

**WSC AD HOC COMMITTEE ON  
NA SERVICE  
OCTOBER 1992 REPORT**

Our last report to conference participants was contained in the September issue of the *Conference Report*. In that report, we presented our plans to have a small group of members meet and develop an outline for the national/world services chapter(s) of *A Guide to Service in Narcotics Anonymous*. It was our hope that, presenting the resulting outline to the World Service Board of Trustees and the WSO Board of Directors, receiving their input, and the results of the questionnaire sent out earlier, would provide us with sufficient guidance for our development of the material.

The small group met in the middle of August and developed a brief outline detailing a unified structure for world services. The plan was then mailed out to the WSB, the WSO board, and the WSC Policy Committee. At the September meeting of the WSB, the outline was presented and input was received during an eight hour period. The following weekend the outline was also commented on by the WSO board during their meeting. The leadership of the policy committee was present during the trustee meeting and provided some input as did some other members of the committee. In the meantime, the responses to the questionnaires were tallied and a limited quantitative analysis was conducted on the answers received. It is worth noting that the two hundred surveys mailed to conference participants generated 193 responses, 63 from world service participants and 130 from local-level trusted servants. This response is certainly greater than those generated by other surveys or similar requests for input.

We met as a full committee during the first weekend of October. In addition to our regular committee members, Jorge M. of Colombia and Paul T. of Spain were also in attendance to help us with our work. The first day of our meeting was spent reviewing the proposed outline and the responses to the survey. In reviewing the responses, it quickly became apparent to us that we may have inadvertently misled the fellowship about our desire to encourage the formation of a US national conference.

The responses seemed to indicate that over two-thirds of the world service participants who replied were in favor of the formation of a US conference. When we started to discuss possible reasons for this, two primary reasons were cited. First, the way the questionnaire posed questions, keeping in mind the Spring 1990 draft of the *Guide* which included an addendum on a US national conference and, second, our lack of clarity within our reports about where we as a committee stood on the issue. In retrospect, it became clear that we should have informed the fellowship that we were not all in favor of such a level of service for the US. As a committee we were clearly divided on the issue when

we developed the draft for release in 1990, but felt a need to include it in an effort to obtain input. As a result of these discussions, we agreed that we need to offer a formal apology to the fellowship if we did, in fact, infer that we were in favor of the formation of a US national conference.

While we certainly have had some significant discussions about the topic prior to the release of the Spring 1990 edition, we have never been able to reach consensus on any of the basic issues. Some of those issues included: What would a US conference do--would it be a deliberative, action-oriented body or a more discussion-oriented meeting focusing on ways to deliver services within the US? What would the World Service Conference then do? What would be the basis for representation at the world level if there was a US conference? What type of funding would be needed for the WSC and where would it come from, considering that the vast majority of the funding for world services currently comes from the US fellowship? How would worldwide development of NA occur? What would happen to our World Service Office if an action-based US conference were in place? These were just a few of the questions we could not conclusively answer and why we could not, therefore, finish the national and world sections of the *Guide*.

At our October meeting, the committee decided to recommend that no American conference be created, and that world services continue to serve NA in every country as they do now. We recognize that, right now, there is no coherent program for delivering services affecting NA in the US nationwide. However, we believe that the fragmentation of our world services into independent arms (WSO, trustees, conference committees), not the lack of national focus in the US, is responsible for poor US service coordination. We are convinced that consolidation of world service administration--that is, the establishment of a single effective point of decision and accountability for world services when the WSC is not in session--is the most important step we can take to ensure creation and effective delivery of NA services in the US and elsewhere worldwide.

The committee, in good conscience, could not encourage the creation of an American conference. We believe that creating a US conference would put the Americans farther and farther away from exposure to world development issues, making them less and less able to include worldwide NA unity-and-common-welfare issues among their top priorities. Under current circumstances, a US conference would probably undercut our worldwide fellowship's efforts to fulfill our primary purpose. We do not, however, wish to see the possibility of an American conference precluded forever. If circumstances change significantly in the future, we can change our service structure--but only when the circumstances have actually changed.

Having decided to recommend no US/world split, the committee then moved on to the issue of what the world service structure would look like. The committee unanimously approved the idea of consolidating world services. A

consolidation model includes a board with a committee system and possibly one or two subsidiary corporations handling those issues currently dealt with by the WSO and the World Convention Corporation. During discussions about the consolidated model, it became apparent that some legal advice was needed about the value of having one board with subsidiary corporations or one board with committees instead. It is our plan to obtain advice on issues such as: Is it possible for a corporation to hold the fellowship intellectual property in trust, but delegate the day-to-day management of the trust to its subsidiary corporation? If there is only one incorporated entity, what are the possible ramifications of suit being brought against a convention managed by a portion of that corporation? What protection would having one board offer to the parent organization (WSC)? What is the extent of personal liability? What is the liability for those individual board members who did not participate in the making of the decision from which the liability was incurred?

One of the decisions that the committee did make and which will be reflected in the *Guide* is that the body acting as the trustee for the property trust will not be participating in those decisions that may affect the trust. The committee also decided that on matters that directly affect the groups, such as the approval of literature, only the groups' elected representatives (RSRs) will be voting. Other similar issues include the steps, the traditions, and the name and nature of the fellowship. On a similar note, the committee decided that representation at the conference would continue to be along regional lines, while recognizing that, for some localities, the term "region" may or may not be appropriate. The committee also agreed that the costs associated with the attendance of all conference delegates would be the responsibility of the conference instead of the local NA communities.

Depending upon the legal advice and further discussion, we decided that simplicity would be the most important feature of the committee system. The committee system we envision focuses on world level committees developing basic resources and establishing philosophical direction for each service field. These committees would essentially coordinate those services delivered by local committees worldwide, only occasionally delivering direct services themselves. These committees may be relatively small (in comparison to some of our current world service committees) but would have the ability to appoint ad hoc committees or "teams" to carry out specific tasks. The committees would be composed of board members and others from throughout the fellowship, perhaps conference delegates in some cases, or members of local service committees serving for specific periods on ad hoc committees.

In addition to subsidiary corporations or committees dealing with the publishing and distribution of literature and the world convention, four other committees would be needed. For lack of better names, these committees would be named Internal Affairs Committee, External Affairs Committee, Literature Committee, and Administrative Committee. The Internal Affairs

Committee would focus on those issues that face the fellowship internally while the External Affairs Committee would focus on the fellowship's interactions with society as a whole. The Literature Committee would focus on the development of new literature and translation issues.

Each committee and/or subsidiary board would have a delegate-review panel attached to it. These panels would serve much the same function as what is currently listed in the *Guide*, that is to provide an objective review of the work being conducted by the committee or board its attached to and also serve as a resource for that committee or board.

One of the proposals the small group brought to the committee was a two-year work cycle for the conference. We agreed wholeheartedly with this idea and believe that it will help the conference and the fellowship to be far more effective in its work by not being forced to complete a project within an extremely short time-frame if it is to be presented to the next conference. We noted that such a cycle would allow the conference to focus on making decisions every two years, but would still be able to meet every other year to hold discussions regarding issues of interest to the fellowship worldwide. Such a cycle would also allow for more opportunity for the delegate-review panels to examine and, if necessary, impact the work of the various committees and/or boards.

The format for the conference would be very similar to the model described in the addendum on US national services in the *Guide*, with the exception that conference actions would occur every other year instead of annually. The staff team was given instruction to ensure that this section of the new material be "user-friendly" describing how such a conference would work. The committee decided to also recommend that the world service conference be conducted in the "most commonly found" language annually, thereby allowing for the greatest participation possible.

The next item on our agenda was the topic of locally developed literature. The committee identified two types of literature that would fit into this category. First is the indigenous personal story for inclusion in the translation of the basic text which the committee endorses be approved on a local level. The second type is the adaptation of literature to unique cultural backgrounds. The committee felt that such adaptations should be reviewed for conceptual fidelity by the world committee dealing with literature. We will also include language in the *Guide* about resources available to local literature or translation committees. On a final note, the committee reiterated its desire to ensure that only the groups' or their designated representatives (conference delegates) vote on the approval or revision of conference-approved recovery literature.

The final item for discussion by the committee was the issue of zonal forums. After lengthy discussion, the committee decided to expand the section on multiregional cooperation in the regional chapter. A section focusing on multiregional forums hosted by world services will also be included in the world

service section of the *Guide*. Such forums would focus on discussions of delivering services on a local level, presentations regarding issues facing the fellowship worldwide, and the facilitation of meetings involving the representatives from neighboring NA communities.

The next meeting for the committee is scheduled for December 11-13, in Van Nuys. At that meeting, the committee will review the first draft of the newly developed chapter on world services, the generic chapter on national services, discuss whether or not to include a charter, and begin discussion of the introductory material. If any further information about the committee's work is requested, please write to or call the committee through the WSO.