

World Service



# Conference Report

---

## WORLD SERVICE TRANSLATIONS COMMITTEE

---

### *Terima kasih*

It is Malaysian for "thank you," and was expressed most genuinely by the members of the local fellowship for the WSTC's participation at the Asia Pacific Forum meeting in Kuala Lumpur in November. The term also expresses our gratitude for having had the opportunity to meet and share with them and other participants from that part of the world. This was an exciting opportunity to have direct contact with members representing roughly a third of the language groups with which we have translation projects (Malaysian, Mandarin, Hindi, Oriya, Bengali, Tamil, Manipuri, Thai, Japanese, Tagalog, and Maori). Since WSC '95, individual WSTC members have also participated in translation workshops at the ECC in Frankfurt, the world convention in Paris, and the Latin American Convention in Rio de Janeiro. In this manner, we have had face-to-face contact with the majority of the language groups with whom we have been working. It has been most exciting and mutually satisfying to meet directly with members from various local translations committees. Such personal contact seems so much more spiritual, if not just more practical.

### What's Up in Translations?

Translation projects continue at full bore. Currently we have about 283 projects in 38 languages. As of February 1996, there are 186 published non-English items in the WSO inventory. Only recently, a WSTC evaluation working group recommended to the full committee that the 'green light' be given to authorize the publication of items in Hebrew, Nederlands, and Turkish. The pamphlet #1 *Who, What, How, and Why*, will be (and is traditionally in our process) the first recovery literature item published for addicts in "new" NA languages. Also, evaluations for conceptual fidelity were completed on Arabic, Czech, and Polish drafts of IP #1. However, substantial work will have to be done on conceptual aspects, i.e., terminology and completeness for those languages.

We would also like to mention translated Basic Text drafts in Hebrew, Arabic, Italian, Swedish, and Russian that are in various stages of development, review, and completion, and we look forward to the production of those projects, hopefully soon. Sometimes that

process appears to move at a snail's pace; however, it is immensely rewarding when we see even a single piece of newly published translated literature. Also, you may remember that the slow pace is directly caused by limited resources in all aspects of the translation process. In part it is a combination of scarce financial and human resources not only at the WSO and WSTC end, but also with the same finite resources at the LTC end. Delays are inevitable and contribute to the length of the translation development process...in the end, it comes down to a joint labor of love with infinite patience, open-mindedness, and dedication to persevere.

## **Committed Motion #14**

*Conference Agenda Report* Motion #14 was committed to the WSTC for our consideration:

*"Move that recognized regions whose primary language is not English be allowed to translate, publish, and distribute approved NA literature after prompt WSC approval."*

**Intent: Make NA literature available worldwide, cut the cost of publication, distribution, and translation of NA literature and lessen the workload of the WSC/WSO. (Show-Me Region)**

The WSTC recommendation is to reject the motion. Our response is to the part of the motion that relates to translating recovery literature, as publication and distribution fall under WSO purview.

We want to clarify the intent, which notes that once WSC approves NA recovery material, language groups be allowed to translate the item(s) immediately. This in itself is not a matter of concern to the WSTC, because a local translation committee (LTC) can and usually will initiate translation work if they have resources. The WSTC does not prescribe when and how these local subcommittee efforts are set up.

The fellowship, through the WSC, has given strong direction to all of world services regarding development and translation of our literature, and the protection of our copyrights. The rapid worldwide growth of NA made it apparent that we needed to find some way to effectively administer translations; apply appropriate quality standards, including to help assure that the spirit and integrity of the NA message are maintained; and protect translations by securing all necessary legal documentation.

The WSC created the WS Translation Committee to assist in the planning and coordination of translations of NA literature by assisting local translation committee efforts and by developing an overall priority schedule for all translation projects worldwide on the basis of established WSTC criteria.

The sheer number of translation requests, and the fact that we are dealing with a multitude of local translation committees and contacts that don't originate in seated regions, requires the WSTC to set priorities for languages and the quantity and types of projects we can help accomplish for each. The goal is that every local NA community should have at least one or several pamphlets translated into their language.

The committee is responsible for considering all translation projects in some manner of fairness, and the resources available to develop them. So, in response to the apparent inequity caused by our current prioritization that emphasizes need, the WSTC in conjunction with the WSO has developed and adopted an accelerated (auxiliary) production stream for "established" language groups that meet certain criteria. The auxiliary process will be managed by WSO rather than the WSTC. We believe that this process addresses well-meaning intentions contained in the motion.

### **Accelerated Production for Qualifying Language Groups**

Based on our ongoing "big picture" discussion, as well as input from last year's conference, we decided to develop an accelerated, or auxiliary, production schedule that we hope will expedite approval and production of items from language groups that are considered more "established" in specific areas. Before, priority was given to communities who didn't have any translated material which resulted in more "established" language groups' projects being pushed to the bottom of the priority list. Now, these language groups can have their projects prioritized by way of a separate track set by the WSO, which allows the WSO in turn to make arrangements based on their production schedule and resources. The criteria to identify qualifying language groups area) a successful translations process that has resulted in published translations of the NA message, b) an established working relationship with the WSTC/WSO, c) a degree of continuity and committed membership within the LTC, and d) a stable service structure with the local internal checks and balances. We are currently looking at book-length projects from several language groups to initiate this process.

### **Conceptual Fidelity**

The committee, through a small working group, is developing what may be called conceptual fidelity-related "tools" in order to help local translation committees with words and phrases that are particularly challenging to translate. In reviewing correspondence and evaluations we determined that the most problematic areas are the translation of "God," addict, and addiction. We continue work on offering clarifications and "food for thought" about some of the basic concepts besides "addict" and "God." Based on the input from LTCs, we updated our glossary format and expanded the glossary with text and usage references, clear definitions, and explanations.

There is also substantial need expressed among LTCs for feedback regarding conceptual fidelity. Specific inquiries cover how literal (or word-for-word) a translation has to be in order to allow for cultural and linguistic adaptation requirements while keeping the spirit of our message. We continue to welcome any opinions and perspectives, especially from those concerned with the issues within their translation efforts.

The WSTC is not the only one who experiences with dismay that being clear and straightforward in our communications is not an easy task, and we are prone to complicated thought processes and long, very long and complex--if not convoluted--sentences. [voilà!--is this a good example or what?]. In fact, this challenge involves all of us

whenever we disseminate written material as service bodies. These days we need to expect and prepare for the likelihood that anything we write--be it service material, conference periodicals, or recovery literature---will have to be translated. It seems essential that we become increasingly mindful of our language use, and strive for clarity and simplicity in all our information materials and communications.

## **Hellos and Good-byes**

It seems like yesterday at the WSC when I, as acting WSTC Chairperson in place of Vivianne, was explaining to you the changes in leadership of the WSTC, and déjà vu, here I am again telling you about more changes in both the leadership and composition of our committee. In January, our chairperson, Jorge O, relocated due to a new, highly demanding position which precluded his continued involvement as chairperson and as a committee member. The vice chairperson, Teresa A M, also had to step down because of family matters. She will, however, as a member, complete this final year of her term. Also, one of our trustee members left the committee in mid-year following her resignation from the WSB (Mary J). We did extend a warm welcome to Bud K onto the committee as the new trustee member. The WSC Administrative Committee asked me to step in and act as chairperson through the conference, and asked that Eddie E. act as the interim vice chairperson. We both hope we can do the committee just service.

We look forward to another exciting and busy year. We have no idea how any changes in how World Services operate will effect our work. We trust that the work will go on in spite of our personal relationship with, it or the continued existence of the WSTC as we know it now. As before, we once again ask all local communities to forward names of possible nominees to the WSTC, and we thank those who submitted names to help fill the two position that will open up this conference year. We are grateful for having the chance to be of service and for the five years of WSTC existence...and must in our turn say *terima kasih*.

*Bob MacFarlane, acting chairperson*  
*Eddie Eriksen, acting vice chairperson*

---