruguay.

We are a non-profit foundation and are required by the government to present certain documents after they are reviewed and signed by legal advisors. Our foundation has legal personhood, which brings responsibilities vis-a-vis the state.

We now have external advisors who work on our finances, such as our accountant, who is certified to present balance sheets and account statements with the proper signatures and certifications.

In order to operate, we rely on a trustee in charge of the office, who interacts with a paid administrative assistant to carry out all office tasks. This position is currently vacant and we are actively looking for a candidate.

For the time being, we have invited an A.A. member, who has graciously accepted to do some interim secretarial work at GSO. When the service was not being covered by the office trustee, the board organized the work so that two of our trustees would handle all necessary activities. Our GSO email receives all manner of requests for help, which are directed to the appropriate service level for an answer.

Our GSO offices are rented and that cost — as well as supplies, taxes and the salary of our administrative assistant — are

covered through our Seventh Tradition contributions. We receive suggestions and recommendations as well. We are also helped by the sale of A.A. literature and our magazine *El Triángulo*, which contains varied information and sharing from the Fellowship. This publication is printed four times a year, with a print run of 600 copies.

Our GSO is open to the public and also hosts meetings for various committees and boards. It is also the place where many gifts and various items representing the Fellowship and its history are housed. The office also stores our literature stock, which is organized for sale and distribution. Likewise, our magazine *El Triángulo* gathers its editorial committee and hosts various other meetings at the office. Expenses that allow the GSB to participate, through its trustees, in various forms of service are also covered. Nowadays we have a prudent reserve that equals eight-and-a-half months of operating expenses.

We have communicated the fact that we are unable to defray the costs of registering our world service delegate at the WSM. We could, at most, cover a portion of this sum.

We are currently able to print literature in our country, with the help of Argentina and their assistance in procuring the necessary authorization from AAWS.

*Daniel G.*

## Venezuela

General overview of the A.A. service structure in Venezuela:

Areas: 27

Regions: 4

Territories: 2

### Current statistics:

Number of areas: 27

Number of districts: 11

Number of groups: 172

Number of active delegates: 17

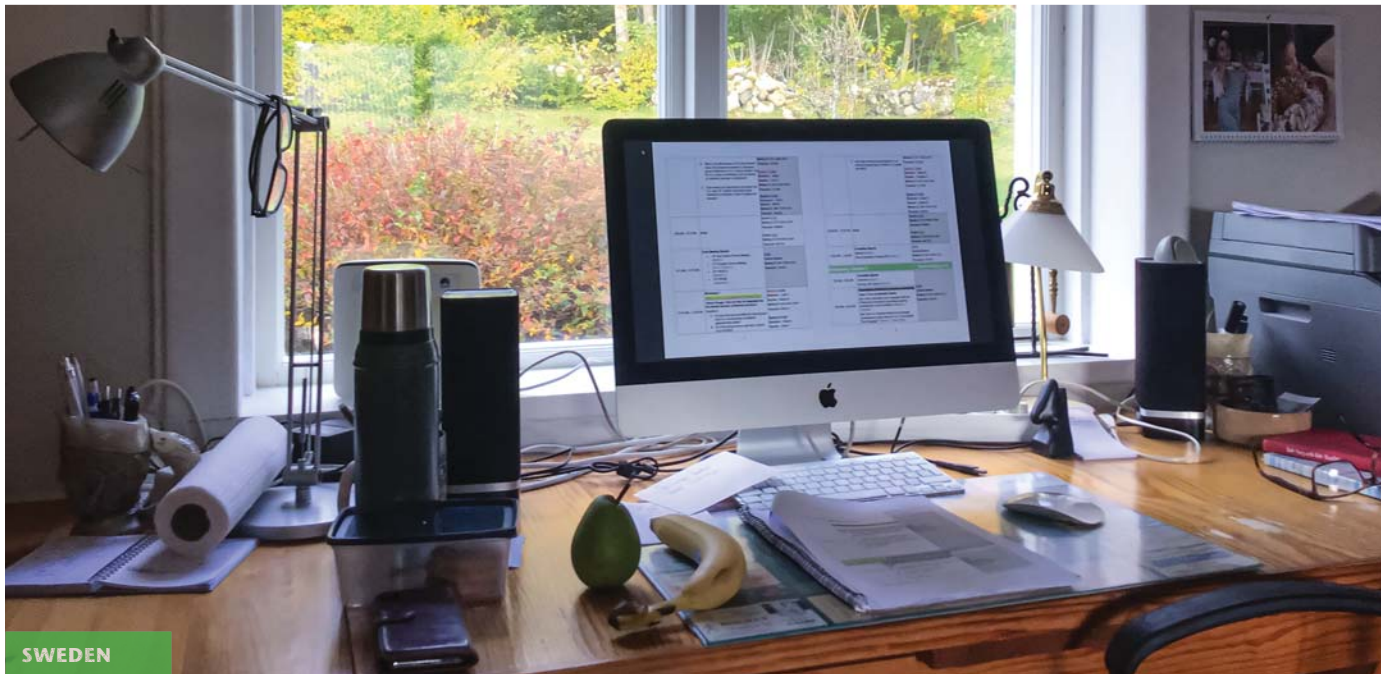
Total membership: 2,400

### Highlights:

1. Reopening of the General Service Office in March 2021.
2. Restructuring of the Board of Trustees.
3. We appointed three Class A trustees.
4. We have maintained our PI efforts on social media.
5. We celebrated our 36th and 37th Conferences online in 2021, while our 38th in 2022 was a hybrid event.
6. We are organizing the VII National Convention — Táchira 2022.
7. The board is visiting all regions.
8. We are constantly motivating groups that had closed due to the pandemic to reopen.
9. We are also motivating them to provide the necessary contributions to keep our office active.
10. Printing of *Gratitud* magazine.

*Sergio V.*

# Committee Reports



## Agenda

The committee reviewed the Composition, Scope and Procedure and made no changes.

The committee recommended the following theme for the 28th World Service Meeting: “The Three Legacies in the Digital Era: Our Great Responsibility to the Alcoholic Being Born Today.”

The committee recommended that the following presentation/discussion topics be included on the agenda for the 28th World Service Meeting:

1. Are Our Groups and GSOs Doing Everything We Can to Reach the Still-Suffering Alcoholic in Our Communities?
  - a. Is our structure prepared to face the change to digital?
  - b. This shows the importance of regular review and inventory at all levels
  - c. How to reach young people
2. Paths to Embrace the New
  - a. A.A. in a virtual world
  - b. Finding balance between innovations and traditions
3. Home Group: Action and Service Derived from Gratitude
  - a. Gratitude in action at the grass roots level is enhanced by having a home group
  - b. The home group: the beginning of service
  - c. Are we encouraging newcomers to serve by letting them know that they will share tasks with other A.A. members?
4. To Serve — A Debt of Gratitude
  - a. A.A. saved my life: how do I give back to that which was so freely given to me?

- b. Expressing our gratitude through service
  - c. How to choose the right service for me. Is it what I like to do or am good at? Or, will it help me grow as a person?
5. Diversity In A.A.: Our Heritage of Inclusion
  - a. Anonymity as a spiritual principle — we are all equal in A.A.
  - b. Are we truly inclusive with atheists and agnostics?
  - c. How can groups help alcoholics with mental disorders and stay safe for everyone?
6. Country-to-Country Sponsorship
  - a. Face-to-face sponsorship
  - b. Online sponsorship
  - c. Hybrid sponsorship

The committee recommended that the following workshop topics be included on the agenda for the 28th World Service Meeting:

1. Are Our Groups Really Practicing the Traditions?
2. Seventh Tradition: Self-Supporting in the Digital Era
3. Online Groups in the World: Here to Stay

The committee elected Frank G. of South Africa as chairperson and Julienne L.L. of Norway as alternate chairperson.

## Literature/Publishing

The chair welcomed the committee members and noted that the second-term delegate from Iceland was included in the master 27 WSM Literature/Publishing Committee but not in



the committee background roster. The delegate was not present at the meeting.

The committee reviewed the Composition, Scope and Procedure and made no changes.

The committee accepted the AAWS Report on the International Literature Fund regarding the fund and the disbursement of funds with the following suggestions for the International Literature Fund Contribution Report:

- That Dutch/Flemish-speaking Belgium's contributions be reflected as one country with two languages: Dutch and Flemish. Currently, the report shows two separate funds.
- Switzerland's contributions should appropriately be included in the contributions under German-speaking Europe and French-speaking Europe, not as a separate country.
- That future reports include past ILF contributions since the fund's inception, as reported in the 26th WSM.
- That India's recent contributions to ILF be clarified. Contributions were sent and not reflected on the ILF report.

The committee was made aware of the AAWS service piece SMF-219 "The International Literature Fund" and encouraged to use it or adapt it to help raise awareness of the ILF.

The committee discussed the relevance of the suggestion made by the 26th WSM that:

" ... AAWS gather shared experience on creating e-books and making literature available online with proper copyright protections in place. The committee discussed that it would be helpful to develop a service piece that would provide this shared experience."

And it agreed that the information provided did not address the request. A service piece that outlines the mechanics of electronic literature, methods to produce e-books, how to produce read-only online materials, audio streaming, and protection against the illegal distribution of electronic literature is essential. The committee reiterated the 26th WSM request and looks forward to hearing from the General Service Office of U.S./Canada with an update on the request.

To address the issues related to electronic literature, production, licenses, etc., the committee also suggested that AAWS consider the idea of utilizing a centralized vendor for electronic literature for all languages and that it be administered by AAWS.

The committee discussed the broad concerns and frustrations with the AAWS licensing delays and lack of communication and are unclear as to the status of requests for permissions and licenses, in addition to information on electronic production methods. However, they expressed high expectations with upcoming changes that are being implemented to expedite and clarify the translation and licensing processes.

### Sharing on the Following Topics Related to A.A. Literature:

#### a) *Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic — contributions vs. literature sales to support services*

The committee members shared widely on contributions versus literature sales to support services during pandemic times and in regular times. The delegate from Greece started the conversation sharing about the Greece A.A. structure's difficulties during the health crisis.

- Although some countries struggle with decisions to direct contributions to support literature or services, many delegates expressed that for their structure's group conscience, the money "belongs to A.A.," therefore, income from literature sales and member contributions is spent where it is needed.
- In terms of self-support, while some countries experienced a significant drop in literature sales during Covid-19 due to the closing of in-person meetings, several countries saw an increase in group and individual contributions.
- Some A.A. structures shared experiences overcoming the challenges of having a print-based business model by switching from inventory-based practices to a print-on-demand business model, with the additional benefit of making literature changes in a more timely manner.
- During the difficult pandemic times, some print-based countries negotiated better printing deals with vendors.
- As meetings turned virtual, some structures found that their local banks had difficulties processing electronic transactions thus impacting their Fellowship contributions.



- Other A.A. structures with easier access to online transactions found creative ways to make contributions accessible for the members without Internet access by developing a Birthday Plan and using alternative methods for contributions.
- Due to anonymity issues, Switzerland, a French-speaking Europe country, have been experiencing challenges setting up an online store. A.A. literature sales are currently made through in-person meetings and the Central Office.
- Many delegates agreed that, in their experience, the problem lies in the lack of clear communication, not in the lack of funds. Self-support pamphlets and clear finance reports resulted in trust and greater response in the Seventh Tradition basket.
- Another outside issue, unrelated to Covid-19, is the internal political divisions inside some countries and that impact contributions and literature sales. The Ireland delegate offered a sharing on how his country's A.A. structure has a unified structure for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland that is aligned with four provinces and intergroup offices, overcoming political and geographical borders, thus sustaining A.A. unity.

b) *Importance of keeping message relevant — how is literature utilized and updated/refreshed*

Many delegates offered local experiences with the use of literature. A pamphlet on Cooperation with the Professional Community is widely used in India and across many regions and is helpful to reach out to the friends of A.A.

c) *Translations of AAWS/Grapevine literature, locally produced A.A. literature*

Committee members shared that their structures primarily use AAWS-licensed literature, but also about efforts to produce local A.A. literature based upon recommendations of each A.A. structure's conscience as expressed by their Conference. Sometimes these efforts cross language barriers unique to one structure, such as India, with 14 languages. India's delegate shared on a recent locally produced and conference-approved book written by a Class A member, who, as a physician, offered a point of view on alcoholism that members from India's A.A. structure found helpful.

The French-speaking Europe delegate shared that a recent publication of a book with a selection of quotes from A.A. literature for meeting moderators to set up meeting topics has been well received by the Fellowship. She also shared on the plans to produce a pamphlet with stories written by A.A. members in uniform, e.g., police officers and firefighters.

d) *Transition away from traditional print media — benefits of e-books and audiobooks*

Electronic literature distribution deeply affected Greece's A.A. literature sales during Covid-19. Japan also saw their literature sales decrease due to the closing of meetings and events, and that Japan is a print-centric society. Other countries, like Venezuela, which is print-based, do not have experience with electronic literature.

For countries like Ukraine, the availability of e-books and audiobooks did not impact the sales of A.A. literature, possibly because printed literature prices are not costly.

Committee members agreed on the need for more information on how to produce digital literature, including PDF format, HTML, audio platforms, and online read-only to satisfy an emerging demand.

e) *Future trends of national "meeting-in-print" magazines*

The New Zealand delegate shared that after some painful discussion, their structure agreed to cancel the publication of their national "meeting-in-print" magazine. Currently, their website posts the magazine's past articles. Instead, the A.A. New Zealand office is currently focused on producing a corrections bulletin with stories written by alcoholics who are incarcerated and that is well regarded by the Fellowship.

Some delegates reported that their national magazine is available digitally by subscription. But the majority of delegates shared that the current "meeting-in-print" magazines are seen as valuable and being produced by their structures.

The chair welcomed committee members on the second day of deliberations and mentioned that the service pieces from AAWS, "Country-to-Country Sponsorship: Carrying the A.A. Message Worldwide" (F-168), and "A.A. Around the Globe" (SMF-165) are available.

The chair invited committee members to share on their A.A. structure's experiences producing and distributing A.A. videos, local A.A. magazines, as well as shared experience on translations, an experience specifically requested by Greece's delegate.

**On A.A. Videos:**

- Japan's delegate shared that because some confusion on the distinction between privacy and anonymity, his structure does not have a wide distribution and use of A.A. videos.
- New Zealand's delegate shared that expenses to produce Public Information videos are among the highest in his structure budget but that the benefits offset the cost. The public response is very good due to the quality and the wide distribution.
- Although the AAWS video "Hope" is posted on the Russian A.A. website, locally produced videos by A.A. members are widely distributed and appreciated. Also, the structure uses non-A.A. Russian television shows that describe how alcoholics found the solution of the problem of alcoholism in A.A.
- India's delegate recalled the more than 200,000 calls to India's A.A. central office in 2013 after the mention of A.A. made by a local celebrity on national TV.
- Ukraine's delegate shared that his structure also used a nonalcoholic actor on a video to carry the A.A. message, and that it is used by their local TV stations along with two animation videos.
- In Venezuela, A.A.'s structure sought help from friends of A.A. professionals in the media as well as journalists and physicians to produce videos for Public Information

that have been distributed through social media and YouTube channels with great reception. A bonus benefit of these relationships with these friends of A.A. is that those people are now candidates to be the Venezuela structure's Class A trustees.

### On Translation:

Regarding translation of A.A. literature, most of the delegate members of the committee shared that having skilled A.A. members working on volunteer basis keeps the translation close to the particular cultural considerations of each country. They noted that experiences with non-A.A. professional translators led to poor results. Delegates agreed that knowing A.A. program was essential.

The translation process is similar in each country, where a committee is involved, and each member is assigned a chapter or a portion of the book or pamphlet to be translated. The committee process allows everyone to revise each other's work which sometimes lengthens the time of production but, as delegates shared, the discussions around the language to convey the A.A. message and understanding regional language use are important. But a delegate noted that because time concerns his structure is currently considering the hiring of professional translators.

A delegate from South Africa shared that her structure translation process is bound to the conditions of AAWS to appoint a professional translator and would have in place a signed contract with any AAWS literature being translated.

Translation efforts are in many cases directed to the translation of languages other than English. India's A.A. structure has completed translations of A.A. literature into 21 languages by nonpaid, skilled A.A. members that are part of seven regional committees who coordinate the process.

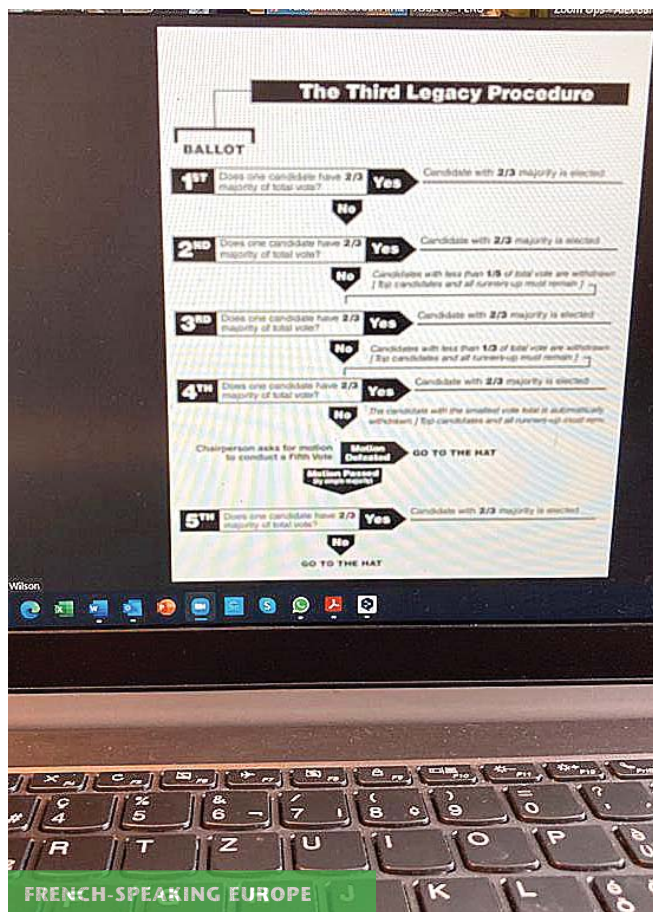
Argentina's A.A. structure is making efforts to reach out to alcoholics in remote communities by translating A.A. pamphlets into indigenous languages, using A.A. members who speak the language and are knowledgeable in A.A. vocabulary.

### A.A. Magazines:

Many delegates indicated that one of the major challenges for local A.A. magazines was to get enough stories to keep the content relevant and to be self-supporting through subscriptions to cover print costs. The pandemic also impacted the sustainability of many magazines that could not be entirely self-supporting. In most of the countries the editorial and production of the local magazines was in the hands of skilled A.A. members on unpaid basis.

The majority of the local magazines are print-based, with the exception of India's structure, which turned their local magazine into online-only during the pandemic, returning to print after the health crisis.

The committee elected Marie-Paule M. of French-speaking Europe as chairperson and Leonor P. of Portugal as alternate chairperson.



## Policy/Admissions/Finance

The committee reviewed the Composition, Scope and Procedure and recommended that Procedure 1, which currently reads:

1. The Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee will meet during each World Service Meeting.

Be changed to:

1. The Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee will meet during each World Service Meeting. The committee will also meet online prior to the World Service Meeting to discuss the admittance of any country, or grouping of countries, applying for admission in keeping with the "Qualifications for Countries Participating in the World Service Meeting."

The committee reviewed requests for participation at the 27th World Service Meeting.

### Mongolia:

The committee approved Mongolia's request for participation at the 27th World Service Meeting.

### Middle East Regional

#### Committee of A.A. (MERCAA):

The committee discussed the MERCAA request for participation at the 27th World Service Meeting. The committee appreciated MERCAA's application but felt that based upon the current qualification guidelines and the information shared by the entity, MERCAA would



not qualify at this time but encourages application in the future.

**A.A. Regional Committee of CIS-Baltic (AARCISB):**

The committee appreciated AARCISB's desire to be part of the WSM but agreed that it did not meet the qualifications based on the information received. The committee noted the benefits of greater participation at zonal meetings for emerging structures.

The committee reviewed the qualifications for countries participating in the World Service Meeting and recognized the need to clarify wording and establish a deadline for countries/groupings of countries applying for participation to the WSM.

The committee recommended that Item 1, which currently reads:

1. It is desirable for each participating country, or zone, to send two delegates to each World Service Meeting, but there will be no denial of the attendance of one delegate only.

Be changed to read:

1. It is desirable for each participating country (or local groupings of countries or structures that have come together through their individual and collective country group conscience to serve A.A. in their countries or for the purpose of participating in the WSM) to send two delegates to each World Service Meeting, but there will be no denial of the attendance of one delegate only.

The committee recommended that Item 2, which currently reads:

2. The two delegates from a country, or zone, may both be members of A.A., or one may be an A.A. member and the other a nonalcoholic member of the General Service Board, General Service Committee, General Service Office, or the equivalent thereof in that country.

Be changed to read:

2. The two delegates from a country, or groupings of countries, may both be members of A.A., or one may be an A.A. member and the other a nonalcoholic member of the General Service Board, General Service Committee, General Service Office, or the equivalent thereof in that country.

The committee recommended that Item 3, which currently reads:

3. Zones consisting of three or more countries may send not more than two delegates to represent jointly all countries in that zone, and who should report back to the membership in all those countries.

Be changed to read:

3. Groupings of countries consisting of two or more countries (not currently represented at the World Service Meeting) may send not more than two delegates to represent jointly all countries in that set of countries and those delegates should report back to the membership in all those countries.

The committee recommended that Item 6, which currently reads:

6. Before the due date for the election of World Service delegates, the secretary of the World Service Meeting will notify each country on the policy regarding the representation and the financial responsibility for countries participating in the World Service Meeting; and will inquire whether or not it wishes to participate in the forthcoming World Service Meeting and intends to fulfill the delegates' commitment and financial responsibility. If this commitment should be impossible, the Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee will consider each situation individually.

Be changed to read:

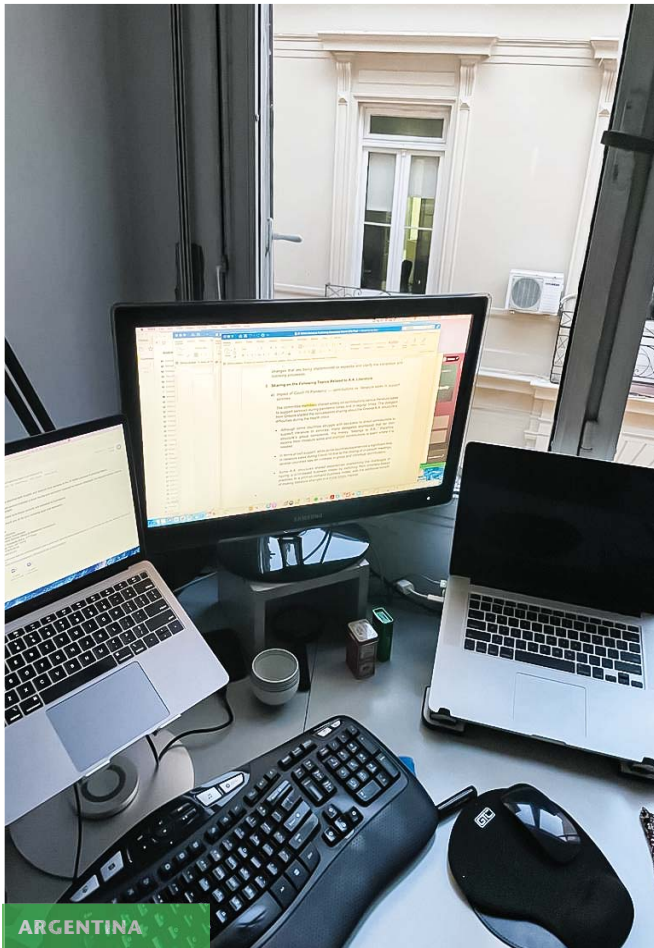
6. Before the due date for the election of World Service delegates, the secretary of the World Service Meeting will notify each country on the policy regarding the representation and the financial responsibility for countries participating in the World Service Meeting; and will inquire whether or not it wishes to participate in the forthcoming World Service Meeting and intends to fulfill the delegates' commitment and financial responsibility. If this commitment should be impossible, the Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee will consider each situation individually. The World Service Meeting Fund (which is maintained by A.A. World Services but is under the purview of the WSM Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee) was established in 2018 to provide financial assistance to countries that request funding and to support the World Service Meeting.

The committee recommended that Item 7, which currently reads:

7. It is recommended that no standardized form for membership in the World Service Meeting be developed and the procedures be as follows: (a) The requirements for new countries to participate in World Service Meeting remain as they have been: that there be an operating general service board and/or literature distribution center and, in addition, preferably have attended zonal meetings; (b) Application approved by the Fellowship of the new country be made to the General Service Office in New York, which will forward the application and background to the World Service Meeting Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee; (c) Membership of the applying country be advised if the application is approved by 2/3 vote of committee; (d) In between World Service Meetings, the committee may vote on the request for participation using available communications technology; (e) New members be seated the next meeting following approval.

Be changed to read:

7. It is recommended that no standardized form for membership in the World Service Meeting be developed and the procedures be as follows: (a) The requirements for new countries to participate in World Service Meeting remain as they have been: that there be an operating general service board and/or literature distribution center and, in addition, preferably have attended their respec-



tive global zonal meetings; (b) Application approved by the Fellowship of the new country (or grouping of countries/structures) be forwarded by May 1 of the WSM year to the General Service Office in New York, which will forward the application and background to the World Service Meeting Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee as it is comprised by June 15; (c) Membership of the applying country be advised if the application is approved by 2/3 vote of committee; (d) In between World Service Meetings, the committee may vote on the request for participation using available online methods; (e) New members be seated the next meeting following approval.

The committee suggested that in the qualifications for countries participating in the World Service Meeting, the second paragraph in Item 2 be numbered Item 3 and that the subsequent item numbers be renumbered accordingly. (Example: Item 3 will now be labeled Item 4, etc.)

The committee reviewed the qualifications for World Service Meeting Delegates and suggested that the staff secretary make an editorial update to Item 2 changing the wording "he/she" to the word "delegates." The committee recommended that Item 3, which currently reads:

3. Delegates should have a working knowledge of English or Spanish and, if they are A.A. members, it is desirable that they have at least five years current unbroken sobriety in A.A.

The need for an interpreter can impede the ability of the delegate to fully participate in all aspects of the World Service Meeting. Countries that need an interpreter should consider the implications of the expense of translation to the World Service Meeting.

Be changed to read:

3. Delegates should have a working knowledge of English or Spanish and, if they are A.A. members, it is desirable that they have at least five years current unbroken sobriety in A.A.

Countries that have no WSM delegate available with working knowledge of English or Spanish may choose to send an interpreter for that delegate at the expense of the delegate country.

The committee reviewed the preliminary budget of the 27th World Service Meeting and an AAWS report on the history of World Service Meeting expenses and delegate fees. The committee discussed the longtime history of financial responsibility that the General Service Board U.S./Canada has underwritten for the WSM. The committee suggested that AAWS use more direct and clear wording in the reporting document noting what costs have been shouldered by the U.S./Canada General Service Board. The committee also suggested that the reporting outlining specific expenses of the World Service Meeting be reported in more detail in individual line items.

In the spirit of the Self-Support as outlined in A.A.'s Tradition Seven, the committee recommended that the delegate fee be increased to \$2,000 for the 28th WSM.

*Note: At the first WSM held in 1969, the delegate fee was US\$200. The highest WSM Delegate fee was US\$2,900 at the 15th WSM in 1998.*

The committee recognized the vital importance of the World Service Meeting in carrying the A.A. message around the world. Acknowledging the challenges with expenses for the WSM, the committee suggested that the Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee at the 27th World Service Meeting offer suggestions to help strive to make the World Service Meeting more self-supporting. Suggestions for consideration offered by this committee are:

- To raise awareness of the importance of the World Service Meeting in carrying the A.A. message;
- To review World Service Meeting income and expenses, with more detailed information provided to the countries, which could also be made available in the WSM *Final Report*;
- To encourage countries that are able to contribute additional funds above the delegate fee to the World Service Meeting Fund;
- To ensure countries understand the existence of the WSM Fund, which was developed in 2018. The WSM Fund was established to provide financial assistance to countries that request funding and to support the WSM. The WSM Fund is maintained and administered by A.A. World Services under the purview of the World Service Meeting Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee;
- That the GSO U.S./Canada communicate with countries about the relationship between WSM expenses, del-

delegate fees, and country contributions to the WSM to ensure maximum participation at the meeting.

The committee recommended that the 28th World Service Meeting take place in New York, October 27-31, 2024, in keeping with the rotation.

The committee elected Justin T. of Great Britain as chairperson and Elena S. of Lithuania as alternate chairperson.

## Working with Others

The elected chairperson, Emre A., was unable to attend the Working with Others Committee meetings and the committee elected Tadeusz C. to serve as chairperson for the 27th World Service Meeting by a plurality vote.

The committee reviewed the Composition, Scope and Procedures and made no changes.

### Sharing on the Following Topics:

#### A. Public Information

##### 1. How are you engaging the public/future members in today's environment?

As members we are anonymous not invisible. Some delegates shared that they engage local radio, television and newspapers to air and to include community service announcements for general public messaging. It is important for members to focus on sharing the A.A. message with local neighbors and family contacts.

Several delegates reported carrying the message into facilities and institutions that collaborate with us.

One delegate country's recent Conference approved carrying the message four times a year specifically by distributing literature into institutions that work with young people. The same country is working nationwide on a new service workbook.

A board of one country is focused on educating members on central service at the group, district, and regional levels. It is important that each member in service makes their way through the different service positions at each level. It is found this generates more of a willingness to continue to serve.

Build a solid reputation about Alcoholics Anonymous. Recently, a capital city board named A.A. as a fundamental institution helping those with addiction into recovery. We are seeking to inspire members to serve with the language of love.

The local heartbeat of service is helped when local community centers host meetings about A.A. with the general public. Young student outreach in local schools can lead to the parents and extended family outreach. A country's Class A trustee, a psychologist, has been instrumental in ensuring that A.A. is present at school seminars.

Several countries admitted much of this service work slowed down during the pandemic. But the service is coming back, and they are engaging in face-to-face meetings. The virtual meetings have added an effective and easy method of meeting with the general public.

One committee member shared that in their country the local newspaper is still a key avenue of public PI outreach. All homes receive and read the local newspaper and standard PI messaging is still effective sharing — "if you have a problem, we have a solution."

The importance of engaging young people in service is critical because they can bring new vision, ideas, and outreach on communication channels like social media. Encourage, don't discourage new ideas.

Ask professionals to come to open A.A. meetings. Share about our proven method but remain humble that we are not the only solution.

A delegate shared on the creation of an updated public leaflet with contacts for all groups and that a dedicated website provides A.A. information. A well-made documentary on Czech and Slovak A.A. was aired on Slovak television.

##### 2. How do local A.A. groups collaborate with A.A. groups across national borders? What is the role of online meetings?

A delegate shared about two or three recently held border meetings. These meetings had been approved by the different countries' service structures. It has helped strengthen the regional relationship building among countries.

Digital meetings online have strengthened the ability of groups miles apart to exchange speakers. Allows for cross-country meetings.

A member shared that the virtual meetings are useful but not a strong part of the recovery process in their country. In-person meetings are more effective. This country has found that instead of bringing remote communities





into their own structure's meetings virtually, that remote groups find it better to attend a closer country's in-person area meeting. The closer country has played the role of a "sponsor" to those remote groups effectively.

Online communities are using WhatsApp as a great resource for communicating the message.

A special forum was held among Argentina, Chile, Canada and the U.S. This event, called the "North/South Connections Virtual Special Forum — A.A. in Remote Communities," brought isolated members from remote communities together through an online forum.

One delegate shared how online meetings had opened their borders. The groups are now hosting a hybrid format and becoming much more of an international group. This allows for more developed structures to help those countries with less developed structures.

A member shared that online meetings have exploded in their country, but the structure has not given them much importance. Some share that in-person groups are better, but these online groups are getting more popular. The question this country is asking is how can we strengthen our online groups?

There are extraordinarily good relations with Slovakia, there are many Czechs visiting Slovak meetings and other events, and vice versa, especially in the border regions.

### 3. *Share strategies to keep members active in service*

Members should consider never dampening a trusted servant's enthusiasm. Get them excited about participating and train them on how to do it. If they are not ready, for example, to do a PI presentation, share with them that we want to practice first and help them practice.

Show members how to be committed servants. It might be exciting to get elected or appointed but show them how to fulfill the responsibility. That this service is strengthening their recovery. Transmit the message to others that each service position needs an active A.A. member for it to work.

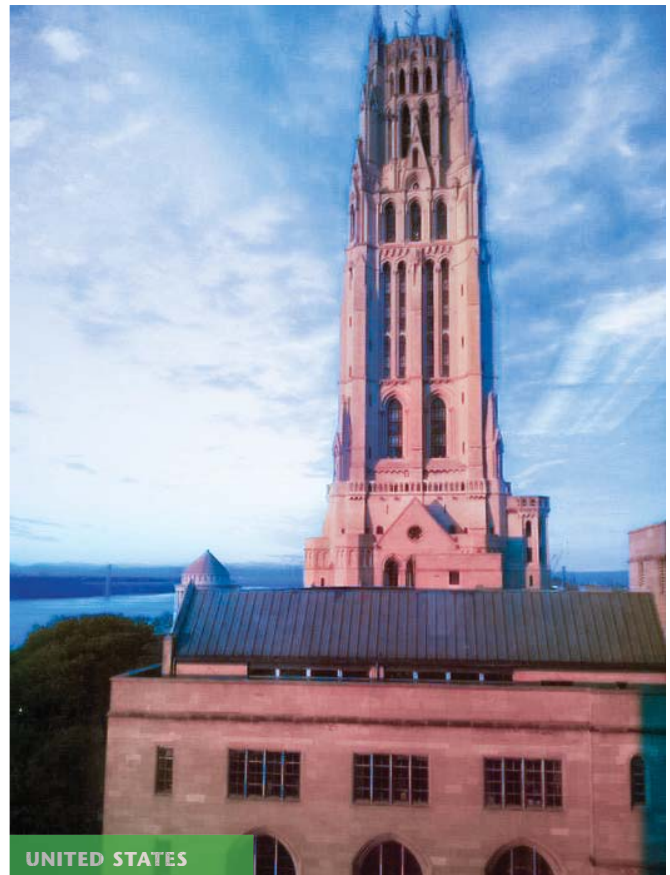
A member shared that a sponsor guided them to serve with a smile or do not serve at all. It also might be important to rise through the service ranks. Others shared that they started in service very early in their recovery and it helped them tremendously. A sentiment shared is that we want others to experience the joy, happiness and gratitude for service rendered.

A member reminded all that solid descriptions of service positions helps those standing for elected or appointed positions to understand their responsibilities and delegated authority. What is expected of them to do.

A member shared that they contact people who come to their GSC, where they see first-hand which commission (committee) does what, and that they have been quite successful in attracting new commission members with this strategy.

### 4. *Accessibility of the A.A. message to underserved communities*

One delegate shared that this is an area of service that their country needs to re-engage. The main underserved



population right now is in correctional institutions. They used to know how to enter and provide service to the members inside, but the pandemic is requiring them to focus on reactivation of this service.

A delegate shared that service needs to be provided to young people, doctors, psychologists, civil servants, and child's rights specialists in major cities and municipal districts. We have much work to do to attract and improve communications with professionals and the public sector.

One country shared about what they called tag-alongs. Some 50-60 members of A.A. go out to remote communities, meeting them where they are. The servants provide a bar code application that shows where A.A. meetings are in person and online. The communities not only come to hear us share about A.A., but they see how we in A.A. act in the community.

Most countries concluded that we have not done enough. Remote communities are hard to access and not many A.A.s are willing to travel. It is agreed that online, and telephone meetings have opened new doors.

A key message carried is that the pandemic has shown us who we are not reaching. Older members, those with language barriers. Members with physical or mental limitations, members with small children. There are remote communities right in the middle of our big cities. Long-term care facilities have members who were strong participants in A.A. and now they are coming back to the online meetings that have opened. One member shared

that even famous people have challenges when A.A. members do not know how to treat them as any other person with a problem with alcohol.

Not all countries have Internet connections. Not all members are able to connect to A.A. in this virtual way. It is important to not leave anyone behind.

## **B. Cooperation with the Professional Community:**

1. Luncheon formats and utilizing resources including the YouTube video *"The Cochrane Report Does Alcoholics Anonymous Work?"* to engage professionals; *"A.A. Professionals Awareness Luncheon."*

All country delegates agreed that this video is an amazing message for professionals. They would like to have this video or a transcription of this video to be able to translate it into various languages. It was shared that you can go to YouTube settings for the video and turn on closed captions to auto-generate and translate it into many languages.

Several countries are using this video at professional luncheons effectively.

Many countries have these types of professional outreach sessions.

2. *How do you prepare members to carry the message to professionals?*

Some delegates shared that it is well established that older members sponsor and train younger members on how to carry the message of A.A. to professionals.

Other delegates shared that this is a pending question in their structure, and they need to learn more about how to do this work.

Practical experience was shared by one delegate where they have developed a calendar of service work that spans 40 weeks of the year breaking the work down by weekly actions. Each week is focused on outreach to a certain professional population such as clerical professionals, legal professionals, or school systems.

Other countries attempt to work on ensuring that each district level has an active PI Committee or CPC Committee with many members to do the service work. Servants who have done the work should accompany the new members.

3. *Developing friends of A.A. (potential Class A nonalcoholic trustees)*

Develop relationships with friends of A.A. from many diverse professional fields by attraction to the program and service. Several countries use a two-channel approach of outreach to professionals. A board level approach and a Fellowship level of approach. Inviting potential future Class A candidates to local events is a key strategy.

Ensure the program includes testimonials from members providing insight into the powerful solution the A.A. program offers. Ensure that the Class A candidates understand they can be our voice at the public level without having to maintain anonymity.

Some delegates shared that it is important to distribute program literature or digital material resources to the professionals at these events. It was noted that if you are inviting legal or corrections professionals, consider having a breakfast event as midday events are not well attended.

One delegate acknowledged that a recent addition of a Class A trustee in the field of journalism and social media networks has helped in developing strong communication channels in keeping with the Traditions.

It was reiterated that we should use these professionals once we have them on the board. That there have been complaints by some Class A trustees, that their experience was not being used effectively. While other delegates shared that we work our trustees too hard, and they cannot make a commitment that fits into their professional and personal life.

Sharing from one member highlighted that one of their Class A trustees had a podcast that focused on the



POLAND

Twelve Steps. Listening to the podcast was a great way to understand this candidate's knowledge of the program's principles.

One delegate shared that in their country the professionals' opinion about A.A. is strongly against the idea of our spiritual program that includes the mention of God. This is a challenge they face in working with and getting professionals to serve. Professionals in their country prefer to refer people to other programs of recovery that do not have this spiritual focus. It was shared that this is a challenge that can be overcome.

Trustees should be assigned a sponsor into the program to help with their training.

A delegate shared that we could use the experience of other countries that have been successful in onboarding Class A trustees.

### **C. Carry the Message into Institutions (Hospitals, Rehabilitation, Treatment Centers, and Jails) and to Homebound Members**

#### *1. How are these efforts coordinated through the structure at the group, intergroup, district and area level?*

Delegates shared that different levels of the service structure manage carrying the message depending on the country and region. For example, in some regions the area manages outreach to the prisons while the local districts manage outreach to the jails. In other areas intergroups or central offices perform this service.

The U.S./Canada general service structure provides services at the national level such as the *Sharing from Behind the Walls* newsletter and the Corrections Correspondence Service (CCS).

In many countries local members perform outreach to the public and private institutions. It is important to understand the guidelines or rules of the institution and build relationships with them to ensure that the A.A. message can be effectively carried.

Country delegates shared that due to the pandemic, corrections work has slowed down for many. Treatment and other types of institutions have allowed A.A. to return more quickly.

A delegate shared that they have effectively implemented a designated week to focus a concerted annual effort to go into hospitals, treatment centers and rehabilitation centers. It was shared that sometimes doctors are not as receptive, but the nurse professionals are more open to working with A.A.

#### *2. What new approaches are in use?*

A delegate shared that a new local outreach committee has developed in some areas called the "Meetings to Go." The facilities are not asking for a public information or cooperation with the professional community presentation or an informational A.A. meeting. There is a shift to have local members focus the service on taking participants in the facility to their first A.A. meeting.

As the pandemic subsides a delegate shared that their country is focusing on getting back to the basics of en-

suring that service work is being performed within the structure as outlined in the Service Manual.

A delegate is seeking to reinstate a program of inviting a past trustee from the U.S., a judge, to come and speak to local professionals in their country.

A new service of online sponsorship communication has successful results for members in correctional institutions in one country.

A delegate shared that they reached out to universities to help incorporate a teacher training course on alcohol abuse being a morbidity health problem.

A recent "Woodstock type" festival was the site of an A.A. public information tent. The event attracts 500,000 visitors. Local A.A. members held informational meetings, provided literature, and even held some open A.A. meetings. New doors seem to be opening because of this event. Of course, there were concerns about anonymity discussed prior to deciding to participate.

#### *3. Preparing members to do various types of Twelve Step work; are there requirements?*

The delegates shared a few ideas on how to best train members:

- Introduce them to all parts of A.A., Steps, Traditions, and Concepts.
- Each person should be well versed in practicing the program.
- Train them on how to be the first person to accompany a potential member from an institution to A.A.
- Understand the specific service being asked to be performed. Answering a phone hotline is different than performing a PI presentation.
- Ensure that the A.A. members meet the service position time requirements.
- Understand how to answer unique questions or handle unique situations that might arise performing the service.

### **D. Experience and Impact of Online Groups**

A delegate shared that their country has 12 online groups that have asked to be included in the service structure and to belong to a district. Now they can be elected to service positions. Was not a unanimous vote.

The pandemic forced many A.A. groups and members to move to the Internet, WhatsApp and other online platforms. It has led to more communication about A.A. to potential members.

A delegate reiterated that the pandemic experience has allowed us to see who is missing from the rooms and who is now able to participate more effectively online.

A delegate shared that new service opportunities arose with those with technical abilities being able to support homebound or those with technical barriers to get connected via online groups.

Most country delegates agreed or shared that online and hybrid meetings are here to stay, and we need to make room for their participation in the service structure.

The committee elected Marita R. of the United States as chairperson, and Lars D. of Sweden as alternate chairperson.



# Workshop Reports



## Workshop I

### How to Encourage the Seventh Tradition in the Time of a Pandemic/Social Isolation at Each Level of the Structure.

Workshop discussions were informed by the following questions:

#### 1. What are the barriers for members in contributing to their groups and service entities?

*Some of the main barriers:* lower attendance, technology issues, lack of transparency with online groups, lack of integration of online groups, lack of communication, information, language barriers, unwillingness, fear of online banking and even a lack of a bank account for virtual groups and, initially, less-than-perfect transparency in reporting of funds due to use of personal bank accounts.

The lockdown brought a financial crash in homes and therefore in A.A., but we are starting to rise once again.

Many groups closed and their cash flow dried up. Groups needed to pause and figure out how to fulfill the Seventh Tradition in the new online group world and then help to train group members.

The modern generation is familiar with online banks, which make it easier for people to contribute, but technical expenses often stop people from contributing.

One delegate shared that their government announced that digital tools should be used on business accounts, and that groups could not register A.A. at a government level.

It is accepted that we are entering a cashless world and we will need to adapt further.

Some in-person and online groups still do not contribute outside of their groups, and this is a barrier for the entire structure.

Some countries have seen online groups become the fundamental pillar and leader for contributions recently.

Continued learning about the different ways to make contributions and training others on these methods can help increase contributions.

We can't fixate on the pandemic to justify the lack of contributions; this creates a new type of pandemic.

Countries have mostly adapted and recovered now.

#### 2. What is the effectiveness of the online basket? Have online baskets increased or decreased group contributions to A.A. service entities? Are the A.A. groups contributing or are we leaning on individual members' contributions?

Online basket donations increased during the pandemic; the costs of physical meetings decreased. Contributions were from individuals mostly. One of the issues is the lack of anonymity when contributing in this new way. Some members are ashamed about contributing online to the treasurer, however that job is to be a trusted servant.

Some groups create flyers with contribution codes that they post around in-person meeting rooms and share in the chat during online meetings.

Because of the way donations are handled, some countries are experiencing getting more contributions from individuals than from groups.

Some members might tend to send more contributions than they would typically have dropped in the physical basket.

Members continue to send contributions around their anniversary.

There is a strong sense of understanding regarding the need for contributions, but communication and training might be warranted to ensure everyone knows how and why to contribute, especially as new members arrive.

With a lack of an online group structure the need for contributions is not taken seriously.

Combine the online group with the physical group to create a good group conscience.

Online groups are here to stay, they won't close; the virtual basket will begin to work better with time.

### **3. *Does sharing our experiences and stories on how A.A. uses Seventh Tradition funds help inspire members to contribute in order to support the services?***

Yes, yes, and yes! Spiritual sharing vs. reporting increases the donations. Challenge with online meetings: people don't stay until the announcements, don't do fellowship. We must encourage participation through the Seventh Tradition, and how we communicate that is important. Groups react to stories about where the money goes, and the lives that are saved. It's easy to explain: money in the basket is a chance to save lives. When a need is communicated, the Fellowship supports the need.

When we support our GSO and international funds we can see the growth of A.A. worldwide.

What came across clearly during the workshop was that although we all come from diverse cultures, overall, we have experienced the same problems and in general applied the same solutions.

The best inspiration for supporting the Seventh Tradition is to be clear with the groups.

To preserve Alcoholics Anonymous, we must "touch" the pockets of the members who are in the groups. Sharing our story is the best way to carry the message, and motivates the sharing of contributions.

Members need clear and trustworthy communication about financial reports. This can ensure there is understanding at each level of our structure that it is the responsibility of each member to contribute to the services that effectively support carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

## **Workshop II**

### **Virtual Groups: How Can They Be Integrated into the General Service Conference Structure?**

Workshop discussions were informed by the following questions:

#### **1. *Do your local service entities list online groups and if so, are the groups considered geographically based?***

Most countries indicated that online groups were listed. However the ways in which online groups are listed vary widely with each country developing its own approach based on the needs of the Fellowship and their group conscience. Many countries list online groups so alcoholics who want to can attend them for recovery but at this time listing online groups does necessarily mean they have been accepted into the service structure in that country or region. At least one country felt that most online groups geographically based in their country were listed on their website. Two types of online groups seem to be emerging, groups that are geographically based (either associated with a physical group, or the group's members tend to live in a certain geography, or the group has decided to align with a particular geography) and those that are considered international with no geographic association.

Many geographically based online groups developed from physical meetings that moved to online platforms due to the pandemic; these groups often have GSRs and or intergroup representatives that take part in the service structure. There are many hybrid groups, which are, of course, geographically based. Most recognized that there are also many international online groups that are not a part of any structure but that those groups work. There was clear recognition for many that these groups list geographically and require a personal name for contact records.

A few countries reported having no online groups and some of those are interested in learning more about online groups.

Listing online groups does not necessarily mean that they are included in the local, national or regional service structures but there are a number of countries that have developed different approaches to including online groups in their structure. Some of the approaches include:

- One country created an "Online Committee" at the General Service board level. Online groups may join this Online Committee by electing a GSR; GSRs meet and elect a chair who have the right of participation and vote at the General Service Conference.
- Some online groups connect only at the regional or only at the local level.
- Joining the Online Intergroup of A.A. It was noted that some thought the Online Intergroup of A.A. was a part of the U.S. and Canada service structure; it is not.
- Virtual districts, areas and intergroups.
- Russia includes online geographically based groups in their traditional structure and has a virtual area that consists of groups that are not geographically based.



It seems that many online groups want to be a part of the service structure, to be a part of A.A. as a whole and most, but not all countries, want to incorporate them into their structure but are still exploring a wide variety of ways to carry this out. It was also noted that there is a difference between online groups and online meetings. Many countries want to welcome online groups into the service structure and are hoping to learn from others' experiences as they develop their own experience.

**2. Do online groups have a vote and a voice in your structure?**

As with the listing of online groups, how online groups take part in service structures varies widely. One regional trend appeared with many European countries reporting that they have incorporated online groups into their structures with full participation with both voice and vote.

In some countries online groups have no voice and no vote and, in some countries, online groups may take part at the local intergroup level but not at the Conference. In some smaller structures groups participate at the Conference directly and again some include online groups with a voice and a vote, and some do not.

Some believe that if a group can send a representative to attend a service meeting physically, they can participate and another structure registers online groups but those groups actually participate at the European Online Intergroup.

Australia has set up a virtual area whose delegate will attend their General Service Conference for the first time this year and they have established guidelines that are available on their website: <https://aa.org.au/>.

Some countries are updating their literature to include information about the participation of online groups. And one structure shared that while online groups and service meetings worked well during the pandemic even conducting Third Legacy elections online, they now only accept physical participation.

It was noted that discussions about the inclusion of online groups reveals different opinions that could challenge unity and that changes in society at large brings change also to A.A. It was acknowledged that some members' only experience of A.A. was virtual and that we have a responsibility to allow them to be represented — but how?

Some countries do not recognize online groups at all while some countries felt it was important to have a vision for acknowledging online groups as part of A.A. in their country. Some countries only include geographically based online groups in their structure with a voice and a vote but not international online groups. Online groups need to join a structure if they want to participate.

**3. How might online group participation in our service structures help or inhibit A.A.'s growth and reach?**

Online group participation offers numerous opportunities to aid in A.A.'s growth by opening our doors even more widely and fulfilling our primary purpose:

- Reaching alcoholics in remote areas — in one instance a vibrant online group led to a physical meeting and the development of an online district;
- More accessible for older alcoholics, new mothers, alcoholics with mental, physical, language and cultural barriers;



- An influx of young people through online groups;
- Gives members around the world an opportunity to connect and share just as we do here at the WSM with speakers and members from around the world;
- Able to start meetings in areas and countries where there are not meetings currently;
- Potential cost savings by having service meetings online so more could be available for Twelve Step efforts of all kinds; and
- Ability to attend more meetings and use technical aids like breakout rooms.

Clear guidelines on how to include virtual groups and avoid unintended consequences would be helpful.

Some concerns about virtual groups were expressed including:

- Some feel online groups lack the spiritual impact of talking with each other after the meeting that is typical in physical meetings;
- A perceived lack of interest in service in online groups as well as a lack of service opportunities;
- Concern about privacy and confidentiality;
- Seventh Tradition contributions;
- Concerns that online A.A. groups may erode personal contact or service activity; and
- Online meetings where people sleep or just socialize, that don't seem to be A.A. meetings.

Online is now a reality that we should embrace it and find pathways for inclusion guided by our principles and Traditions.

## Workshop III

### A.A. in Society: Relationship with Networks and Social Media

Workshop discussions were informed by the following questions:

#### 1. How do we adhere to A.A. Traditions while being on the platforms that people use? (Example: anonymity and affiliation).

Most of the delegates agreed that one of the main challenges about maintaining a presence on the Internet is preserving A.A. Traditions, especially those that have to do with affiliation and anonymity. Generally, this is possible in the case of the websites managed by the offices of each service structure, which have content continually reviewed by office employees and supervised by a trustees' committee.

In many cases, such as that of the Mexican structure and that of the United States and Canada, the appropriation of the A.A. logo by entities that do not adhere to the A.A. Traditions presents an obstacle in terms of people reaching the central office itself. But the experience varies from one structure to the next, as some delegates shared that they get requests to post links on their websites by entities that wish to spread the word about the A.A. program, and that respect our basic principles.

The structures' official websites are expanding their tools. The U.S./Canada delegate shared that their structure is trying to work with "Google Profiles" in order to keep information updated for the Fellowship and by answering comments and questions sent to their website.

#### 2. What social media platforms are members, groups, and service entities using to carry the message of A.A.?

Many delegates agreed that their structures' experiences show that the public seeks help through the Internet. Most countries represented at the WSM use all known social media platforms to carry the A.A. message to those who have a drinking problem. "This is a reality that is here to stay, and which we will gradually adapt to, according to our principles of Recovery, Unity and Service," said one delegate. But many think that anonymity in the virtual world and in the use of platforms such as Zoom, Skype and WhatsApp, is hard to maintain. When looking for a solution, the delegates agreed that the general tendency is to incorporate such tools into the structure. We are sharing and working towards this.

In many cases, virtual A.A. groups are only for members of the Fellowship. Facebook is used widely by A.A. members in many countries, but with accounts that are not connected to each country's central service office. The delegates recognized the importance of taking advantage of networks and their ability to offer instantaneous communication with the entire world.



Some structures have created Twitter and YouTube accounts with official names and have even achieved a quick path to A.A.'s website in Internet searches, reducing the number of clicks between users and the help available.

But other structures, such as Japan, shared that they do not use social media to carry the message.

Many structures have created guidelines for managing the Internet and social media, by appealing to individual responsibility for such management. Despite the fact that anonymity breaks are a frequent problem, the use of YouTube, WhatsApp or Instagram as service tools is invaluable for the structures that shared in the workshop, and it is a big job to educate members about the A.A. Traditions so as not to fall into extremes, such as the absolute lack of anonymity, or anonymity which does not allow for the message to be carried to the alcoholic who still suffers. "We cannot be so anonymous that we can't be reached by other drunks," said a delegate, alluding to the two types of anonymity breaks that Dr. Bob mentions.

**3. How do social media platforms and professional networking platforms help alcoholics we have yet to reach? Is the language we use on these platforms from our literature an effective way in reaching diverse current and potential members?**

Many delegates stated that social media, especially Facebook, WhatsApp and others, are used to carry information to professionals, agencies and institutions.

The delegate from Japan mentioned that, in his opinion, the use of social and professional media reminded him of the impact that the article by Jack Alexander had in its time. It served as a timely outreach tool. The delegate said that there is much to be done in his country in the area of public information, as there is still a notion that Alcoholics Anonymous is a secret society, and a large portion of the Japanese Medical Society does not know how the A.A. program works.

A delegate felt that many structures use social media, videos and other virtual tools in a careful, professional way, and are able not only to attract the public at large, but also to help groups and members to get to know the A.A. program better.

Based on another delegate's experience, the virtual world leaves a lot to be desired. He feels fortunate to have gotten to A.A. at a time when social media was not as widespread, as he thinks that the language is distorted in social media, and gave as an example the use of the term "sober" without any connection to alcoholism.

In the case of India, their delegate mentioned that outreach



through printed materials is still quite effective, and that the language used to spread the word about A.A. is effective.

Several delegates mentioned working jointly with Class A trustees as a fundamental tool to spread the message of A.A. through social media. But some delegates shared about the difficulties that their structures have in finding nonalcoholic trusted servants.

One delegate shared about sponsoring Class A trustees as possible ways of attracting and educating friends of A.A., and about the special attention to professional experience, more than their personalities, when choosing these people. In another structure, they have webinars to provide information to professionals and tell them about A.A.

Lastly, many delegates agreed on the need to approach the new generations by updating the language used, via social platforms.



# Reports of Interim and Zonal Service Meetings

## 14th Asia Oceania Service Meeting (AOSM)

**Introduction:** The Asia Oceania Region encompasses a large area, covering a third of the world’s population, with more than 70 countries stretching across the globe from New Zealand and Australia to India, the Middle East, the Pacific Islands, Asia, Southeast Asia, China, and Russia. In many countries in our region Alcoholics Anonymous is in its infancy with membership and structures that are supported by those in our region who do have an established Fellowship and service structures.

**The 14th AOSM Host Country — Hyderabad India:** The 14th AOSM themed “Carrying the Message in the Digital Age,” was due to be held in Hyderabad, India, however due to the pandemic the conference was held online July 9-14, 2021, with the support of a tech team based in Japan. We are so grateful to this team for their commitment and support to make this happen. The number of delegates registered to attend was highest we have had with 30 delegates from 18 countries.

As well as the standard agenda items including finance and sub committees there were two key presentation themes, one being “Carrying the Message in the Digital Age” presented by Racy J. and the second being “Country-to-Country Sponsorship and the Development of A.A. Service Structures” presented by delegates.

**Carrying the Message in the Digital Age:** Racy J., U.S./Canada GSO, International Desk, gave a comprehensive overview on the history of translations, how many translations we have, and the processes required to obtain licenses to do so. Importantly Racy highlighted that as we move from hard copy print into the digital age, one thing remains the same, we are still carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic.



For the publication	We have
“Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions”	51 languages 3 pending
“Daily Reflections”	37 languages 1 pending
“Living Sober”	37 languages 1 pending
“Came to Believe”	19 languages

David R., Publishing Director from the U.S./Canada GSO, contributed to the paper covering how we publish in the digital environment.

He covered an important topic around e-books and what is possible for a country that holds a license: “Any text for an item of translated and licensed literature, which has been approved via the GSO translation-submission and review process, usually

undertaken for print distribution may be licensed for e-book format. To obtain a license to distribute an approved item in e-book format, simply request to license the e-book format for an item of literature. Our licensing administrator will send the appropriate documentation,” he explained.

David R. also discussed posting on websites: “Licenses to post an item on a country’s official A.A. website (in PDF or e-book formats, for example) may be requested for any licensed item as well. Multiple items may be included in one license. Simply request the license accompanied by a list of titles you intend to post. Our licensing administrator will need the name/URL of your official A.A. website. It is included in the license.”

## AOSM Delegate’s Presentations

### “Country-to-Country Sponsorship — A Sponsor’s Perspective”

**Australia:** Country-to-country sponsorship is no different than one alcoholic helping another, one alcoholic country helping another. Australia today has a vibrant general service structure that attempts to carry the message in the Asia Pacific region. Sponsorship funding has been provided to countries like Bhutan, Bali, Indonesia, and Vietnam to enable them to attend the AOSM in the past. Australia has sent delegates to the Solomon Islands to start groups and run public awareness meetings. One of the great success stories is with Fiji through the Australia international sponsorship fund resulting in Fiji running its own in-person and online meetings.

**New Zealand:** New Zealand has a large Pasifika population of more than 380,000 from all of the Pacific Island nations with a large percentage based in Tamaki Makaurua/Auckland. There is a focus on carrying the message to this group in Tamaki Makaurua/Auckland that reaches back out to the Pacific through family and community groups. There is also a weekly “Meeting on Air” through community radio that is picked up by these island nations. Often there is a meeting themed and recorded in the Samoan or Tongan language.

### “Country-to-Country Sponsorship — A Sponsee’s Perspective”

**Fiji:** Fiji has benefited greatly from country-to-country sponsorship with support from Australia. In 2012 Australia financed an A.A. advertisement in a daily Fijian newspaper and the operational costs of an A.A. hotline to support this. In 2016, the Australian National Convention was held in Fiji creating the opportunity for the Fiji Ministry of Health to bring 140 ministry officials to be part of an A.A. Information Day where 400 people attended, spurring the growth and greater awareness of A.A. in Fiji. With this growth Australia has supported Fiji in developing an A.A. service structure to the point where Fiji will host the 15th AOSM conference in 2024 with financial and committee support from both Australia and New Zealand.

**Bhutan:** The one group in Bhutan that started with two members has now grown to 45. Bhutan is immensely grateful to its neighboring country of India for their ongoing support and sponsorship in growing their Fellowship.



## “Countries with a GSO — How They Achieved It”

**Iran:** The first groups were formed in Iran about 30 years ago but faced many challenges because of the general sensitivity to the word “alcohol” making it very difficult to carry the message and develop a structure. After many years of persistence, on June 10, 2010, Iran registered its General Service Office and in October attended its first World Service Meeting (WSM) in Warsaw all through the support of GSO New York, the AOSM and the Middle East Regional Committee of A.A. (MERCAA) regional meeting.

**Mongolia:** A.A. was officially established in 1998 with the support of JCS International, an international development and relief agency, however the local GSO was established in 2010 through financial support from JCS International, U.S./Canada GSO and A.A. in neighboring countries. With this support, the Big Book was translated into Mongolian along with printing costs to produce the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions wall shades. This financial support and income from the sale of the Big Book and wall shades laid the foundational funding for ongoing GSO operations and to carry the message to still-suffering alcoholic in the wider community.

**Japan:** A.A. Japan was officially started in March 1975, however before this there were A.A. members from the U.S. Military who were stationed in Japan. In 1979, the U.S. and Canada funded the publication of the Big Book in Japanese and went on to fund the Big Book reprint and the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* in 1982. Through this support the Japanese Fellowship grew and developed their own service structure under guidance from GSO New York. Now Japan has a fully developed service structure with a thriving A.A. community that is able to lead by example and carry its message country to country through AOSM membership and contribution at World Service.

Steve K. — Aotearoa/New Zealand

## 21st European Service Meeting (ESM)

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the 21st European Service Meeting (ESM) was held virtually on Zoom on October 22-24, 2021, with the theme “Love in Service.” Forty-two delegates from 29 European countries gathered to share and exchange their experience, along with representatives from GSO New York and the Great Britain/European Information Center (EIC), and observers from Russia.

On Friday morning, the 21st European Service Meeting was opened by the chair, Yury T. (Ukraine), who gave a warm welcome to all participants and presented an opening address that was inspirational and uplifting, thus setting the mood for the whole weekend. Yury mentioned that we had learned to overcome challenges caused by the pandemic and had witnessed the fact that A.A.’s message of recovery can be carried over the Internet. He noted that we can carry on our A.A. work *in love and service, or, of love and service*, without missing a beat by making use of modern-day technologies. He shared his experience about love and service in A. A. and ended his presentation with the statement: “In love and service,” which is often used as a closing, just before the signature, in letters written by A.A.s.

Following the reading of the Twelve Traditions, a roll call was held, and all attendees were invited to introduce them-

selves. It was then time for the presentation of the first half of the country reports; the second half were presented on Saturday morning. One delegate from each of the national A.A. entities was invited to share highlights of activities that had taken place in their countries since the last ESM in 2019. The presentation of the 26th World Service Meeting (WSM) was given by Nana K. (Greece). This was followed by the keynote address given by Bob W., General Manager at GSO New York, who mentioned examples of “Love & Service” in A.A. and emphasized that we have an obligation to do all we can to carry A.A.’s message to all who need it. He noted that as members of the Fellowship, the deeper we allow ourselves to become familiar and practice our Steps, Traditions and Concepts, the more naturally we will carry out our service with love. David R., GSO New York’s Publishing Director, gave a report on “Literature, Licensing & Translation.” A brief report concerning the finances of the ESM was made by Ranjan B., EIC General Secretary from Great Britain.

On Friday afternoon and Saturday, the committees and workshops then went into action, with delegates sharing their wide and varied experience as it applied to their individual structures. Each committee and workshop chair reported back on the discussions held within their meetings to the



full meeting on Saturday afternoon (committees) and Sunday morning (workshops). All the committee reports were approved unanimously.

### **ESM Workshops & Committees**

On Friday evening all delegates were divided into three committees: Service, Recovery and Unity.

**Service Committee:** the topic was about literature. On what basis are decisions made about which literature gets translated? Does the country have an adequate variety and supply of literature to serve the Fellowship's needs? What criteria does your country use to determine the price of literature?

In most countries, decisions are made by a Literature committee and General Service Conference with approval and licensing from AAWS or Grapevine. There are some exceptions, for example when a translation is made without established procedures and authorization, but the process has been started.

The price of books is determined mostly by publishing costs, with a surplus going to build a reserve or to keep a balance between contributions from literature and those from the Seventh Tradition. In some countries, the charge for books has been nearly constant for a long time. Prices increased when some countries switched to the Euro.

Delegates then shared experience about cooperation with professionals: Participation in seminars, exhibitions, conferences, etc., and paying for participation in these events. Is paying a participation fee in keeping with our Traditions? In general, we do not have to pay if we are invited to seminars or exhibitions. We do not participate in business enterprises where we must pay to rent some space. We have good access to professionals in health care and prisons, and we can participate in seminars without payment.

**Recovery Committee:** discussed a large topic — online meetings. How can we find a balance between the need and demand for online meetings and retain the elements of fellowship with person-to-person contact? The delegates considered the experience of online sponsorship and promoting literature online.

It was very common for each country to open online meetings during lockdown when face-to-face meetings were forced to close due to the pandemic. Any issues were quickly defeated by helping members solve technical difficulties to enable them to attend online meetings, through one-to-one meetings, telephone meetings, WhatsApp groups, and by encouraging members to attend and sponsor newcomers.

There were some benefits of online meetings such as an increase in members and the opportunity to attend meetings worldwide, at any convenient time, giving new chances to those who normally struggle to get to face-to-face meetings. The online meetings encouraged more young people to attend A.A. for the first time. New service positions were created (e.g., technical assistants, meeting host and co-host, "troll patrol," and group administrator).

New challenges were overcome in online sponsorship with newcomers resisting to accept, or to ask for sponsorship because they didn't know the potential sponsors personally. On the other hand, sponsorship was increased because more members were available to sponsor online than just face-to-face. In addition, lists of available sponsors were kept. Members maintained contact with their sponsors using phones,

Skype, WhatsApp, Zoom, and various apps. Some groups found a balance between online and face-to-face with hybrid meetings.

The second topic related to youth members: How can we attract young people to A.A.? We could take into consideration such suggestions as: ask for help in technical matters, encourage them into the service structure — especially in the IT field, translate leaflets dedicated to young persons, make podcasts, share young person meeting lists with other countries, organize young people's events both physically and online, share our experiences and hope on how to live a happy life without alcohol.

**Unity Committee:** faced the topic of how the proliferation of online groups created new challenges for the countries' service structures.

All countries reported significant challenges, but that was balanced by the realization of the opportunities and possibilities that the online platforms offered. The perceived challenges included fear of the unknown, adapting to new technology, dealing with difficult behavior online, and questions about how meetings and groups would integrate into the service structure and receive Tradition Seven contributions. Opportunities included greater access to those with physical challenges, fellowship across the globe, and a greater diversity embracing previously marginalized communities. For some, Tradition Seven contributions became simplified through online payment options.

Delegates shared their experience of how A.A. groups determine, by the group conscience, their policy about meeting attendance. Members firstly take responsibility in establishing whether their meetings are open or closed, and as such, determine the qualification of non-members to attend and/or share. Secondly, they create a code of conduct by which the group operates and clarify appropriate behavior at the outset of the meeting (blue card, safeguarding, etc.). This empowers the group to deal with persistently inappropriate behavior. For drunks attending meetings, if they become rowdy the best solution is to take them outside to talk. When calm, they would be welcome back into the meeting.

At the end of this work, each committee chose chairpersons, alternates, and themes for the next ESM.

Three workshops were conducted:

1. "Allowing our Group Conscience to Guide our Service Work:" It is a long-term, two-way process, from the structure to the Fellowship, and from the Fellowship to the structure. We should see the service structure as being reliant on group conscience. It's crucial to build a well-informed group conscience based on general service representatives (GSRs), manuals, and the pamphlet "Group Inventory."
2. Discussion about "What Spiritual Freedom Means" for each delegate: The main answers mentioned unity across the Fellowship with A.A.s helping each other locally and nationally during the pandemic; the freedom to change and adapt, from forcing personal religious views on members to accepting who they are; to get closer to the program and feel more freedom; to help newcomers understand when the word "God" is mentioned in the meeting, and how to accept and respect everyone's understanding of God/Higher Power.

3. "How to Make a Newcomer Feel Part of the Group:" All delegates agreed that the newcomers are the most important people in the group. We can make them feel safe, welcome, and part of a group; encourage them to come back; give sponsorship advice; translate A.A. language; treat them with a gentle approach based on trust and a belief in attraction rather than promotion; leave the door open; share contact details in person or through a website.

The meeting closed on Saturday afternoon with a broad-ranging question and answer session. The surplus of the ESM Fund was discussed and after being proposed (Ivo C., Portugal) and seconded (Tadeusz C., Poland) it was agreed by a simple majority that £25,000 be transferred to the International Literature Fund. On Sunday morning, the day began with the Sharing meeting. Presentations were given by Daniel G. (Romania) and Juha I. (Finland) on the theme "Adapting and Adjusting to the Pandemic." This was followed by general sharing around the room. Then the business concerning the 22nd ESM was conducted. Following elections, we were delighted to welcome Tobias D. (Sweden) as chair of the 22nd European Service Meeting to be held in 2023. Elena S. (Lithuania) and Iza A. (Poland) will jointly prepare and present a report on this 21st ESM to the 27th World Service Meeting, which will take place in 2022. They will then report back on the 27th WSM to the 22nd ESM in 2023.

Four second-term delegates were invited to share their experiences both this weekend and from the previous ESM. These were Nana K. (Greece), Ray L. (Sweden), Tadeusz C. (Poland) and Zdravko Z. (Slovakia), all of whom recalled their feelings with positive emotions in moving addresses. To conclude the meeting, a heartfelt closing address was given by Yury T., the ESM chair, who spoke with inspiration and encouragement for all in the room. To bring the 21st ESM to a close all delegates were invited to take turns sharing the Serenity Prayer in their native language, ending with all delegates speaking the Serenity Prayer in English as one.

*Elena S. — Lithuania / Iza A. — Poland*

## 22nd Meeting of the Americas (REDELA)

*Dear world leaders and members of the  
27th World Service Meeting,*

The purpose of this report is to provide you with an overview about the 22nd REDELA, whose theme was: "REDELA: The Americas United Under the Three Legacies." We met in Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala, from October 3-7, 2021.

**22nd Meeting of the Americas in Guatemala:** Once we got to Guatemala City we gathered at a downtown hotel and from there we were taken to the General Service Office of A.A. of Guatemala. Once there, continuing with what we did in Argentina, we had a pre-REDELA forum, which incorporated virtual technology. Many A.A. members from the various countries who had received the access code attended the meeting. The platform was used to its full capacity. The information that the Fellowship in the Americas received through its representatives — who gave several talks on topics assigned by the hosts of the pre-REDELA event — was first-rate.

Thirteen delegates participated at the REDELA in person, while 12 delegates connected online. We also had two inter-

preters. The delegates represented the following structures: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, U.S./Canada, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago, and the host, Guatemala.

Also, we had two observers from GSO New York: our fellow A.A. member Racy J., International Desk Coordinator, and David R., Director of Publishing.

We started our activities with breakfast at the hotel in Antigua Guatemala, followed by a walk around the city, organized by the host committee. After registration by the in-person participants, we had our Red Ball A.A. meeting. There was a lot of laughter and general merriment, and all delegates had a chance to participate. We also had five female delegates (from U.S./Canada, Brazil and Chile) plus Racy from the International desk, as well as our interpreter, Luciana, and Guatemalan A.A. assistants.

Guatemala was in charge of chairing the meeting. The ceremony where participating countries are introduced with their flags and national anthems is always very moving. The event was opened by Dr. Mario Vinicio Alvarado, the chair of the GSB of A.A. of Guatemala; and the mayor of Antigua Guatemala said a few words of welcome.

Ernesto F., first-term delegate from Guatemala, read the Statement of Purpose, while the presentation on the theme "22nd REDELA: The Americas United Under the Three Legacies" was given by Gonzalo M., the delegate from Mexico. There was also a presentation on the history of the Meeting of the Americas by Reinaldo de Jesús M.P., second-term delegate from Colombia.

Over the next few days, country reports were given, and the four committees — Agenda, Policy/Admissions/Finance, Literature and Publications, and Working with Others — met to conduct their business.

The delegates also met in two separate groups to discuss the various workshop topics.

The sharing followed the agenda quite closely, but there were plenty of opportunities for additional sharing on other matters. Despite this, the event followed its schedule as planned.

The interpreters for the 22nd REDELA were Luciana C. and Hernán M., who helped maintain fluid communications during all REDELA meetings.

On Thursday, October 7, 2021, the 22nd REDELA came to a close, with a closing speech and a farewell dinner at the Villa Colonial Hotel restaurant in Antigua Guatemala. The delegate from Honduras, Ignacio, sang for all attendees, and dedicated a song to Maria, the Brazilian delegate.

Personally speaking, the Meeting of the Americas provides a true sense of the scale and diversity of our Fellowship, which comes together like a big embrace, heart-to-heart and from one pole to another. It is both motivational and foundational; it provides certainty that A.A. really works.

The Following Presentations Were Given:

- Ernesto F., Class B trustee from Guatemala, shared about the "REDELA Statement of Purpose."
- Roberto R. from Argentina spoke about "How to Make Active Trusted Servants and Group Members Aware About How the Service Structure Works."





BRAZIL

- Sandra Huenumán León, Class A trustee and chair of the GSB of A.A. of Chile, spoke about “The Importance of Districts for the Growth of our Fellowship.”
- The northern territorial trustee from Colombia, Reinaldo M.P., gave a presentation about “The History of the REDELA.”
- Racy J., GSO staff on the International desk (U.S./Canada) participated virtually with a talk about the “International Literature Fund.”
- María Z., the second-term delegate from Brazil presented on: “Opening the Doors of Service to Women.”
- The presentation about “A.A.’s Progress in the Use of Social Media” was given by the southern territory trustee from Mexico, Gonzalo Teodoro M.
- David R., Publishing Director from the U.S./Canada GSO, shared about literature, licenses and translations. Also, during the week, David scheduled virtual appointments with each delegate to solve any license-related issues.

*David R.’s talk:* I’m delighted to share with you today a brief presentation on: What’s new in A.A.’s global publishing efforts — innovations in attraction, inclusion and accessibility, with a focus on digital distribution. Let’s begin with the “why.” Why do we do what we do: from all our painstaking attention to our items of our literature, carefully attending to the accuracy of translations, to the licensing and distribution of literature within our international structures? Why do we do this? One answer: We work together to help ensure that the message of hope that we carry is not “garbled,” to use one of our co-founders, Bill W.’s, favorite phrases.

And what is more, we work together to ensure that we respect and support the international structures of our Fellowship. Our primary purpose and our great responsibility to keep the doors of A.A. open both inform our work. We extend the hand of A.A. to the next sick and suffering alcoholic — and help those who help alcoholics in recovery everywhere.

“I want the hand of A.A. always to be there ...” and in that hand: perhaps an item of literature, say, a Big Book.

I would especially recommend that you read all the reports, especially Racy’s, and all the sections. What are we doing? Our Big Book, audiobook innovations, etc. They offer a great overview on these topics, which were simply and clearly explained by Racy, who concluded her talk by quoting Bill W. on the delegated responsibility to preserve and spread the A.A. message.

## REDELA Committee Reports

### Agenda

Themes for the 23rd REDELA — the committee received 26 proposals and recommended the following: “Unity and Diversity in A.A.”

Agenda topics for the 23rd REDELA — the committee recommended the following presentation topics:

1. Our literature and A.A.
2. Why is REDELA necessary?
3. How to improve internal communications in A.A.
4. Our responsibility as an A.A. structure.
5. Are we training our Class A trustees?
6. Does formal sponsorship between structures exist?

Workshop topics for the 23rd REDELA — the committee recommended the following topics for the workshops:

1. Living the Twelve Steps strengthens our structure.
2. Alcoholics Anonymous and social media.
3. A good leader does not govern; he/she serves with love, tolerance and responsibility.
4. The structure of virtual groups/meetings.
5. Is there true unity in our structures?
6. Virtual groups: how to be inclusive in the structure.

## Policy/Admissions/Finance

A lively debate ensued. There was one recommendation that was put forward to the full body, requesting that “at the next REDELA”:

1. We try to balance participation in the committee between first- and second-term delegates.
2. The REDELA fund be discussed. The registration fee was left at US\$ 800.00, with a commitment to foster contributions to the REDELA fund, which was created with the goal of providing assistance to those countries that are struggling to become self-supporting.
3. Colombia was ratified as the next host for the XXIII REDELA. The Dominican Republic is the alternate host.

## Literature and Publications

1. The importance of licenses was discussed. Regarding this topic, the feeling was the same among all delegates. Aside from individual concerns, there was a request signed by all delegates to urge [GSO] to authorize and streamline the granting of licenses to each country, so that they can all print their own books and pamphlets.
2. Preamble. The following discussion topic was the change in the Preamble, which now reads: “... a fellowship of people,” thus including all human beings. This change did not come about in a simple fashion; there was discussion over three years. Each group may decide whether to use the previous version or adopt the new one.
3. New business. The following topics were proposed: a) “How to improve our literature”; b) “Is it better to purchase literature abroad or print it in-country?”; c) “What is the relevance of newsletters and magazines?”

## Working with Others (WWO)

*Mexico:* reported that they are seeking strategies to reach groups, looking for options and working toward that goal. As it is not possible to have events that reach all groups, delegations have been established to take the message to places where [it is needed]. The delegate explained also that they have successfully used national radio announcements to carry the message.

*El Salvador:* said that there has been a drop in group membership and that they are planning to work on this issue. They also reported that a QR code has been implemented, which directs people to their A.A. webpage.

All structures that made up the committee discussed various ways in which they carry out WWO work, from updated basic innovations to including literature in tablets. The importance of reading reports was stressed.

## REDELA Workshops

### Workshop 1:

#### Women’s Participation in General Service

*Chile:* Hernán L., a delegate from Chile, gave the talk and mentioned that when talking and sharing about women’s participation in General Service, it is important to consider that all service in Alcoholics Anonymous is basically the Third Legacy in action. We do not need to have deep knowledge in order to

participate in general service. In fact, Concept IV says: “There is another good reason for ‘participation,’ and this one has to do with our spiritual needs. All of us deeply desire to *belong*. We want an A.A. relation of brotherly partnership. It is our shining ideal that the ‘spiritual corporation’ of A.A. should never include any members who are regarded as ‘second class.’ Deep down, I think this is what we have been struggling to achieve in our world service structure.”

*GSO U.S./Canada:* Racy J. said that there are several women on the General Service Board and suggested that the structures in the Americas support the participation of women in service. Racy congratulated Argentina on a recent event about the power of women in A.A. It was a true celebration of how to identify and tear down barriers. One point that was made very clear is that women often have to find childcare in order to be able to serve in A.A.

*Brazil:* The Brazilian delegate said she was very happy to be participating and to be one of the first women in the general service structure in her country. Maria invited other women to keep insisting and persisting in service.

*Panama:* expressed their gratitude to the Chilean delegate for the struggles they have faced as women, as they deal with male prejudice among A.A. members. Women, just like men, have suffered from the negative effects of alcoholism. A common problem is that women in A.A. groups are not often seen as fellow A.A.s. The Third Tradition is very open and the requirement for membership remains “a desire to stop drinking.” In other words, the program does not set up any barriers to women joining the Fellowship and providing them with opportunities to stop drinking, to start serving at their groups and in the structure at large.

*Mexico:* thanked the Chilean delegate for the topic and urged female A.A. members to participate and continue serving in the various service arenas within the structure.

### Workshop 2:

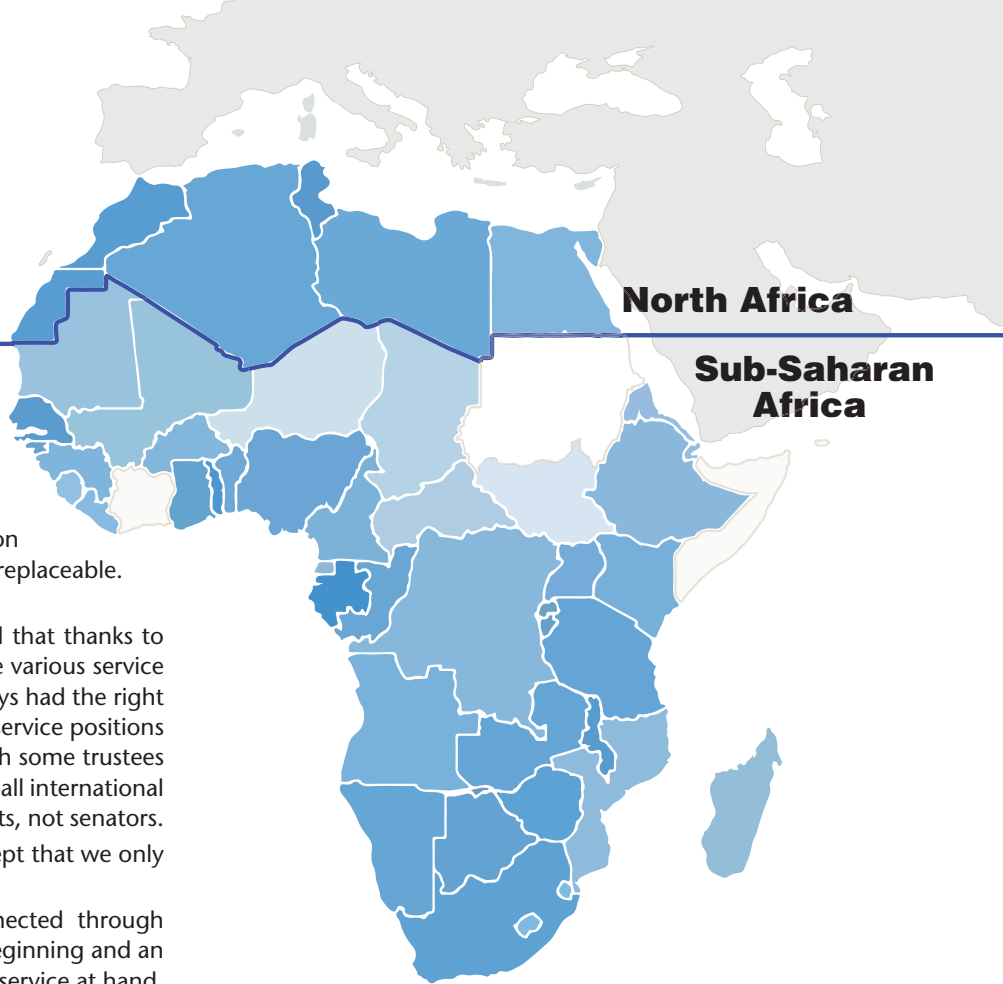
#### The Seventh Tradition: How are We Practicing it?

*U.S./Canada:* There was an introduction by Marita from the U.S. and Canada, who thanked her Higher Power and A.A.’s principles for allowing her to be present, even in a virtual way. Marita began her talk by reporting that 80% of the contributions received at the office come in through postal mail and the remaining 20% through credit card payments. The U.S./Canada delegate expressed her admiration for groups that have continued to meet their Seventh Tradition commitments despite the negative effects of the pandemic around the world. Marita is very glad that most groups have embraced new ways of giving through virtual means, as literature sales have plummeted as a result of the pandemic. Not everything is about money; a lot has to do with the willingness and desire to do things in one’s life. It is hard to talk about the Seventh Tradition if groups do not join us and become strong. Money works best when it is spread to different places.

### Workshop 3:

#### The Importance of the Spirit of Rotation for Leadership in Alcoholics Anonymous

*Chile:* pointed out that without rotation we become stagnant. Rotation is a manifestation of A.A.’s democratic nature. Colombia said that one of Bill W.’s paramount contributions



was the creation of trusted servant panels, making sure others are not deprived of the right of participation. Problems with rotation have to do with mistrust of others, believing that “only I can do this well.”

**Honduras:** expressed the notion that rotation equals humility, recognizing that we are not irreplaceable. Accepting fresh, new ideas that bring renewal.

**Ecuador:** the delegate from Ecuador stated that thanks to rotation he has been able to experience all the various service positions, including GSR, and that he has always had the right of participation. Some people stay on in their service positions for years — even 12 or 15 — as is the case with some trustees who do not allow rotation to take place, go on all international trips, etc. We need to remember we are servants, not senators.

**El Salvador:** said that it is important to accept that we only serve once in our lifetime.

**Bolivia:** The Bolivian delegate, who connected through Zoom, said that every service position has a beginning and an end. The basis for rotation is humility. I do the service at hand. Rotation eventually brings us back to making coffee.

**Workshop 4:  
The Importance of Districts for the  
Development of the Fellowship**

**Argentina:** shared extensively about the topic, starting with service at the group level, all the way to the other end of the structure, mentioning various motivations and challenges.

**Workshop 5:  
Progress in A.A. with regard to Social Media**

**GSO U.S./Canada:** Racy shared on her ample experience and said that GSO does not do anything that does not originate from the top [of the triangle]. As groups move forward, so does the office, very prudently delving into the lessons learned and developing them further.

Providing a brief, clear message through social media is very important. We are currently experiencing a technology boom and the coming of new apps, which make everything easier and faster.

We need to keep our webpages updated and foster more services to be able to help others. Through technology, we can create an emergency link in order to help others. Innovation is always important. We need to update our topics and the information so that we do not lag behind the new generation.

A conclusion that was reached was that we need to leverage the monthly REDELA meetings between one Meeting of the Americas and the next, in order to foster an exchange of experiences, update policies and modes of communication, and bring new life into our committee work.

*Roberto R. — Argentina*

**10th Sub-Saharan  
Africa Service Meeting (SSASM)**

Africa has 54 countries, of which 46 lie within the Sub-Saharan Africa region. The Sub-Saharan Africa region describes the part of the African continent situated geographically south of the Sahara, the world’s largest hot desert and the world’s third largest desert overall. The SSASM structure comprises 12 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, namely Botswana, Eswatini (Swaziland), Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Meetings of the SSASM are held mid-year biennially on the alternate year to the World Service Meeting. For ease of access and resources, meetings are held in Johannesburg, South Africa. We are grateful to the General Service Boards of U.S./Canada and Great Britain for their financial contribution in sponsoring these meetings as well as their support at the SSASM.

**SSASM Statement of Purpose**

The primary purpose of the Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting is the same as that of all A.A. activity — to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, whoever he or she may be, whatever language he or she speaks. The SSASM seeks ways and means of accomplishing this goal by serving as a forum for sharing the experience, strength and hope of delegates who come together from all parts of the Sub-Saharan Africa region. It can also represent an expression of the group conscience throughout the region. Experience teaches us that developing a sound structure enables us to deliver our services more effectively. The SSASM encourages the planning of sound structures suited to the needs and capabilities of the





various countries and the exploration of expanding A.A.’s services to reach the alcoholic through internal communication, community relations and working in institutions.

### The 2021 SSASM Meeting

Whilst it is ideal for the SSASM to be held in person, the Covid-19 pandemic prevented this for our 10th conference on September 24-26, 2021. Thus, the 2021 meeting was moved to an online platform, with our sponsors financially supporting access to resources so that members could attend virtually. However, given the lack of resources in some areas, it was not possible for all countries to attend. The theme for SSASM 2021 was “The Purpose of Our Service: Sobriety Within Everyone’s Reach.”

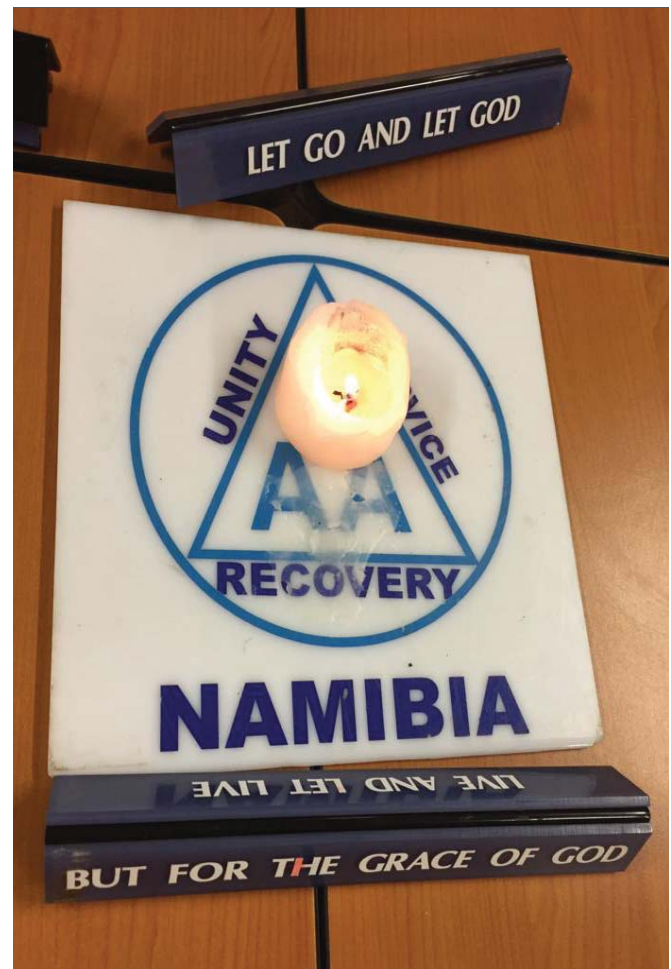
### Recent Highlights from Member Countries

**Botswana** has a few active groups in Gaborone and Francistown, with the Gaborone Rally being held since 2016 and drawing many attendees from among government officials, community leaders and young people. **Eswatini** (Swaziland) is making efforts to resume their meetings. A.A. established a foothold in **Ghana** more than a decade ago primarily through the growth of the general “recovery movement,” with three active home groups and one intergroup in place. Of note is that Ghana has translated the first 164 pages of the Big Book into Twi, the most widely spoken local language. **Kenya** had to forego hosting the A.A. East African Convention in 2020 due to the onset of the pandemic. Notably, in 2019 Kenya was granted a licence by GSO to print the Big Book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* and selected pamphlets locally. The country of **Lesotho** has one A.A. group, namely the Maseru Legacy Group, which has meetings twice weekly. The group hosts the annual A.A. Lesotho Rally and offers the Maseru Sobriety Awards. The country of **Namibia** has meetings in two major cities: inland in the capital, Windhoek, and on the coast in Swakopmund. The Keetmanshoop Winter Rally is a draw-card and resumed in 2022 after a two-year absence due to the

pandemic. A.A. in **Malawi** was also severely affected by the lockdown and hopes to resume former capacity shortly. A.A. in **Tanzania** started more than 36 years ago and is established in eight towns. Tanzania hosted the East African Convention in 2019. A.A. Tanzania has the Big Book in Swahili and English. A.A. in **Uganda** has been active with meetings held daily and has the Big Book translated into Luganda. A.A. in **Zambia** started in 1986 in Lusaka and is growing. However, there is a need for the Big Book to be translated into a local language for ease of reading and access. A.A. in **Zimbabwe** is active both online and in person with meetings daily in Harare and Bulawayo. Two recent key achievements are the regular meetings held in the Chikurubi Maximum Prison and the Harare Remand Prison since 2019, as well as the mini convention held in May 2021. Finally, A.A. in **South Africa** celebrates its 75th Jubilee this year with many commemorative events across the country, including regular rallies and mini conventions. A.A. South Africa has a well-established General Service Board, a well-functioning General Service Office and more than 330 active groups across the country.

In conclusion, we are grateful to all countries who are part of the SSASM structure, as well as our sponsors. The current SSASM chairperson is Yaw O. from Ghana, with Ben P. from South Africa currently carrying the secretariate. We look forward to meeting in 2023 under the theme “Bridging Barriers and Holding Hands in Service.”

Varoshini N. — South Africa



## SUMMARY: 27TH WORLD SERVICE MEETING EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Seventy-two delegates attending the 27th World Service Meeting completed their evaluation questionnaires to help with planning for the 28th World Service Meeting. A summary of their responses follows:



### **Q. What presentations did you find most valuable?**

**A.** The presentations that delegates found extremely valuable were: “International Literature Fund / World Service Meeting Fund” (57); “Licensing and Translation” (57); “How to Invest in the Future of A.A.” (51); “A.A. and New Technologies” (51); “The Seventh Tradition: Fully Self-Supporting in the Digital Age” (49); “What Is Our Attraction? Unity, Service” (46); “Our Nonalcoholic Friends” (44); and “Alcoholics Anonymous Has Already Come of Age. Is There Any Danger That It May Get Too Old?” (43). Respondents also noted that the Country Highlights (39), Country Reports (35) and Zonal Meeting Reports (32) were extremely important.

### **Q. What workshops did you find most valuable?**

**A.** The workshops that delegates marked as “extremely valuable” were: “How to Encourage the Seventh Tradition during a Pandemic/Social Isolation at all Structure Levels?” (50); “Virtual Groups: How can they be integrated into the General Service Conference structure?” (47); and “A.A. in Society: Relationship with Networks and Social Media.” (46).

### **Q. Do you think we should continue Country Highlights and/or Country Reports?**

**A.** The majority of respondents agreed that the WSM should continue with Country Highlights and/or Country Reports. As one delegate noted: “Country highlights and reports are invaluable as they show clearly the variations in various countries imposed by finance, structure size and membership numbers and therefore add to our tolerance and loving concern towards those who struggle.” Another said: “It allows us to exchange information about the current functioning, and the strengths and weaknesses in each structure.” In addition, most delegates (48) said they appreciated hearing the Country Highlights presented verbally. “Let us see and hear the person behind the reports and what is important to them and their structure in a way that written only cannot,” one respondent commented. Another added that when the delegates read the highlights,

“They pass along the energy of the country that they represent.” On this topic, but in response to the question about delegate participation, one person observed that it was “good to hear the highlights because not all delegates will have time to read the full reports, and this will cause them to get interested and follow up.”

### **Q. Do you think there is enough delegate participation?**

**A.** Most respondents felt that there was sufficient time and opportunity for delegate participation. In addition, there were several comments brainstorming ideas on how to ensure broader sharing: across countries (encourage two delegates rather than just one); languages (continue enabling direct translators for those lacking proficiency in either English or Spanish); and individuals (maintain clear time limits and discourage multiple shares by dominant voices). “Although we all had the right to participate, some delegates barely did,” one respondent said. “We should try to find out the reasons behind this situation.” Another observed, “I wish there was a way to get more delegates to participate at the microphone.” Several noted here and in other parts of the survey that in-person WSMs allowed for more individual commentary and exchange of ideas among delegates outside of the formal sessions.

### **Q. Was the communication and information you received prior to the meeting adequate?**

**A.** Most answered positively to this question, praising the quality of the content and response time to individual questions. “The communication and information prior to the meeting was clear, precise and thoughtful. It made the process of preparing for the WSM most welcoming,” one delegate said, reflecting a large percentage of enthusiastic positive responses and comments. However, there were several requests for the materials to be provided earlier whenever possible. More than a few respondents to this and other survey questions suggested that delegates be reminded of the guidelines on

word counts for presentations, highlights and reports, particularly for those that were to be read aloud at the WSM, and that they be returned for editing so that presenters would be better able to stay within time limits. “Make clear what the available time is for the presenters. I was curious to find out more about what they researched regarding their topics,” one respondent said, adding that: “we could review and then use them as topics to be discussed in each country.” With regards to the WSM Dashboard as a communication platform, 57 of the 69 respondents to a question about it found the Dashboard to be enormously valuable, although a few found it to be confusing or difficult to navigate.

**Q. How can the World Service Meeting be improved?**

**A.** As this was the second WSM held on a virtual platform, and the first for the full six-day length of the traditional in-person WSM format, much of the feedback had to do with balancing the benefits and drawbacks of both meeting methods. “It has been perfect this time,” one delegate said, adding, however, “I would prefer to meet physically to be able to have the one-to-one talks in the breaks.” A number of other delegates called for a full return to face-to-face meetings, while still others proposed either a hybrid format or a rotation between online and in-person meetings. “I do believe that the WSM needs to be in person, but I also would support a hybrid WSM. This could be to support delegates with health reasons or to ease the financial burden for some countries. It would be a choice made by countries/delegates,” one respondent said, echoing the comments of several delegates. There were also suggestions from various quarters to have committees meet in advance of the meeting to make the work of the full WSM more efficient, particularly for online meetings where respondents felt it difficult to sit in front of a computer and concentrate for long stretches of time. Some made suggestions on improving the ability for delegates to communicate one-on-one in a virtual format with clear instructions on how to use breakout rooms and providing contact information for all delegates to: “improve the possibility of our fellow members interacting via smartphone chats,” as one respondent put it.



**Comments or suggestions:**

Find a way to focus the General Sharing sessions to focus less on personal experience and more on big questions and issues in A.A. that many countries are facing. Include a presentation from a Class A WSM delegate on the experience of a Class A or offer a breakaway session for Class A trustees. If meeting online, don't move with the camera on during the meeting. When people move or go somewhere it shows disrespect and that this event is not so important — better to turn the camera off.

**Literature**

A few respondents had suggestions about A.A. literature, on the one hand that communications about literature and licensing should be more responsive and quicker, and on the other that there be some means of soliciting input from the WSM or structures outside U.S./Canada for “significant” changes to A.A. literature. “All countries rely on literature from AAWS, whether in the English/Spanish/French versions created by GSO/NY, or translations of those versions,” noted one delegate. Another suggested: “While still respecting the autonomy of each structure, the WSM could be used as a sounding board for issues or literature changes that could affect the World of A.A. The feedback from the WSM would not be a directive to AAWS, however, it could serve as an additional Group Conscience to be added to the considerations of the U.S./Canada structure.”

**Financing**

Another popular topic among respondents was financing and the World Service Meeting Fund, which since the 26th WSM has been used to cover WSM deficits that previously had been absorbed by the U.S./Canada service structure. “If GSO in New York is in financial difficulties, you should admit it to all countries and ask for help. I am sure many will transfer as much as possible,” one respondent said. “This WSM was wonderful, under the circumstances. We are grateful for the U.S./Canada support in both coordinating the WSM, which

is no small feat, but also for the financial support through a contribution to the WSM Fund,” another delegate noted, reflecting sentiment expressed by several. “The awareness of the fund was raised this time, and I pray that U.S./Canada continue to be able to support the WSM as a service to the global Fellowship, of course, while raising awareness of the need for contributing to the WSM Fund.”

Several comments praised the efficiency and diplomacy of the staff, while the majority just expressed gratitude for being able to participate. “My personal opinion is that the meeting was very well planned. I was able to live and feel spirituality in action,” one delegate said.







# Delegates to the 27th World Service Meeting

49 Countries | 75 Delegates

## Argentina

Roberto R. (1st Term)

## Australia

Brian F. (1st Term)  
Gregory B. (2nd Term)

## Belarus

Dimitry K. (1st Term)

## Belgium (Flemish-Speaking)

Claude D. (1st Term)

## Bolivia

Milton H. (2nd Term)

## Brazil

Ana Elisa L. (1st Term)  
Maria Z. (2nd Term)

## Bulgaria

Nevena B. (1st Term)  
Iliana T. (2nd Term)

## Central America/ Southern Zone

Orestes A. (1st Term)

## Chile

Juan José O. (1st Term)

## Colombia

Alfonso O. (1st Term)

## Cuba

Orestes S. (1st Term)

## Czech Republic

René F. (1st Term)

## Denmark

Asger J. (1st Term)  
Svend H. (2nd Term, Alt.)

## Dominican Republic

Pennina A. (1st Term)  
Alexander C. (2nd Term)

## Ecuador

Bolívar R. (1st Term)  
Jaime B. (2nd Term)

## El Salvador

Miguel P. (1st Term)

## Finland

Laura K. (1st Term)

## French-Speaking Europe

Marie-Paule M. (1st Term)

## German-Speaking Europe

Guido H. (1st Term)  
Karin F. (1st Term)

## Great Britain

Justin T. (1st Term)  
Stephen S. (2nd Term, Alt.)

## Greece

Stamatina C. (1st Term)

## Guatemala

Jorge I. (2nd Term)

## Hong Kong

Alexandra S. (1st Term)

## Iceland

Karl S. (1st Term)  
Gísli K. (2nd Term, Alt.)

## India

Lokesh B. (1st Term)  
Nagadura A. (2nd Term)

## Iran

Nabi A. (1st Term)  
Gholamreza (Reza) V. (2nd Term)

## Ireland

Tom D. (1st Term)  
Moirá S. (2nd Term)

## Italy

Rita M. (1st Term)

## Japan

Masaya O. (1st Term)  
Douglas G. (2nd Term)

## Latvia

Andris K. (1st Term)  
Ilze K. (2nd Term)

## Lithuania

Elena S. (1st Term)  
Marius L. (2nd Term)

## Mexico

Miguel B. (1st Term)  
Gonzalo M. (2nd Term)

## Mongolia

Tserennyam (Tsegii) D. (1st Term)

## New Zealand (Aotearoa)

Christine H. (1st Term)  
Steve K. (2nd Term)

## Norway

Julienne L.L. (1st Term)

## Paraguay

Rodrigo B. (2nd Term)

## Peru

José F. (1st Term)  
Daniel G. (2nd Term)

## Poland

Izabela A. (1st Term)  
Tadeusz C. (2nd Term)

## Portugal

Leonor P. (1st Term)  
Ivo C. (2nd Term)

## Russia

Anastasia A. (1st Term)  
Uliana M. (2nd Term)

## Slovakia

Peter R. (1st Term)

## Slovenia

Zdravko Z. (1st Term)

## South Africa

Frank G. (1st Term)  
Varoshini N. (2nd Term)

## Spain

Agustín S. (1st Term)  
José F. (2nd Term)

## Sweden

Lars D. (1st Term)  
Ray L. (2nd Term)

## U.S./Canada

Marita R. (1st Term)  
Trish L.N. (2nd Term)

## Ukraine

Oleksandr S. (2nd Term)

## Uruguay

Daniel B. (1st Term)

## Venezuela

Sergio V. (1st Term)  
Juan C. (2nd Term)

## GSOs and Literature Distribution Centers

### Argentina

*Oficina de Servicios Generales*  
Aranguren 728  
1405 Ciudad de Buenos Aires, Argentina  
Service Office: (54) 11-43251813  
Email: osg@aa.org.ar  
Website: www.aa.org.ar

### Australia

*General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous*  
*Australia*  
48 Firth Street  
Arncliffe NSW 2205, Australia  
Service Office: (61) 2-9599-8866  
Email: gso@aa.org.au  
Website: www.aa.org.au

### Austria

*Anonyme Alkoholiker*  
Barthgasse 5  
Vienna, Austria 1030  
Service Office: (43) 1-7995599  
Email: info@anonyme-alkoholiker.at  
Website: www.anonyme-alkoholiker.at

### Belarus

*Belarusian Alcoholics Anonymous Service Centre*  
Kalinovsky str. 6-19  
220103 Minsk, Belarus  
Phone/FAX: (375) 17-395 83 50  
Email: oo\_csaa@tut.by  
Website: www.aabelarus.org

### Belgium

*Conseils des Services Generaux des Alcooliques*  
*Anonymes/CSGAA (French Speaking)*  
Rue des Pieds D'alouette 42-B  
5100 Naninne (Namur), Belgium  
Phone: (32) 2-5114030  
Helpline: (32) 7-8152556  
Email: bsg@alcoholiquesanonymes.be  
Website: www.alcoholiquesanonymes.be

### Belgium

*Algemeen Dienstbureau A.A. (Dutch Speaking)*  
Grote Steenweg 149  
Antwerp, Belgium 2600  
Service Office: (32) 3-2391415  
Email: info@aavlaanderen.org  
Website: www.aavlaanderen.org

### Belize

*A.A. General Service Office of Belize*  
114 Cemetery Road  
Belize City, Belize  
Phone: (501) 600-3796  
Email: aabelize.org@gmail.com  
Website: www.aabelize.org

### Bolivia

*Junta de Servicios Generales de A.A. de Bolivia*  
Barrio Gualberto Villarreal  
Calle Las Petas, Edificio Olga  
2330, 1er Piso, Dpto. No. 5  
Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia  
Service Office: (591) 3-3329720  
Email: osgbolivia@yahoo.com  
Website: www.alcoholicosanonimosbolivia.org

### Brazil

*Junta de Serviços Gerais de Alcoólicos Anônimos do Brasil (JUNAAB)*  
Rua Padre Antonio de Sa  
116-Tatuape  
Sao Paulo, Brazil 03066-010  
Phone/FAX: ( 55) 11-32293611  
Email: gerencia@esg.aa.org.br  
Website: www.aa.org.br

### Bulgaria

*Central Service Office of A.A. Bulgaria*  
71 Zahari Knyajeski Str., office 14  
Stara Zagora 6000, Bulgaria  
Phone: (359) 887-399-887  
Email: aabulgaria@abv.bg  
Website: www.aa-bg.info

### Chile

*Oficina de Servicios Generales*  
Bellavista No. 0330  
Providencia  
Santiago, Chile  
24 Hr Phone: (98) 260-10-46  
Service Office: (56) 22-7771010  
FAX: (56) 22-7779013  
Email: gerencia@alcoholicosanonimos.cl  
Website: www.alcoholicosanonimoschile.cl

### Colombia

*Oficina de Servicio General*  
Calle 50 #46-36  
Oficina 310  
Edificio Furatena  
Medellín, Colombia  
Service Office: (57) 4-2517887  
FAX: (57) 4-2316458  
Email: corporacionaa@une.net.co  
Website: www.aacolombia.org

### Costa Rica

*Oficina de Servicios Generales*  
Paseo Colon  
Avenidas 1 y 3, Calle 22  
Costado Este Esc. Juan Rafael-Mora Porras  
San José, Costa Rica  
Service Office: (506) 2222-52-24  
Email: aaosgcr@gmail.com  
Website: www.aacostarica.org

### Cuba

*Oficina de Servicios Generales*  
Calle 19 #954  
Entre 8 y 10 Vedado  
La Habana, Cuba 10400  
Cell: (53) 533-98629  
Email: aacubaosg@gmail.com

### Czech Republic

*Sdružení pro služby Anonymním alkoholikům v CR*  
Kancelar Anonymních alkoholiků  
Ambrozova 729  
Hradec Kralove,  
Czech Republic 500 02  
Phone: (420) 773-138-303  
Email: international@aamail.cz  
Website: www.anonymnialkoholici.cz

### Denmark

*A. A. Hovedservicekontor*  
Thorsgade 59, 3.tv.  
2200 Kobenhavn N, Denmark  
National Number: (45) 7010-1224  
Phone/FAX: (45) 3581-8531  
Email: aa@anonyme-alkoholikere.dk  
Website: www.anonyme-alkoholikere.dk

### Dominican Republic

*Oficina de Servicios Generales*  
Calle Beller  
Esquina Sully Bonelly  
Santiago, Dominican Republic  
Phone: (809) 583-0351  
Email: osgparard@gmail.com

### Ecuador

*Oficina de Servicios Generales*  
Lorenzo de Garaicoa 821  
2do Piso Oficina 208  
9 de Octubre y Victor Manuel Rendo  
Guayaquil, Ecuador 090150  
Service Office: (593) 4-2309023  
Phone/FAX: (593) 4-2312882  
Email: osg@alcoholicosanonimos.org.ec  
Website: www.alcoholicosanonimos.org.ec

### El Salvador

*Oficina de Servicios Generales*  
16 Av Norte y 25 Calle Oriente  
Casa No. 10 Colonia Magaña  
Barrio San Miguelito  
San Salvador 1123, El Salvador  
Phone: (503) 2225-9526  
Phone: (503) 2225-1430  
Email: osgdeelsalvador@hotmail.com  
Website: aaelsalvador.org

### Estonia

*Eesti AA Teenindusbüroo*  
*(General Service Office A.A. of Estonia)*  
Lastekodu 6A  
Tallinn, Estonia 10115  
Phone: (372) 529-9955  
Email: teenindus@aaestonia.com  
Website: www.aaestonia.com

### Fiji

*General Service Office A.A. Fiji*  
77 Grantham Street  
Suva, Fiji  
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Email: info@aafiji.com  
Website: aafiji.org/

### Finland

*Suomen A.A. Toimisto*  
Kylänevantie 2  
00320 Helsinki, Finland  
Phone: (358) 9-8387040  
Email: aa@aa.fi  
Website: www.aa.fi

### France

*Services Generaux A.A.*  
29 Rue Campo Formio, 75013 Paris, France  
Helpline: (33) 9-69-394020  
Service Office: (33) 1-48-064368  
Email: bsg@aafrance.fr  
Website: www.alcoholiques-anonymes.fr



## GSOs and Literature Distribution Centers (cont'd)

### Germany

Anonyme Alkoholiker Interessengemeinschaft e.V.  
Waldweg 6  
Gottfrieding Unterweilnbach  
Germany D 84177  
Phone: (49) 8731-325730  
FAX: (49) 8731-3257320  
Email: sekretariat@anonyme-alkoholiker.de  
Website: www.anonyme-alkoholiker.de

### Guatemala

Oficina de Servicios Generales  
11 Ave No. 12-48, Zona 2,  
Colonia Ciudad Nueva  
Guatemala  
Guatemala 1002  
Service Office: (502) 2254-6565  
Business: (502) 2288-5139  
Email: osg@aaguatemala.org.gt  
Website: www.aaguatemala.org.gt

### Honduras

Oficina de Servicios Generales de A.A.  
Barrio La Hoya, Casa 901  
Primera Calle, una cuadra abajo  
De Funeraria La Auxiliadora  
Tegucigalpa MDC  
Honduras  
Phone/FAX: (504) 2238-7930  
Email: osgdehonduras@yahoo.es  
Website: aainformacionhonduras.net

### Hungary

Felepulok Egesszegugyi Anonim Egyesulete  
Rózsafa utca 4  
Budapest 1134  
Hungary  
Phone: (36) 1-2510051  
Email: info@anonimalkoholistak.hu  
Website: www.anonimalkoholistak.hu

### Iceland

National Service Office of A.A.  
Tjarnargata 20, Reykjavik, Iceland 101  
Service Office: (354) 551-2010  
Business: (354) 562-8812  
FAX: (354) 562-8814  
Email: aa@aa.is  
Website: www.aa.is

### India

India General Service Office  
Bharat Shatrughna Com. Complex  
Office 116 ABC above hotel  
Sector-18 Sanpada  
Navi Mumbai, India 400 703  
Service Office: (91) 86550-55134  
Phone: (91) 80970-55134  
Helpline: (91) 90227-71071  
Email: info@aagsoindia.org  
Website: www.aagsoindia.org

### Iran

General Service Office of Iran Alcoholics  
Anonymous  
Shahid Fahmideh Blvd  
106 Shalchi St.  
Karaj, Iran 3135694915  
Phone: (98) 2 63-273-3069  
FAX: (98) 263-273-1137  
Email: iran00@gmail.com  
Website: www.iranaa.org

### Ireland

General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous  
Unit 2, Block C  
Santry Business Park  
Swords Rd  
Dublin, Ireland D09 H584  
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FAX: (00353) 1-8420703  
Email: gso@alcoholicsanonymous.ie  
Website: www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie

### Israel

A.A. Israel Central Service  
Tel Aviv  
Service Office: 072-393-2500  
Email: contact@aa-israel.org  
Website: www.aa-israel.org/

### Italy

A.A. Alcolisti Anonimi Servizi Generali  
Via Di Torre Rossa 35  
Scala B Int. 1B  
Rome 00165, Italy  
Phone: (39) 06-6636629  
FAX: (39) 06-6628334  
Toll Free: (39) 800-411-406  
Email: info@aaitaly.it  
Website: www.alcolistianonimitalia.it

### Japan

Japan General Service Office  
Tsuchiya Building 3-F  
4-17-10 Ikebukuro  
Toshima-ku  
Tokyo, Japan 171-0014  
Phone: (81) 3-35905377  
FAX: (81) 3-35905419  
Service Office: gsoj-int@ric.hi-ho.ne.jp  
Website: www.aajapan.org

### Kazakhstan

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Email: hello@aaorg.kz  
Website: aaorg.kz

### Latvia

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Riga, Latvia LV-1055  
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Email: aa@aa.lv  
Website: www.aa.org.lv

### Lithuania

Lithuania A.A. Service Office  
J. Basanavicius a. 16  
Birstonas, LT-59211 Lithuania  
Helpline: (370) 685-05191  
Service Office: (370) 3-1945141  
Email: info@aalietuvoje.org  
Website: www.aalietuvoje.org

### Malta

General Service Committee A.A. Malta  
66 Archbishop Street  
Valletta, Malta  
Hotline: (356) 79-239264  
Phone: (356) 21-239264  
Service Office: info@aamalta.org.mt  
Website: www.aamalta.org.mt

### MERCAA

Middle East Regional Committee of Alcoholics  
Anonymous  
Phone: (971) 567881416  
Email: mercaame@gmail.com  
Website: http://mercaa.com/

### Mexico

Central Mexicana de Servicios Generales de A.A.  
Huatabampo No. 18, Colonia Roma Sur  
CDMEX-Ciudad de Mexico,  
Mexico C.P.06760  
Phone: (52) 55-52642588  
FAX: (52) 55-52642166  
Email: cintnacional@aamexico.org.mx  
Website: www.aamexico.org.mx

### Mongolia

GSO Mongolia  
Chingeltei district, 2 khoroo,  
Ikh toiruu, Rentalon LLC bld, 300A  
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia  
Phone: (976) 11-351-056  
Email: gso@aa.org.mn  
Website: www.aa.org.mn

### Netherlands

Algemeen Diensten Bureau A.A. Nederland  
Statenweg 20  
Rotterdam, Netherlands 3039 HP  
24 Hr Hotline: (31) 851-045-390  
Phone: (31) 10-243-0175  
Email: adb@aa-nederland.nl  
Website: www.aa-nederland.nl

### New Zealand/Aotearoa

A.A. NZGSO Office  
Unit 2, 30 Downer St  
Lower Hutt, New Zealand 5010  
Phone/FAX: (64) 4-4724250  
FAX: (64) 4-4724251,  
24 Hr Hotline: (64) 800-229-6757  
Email: nzgso@aa.org.nz  
Website: www.aa.org.nz

### Nicaragua

Oficina de Servicios Generales  
Costado Sur del Colegio Maria  
Mazzarello, Barrio Altigracia Casa #8  
Managua, Nicaragua  
Service Office: (505) 2266-2022  
Cell: (505) 7869-3517  
Email: aaosgdenicaragua@hotmail.com  
Website: www.aaosgdenicaragua.wix.com/inicio

### Norway

Stiftelsen Anonyme Alkoholikere I Norge  
Servicekontoret  
Hammersborggata 20, 0181 Oslo, Norway  
Phone: (47) 22-46-89-65  
Answering Service: (47) 911-77-770  
Email: servicekontoret@anonymealkoholikere.no  
Website: www.anonymealkoholikere.no

### Panama

Oficina de Servicios Generales  
Avenida Central-Espana Perejil  
Edificio Rafael, 1er Piso, Oficina 103  
Panama City, Panama  
Service Office: (507) 225-3585  
Email: aadepanama@hotmail.com  
Website: www.aapanama.org

## GSOs and Literature Distribution Centers (cont'd)

### Paraguay

*Oficina de Servicios Generales de Alcoholicos Anonimos del Paraguay*  
Carmelo Figueredo y Juan A. Rodas  
Barrio Mbachio-Villa Policial  
Ciudad de Lambare, Paraguay  
24 Hr Phone: (595) 098-3847093  
Phone/FAX: (595) 21-907805  
Service Office:  
osg-alcoholicosanimosparaguay@hotmail.com  
Website: www.alcoholicosanimos.org.py

### Peru

*Asociación Junta de Servicios Generales de Alcohólicos Anónimos del Perú*  
Av. Mariscal Caceres 295A  
Oficina 201, 2 piso  
Surquillo, Lima, Perú  
Service Office: (51) 1-447-8666  
Email: gerenteaa.osgperu@gmail.com  
Website: www.aajunta.org.pe

### Poland

*Fundacja Biuro Sluzby Krajowej A.A. W Polsce*  
ul. Piękna 31/37  
00-677 Warszawa, Poland  
Phone/FAX: (48) 22-828-04-94  
Email: aa@aa.org.pl  
Website: www.aa.org.pl

### Portugal

*Associação de Serviços Gerais de Alcoólicos Anónimos de Portugal*  
Praca D Miquel I, 3-C  
Sto Antonio dos Cavaleiros,  
2660-310 Portugal  
Service Office: (351) 21-7167840  
Helpline: (351) 21-7162969  
Email: info@aaportugal.org  
Website: www.aaportugal.org

### Romania

*Asociatia Biroul de Servicii Generale ale Alcoolicilor Anonimi din Romania*  
Beclean str IL Caragiale nr 4  
425100 Jud Bistrita  
Nasaud, Romania  
Hotline: (40) 770-225522  
FAX: (40) 364-780214,  
Service Office: (40) 731-114440  
Email: gsoromania@alcoolicianonimi.ro  
Website: www.alcoolicianonimi.ro

### Russia

*Central Service Bureau of A.A. in Russia (CSB AA of Russia)*  
15 Semenovskiy Pereulok, Room 218  
Moscow 107023, Russia  
Service Office: (7985) 448-29-80  
Email: rsoaa@rsoaa.ru  
Website: www.rsoaa.ru

### Slovakia

*Zdruzenie Pre Sluzby Anonymnym Alkomolikom Misijny Dom*  
Kalvaria 3, Nitra, Slovakia 949 01  
Service Office: (421) 37-6516235  
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alkoholici-anonymni@alkoholici-anonymni.sk  
Website: www.alkoholici-anonymni.sk

### Slovenia

*Društvo AA Slovenija*  
Linhartova cesta 13  
Ljubljana, Slovenia 1000  
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Email: info@aa-slovenia.si  
Website: www.aa-slovenia.si

### South Africa

*General Service Office*  
28 Hennie Alberts Street  
Brackenhurst, Alberton, South Africa 1448  
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FAX: 27 (088) 011-867-5950  
Email: gso@aasouthafrica.org.za  
Website: www.aasouthafrica.org.za

### South Korea

*Korea A.A. Office*  
5F, Jung Woo Bldg  
Yeongsin-ro 20-gil 6, Yeongdeungpo-gu  
Seoul, Republic of Korea  
Service Office: (82) 2-833-0311  
Phone: (82) 2-774-3797,  
FAX: (82) 2-833-0422  
Email: aakoreagso@gmail.com  
Website: www.aakorea.org

### Spain

*Oficina de Servicios Generales de A.A.*  
Avda Alemania 9-3 Izda  
Aviles Principado de Asturias  
Asturias, 33400 Spain  
Service Office: (34) 629-317-868  
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Email: aa@alcoholicos-anonimos.org  
Website: www.alcoholicos-anonimos.org

### Sweden

*A.A. Servicekontor*  
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121-63 Johanneshov, Sweden  
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Email: service@aa.se  
Website: www.aa.se

### Switzerland

*Anonyme Alkoholiker Schweiz*  
Grebelaekerstrasse 32  
Zurich CH-8057, Switzerland  
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Service Office: (41) 44-3701383  
Email: info@anonyme-alkoholiker.ch  
Website: www.anonyme-alkoholiker.ch

### Switzerland

*A.A. Suisse Romande Et Italienne*  
Route des Arsenaux 3C  
Fribourg CH-1700, Switzerland  
Phone: (41) 22-344-33-22  
24 Hr Hotline: (41) 848-848-846  
Service Office: info@asri.org  
Website: www.asri.org

### Taiwan

*GSO Taiwan*  
8F-6 #189 Sec2 RD, Keelung  
Taipei City, Taiwan 11054  
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Email: aataiawangso@gmail.com  
Website: www.aataiwan.org

### Trinidad and Tobago

*General Service Office*  
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### Turkey

*Turkey General Service Office*  
Korut Reis Mahallesi  
Ilkiz Sokak No 22/8  
Çankaya  
Ankara, Turkey  
Service Office: (90) 532 341 00 99  
Email: ghosekreter@adsizalkolikler.com  
Website: www.adsizalkolikler.com

### Ukraine

*Ukrainian Service Centre of A.A.*  
8A Meterorytny Lane  
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Website: www.aa.org.ua

### United Kingdom

*General Service Office of A.A.*  
P O Box 1  
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York, United Kingdom YO1 7NJ  
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FAX: (44) 1904-629091  
Email: gso@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk  
Website: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

### United States

*U.S./Canada General Service Office*  
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New York, NY 10115 USA  
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Tel: (212) 870-3400  
Email: international@aa.org  
Website: www.aa.org

### Uruguay

*Fundacion A.A. Del Uruguay*  
Calle Coronel Brandzem  
1956 piso 1, oficina 104  
Barrio Cordón  
Montevideo, Uruguay 11200  
Service Office: (598) 2-400-3501  
Email: osg@alcoholicosanimos.org.uy  
Website: www.alcoholicosanimos.org.uy

### Venezuela

*Oficina de Servicios Generales*  
Avenida Universidad  
Esq Coliseo a Corazon de Jesus  
Edificio J.A. 4to Piso, Ofc. 42  
Caracas, Venezuela 1010  
Service Office: (58) 212-543-2286  
Phone: (58) 212-541-8894  
Service Office: osg.aadevenezuela@gmail.com  
Website: www.alcoholicos-anonimos.org.ve/

## WORLD SERVICE MEETING ACCOUNTING HISTORY

	27th WSM 2022	26th WSM 2020	25th WSM 2018	24th WSM 2016	23rd WSM 2014	22nd WSM 2012	21st WSM 2010	20th WSM 2008
	VIRTUAL*	VIRTUAL*	DURBAN	RYE	POLAND	RYE	MEXICO	NYC
	Actual Unaudited	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
Delegate Fee	\$1,000	\$500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,100	\$1,100	\$1,100	\$1,100
<b>Income</b>								
Delegates Fees	\$49,617	25,621	66,022	77,998	51,257	64,284	57,200	64,900
Additional Contributions	\$0	0	48,750	68,486	72,117	44,009	27,240	71,897
Transfer from WSM Fund to cover delegate fees.	\$24,359	8,878						
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$73,976</b>	<b>34,499</b>	<b>114,772</b>	<b>146,484</b>	<b>123,374</b>	<b>108,293</b>	<b>84,440</b>	<b>136,797</b>
<b>Expenses</b>								
Technical Assistance	\$25,936	14,958	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gratitude in Action	\$0	4,485	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transportation — Delegates	NA	NA	50,596	20,879	44,687	40,689	33,219	33,170
Hotel Expenses	NA	NA	121,558	228,075	166,549	204,553	168,123	243,341
New York Staff Expenses	NA	NA	66,922	1,017	5,812	13,018	23,040	9,328
WSM Report	TBD	1,950	13,000	10,580	7,425	6,970	13,243	12,831
Other Expenses/Binder (Manual and Editorial, etc.)	\$35,680	17,088	63,734	46,649	31,458	36,739	33,691	35,941
Simultaneous Interpretation	\$12,360	4,380	15,150	21,957	26,137	18,826	18,718	19,525
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$73,976</b>	<b>42,861</b>	<b>330,960</b>	<b>329,157</b>	<b>282,068</b>	<b>320,795</b>	<b>290,034</b>	<b>354,136</b>
Deficit	\$0	8,362	216,188	182,673	158,694	212,502	205,594	217,339

Note: In 2021, \$8,361 was transferred from the WSM Fund to cover the 26th WSM deficit. Prior to the 26th WSM, the U.S./Canada service structure covered WSM deficits.

## 27 WSM List of Delegates by Committee

### Agenda (19 Members)

#### First Term

Anastasia A. (Russia)  
Karin F. (German-Speaking Europe)  
Frank G. (South Africa)  
Christine H. (New Zealand/Aotearoa)  
Laura K. (Finland)  
Dimitry K. (Belarus)  
Julienne L.L. (Norway)  
Juan José O. (Chile)  
Peter R. (Slovakia)  
Orestes S. (Cuba)  
Agustín S. (Spain)

#### Second Term

Gregory B.\* (Australia)  
Alexander C. (Dominican Republic)  
Juan C.\*\* (Venezuela)  
Daniel G. (Peru)  
Svend H. (Denmark-2nd alt.)  
Jorge I. (Guatemala)  
Stephen S. (Great Britain-2nd alt.)  
Iliana T. (Bulgaria)

### Literature/Publishing (19 Members)

#### First Term

Lokesh B. (India)  
Nevena B. (Bulgaria)  
Daniel B. (Uruguay)  
Stamatina C. (Greece)  
Tom D. (Ireland)  
Claude D. (Flemish-Speaking Belgium)  
José F. (Peru)  
Asger J. (Denmark)  
Ana L. (Brazil)  
Marie-Paule M. (French-Speaking Europe)  
Leonor P. (Portugal)  
Roberto R. (Argentina)  
Sergio V. (Venezuela)

#### Second Term

Doug G.\* (Japan)  
Steve K. (New Zealand/Aotearoa)  
Gisli K. (Iceland-2nd alt.)  
Uliana M.\*\* (Russia)  
Varoshini N. (South Africa)  
Oleksandr S. (Ukraine)

### Policy/Admissions/Finance (19 Members)

#### First Term

Izabela A. (Poland)  
Nabi A. (Iran)  
Miguel B. (Mexico)  
Tsereniyam D. (Mongolia)  
Guido H. (German-Speaking Europe)  
Andris K. (Latvia)  
Alfonso O. (Colombia)  
Masaya O. (Japan)  
Bolívar R. (Ecuador)  
Elena S. (Lithuania)  
Alexandra S. (Hong Kong)  
Justin T. (Great Britain)

#### Second Term

Nagadura A. (India)  
Ivo C. (Portugal)  
José F. (Spain)  
Trish L.\* (U.S./Canada)  
Ray L. (Sweden)  
Moira S.\*\* (Ireland)  
Maria Z. (Brazil)

### Working With Others (18 Members)

#### First Term

Orestes A.  
(Central America Southern Zone)  
Pennina A. (Dominican Republic)  
Lars D. (Sweden)  
René F. (Czech Republic)  
Brian F. (Australia)  
Rita M. (Italy)  
Miguel P. (El Salvador)  
Marita R. (U.S./Canada)  
Karl S. (Iceland)  
Zdravko Z. (Slovenia)

#### Second Term

Jaime B. (Ecuador)  
Rodrigo B. (Paraguay)  
Tadeusz C.\* (Poland)  
Milton H. (Bolivia)  
Ilze K. (Latvia)  
Marius L. (Lithuania)  
Gonzalo M. (Mexico)  
Gholamreza (Reza) V. (Iran)

\*Indicates Committee Chair    \*\*Indicates Committee Alternate



# The Twelve Traditions

**1.** Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

**2.** For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

**3.** The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

**4.** Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

**5.** Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

**6.** An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

**7.** Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

**8.** Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

**9.** A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

**10.** Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

**11.** Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.

**12.** Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



# The Twelve Concepts for World Service

**I.** Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

**II.** The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.

**III.** To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A. — the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives — with a traditional “Right of Decision.”

**IV.** At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional “Right of Participation,” allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

**V.** Throughout our structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

**VI.** The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.

**VII.** The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.

**VIII.** The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.

**IX.** Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.

**X.** Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.

**XI.** The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.


**XII.** The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.









A network diagram with various icons representing communication, technology, and community. The icons include a coffee cup, a house with a briefcase, a globe, a person at a computer, a Wi-Fi symbol, a person at a desk with a dog, a house with a laptop, a person at a computer with a shield, a mouse, and a person at a computer with a screen. The icons are connected by lines, forming a network.

“A VAST COMMUNICATIONS NET NOW COVERS THE EARTH, EVEN TO ITS REMOTEST REACHES. GRANTING ALL ITS HUGE PUBLIC BENEFITS, THIS LIMITLESS WORLD FORUM IS NEVERTHELESS A HUNTING GROUND FOR ALL THOSE WHO WOULD SEEK MONEY, ACCLAIM AND POWER AT THE EXPENSE OF SOCIETY IN GENERAL. ... THEREFORE NOTHING CAN MATTER MORE TO THE FUTURE WELFARE OF A.A. THAN THE MANNER IN WHICH WE USE THIS COLOSSUS OF COMMUNICATION. USED UNSELFISHLY AND WELL, THE RESULTS CAN SURPASS OUR PRESENT IMAGINATION. SHOULD WE HANDLE THIS GREAT INSTRUMENT BADLY, WE SHALL BE SHATTERED BY THE EGO DEMANDS OF OUR OWN PEOPLE—OFTEN WITH THE BEST OF INTENTION ON THEIR PART. AGAINST ALL THIS, THE SACRIFICIAL SPIRIT OF A.A.’S ANONYMITY AT THE TOP PUBLIC LEVEL IS LITERALLY OUR SHIELD AND OUR BUCKLER. HERE AGAIN WE MUST BE CONFIDENT THAT LOVE OF A.A., AND OF GOD, WILL ALWAYS CARRY THE DAY.”

—Bill W., *“Freedom Under God: The Choice Is Ours,”*  
AA GRAPEVINE, NOVEMBER 1960

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