

# From the World Board—Final Report on the Communications Task Force Project

## Introduction/Summary

Communications have always been a challenge in Narcotics Anonymous. This dates back to the beginning when NA was just a handful of members, then a handful of groups, before we had either a fellowship service structure or any “world services.” As we’ve become a truly worldwide fellowship—existing as of August 2000 as about 27,000 registered NA groups holding about 28,200 weekly meetings in 104 countries—our communication challenges have become more complex. NA is not standing still. Our most heartfelt desire is to carry the message to every addict who still suffers. We do this so that no addict anywhere need ever die from the horrors of active addiction without knowing the way out that we have found. This desire to share freely and gratefully the recovery we have found in NA is at the heart of our efforts to improve our communications. We share our experience, strength, and hope about recovery and service to help strengthen the NA unity upon which personal recovery depends. We foster unity through our communications to help keep our fellowship alive and growing. Our service communications help the service structure at all levels to hear the voice of the NA groups. This helps to ensure accountability, in keeping with our Ninth Tradition (“NA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”) Likewise, our Eighth Concept reminds us that “our service structure depends on the integrity and effectiveness of our communications.” In NA worldwide, we are constantly motivated by the vision that one day, every addict in the world has the chance to experience our message in his or her own language and culture and find the opportunity for a new way of life.

### **NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY STATEMENT**

#### **WHO WE ARE:**

NA World Services is comprised of the World Board, the World Service Office, and the World Service Conference.

#### **WHAT WE DO:**

NA World Services provides services supporting the unity of NA and facilitating the continuation and growth of NA worldwide.

#### **WHY:**

So that every addict in the world has the chance to find a new way of life.

#### **HOW:**

NA World Services achieves its purpose by always acting in accordance with the principles of our program, emphasizing honesty, trust, goodwill, and integrity. We use fair, fiscally sound, efficient, and effective decision-making, policies, and practices.

#### **WHERE:**

Internally: among our fellowship, conference participants, board and committees, and WSO staff. Externally: among the general public, treatment and correctional personnel, medical professionals, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and families.

Now, perhaps for the first time in NA’s history, NA World Services has tried to take a comprehensive look at our fellowship communication problems and begin a process with the board’s Communications Task Force Project to suggest some specific areas of communications activity and their respective shortcomings that will merit our focus and concentration. This report summarizes the problems uncovered to date. The Organizational Identity Statement above is one

tool we have developed to anchor our communications strategy. We hope this will help in attempting to communicate who we in world services are, what we offer, and how our members across the globe can most easily access our collective resources. Our findings indicate, in fact, that one of our most basic challenges is a need to communicate more effectively to improve the limited awareness and understanding that our members now have about the functions, services, and resources of NA World Services.

We have tried to make this report as simple to understand as possible, because we know this is what you want. The information we have researched, however, is complex. It is always challenging to try to simplify complex information and balance the needs of different audiences. Some want to know every last detail. Others only want the headlines. We have a number of different audiences in Narcotics Anonymous. We must do a better job of tailoring our written communications to the differing needs and interests of different parts of our fellowship. This is, in fact, one of the principle communication challenges this report highlights. We have tried here to strike a balance. This six-page executive summary contains only the highlights. A fifty-page version for conference participants contains all of the details of our research results. The addenda to this most detailed version of the report include:

- The detailed problem profile based on the CTF's research to date (Addendum A);
- Detailed background and history of the CTF and research overview (Addendum B);
- The questionnaire used in each of the eight focus groups worldwide and the quantitative survey results (Addendum C);
- The quantitative results from the WSC 2000 survey (Addendum D); and
- The results of the CAR 2000 workshop survey (Addendum E).

We have posted this summary along with Addendum A and Addendum B on our website, [www.na.org](http://www.na.org). It's also available on request from NAWS.

### ***This Report Is About Problems, NOT Solutions or Implementation***

This report covers seven basic areas of communications between NAWS and the fellowship as a whole: (A) Correspondence; (B) Internet; (C) Periodicals; (D) the *Conference Agenda Report*; (E) Products and Services; (F) Translations; and (G) the Worldwide Workshop System. Our Communications Task Force developed these categories as major areas of research. We are focused here on identifying perceived problems and putting them into context. Identifying solutions and implementing standards to improve NAWS communications with the fellowship are not the subject of this report.

But the problems and challenges identified in this report are rarely stand-alone, isolated problems. The danger of dividing these problems into these falsely separated categories,

#### **Concept Eight:**

“Our fellowship’s service structure is founded on the unity of our groups; to maintain that union, we must have regular communications throughout Narcotics Anonymous. Together, our groups have created a service structure to help them fulfill their common purpose. The effectiveness of the service structure depends on the continued unity of the NA groups, and on their continued support and direction. These things can only be maintained in an atmosphere of honest, open, and straightforward communication among all parties concerned.”

--From the booklet,

*Twelve Concepts for NA Service*

therefore, is that we may get lost in the details and miss the overall picture. That is to say, it may be tempting to try to tackle each identified problem without seeing the larger picture of how each of these difficulties relates to the others.

In essence, we suggest focusing on who we in NA World Services are, who we serve, and why, as the reference point of examining these problems. We haven't done such a great job in the past of keeping this in mind. In fact, when the CTF sat down to create an organizational identity statement (see page 1) to clearly focus on this—the CTF realized that it was the first time anyone had attempted to do so with regard to communication responsibilities in a very long time. We recommend using this NAWS Organizational Identity Statement as the touchstone for analysis of the identified problems and the development of their solutions.

## **Research: Focus Groups, WSC 2000 Survey, Staff Interviews**

We developed a focus group questionnaire, which we used at the eight focus groups held around the world. The eight groups met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Rockford, Illinois; Spokane, Washington; Mumbai (Bombay), India; Berlin, Germany; Montevideo, Uruguay; Calgary, Alberta, Canada; and Woodland Hills, California. We deliberately chose specific limited areas within a larger region in order to get a balanced mix of distinct communities (rural, suburban, urban—established and developing, etc.) In addition to the qualitative data we gathered at each individual workshop, each focus group generated an average of 17 individual questionnaires from members who participated in the groups, as well as a written narrative summary from staff and trusted servants attending those groups. The quantitative and qualitative results have been integrated into a problem profile narrative (Addendum A). However, for those wishing additional detail, the complete quantitative results (including the original survey used for the focus group participants) are available as Addendum C.

The planned setup for each eight-hour focus group was to have 20 participants total. Demographic considerations included mixing members who have various lengths of time clean with all types of service backgrounds (including no service structure experience); male and female; English-speaking and non-English-speaking. We also considered racial diversity, educational background, and work experience where appropriate. Overall, the methodology of the focus groups was not perfect. The survey instrument was originally designed as a way of recording and capturing the data from each focus group uniformly, not as a questionnaire for quantitative or statistical data. Caution should also be used in generalizing the results from the focus groups to the entire fellowship in a literal way. Nonetheless, we believe we have gathered some highly relevant and useful input from the fellowship.

We also conducted a survey of the WSC 2000 conference participants. We did this because the regional delegates are actually the main audience for various WSC publications. We also wanted to find out what perceptions regional delegates thought members in their local region had about NAWS communications. We thought this would give us some basis for comparing points of agreement and disagreement between the perceptions of the delegates versus the perceptions of the focus group participants—and it has. The details about that survey are available as Addendum D.

The information gathered here mostly represents various communities' *perceptions* about our communications. By communities we mean members

### ***Improving Communications Is Everybody's Business:***

Staff, management, the board, its committees, the conference, and the fellowship at large will all be involved and will have to work together and engage in genuine dialogue to make lasting and effective changes in NAWS communications.

at the group level, trusted servants among our fellowship, regional delegates and their alternates, and so on. To find out whether you are communicating successfully, you have to find out how the people you are trying to communicate with *perceive* that communication. We have tried to ask: “Are we communicating effectively?” The perceptions of the members we are trying to communicate with are the best judge of the effectiveness of our attempts to communicate, from their perspective. This may seem unscientific or like a liability to some. But we aren’t trying to prove the existence of these problems, scientifically or statistically. We suggest judging these problems based upon our fellowship’s collective experience and common sense.

The contents of this report aren’t especially encouraging, but we also don’t think our findings are especially surprising. This report confirms a truth we already knew—we have significant challenges before us in our ongoing efforts to improve world services’ responsiveness to our membership. This is especially true in the areas of service-related communications and our members’ general awareness of the availability of services and information. We’ve found that most of our members really have little or no idea what NA World Services is or what services are provided. Nearly all of the identified problems grow out of this major reality. But the specific problems are not by any means “smaller” ones.

For example, it’s evident that the fellowship does not understand the finances of NA World Services, what services cost and where the money to pay for them comes from, the limits of NAWS current resources, and the areas where we are unable to provide needed services due to lack of resources. Our shortcomings in communicating about resource needs have a huge impact on the willingness of the NA groups to contribute funds to the service structure in general and directly to NA World Services in particular. Of about 27,000 registered NA groups worldwide (according to our imperfect database records as of August 2000), fewer than 500 groups (less than 2%) chose to make direct contributions to NAWS. However, at the same time, there has been a 400% increase over the last five years in the number of groups making direct contributions. This is a very encouraging trend. Still, it highlights how far we have to go to put the finances of NA World Services on the most stable and desirable foundation in existence: direct Seventh Tradition contributions from the NA groups themselves rather than indirect and less stable income derived from either literature sales or events. Poor communication about money in world services is just one aspect of the fellowship’s limited understanding of the who, what, how, and why of NA World Services, but the effectiveness of our communications about finances strikes at the heart of the integrity and effectiveness of our service structure.

## ***So, What’s This All About?***

This report identifies and discusses 29 specific and significant fellowship communication problems. In examining all of these communications challenges, we want to remain focused on the bottom line. Simply put, most, maybe even all, of our fellowship communication difficulties add up to a very simple truth: *We’re not serving our members as well as we could be.* When members don’t know what products and services are available from world services, they aren’t being served as they should be. When addicts with special needs don’t have access to products or services that meet their needs, those members aren’t being served as well as they could be. When our members can’t understand our service-related communications, we must strive to make them more understandable. When service committees don’t understand how to contact world services or aren’t aware of what products and services are available to help them with their service efforts, we must strive to do a better job of raising that knowledge and awareness.

These communications problems, perhaps as much or more than any other thing world services does, affect our members at their home group level. It’s our number one priority to communicate more effectively with our members regarding both the products and services we

provide and all pertinent service information. By doing so, NA can remain a vital, growing, and well-informed worldwide fellowship—connected by the knowledge, information, and power contained in our literature, our products, and our services.

**So, What's the Problem? — “What we have here is a failure to communicate.”**

The last page of this summary lists the 29 problem statements from the problem profile report (Addendum A). Members lack knowledge and awareness of world services' functions and services. There are difficulties with both the NAWS voicemail system and with NAWS telephone callers being shuttled around from one staff person to another to get the help desired. Members have limited world convention awareness, don't understand world services communications, and are often unable to participate in NAWS efforts to gather fellowship input through surveys. And in the area of the Internet, unknown and limited member access raises questions about how to integrate Internet communications into NAWS overall strategy.

In the area of publications, we see a need to reexamine the unity of the entire NAWS periodicals program. We've found very limited member awareness of existing periodicals, lack of agreement how easy they are to read, and problems with the identified audiences for various periodicals and the overall level of complexity/language used in service communications. Distribution is also a serious problem due to unreliable or incomplete mailing lists. Historically, much of our service communications have relied on indirect communications passed through multiple levels of the service structure—from NAWS to the regions to the areas to the NA groups. But this indirect system has its own set of limitations due to breakdowns and bottlenecks along the route. We examined one particularly important service periodical separately: the *Conference Agenda Report*. Much of the fellowship does not even know what the *CAR* is. The *CAR* (if known about at all) is often perceived to be difficult, uninteresting, and/or irrelevant. A related problem is the lack of knowledge regarding how to engage in effective fellowshipwide discussions. At the same time, our members want to talk about a very large number of discussion issues. This may also be a communication problem in itself because of fellowship confusion about the whole WSC issue discussion process.

In the area of NAWS products and services, our members want a large number of new products and services. Also, some perceive that some existing products and literature are outdated. Our members also lack an understanding of the translations process, which is really just another example of an area where members misunderstand NAWS functions and services. And regarding the worldwide workshop system, we found no clarity regarding the purpose(s) of the workshops, and no consensus as to how often they should occur. Finally, we found an overall lack of understanding of world services' limited resources.

***The Communication Standards Project (July 2000 - June 2002)***

The board will work in partnership with staff to refine the problem profile (as required) over the next two years. Although some staff and executive management have had significant impact on the development of the problem profile (Addendum A), others have not yet had much involvement. It will be desirable for other key staff to review and contribute ideas as the Communication Standards Project unfolds. Together we will develop recommendations to deal with the identified problems and then begin to implement new communication standards as time and resources permit.

**Goal Eight of the Fellowship Development Plan:**

“Improve world services' written and face-to-face communication with the fellowship.”

## **The Problem Statements** (see Addendum A for problem discussion)

Here are 29 problems (in no particular order), divided among the seven categories of research:

### **Correspondence/Direct WSO Contact:**

- #1: Members' limited awareness of world service functions/services.
- #2: Members' lack of understanding of world service communications.
- #3: Members' lack of knowledge of specific world services contact information.
- #4: Difficulties with the NAWS voicemail system and frustrations with front-desk call-routing.
- #5: Other barriers to contacting NAWS: members' negative experiences, feelings of fear/intimidation, and/or distrust.
- #6: Additional non-US difficulties contacting NAWS.
- #7: Limited awareness of world conventions.
- #8: Surveys are hard to understand and harder to access.

### **Internet:**

- #9: Unknown and limited member access to the Internet raises questions about the efficiency and effectiveness of efforts to integrate Internet communications into NAWS overall strategy.
- #10: Lack of usage/access to NAWS website ([www.na.org](http://www.na.org)).
- #11: Lack of agreement about what the NAWS website's functions should be.

### **Periodicals:**

- #12: Need to re-evaluate the coherence of the periodicals program (including the purpose/philosophy and the function(s) of the program overall and of each component periodical).
- #13: Audience(s) may not be appropriately matched for each periodical in terms of audience interests, desire for access, use of language, publication length, and level of detail (or complexity).
- #14: Awareness of periodicals is low and access is limited.

- #15: Service-related information is too complicated or uninteresting to NA members.
- #16: Lack of agreement about the ease of understanding of periodicals.
- #17: Unreliable or incomplete mailing lists (database accuracy problem).
- #18: The breakdown in NAWS communication, filtered through the layers of the service structure—from the regions to the areas to the groups to the NA members.

### **The Conference Agenda Report:**

- #19: Lack of awareness and/or use of the *Conference Agenda Report*.
- #20: Service issues in the *CAR* are too complicated.
- #21: Lack of understanding about how to participate in fellowshipwide discussion.
- #22: The diverse range of topics members hope to see discussed fellowshipwide.

### **Products and Services:**

- #23: The large number of pieces of new literature and products focus group participants would like to see developed.
- #24: The large number of "special needs" literature products members would like to see developed.
- #25: Some products and services are outdated.

### **Translations:**

- #26: Communities that are not directly involved in translations don't understand the needs and issues faced by communities that actually do translations with help from NAWS.

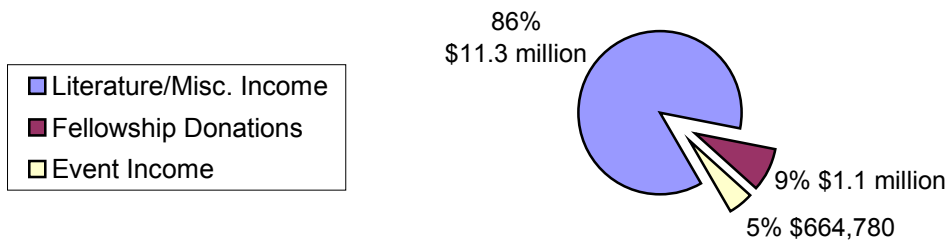
### **Worldwide Workshop Experiment:**

- #27: Lack of clarity regarding the purpose of experimental worldwide workshop system.
- #28: Lack of clarity as to how often worldwide workshops should occur.
- #29: Little understanding of world services' limited resources.

**A Snapshot of NAWs Resources Today:**

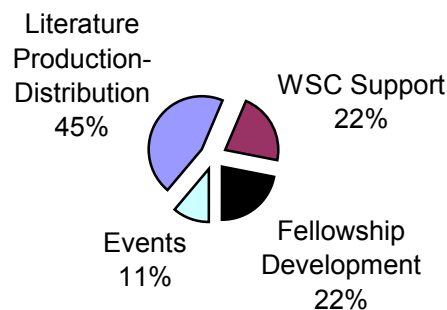
NA World Services now has a two-year consolidated budget system known as the Unified Budget. The Unified Budget now combines into one budget plan what once were three separate budgets for the World Service Office, the World Convention Corporation, and the World Service Conference. The budget matches the two-year conference cycle and covers the period from 1 July 2000 through 30 June 2002. The 2000 World Service Conference approved the 2000-2002 Unified Budget, which estimates total income of \$13,082,204 and total expenses of \$12,609,928 (with excess revenue projected at \$472,276).

**Where the Money Comes From (2000-2002):**



Where does the estimated \$13,082,204 in income come from? There are three main sources. The largest source (86%) is from the sale of recovery literature and other products. Income of \$11,291,502 is projected from this source, net of other miscellaneous income (which includes interest, shipping income, and both sales discounts and allowances and developmental subsidies). The second largest source is fellowship donations (9%). Fellowship donations are expected to account for \$1,125,923 during this period. The third and smallest source is event income (5%). Budgeted income from this source was projected at \$664,780 (this includes Unity Day, WCNA-28 in Cartagena and WCNA-29 in Atlanta).

**Where Your Money Goes (2000-2002):**



Projected expenses of \$12,609,928 are divided among four major budget categories: (1) Literature Production and Distribution (45%); (2) World Service Conference Support (22%); (3) Fellowship Development (22%); and (4) Events (11%).

# Addendum A

## THE PROBLEM PROFILE

The following problem profile is largely a report about the *perceptions* of the focus group participants and the WSC 2000 participants. Quantitative results have been incorporated throughout the problem profile from these sources. (Those results are also included separately in their full context as Addendum C, and Addendum D). Wherever figures do not add up to 100%, you should assume that the difference is due to blank or nonresponsive answers to those questions.

Again, we aren't trying to prove the existence of these problems, scientifically or statistically. Data of any kind always provides a basis for argument, and that is not our purpose. Our purpose is to shine a spotlight on perceived problems as a first step in a process of improving NAWS overall communications strategy and the quality assurance standards that make up that strategy. Our premise is that a well-defined problem is halfway solved. We suggest judging these problems based upon our fellowship's collective experience and common sense.

We have added background information and facts about NAWS operations, products, and services, as well as our own perceptions wherever we felt doing so would make this report more useful and understandable. You will find such "fact boxes" scattered throughout the report where we have also noted new developments since the focus groups occurred last year. (For example, when appropriate, we have noted new actions taken at WSC 2000.)

Addendum B (Overview of the History of the CTF) also provides additional background information about the CTF Project for those who wish more detail of this nature.

These 29 problems are not listed in any priority order. Most of these problems are interrelated.

### A. Correspondence/WSO Direct Interaction/General

#### Today's Reality:

Under this category of communication, we included all written communication by letter, fax, and email, as well as telephone calls to and from NA members, groups, and service committees around the world. The NAWS database (currently known to contain significant inaccuracies) shows about 27,000 registered NA groups worldwide holding around 28,200 weekly meetings in 104 countries. NAWS headquarters is divided into three main teams: Fellowship Services, Literature Production and Distribution, and Administration. There has been a steady increase in the volume of inquiries that the WSO responds to. In 1999, the Fellowship Services Team alone handled an estimated 15,300 inquiries (3,600 telephone, 5,000 emails, 500 regular mail, 6,000 H&I/PI inquiries, and 200 loner-related inquiries). In 1998, we reported that the Fellowship Services Team alone handled 11,000 such inquiries, up from 8,500 in 1997 (with an ever-growing proportion of the communication we receive now in the form of email). Moreover, the Production and Shipping Team processed about 12,500 shipments in 1999. (The Administrative Team is involved in a significant portion of additional fellowship communications relating to the World Service Conference and the world convention, among other matters.)



**Problem #1: Members' limited awareness of world service functions/services.**

One very central problem identified by the focus groups is the fact that most of our members at the group level don't know what world services' activities are, or what products and services are available from world services. This umbrella problem encompasses every problem in this report.

For example, when asked, "Do you know the functions/services at the WSO?" none of the members in Calgary claimed *specific* knowledge of those functions or services. Similarly, most addicts participating in the focus groups in Philadelphia claimed they weren't aware. The majority in Spokane, Washington and Rockford, Illinois also claimed very limited awareness. Interestingly, in Mumbai (formerly Bombay), Berlin, and Montevideo (Uruguay), many participants claimed some awareness. Nevertheless, most addicts in the Woodland Hills, California, focus group, who attend meetings within just a few miles of the WSO itself, claimed to be unaware or largely unaware of the functions and services of world services and the WSO. Although some members claimed awareness of some functions or services (literature distribution, for example), this does not undercut the reality that there is very limited awareness and even more limited understanding of the functions and services of NAWS.

These general perceptions from the focus groups of our members' essential lack of awareness are reflected in the WSC 2000 participant survey results as well. For example, 92% of conference participants described their region's awareness of world services' functions and services as either "moderately aware" (53%) or "largely unaware" (39%). Only 7% of participants said members in their region were "very aware" of world services' functions and services.

Most, if not all, of the problems that follow represent more specific examples of particular

NAWS functions and/or services that the typical member either doesn't understand, or isn't even aware of.

**Today's Reality:**

NAWS headquarters are in Chatsworth, California, and there are two additional branch offices for literature distribution. One branch office is in Europe (Brussels, Belgium). The second branch is in Ontario, Canada.

The CTF facilitators described NAWS functions/services to focus group participants as falling into three major categories:

1. Fellowship services: meeting information, database, group services, local service committee support, Spanish services, translations, conventions, and World Service Conference support.

2. Customer services: literature orders, RSOs, branch offices, production, inventory, shipping.

3. Other services: marketing, public relations, accounting, legal, Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust (FIPT) and vendor relations, website (network), World Board support, and Human Resource Panel support.

This is actually an arbitrary way to describe the organization of NAWS services. Another way of grouping these services is by the four categories of the NAWS Unified Budget: (1) Fellowship Development; (2) Literature Production and Distribution; (3) World Service Conference Support; and (4) Events (WCNA).

**Problem #2: Members' lack of understanding of world service communications.**

When asked, "How easy is it to understand the communication that comes from world services?" five focus groups indicated that these communications were generally understood by most NA group members. However, additional information from focus groups suggests that many members want to see a glossary of terms and acronyms included

with each world level communication. More conflicting still is the fact that five focus groups (exactly the same number that said communications were generally OK), said that the language world service uses needs to be simplified for NA members.

Ironically, the way we asked a number of questions on the focus group surveys was hard for members to understand. We asked, “How easy is it to understand the communication that comes from world services?” Only 35% of participants indicated that they found world services’ communications easy to understand. 12% gave a negative response. 18% gave a mixed response (some are easy, some are hard). But a very big 35% did not give a responsive answer to the question. The comments suggest that our question was not clear in defining exactly what we meant by the broad term, “communications.” This caused confusion.

WSC 2000 participants indicated that they believed only 31% of their region’s members found world services’ communications “very easy” or “moderately easy.” 66% found it “somewhat hard” to “very hard” to understand. On the other hand, we asked these same conference participants “How easy is it for you *personally* to understand the communication that comes from world services?” 72% said communications were “very easy” or “moderately easy” to understand.

The upshot of these numbers indicates that, while some members claim to be generally satisfied with the ease of understanding of these communications, in fact NA members are not finding world level communications as easy to understand as they would like them to be. To gain a fuller understanding of this issue, see the discussion of Problems 12-22.

***Problem #3: Members’ lack of knowledge of specific world services contact information.***

Focus group participants indicated that their primary source of world services contact

information was the address and phone number printed on our literature. They also identified, to a much lesser extent, local trusted servants, other members, literature order forms, NAWS home page on the Internet, the *NA Way Magazine*, and their local area service committee as additional sources of world services contact information.

In short, when asked “Why don’t more members present contact the WSO from the group level?” over three-fourths of the focus groups responded that the single biggest reason was a lack of awareness of *how* to contact world services and what services were available to members. In fact, the focus group surveys indicated that only 47% of focus group participants had had previous experience contacting the WSO. 53% had either had no prior contact or were unresponsive. Of those who had had contact, however, 79% said that contact had been helpful to them.

It may be a problem that more members have not been especially aware of these additional resources. However, a bigger problem plainly identified by many focus group participants was the absence of any specific resource that could serve as a simple directory of WSO staff members, their functions, and appropriate contact information. Members repeatedly suggested that some type of guide or brochure, regularly updated with each staff person’s extension number and accompanying functions within the WSO, would make contacting world services much easier, less intimidating, and ultimately more productive.

**Contact NA World Services at:**

PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409 USA

Phone: 818.773.9999

Fax: 818.700.0700

Internet: [www.na.org](http://www.na.org)

Email: [info@na.org](mailto:info@na.org)

**Problem #4: Difficulties with the NAWS voicemail system and frustrations with front-desk call-routing.**

The majority of focus group participants found the voicemail system at the office confusing and difficult to use. Other members (a minority) said the voicemail system at the office was helpful, however. (Of course, others simply had never used it and therefore weren't able to respond to the question.)

A number of participants also complained that their calls were misrouted by the operator to staff members and/or departments who were unable to help them and who had to transfer them to another department.

**Service Improvements:**

The new NAWS database has been designed to put more information at the fingertips of more staff throughout the office. We hope this will minimize the number of different staff and departments that callers will have to talk to in order to get some problems solved or some questions answered. However, it is inevitable to some extent that when members call with a number of different questions or problems, particularly complex ones, that a variety of staff may be involved in providing assistance. We are still training staff and working the bugs out of the new database, but we hope noticeable improvements in service will be obvious as we make use of the new features and capabilities our new database system offers.

**Problem #5: Other barriers to contacting NAWS: members' negative experiences, feelings of fear/intimidation, and/or distrust.**

Members listed a number of reasons why they thought more NA members don't contact world services. As mentioned previously, one reason focus group members guessed that other members did not contact world services more frequently was a basic lack of awareness

of the functions of world services and the services offered. The data also suggest other reasons why members felt others didn't contact world services more often. Some believed that this type of correspondence should be done via our service structure. Some members also expressed that they had simply never felt the need for such contact, that their local service committees were essentially meeting their needs.

More troubling, however, were those members who indicated previous negative experiences with contacting the office. Members in at least two focus groups felt that some of the information from some staff is not, based upon their past experience, reliable, in that some staff had expressed too many personal opinions while attempting to offer information or services to those members. This perception, along with a general fear of contacting "the world," caused members in at least four focus groups to feel intimidated about contacting world services. Clearly, every complaint and criticism merits our concern and may offer an opportunity to improve.

On the other hand, WSC 2000 participants rated their overall experience with world services at 7.98 out of a perfect 10. Even more encouraging, comments from focus group participants and from delegates at WSC 2000 suggest that the overall perception of world services is improving, a trend resulting in a climate where trust, confidence, and satisfaction are higher than in previous years.

**Problem #6: Additional non-US difficulties contacting NAWS.**

For non-US focus group participants, expense and a language barrier were considerable additional concerns.

Not surprisingly, a slightly lower level of satisfaction was found among those conference participants whose primary language was *not* English. On the question of overall satisfaction with world services, the non-English satisfaction level was 7.15 versus 8.16 out of a perfect 10 for those whose first

language is English. Again, the overall rating was 7.98. One reason this is not surprising is that NAWS provides fewer products and services to non-English members.

**The Way It Is Now:**

When NA members have conflicts in NA groups and/or area and regional service bodies, they sometimes turn to NA World Services for help. This is a basic function of Fellowship Services. When staff responds to these inquiries, every effort is made to treat every member with respect. Often, staff will share information over the telephone that is then taken back to the local community by the member(s) who called. The information that is given out is not always the same information that is perceived and/or delivered.

Staff members share factual information and other experience, strength, and hope that is relevant to the principles involved in the situation. Staff members always try to focus on sharing facts and experience of what has worked for others before and what hasn't. Staff routinely relies on approved recovery and service material. The same problems tend to occur time after time everywhere. Staff members always try to avoid personality disputes.

There are many times, however, when the essence of the problem is, in fact, a battle between personalities, where various factions in a conflict contact "the world" to try to get an answer that supports "their side." Often there is no right or wrong answer. NAWS carefully tries to avoid becoming a fighter in any local disputes of any kind. The basic policy is to try to help members work out such conflicts among themselves. After all, though all of us forget from time to time, we are all on the same side together in NA: "Our common welfare should come first—personal recovery depends on NA unity."

***Problem #7: Limited awareness of world conventions.***

The majority of focus groups agreed that information about upcoming world conventions

was readily available to our members. However, three groups out of eight found that this information was not as available as it should be. These numbers indicate that there is still room for improvement in increasing member awareness about the world convention.

**The Facts Are:**

The 28<sup>th</sup> World Convention will happen 31 August-3 September 2000 in Cartagena, Columbia.

WCNA-29 will occur in Atlanta, Georgia, 4-7 July 2002.

WCNA-30, our special celebration of NA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, will take place in San Diego, California, 3-6 July 2003.

WCNA-31 will happen in Honolulu, Hawaii, 1-4 September 2005.

Contact NAWS for more information.

***Problem #8: Surveys are hard to understand and harder to access.***

We asked about the availability and ease of understanding of world service surveys. One focus group indicated that the surveys were easy to understand, while another group claimed that the surveys were not easy to understand. The majority of members in four groups, however, indicated that they had not received the most recent survey (that addressing the future literature program sent out by the World Board in 1999) and therefore could not respond as to the relative ease of understanding.

Only 30% of WSC 2000 participants felt that surveys were accessible to most members. And 69% felt access was limited to only "some" or "none" of their region's members.

The perceptions of focus group and conference participants both indicate that our ability to survey NA groups and members is limited dramatically by our ability to get those surveys into the hands of NA members.

**Survey Says:**

The board sent out 35,000+ copies of a fellowshipwide literature survey in the first half of 1999 to get a general idea about future literature priorities. There were 2,339 responses.

Other surveys in the last year were directed at specific, limited audiences:

1. A short customer satisfaction survey sent (on a postcard) only to those NA groups who purchase directly from NAWS.

2. A literature distribution survey directed at area and regional literature committees and service offices in the US.

3. A similar literature distribution survey directed at non-US customers.

NAWS has four main sales policies, which was the reason for different surveys directed at measuring the particular needs of different customers under the various sales policies.

***Problem #9: Unknown and limited member access to the Internet raises questions about the efficiency and effectiveness of current and future efforts to integrate Internet communications into NAWS overall strategy.***

One of the difficulties regarding the growing interest in the Internet as a viable communication resource to world services is our uncertainty about the number of members who actually have Internet access. Three of the seven focus groups who responded directly to this question collectively indicated that most of their members had access, while three groups indicated that fewer than half of the members present had access. One group indicated that about half of the members had access. Overall, the focus group surveys indicated that 58% of the participants said they had Internet access. 42% indicated they had no access or were not responsive.

More telling were the WSC 2000 numbers. These indicated that only 34% of our members were thought to have access. The remainder were described as having “some or limited” access or “no” Internet access.

We simply have no hard data about our members’ level of access and usage of the Internet as a communication vehicle. This fact alone is unsettling, given much of what has been often heralded as a fresh and viable means of quick communication between world services and our members. Since there are limits to the resources NAWS can prudently devote to fellowship communications, we must carefully try to measure how resources devoted to Internet communications are balanced against other means of communication in terms of cost efficiency and effectiveness. Of course, there yet remains an obvious and growing need for the use of Internet technology as a communication resource for world services.

**B. Internet**

**NAWS on the Net:**

NA World Services has had a presence on the Internet for several years. Redesigned last year, the resources available on the current site, [www.na.org](http://www.na.org), have been growing steadily. The site contains basic information about NA, a wealth of service information (basic PI and H&I information, service bulletins, the World Pool resume form, the conference participant discussion bulletin board, and a variety of financial info). An editorial archive includes current and past issues of *The NA Way*, *NAWS News*, the *Conference Report*, and the *CAR*. You’ll also find old issues of the *NA Update* and *WSO at a Glance*, which are no longer published. The site also contains product information and news about upcoming world conventions and local NA events, local helpline phone listings, and the new international meeting locator (best used with the local helpline phone listings). We also now have a group registration form available that can be completed online (nothing to print, photocopy, mail, or fax).

**Find the Meeting(s) of Your Home Group Online Today:**

Check to see if meeting information for your home group is listed accurately in the NAWS online database. Register a new group or update meeting information for an existing group online. The online meeting locator is only as accurate as the information we have in the database. This is one of the most important communication challenges in our history. We need your help!

Please help us to have accurate information for the meetings you attend regularly. Our records as of August 2000 indicate that NA has about 27,000 groups holding around 28,200 regular weekly meetings in 104 countries. But we have no way of knowing how many hundreds of unregistered NA groups there are, or how many groups and meetings now in our database have actually gone out of existence, or changed meeting times, meeting locations, and/or mailing address/contact information. With your help, any addict seeking meeting information will be able to find current information on the nearest NA meetings whenever and wherever, anywhere in the world. Help us make this dream a reality! Help a newcomer find an NA meeting!

***Problem #10: Lack of usage/ access to NAWS website (www.na.org).***

Some might read the preceding estimates about Internet access positively (in terms of the overall percentage of members with access). However, only one focus group, as a group, indicated definite awareness of the www.na.org site, and of that group, less than half of the members present claimed regular use of that site.

Another telling figure is that of the seven focus groups responding directly to the question, all seven said fewer than half of the members present had ever used www.na.org. Overall, 65% of focus group participants in the individual survey said they were aware of the

website. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of all participants indicated that they had actually used the site. This may indicate a much lower average percentage of our members using the website than we might have expected by looking at the website numbers themselves.

Even though so few members from the focus groups apparently had used the site, those who had did so for many functions. These were (in descending order from number of mentions across focus groups): obtaining world convention and world service events information; seeking meeting information; seeking local contact information; keeping current on periodicals; sending email; reading service bulletins; obtaining H&I and PI information; receiving product information; and keeping up with world service reporting.

**—A cautionary note:**

The CTF does not wish to indicate any faith, necessarily, that these numbers are representative of our fellowship's access to and use of the Internet and www.na.org. The website is relatively new. Also, because of the increasing number of services available on the website, it's reasonable to assume that awareness of the website and its usage will continue to grow. We know, for example, that the recently added meeting locator is sparking widespread fellowship interest. Although we don't know for sure how many more people we are reaching through the site that we don't already reach through other existing communications channels, nonetheless every additional member that we do reach in this way, directly or indirectly, represents a net gain. To gain the maximum benefit at the most reasonable and effective cost, balancing the opportunities and challenges of Internet communications will be an ongoing process.

The bottom line with both problems nine and ten is we do not know what audience we are currently reaching with the website, nor do we know how the potential audience we could reach compares to our general membership or the other audiences we are already reaching with our non-Internet communications.

**Current Website Statistics:**

Figures for the most recent month available, June 2000, show 17,256 unique visitors who viewed over 100,000 NAWS web page impressions that month. Of course, traffic and use of the site goes up and down. The new international meeting locator has attracted additional visitors to the site.

**Online Shopping Cart Ordering Feature:**

Between now and the end of the year, we plan to roll out a new online shopping cart feature that will allow customers to order literature and other products online. We have received requests for this feature and are excited about the ability to offer this new service.

***Problem #11: Lack of agreement about what the NAWS website's functions should be.***

The last problem in this section has to do with the sheer number of ways in which focus group participants want to see Internet technology used by world services, and the lack of agreement as to how these services should be prioritized. The many suggestions for the website amount to a positive interest in and concern for this rapidly developing communication vehicle. However, the diversity of suggestions also is a problem, since world services will need to develop ways to prioritize these suggestions and their accomplishment.

Clearly there are major differences between what focus group participants suggested for the website versus conference participants. For example, the top item for conference participants (76% support) was to include archival and historical information, but this ranked near the bottom among suggestions from the focus group participants. On the other hand, the number one desire for focus group participants was to include online literature on the website, which is not consistent with the responsibilities NA World Services has under the Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust.

**Online Literature and the Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust:**

While focus groups participants mentioned having online literature on the website most often, no recovery literature is presently on the NAWS website. The reason for this is world services' responsibility to protect and preserve the fellowship's rights and interests in its literature. The fellowship has mandated this through the adoption of the Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust (FIPT). The board has sought advice from legal experts who specialize in the protection of intellectual property on the Internet. The advice we have received counsels us to avoid placing any copyrighted literature on the Internet in order to preserve the fellowship's interests.

This is also why we have repeatedly asked all members of the fellowship to avoid placing NA literature on either personal or local websites. We believe this is an area where our common welfare must come first. While we all share an enthusiastic and heartfelt desire to carry the NA message to the addict who still suffers, if we do not follow the best legal advice available to us now, the fellowship risks losing control of our written message as developed in our recovery literature.

Given the problem with survey access mentioned beforehand, it is also somewhat surprising that neither audience had much support for using the website to administer surveys relative to other uses for the site. (Here, the two audiences were closer to agreement, with this item ranking at the bottom among focus group participants, and only 37% of WSC participants supporting this option.)

**C. Periodicals**

**The NAWS Periodical Program Today:**

NAWS produces several different publications in an effort to provide frequent and regular written communications. Each publication has a specific distribution list. Sample copies are always available to any member by contacting the WSO (and some are on the website).

**The NAWS Periodical Program (continued):**

With a view toward providing some direction in this area, the CTF gathered the following information about world services' periodicals.

NAWS periodicals are divided into two main categories and budgeted for accordingly: general fellowship publications and World Service Conference publications.

The overall budget for publication expenses is \$430,750 for the next two years, excluding personnel costs associated with developing the publications. This \$430,750 represents about 3.5% out of approximately \$12,500,000 of budgeted expenses overall. On an annual basis, the total publications budget is half of \$430,750, or \$215,375. This represents a 45% increase from the one year 1999-2000 conference cycle annual budget of \$148,000.

**FELLOWSHIP PUBLICATIONS**

The three principle publications in this category are: *The NA Way Magazine*, *Reaching Out*, and *Meeting by Mail*. The combined annual budget for these three publications during the next conference cycle is \$134,375 per year, 62% of total publications expense. The old annual budget (1999-2000) for fellowship publications was only \$104,500—the budget was increased 29% for this conference cycle.

**WSC PUBLICATIONS**

The principle WSC publications are: *NAWS News*, the *Conference Report*, the *NAWS, Inc. Annual Report*, the *Quarterly Financial Report*, and the *Conference Agenda Report*. The combined annual budget for these publications during the next conference cycle is \$81,000 per year, 38% of total publications expense. The old annual budget (1999-2000) for WSC publications was only \$43,500—the budget was increased 86% for this conference cycle.

***Problem #12: Need to re-evaluate the coherence of the periodicals program (including the purpose/philosophy and the function(s) of the program overall and of each component periodical).***

The periodicals program represents the single largest sum of world services' communication expense, and, simultaneously, the single largest chance to reach our worldwide membership. The underlying problem here is that there is a need to re-examine the coherence of the existing periodicals program for world services in a way that best takes into consideration our fellowship's various audiences, information needs and desires, and geographical differences. The new *NA Way* has made great strides in providing an example (both in terms of the production schedule and the content and consistent philosophy). Nevertheless, it remains a problem that the entire periodicals program has not been coordinated to achieve maximum coverage of the fellowship's information wants and needs versus cost, distribution, and purpose of each publication.

One sentiment heard at many of the focus groups was surprise that so many periodicals were available from world services. While this raised the issue that members need to be made more aware of what is available to them, it also made many members question why we have so many periodicals in the first place. Some people felt that world services should combine most of our periodicals into one or two publications made more widely available to everyone.

This is an umbrella problem that ties together all of the problems in this periodical section, as well as the section on the *Conference Agenda Report* which follows. We suggest that the basic questions that need to be answered—first for the periodical program overall and then for each publication individually—are who, what, when, where, how, and why. The first question to answer, however, is about the program's purpose.



Answering this “why” question—the purpose and philosophy behind our periodicals program overall—will help guide the answers to the other questions. To whom (what audiences) are we trying to communicate? What message(s) are we trying to communicate? When (how frequently and on what schedule) do we need to communicate our intended messages to each audience to accomplish our stated purposes? Where do we need to deliver these periodicals (the methods of distribution, including the Internet)? Lastly, how do we pass on what we need to communicate—both in terms of the overall editorial process and the production/design process? The editorial process encompasses but is not limited to the writing and editing of each periodical and its style, tone, and voice, as well as how this process is coordinated between staff and the board and its committees. The production and design process includes how we produce each publication and takes into account the balance between the cost effectiveness of the periodicals program overall and the above objectives. Looking at all of these questions together will also necessitate re-examining whether our current periodicals program has the right priorities and/or whether communication priorities also need to change in order to address the problems recognized.

Re-examining the objectives of the periodicals program overall can then proceed to the next level of applying the information learned from answering these basic why, who, what, when, where, and how questions to each individual piece of the existing periodical program. This will allow a needed re-examination of each publication individually, as well as assessing how well each one works with the others to meet the objectives of the overall periodicals program. In this way, we will find out how well the parts of the existing periodicals program fit together in a coherent whole, where the gaps are, if any, and/or where there is overlapping redundancy and inefficiency, if any. Once this is accomplished, we should be able to see what existing standards in the current periodicals program might need to be modified and/or what new standards might need to be created.

### ***The NA Way Magazine***

The magazine publishes articles from the fellowship, feature articles, updates about new products available from NAWS, non-time-sensitive updates about general-interest world service activity, an events calendar, items about local NA communities, and a variety of other material.

Distribution is quarterly in January, April, July, and October in English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish. When new groups and service committee contacts register with NAWS, they can request the magazine by checking the box on the registration form. The magazine is also available upon request to any NA member or interested professional. The current circulation is approximately 27,000 copies per issue.

*The NA Way Magazine* seems to be the periodical most members are aware of, with 67% of WSC 2000 participants saying that they personally read the magazine either “always” or “most of the time.” When asked how they would rate the balance of articles and features about personal recovery versus service, news, and opinion articles, 83% agreed strongly or agreed generally that the balance was about right. WSC participants gave the magazine an overall quality and value rating of 8.14 score out of a perfect 10.

On the individual focus group survey, we asked participants: “Do you or your group receive *The NA Way*?” 54% responded positively. 22% answered in the negative. 18% gave a mixed response. And 6% did not answer.

As a result, *The NA Way* has an excellent reputation among our membership. However, it is certainly a problem if fewer than half of the focus group members either receive the magazine or even belong to groups that receive it. It seems that world services ought to do a better job getting this and other periodicals into the hands of our members.

### **Reaching Out**

*Reaching Out* is a newsletter for incarcerated NA members, prison libraries, correctional officials, and registered H&I committees. It is published in English four times a year—January, April, July, and October. This newsletter circulates to approximately 7,300 addresses each issue.

- ❖ *Reaching Out*, a periodical published six times a year for incarcerated addicts, received a value rating by WSC 2000 participants (based on the value of the publication to members in their home region) of 7.35 out of 10.
- ❖ 51% of focus group participants said they were not aware of *Reaching Out*. 45% said they were aware.

### **Meeting by Mail**

Published every other month in English, it contains the written sharing of members of the Loner Group. This periodical has existed since the mid-1980s so that NA members isolated by geography or circumstance have the opportunity to share with one another. Nonloners may participate in the Loner Group as sponsors, pen pals, and members. This publication cannot be sent to institutions. Each issue of *Meeting by Mail* goes to about 600 members.

- ❖ *Meeting By Mail*, a periodical published six times per year for geographically isolated addicts, received a value rating by WSC 2000 participants (based on the value of this publication to members in their home region) of 5.0 out of 10.
- ❖ 55% of focus group participants said they were not aware of *Meeting By Mail*. 42% said they were aware.

### **NAWS News**

*NAWS News* is a short, easily translatable report published several times each year. It was created to allow the World Board to report regularly, particularly after its meetings. Distribution is ordinarily to areas, regions, and conference participants in multiple languages.

- ❖ 56% of WSC 2000 participants believed that *NAWS News* is published in the appropriate frequency. 29% wanted to see it more frequently.
- ❖ 76% of WSC participants said that the level of detail in *NAWS News* was “just about right.” 14% felt that there was too little detail. 3% felt there was too much detail.
- ❖ 78% of WSC participants found *NAWS News* either “very easy” or “moderately easy” to read.
- ❖ 54% of focus group participants said they were not aware of *NAWS News*. 42% said they were aware.

### **The Conference Report**

The *Conference Report* is a periodic publication of the World Service Conference. This publication has evolved as a means of providing continuing information to conference participants about the activities of world services—the status of major projects, suggestions for new work, and problems that have been encountered. Through the *Conference Report*, the board is able to keep WSC participants informed of the progress on items that may eventually be contained in the *Conference Agenda Report*. Regional delegates may also provide reports to be included, subject to editorial review by the World Board. The frequency of publication may change from year to year. The schedule for each year is provided to conference participants ahead of time. The report is distributed to all conference participants. Any NA member, group, service board, or committee may purchase single and bulk subscriptions to this report from NAWS.

- ❖ 58% of WSC participants said that the *Conference Report* is published in the appropriate frequency. 38% wanted to see it more frequently.
- ❖ 68% of WSC participants said the level of detail in the *Conference Report* was “just about right.” 11% felt there was too little detail. 16% felt there was too much detail.
- ❖ 69% of WSC participants said that the *Conference Report* was either “somewhat hard” or “very hard” for members in their region to read.

### ***NAWS, Inc. Annual Report***

The *NAWS Annual Report* provides a summary of the activity of world services for the prior fiscal year and is released by the end of September. Distribution is ordinarily to regions and conference participants.

- ❖ 63% of WSC 2000 participants said the present format of the *NAWS Annual Report* is effective.
- ❖ 73% of WSC participants found the *NAWS Annual Report* either “somewhat hard” or “very hard” to read.
- ❖ These two figures may seem contradictory. But it appears that the perception that certain publications are “somewhat hard” to read does not lead to a perception that such publications are “ineffective,” possibly due to the complexity members expect.

### ***Quarterly Financial Report***

Conference participants receive the *Quarterly Financial Report*, which contains financial and travel information. We did not ask the focus group or the WSC participants about this periodical.

### ***Problem #13: Audience(s) may not be appropriately matched for each periodical in terms of audience interests, desire for access, use of language, publication length, and level of detail (or complexity).***

Focus group participants were confused as to how the mailing lists for each publication had been created, as well as how they might be able to get on the various mailing lists. A problem that needs to be addressed is the need to review and perhaps overhaul the lists based upon the various audiences who read our periodicals. This difficulty, of course, raises in turn the need to actually spend significant time and effort in determining whom, exactly, NA's various audiences are, and what communication means and methods best serve those audiences.

There now are separate streams of reporting. One is directed at our general membership. The other targets conference participants. It is not at all clear how successful we are in matching the desired type of information to the various interests of different members and NA communities. Members perceive various problems, often in contradictory ways. It seems these differences stem from these members having different needs and/or interests. These problems include: length of various periodicals, availability of a summary or digest, frequency and methods of distribution, amount of detail/background, complexity, use of language (including style, tone, and voice). Underlying these factors are the philosophy and purpose of each periodical, its separate budget, and then how each individual periodical taken separately and as one part of the greater whole fits into the overall periodicals program (and its total budget, overall philosophy, and overarching communication priorities).

### **NA Update**

One audience that is not really targeted by any of the existing periodicals is the community of interested professionals outside of the fellowship. At one time world services did produce a periodical known as the *NA Update*—now discontinued due to lack of resources. We asked conference participants what they thought about recreating such a periodical directed toward that audience.

- ❖ 79% of WSC 2000 participants felt that reviving a professional periodical such as *NA Update* would be either a “valuable” or a “very valuable” resource to their region. 14% felt it would not be very valuable.

### **Problem #14: Awareness of periodicals is low and access is limited.**

Lack of awareness about and/or accessibility to the periodicals is clearly a significant problem. We have noted our findings about the low levels of awareness about each periodical in the section above. This is another aspect of a coherent periodicals program, as is each interconnected problem in this section.

### **Problem #15: Service-related information is too complicated or uninteresting to NA members.**

One of the primary statements heard across the focus groups was that most NA members are simply not interested in world service issues and reporting. Significant effort has been made throughout the years to make world service communications more accessible and more understandable to NA members. However, it may be that world services needs to consider that: (1) service-related issues are only interesting to a relatively small minority of our members, and (2) the issues that NA members consistently express interest in (such as literature development) need to be highlighted at the group level. Moreover,

information about the issues NA members do find interesting may need to be better emphasized in world service communications to our groups.

### **Problem #16: Lack of agreement about the ease of understanding of periodicals.**

The ease of understanding of world service periodicals seems a confusing issue. On the one hand, four focus groups agreed that the periodicals were easy to understand, while one said they were easy for the most part, but some periodicals like the *Conference Agenda Report* were difficult. (The *CAR* is discussed separately in the next section.) Similarly, four groups agreed that the overall perception of world service periodicals was generally good, with special mention of satisfaction going out to *The NA Way*.

We asked WSC 2000 participants more in-depth questions about the *NAWS* periodicals program. Again, we've noted these above under each periodical. Thus, as stated in Problem #2, NA members seem to have much difficulty with acronyms, level of language, and, particularly in service-related reports, the level of complication regarding service matters and *CAR*-related information. Yet trusted servants, as represented in the pool of WSC participants, indicated a relative ease of understanding of world service periodicals. WSC participants themselves seemed to feel they had a better understanding of world services' communications than their fellow members. Where they consistently rated (as shown above) their general membership's understanding as incomplete, 72% felt that they themselves found world services communications either “very easy” or “moderately easy” to comprehend. Participants also indicated, however, that 67% felt that it was “somewhat hard” to “very hard” for them to explain world service reporting to their RSCs, ASCs, and the general membership. This ties into Problem #18 below.

It remains difficult to find out, therefore, what the actual level of ease of understanding

of our communications is among NA members at large. Some of the qualitative data suggests that how much background information members have about a given service topic or issue makes a difference in how easy it is to understand any specific communication. The diversity of our membership worldwide is a natural challenge. The constant influx of new members who are continually arriving and starting at ground zero in understanding the NA service structure and current issues certainly also represents an ongoing challenge in our service communications.

**Today's Reality:**

As mentioned above, we are very aware of the problems in this area and have continued to make an intensive effort to improve this situation, particularly the recent work to upgrade NAWS database system at a cost of more than \$350,000. We are still working on conducting the largest mass mailing in our history—to every currently registered NA group in the world—to update group and service committee information.

**Problem #17: Unreliable or incomplete mailing lists (database accuracy problem).**

Members suggested repeatedly during the focus groups that the perception of participants included skepticism regarding the NAWS mailing lists. Many members felt that periodicals and other information were not reaching NA groups and members because mailing lists were out of date, incomplete, or simply incorrect.

**World Board "Executive Summary:"**

We asked focus group and WSC 2000 participants how interested their group might be in receiving an executive summary of world service activities, and if so, how frequently.

- ❖ 67% of focus group participants said they would like to receive an executive summary from the World Board. 8% would not.

- ❖ 61% of WSC 2000 participants said they would like to receive an executive summary from the World Board. 32% would not.
- ❖ Of those WSC participants who said they wanted to receive an executive summary, it was felt that an average of three times per year was the appropriate publication frequency. Focus group participants wanted one 4.5 times per year on average.

We did not define, however, what an executive summary might be like. Many believe that we already have an appropriate summary in *NAWS News*. However, *NAWS News* does not go to every NA group, and some feel it is too long or contains the wrong information for a true summary that would be appropriate for direct communication with every NA group. This issue will require further study and consideration as part of examining the coherence of the entire periodicals program.

**Problem #18: The breakdown in NAWS communication, filtered through the layers of the service structure—from the regions to the areas to the groups to NA members.**

Focus groups were amazed and frustrated at the amount of information being distributed by world services that they had never seen before and often weren't aware existed. It's certain that some of the responsibility falls to world services to help improve that general awareness. But it is also true that, as one member put it, "our local communications through the service structure seem to break down. It's like the 'telephone game,' where people sit in a circle and pass a message from one person to the other around the room. By the time the message gets all the way around, it has either changed so much it's not the same message, or it just doesn't arrive at all."

WSC 2000 participants confirmed this reality in the CTF survey results. When asked to rate what they felt to be the effectiveness of service-related communication from the their region to their areas and groups, participants

said that 94% of that communication was only “somewhat effective” (56%) to “not very effective” (39%). The conflicting data suggesting that they perceived communications as easier for them to understand personally versus how easy it is for them to explain the same information to others is also relevant here.

In any case, focus group and WSC 2000 participants agreed that local communications seemed to be playing a major role in the breakdown of communication between world services and the NA member.

#### **D. Conference Agenda Report**

##### **The Conference Agenda Report:**

The *CAR* includes reports, proposals, and motions from the World Board and may include proposals or motions from regions. The report contains the proposals and motions that the fellowship is being asked to consider and form a fellowshipwide group conscience on for action at World Service Conference meetings every two years. The *CAR* also includes an easy-to-read glossary of terms. This has been an annual periodical, but with the change to a two-year conference cycle, NAWS will now publish it every two years.

NAWS distributes the *CAR* free to WSC participants and regions. One copy of the report is mailed to each voting participant of the conference, each RD alternate, and the mailing address of each region. NA members may purchase additional copies from NAWS.

The price established for the report varies depending on the cost of production. The *CAR* was sold for \$12.00 for WSC 2000.

The total distribution has averaged around 2,500 copies, plus a couple hundred additional copies have been downloaded from the NAWS website, where the *CAR* has been available the past two years *for free*. This limited response to the free distribution suggests that lack of awareness and/or lack of interest are the problems, rather than cost.

We describe the *CAR* and discuss problems related to it in a section different from the other periodicals only because we asked questions about it separately in the focus groups and at WSC 2000. Problems 12-18 apply to all the periodicals, including the *CAR*.

##### **Multiregional CAR Workshops:**

Each year the board has attended multi-regional *CAR* workshops to help WSC participants and interested members understand and use the *CAR*. The survey we did this year (see Addendum E) indicates that this face-to-face communication is effective and appreciated by those members who attend those workshops.

##### **Problem #19: Lack of awareness and/or use of the Conference Agenda Report.**

The biggest problem relating to the *CAR* is the large proportion of NA members and groups who are not even aware that this periodical exists and/or do not participate in the fellowshipwide discussion and decisionmaking processes it is intended to make possible.

- ❖ 87% of WSC 2000 participants found the *CAR* either “somewhat hard” or “very hard” to read.
- ❖ 59% of WSC participants said that the *CAR* should be used primarily for providing information for voting purposes. 38% did not. We asked this same question of the focus group participants. However, only 19% responded positively. 22% responded negatively. 17% gave a mixed response. And a whopping 42% of respondents gave no answer. From the comments on the forms, many of which were left blank, it is clear that this large percentage of members either didn’t know what the *CAR* was, or possibly didn’t care.
- ❖ 62% of WSC participants said that the *CAR* should be used as a tool for fellowshipwide discussion. 34% did not. But when we asked this same question of the focus

group participants, only 35% responded positively. 12% responded negatively. 18% gave a mixed response. And a whopping 36% of respondents gave no answer. Clearly, focus group members, despite being more involved in service than the general membership, had limited awareness of the *CAR*—and a different viewpoint than the *WSC* audience, which itself is far from reaching a consensus on the *CAR*.

### **Change the *CAR*?**

Whether the *CAR* itself is motion-oriented or issue-oriented has more to do with the effort the *WSC* has been making over the past couple of years to make the *WSC* itself more of an issue-discussion event that strives to use more consensus-building processes in any decision-making. The current *CAR* process presents fundamental obstacles to making consensus-building decisions about any ideas that are placed in the *CAR*.

When we asked focus group participants these questions about the *CAR*, there was clearly confusion about the questions, mostly because members obviously did not know what the *CAR* was, or how that process functions now. *WSC* participants are also far from reaching a consensus on changing the *CAR*, although they, unlike the focus group participants, are obviously aware of what the *CAR* is and how the fellowship uses it. *WSC* participants show some support for simplification, possibly eliminating housekeeping motions or possibly others that are not relevant to the groups. And there were some suggestions about a detailed version for delegates, and a simplified summary version for the groups.

### ***Problem #20: Service issues in the *CAR* are too complicated.***

Many members felt that the lack of interest in the *CAR* resulted from the complicated nature of world service issues and motions. In addition to complaints about too many acronyms and too much service jargon,

members also felt they wanted more introductory material included with the motions so that they could better understand the issues, as well as simpler language to make the issues more clear to our members.

### ***Problem #21: Lack of understanding about how to participate in fellowshipwide discussion.***

#### **The Issue-Discussion Topic Process:**

The *WSC* places issue-discussion topics into each *CAR*, and the fellowship then selects two topics for fellowshipwide discussion for the next (two-year) conference cycle.

The two topics selected at *WSC* 2000 for this two-year cycle are:

- “How can we continue to provide service to our fellowship and at the same time decrease our reliance on funds from events and conventions?”
- “How can we create a bridge that builds and maintains a connection to service for home group members?”

The board made a commitment to help lessen confusion about how to participate in the discussion process. The board also promised to do a better job of reporting the results of the discussions back to the fellowship, including the possibility of developing a tangible result in cases where that is warranted (examples include a new service bulletin, or possibly new or updated service handbook-type material or recovery literature if the *WSC* so directs).

All of the focus groups agreed that the *CAR* should employ some combination of motion-oriented material along with discussion-oriented material. However, many members expressed frustration that most *NA* members have great difficulty trying to have discussion-oriented sessions about *CAR* issues. The implication seemed to be that, while the process of voting on the *CAR* motions is relatively familiar, the process of attempting to hold issue discussions seems relatively new,

therefore less clear, and more difficult for our members. Many participants suggested that the World Board, or world services more generally, needs to develop ways to educate our members about how to hold such issue discussions.

Another expressed problem was that our service system, as yet, seems to have developed no clear process as to how to take the conscience of our groups effectively on discussion issues and forward some synthesis of those discussions from the areas to the regions to the WSC. This is another example of the communications breakdown described in Problem #18, and an indication that there are blocks to the flow of information in both directions, to and from NAWS.

**WSC 2000 Update/Bulletin Development:**

The conference considered a long list of 104 topics that the board asked the conference to prioritize for future bulletin development. These 104 topics were distributed to WSC 2000 participants in a straw poll to get input from the conference about which topics are most in need of being addressed, including the possibility of updating any of the 14 existing trustee service bulletins. Only 2 of these topics received the support of 2/3rds of conference participants. Only 10 topics received support from a majority. Achieving consensus or unity given our increasing diversity is an ongoing challenge.

**Problem #22: The diverse range of topics members hope to see discussed fellowshipwide.**

Members responding to the following question—“What topics would you like to see addressed by the fellowship in the future?”—also pointed out another potential “problem” with the issue discussions in the CAR: Our members have a lot of issues they want to have discussed among the worldwide membership! The focus group participants, for example, suggested more than 27 topics for discussion.

**E. Products and Services (present and future)**

**Problem #23: The large number of pieces of new literature and products focus group participants would like to see developed.**

Even though four groups essentially agreed that our current products and services are meeting their needs, participants identified 28 new pieces of literature and/or products that they would like to see developed. This is a problem, insofar as world services may have to prioritize this list and make recommendations as to which pieces merit development and in what order. This difficulty also is a problem insofar as world services may need to find a way to communicate these choices to the fellowship at large and have the fellowship prioritize this list.

**The WSO Product Catalog:**

Published twice a year, the *WSO Product Catalog* is available free upon request. Amazingly, there are now 1,150 separate products available in the WSO inventory. Major product categories include: recovery literature (books, booklets, and information pamphlets); keytags, chips, and medallions; service handbooks and resource materials; accessories (posters featuring the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts, Serenity Prayer, Third Step Prayer, and My Gratitude Speaks; wallet cards and group reading cards); audiotape and video products (including the new CD-ROM edition of the NA Basic Text); and, various specialty items (large print literature items, literature racks; *the Basic Journal*; the *Sluggfest* book (featuring the cartoon character, Slugg, from the popular *NA Way Magazine* series). More items are available from time to time at world convention and world unity day events. Translated versions of certain English-language items are now available in 20 different languages.



The NA Basic Text, *Narcotics Anonymous* (Fifth Edition), remains our best-selling book, 17 years after its first publication, accounting for over one-third of the annual income of NA World Services. With over 4,000,000 copies now in print (all editions, all languages), the Basic Text far outdistances our second best-selling book overall, *It Works: How and Why*, with over 500,000 copies in print since its first publication in 1993.

***Problem #24: The large number of “special needs” literature products focus group members would like to see developed.***

Another problem identified by focus group participants was the significant number of “special needs” products and services needed in their NA groups that are not now available.

We asked focus group participants: “Are there ‘special needs’ addicts in your area that need additional types of products and services than what they are currently receiving?” 26% responded positively. 30% answered negatively. 10% gave a mixed response. And 34% gave no response. Obviously, the term “special needs” is not universally understood and caused some confusion. Moreover, the survey comments make clear that many members were reluctant to assume that the needs of all addicts in an area were met. Both of these factors contributed to the high 34% nonresponse rate. In spite of the high percentage of negative responses, the overall comments suggest that our members are open-minded about this question, and if questions were posed about specific populations of addicts and potential services or needs relating to those addicts, the nature of the responses could likely be quite different. Moreover, the form of the question did not make clear the distinction between services or products from the local NA communities versus services and products from NAWS. This difference was clearly indistinguishable in the minds of some of our members. For example, a number of responses indicated the need for meetings with childcare or ASL-interpreters for

hearing-impaired addicts or other meeting format issues that are matters for local groups to decide autonomously.

There are two closely related problems about the issue of special needs and new literature development. The first is the lack of consensus about whether having any “special needs” literature is a good idea for our fellowship. The second is that one person’s view of what constitutes a special need may seem like a common or general need from another person’s point of view. Many members would consider many of the items that focus group members suggested under Problem #23 as “special needs” items, while the focus group members themselves often did not think about such needs in these terms.

Some of the divisions about this issue are also reflected in the lack of consensus among conference participants about the extent of “special needs” or even what is a “special need.” We asked: “Are there ‘special needs’ addicts in your area that need additional types of products and services than what they are currently receiving?” 51% said yes. 32% said no. 17% did not respond. The term seems more familiar to WSC participants, which is not surprising. WSC participants know more about the process of prioritizing new literature for development or revision, and the large backlog of potential products the fellowship could choose to work on someday. Conference participants have a better understanding of the resource limits and other issues that impact the current literature development situation.

Given limited resources and the nature of the existing literature development system, building consensus among NA worldwide about the priorities for new products and services is a large communication challenge.

***Problem #25: Some products and services are outdated.***

Focus group members from at least three groups indicated that they would like to see a review of all existing literature to determine if each item is outdated, obsolete, and/or in need

of revision. Members also wished to see some IPs combined into a single booklet, and requested adding more personal stories to existing literature and any new literature.

Members in two or more focus groups identified the following items as outdated or in need of revision.

- a. The Fourth Step Guide (outdated).
- b. The Little White Booklet (revision).
- c. *Hey! What's the Basket For?* (eliminate).
- d. *Sponsorship* IP (revision).
- e. *NA: A Resource in Your Community* (outdated).
- f. *Miracles Happen* (review).

#### Today's Reality:

Problems #23, #24, and #25 certainly tie back to Problem #1. Some members were evidently unaware of what current products and services we offer. Some comments also indicated confusion between NAWS products and services versus area and regional products or services. These problems also clearly relate to Problem #29—the lack of understanding our financial resources.

**Sponsorship:** WSC 2000 recently decided to encourage area and regional literature committees to begin to develop new material on the topic of sponsorship. The WSC directed the board to begin a preliminary evaluation of the issues in 2001, and then report back to WSC 2002.

**Basic Text Evaluation after WSC 2004:** The 2000 WSC also directed the World Board to present a project plan to WSC 2004 to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of revisions and additions to the entire Basic Text and the Little White Booklet, with that evaluation then beginning after WSC 2004 if the conference approves the evaluation project proposed at that time. The board promised to deliver a status report to WSC 2002.

## F. Translations

### Translation Basics:

NA communities who've never had the direct experience of translating NA literature are often unaware of how the process actually works. The most important element in the translation process is neither professional translators nor WSO staff. The key resource that makes the entire process succeed is the local translation committee (LTC).

The World Service Conference mandates the World Board to ensure the integrity of NA's message in translated literature. The board is responsible for providing direction and oversight for all translation efforts. WSO translations staff performs most of the actual (administrative) work that is involved.

Translations staff members don't actually translate NA literature, but assist LTCs by providing guidance and by coordinating all translation activities. WSO translations is part of NAWS Fellowship Services. Translations staff handles all communications with LTCs, and make sure translation projects move through the various development stages. The World Board authorizes the publishing of all translated NA literature, whereas local NA service committees approve the translations.

As the board worked last year on a 10-year plan for recovery literature development, we realized that misunderstandings about translations were confusing discussions about the creation or revision of English-language literature. As a result, we proposed a motion, adopted at WSC 2000, which, among other things, directed the board during the next two years to develop a discussion paper to help fellowship understanding of translation issues.

**Problem #26: Communities that are not directly involved in translations don't understand the needs and issues faced by communities that actually do translations with help from NAWS.**

**Conceptual Fidelity:**

It is true that NA is a worldwide fellowship whose primary purpose transcends national boundaries, cultural barriers, and linguistic differences. But once the message has transcended boundaries and comes to rest in a particular place, local members have to figure out how to communicate this message in their language and culture. That is where conceptual fidelity comes into play.

Conceptual fidelity means simply that when we translate NA literature, we translate *ideas*, not just words. Our aim in translating those ideas is to make sure they are faithful to the original. We want to make sure that NA literature carries the same message, regardless of the language. Maintaining conceptual fidelity in NA literature translations gives life to our spiritual commitment to preserve the NA message of recovery. This isn't just a literal translation process.

Some terminology in NA literature shows the American origin of our literature. American slang complicates an already challenging task. Words such as "clean," "using," and "high," and phrases such as "give yourself a break" and "easy does it," are some examples. American idiomatic expressions like these may be misunderstood in the translation process. When LTCs translate, it is most important that the concept is expressed, as well as the *spirit* of the expression, and not so much the actual words. Often another more culturally relevant expression conveys the meaning much better. But other times, the original expression may be the only one that works and therefore must be translated literally.

The single biggest problem identified by focus group participants during their discussion about translations was that our members who

are not directly involved in translations neither understand our translations process nor world services' role in that process. This should not be that surprising, as communities not directly involved in translations have no direct experience with something that is very complex. There was significant support of translations generally among the groups. However, there was also the recognition that, in most geographical areas, the perceived "need" for translations worldwide was purely a matter of conjecture. Most addicts found the concept of NA translated material well beyond their personal experience.

A large majority of the groups agreed that the need for additional translated materials, both service-related as well as translated literature, was quite high. However, most of the groups' answers also indicated little need for such translations locally, but recognized or at least perceived a need elsewhere in NA.

We asked two questions about this on the individual focus group surveys. When we compare the responses of the three focus group locations where translations work has occurred (Berlin/Germany, Mumbai/India, and Montevideo/Uruguay) versus the five others (in the USA and Calgary, Canada), the contrast is dramatic. We asked: "How would you rate the need for additional translated service material in your locale? (1-10 – 1=low; 10=high)." The North American average (mean) response was 2.77 versus 7.48 for the others. Similarly, we asked: "How would you rate the need for additional translated recovery material? (1-10 – 1=low; 10=high)." The North American average (mean) response was 4.75 versus 8.54 for the others. Note also that this difference in perception is even more dramatic when you consider that the first question about translating service material was specific about estimating the need *in your locale*. The second question about recovery literature did not contain this same limiting reference, *in your locale*. Nonetheless, the perceived need was still rated 4.75 by the English-speaking North Americans versus 8.54 by the three non-English-speaking focus group locations (Berlin, Montevideo, and Mumbai). (It's also worth

noting that the amount of translated literature is quite substantially different between these three language communities—yet there were very small differences between these three locations on these two questions.

The upshot of these responses is that the entire issue of translations, while clearly supported by the majority of our membership, is largely misunderstood by most of us. Although we didn't ask these questions as intelligently as we maybe could have or should have, the differences in perception at least are clear. In order for our membership to make better, more well-informed decisions regarding translations of NA materials, clearly members need to be better educated about (1) the translations process itself; (2) world services' role in that process; (3) the differences between translated literature, translated service material, and translated reporting, as well as (4) our non-English communities' prioritization of the relative need for these three different types of translations locally.

## G. Worldwide Workshop System

### Experimental Workshop Series Approved:

The World Board proposed, *as an experiment for the first two-year conference cycle*, to hold up to six workshops throughout the fellowship between 2001 and WSC 2002. The workshop purpose is to engage in various discussions on a variety of service and NA philosophy issues with as many members as possible. This purpose arose out of Goal Eight of the Fellowship Development Plan: to "improve world services' written and face-to-face communication with the fellowship."

The scope for this first cycle will be to plan for up to six workshops in conjunction with delegates and zonal forums. There will be one workshop each in Latin America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific, and up to three workshops in North America. The future of these workshops will be decided at WSC 2002. When we asked focus group participants about these workshops, this proposal was only a vague idea that had not yet been refined.

### **Problem #27: Lack of clarity regarding the purpose of the experimental worldwide workshops.**

According to our focus group participants, local NA communities discuss service in a number of ways, including over coffee after meetings, at their local ASCs and RSCs, at subcommittee meetings, and at learning days/workshops. At least two groups described their discussions as often argumentative and contentious. Another two groups said that locally they discuss service either rarely or not at all.

When introduced to the idea of the worldwide workshop system, all groups responding to the questions believed that the workshops should be used as both opportunities for world service to provide training in local service efforts such as PI, H&I, and conventions, as well as opportunities for local NA communities to provide feedback and direction to world services.

In the focus group surveys, 82% of those responding felt these workshops would be helpful in assisting the training of local members in service efforts such as H&I, PI, and conventions, while 4% did not. Similarly, in a ranking of separate purposes for the worldwide workshops, 68% of WSC 2000 participants felt that "education and training" was a good use of the workshops. 67% said sharing experiences about local services such as H&I and PI was a good way to use the workshops. 63% said that "providing guidance to local communities" was a good purpose for the workshops. Similarly, 63% of WSC 2000 participants said that "issue discussion" was a good purpose for the workshops. 56% said the workshops should be used to "promote mutual dialogue and exchange."

Using these workshops as an opportunity for the fellowship to provide input on world service projects would be a good use of the workshops according to 77% of focus group respondents. (3% disagreed. 20% did not respond.) On the other hand, only 29% of WSC 2000 participants felt that "providing

direction to NAWS” was something that should happen at the workshops. This discrepancy in perspective is probably explained by the delegates’ approval of the World Service Meeting Project—a separate event to allow the board to interact with regional delegates about current world service projects.

Thus, most everyone agreed that such a system would be most welcome in assisting local community service efforts. However, one big obstacle for the new system is precisely that it *is* so new. Members had many views as to how these workshops could be utilized.

One obvious difficulty facing world services here will be to ascertain from our membership exactly (1) what the stated purpose of the workshop system should be; and (2) how they will function locally, nationally, and globally.

**The Evolving Plan for the Worldwide Workshop Experiment Becomes Clearer:**

By the time we surveyed WSC 2000 participants, what had been presented as only a vague idea in late 1999 to the focus groups had taken the form of a much more definite proposal to the fellowship that the WSC 2000 delegates approved. The survey participants at WSC 2000 showed more consensus about what the workshops should try to accomplish. 68% said education, information, and training. 67% said share experience about local services. 63% wanted to provide guidance to local communities. 63% were also in favor of using the workshops to increase global awareness and to hold issue discussions. At the same time, WSC participants seemed equally clear about what the workshops should not try to do: only 29% were in favor of using the workshops to “provide direction to NAWS,” and only 28% wanted to see a focus on WSC agenda development.

The WSC-approved budget for the workshop experiment is from \$157,050 to \$181,200 in total expenses. The budget provides for six to eight travelers per event. Thus, actual direct expenses will depend on the number of travelers (six to eight) and the number of workshops (four to six).

**Problem #28: Lack of clarity as to how often worldwide workshops should occur.**

Another problem facing the worldwide workshop experiment is that there was no consensus as to how often such workshops should occur in each multiregional geographic area. Responses ranged from once every five years to once every month. The average (mean) was 2.6 times per year, and the median (midpoint) was every nine months (1.3 times per year).

**Problem #29: Little understanding of world services’ limited resources.**

The other difficulty posed by the responses evident in Problem #28 is the simple fact that members at the group level appear to have little understanding as to the nature and limitations of world services’ resources. For example, we asked “How many workshops is it reasonable to expect of world services each conference year?” The focus groups provided the following responses:

- a. One per year.
- b. One to two per year.
- c. One per conference cycle (two years).
- d. Eight to twelve total per year.

This response indicates not only confusion as to the purpose of the workshop system itself, but also demonstrates a fundamental lack of understanding of the very limited nature of world services’ financial and human resources.

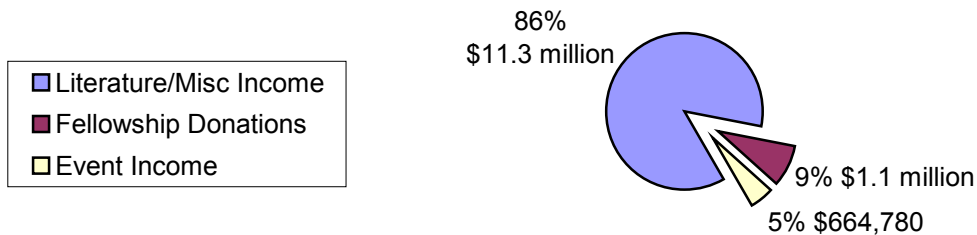
For the worldwide workshop system to be successful, part of world services’ duty here will be to communicate effectively (1) the purpose(s) of the workshops; and (2) the reason for the limited number of workshops that can be conducted during a conference cycle.

As we noted in the introduction, these problems are linked, and this problem surely ties back to Problem #1, members' limited awareness of world service functions/services. For example, it's apparent that the fellowship does not understand the finances of NA World Services, what services cost and where the money to pay for them comes from, the limits of NAWS current resources, and the areas where we are unable to provide needed services due to lack of resources. This problem suggests that specific lack of awareness about the resources available to devote to holding these worldwide workshops. But there's a much more general lack of understanding that is equally apparent in many of the comments and issues which underlie the set of Internet problems, the periodical problems (including the *CAR*), the resource limitations that affect efforts to develop new or revised literature, and translations.

**A Snapshot of NAWS Resources Today:**

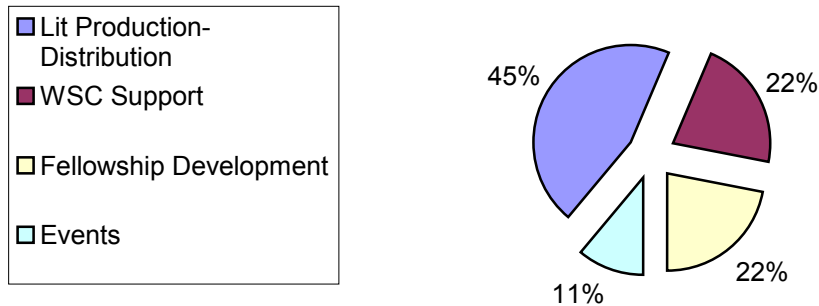
NA World Services now has a two-year consolidated budget system known as the Unified Budget. The Unified Budget now combines into one budget plan what once were three separate budgets for the World Service Office, the World Convention Corporation, and the World Service Conference. The budget matches the two-year conference cycle and covers the period from 1 July 2000 through 30 June 2002. The 2000 World Service Conference approved the 2000-2002 Unified Budget, which estimates total income of \$13,082,204 and total expenses of \$12,609,928 (with excess revenue projected at \$472,276).

**Where the Money Comes From (2000-2002):**



Where does the estimated \$13,082,204 in income come from? There are three main sources. The largest source (86%) is from the sale of recovery literature and other products. Income of \$11,291,502 is projected from this source, net of other miscellaneous income (which includes interest, shipping income, and both sales discounts and allowances and developmental subsidies). The second largest source is fellowship donations (9%). Fellowship donations are expected to account for \$1,125,923 during this period. The third and smallest source is event income (5%). Budgeted income from this source was projected at \$664,780 (this includes Unity Day, WCNA-28 in Cartagena and WCNA-29 in Atlanta).

### Where Your Money Goes (2000-2002):



Projected expenses of \$12,609,928 are divided among four major budget categories: (1) Literature Production and Distribution (45%); (2) World Service Conference Support (22%); (3) Fellowship Development (22%); and (4) Events (11%).

[Becky will verify Unified Budget figures.]

Clearly, our lack of success in communicating about money has a huge impact on the willingness of the NA groups to contribute funds to the service structure in general and directly to NA World Services in particular. Of approximately 27,000 registered NA groups worldwide (as of August 2000), fewer than 500 (less than 2%) chose to make direct contributions to NAWS. However, at the same time, there has been a 400% increase over the last five years in the number of groups making direct contributions. This is an enormously encouraging trend that at the same time highlights how far we have to go to put the finances of NA World Services on the most stable and desirable foundation in existence: direct Seventh Tradition contributions from the NA groups themselves rather than indirect and less stable income derived from either literature sales or events. Poor communication about money in world services is just one specific aspect of the fellowship's limited understanding of the who, what, how, and why of NA World Services. All 29 of these communication problems affect the integrity and effectiveness of our service structure.

## **Addendum B**

### **Overview of the History of the CTF**

It is certainly *not* headline news that we have longstanding communication problems in Narcotics Anonymous.

With the adoption of the Twelve Concepts for NA Service in 1992, effective communication was clearly identified as essential for the accomplishment of service. Concept Eight states: “Our service structure depends on the integrity and effectiveness of our communications.” Certainly, the identification of our communication problems did not originate in 1992. However, tracing the problem from this point forward will help to explain the scope and origins of the CTF project.

In keeping with Goal #8 of the Fellowship Development Plan, the World Board created the CTF for two reasons. The first reason was essentially to examine and evaluate the effectiveness of the communication between NAWS and the fellowship. The second reason was to report its findings to the World Board and make some recommendations for the board to review.

Communication was one of the main problem areas identified by the World Service Inventory conducted by the Composite Group from 1993 to 1995. The conference then formed the Resolution Group to address the inventory problems, but the Resolution Group did not tackle the communications issue. The conference then adopted various resolutions in 1996 and formed the Transition Group to implement those resolutions. While the Transition Group worked on mapping out some possibilities for the resolutions adopted in 1996, communication problems went largely untouched by all bodies except within the WSO. The 1998 conference adopted the proposals of the Transition Group, resulting in the formation of the World Board and a dramatically new structure for NA World Services.

As far back as 1992, WSO staff has been looking at various ways of improving world service communications, specifically within the NAWS periodicals program. One study, for example, helped to bring about the new *NA Way Magazine* in 1997, but other problems remained unaddressed. As the WSO Board of Directors looked at implementing its business plan and worked with the World Service Board of Trustees on the Fellowship Development Plan, it became increasingly apparent that something needed to be done about communications. To that end, staff developed the first proposal to improve communications for the WSO board. Staff recommended a specific approach to develop such a comprehensive communications strategy known as “Communication by Objectives” or CBO. Although it was largely supported in theory, it was not fully addressed until 1998, after the implementation of the World Board.

At its third meeting in November of 1998, the World Board began to prioritize various issues to address within its next two years. The board prioritized the issue of communication (not the CTF itself, but the topic) as the highest nonroutine priority for its work. The board decided to put together a workgroup to look at the issue and report back with some recommendations about how to tackle the issue. The workgroup



became known as the Communications Task Force. The board then proposed a CTF Project, which the 1999 WSC adopted.

The CTF reviewed the CBO model as part of its initial orientation. *The group agreed there was a significant lack of an existing set of standards against which communications could be measured to evaluate effectiveness.* All members agreed to limit the project scope to communication within those areas that could be readily dealt with in terms of having identifiable problems, lending themselves to generally agreed-to solutions, and for which standards could be set. All members agreed that the scope of the project would be limited to the communications between NAWS and the fellowship. External communications, particularly the vitally important area of our communications with professional groups, has not been focused on over the course of this project. We plan to consider this important area in the future.

The CTF's first order of business was to develop the NAWS Organizational Identity Statement (see page one), which it used as its touchstone during the project. An organizational identity statement is like a mission statement for communications. The purpose and importance of such a statement is for an organization to define, consciously, the who, what, why, how, and where of its communications. The CBO theory suggests that in the absence of a *deliberately* planned communications strategy, organizations tend, by default, to communicate in ways that are more haphazard, chaotic, and ineffective. Our belief is that this statement can only have meaning and effect to the extent it becomes an action, not merely propaganda.

One of the main reasons the group adopted the CBO model was the generally held belief that a problem clearly identified was halfway solved. The CBO model laid out a system that called for four primary phases:

**Research:** Gather as much data as feasible, whether quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative data means information that can be analyzed statistically. Qualitative data is generally more subjective and does not lend itself readily to statistical analysis, but this does not mean that one form of data is superior to the other or necessarily more “true” or “objective.”

**Problem Identification:** Develop a comprehensive problem statement for all issues identified in the research phase.

**Solutions/Recommendations:** Develop a comprehensive set of recommendations based on the CBO model—broad objectives, general goals, and specific tasks to accomplish the goals and then, in turn, the objectives.

**Implementation/Follow-up:** Implement recommendations, which includes the establishment of set standards, followed by periodic evaluation to ensure standards are met.

## **Research Overview**

During 1999 and early 2000, the CTF designed research tools and conducted research both within the WSO as well as among the fellowship. We also interviewed WSO staff members, surveyed conference participants at WSC 2000, and surveyed *Conference Agenda Report* workshop participants throughout the USA before WSC 2000.

One purpose of the research was to determine fellowship perceptions about world services' communications activities so that we could have a basis for measuring the effectiveness of any changes we may put into place for the future. One of the primary areas of research has been in the form of communication focus groups conducted utilizing NA members. The following profile relies heavily on the information gathered from these focus groups, both collectively, as the groups represented their various consensuses on a variety of issues, as well as through the individual surveys that each focus group participant completed while attending the groups.

We have also relied upon the WSC 2000 survey to complete this profile. We've tried to point out where conference participants' perceptions about our communications (and about various communities' experiences with those communications) either supported or contradicted the perceptions we heard in the eight focus groups.

We have used our research material to generate a problem statement—that is, a comprehensive statement of world services' major communication challenges. This problem profile report along with the underlying research and discussion about both by the board, the CTF, and WSO staff will lead to the discussion and identification of recommended solutions. These solutions will include objectives, goals, and tasks for the World Board to consider. After further discussion and possible revision by the board, the board's new Communications Standards Project (adopted by WSC 2000) can proceed to develop and adopt recommendations to improve communications with the fellowship and then implement those quality assurance standards. One expects that, in the course of examining this information and identifying objectives, goals, and tasks to address these issues in the future, the board will identify areas of responsibility for each separate communications activity. The board could then assign each accompanying responsibility associated with that activity as appropriate—as need, availability of resources, and proper prioritization of board activities suggest and permit.

However, “parceling out” the various identified areas of communications, of course, will require that all “arms” of the world services apparatus will necessarily need to be engaged and then motivated to effect any lasting changes and improvements to our communications. What this means is that improving communications is everybody's business, and staff, management, the board, its committees, the conference, even the fellowship at large all will have a part to play—we'll all need to work together and engage in an ongoing dialogue in order to achieve lasting and effective changes in NAWS communications.

## **Focus Groups**

We developed a focus group questionnaire, which we used at the eight focus groups around the world. In addition to the qualitative data we gathered at each individual workshop, each focus group generated an average of 17 individual questionnaire responses from members who participated in the groups, as well as a written narrative summary from staff and trusted servants attending those groups. The quantitative and qualitative results have been integrated into the problem profile narrative below. However, for those wishing additional detail, the complete quantitative results are available as Addendum C.

The designed setup for each focus group was as follows: eight hours, 20 participants total. Clean time: Designed to vary, from one to five, five to ten, and more

than ten years. Regular members mixed with service folks. People who have (1) never been involved in service; (2) people who used to be involved in service, but are not currently involved; and (3) people currently involved in service. Male and female, English-speaking and non-English-speaking, and racial diversity where appropriate. Other things that were considered: educational background and work experience.

The regional delegate worked with the regional committee member to find a meeting place and select the focus group participants. Staff contacted the RDs by phone. The RDs and RCMs for each focus group area received a detailed letter with the above information. Service resumes were distributed to members who chose to submit one.

## **WSC 2000 Survey**

We conducted a 36-question communications survey of conference participants at WSC 2000. We did this because the regional delegates are actually the principle audience for various World Service Conference publications. We also wanted to find out what perceptions regional delegates thought members in their local region had about NAWS communications. This gave us some basis for comparing points of agreement and disagreement between the perceptions of the delegates and the perceptions of the focus group participants. Conference participants also received a preliminary CTF report, including an incomplete problem profile as a work-in-progress, and they discussed certain communications (primarily service periodicals and the *CAR*) in a small group discussion setting. Although we have interpreted and integrated the results from the WSC survey throughout this narrative, the complete results of the survey of WSC 2000 conference participants are available as Addendum D for those readers who want more detail.

The WSC survey provided highly useful and relevant information with minimal effort and cost. The CTF highly recommended the repetition of such a survey at each conference as a way of evaluating and measuring effectiveness of any efforts to improve communications by getting subsequent feedback from key audiences. Moreover, the CTF also suggested that the board might wish to broaden the scope of such surveys, as this survey illustrates how valuable information could and should be gathered regularly about the makeup of the conference itself and about other issues of interest to the board.

## **CAR Workshop Survey**

The CTF developed the *CAR* workshop tool at its January 2000 meeting. The CTF asked board members attending *CAR* workshops to pick 15 to 20 people—five of whom should be regional delegates and 10-15 general participants. The purpose of the survey was to gauge the effectiveness of the board's face-to-face communication during the multiregional workshop presentations. This information has been used to begin a baseline on NAWS face-to-face communication effectiveness for the problem profile. For those wishing additional detail, the complete quantitative results (including the original survey used at the *CAR* workshops) are available as Addendum E.

## **Staff Tracking Sheets**

Part of the internal research conducted at the WSO consisted of tracking various communication operations within the office. The Fellowship Services Team, customer service staff, NAWS events staff, and other WSO staff completed tracking sheets for various kinds of communication activities for a designated period. CTF members subsequently made telephone calls back to some WSO customers to check the quality of certain communication activities. Through this research, we hope we can begin to (1) establish a baseline of *purposes* of staff communications (i.e., service questions, literature orders, meeting information requests, etc.); (2) develop a breakdown of the percentages of these types of calls across WSO operations; and (3) assess areas of difficulty in terms of response times, difficulty of response, and customer satisfaction. Any data entry, analysis, problem identification, or results from that area of research will be left to the follow-up Communication Standards Project (2000-2002).