

## **World Service Board**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The World Service Board (WSB) has three primary functions. First, it coordinates assistance for emerging N.A. communities, either by linking those young communities with more mature ones, coordinating development workshops, or making translation and production services for N.A. literature available for those communities which are not capable of supporting their own. Second, the board helps safeguard the integrity of the N.A. message, both in the course of reviewing translations and adaptations of existing N.A. materials, and in reviewing new materials developed by national communities. And third, the world board serves as a liaison between N.A. as a whole and other international organizations, whether they be professional, business, government, or press agencies. The World Service Board is assisted in its work by the staff of the World Service Office, for which the board is responsible.

### **INTERNATIONAL GATHERINGS**

The World Service Board hosts N.A.'s **World Assembly**, a world sharing session, every three years. Attending are delegates from the various national service conferences around the world, along with representatives of less-developed national communities. Participants share their country's service challenges and solutions with one another, and discuss issues of broad importance to the development of Narcotics Anonymous around the globe.

The board also hosts the **World Convention** for Narcotics Anonymous. Held every five years, the convention is a fellowshipwide recovery celebration. Proceeds from the convention go to support the World Service Board's international development activities.

### **HOW THE BOARD IS ORGANIZED, AND HOW IT WORKS**

The World Service Board for Narcotics Anonymous is a corporation established to serve on behalf of the entire N.A. Fellowship. The full board meets at least once a year, though it may meet more often. Its members are elected from nominees offered by established national N.A. communities, and its general officers are elected by the board itself from among those members. The officers serve between full board meetings as an executive committee, overseeing the ongoing work of the World Service Office in carrying out the board's policies.

The world board has a minimum of twelve voting members. Members serve three-year terms, and may serve more than one term. Each established national

service conference is entitled to nominate at least one voting member to the World Service Board.<sup>1</sup> A newly-established national conference may send a non-voting representative to the board; once that national conference has been in existence for five years, it may nominate a voting member to the World Service Board.<sup>2</sup> The participation of non-voting representatives of new conferences on the board helps the WSB better support these new service bodies as they develop into full maturity.

The world board has the ability to recognize *associate members*--representatives of those national N.A. communities which have not yet developed to the point of being able to support a national service system of their own. Though associate members do not vote in meetings of the World Service Board, they do have a voice and may share the concerns of the fellowship in their countries.

The authority to perform services affecting N.A. worldwide is delegated to the World Service Board by the various national conferences, and the board is directly accountable to them. However, in the words of our Seventh Concept of Service, the WSB has "the ability to determine which decisions fall within [its] own defined authority and which will be brought back to the [national conferences] for further consultation." The board reports its activities in its newsletter, the *World Service Quarterly*, mailed to registered participants of all the national service conferences.

### SERVICES TO DEVELOPING NATIONAL COMMUNITIES

One of the primary responsibilities of the World Service Board is to provide basic development services to young and growing national N.A. communities. Sometimes, that means putting trusted servants in young N.A. communities in touch with more developed national N.A. communities nearby, so that service and recovery experience can be passed along. The board organizes workshops for new service committees forming in countries without a national service structure. These workshops are usually conducted by experienced N.A. members from neighboring countries.

The board also provides limited material support to developing national communities. The WSB assists service committees in these countries in translating and adapting existing N.A. recovery and service literature. It keeps a small stock of translated literature on hand at the World Service Office, and, when necessary, provides such material to brand new N.A. communities at little or no cost. When a national service structure approaches the point where it can print and distribute literature itself, the World Service Board helps make the necessary arrangements.

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<sup>1</sup> Should only four national communities have established national service conferences by the time the Guide goes into effect, then each of the four will nominate three candidates for service on the world board. Should six conferences exist, each will nominate two members. Should twelve or more exist, each member-conference will have only one seat on the board.

<sup>2</sup> All national service conferences existing at the time the International Service Charter goes into force will be eligible to nominate at least one voting member of the World Service Board. The provision for a probationary period for new national conferences shall apply only to conferences established after the charter goes into effect.

## THE AUTONOMY OF NATIONAL COMMUNITIES

The International Service Charter for N.A. describes the foundations upon which our fellowship maintains its identity from nation to nation. The charter offers simple descriptions of each element of the service structure, from group to world, broadly applicable to the way Narcotics Anonymous conducts itself in any country. Also included in the charter are the philosophical cornerstones of the N.A. Fellowship: our Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts for Service. The International Charter describes the barest essentials which a national recovery community must abide by in order to be recognized as a part of our worldwide fellowship. Beyond what is described in the charter, a national N.A. community is entirely free to develop on its own, in a way consistent with its national culture, geography, language, and law.

## TRANSLATING AND ADAPTING EXISTING N.A. LITERATURE, AND DEVELOPING NEW MATERIAL

All N.A. literature--including the N.A. Basic Text, *A Guide to Service in Narcotics Anonymous*, and our book on the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, *It Works: How and Why*--is copyrighted by the World Service Board, and is held in trust by the board on behalf of the entire fellowship worldwide.<sup>3</sup> The board charges a nominal royalty fee for the right to reprint N.A. literature; those royalties provide the vast majority of the funds the WSB needs for its development work.

Each national community is encouraged to translate and adapt existing Narcotics Anonymous recovery literature and service aids to meet its own needs. To insure that challenges in the translation process can be met before they develop into crises, indigenous service boards and committees engaging in the translation and adaptation of existing N.A. materials are encouraged to contact the WSB through the World Service Office as early in the process as possible. Translated and adapted literature, once complete, must be submitted to the WSB for review prior to publication, to insure consistency with the original material and with the International Service Charter.

National communities are also encouraged to develop new literature of their own. The only requirement regarding development of such material is that it be consistent with the International Charter. As is the case with translated and adapted materials, new literature developed independently by the various national communities must be submitted for review to the World Service Board prior to publication, to insure consistency with the charter. Once reviewed, the national community which developed the new material is free to publish it. The World

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<sup>3</sup> The World Service Board also maintains ownership of the fellowship's registered trademarks, including the name Narcotics Anonymous and its translated forms and the various N.A. logos.

Service Board will copyright the new material and hold it in trust for use by the entire N.A. Fellowship.

From time to time, conflicts may arise from a World Service Board decision concerning a new or translated piece of N.A. literature and its consistency with the International Charter. In such cases, a special arbitration panel will attempt to settle the conflict. The panel, whose members are selected at the World Assembly, is composed of five national delegates, each from a different country. Should the panel's attempts at reconciliation prove unsuccessful, the matter will appear on the agenda of the next World Assembly, and the decision then arrived at will be final.

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