



Final Report for the

15th AOSM

Asia Oceania Service Meeting of
Alcoholics Anonymous

6th to 9th July 2023
Nadi, Fiji Islands

**Carrying the Message and Overcoming
Cultural Barriers within Borders**



I am responsible...

When anyone, anywhere,
reaches out for help, I want the
hand of AA always to be there.

... and for that, I am responsible



PUBLISHING INFORMATION

Report on the 15th Asia Oceania Service
Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous

Dates: 6th – 9th July 2023

Venue: Novotel Nadi, Fiji Islands

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(Hong Kong) – AOSM Secretariat (2021 – 2025)



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A note about anonymity
CONFIDENTIAL

Since this report is a confidential AA document for members only, it contains members' full names. Such confidential use respects our tradition of anonymity in public communications and with any media (press, radio, TV, internet, and film).





Opening Address



Mary Raori - Chair (GSO - Fiji Islands)

Ni sa bula vinaka everyone, my name is Mary, and I am an alcoholic and a grateful, sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous and my home group, the Fiji Bula group.

On behalf of our small and growing fellowship, present here and those who are with us in spirit, we warmly welcome you all to our beautiful shores and to the 15th Asia Oceania Service Meeting, 2023. BULA!!! You may have heard this numerous times as you disembarked your flights all the way here. Bula, in Fijian means LIFE. Bula vinaka, is good life. And life is good today, a sober life worth living a day at a time, thanks to AA.

It is indeed an absolute honor to be hosting you all this year and we are so very grateful for the opportunity to be of service. It seems only yesterday that we decided, as a group to submit our bid and here we are 2 years later, meeting all of you, face to face. We are grateful to our friends in Australia and New Zealand for their immense support and generosity. Our participation has been possible through their financial contribution, enabling 4 volunteers and 2 delegates to be a part of this event.

We wish to acknowledge that most of you have travelled far to be here. Thank you to all delegates, volunteers, translators, observers, note-takers, friends from, Russia, South Korea, Hong Kong, Dubai, Norfolk Island, Singapore, Japan, New Zealand, and Australia. We also acknowledge our representatives from our General Service Office, New York. Welcome and vinaka vakalevu.

This year 2023, is the 3rd AOSM that Fiji is privileged to be a part of; having participated in 2019 at the Hong Kong meeting and then virtually in 2021. Our fellowship has benefited immensely as a result:

- i. We have been able to learn from more developed service structures in the region and use that learning to inform our own evolving service structure.
- ii. We have been able to connect to other AAs from neighboring Pacific Islands and beyond.
- iii. We have been able to develop our GSO service rotation guidelines to expand to business meeting proceedings and to clearly outline roles and objectives of the GSO including service positions.
- iv. Fiji is now on the AA world map, in the “near-you” AA listing. We have been able to connect

with New York General Service Office through this platform.

As a growing fellowship, participating in the AOSM is a tremendous learning opportunity for which we are grateful and we look forward to sharing with you, our progress in the coming days.

This year’s theme is - “Carrying the Message and Overcoming Cultural Challenges Within Borders”. This is very significant to our context where the disease of alcoholism is still seen as foreign.

We have had success having local sober members carry the message in the local language to local communities. This approach has been especially impactful because of the familiarity that local sober members bring to the local context and in the local language.

I refer to the line in the foreword to the fourth edition page 23 of the Big Book that further refers to a line from page 17 of the same that “we are people who normally would not mix “and so very true, as I look around the room, we represent a membership of different cultural backgrounds and yet we have been united by our common striving. That in spite of the increase and the span of our fellowship, at its core, it remains simple and personal. Each day, somewhere in the world, recovery begins when one alcoholic talks with another alcoholic, sharing experience, strength, and hope.

So, it is our hope that in the next couple of days, we will be able to learn from each other’s experiences on what has worked and has not worked in this area in your own context, in order to overcome cultural challenges within our borders to carry the message of hope and recovery in AA.

I wish to conclude my welcome remarks by recognizing our wonderful local host committee. Anna, Martha, Phylis, Maraia and Mele. Thank you so much for your commitment and hard work these last couple of months. I know it has not been easy, but I believe that it has been a learning and fulfilling journey for all of us. Am ever so grateful to be working alongside you all.

Dear friends, let us enjoy today and the next couple of days and May God be with us in our deliberations.

Thank you, vinaka vakalevu.



Keynote Address



“Carrying the Message and Overcoming Challenges within Borders”

Phylis Gandy - Past Delegate (Fiji Islands)

Bula.

When you hear Bula, it is a greeting in Fijian like hello. It means “Life” to you. You need to reply to me, Bula. So, let’s try it out.

I will say Bula and when I am done you say Bula.

Bula!

Good, you will be hearing Fijians in the hotel saying this to you as you go to your rooms or in the restaurant. It is very good manners to reply to them Bula and such a nice way to greet one another.

My name is Phylis, and I am a grateful alcoholic. My sobriety date is June 13, 1975. My home group is the Bula Fiji Tuesday Suva Group. I have now 48 years of sobriety thanks to Alcoholics Anonymous. I will never be able to repay this fellowship for the incredible gifts of sobriety I have been given. But I can pass it on as I am doing today and to carry this message to the still suffering alcoholic in Fiji.

Fijian Culture is known worldwide for its friendliness and hospitality So, before I go into the challenges of our culture, I wanted to also share with you the joys of our culture that we hope you get to experience while in Fiji. The Bula Fiji fellowship invites you to our customary Lovo Dinner Sunday Night where the food is cooked in a pit. While you are feasting the International Fijian VOU Dance group will be performing courtesy of the owner, a member of our fellowship.

You will notice also that we have given gifts of Sulus for you to wear. If you would care to. The sulu is our customary wrap that is worn in the villages and at a lovo meal in the villages.

Lots to look forward to this weekend, of sharing, hope, recovery, and carrying the message.

I would like to give thanks to AOSM, for your loving invitation to be your keynote speaker for this 15th AOSM. It’s an honor for Fiji to be chosen.

Fiji hosting the AOSM would not have been possible without the Country-to-Country financial Sponsorship from Australia and New Zealand. To Steve and Greg, Bless your hearts for all your support and to your respective fellowships.

In fact, the Country-to-Country support that Australia has given us over the past years, has been a major factor

in the success our fellowship has had in establishing itself here in Fiji.

And thanks to you all for carrying literature to our shores, in your handbags, suitcases and boxes. We will now be able to spread that literature to prisons, hospitals, libraries and village community centers and clinics.

I have looked forward to this conference as a past delegate in Hong Kong and as Chair for the Site and Agenda committee at the virtual AOSM in 2021, to share with you again our hopes and challenges in carrying the message of recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous, to see old friends and to finally meet those that I have not had opportunity to.

Carrying the Message

Bill W. said that the main way we carry this message of recovery in AA. is by word of mouth, that identification from one alcoholic to another. and here in AOSM, it is the same. I believe that during this AOSM the most valuable time you will have is getting to know your fellow delegates and your sharing during breaks. This is not to negate your hard work and reports. But it is again that one-to-one carrying of the message, our hope, frustrations, and successes, that Bill W talks about to find the commonality of solutions. It is my hope that you will be able to share from the heart within this conference the same as how it works, one member to another, and that our Fiji fellowship will gather those solutions for our own outreach and of carrying the message.

The theme for our 2023 AOSM is Carrying the Message and Overcoming Cultural Challenges within Borders

My keynote will be with stories, much like we share in meetings and I hope that by the end of this keynote they will speak to you from the heart as happens in our AA meetings and in carrying the message.

Lack of Awareness

I would like to begin with a time back in 1945 and transport you to the small town of Livingston, California. My mother had taken me at the age of five to a home where a sick man that we knew lived. His name was Morsey Corbet, and I liked him. He was funny and always happy to see me. My mother helped sick people, so it

was not unusual for her to take care of someone or visit sick families. But something strange was going on in Morsey's house this day, that I did not understand. There was a bad, bad thing happening with whispers, people angry. People crying. not like people that we had visited sick and were dying but so much worse. Why? When my mom went to his bedside I peeked in and saw not the Morsey I knew anymore. He was yellow and his stomach was gigantic. To this day. I still recall that sight. Why the shame, the stigma, and what I know now was last stages of alcoholism.

Remember I was only five years old. But I got the message that alcoholism is bad, shameful, and worse than any other disease or sickness,

The Little town of Livingston in 1945 did not have an AA group or knowledge or awareness of recovery of this disease and Morsey of course died because of his alcoholism. Word of mouth about alcoholism and the program of AA was not known. Many of our communities and villages in Fiji still do not have that awareness of alcoholism and that there is a program of recovery in AA.

Lack of Services

Now let's transport you to one of our 1,151 villages here in Fiji. And look in on one of our still suffering alcoholics lying passed out on the beach. We'll call him Solo. Solo has drunk all night with his cousins and has passed out on the beach. The sun is beating down on him. He moans, wakes up, his face covered in sand and swears not again. Solo wants to stop but how?

What is Solo's hope of recovery, what are his cultural and recovery challenges to finding a way to stop here in Fiji

Just like the little town of Livingston, that had not heard of AA, many living in rural areas and in the city do not know about Alcoholics Anonymous. And if they do, the supporting meetings are not in their villages or they do not have internet capabilities.

Solo is sick now with shakes and tremors and needs help, but there is no detoxification center in Fiji, no alcohol rehabilitation program, and limited medical help for chronic alcoholics.

So, our young man crawls home hopeless.

I was so lucky to call in a drunken blackout seeking help on my last drinking day to connect with an operator that put me in touch with AA. That somehow got me to a meeting the next day. How many of you were referred to AA via Doctors or Church Pastors or went through a rehabilitation center for your introduction to AA.? The helping hands of our professionals are so important.

The hopelessness, of alcoholism in 1945, and of our friend Morsey, is still present in Fiji. And although our efforts here in Fiji to carry the message have made

incredible gains in that awareness; we have a long way to go. But, we are making gains now, with sober local Fijians and an established GSO and with our Public Information Day with Professionals this weekend.

Clearly, there is a need for more information to be given to professionals and the public concerning alcoholism and the recovery program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

But to understand "What Works" when you are carrying the message, you need to understand that the European languages, clothes, authority, and culture may not always carry the message in Fiji.

Cultural Demographics of Fiji and Challenges

Carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous can sometimes encounter cultural problems due to a variety of factors. Here are a few of the potential challenges that may arise:

Cultural Stigma

A Story

Solo knows as he crawls home, that it is a lost cause for him, it is his family belief that his alcoholism, as is any sickness or crippling disability, is due to the heritage of his ancestors called the Dark Time.

The regular denial of our alcoholism that most alcoholics experience for our Solo has a deeper belief that he is suffering because of his ancestors with a reluctance to admit his drinking problem not only for himself but for the shame it would bring to the family.

I asked a woman elder in the village if this belief was still held true? She replied that it was, but that if he can find a way to regain spiritual healing, and go into the light of healing and change, then it would be ok and the shame of being an alcoholic in recovery that no longer drank would not have a stigma.

Many try to get sober by church pledges and some do. But for Solo, it has not worked.

The cultural stigma of alcoholism also applies to the Indian community causing shame to the family.

In some cultures, the stigma attached to addiction and mental health issues can make it difficult for individuals to openly discuss their struggles with alcoholism or seek help, which in turn affects the dissemination of AA's message.

The awareness of a program of recovery and a spiritual change and acceptance of the change will be required. There is hope for Solo, if he can only find that hand of AA that is waiting for him.

Culture Beliefs and Values.

AA's spiritual framework with its emphasis on a higher power, may not align with everyone's cultural and religious perspectives.

My Children are from the Native American Saulteaux Tribes of Canada. There is another program there, rather than AA, that many follow what is called the Red Path and where more emphasis is put on their Creator, Sun Dance and healing, while using the 12 steps as adapted. I have attended such meetings on the Cree reservation and have joined in sweat lodge and fast for spiritual awakening.

Language and Communication

Language barriers can hinder effective communication and understanding of AA's principles. If meetings are predominately in a language that is not widely understood with a particular culture, it can limit access and engagement. AA needs to be able to carry its message in the language and culture so it can be understood.

To be able to effectively carry our message an awareness of the demographics of our communities need to be understood.

Fiji's Demographic

Fiji is made up of the following:

Ethnic Groups:	Fijian 51%. Indian 44%. European and other 5%
Religions:	53% Christian, 8% Hindi, 2% Muslim, 1% Sikh
Languages:	English, Fijian Itaukei, Fiji Hindi

The Itaukei Fijian language is spoken in homes and provincial meetings although English is the official language. Fiji Hindi is a language for Indian Fijians that has developed due to the many different regions and dialects from India.

Cultural misunderstandings and communication problems may arrive when we carry the message only in English.

A language story.

I had discovered an AA pamphlet in Fijian with the twelve steps, it had been done unofficially either in New Zealand or Australia, I was very excited to bring it to our local meeting at my house in the village of Votua. Although we had been reading the English version of the

12 steps most meetings. I asked the two Fijian members attending to read the Fijian version.

As they took turns reading the Fijian pamphlet, they both began to cry. I asked "What is wrong" Their answer touched my heart. Vilisi, (my Fijian Name) This means so much more to us. The Fijian words conveyed their heritage and conveyed a deeper meaning and understanding.

We also took times to share in Fijian rather than English. What would in English come out in short blunt sentences. In Fijian the flow was full and emotional and no matter if I could understand the words, I understood the feelings and the hope of recovery.

We have a big job ahead to translate into Itaukei our Fijian AA literature and hope that the coming years will see us working with World Services to accomplish. Also needed is a survey of Hindi literature which hopefully has already been published.

Community and Support Networks

Some cultures place a strong emphasis on familial or community support systems. Which may have their own ways of addressing social issues or of addictions.

To understand the cultural rituals to enter a village or participate in a Fijian AA meeting, Groups need to be aware of traditions concerning customs. Anglo American informality can be addressed as rudeness or disrespect.

Story: lack of awareness of customs

The other morning, I looked down on the lagoon where I live and saw one of the visiting professors from a U.S. University, that had just arrived to study at our Coral Conservation Site. He was all decked out in blinding yellow hip waders and jacket fly fishing in the lagoon. He stood out against the blue waters. And the fact there was not another soul fishing or in the lagoon. I was shocked. What was wrong? What he was doing was like going into someone's private home and backyard and to their swimming pool and flyfishing. He was acting without permission and total disrespect. He should have waited for the formal Savusavu to be introduced to the Chief and gain permission to enter the fishing grounds or the village. Besides, it was a Sunday morning when you do not fish. While it would be normal for a westerner to grab his fishing pole on a beautiful morning off the coast, not here. Villages have control over their fishing grounds.

Disrespect can be shown in many ways without the knowledge of cultural behaviors and customs. Even who sits where and who speaks in a village meeting. As does clothing and western apparel.

Indian communities have the same challenges having to do with language, family and lack of awareness, many

feel torn between their native culture and the dominate culture or city living.

Addressing these challenges requires cultural sensitivity and adaptation. Seeking ways to make our message more accessible and relevant, providing translations, and incorporating cultural perspectives.

Another Story

Although I have concentrated on the Itaukei villagers, cultural divisions in urban areas may be felt but may not be in evidence.

For example. A professional Fijian woman, educated at a University overseas, came into AA here in Fiji. We in our women's Bula Fiji Group are huggers and she with some months of sobriety hugged really good, wrapping her arms around me. But one day she stopped and looked at me and spoke. "You know you are the first white woman I have ever hugged. "We both were amazed."

I include this wonderful, warm, special hug, because sometimes, the separation of the transient white expat professional community may not have a social mixing experience here or does the Fijian community of the Expats.

Plan of Action

So how did I personally, experience these challenges culturally and with the fellowship stay sober!!

I had been living full time in Fiji for four years... moving here after retirement to run a small cooperative scuba diving company I owned with the village of Votua. I had tried to maintain a constant meeting attendance but was frustrated with the small group that we had in AA made up of mainly expats and how we had no outreach but only sober members attending to maintain their sobriety.

I sat on my deck and shouted to my higher power. "Ok, it's now up to you... I've been driving back and forth to Suva in the dead of the night, two days a week ... three and half hours, with cows, horses, bad roads, and trucks. You get more members!" ... and I let it go. True story.

The next week I received an email from Australia selecting Fiji for their offshore National AA Convention. My God Works.! Working with Dr Tukana of the Ministry of Health, and the World Health Organization, we were able to have a Public Information Day with 400 in attendance.

One of the most special times was the donation for a bus load of villagers from the four villages of my Tikina to go to the convention. One of the elders, Damu, went to each village in the Tikina and got representatives to go. All except one female alcoholic that had not been chosen but had a drinking problem, she knew she had to go... so, she got someone's name card and jumped on

the bus. Today, our Mele has 6 years sober from that date. And we have a meeting in the village of Votua.

Following that, Australia sponsored a delegate to attend AOSM in Hong Kong. As delegates we learned the importance of setting up our GSO to establish a permanence with the fellowship.

Once home in Fiji, we organized and established our GSO with elected officers. We began developing our Outreach programs, with posters, a website, and online meetings. We also were funded to travel to the smaller island of Tavuni to carry posters to the hospital and clinics.

Fiji has also been a clearing house and contact for other islanders. Solomon has a member that sobered up here and is chairing a men's zoom meeting from the Solomons. We also have a member here that contacted Fiji AA from Solomons in her early sober days and is now part of the Bula Fiji Group. Contact with Samoa and PNG has been made in the past but currently does not have an active member attending any of our zoom meetings. Norfolk Island ,with Keith representing, is here today and is an active online member and helps sponsor men in Fiji, as does Bob in the US.

All of this is a direct result of Country-to-Country sponsorship and what you have carried across the sea to our Fiji

One other special story.

When our membership of women began to add up, I offered my home on the hill for a weekend retreat. Needed was the arm's length sharing and time that is so necessary to see what sobriety in action and life looks like. We have a special rock not far from the house where we have a meeting out in the water. It's called the 'Mermaid Rock'. We have been told that we are the only mermaid meeting known in the fellowship.

Some of our meetings are informal and happen on the beach if another member is walking down or on the hill or in the car traveling. We call them our 'here and now as you need it' fellowship meetings.

In our country report later, you will hear the steps we have made to reach out via internet. But we are still small. But we believe that gatherings such as this and persistence, faith and hope we will be able to reach those still suffering alcoholics.

To go back again to what Bill W said about carrying the message, it is by word of mouth, and I will add 'language of the heart'. To convey the hope of recovery through the steps of Alcoholic Anonymous.

I leave with one last story.

In the small rural Community of Pescadero, California, we had an English-speaking meeting that was attended

by a migrant farm worker that spoke no English but somehow learned that he could get sober in the meeting at the church, and so he came and sat.

We shared our stories and he nodded and then he spoke in Spanish. Of the policia, and his esposa wife, of pelegrosa danger and being barrachi drunk, while tears came down his face. But he kept coming and soon his shares were changed from loud shares to soft, when he spoke of Alcoholics Anonymous and his sobriety, and his Dios God. He remains sober today and started a Spanish speaking meeting that I believe that is still going on.

So, whatever language or culture or stigma, there is that part of our message that transcends all. Language of the spirit that heals here in Fiji and all over the world.

And lastly, keep putting one foot in front of the other. Persistence and patience. One day at a time. I could not

have lived here in Fiji without the fellowship and so even though I had a tantrum with my higher power to get in the act, I could not have stopped, as that would have meant losing my sobriety and or leaving Fiji. I am now a Fijian citizen, and this is my home.

I close with what is written on page 83 of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Spiritual Life is not a theory, we have to live it.

Bula Life. AA Spiritual Life

Bula AA, my Spiritual Life.

Vinaka Vaka Levu

Many Thanks to you



Section A

Officer Reports



A.1. Chair's Report

Bertie Sawhney



Welcome to all

Firstly, I would like to thank the Host Committee and the Fellowship of Fiji for hosting this event and I am sure that the Host Committee will ensure that the reputation of Fijian hospitality is

lived up to and surpassed.

I take this opportunity to welcome all the delegates. This is the first face-to-face AOSM (conference) for all of you.

Above all, I would like to thank the observers, the meeting secretaries and our guests from GSO New York, Bob and Racy, who accepted our invitations to join us.

The Committee Chairs have been working with their committees for the past year to make our experience during these 4 days as smooth and effective as possible. As a growing conference, spread over 70 countries, with language and time barriers, they had their own challenges, but managed to meet the deadlines. They all faced the common challenge that some delegates who had worked with them throughout the year were not able to attend this AOSM in person.

AOSM has always worked along the lines of the theme of this conference — “Carrying the Message and Overcoming Cultural Challenges Within Borders.” Our effort is to involve more countries and today we have 14 delegates from 9 countries. We have gathered here for a face-to-face meeting after 4 years to share our experience, strength and hope. This is a platform where countries with developing service structures can get themselves sponsored by countries with developed service structures.

In our region we have many countries like Thailand, China, Indonesia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Philippines, MERCAA and a few more where our Fellowship is only serving the expatriate population. We have observed that in such countries we can never grow significantly in numbers unless they penetrate the local population, but this is difficult due to the repatriation nature of the expatriates. On the other hand, we see in countries like India, Japan, Korea, Mongolia and Iran, those fellowships are growing significantly where the message has reached the local population. This makes AOSM very diverse in terms of the number of countries served, the number of languages covered, etc.

Fiji was the only country to bid for 15th AOSM, but conditionally. The condition was that they received support. We are extremely grateful to the fellowships of Australia and New Zealand, who made this event possible with their financial donations. Our contributions

come mainly from those countries that have strong service structures, and we at AOSM strive to enable smaller structures to grow by promoting country-to-country sponsorships.

Although we did not have a face-to-face conference in 2021 due to COVID, at the same time we were exposed to working via Zoom, and that has been very helpful because now we can finish a lot of work before we meet face to face. This makes this conference more productive. And the best part of that is that the first term delegates were able to attend an orientation workshop, which hopefully made them feel comfortable, unlike the earlier times when we came to the conference empty handed. I would like to express my gratitude to Japan GSO who did a tremendous job in making our 2021 conference virtual. Hiro and his team spent thousands of man-hours to make sure we have a smooth experience.

At this point, I would like to touch on the fact that all the committees have faced different challenges but they have successfully overcome them.

At the end of the 14th AOSM, we had no bids to host the 15th AOSM. But this time, thanks to the effort of the SSA committee, we have had three bids to host the 16th AOSM.

At the conclusion of the 14th AOSM, the role of the Chair of the WWO committee was not filled. After committee members stood into the roles, the new Chair and Alternate Chair had had to drop out due to family commitments. Even in the absence of any 2nd Term delegate in the committee, a 1st Term member graciously stepped into the position of Alternate Chair, and he has guided them successfully.

WLP didn't have it easy either because we lost our website to hackers. With guidance from their Chair and efforts put in by different countries, our website has turned out to be better than the earlier one.

PAF had its own challenges become some delegates didn't show up until recently.

By virtue of all of us being here this weekend, the Fiji fellowship has organised a CPC event on Monday. This is an opportunity for carrying our message to the still suffering alcoholic. Historically, friends of AA have helped AA grow exponentially. A prime example is Jack Alexander's article in the Saturday Evening Post.

Thanks

I'd like to thank the Host Committee, wholeheartedly, for their tremendous commitment to making this AOSM

a success. Anna, Phylis, Martha, Mariaia, and Mele, and Mary: Thank you! I'd like to thank Simon, too, for his support as Secretariat of AOSM for the past two years, and as Secretariat to my PAF Committee for the two years before that. Thank you, Simon!

I enjoyed my service at AOSM because it exposed me to different aspects of this conference and gave me the opportunity to work with some knowledgeable and

experienced people. This experience has been extremely enriching for me because AOSM has exposed me to the workings of developed structures.

From the guidance and inspiration received from different countries at AOSM, MERCAA managed to get a license to print, publish and distribute the literature in Arabic and we are trying to get a seat at WSM.



A.2. Treasurer's Report

Yasuhiko Morita



After the AOSM in Hong Kong ended in July 2019, the treasurer changed to me. I had just set up a new account for AOSM in a Japanese bank and was about to take over the property when, unfortunately, the previous treasurer passed away and I was unable to take over the money immediately. The AOSM assets he had in his custody were about USD 7,000, but it was not until November 2021, more than two years after his death, that I was able to inherit the assets frozen by his death. In the meantime, AOSM had managed to survive on about USD 2,000 in voluntary contributions. The AOSM in 2021 was held online, just as the COVID19 pandemic was sweeping through the world. The payments were minimal, as airfare and hotel expenses were not necessary. Of course, even though it was online, technical expenses such as the website and zoom costs were necessary. With these expenses covered, the activities after 2021 AOSM got underway.

Around the time of the online AOSM in 2021, donations began to come in little by little from various countries.

We have received contributions from Mongolia, Japan, Russia, Australia, New Zealand, and the U.S. Canada GSOs. Of course, we have received donations from some A.A, groups and individuals as well. The freeze on past funds has been lifted and is now back in our possession. Just around that time, we got a bid to AOSM of Fiji. When the decision was made to hold the AOSM face-to-face in Fiji in 2023, we were able to secure sufficient funds up to USD 15,000.

It took some trial and error to change the hotel selection and return the deposit after making the hotel reservations, but now all venue fees to Novotel have been paid. After the selection of the venue, we have continued to receive regular annual donations from Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, which has kept our operations stable without depleting our funds. We have collected nearly USD 3,000 in total registration fees from participating delegates, and we still have more USD 6,000 in surplus funds. Even after the Fiji event is over and additional payments are made, there will still be plenty of money left over. After this is done, we would like to settle the account and hand over the funds to the next treasurer.

A.3. Secretariat's Report

Simon Miles



Thank you to everyone who trusted me to take on the role of a AOSM Secretary. I felt called upon to put myself forward for the role during the last AOSM. I had little knowledge at that time of what the role would entail and I had

little experience of service at this level. As you can imagine, it's been quite a journey!

It's a journey that my higher power knew I needed to take and a journey that I am deeply grateful for. It has given me an opportunity to consider the value of some core principles of AA; humility, acceptance, gratitude and faith; and it has contributed beyond measure to my self-esteem. Having a purpose ... what a great feeling that is.

I would like to thank some fellow alcoholics. Bertie, Doug; I've been moved by your practical and emotional support and your tolerance of my inexperience. The Committee Chairs - Greg, Brian, & Sheli – for teaching me how to show up and behave in committee meetings. The members of the Host Committee – Anna, Mary – for showing me what selfless dedication looks like. I have such a deep respect for everyone that I've worked with during these past two years.

The world, and AA, has changed a lot in these past two years. It's been a time of growth and transition.

What have been the main developments?

By necessity, AA has gone virtual - but what an opportunity this has been! AOSM has begun to work at a speed never before possible. The Chairs of the Committees have met 15 times since the AOSM in 2021. We've maintained quarterly meetings and scheduled *ad hoc* meetings in between.

We've set up WhatsApp groups, including a general group for delegates, a group for delegates attending the AOSM, and a group for Committee Chairs. These groups have allowed us to make announcements and to share

opinions. New countries have felt included in the conversation. I'm just a little sad that most of them have been unable to make the long and expensive trip to Fiji.

We've begun using Google Drive to share documents with each other more easily, and we've agreed with the fellowship in New Zealand to employ a professional archivist. She will help us build an official depository for critical documents, which in turn will help us overcome an issue which has beset AOSM from the early days; that is the loss of valuable records, templates and lessons learnt when officers rotate out of their positions.

We've received enquiries from potential members and we've been more able to share our ESH with countries experiencing growing pains.

So, what's next?

A New Website

The Website, Literature and Publishing Committee have worked hard to rebuild a website that had been lost. With their help, we will soon be able to store documents in a password protected area. These will be documents which we need to access more regularly, including past reports, minutes of meetings, recording templates such as those in your Delegates' Kit, country reports, and our new database of country data.

An AOSM Database of Country Data

This database will provide a snapshot of AA in our zone. Such a snapshot will allow us to recognise our collective strengths and diagnose our occasional problems. Special thanks to the six countries who have completed the online form and contributed their data so far: Japan, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, and Thailand.

It's been such an incredible privilege to serve AOSM in this way. It's a part of my recovery that would be hard to live without.

My deepest and most heartfelt gratitude to you all.



Section B

Presentations





My tenure as General Manager of the General Service Office of the United States and Canada began in June of 2021. Very early on, I determined that the international licensing and translation services of our literature we provide worldwide greatly needed additional resources and new processes. Some of you may recall my communication in February of 2022 acknowledging our shortcomings in fulfilling our responsibilities of this important service. I committed our pledge to clean up the backlog of requests and to develop and implement new processes, procedures, and policies.

Since that time our office has been working hard to make this happen.

Licensing TL@aa.org

The TL@aa.org email address was established in February of 2022 as the beginning point in gaining an understanding of the gravity of the overwhelming number of backlogged licensing service requests. We asked the international community for their patience and to forward any new or outstanding requests to us again. Internally, we also moved requests from our old email addresses to the TL@aa.org address so we could organize and centralize all of the requests. This quickly rose to an email exchange of over 3,000. It's important to note that the number of emails doesn't equate to the number of licenses or questions as an individual email could potentially contain multiple requests or questions.

Immediately upon establishing the address, we began to filter through these emails and process requests. On June 27, 2022, we launched a request management solution in our automation system to manage the AAWS translation licensing requests. This was a key shift for us as we were then able to begin moving open requests from the TL email into our integrated request management system and process them more efficiently than through email. We subsequently began building a new portal, Translation Licensing Connection (TL Connection), to be the primary contact point for our international community to submit and view all translation and licensing service requests.

Until September of last year, the international licensing function was managed within our Publishing Department. To provide more focus and direct oversight, the licensing function was reorganized into a separate department also including functions of intellectual property, copyrights, and general legal coordination. Only one month prior, Beverly Jones-King joined the General Service Office as Executive Legal Administrator to lead this transition.

ERP and TL Connection

The development and building of TL Connection was completed earlier this year and is fully integrated with the G.S.O. ERP solution (our automation system). We also integrated DocuSign, an automated method to sign and deliver licenses, into the workflow, which significantly increases our speed and efficiency in processing licenses. We tested TL Connection with three countries, which was very well received and successful. We also added two temporary employees in March, to step up our progress.

In April, Translations Licensing Connection was officially launched to the international community. Attendees included representatives from several GSO's, Literature Committees, international delegates, and some of our own trusted servants. It was recorded and will be available for viewing for those who were not able to attend. We have also conducted additional virtual 1 on 1 meetings with various international structures to provide more training and to answer questions.

To date, approximately 42 structures have completed the TL Connection application form and now have access to it. TL Connection gives these structures the ability to input requests directly, review status updates and connect with the Licensing team. We continue to encourage all structures to register and use TL Connection to request and manage their licenses as this is the most efficient and preferred way to receive licensing requests, see statuses and pose questions.

We are now in a very exciting stage of this organizational restructure as both the request management solution and TL Connection are fully functional and, with many requests being directly uploaded into TL Connection, we have less to transfer from email ourselves and can focus on processing! Our progress has given us a more accurate reflection of the status of our work.

Where we are now

All email received prior to May 1st have been addressed with requests identified and transferred into our ERP solution and visible in TL Connection. Currently (May 1-present), there are approximately 100 emails in the TL inbox. The significant reduction in email from when we began (3,000) to now is a very good depiction of how far we've come.

We have dedicated one of our team members specifically to completing the transition of emails into our system and expect all requests to be transferred in just a few weeks' time and remain current.

Although we will continue to receive and accept requests for licensing services through the TL@aa.org email address, use of TL Connection is our goal. If you have not yet signed up to communicate with us through TL Connection, please complete our [registration form](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/15e37620495046439b9af3670edcfc62) to gain access as soon as possible (<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/15e37620495046439b9af3670edcfc62>).

To date, we have transferred 884 requests into our ERP solution. We have processed and completed 418 of these (approximately 47%), leaving us with 466 open items. The remaining open items are categorized into the various stages of completion:

215 - Document prep for license or permit.

117 - Needs special attention and/or consulting with other departments for information. 16 - In translation review.

118 - DocuSign approval & execution.

Since the launch of TL Connection and the integration of DocuSign into our license issuance process, we have issued 144 licenses in 9 languages representing 5 countries for eBook amendments, website postings, re-translations, and renewals. These were all executed through the portal with the use of DocuSign. Clean-up of the backlog is now moving much quicker, and we estimate being current within the next few months.

A.A. Grapevine Titles

To date our focus on clean-up of backlog has been specific to A.A.W.S. This is largely due to the fact that our request management solution in our system is integrated with our webstore which doesn't include Grapevine titles. This is why Grapevine requests have not yet been processed.

We are currently developing a project management solution specific to Grapevine. It will include a Grapevine license request form accessible within TL Connection so when structures complete the form, they will be delivered directly to Grapevine personnel.

This form will be added in the next few weeks.

Further conversations among Grapevine and AAWS management will determine complete workflows between each office including issuance and the possible use of DocuSign for execution. The final process will provide both AAWS and Grapevine details of timelines and the status of requests. Much of this design will be completed in the third quarter.

New Process and Policy Development

As the clean-up process draws to a close, we will be drafting official detailed policies and procedures to request new translations and licenses, our renewal, amendment and other processes. That said, I want to

provide you with some thoughts as to what these will look like.

Some general guidelines:

- AA World Services, Inc. literature can only be offered for sale by an official General Service Office (GSO) and/or General Service Board.
- The standard term of licenses will be issued for 10 years.
- Countries that do not have an established GSO or General Services Board may still be eligible to obtain A.A. Literature translation permissions and print authorization. These authorizations will provide authority that local printers may require to print specific quantities and titles without a license.
- "Translation is an art not a science". Many factors contribute to a successful translation. The use of on-line or electronic translation tools such as Google translate, iTranslate, etc. are helpful to many of us when communicating with each other but is not an accepted method for the translation of A.A. Literature.
- AA World Services, Inc. does not charge for translation rights to the literature they publish.
- The General Service Office in New York handles all copyright registrations for all translation, therefore other structures don't need to be concerned with this process.
- Translations, Licenses, or amendments will be available in print (books or pamphlets), eBooks, audiobooks, and video.

New Translations

Each translation begins with an expressed need within local A.A. communities. Most often, a committee within the local community is formed to help manage the process with one point person or chairperson identified to work with our office. This allows for the clearest communication and helps to eliminate confusion and delays as multiple representatives may have conflicting information.

Requests are submitted through TL Connection.

Requests are reviewed to ensure that all necessary information has been submitted and criteria met.

If you need assistance with your submission, you can request a virtual meeting with us through TL Connection (TLC) for guidance with the process. If you don't yet have access to TLC, please send us an email at TL@aa.org.

Generally, your local committee drafts the initial translation. This allows for your local A.A. community to participate in the process, ensuring that your local culture of the new language is captured properly.

We will interact with you through the process to answer your questions and share experience when needed.

Upon receipt of your complete submission, our Licensing Administrator arranges for review by an outside, independent-translation-evaluation professional.

This review service locates a professional linguist familiar with A.A.'s literature, who will report on the submission's clarity, adherence to the sense, spirit, tone, the passion of the original English work and the translation's overall integrity.

The evaluation service provides a report which we will pass on to the chairperson. The report may include suggestions for improvement such as grammar or word choices and a general critique.

The report then serves as a guide for the local committee to correct and polish the text for completion.

Upon re-submission, the edited document is re-evaluated by our service.

Upon their approval, A.A.W.S. executes licenses through DocuSign to reproduce and distribute.

Renewals

Upon the completion of our backlog of license requests, we will be implementing automatic license renewals whereby a communication will be made several months before a license is due to expire. This communication will provide time to decide whether or not to renew. If no action is taken, licenses will automatically renew and a notification to execute through DocuSign will be sent.

Amendments

Amendments are generally issued when licenses are held for specific titles and there is a desire to license in an additional format such as an eBook.

Current and Pending Translations

Our first priority remains the organization and completion of backlogs and the building and launching of our automated licensing management tool and TL Connection. The results of these efforts have revealed pending translations of approximately 55 titles, several of which are for the Big Book. We will be providing an increased focus to move these projects to the forefront.

eBooks & Audio Books

Items of A.A. literature in print in translated languages (other than English, French and Spanish) may be converted into eBook formats. Upon completion, we will issue an amendment to your print license for each item.

Although A.A.W.S does not provide eBook conversion services, we acknowledge the requests the World Service Meeting Literature Committee:

- “That AAWS gather shared experience on creating e-books and making literature available online with proper copyright protections in place. The committee discussed that it would be helpful to develop a service piece that would provide this shared experience.”
- “A service piece that outlines the mechanics of electronic literature, methods to produce e-books, how to produce read-only online materials, audio streaming, and protection against the illegal distribution of electronic literature is essential.”
- To address the issues related to electronic literature, production, licenses, etc., the committee also suggested that AAWS consider the idea of utilizing a centralized vendor for electronic literature for all languages and that it be administered by AAWS.

Our Experience

When our backlog and inventory of license formats is completed, we will begin gathering shared experience on creating eBooks and audio books. In the interim, our structures experience and guidance with e-books is as follows:

- eBooks use the same translated text as print editions; therefore, review of your converted eBooks is not necessary.
- Our eBook conversion charges range from \$1,000 - \$4,000 each, depending upon word and page count totals and the number of illustrations.
- Conversion is completed by a reputable outside vendor who provides read-only access and ensures security measures and protection against illegal distribution.
- Our eBooks are available for our Fellowship in English, French and Spanish.
- We set list prices for eBooks (and audiobooks) as close to the list prices of print books, for fairness and equal access.
- For audio books, we retain a professional narrator “talent” and use professional studios. This greatly improves the quality of the completed Audiobook.
- Narrators are required to sign official release forms which our office will supply.

eBook Distribution Options

Each structure has the latitude to decide how their eBooks will be distributed. Once you receive the amendment to your license, you may distribute the eBook.

You may distribute eBooks directly from your official A.A. website or via a vendor or a vendor hub. Vendor hubs may include platforms that carry eBook distribution to

individuals, libraries, institutions, professionals, and subscription services.

Websites & Apps

A license is required to post your approved translated books, booklets or pamphlets in PDF format or Audiobooks, on your structure's official website. We will need the URL domain name of that website confirmed, to be included in the License.

B.1.1. Activity Report - International Literature Fund

for the Quarter Ended March 31, 2023

Beginning Balance 1/1/23	30,008.25
Contributions	6,160.91
Withdrawn from Fund	313.94
Ending Balance 3/31/23	35,855.22

CONTRIBUTIONS DETAIL

France	528.70
Switzerland	3,128.21
Peru	310.00
Brazil	2,000.00
Mexico	194.00
Total Contributions	6,160.91

WITHDRAWN FROM FUND DETAIL

Bank fees	313.94
Total Withdrawn from Fund	313.94

B.1.2. Activity Report - World Service Fund

for the Quarter Ended March 31, 2023

Beginning Balance 1/1/23	36,684.55
Contributions	540.80
Withdrawn from Fund	305.30
Ending Balance 3/31/23	36,920.05

CONTRIBUTIONS DETAIL

French speaking Europe	540.80
Total Contributions	540.80

WITHDRAWN FROM FUND DETAIL

Bank fees	305.30
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B.2. Cooperation with Professional Communities and Government Authorities



Greg Byrne
(2nd Term Delegate - Australia)

My name is Greg Byrne and I am an alcoholic. I am a member of the Forster (Mid-North Coast of NSW, Australia) Steps and Traditions Group and my sobriety date is 2nd October 1976.

My Presentation today, concerning cooperation with the Professional Community and Government, will first look at the material available to assist in this venture and will then relate actual Public Information projects that dealt with this subject.

At the outset let me say that there is an abundance of literature available regarding this issue and I will merely reference it rather than duplicating it.

Preface

The goal of AA Public Information and Co-operation with the Professional Community, like most of our Service activities, is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. This is achieved in two ways, through informing the general public about the AA programme and through reaching "the third person", whose work is or may be involved with the active alcoholic.

In Australia we have Service Guidelines and Guideline GL-07 is entitled "Public Information and Co-operation with the Professional Community" and may be found on our Australian AA website.

<https://members.aa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Guideline-7-Public-Information-and-Cooperation-with-the-Professional-Community-1.pdf>

We also have a "National Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community" position in our structure. That office is at present held by Rob C. who produces a periodic newsletter. You can download a description of this link:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_AolZq8L4NKDoEB70i796uJvzzHQnrgy?usp=sharing

Educate ourselves

Many AA members are only too keen to be involved in PI activities but before we begin any attempt to carry the message to others, we must first educate ourselves in the most effective way to carry that out.

Along with a basic knowledge of the Fellowship and its Recovery Program there is a suggested way of presenting this information to non-alcoholics. Two pamphlets that I found to be helpful are "How AA Members Cooperate with Professionals" and "Speaking at Non-AA Meetings".

Anonymity statement

It is important when speaking to non-alcoholics, (particularly members of the media), that we acquaint them with our Anonymity Tradition. It is equally important that we ourselves adhere to this Tradition and not become too relaxed when dealing directly with media professionals. At PI Meetings it is important to read our Anonymity Statement. I reproduce it below:

"The public relations policy of Alcoholics Anonymous is based on attraction rather than promotion. We need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press radio and films.

Therefore, we respectfully ask that no AA member be identified by full name or photograph in published or broadcast reports of this function including technologies such as social media and the internet.

The assurance of anonymity is essential in our effort to help other problem drinkers. Our Tradition of Anonymity reminds us that AA principles come before personalities."

Two Professional Awareness Projects

PI ventures are possibly best held on a local level and at a small scale so that intimate relationships may be formed between the Professionals who attend and AA members. The report concerning typical projects is outlined below.

Manning Great Lakes District Holds Public Information Lunch

The Manning Great Lakes District which is located on the mid NSW Coast in Australia and is part of Area A , Eastern Region, recently held a Public Information lunch

Previously we had run a Public Meeting as part of our annual rally on the Saturday night. Although our members enjoyed it, the meeting didn't achieve its aim as over the years very few people outside AA attended. So, we decided to try a lunch.

We booked a local club and organised a 2-course meal. We produced a flyer as well as personal invitations. Local AA members were encouraged to personally invite any professionals they knew. We also sent personal emails to prospective attendees. Our local paper published a short article with an invitation. Members were organised to attend and given jobs to do such as welcoming guests and staffing the literature table. Members were spread out among the tables as were our guests.

The personal touch worked well. There were 14 professionals in attendance, including our Local Politician and the Council Mayor Also attending were drug and alcohol counsellors, representatives for local charities, pastors and priests. Three staff from the local Aboriginal Health Centre, including the Doctor and the Drug and Alcohol worker attended too.

What we found worrying was that the Drug and Alcohol worker knew nothing of AA. Perhaps that is a reflection on us, and our failure to get the message out there to people working with alcoholics in our community. We were so glad she came and it really brought home how important these events are.

The event started with a welcome and overview, which included our Anonymity Statement. We followed that with the Video presentation on the Cochrane Report. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgmjTlwh_LA

Cochrane Reviews are widely considered the gold standard of systematic reviews and is an independent investigation. We emphasized that the report was totally independent from AA. It was not commissioned by AA and AA did not have a part in it. We choose to show it as the video about the review indicates that AA works. We members know it works but we feel that it's important when doing public information presentations that scientific information by presented as well as our own recovery stories.

Lunch was served and our guests had a chance to talk at the table with the 10 AA members who attended. There was much conversation. Over dessert and coffee, two AA members shared their stories, which were very well received.

Each guest received a basic pack of literature and we had extra literature and posters available at the literature table.

We all felt the lunch was a great success. A local journalist who attended wrote a very good article which was published in our local paper.

Reaching Outback Australia

Australia is a country of 7.7 million square kilometers, two and a half times bigger than India. Its population is

unevenly spread out with 80% of the inhabitants living in the coastal areas. This leaves vast "outback" areas that are isolated from the rest of the nation. In an attempt to bring our life-saving AA message to these outback towns we hold an annual "Tag-a-long" where members travel in convoy in caravans, motor homes, tents and swags to these locations.

The Primary Purpose of the Tag-a-long is to carry the AA message into outback communities through holding meetings in towns where local alcoholics don't get to experience the Fellowship as one does in a city area.

The recent Tag-a-long travelled over 2,000 Kilometers in six weeks and visited 15 outback towns. Professional Awareness Luncheons were held in several of those towns.

In one of those towns 19 people attended the event including local police, local ambulance, Council for Indigenous Health, Lifeline and the local media. Nine AA members mixed and communicated with these professionals. The population of this town was 1,140 people so the exceptional attendance at the meeting showed the thirst for knowledge of the disease of alcoholism in these remote areas.

As part of the program, we showed the Cochrane Report which had a very positive effect on the Professionals. Two weeks after the Tag-a-long we had a call from the Council of Indigenous Health asking about setting up an AA Meeting and how to access Zoom AA Meetings.

Some AA members think the Tag-a-long is just a fun adventure but obviously it is much more than that. It is bringing our message to places that would otherwise remain ignorant of our program and Fellowship. Apart from spreading our message to alcoholics our presence in small country towns brings positive comments from inhabitants as they witness the responsible and respectful behaviour of sober alcoholics.

Conclusion

The second half of our Primary Purpose is to "help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety". This is often achieved by direct conversation with suffering alcoholics in Twelfth Step work but equally important is our outreach and education to Professionals who come into contact with suffering alcoholics. As Bill W. recommends, "Let's Be Friendly with Our Friends".

I am reminded of the long form of Tradition Eleven which says in part:

"Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never a need to praise ourselves. We feel better to let our friends recommend us".



B.3. Reaching out to Remote Communities Separated by Language, Culture of Geography

Anastasia Astashina
(1st Term Delegate - Russia)



Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experiences, strengths, and hopes with each other to help themselves and others recover from alcoholism.

In today's world, it is so important that our fellowship has no boundaries and no obstacles in order to carry the message of recovery and maintain our unity.

The development of online technology help to the growth of online AA meetings, making it even more accessible for the newcomers or recovering alcoholic to participate in the life of the fellowship.

In any part of the world where the Internet is available, you can get to an online AA meeting, including in your own language. However, in order for our brother or sister to know that there is a solution, members of the fellowship do a lot of work every day.

Russia is a multinational country with an area of 17 million sq. km. AA meetings are already active in major cities across the country. Local service structures see it as one of their jobs to inform professionals about how Alcoholics Anonymous can help suffering alcoholics in the area. With help from people who support us, partly because of their personal life stories, the doors of the meeting rooms are opened, and the hearts of new members can be with our Fellowship.

The main difficulties on this path are the territorial remoteness of small towns and settlements from regional centers. And the closed private way of life of local communities of small nationalities. Nevertheless, there are enthusiasts who find the opportunity to travel, often at their own money.

In the Khabarovsk area, the head of one of the local settlements turned to AA members for help. There is drunkenness in the village. Previously, the state provided assistance by the fact that once a year doctors came and make medical treatment just for the body. But after some time, such method did not give a long-term effect, everything started again. AA members came to the village, but nobody came to this meeting. People said that they were all right, there was no problem with alcohol. What a familiar situation with the mind of a suffering alcoholic.

Time passed, the situation did not change, the social workers took children away from dysfunctional families, and social workers themselves turned to AA. We informed them about how AA works, how it helps in recovery. All that remains now is to pray for the will of God to spread this message.

Chukotka is the very East of Russia. A region with harsh climatic conditions. There was a big travel trip of AA

members to this area 10 years ago, as a result, AA group was opened, which is still working. In August 2023, several AA members are planning to make a trip to this region again, to meet with psychologists and narcologists. Support local A.A. with literature and your recovery experience. Help from local AA service structures to their friends in **Kamchatka** consisted of providing recovery literature free of charge. The **Republic of Mari El** is doing a lot of educational work in the region. Meetings with heads of settlements are organized. We are helped in many ways by the local youth policy committee. AA groups are already working in two of the 14 districts of the republic. In the area around **Baikal Lake**, meetings are also held with local government structures and members of the medical community. **In Buryatia and Yakutia**, our path to suffering alcoholics also lay through meetings with interested government officials. People sincerely care about the state of the population and are looking for a way out by all means.

Several words about AA members traveling by car. People organize miles-long trips to remote places of the country and make stops along the way to inform local governments about the activities of our worldwide fellowship, support already open AA groups, bring inspiration and a spirit of unity.

Online meetings

Online recovery is the way of many alcoholics from segregated places. The guys from Khabarovsk, at the height of the covid epidemic, initiated a ZOOM AA meeting. Was founded group named "Wind of Change" - two meetings a day, mentorship for newcomers, regular employees, work according to the 5th tradition, donations. Alcoholics from rehabs of the Khabarovsk Territory and the Amur Region regularly join the meetings. Patients learn that it is possible to recover with the AA 12-step program.

Some members of the AA "Winds of Change" group have been recovering for years only online and they are doing great!

Finally. Thanks to such an attitude an alcoholic in the most remote areas of the country and the world can get a chance for a new life. Professionals are really our friends. Our experience is that it is necessary to continue the formation of strong relationship with state representatives, medical workers, psychiatrists, narcologists. These people, like us, are at the very forefront of the disease, and together we can save more than one life.



B.4. Understanding Anonymity Inside and Outside of AA

Steven King

(2nd Term Delegate - New Zealand)



Anonymity is often referred to as the greatest single protection the Fellowship has to assure its continued existence and growth. In stressing the equality of all A.A. members — and unity in the common bond of their recovery from alcoholism — anonymity serves as the spiritual foundation of A.A. (*GSO New York Website*)

Understanding the Two Sides of Anonymity

There are two sides to consider when looking at anonymity in Alcoholics Anonymous, at a public and at a personal level. Below is an overview of these two sides drawing from our literature, Understanding Anonymity P-47, AA Guidelines - Internet MG-18, The AA Group - where it all begins P-16, information published on the GSO New York website, AA Steps & Traditions, and our own New Zealand experience.

1) Anonymity at the Public level Outside of AA – Press, Radio, TV, Films, Social Media, Internet

Anonymity at a Public Level – Tradition 11

Short Form

11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

Long Form

11. Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never a need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.

Even though our Steps and Traditions only list press, radio, tv, film we also need to consider the inclusion of other communication platforms such as social media and the internet. Maintaining anonymity at these levels puts caution to those who might otherwise exploit their A.A. affiliation to achieve recognition, power, or personal gain.

An A.A. member may disclose their identity and speak as a recovered alcoholic on any of these media platforms without breaking these Traditions — so long as their A.A. membership is not revealed. If an AA member discloses

or affiliates themselves with Alcoholics Anonymous in public this is where the breach occurs.

Our AA literature references that when speaking publicly, such as at a public meeting we are to use our first name and initial of our last name.

New Zealand has a very connected and united service structure across the country. People in these service positions have a good understanding of these Traditions and keep a watchful eye on media activity. If we do have a situation where a person’s anonymity has been breached, we have a designated person on the New Zealand General Service Conference Board who looks after all media and will make contact with the media outlet and remind / educate them on our Tradition of Anonymity. For us, having one person as a point of contact offers consistency of messaging when talking to media about anonymity.

For people who choose to speak in a public space about their recovery we often suggest that they refer to having the support of a community-based or 12-step programme that helped them. In these situations, an AA member speaks as an individual, but not for A.A as a whole.

In a situation where an AA meeting is televised, as in North America, we will see this as blurred out images or filmed without revealing a person’s identity and identifying themselves only by their first names or first name and initial of their last name. This is in line with our Traditions as their personal anonymity is not broken – AA is not anonymous, but its members are.

When dealing with any media regardless of the platform we must remember that it is the A.A. member’s responsibility, and not that of the media, to maintain our Tradition of anonymity – “*we are responsible*”.

Social Media

Social networking websites are public in nature. Although users create accounts and utilise usernames and passwords, once on the site, it is a public domain where A.A. members and non- A.A.s mingle.

As long as individuals do not identify themselves as A.A. members, there is no conflict of interest. However, someone using their full name and/or a likeness, such as a full-face photograph, would be contrary to the spirit of the Eleventh Tradition, which states in the Long Form that, “our last (Family) names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed or publicly printed”.

We need to remember that even “closed” or “private” groups might still unintentionally reveal an individual’s identity.

Questions to consider (*AA Guidelines Internet MG-18*):

- Is my post about the message or the messenger?
- Am I carrying the message in the hopes of helping someone else, or simply shouting from the rooftops?
- Am I taking my story and affiliating it with political causes?
- Am I being cautious about not identifying other members as AA members in photo or statements?
- Am I avoiding the temptation to incite controversy with caustic arguments or bully others who disagree with me?
- Am I providing helpful links to my local AA websites?

We must always remember when using social media and other online platforms, A.A. members are responsible for their own anonymity and that of others. When we break our anonymity in online forums, we may inadvertently break the anonymity of others.

2) Anonymity at a Personal Level Inside of AA

Anonymity at a Personal level - Tradition 12

Short Form

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Long Form

12. And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities, that we actually practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessing may never spoil us, that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.

At the personal level, anonymity provides protection for all members who identify as an alcoholic, remembering the only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking. In those early days of recovery most alcoholics carry a level of shame and humiliation whether they admit it or not, anonymity is a safeguard often of special importance to these newcomers as we provide an atmosphere of trust and openness with each other.

As valuable as privacy is to new members, most of them are eager to share the good news of their A.A. affiliation with their families. Such a disclosure, however, is always their own choice.

AA as a whole seeks to ensure that individual members stay as private and protected as they wish, or as open as they wish, about belonging to the fellowship.

Within the fellowship AA members sometimes become so anonymous they don’t know who each other is. Some think we cannot use our names and/or family names because it will break anonymity. It is common practice to use first names and the initial of a last name within the fellowship, as we do with public speaking, however our literature only refers to doing this when speaking publicly. What our literature does say, is AA members are to use last names within the Fellowship especially for election of group officers and other service jobs. *“The AA Group, where it all begins P-16” page 12*

A.A. members generally think it unwise to break the anonymity of the member even after the member’s death, but in each situation, the final decision must rest with the family. A.A. members, though, are in agreement that the anonymity of still living A.A. members should be respected in obituaries or in any type of printed remembrance or death notice.

The Spiritual Significance of Anonymity

In stressing the equality of all AA members and unity in the common bond of our recovery from alcoholism, anonymity serves as the spiritual foundation of the Fellowship.

In 1948 Bill W wrote:

“One may say that anonymity is the spiritual base, the sure key to all the rest of our Traditions. It has come to stand for prudence and, most importantly, for self-effacement. True consideration for the newcomer if he desires to be nameless, vital protection against misuse of the name Alcoholics Anonymous at the public level, and to each of us as constant reminder that principles come before personal interest, such is the wide scope of all-embracing principle. In it we see the cornerstone of our security as a movement, at a deeper spiritual level it points us still greater self-renunciation.”

Responsibility

As delegates in elected service positions, we are the custodians of our Steps and Traditions. It is our responsibility to ensure that the Fellowships purpose and intentions (not our own) are maintained and passed on to others coming into service as it was passed on to us by those who have gone before us.



B.5. Anonymity on Digital Platforms



Simon Ashby

(1st Term Delegate - Singapore)

Members of Alcoholics Anonymous, my name is Simon, and I am a grateful recovered Alcoholic. I am honoured to be with you today in Fiji. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today at AOSM 2023 about a topic that holds great importance for members of Alcoholics Anonymous around the world, Anonymity on Digital Platforms.

A.A. in the digital age has certainly taken on a new meaning in these challenging times. In recent years, Coronavirus (COVID-19) has affected many A.A. groups that normally would meet in-person. This has resulted in a vast shift from these in-person meetings to online / digital meetings. Then, post-pandemic, many Alcoholics Anonymous groups have transitioned back to in-person or hybrid meetings. Whilst some groups have chosen to remain online.

Now, let's take a moment to reflect on Anonymity in A.A.:

Tradition 11 states, "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films."

Tradition 12 states that, "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

What is the purpose of anonymity in Alcoholics Anonymous? Why is it often referred to as the greatest single protection the Fellowship has to assure its continued existence and growth?

If we look at the history of A.A., from its beginning in 1935 until now, it is clear that anonymity serves two different yet equally vital functions:

- At the personal level, anonymity provides protection for all members from identification as alcoholics, a safeguard often of special importance to newcomers.
- At the public level of press, radio, TV, films, and other media technologies such as the Internet, anonymity stresses the equality in the Fellowship of all members by putting the brake on those who might otherwise exploit their A.A. affiliation to achieve recognition, power, or personal gain.

The general principles are:

"When appearing on radio, television, film or on the Internet as A.A. members, we refrain from showing our faces or revealing our last names. In printed articles, on

websites or email, we are identified by our first names and last initials only."

It means that we respect the principles of the fellowship, and we don't break the anonymity of others.

Here are some specific examples. We are going to talk about:

- A.A. Traditions and The Internet
- Guarding Anonymity Online
- General Social Networking Websites
- Online A.A. Meetings/Groups (including web conferencing)
- Speaker Talks Online
- A.A. Websites — Setting Up A Local Website
- Posting Service Minutes and Reports
- Personal Phone Numbers on A.A. Event Flyers
- Anonymity And Email
- Using Full Names in Emails to Professionals
- Anonymity On Personal Computers

A.A. TRADITIONS AND THE INTERNET

We observe all A.A.'s principles and Traditions on A.A. public media such as the Internet.

In 2013, the 63rd General Service Conference affirmed that "the Internet, social media, and all forms of public communications are implicit in the last phrase of the short form of Tradition Eleven, which reads: '...at the level of press, radio, and films.'"

In its simplest form, this means that A.A.s do not publicly identify themselves as A.A. members using their full names and/or full-face photos.

GUARDING ANONYMITY ONLINE

Modern communication in A.A. is flowing from one alcoholic to another in ways that are high-tech, relatively open-ended and evolving quickly. Protecting anonymity is a major concern for members, who are accessing the Internet in ever-growing numbers.

When we use digital media, we are responsible for our own anonymity and for protecting that of others. When we post, text, or blog, we should consider whether we are publishing at the public level. When we break our anonymity in these forums, we may inadvertently break the anonymity of others.

GENERAL SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

Facebook and other social networking websites are public in nature. Though users create accounts and utilize usernames and passwords, once on the site, it is a public medium where A.A. members and non- A.A.s mingle.

The platforms in and of themselves do not infringe on our principles of anonymity or any other Traditions. It is the actions of the individual that may cause harm to themselves, to others, or to A.A. as a whole. For that we are, each of us, individually responsible to our fellowship, to ourselves and to our personal higher powers. Using these platforms to provide information about anonymity online may actually strengthen the principle of anonymity at the public level.

Individual members can take clear steps to safeguard their own anonymity. For example, an individual or group might create an entirely anonymous social media account without use of their full name or face and for sharing about recovery only. Others may choose to use their names but not photographs of themselves. Both the letter and the spirit of the Eleventh Tradition are clear guideposts for our fellowship in this respect.

As long as individuals do not identify themselves as A.A. members, there is no conflict of interest.

Experience suggests that it is in keeping with the Eleventh Tradition to not disclose A.A. membership on social networking sites as well as on any other website, blog, electronic bulletin board, etc., unless composed solely of A.A. members and password protected.

ONLINE A.A. MEETINGS/GROUPS (including web conferencing)

Just like regular A.A. meetings, online A.A. meetings and groups are autonomous.

Online AA meetings have gained popularity, especially with the advancement of technology and the widespread use of the internet, particularly true during the global pandemic. These meetings provide a convenient and accessible platform for individuals to seek support and connect with other members of A.A. While maintaining anonymity is still encouraged, it can be more challenging to guarantee complete anonymity in the online space.

Here are a few key points to consider regarding anonymity and online AA meetings:

Confidentiality reminders: Online AA meetings typically begin with a reference to the 12th Tradition on anonymity. a reminder to maintain confidentiality and respect the anonymity of fellow participants. This serves as a gentle reminder to maintain the trust and privacy of everyone involved.

Group guidelines and principles: Each online AA meeting may have specific guidelines and principles in place to ensure a safe and respectful environment. These guidelines often include a reminder about anonymity and respecting the privacy of others. Some groups request participants to keep their video cameras on so that they can see who is in the meeting. Some groups have waiting rooms and greeters.

Caution with technology: It's important to note the potential risks associated with technology. Participants should exercise caution when sharing personal information online, and it's generally advised to use secure platforms and follow best practices for online privacy.

SPEAKER TALKS ONLINE

Members report that audio files of A.A. talks are being increasingly disseminated over the Internet. If a member objects to having his or her A.A. story broadcast publicly, he or she may wish to contact the site's webmaster and request its removal.

Experience shows that it is best to encourage speakers not to use full names and not to identify third parties by full names in their talks.

A.A. WEBSITES — SETTING UP A LOCAL WEBSITE

Decisions in the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous are made through an informed group conscience and the decision to create a website is no different. Whether area or district, central office or intergroup, A.A. experience suggests forming a committee to discuss all aspects of the project, including all possible concerns about the Traditions. Unless password-protected and for members only, an A.A. website is a public medium, and, therefore, requires the same safeguards that we use at the level of press, radio, and film.

POSTING SERVICE MINUTES AND REPORTS

Deciding what contents to post on public websites requires careful consideration. While it can be helpful when websites make minutes of meetings, reports, and background material readily available to a broad population, it is also paramount to keep in mind that these documents may be posted in a public medium. Each document needs to be reviewed and edited to ensure that the full names of A.A. members are not included.

PERSONAL PHONE NUMBERS ON A.A. EVENT FLYERS

Until relatively recently, A.A. members usually had little concern about placing their first names, last initials and

personal phone numbers on flyers announcing upcoming A.A. events, since these flyers were typically given out only in A.A. meetings, left on tables at other A.A. events or distributed to members. Today, event flyers can be easily uploaded and viewed on websites, accessible to the general public.

Due to search services on the Internet, it is now possible to utilize phone numbers to find out a person's identity, including full names and, possibly, other personal information. If A.A. members become increasingly uneasy with personal phone numbers being placed on flyers, event committees may need to look into alternate ways of providing contact information such as an event email address.

ANONYMITY AND EMAIL

Electronic mail is a widely used and accepted method of communication. It is now used regularly as a service tool in A.A., but as with any service, we need to ensure the Fellowship's Traditions are maintained while still receiving the most benefit from this form of communication.

When using email, it is necessary to consider the anonymity of the recipients of messages.

When sending A.A. mail to multiple recipients who wish to remain anonymous, use can be made of the BCC (Blind Courtesy Copy) option available on most computers.

For A.A. service positions, generic email addresses can be passed from one trusted servant to another at rotation time. For example, emails we will all have received from the AOSM Secretary.

USING FULL NAMES IN EMAILS TO PROFESSIONALS

It is suggested that email communication with professionals is similar to a letter-mailing project with two caveats: 1) emails can easily be forwarded, and 2) the contents of emails can easily be cut-and-pasted, changed and/or uploaded to websites.

Professional "friends of A.A." have shared that, for the purposes of Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.) or Public Information (P.I.) service, it lends credibility to the letter or email if a full name is used and if the letter or email has a professional look and feel. "A.A. Guidelines on Internet" gives references to example email signatures.

ANONYMITY ON PERSONAL COMPUTERS

Some individuals in Alcoholics Anonymous may believe that having their own computer eliminates concerns about anonymity in their address book. However, it is still possible for a motivated person to gain unauthorized access to someone else's email account with the right credentials. While such intrusions may be unlikely, it is advisable to choose a unique password and keep it private. It's important to acknowledge that even the most secure email accounts can be hacked by computer experts, but many A.A. members and committees are willing to take this risk while exercising caution and common sense. Additionally, when using email address books for A.A. correspondence on shared devices like home computers, laptops, smartphones, tablets, or digital media devices, it's worth considering that friends and family who use the same device may have access to those address books.

This is also true for access to simple messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Line and others.

In summary, A.A. members may disclose their identity and speak as recovered alcoholics, giving radio, TV and Internet interviews, without violating the Traditions — so long as their A.A. membership is not revealed.

Experience suggests that A.A. members:

- Respect the right of other members to maintain their own anonymity at whatever levels they wish.
- Are vigilant not to break their anonymity when posting, texting, or blogging, and very careful not to inadvertently break the anonymity of others.
- When speaking as A.A. members at non-A.A. meetings, usually use first names only.
- Maintain personal anonymity in articles and autobiographies (online or in print).

References:

1. Anonymity Online and Digital Media – AA.ORG
2. A.A. Guidelines on Internet – AA.ORG
3. Understanding Anonymity – AA.ORG
4. Physically Distanced but Digitally Connected, The Alcoholics Anonymous Message Carries on Amid Coronavirus (COVID-19) – AA.ORG
5. Anonymity Statement Card – AA.ORG



B.b. Creating Local Literature in Local Languages - Sharing Examples

Masaya Osako
(1st Term Delegate - Japan)



Bula, everyone. My name is Masaya, I'm an alcoholic. As an AOSM Delegate from Japan, I would like to thank you all for this invaluable opportunity to give a presentation here.

I would like to start by sharing experiences of my own and AA Japan to address why it is necessary to publish local literature in local languages.

Last October, I had a chance to participate in the 27th WSM as the first-term delegate from Japan, together with our second-term delegate - Doug G. It was originally supposed to be held in Japan, but due to Covid-19, it has changed into online format. 75 WSM delegates from 49 countries gathered for 6 days, and so many valuable sharing of experiences and hopes took place.

One particular moment in the meeting left a deep impression on me. It happened in the last day of the six-day WSM and was just before its closing session. Rather than explaining it in my poor English, I will quote it from the WSM report.

Racy J., GSO international staff coordinator, invited all present to say the Serenity Prayer in the language of their choice. We talk about literature about opening doors to the A.A. message, the light that goes on when we hear it in our own language; you are here because you received the message in your own After each, the WSM delegates paused to listen to the Serenity Prayer spoken in the Racy said "Just give us a moment to sit with what just happened,"

In that brief moment, I was deeply moved by the significance of the fact that the members from all over the world talking different native languages were here to take our primary responsibility and filled with strong sense of gratitude.

I myself was once an alcoholic who could not either stop or manage my drinking. I came to AA 14 years ago and have been sober ever since. I was able to keep my sobriety, be an AOSM delegate and join this meeting only because that there are people who have carried the AA message to Japan, that there are many local AA groups formed in Japan and pass it on to me in Japanese and that I was able to receive the AA principles as it is through AA literature translated into Japanese such as the Big

Book and the 12&12 and other Japanese GSC-approved publications.

Let me give you an quick linguistic overview of Japan. The total population of Japan is approximately 125 million and Japanese, which is spoken by the vast majority of the population is the only official language in de facto. Only a small number of Japanese can use English in daily conversation level or higher, even they start learning English from secondary education and some continues that through university level. Surveys indicate that less than 10% of the total population can use English fluently.

There are an estimated 5,800 members in Japan AA, but the percentage of Japanese members who can participate in English meetings is probably less than 10%. The majority of Japanese AA members, like myself, are not able to speak even daily-level English.

The Big Book has been translated and published in 72 languages, thanks to the efforts of the International Publication Fund and AAWS. However, if there are no meetings held and no AA books translated in local languages of certain country or region and only English, Spanish, and French ones are provided, I don't believe that our message is reaching to many alcoholics in that place.

We, AA Japan, will be holding our 50th anniversary convention in March 2025, since we consider that AA Japan started its path when we had the first Japanese step meeting in Tokyo in 1975.

After that, in 1979, the Japanese translation of the Big Book was published including 10 personal stories of pioneers of AA Japan as its second half.

This suggests a significant thing when we think about the meaning of carrying the message in a local language.

To say the truth, English AA groups had already been formed in Tokyo from 1948 by AA members of the U.S. military stationed in Japan as occupying forces after World War II. However, it remained as an English inter-group, primarily for members of the U.S. military inside U.S. bases and for Western members visiting Japan on business purposes. They did not have an direct connection with Japanese

alcoholics so as to help them starting their Japanese meetings or developing AA service structure in Japan which we currently have.

In 1979, the first Japanese translation of the Big Book was published. A Japanese alcoholic priest who is fluent in English led the projects. U.S.-Canada GSO provided us the license and lend money for the translation with the advice to include personal stories of Japanese members as the second half of it, rather than translating those of U.S.-Canada version. Because of that, the first edition of the Japanese Big Book included the stories of 10 Japanese members.

For an additional information, in 2000, we did a full revision of our translation for the Japanese Big Book and added two personal stories. In 2016, our GSC made a recommendation to fully revise the personal stories so we asked our fellows to send their stories. We had a selection meeting and chose 20 stories for our new edition of the book which we will be publishing in 2025 with partial revision of the translation of the first half implemented.

In 1981, our General Service Office (JSO) was established and we opened our first General Service Conference (GSC) in Japan in 1996. At the time there were no GSC, the decision about literature translation and publication was done just by our JSO General Manager and a few Board members. But after we started to have our GSC, many groups began to submit a proposal regarding publications and those decisions were made as the recommendations from GSC by the conscience of Japan AA formed through discussion among conference members such as delegates elected from each area, trustees, WSM delegates and JSO staffs.

Initially, most of the agenda items for publication were about translating and publishing AA literature in U.S. and Canada that had not yet been translated into Japanese. Gradually, proposals for AA Japan original publication to fulfill unique needs in Japan were started to come up and some of them got recommended as an action item, examined in our publication committee and actually published as our literature and service materials.

Creating the General Service Guide for Japan AA is one such example. Since the scale of services between AA in Japan (approx. 5800 members) and United States/Canada (1.2 million+ members) are quite different, we decided to make our own one other than the Service Manual.

Currently, our JSO have about 68 AA publications in Japanese including guidelines and about 10 of them are publications unique to Japan AA.

Today, as a sample of the unique publications, I brought each of you delegates a pamphlet "Welcome to AA" and a copy of either a male or female version of our comic book as they contains a lot of illustrations and can convey some of its contents without texts.

The following is a brief explanation of these two publications.

"Welcome to AA"



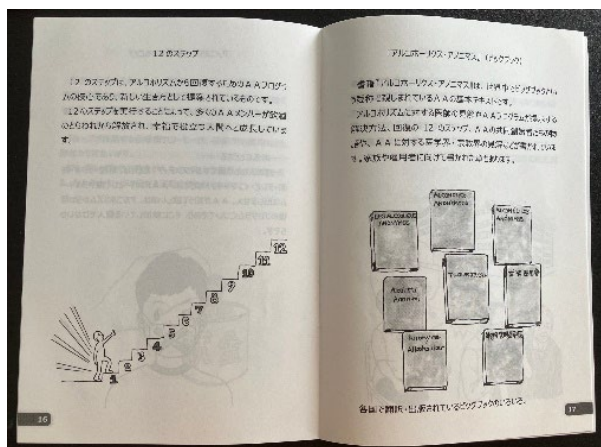
"Welcome to AA" is a brief introduction to AA with many illustrations and it is created for newcomers and beginners. One of our group hand wrote its original version as their own material for 12th step work and asked JSO to check the content. The staffs and the board members back then considered that it was well explaining AA discussed about it in GSC, published its first edition in 2003 as our GSC approved AA pamphlet. Its latest edition was updated in 2011 by our publication committee with review and some addition to the contents and they asked a professional to redo the illustration. It is currently the fourth most circulated ones out of 68 types of our publication. The slide show format of this pamphlet has been posted on the top page of our JSO website (Link: [Welcome to AA JSO HP \(slideshare.net\)](http://www.jsos.jp/Welcome-to-AA-JSO-HP-slideshare.net)) since 2020, and has collected 157,000 views in 3 years. We are now preparing a video version of it with narration.

Two Comic Books

Below is the brief explanation about two comic books.

- "What Happened to Me - Is Your Drinking Safe?" (Male version comic book)
- "It Happens to Everyone - When Did My Comfort Drinking Go Away?" (Female version comic book)

The first edition of the male version comic book was published in 2008, followed by the revised edition in 2010 with a new title and etc.



The first edition of the female version was also published in 2010. These two books were approved by our GSC and are aimed at those who have not yet come to AA or who are suffering from alcoholism and do not yet identified as alcoholics.

This can be a good example of a locally unique publication in a local language.

Photos of other Japanese literature unique to AA Japan are attached to the manuscript for your reference.

As the closing, I would like to quote the Statement of Purpose of the World Service Meeting which says "The primary purpose of the World Service Meeting is the same as that of all A.A. activity — to carry the

message to the alcoholic who still suffers, wherever in the world he may be, whatever the language he speaks." I believe it is same for the AOSM.

I hope that our experience will be of help to everyone in the Asia Oceania Zone. Thank you very much.

Reference List of AA Japan original literature in Japanese



- "Welcome to AA"
- "What Happened to Me" (comic book for men)
- "It Happens to Everyone" (comic book for women)
- "AA Japan PI Material"
- "AA Japan PI Material DVD"
- "Meeting Handbook"
- "Meeting Handbook" (large size with ruby)
- "The Big Book" (hardcover, including personal stories of Japanese members)
- "AA Japan Service Guide, Revised Edition 2010"
- "The 'Days Trapped in Booze' (stories of fellows who have been in correctional facilities)
- "The Road to Recovery 1-4" (personal stories)
- "BOX916" (our monthly meetings-on-paper magazine)
- "BOX Selection Vol. 1-5"
- "AA Japan 20th Anniversary Booklet"
- "AA Japan 30th Anniversary Booklet"
- "AA Japan 40th Anniversary Booklet"
- "Catalog of Literature" (free)
- "What the Executive Board can do" (free)
- "AA Poster"
- "Newsletter" (published quarterly by JSO)
- "Membership Survey" (once every three years)



B.7. World Service Report

Steve King

(2nd Term Delegate - New Zealand)



The host country was Japan. However, due to covid restrictions, the meeting was held online between 1-6 October 2022.

Attendees: There was record high participation with 75 delegates from 49 countries “Keep coming back”

Newcomer: Mongolia was accepted as a country member of the WSM “welcome to the newcomer”

Newer Members: Bulgaria, Greece, El Salvador, Guatemala were represented in 2020 for the first time and returned in 2022 - “keep coming back”

Our Focus – We talked a lot about:

- AA meetings online - virtual meetings
- Seventh Tradition - the virtual basket
- Service Structure – virtual meeting participation
- Carrying the message in the digital space
- AA Literature in the digital space (relevance, accessibility)
- The changes to AA brought on by the pandemic

Presentations

Country Reports: Each participating country gave a brief overview of their report. Through these reports we learnt how our fellowship is coping with change brought on by the pandemic and the digital age

Licensing & Translation: David R AAWS Publishing Director there had been a significant increase licensing & translation queries and request reaching up to a 300% increase

To address this growth a new administrative department devoted solely to translation and licensing with new system technology to support the 100 countries working on translations and local publishing projects. Contact email is tl@aa.org

Topic Presentations from:

Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Great Britain, Iran, Portugal, Columbia, South Africa, Australia, Belarus, Ireland, Peru, India

3 Workshop Segments: Delegates were assigned into working groups to discuss aspects of a topic, take minutes, report back with a brief overview and submit minutes before the end of conference

Committee Meetings & Reporting

Zonal Meetings & Reporting

Topic Presentations

(You can read each presentation in the WSM report)

Topic 1: AA and New Technologies

- Do digital platforms strengthen or weaken our communication today? Do they broaden AA’s accessibility to all backgrounds, genders, ages, socioeconomic demographics and geographies?
Maria Z – Brazil
- (b) AA Literature on digital platforms Masaya - Japan
- (c) Technology and AA – Reaching all generations
Stephen S – Great Britain

Topic 2: What is our attraction? Unity, Service

- Unity – We are a diverse Fellowship with a singleness of purpose
Juan O – Chile
- (b) Service – Passing it on Gholamreza “Reza” V - Iran

Topic 3: The Seventh Tradition: Fully Self Supporting in the Digital Age

- Passing the “basket” on virtual platforms
Gonzalo M – Mexico
- The spiritual significance of being self-supporting to myself, to my group, to my local AA entities
Leonor P - Portugal

Topic 4: Our Non-alcoholic Friends

- Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community committees reaching professional on the frontlines
Alfonso O – Columbia
- Does AA literature attract and encourage professionals to refer clients to AA? Do we speak their language
Frank G – South Africa

Topic 5: Alcoholic Anonymous has already come of age, is there any danger that it may get too old

- Has the global pandemic taught us lessons to better inform our Twelfth Step services
Gregory B – Australia
- (b) “Young People” in AA (potential members, members and participation in service)
Dimitry K - Belarus

- (c) How to incorporate online groups into our service structures *Moira S - Ireland*

Topic 6: How to invest in the future of AA

- (a) Learning from our history and stepping out of our comfort zones *Daniel G – Peru*
(b) Keeping the fellowship united - *Lokesh B - India*

Workshop Presentations

(You can read each presentation in the WSM report)

Workshop 1: How to encourage the Seventh Tradition in the time of a Pandemic/Social Isolation at each level of the structure

- (a) What are the barriers for members in contributing to their groups and service entities
(b) What is the effectiveness of the virtual basket? Have virtual baskets increased or decreased group contributions to AA service entities? Are the AA groups contributing or are we leaning on individual members contributions
(c) Does sharing our experience and stories how AA uses 7th Tradition funds help inspire members to contribute in order to support the services

Workshop 2: Virtual Groups: How can they be integrated into the General Service Conference structure?

- (a) Do your local service entities list virtual groups and if so, are the groups considered geographically based?
(b) Do virtual groups have a vote and a voice in your structure?
(c) How might virtual group participation in our service structures help or inhibit AA's growth and reach?

Workshop 3: AA in Society: Relationships with networks and social media

- (a) How do we adhere to AA Traditions while being on the platforms that people search for help?
(Example: Anonymity & Affiliation)
(b) What social media platforms are members, groups and service

entities use to carry the message of AA?

- (c) How do social media platforms and professional networking platforms help alcoholics we have yet to reach? Is the language we use on these platforms from our literature an effective way in reaching diverse current and potential members?

Committee Meetings

(You can read minutes from each committee in the WSM report)

Each delegate is assigned to a working committee who meet during the conference. Within these groups delegates are appointed as chair and secretary. Minutes are recorded by each group and send in before the end of conference along with an overview of what was discussed presented back to the WSM session.

- Agenda
- Literature
- Policy Admissions and Finance
- Working with Others

Zonal Meetings Reports

- 16th Asia Oceania Service Meeting *Steve K – New Zealand*
- 21st European Service Meeting *Iza A & Elena S*
- 22nd REDELA *Roberto R*
- 10th SSASM *Varoshini N*

General Business

New Zealand delegate raised the topic of what mechanism is in place for the international fellowship to have the right of participation when reviewing AA literature – such as The Big Book

Other countries have since shown support towards this initiative and a topic that should be kept live with in coming delegates and championed by AOSM and other zonal regional meetings.

You can read the full WSM report here:

https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/f-150_en_2022.pdf



Section C

Outcomes and Recommendations





C.1. Election of Officers



See Appendix D for qualifications and criteria for each position.

C.1.1. AOSM Chair

The meeting elected Doug Grude (Japan) to the position of Chair and Sheli Bowman (Hong Kong) to the position of Alternate Chair. All five 2nd Term Delegates stood for election.

C.1.2. AOSM Secretariat

The meeting reaffirmed the sitting secretary, Simon Miles (Hong Kong), for the remaining two years of his 4-year term.

C.1.3. AOSM Treasurer

The meeting elected Steve King (NZ) to the position of Treasurer for a four-year term. The term for this position is 4 years

C.1.4. World Service Meeting Report

Delegates selected Masaya Osako (Japan) to give the report from the 15th AOSM (2023) at the 26th World Service Meeting (2024), and to present a report from the 26th World Service Meeting (2024) at the 16th AOSM (2025).



C.2. Committee Recommendations



KEY:	PAF:	Policy, Admissions and Finance	WLP:	Website, Literature and Publishing
	SSA:	Site Selection and Agenda	WWO:	Working with Others

C.2.1. Policy, Admissions and Finance Committee

PAF#1	The committee recommends that the “Number 1 procedure be changed to:	14 Yes
	“1. The committee will meet during each AOSM and in between, on-line as required.”	0 No
PAF#2	The Committee recommends that the AOSM set a prudent reserve of US\$12,000 and if it goes below that amount, a warning is triggered.	14 Yes 0 No
PAF#3	The committee recommends that an AOSM Service Manual be developed.	14 Yes 0 No
PAF#4	The committee recommends that the number of observers be increased from 25 to 50 with the following conditions: Observers secure their own accommodation and meals and they do not play a part in any decision-making discussion.	
	Suggested amendment	
	The committee recommends that the number of observers be increased from 25 to 50 with the following conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the host committee be aware of the potential difficulties cause din accommodation for observers • That observers to not play a part in any decision-making discussions. 	14 Yes 0 No
PAF#5	The committee recommends that all second term delegates present at the AOSM be encouraged to nominate themselves as office bearers. If no nominations are received, then the AOSM could consider extending the invitation to second term delegates who are not present at the meeting.	
	1st suggested amendment:	
	The committee recommends that all second term delegates present at the AOSM be encouraged to nominate themselves as office bearers. If no nominations are received, then the AOSM could consider extending the invitation to second term delegates who are not present at the meeting or former delegates or who are two years or less out of office.	
2nd suggested amendment:	The committee recommends that all second term delegates present at the AOSM be encouraged to nominate as office bearers.	14 Yes 0 No
PAF#6	The committee recommends that the AOSM Chair and Treasurer write to the General Service Boards of New Zealand and Australia to ask how best to set up an AOSM WISE account in their country and inform the AOSM of any legal implications.	14 Yes 0 No
PAF#7	The committee recommends that Chairs of the AOSM Committees be provided with an on-line account to conduct committee meetings in between AOSMs.	14 Yes 0 No

C.2.2. Website, Literature and Publishing Committee

WLP#1	The committee recommends that the WLP committee coordinate with the AOSM secretary to gather country information through outreach to complete country profiles & request permission to their link their URL/website to the AOSM website as well as determine their desire to list their free literature on the AOSM Website.	14 Yes 0 No
WLP #2	The committee recommends that AAWS provide a flowchart outlining the licensing process.	14 Yes 0 No
WLP #3	The committee recommends that the AOSM website serve as an option for posting literature for countries within the AOSM zone.	14 Yes 0 No
WLP #4	The committee recommends that the WLP committee develop standard operating procedures (SOP's) for updating and entering data into the private database area of the website.	14 Yes 0 No
WLP #5	The committee recommends that the WLP committee create a password protected database accessible through a login function on the AOSM website to replace the current Google Drive folders.	14 Yes 0 No
WLP #6	The committee recommended that the WLP committee create the following new sections to the AOSM website: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A password protected database accessible through a login function on the AOSM website to replace current Google Drive folders.2. A Country Section including country profiles and links to country specific websites. A literature section that may include free country specific literature and links to country specific website literature pages.	14 Yes 0 No

C.2.3. Site Selection and Agenda Committee

SSA#1	The committee recommends that the 'Composition' be updated to remove "Website", as it is currently part of the WLP committee.	14 Yes 0 No
SSA#2	The committee recommends the Scope be changed from: "The purpose and function of this committee is the Selection of the site for each AOSM and wording of the agenda, with input from the Chair and Secretary, between AOSM meetings." "and to review and initiate the recommendations (if this is felt necessary by the meeting) to the AOSM." To the following: "The purpose and function of this committee is to recommend 1) the location for each AOSM, and 2) the theme, presentation, and workshops for the next AOSM. In addition, the committee, with input from the Chair and the Secretary, shall determine the overall structure of the AOSM agenda."	14 Yes 0 No
SSA#3	The committee recommends the 16 th AOSM be held October 16-19, 2025.	14 Yes 0 No
SSA#4	The committee recommends the theme of the 16 th AOSM be "One Message – Many Languages – One Fellowship"	14 Yes 0 No
SSA#5	The committee recommends the following presentation and workshop topics for the 16 th AOSM.	14 Yes

Presentations:**0 No**

- Carrying the message through country-to-country sponsorship
- Translations, Licensing, and the International Literature Fund
- Extending the hand of AA into all communities
- Unity – the importance of consistent literature
- The value of specialized AA groups
- Cooperation with Professional Community as a key to growth

Workshop Topics

- Experience with country-to-country sponsorship
- Cultivating unity within a country

SSA#6

The committee recommends that the 16th AOSM be held in Singapore, with Mongolia as the alternate site.

14 Yes**0 No**

C.2.4. Working with Others Committee

The Working with Others Committee submitted no recommendations.



C.3. Committee Reports



C.3.1. Policy, Admissions and Finance

Attendees:	5 Voting Members	*Chair / **Alt. Chair	
	Greg BYRNE*	Australia	2 nd Term
	Laura STEPHENSON	South Korea	1 st Term
	Christine HART	New Zealand	1 st Term
Absent:	Iz KHALAF	MERCAA	2 nd Term
	Kirill KAPTANOV	Kyrgyzstan	2 nd Term
	Yisrael CAMPBELL	Israel	2 nd Term
Scope:	The purpose and function of this committee is to review and initiate recommendations involving policies, finances and requests for admissions (if this is felt necessary by the meeting) to the AOSM.		
Composition:	The Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee of the AOSM was formed at the 9th AOSM in 2003 in Hong Kong. The Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee will have the same number of members (or as near to this as possible) as the other committees conducting the business of the AOSM. Each member has a vote. The secretary assigned to the committee does not have a vote. Members of the committee are selected, if possible, geographically. Consideration will be given to the balance between 1st and 2nd term delegates to try and provide continuity. The exact time of where and when the selection will be made, will be decided after the information concerning the new delegates has been received by the Chair and Secretary of the AOSM.		
Agenda:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review minutes from 14th AOSM meeting (held virtually) 2. Matters arising and Correspondence 3. Old business 4. New Business <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1. Review Composition/Scope/Procedure for Policy, Admissions, and Finance Committee 4.2. Review the Treasurer’s Report 4.3. Review policy and admissions requirements for countries 4.4. Review policy and admissions requirements for delegates 4.5. Review new requests for admission. 4.6. Review the financial reporting format. 4.7. (other) 5. Other Issues <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1. Discuss how to better reach out to non-participating countries. 5.2. Additional items to be discussed? 6. Election of PAF Chairperson and Alt. Chairperson for the 16th AOSM 7. End with “Responsibility Statement” 		
Recommendations:	PAF#1	The committee recommends that the “Number 1 procedure be changed to: “1. The committee will meet during each AOSM and in between, on-line as required.”	14 Yes 0 No
	PAF#2	The Committee recommends that the AOSM set a prudent reserve of US\$12,000 and if it goes below that amount, a warning is triggered.	14 Yes

		0 No
PAF#3	The committee recommends that an AOSM Service Manual be developed.	14 Yes 0 No
PAF#4	The committee recommends that the number of observers be increased from 25 to 50 with the following conditions: Observers secure their own accommodation and meals and they do not play a part in any decision-making discussion. Suggested amendment The committee recommends that the number of observers be increased from 25 to 50 with the following conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">That the host committee be aware of the potential difficulties cause din accommodation for observers That observers to not play a part in any decision-making discussions.	14 Yes 0 No
PAF#5	The committee recommends that all second term delegates present at the AOSM be encouraged to nominate themselves as office bearers. If no nominations are received, then the AOSM could consider extending the invitation to second term delegates who are not present at the meeting. 1st suggested amendment: The committee recommends that all second term delegates present at the AOSM be encouraged to nominate themselves as office bearers. If no nominations are received, then the AOSM could consider extending the invitation to second term delegates who are not present at the meeting or former delegates or who are two years or less out of office. 2nd suggested amendment: The committee recommends that all second term delegates present at the AOSM be encouraged to nominate as office bearers.	14 Yes 0 No
PAF#6	The committee recommends that the AOSM Chair and Treasurer write to the General Service Boards of New Zealand and Australia to ask how best to set up an AOSM WISE account in their country and inform the AOSM of any legal implications.	14 Yes 0 No
Minutes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed minutes from 14th AOSM meeting. The committee reviewed the report and approved the minutes. Matters arising and Correspondence. There were a number of proposals withdrawn from the 2021 AOSM due to time constraints. They were discussed in new business (below). Old business There was no old business. New Business <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review Composition/Scope/Procedure for Site Selection and Agenda Committee The committee reviewed the CSP and recommended changes to the Procedure Number 1. RECOMMENDATION #1 The committee recommends that the “Number 1 Procedure” be changed to: “1. The committee will meet during each AOSM <i>and between AOSM’s on-line as</i> 	

required.”

4.2. Review The Treasurer’s Report

The committee discussed the costs of holding the AOSM in Fiji. The Treasurer reported that the Fiji costs were relatively low (approx. US\$7,000) and suggested US\$12,000 would be appropriate for the prudent reserve.

RECOMMENDATION #2: The committee recommends that the AOSM set a prudent reserve of US\$12,000 and if it goes below that amount, a warning is triggered.

4.3. Review policy and admissions requirements for countries

There is no policy, a desire to join is the only requirement. Each country is autonomous.

4.4. Review policy and admission requirements for delegates

No changes

4.5. Review new requests for admission

No new requests

4.6. Review the financial reporting format

The committee agreed that the financial reporting format was good and needed no change. They asked that the Treasurer email the committee reports between AOSMs.

RECOMMENDATION #3 The committee recommends that an AOSM Service Manual be developed. Headings have already been completed. (See 2.2 of 2021 Withdrawn Recommendations.)

RECOMMENDATION #4. The committee recommends that the number of observers be increased from 25 to 50 with the following conditions:

- That observers secure their own accommodation and meals and
- they do not play a part in any decision-making discussion. (See 2.4 of 2021 Withdrawn Recommendations.)

RECOMMENDATION #5 The committee recommends that all second term delegates present at the AOSM be encouraged to nominate as office bearers. If no nominations are received, then the AOSM could consider extending the invitation to second term delegates who are not present at the meeting. (See 2.1 of 2021 Withdrawn Recommendations.)

5. Other Issues

5.1. Discussion on how to better reach out to non-participating countries.

5.2. It was felt that an email could be sent to non-participation countries with information on the AOSM including that financial assistance can be given.

5.3. Suggested Steps

- Create email or text message for nonparticipating countries
- Vote on it
- Create a list a list of non-participating countries
- Look on their websites to get emails or phone numbers
- Put in database
- Send short email or text
- Keep track of messages and replies
- Add a statement about country-to-country sponsorship into the policy book

5.4. AOSM Bank Accounts

Recommendation #6 The committee recommends that the AOSM Chair and Treasurer write to the General Service Boards of New Zealand and Australia to ask how best to set

up an AOSM WISE account in their country and inform the AOSM of any legal implications.

5.5. On-line Accounts for meetings

5.6. **Recommendation #7** The committee recommends that Chairs of the AOSM Committees be provided with an on-line account to conduct committee meetings in between AOSMs.

6. Election of PAF Chairperson and Alt. Chairperson for the 16th AOSM
The committee elected as Chair, and as Alt. Chair.

7. End with “Responsibility Statement”

Elections:

Chair: Christine HART (NZ)

Alt. Chair: Laura STEPHENSON (South Korea)

C.3.2. Site Selection and Agenda

Attendees:	3 Voting Members	*Chair / **Alt. Chair	
	Doug GRUDE*	Japan	2 nd Term
	Simon ASHBY	Singapore	1 st Term
	Michael JACOBS	Hong Kong	1 st Term
Absent:	Reza VAKTI	Iran	1 st Term
	Tandin PELZANG	Bhutan	2 nd Term
	Deegi OVUNDEGER	Mongolia	2 nd Term
Scope:	"The purpose and function of this committee is the Selection of the site for each AOSM and wording of the agenda, with input from the Chair and Secretary, between AOSM meetings" and to review and initiate recommendations (if this is felt necessary by the meeting) to the AOSM."		
Composition:	<p>The Site Selection/Agenda/Website Committee of the AOSM was formed at the 5th AOSM in 2003 in Hong Kong.</p> <p>The Site Selection/Agenda/Website Committee will have the same number of members (or as near to this as possible) as the other committees conducting the business of the AOSM. Each member has a vote. The secretary assigned to the committee does not have a vote.</p> <p>Members of the committee are selected, if possible, geographically. Consideration will be given to the balance between 1st and 2nd term delegates to try and provide continuity. The exact time of where and when the selection will be made, will be decided after the information concerning the new delegates has been received by the Chairman and Secretary of the AOSM.</p>		
Agenda:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review minutes from 14th AOSM meeting (held virtually) 2. Matters arising and Correspondence 3. Old business 4. New Business <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1. Review Composition / Scope / Procedure for Site Selection and Agenda Committee 4.2. Review hosting country bid forms and supplementary information 4.3. Review AOSM theme request form 4.4. Review potential dates for 16th AOSM 4.5. Review theme suggestions for 16th AOSM 4.6. Review presentation/workshop topics for the 16th AOSM 5. Other Issues <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1. Discuss the following request. <p>“Invites countries to participate virtually if they cannot afford to attend in person and if they cannot secure sponsorship from another country. This would make future AOSMs hybrid conferences.”</p> 5.2. Additional items to be discussed? 6. Election of Chairperson and Alt. Chairperson for the 16th AOSM 7. End with “Responsibility Statement” 		
Recommendations:	SSA#1	The committee recommends that the ‘Composition’ be updated to remove “Website”, as it is currently part of the WLP committee.	14 Yes 0 No
	SSA#2	The committee recommends the Scope be changed from: “The purpose and function of this committee is the Selection of the site	14 Yes 0 No

	<p>for each AOSM and wording of the agenda, with input from the Chair and Secretary, between AOSM meetings.” “and to review and initiate the recommendations (if this is felt necessary by the meeting) to the AOSM.”</p> <p>To the following:</p> <p>“The purpose and function of this committee is to recommend 1) the location for each AOSM, and 2) the theme, presentation, and workshops for the next AOSM. In addition, the committee, with input from the Chair and the Secretary, shall determine the overall structure of the AOSM agenda.”</p>	
SSA#3	The committee recommends the 16 th AOSM be held October 16-19, 2025.	14 Yes 0 No
SSA#4	The committee recommends the theme of the 16 th AOSM be “One Message – Many Languages – One Fellowship”	14 Yes 0 No
SSA#5	<p>The committee recommends the following presentation and workshop topics for the 16th AOSM.</p> <p>Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carrying the message through country-to-country sponsorship - Translations, Licensing, and the International Literature Fund - Extending the hand of AA into all communities - Unity – the importance of consistent literature - The value of specialized AA groups - Cooperation with Professional Community as a key to growth <p>Workshop Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience with country-to-country sponsorship <p>Cultivating unity within a country</p>	14 Yes 0 No
SSA#6	The committee recommends that the 16th AOSM be held in Singapore, with Mongolia as the alternate site.	14 Yes 0 No
Minutes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reviewed minutes from 14th AOSM meeting The committee reviewed the previous report, which was helpful in deepening the committee's understanding. 2. Matters arising and Correspondence. The committee would like to acknowledge some of the challenges that committee members have had that have prevented them from attending AOSM. We hope that they will be able to attend in the future. We are grateful for their input and contributions to the regular committee meetings leading up to this AOSM. 3. Old business There was no old business. 4. New Business 	

4.1. Review Composition/Scope/Procedure for Site Selection and Agenda Committee

The committee reviewed the Composition/Scope/Procedure, and recommended the following changes:

RECOMMENDATION #1: The committee recommends that the Composition be updated to remove “Website”, as it is currently part of the WLP committee.

RECOMMENDATION #2: The committee recommends the Scope be changed from

- “The purpose and function of this committee is the Selection of the site for each AOSM and wording of the agenda, with input from the Chair and Secretary, between AOSM meetings.” “and to review and initiate the recommendations (if this is felt necessary by the meeting) to the AOSM.”

to

- “The purpose and function of this committee is to recommend 1) the location for each AOSM, 2) the theme, presentation, and workshops for the next AOSM. In addition, the committee, with input from the Chair and the Secretary, shall determine the overall structure of the AOSM agenda.”

The committee discussed the agenda format updated at the 6th AOSM and needed clarification on item “2. Apologies.” It is unclear what the intent of this item is.

4.2. Review hosting country bid forms and supplementary information

The committee discussed the bid form and supplementary information that was sent to the delegates and determined that several updates are necessary before the next AOSM. Comments included:

- 4.2.1. The bid form is missing an opportunity for the bid country to share how hosting AOSM would impact AA in their community.
- 4.2.2. How facility, room, and other incidental charges are be described on the form should ensure as fair a comparison as possible.
- 4.2.3. The bid form should include the “AOSM Expenses Responsibilities Breakdown” appendix clarifying the financial responsibility of the host country, the AOSM, and the delegates. (The committee expects this to be reviewed and codified by the PAF committee.)
- 4.2.4. Add prior years’ locations & venues as reference.
- 4.2.5. The committee recognized that if there is to be an online component to future AOSM’s, the bid form will need to be updated accordingly.
- 4.2.6. The committee will review the 27th WSM bid questionnaire for other ideas to improve the bid form prior to the 16th AOSM.

4.3. Review AOSM theme request form

The committee reviewed the Theme/Presentation/Workshop request form and made no changes.

4.4. Review potential dates for 16th AOSM

The committee discussed the dates for known national conventions, significant service meeting dates and national holidays in 2025 in an attempt to avoid conflicts.

RECOMMENDATION #3: Committee recommends the 16th AOSM be held October 16-19, 2025

4.5. Review theme suggestions for 16th AOSM

No themes had been submitted in advance by AOSM countries. The committee reviewed

past AOSM and WSM themes. There was agreement that the theme should be clear and address the needs of the AOSM region.

RECOMMENDATION #4: The committee recommends the theme of the 16th AOSM be “One Message – Many Languages – One Fellowship”

4.6. Review presentation/workshop topics for the 16th AOSM

The committee discussed a variety of potential presentation topics, emphasizing the need to raise awareness of country-to-country sponsorship, how to adapt literature to local needs, and techniques for overcoming cultural and language barriers.

RECOMMENDATION #5: The committee recommends the following presentation and workshop topics for the 16th AOSM.

Presentations:

- Carrying the message through country-to-country sponsorship
- Translations, Licensing, and the International Literature Fund
- Extending the hand of AA into *all* communities
- Unity – the importance of consistent literature
- The value of specialized AA groups
- Cooperation with Professional Community as a key to growth

Workshops

- Experience with country-to-country sponsorship
- Cultivating unity within a country

5. Other Issues

The committee discussed a request for “Inviting countries to participate virtually if they cannot afford to attend in person and if they cannot secure sponsorship from another country. This would make future AOSMs hybrid conferences.”

There was a lively discussion about the positives and negatives - and possible unintended consequences - of a hybrid AOSM. A fully hybrid event would have special technical/IT support requirements. Running such an event would involve extensive planning and would most likely require the use of a potentially costly outside company. A concern was expressed that if the AOSM were fully hybrid, some countries might not want to financially support sending a delegate to an in-person AOSM because it would be too easy to participate remotely. One idea is to have a portion of the event open for delegates who cannot travel to simply observe or participate during a plenary session, such as the keynote address or country reports.

The committee recognizes the immense value of face-to-face meetings and will explore ways to make a portion of the 16th AOSM accessible to those delegates who face barriers to attending in person.

The committee will strive to estimate the cost and logistics of what a full hybrid AOSM would entail and will report its findings to the 16th AOSM SSA and PAF Committees.

6. Site selection for the 16th AOSM.

The committee met virtually to hear bids from India, Mongolia, and Singapore. (Note: both India and Mongolia were not able to attend in person, so the bids presentations were done via Zoom.). All of the bids were very viable, attractive, and had excellent reasons and justifications for hosting the AOSM in their respective countries. It was not an easy decision, and the committee would like to express its deepest appreciation to the fellowships of all the bidding countries for their passion, preparation, and thoroughness.

RECOMMENDATION #6: The committee recommends that the 16th AOSM be held in Singapore, with Mongolia as the alternate site.

7. Ended with “Responsibility Statement”

Elections: **Chair:** Simon ASHBY (Singapore) **Alt. Chair:** Michael JACOBS (Hong Kong)

C.3.3. Website, Literature, and Publishing

Attendees:	5 Voting Members	*Chair / **Alt. Chair
	Mary RAORI*	Fiji 2 nd Term
	Sheli BOWMAN**	Hong Kong 2 nd Term
	Steve KING	New Zealand 2 nd Term
	Masaya OSAKO	Japan 1 st Term
	Anastasia ASTASHINA	Russia 1 st Term
Absent:	Raju LOUNGANI	India 1 st Term
	Subodh ARYAL	Nepal 2 nd Term
	Truman YEH	China 2 nd Term
Scope:	The purpose and function of this Committee is to provide a forum for the exchange of experience and views related to the AOSM website (https://aosmaa.org/), translations, licensing, and publishing of AA approved literature of the AOSM member countries. If necessary, recommendations and/or motions may be forwarded to the AOSM delegates for further action.	
Composition:	<p>The Literature/Publishing Committee of the AOSM was formed at the 5th AOSM in 2003 in Hong Kong.</p> <p>The Website, Literature and Publishing Committee will have the same number of members (or as near to this as possible) as the other committees conducting the business of the AOSM. Each member has a vote. The secretary assigned to the committee does not have a vote.</p> <p>Members of the committee are selected, if possible, geographically. Consideration will be given to the balance between 1st and 2nd term delegates to try and provide continuity. The exact time of where and when the selection will be made, will be decided after the information concerning the new delegates has been received by the Chairman and Secretary of the AOSM.</p>	
Agenda:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review minutes from 14th AOSM meeting (held virtually) 2. Matters arising and Correspondence 3. Old business 4. New Business <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1. Review Composition/Scope/Procedure for Website, Literature, and Publishing Committee 4.2. Discuss the website 5. Discuss literature usage and needs throughout the AOSM zone 6. Other Issues 7. Election of WPL Chairperson and Alt. Chairperson for the 16th AOSM 8. End with “Responsibility Statement” 	
Recommendations:	WLP#1 The committee recommends that the WLP committee coordinate with the AOSM secretary to gather country information through outreach to complete country profiles & request permission to their link their	14 Yes 0 No

	URL/website to the AOSM website as well as determine their desire to list their free literature on the AOSM Website.	
WLP #2	The committee recommends that AAWS provide a flowchart outlining the licensing process.	14 Yes 0 No
WLP #3	The committee recommends that the AOSM website serve as an option for posting literature for countries within the AOSM zone. <i>(Doug asked whether AOSM would qualify as an entity which might receive a publishing license. Steve will formally ask TL and Bob for that license.)</i>	14 Yes 0 No
WLP #4	The committee recommends that the WLP committee develop standard operating procedures (SOP's) for updating and entering data into the private database area of the website.	14 Yes 0 No
WLP #5	The committee recommends that the WLP committee create a password protected database accessible through a login function on the AOSM website to replace the current Google Drive folders. <i>(Christine asked that we inform the PAF committee immediately after this is set up.)</i>	14 Yes 0 No
WLP #6	The committee recommended that the WLP committee create the following new sections to the AOSM website: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. A password protected database accessible through a login function on the AOSM website to replace current Google Drive folders. 4. A Country Section including country profiles and links to country specific websites. <p>A literature section that may include free country specific literature and links to country specific website literature pages.</p> <i>(Simon wanted reassurance that we'd back up all the files)</i>	14 Yes 0 No

Minutes:

1. Reviewed minutes from 14th AOSM meeting

The committee had regular interim meetings since the 14th AOSM meeting, which were casual, informative and action based but did not produce written minutes, however, the committee summarized the work that has transpired.

2. Matters arising and Correspondence.

No new matters or correspondence have arisen since the 14th AOSM.

3. Old business

There was no old business.

4. New Business

4.1. Review Composition/Scope/Procedure for Site Selection and Agenda Committee

The committee chair reviewed the CSP and made no changes.

4.2. Discuss the website.

The committee had extensive discussion about many aspects of the AOSM website which resulted in the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION #1: The committee recommended that the WLP committee coordinate with the AOSM secretary to gather country information through outreach to complete country profiles & request permission to their link their URL/website to the AOSM website as well as determine their desire to list their free literature on the AOSM

Website.

RECOMMENDATION #2: The committee recommended that AAWS provide a flowchart outlining the licensing process.

RECOMMENDATION #3: The committee recommended that the AOSM website serve as an option for posting literature for countries within the AOSM zone.

RECOMMENDATION #4: The committee recommended that the WLP committee develop standard operating procedures (SOP's) for updating and entering data into the private database area of the website.

RECOMMENDATION #5: The committee recommended that the WLP committee create a password protected database accessible through a login function on the AOSM website to replace the current Google Drive folders.

RECOMMENDATION #6: The committee recommended that the WLP committee create the following new sections to the AOSM website:

- A password protected database accessible through a login function on the AOSM website to replace current Google Drive folders.
- A Country Section including country profiles and links to country specific websites.
- A literature section that may include free country specific literature and links to country specific website literature pages.

Throughout the committee's discussion regarding the website and their recommendations, they identified several points related to licensing and permissions that may require license amendments and other approvals and permissions from AAWS and individual counties. The committee looks forward to the new policies and procedures being developed by AAWS that will provide guidance with listing, downloading and printing literature.

4.3. Discuss literature usage and needs throughout the AOSM zone.

The committee discussed the literature needs throughout the AOSM zone. Although the committee's discussion did not result in a recommendation, they did conclude that one of the key purposes of the AOSM website is to provide an information platform for countries that don't have a website. The spirit of this sentiment was carried within the website development discussions that concluded in the recommendations the committee has put forth.

5. Other Issues

No other issues were brought before the committee.

6. The committee closed their meeting with the "Responsibility Statement".

Elections:

Chair: Anastasia ASTASHINA (Russia)

Alt. Chair: Masaya OSAKO (Japan)

Attendees:	3 Voting Members	*Chair / **Alt. Chair	
	Brian FERGUSON**	Australia	1 st Term
	Maraira RAGOGO	Fiji	1 st Term
	Sarah NADER	MERCAA	1 st Term
Absent:	Jeff SINCLAIR	Thailand	1 st term
	Thezween KARYAWASAM	Sri Lanka	2 nd Term
	Wee PRASOPKIATPOKA*	Thailand	2 nd Term
Scope:	The purpose and function of this committee is to work with others to establish means of communication between AOSM countries and to further the goals of the AOSM between AOSM meetings and to make recommendations (if this is felt necessary by the meeting) to the AOSM.		
Composition:	The Working with Others Committee of the AOSM was formed at the 5th AOSM in 2003 in Hong Kong. The Working with Others Committee will have the same number of members (or as near to this as possible) as the other committees conducting the business of the AOSM. Each member has a vote. The secretary assigned to the committee does not have a vote. Members of the committee are selected, if possible, geographically. Consideration will be given to the balance between 1st and 2nd term delegates to try and provide continuity. The exact time of where and when the selection will be made, will be decided after the information concerning the new delegates has been received by the Chairman and Secretary of the AOSM.		
Agenda:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review minutes from 14th AOSM meeting (held virtually) 2. Matters arising and Correspondence 3. Old business 4. New Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Composition/Scope/Procedure for Working with Others Committee 5. Other Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional items to be discussed? 6. Election of WWO Chairperson and Alt. Chairperson for the 16th AOSM 7. End with “Responsibility Statement” 		
Recommendations:	None		
Minutes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review minutes from 14th AOSM meeting (held virtually) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The committee accepted the Working With Others report of 14th AOSM meeting. 2. Matters arising and Correspondence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None to report 3. Review Composition/Scope/Procedure for Working with Others Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No changes. 4. New Business <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1. Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Australia, biannual or annual events geared to the professional community are a focus of some C.P.C. committees. The events aren’t titled Public Information events but rather, “Professional Awareness Luncheons” about A.A. A hand delivered 		

invitation can be a more personable practice.

- It would be helpful to break down monthly targeted professional contacts of various professional fields. For example, one month legal, one month medical, clergy, etc. It has been found that some professionals may not be available for afternoon events and mornings may be better suited for their schedules.
- Sharing the Stanford Cochrane report or video to professionals provides much credibility when our “friends” recommend us. Noting that A.A. does not conduct research, it can be so helpful when unbiased studies make the public eye. (<https://www.cochrane.org/news/new-cochrane-review-finds-alcoholics-anonymous-and-12-step-facilitation-programs-help-people>)
- At times, alcohol is often seen as a common thread in some domestic violence and family issues, however it can be challenging for the legal field to make the connection.
- Many government policies may not consider alcoholism (sometimes referred to as “alcohol use disorder” by the medical community) as a priority issue.
- All committee members agreed that there is not enough consideration by the public and professional community on the fatal malady, in alcohol related deaths. There can at times be much more focus on drugs.
- Still so many have yet to hear of A.A. or have misconceptions.
- In Cairo much of the government focus is on policy for solutions for drug addicts. There is less stigma for drug use than alcohol use due to religious and cultural teachings and many professionals do not understand or recognize alcoholism in the way A.A. understands (not a moral failure, once I start, I can’t stop.)
- All the committee members agreed that today many people are dual addicted but fit the requirement for membership.

4.2. Public Information

- Sometimes having a QR code on a Public Information card is more approachable than a hotline number.
- Pamphlets tend to get thrown away- but business cards, people are more likely to hold onto for a future time.
- A memorable website address may plant a seed for the future.
- 30 years ago, journalists were more considerate about anonymity but less so today. In Australia, we do short video/Community Service announcements videos. Radio stations still leave 30 % of their commercial space for community.
- Some media may choose to twist words or want to get into debate, even about alcohol, to which we have no opinion. Agreeing to media requests has to be thoughtfully considered. We share about A.A.
- In Fiji we have posters and flyers. We put ads in the newspaper. We are on the Ministry of Health website.

4.3. Language, Culture, Geography

- In Fiji, there have been challenges with remote communities due to lack of A.A. resources in the language the potential member may speak.
- Some cultures can be cautious in approaching A.A. Some of this may be due to family disapproval or cultural stigma. People are cautious in joining anything that they do not understand or if it is unknown to them.
- One committee member shared that some members may have challenges expressing themselves fully if they are not using their native language with a sponsor who is English speaking (or other secondary language.) Sometimes one may need to take a 5th Step and share with someone in the language they feel they can fully express themselves as well as receive the message. Yes, we speak the language of the heart, however some can take for granted the privilege of sharing in one’s preferred language.
- In Egypt, there can be challenges due to some members are Arabic speaking and

some are English speaking.

- Arabic has different dialects. Some may speak it but may not read Arabic or have the same dialect. Words can mean very different things depending on the Arabic speaking country/demographic.
- People often group all Arabic people as the same. It is hard to have just one Arabic translation. For example, Saudi Arabian terms are different than Egyptian.
- MERCAA had to develop a glossary of terms in the front of the Arabic Big Book particularly to define with better clarity what A.A. means by the term “Agnostic” which can be quite a controversial statement, in conflict with some potential members’ religious beliefs.
- All committee members noted the importance of Audio books in carrying the message for those who cannot read and other varying abilities.
- In Australia, part of the Indigenous culture is a “sharing culture.” Sharing alcohol is part of the culture and therefore a symbol of camaraderie and community. Could that spirit of “sharing” being carried over into sharing the message of A.A.?
- All committee members noted that education levels or class constructs can also be a barrier. Prejudices can surface both if someone is viewed as “high bottom” or “low bottom”, “educated” or “uneducated”, rich, poor or from varying ideologies.
- Understanding alcoholism and how alcoholism has no prejudice in who it targets is key to understanding that that which unites us is the same, though the roads we traveled to get here may look very different.

4.4. Working With Others

- When communicating with those who are dual addicted, it isn’t always what we say; it is also about how we say it. A helpful question to widen the net “Does drinking alcohol cost you more than money?”
- It is important to not be despondent if at first, they do not stay sober, do not return, or are simply not interested in what we have to share. Do not be discouraged, you may not see the fruits of today’s service.

4.5. A.A. Online

- In recent years, online meetings have really opened the door and widened the A.A. circle around the world.
- In some places those who may not have had access to A.A. find it is now within reach.
- Some in person groups have suffered to create the same consistent experience as before the pandemic.
- Some members will go online for convenience but may not be as willing to support their meeting down the street.
- In Fiji, there is a need for Fijians who have moved elsewhere and are involved in A.A. in other countries to come back to Fiji to share experience and to provide identification to locals in order for them to see those who have recovered and live a fruitful life through A.A.
- As a result of the pandemic the small surrounding Islands have been connecting with A.A. in Fiji. The hope being that eventually A.A. will develop in those neighboring Islands as well.
- In Fiji, there are a handful of people who keep connected through a chat group both in Fiji and internationally.
- At times online it can also become clearer as to who is missing from the meetings.
- We have never been so internationally connected.
- Some structures have incorporated online groups into their country service structures while some still only list in person groups with their GSOs.

4.6. Sponsorship/ Service Sponsorship/Country to Country Sponsorship

- Australia has been communicating with a neighboring country’s Intergroup which is

in the infancy of its development. In that country there is a huge need for solutions for problem drinkers. However, at times there can be cultural and religious barriers to being open to seeking help from A.A. Expats are the dominant makeup. This sometimes hinders a service structure to develop especially when expats move on. Before attending a zonal meeting, there may be a need for preliminary steps to develop a basic structure prior to any zonal attendance.

- In sponsorship we don't tell people what to do, just simply share what is our experience and why we do something. Just like how A.A. Traditions developed – newer structures can even learn from our mistakes if they so choose.
- In country-to-country sponsorship, we can offer much more than just financial help.
- In member-to-member sponsorship, it is important to consider dynamics as to what is an appropriate sponsorship relationship. (Example, gender, sexual orientation etc.) There is not a one size fit all approach, or formal criterion but the sponsor needs to assess honestly if this dynamic is appropriate in order to focus on what we do best... recovery from alcoholism.
- A committee member offered the acronym "SPONSOR- Support -person- offering - newcomer- suggestions- on- recovery."
- In all sponsorship everyone meets as equals.

In conclusion...

- Committee members agreed that the most important alcoholic in the room may be the one who is not here... yet. (The seat we save.) The Working with Others committee noted the importance of taking the time to learn people's cultures outside of their own experiences. Many communities know who is "missing from the rooms" and now it is important to dig deeper and ask, "Why?" And how do we remove these barriers, to widen participation in all three A.A. legacies.
- Though our common thread, alcoholism, is the same, it is important to strive to learn more deeply that the roads our members and potential members have traveled to get here may shape how they perceive A.A., hear A.A. messaging, and whether they choose to stay. Privilege is not what you have experienced but rather what you have not experienced. This understanding can be an integral part of fulfilling Traditions 3 and 5.

Committee Considerations:

- The committee suggested that the 16th Working with Others Committee consider discussing particular attention to cultural and language barriers in working with others and offering solutions and country shared experience to help remove these barriers, in keeping with A.A.'s 3rd and 5th Traditions.
- The committee suggested that an "AOSM -Working with Others" service piece be developed, compiled of excerpts of Working with Others Committee reports, country reports and highlights, and from other zonal reports (when appropriate) on this topic. The committee suggested the Working with Others committee might consider forwarding a draft plan on the development of a service piece to the 16th Working with Others committee for their review. The committee looks forward to more discussion on this topic at their quarterly meetings.

Elections:

Chair: Maraira ROGOGO (Fiji)

Alt. Chair: Sarah NADER (MERCAA)



C.4. Workshop Outcomes



How did we conduct the workshops?

We divided delegates into three groups for each workshop. Delegates then discussed their answers to the questions below.

Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3
Understanding the Seventh Tradition—Overcoming Challenges to Supporting our Services	Using Traditions to Find Solutions to Adversity and Maintain Unity.	Service starts at the group - setting up structures. How having a structure can be helpful.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How do we educate our groups on the value of the Seventh Tradition? Do they understand that it keeps AA free of outside influences that might divert us from our primary purpose? What kinds of challenges have you faced regarding self-support, and what kinds of things have you done? Are there things members can do other than just financial? Do your groups have a prudent reserve? Does your structure also have one? If so, how much? Does your country participate in supporting the AOSM Fund, the WSM Fund, the International Literature Fund, or set aside funds for country-to-country sponsorship? Are they aware of this channel for expressing gratitude? What percentage of Services expenses are covered by group and individual contributions vs. sales from literature? Should anything be done to change it? How do we ensure that AA remains accessible to those who may struggle financially and yet still provide the services and have literature available for all who seek a solution? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Traditions as Tools: How have the Traditions of AA served as tools in your personal journey through recovery? Provide specific examples of situations where a Tradition guided you or your groups through a challenging situation. Tradition One and Unity: How have you experienced Tradition One in your journey? Can you recall an instance where the group's unity helped you or someone else overcome adversity? Tradition Two and Group Decisions: How does this Tradition contribute to maintaining unity within the group? How can we utilize this Tradition when conflicts or disagreements arise? Tradition Five and Purpose: How does maintaining a clear group purpose help in navigating adversities? How can we ensure we don't lose sight of this in challenging times? Tradition Ten and External Issues: How does Tradition Ten protect the unity of the group? How can we use this principle to avoid potential pitfalls and discord? Do your groups take time to study the Traditions, understanding that they are not rules, nor weapons to beat one another with, but rather the collective shared experience hammered out on anvils. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Group Structure: How are your groups structured? How does this structure help in effectively carrying out AA activities? National Structures: How is the AA service structure set up in your country? Was it modeled after the US/Canada example, or does it have unique characteristics that address your local population or needs? Revision and Adaptation: Has there been a need to revise the original service structure in your country? If so, what were the reasons for this, and what changes were made? Cultural and Linguistic Adaptation: How does your country's structure address cultural or linguistic challenges? What has been effective in ensuring the AA message reaches the local population? Learning from Differences: What can we learn from the differences in service structures across the AOSM zone? How can these learnings help us improve our own structures? How can we effectively use country-to-country sponsorship to help build our service structures?

1. How do we educate our groups on the value of the Seventh Tradition? Do they understand that it keeps AA free of outside influences that might divert us from our primary purpose?

Australia shared that they always tell fellows where the money goes to when they pass around the basket, they explained that they buy BB's and 12&12 for the prisons, for example. One group has a 'Square' account for those who don't have cash.

Hong Kong shared that they had added into the meeting scripts where the money goes to and what it costs to run the meeting, although they also added to the script, "We need you more than your money." They sometimes pass the basket during the opening of the meeting and they pass the basket a second time if expenses are not covered. They said that they know they need to do more.

They shared a recent experience. They launched an appeal for books so that they could carry them to Fiji. One women's meeting raised HK\$600 which turned into HK\$2000. People saw the purpose and felt a direct connection to Step 12.

Singapore doubted that groups would understand the second part of the question above. Meetings in Singapore now have QR codes so the 7th tradition. Contributions are down overall.

Japan shared that fellowship generally responds well when they tell them what the need is.

Anonymous shared that informing and educating the fellowship about the seventh tradition is a slow and continual process. There are layers to its understanding that take time and experience. Newer and/or less developed areas rely on basic meeting scripts as the primary place people hear about the seventh tradition.

Most countries felt it was important to be very specific about what 7th tradition dollars were being spent on. They felt that fellows needed to see with own what their money pays for. The group felt that regular reports from offices and chairpersons about 7th tradition uses is critical.

One country was entirely dependent on outside financial sponsorship and has begun the journey of self-support. They felt that it was important to not lose a spiritual perspective of Tradition 7th – Gratitude. We used to spend a lot of time and money on booze. Now how about AA?

Russia shared that the chairperson of the service structure goes to the groups to discuss where the money goes. He/she sends a monthly financial report to the groups. They feel it's important to stress that the money is spent not just on cakes and snacks but that it benefits the members by supporting the hotline, the

website and literature etc. The certainly talked a lot about finances during the business meetings. Russia shared that most members understand meaning of self-support. Trustees & steering committee members try to visit as many conferences and assemblies as they can so that they can support service entities.

Fiji shared that they have depended on financial contributions from sponsoring countries for their hotline, outreach, literature, and rent. They said that they are currently working on budget to be self-supporting, and they can now pay for their newspaper ads, hotline, and rent on their own.

New Zealand shared that they make it clear to that they don't need to pay for their first meeting and they encourage their old-timers to think about the price of their last drink. They encourage a spirit of gratitude and a spirit of 'passing it on'. They remember what was given to them and where they came from. They said that they feel that there is no right or wrong when it comes to how countries manage their 7th tradition. Countries have to focus on groups first, then move out from there.

Most delegates reported that they explained at the end of their meeting what the 7th Tradition was for and what expenses it covered. It was agreed that the process should be transparent. Delegates thought that sponsors should emphasise to newcomers the importance of this tradition. Groups could also read the long form at their meetings. This group felt that self-support is important in that it excludes external support which may contaminate our Fellowship.

2. What kinds of challenges have you faced regarding self-support, and what kinds of things have you done? Are there things members can do other than just financial?

Delegates discussed the challenges during Covid and the challenges of a cashless society. All reported issues with opening bank accounts and as some on-line meetings had members /attendees from outside the host country, there were issues with transferring contributions between countries. Another challenge for Groups can be the cost of setting up swipe facilities.

One Delegate reported that contributions had improved since there was more on-line banking of contributions. It was felt that members were more likely to bank a larger amount rather than contribute a few coins in a physical basket.

Another group reported that the pandemic had shifted donation patterns. Some countries were up, some were down. Making it possible for members to donate online was critical to most countries and this offset a shortfall in literatures sales. Making mistakes is the best experience. In one country, 7th tradition was used for

inappropriate expenses – the fellowship learned and started to focus. Service commitments and engaging with members at the meeting are ways to live the 7th tradition other than financially. If the basket passed isn't enough, pass the basket again.

Fiji shared that they have to rely on outside donations because sometimes, only two members come to the meeting and they cannot afford rent for the hour. Some members who now live abroad have their groups donate or join the meeting to donate online, which has been helpful.

Japan shared that their GSO has started accepting donations online. They felt it was important to tell members that they need to decline outside contributions, even for things like transport to and from our service facilities. They felt that it was important to that making a contribution is a privilege for members.

Russia shared that they had learned from their mistakes and started to focus. Seventh tradition money had been used to pay for air conditioning at a hospital where they provided AA services and buses to bring people from institutions to AA meetings. They felt that service commitments are ways to participate in the 7th tradition without putting money in the basket. They shared that if they don't get enough money in the first passing of the basket, they pass the basket again.

Japan shared that in their country, electronic banking is behind the times. Groups can't open bank accounts.

Hong Kong said that the average contribution has remained the same for 20 years now i.e. HK\$20. They've recently started reminding fellows of the cost of a cup of coffee or the price of their last drink. They said that contributions during COVID were significantly lower and that some long established groups have cancelled their meetings.

Australia shared that their members can contribute by direct debit. Some groups have automated contributions while others contribute regularly. The average contribution is AU\$5. One group says, "Down the road, coffee is \$5, but here it seems to be only 50-cents!" Groups are getting 'Square' accounts as people don't use cash, and the fee is minimal. Groups support GSO, Area, District.

Singapore shared that AA is not registered, so accounts are opened by individuals. They use QR Codes at meetings and contributions are easy. Physical meeting attendance varies; some groups struggle to meet rent and have to close. Thailand also had the same standard fixed amount; some members in Singapore will be aware of the group still needing the money even if they haven't attended. Group rents have gone up, but groups tend to be fairly well off. They look to the long form of the Traditions.

Hong Kong shared that all groups have a prudent reserve, and excess funds are sent to Intergroup. After conducting a survey recently, they found out that most members don't know much about Intergroup.

Japan shared that they have a prudent reserve, but it's down to only 1.2 months of expenses. However, when they announce a need, the fellowship responds.

In the USA, the GSO keeps the prudent reserve at 9-12 months due to NPO laws. Bequests are one time only.

In Australia, groups usually keep 2 months expenses as a reserve. Districts or Areas keep six months expenses, and the National Office keeps two years.

Singapore shared that they are now looking at setting a prudent reserve. They hold an annual round-up. They acknowledged that the fellowship is wealthy and that they need to look outside of themselves. They had SG\$40,000 at one time. When asking IG whether they would fund a delegate to AOSM, people asked how SG would benefit.

In another group, members shared that most countries have prudent reserves that are between 1- and 3-months' operating expenses. Making ends meet at the group level is easier than at central office and GSO, partly because central office and GSO have staff.

Russia shared that they have a prudent reserve of 2x their monthly budget. To run their GSO, they need 250k per year, which is equal to about \$50 per member per year. They are still having trouble maintaining their offices and their service work. They shared that they need to stay aware of the need to ask members to contribute and they need to remind themselves of their past mistakes. They stressed the importance of regular reporting.

In Hong Kong, the government provides a building basically free of rent (1HK\$). Their main expense is maintenance of the room. They try to keep their prudent reserve small unless they know of upcoming expenses.

All Delegates reported that their groups were autonomous, so the prudent reserve varied from none to about 12 months. It was felt that around 3 months was adequate for a group.

Having a prudent reserve for wider structures varied. Australia has 15 months for their GSO, while NZ had 12 months. Others reported that it was a dollar amount and any more than that amount meant that the extra was donated to the next service level. Another delegate in a developing AA country indicated that their wider structure was considering having a prudent reserve and how much that should be.

4. Does your country participate in supporting the AOSM Fund, the WSM Fund, the International Literature Fund, or set aside funds for country-to-

3. Do your groups have a prudent reserve? Does your structure also have one? If so, how much?

country sponsorship? Are they aware of this channel for expressing gratitude?

Japan reported that they do contribute to these funds. This year, they printed International Cooperation Fund bags along with a letter explaining how money is used. They showed that Japan is the only country to have contributed to the International Literature Fund since it began.

Hong Kong started funding a delegate to WSM/AOSM as a result of hosting the AOSM in 2019. Intergroup now has it as a budget item. They cannot buy air tickets with air miles anymore.

Australia shared that they have their brown bag collection and an informative letter.

Another group shared that most countries participate in the AOSM fund and WSM fund. One country cannot donate to WSM due to sanctions, but USA GSO told them not to worry. When asking for donations, members shared that they make special collections for specific purposes.

Some members shared that they raise awareness by talking about how AA benefited from financial support in the past. The brown paper bag collection has been most successful when members know how the money will be spent. Some members shared that they personally send books or money to other countries but not in an official capacity.

Both Australia and NZ reported that their countries support the AOSM, WSM and ILF, Australia through a Brown Paper Bag Appeal where groups donate a meeting 7th Tradition near Founders Day. MERCAA donates to the AOSM but not to specific countries. South Korea donates funds to AOSM which are over and above their prudent reserve and after paying for their delegate to attend the meeting. They were not aware of the International Literature Fund. Fiji does not support the fund yet and it still relies on sponsorship.

5. What percentage of services expenses are covered by group and individual contributions vs. sales from literature? Should anything be done to change it?

Covid highlighted an issue with Australia depending on literature sales when the number of sales dropped. An effort has been made to reduce this reliance and there is now a greater dependence on member contributions. NZ is not dependent on literature sales and has just dropped their prices. Some country's members almost only buy online downloadable literature so there are very few sales of actual literature. MERCAA reported there were always problems with relying on literature sales for them as currency fluctuations made it hard to price literature.

Most countries had > 50% of contributions from 7th tradition. Lesson learned – don't increase prices of literature to cover financial shortfalls. One group is almost entirely supported by country-to-country contributions.

Japan reported that 60% of the operating budget comes from 7th tradition contributions while 33% comes from literature sales.

Another country reported that 40% of the operating budget comes from 7th tradition contributions, 25% comes from monthly publications, and 35% comes from other literature. They shared that their income from monthly publications is going down. Their membership compensated for the decrease in literature sales by donating more to the 7th tradition.

Fiji asked whether it was wrong for them to give away literature that they had been gifted.

6. How do we ensure that AA remains accessible to those who may struggle financially and yet still provide the services and have literature available for all who seek a solution?

Delegates discussed that most groups and sponsors would give literature away for free to those who can't afford it. In NZ, police carry literature that they can give out. Newcomers are supported with literature that is available in some countries to download for free.

1. Traditions as Tools: How have the Traditions of AA served as tools in your personal journey through recovery?

Traditions have reminded me that we need to focus on a singleness of purpose and to avoid forming an opinion on things which aren't my business. The group shared examples of when the group conscience has occasionally brought members back into a position where they aligned to the traditions.

Tradition 12 (Principles before Personalities) guides us in our recovery and in group situations. It enables us to focus on principles when differences occur. Using the traditions helps to maintain unity and helps the newcomer to understand what is going on. We need to be careful of using jargon.

The Traditions help when dealing with disruptive behaviour. A person can be asked to leave a meeting but not AA as such. They help us to be respectful. Traditions are also very useful in our outside life to show us how to navigate the world.

The traditions are necessary in our recovery. With traditions comes unity. Traditions help when dealing with others. They are the vehicle towards unity when different views come together Use of Grapevine Inventory Checklist.

Tradition 12 (Principles before Personalities) must come first when we listen to the person sharing. Group conscience means that we may not all agree but we all need to accept the group's decision. Unity is important.

We include God in group conscience. Group conscience keeps our egos in check. This helped in my personal recovery, in my search for God. I used Tradition 2 for a personal group conscience.

Examples

Hong Kong made flyers with both NA and AA on the same flyer but members reminded us about our singleness of purpose.

Singapore had to deal with a member who had set up a meeting which conflicted with another.

Russia had to tell someone that they could do presentations on the history of AA because a group conscience had decided that it was not appropriate.

Other countries: The Traditions helped when two districts wanted to merge but they had many disagreements. Traditions meant that decisions came from the group as a whole and were well-informed. We experienced problems with some business meetings not using opening prayer and some people using the Traditions out of context to win an argument. We should not quote one-liners from the Traditions. We

need to use the long form of the Traditions if we are to apply them properly.

Personal story: My first sponsor took me through the Traditions before the Steps. This brought me an understanding of AA; what it is and isn't. I use the traditions in the home. I practiced the principles in all my affairs.

2. Tradition One and Unity: How have you experienced Tradition One in your journey? Can you recall an instance where the group's unity helped you or someone else overcome adversity?

"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on AA unity."

United we stand, divided we fall. Group's disunity will hurt. The group comes before the individual. The long form of the Traditions is necessary for a group conscience. The traditions band us together.

I use this Tradition at work, in meetings, one-on-one, etc. The Chair at an Area Assembly tried to manage a difficult problem alone. I suggested a more constructive way of dealing with unruly members. Application of this tradition helped to bring civility.

The Traditions help our diverse groups maintain unity and consistency. We have different languages and areas, but the traditions help us focus on our primary purpose. We need translators to help with the language problems.

Unity is just one side of our triangle. Without unity, our recovery suffers. We each have a responsibility to maintain unity; to keep our triangle balanced. Unity also helps if there are troublemakers. The Group can talk about this and have a unified approach. Unity comes first. When dealing with so-called prickly people, a time limit can be put on shares.

It was reported that in countries with an expat population, there can be disunity between English and local language groups.

Examples

Hong Kong: After running for nearly three decades, a guy tried to start changing how the meeting was run. The group dealt with that problem by using the group conscience. Every decision after that made by group conscience, including the decision to ban smoking in the meeting room. It had felt like a civil war until then. In the end, a decision was made and unity won out.

Fiji: This Tradition means for us that we have a responsibility to show up even when no one else does.

Singapore: We had a fractious discussion about whether we should set up a GSO because some feared

the the government would become involved. We eventually decided to table the discussion in the spirit of unity. We felt it important to respect the minority opinion.

Russia: Attending the WSM meeting was a strange situation because of the war in Ukraine. We need to remember that, regardless of geopolitical issues, the unity of AA is paramount, especially because this is one of the only safe places people can go. AA members from different countries are representing AA members in that country, not the country itself.

3. Tradition Two and Group Decisions: How does this Tradition contribute to maintaining unity within the group? How can we utilize this Tradition when conflicts or disagreements arise?

“For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.”

The Group discussed that Tradition Two reminds us that God is in control. It helps to diffuse difficult situations and it helps us to listen to another point of view and to accept that point of view if things don't go our way.

The 'Minority Opinion' is a way of inviting God back into the room. We take time to discuss and to make sure all voices are heard. We acknowledge that we don't know who God will choose to carry the message. Some loud voices may not represent the majority. Read Concept 9 on leadership.

This is a useful tradition because it keeps things simple. It helps with unity. It means that if we have something to say, we can come to meeting to discuss it rather than individually complaining. We discussed the difference between an elder statesman and a bleeding deacon.

An abstaining vote should allow for more discussion. It may mean that we need more information before we make a decision. We should remember that an abstention is not a 'no' vote. An abstention is a 'none' vote.

4. Tradition Five and Purpose: How does maintaining a clear group purpose help in navigating adversities? How can we ensure we don't lose sight of this in challenging times?

“Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry the message to the suffering alcoholic.”

This helps our small group focus on our primary purpose; what the group needs is more important than what the individual needs. We know that to carry the message outside of the rooms, we need a unified message inside the rooms. We need to maintain anonymity. We also need a measuring stick; does this

carry the message or not? The General Service Board knows that it can only make a decision with a group conscience behind it.

Our primary purpose keeps us in check. It's a peg in the ground that holds us together. Old timers must teach and pass it on with how it works.

One solution may be to update formats to include language about singleness of purpose. Another solution may be to make meetings closed meetings.

Examples of Tradition 5

Fiji: Importance of responsibility and lending the hand of AA. With such a small fellowship, it's difficult when people come and get sober and then don't continue to come back to carry the message. As a sponsor, we can be more assertive about this.

Russia: We are seeing a trend of people doing alternate 12-step 'graduate' programs. AA members have done other programs and then returned to the AA group to share about other problems. We empower the Chairperson to interrupt shares that divert us from our primary purpose. We can talk about outside issues after the meeting.

5. Tradition Ten and External Issues: How does Tradition Ten protect the unity of the group? How can we use this principle to avoid potential pitfalls and discord?

“Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.”

We discussed various examples of people breaking anonymity at the public level. Due to the rapid flow of information in this age, it is imperative to be mindful of what is said by who, and where. We don't want people to associate AA with an individual. Ego is the driver of breaking anonymity. We want to have AA always be a safe place. Lead by example, rather than shout from the roof tops.

Principle of anonymity. Importance of safeguarding AA especially in this digital area.

We need to protect AA with anonymity. This is the responsibility of elder statesmen. Spirit of the spoken word vs the written word.

We discussed the potential confusion around what an outside issue might be, acknowledging that all individuals have opinions. We recognised that the long form of the Tradition is important. Good sponsorship can help. We need to welcome discussion which washes out outside issues. Cultural issues could be seen as outside issues. Read: Quote from Bernard Smith; “Why do we need a conference?”

Examples

New Zealand: The traditions are there to protect the fellowship from us. Celebrities who talk about AA are problematic. Important we don't have spokespeople because not everyone likes certain individuals.

6. Do your groups take time to study the Traditions, understanding that they are not rules, nor weapons to beat one another with, but rather the collective shared experience hammered out on anvils.

There are misconceptions about traditions. One country is going to do a Traditions workshop to raise awareness

and dispel some misconceptions. Breaking traditions is the best way to learn about them. WhatsApp chat groups, get out of hand and if not regularly curated, can inadvertently break people's anonymity. Some members experienced reservations about certain service commitments because of the potential challenges of being known by the government as an Alcoholic.

We need to change the perception that the Traditions are "rules". We need to read the long and short forms at traditions study. The '12&12' is not the only source of information about the Traditions. We have other valuable resources as well.

1. Group Structure: How are your groups structured? How does this structure help in effectively carrying out AA activities?

All delegates reported that their groups had some structure. They operated autonomously and most held group consciences. It was felt that a good structure enabled groups to be clear on their commitments towards carrying the message to hospitals and institutions. Also, a good structure makes it clear how money should be distributed to where the greatest need is.

Some Groups have multiple meetings. Some countries have intergroups which work with varying success.

Generally, we have become more structured. Bigger cities are more structured than rural areas. As the number of members increases, the number of formats increases. We struggle to get members to do service at the local levels.

Simon (Singapore) said that his structure needs to improve dialogue between groups and intergroup. He said that they may need to educate people on what the role of GSR is.

Steve (NZ) said that NZ has well over 300 groups, and most have a GSR, HIPI, TCF and an Intergroup.

Greg has a full general service structure in the inverted triangle. Most groups don't have a GSR which means that members don't know what the service structure is doing. Most areas are represented at conference. He lamented that fewer people are standing for GSR.

Sarah said that each country has a country delegate, who serves first at the area level before serving at the MERCAA level.

Mary (Fiji) said that the fellowship has only grown recently. They have meetings in Suva and Nadi, as well as online meetings. She shared that fellows standing for service must have 2 years sobriety. Their GSO meets monthly. Now, they're at the stage where they can rotate out of the GSO roles.

2. National Structures: How is the AA service structure set up in your country? Was it modelled after the US/Canada example, or does it have unique characteristics that address your local population or needs?

In general, national structures have been modelled on the US/Canada structure. Hong Kong, however, does not have a General Service Board but operates nationally through their Intergroup. New Zealand is a model on how a smaller country can operate nationally.

Who votes at the General Service Conference and who are voting members of the General Service Boards varied. Russia does not have non-alcoholic trustees. In general, World Service Meeting delegates have a voice at Board level and at Conference.

In Hong Kong, the highest level of structure is the Intergroup. Groups send representatives to monthly meetings. The Intergroup is now incorporated and has charitable tax status.

Another country reported that each group sends a representative to Intergroup but the areas are physically far apart.

Another country reported that the national structure is flat. Service positions are difficult to fill. Membership is transient.

Sarah (MERCAA) shared that they lack the number of people in service in Egypt. Meeting secretaries are also the GSR but they face problems translating announcements. Meetings are in Russian and Arabic as well as in English.

Greg shared that it was difficult to introduce a service structure at the national level because until then, a group of old timers had run AA less formally.

Steve said that NZ follows the US/Canada model. He shared that NZ had set recently themselves up as a charitable trust. To do that, they needed to create a board. The board reports into conference. It handles the business end of AA. They nominate people with relevant experience to work directly with media, banks, social media i.e. board members and trustees need to have specific skills. The relationship between the conference and board is transparent. Roles are well defined. The board cannot act alone. The board receives instructions from delegates. They have to have 3 trustees on the board. The chair of conference is the link between the conference and the board. He or she attends the board but does not have a vote.

For national roles, they have a two-year stand down period wherein someone who stands down from service cannot stand again within 2 years.

In NZ, groups are automatically registered when they become part the service structure, which gives them insurance coverage. Getting insurance coverage is why groups join the structure and this helps with the integrity of the structure.

Singapore has groups and an intergroup. They are now looking how they can realign with the world service manual. They allow some roles to attend intergroup and vote when they may not have been

able to before. This ensures they achieve quorum more often.

Greg said that in Australia they have trustees in each region.

Mary (Fiji) said that they opened groups wherever a new member emerged. Their Zoom meetings work well for them, and they have a lot in international visitors.

3. **Revision and Adaptation: Has there been a need to revise the original service structure in your country? If so, what were the reasons for this, and what changes were made?**

Japan revised their structure in 1985 when their Board was formed. It was felt that the structure was not working as well as it could and may need a review in future.

New Zealand's General Service Board has separated from their Conference. Area delegates now have two thirds of the vote at Conference.

The Intergroup in Hong Kong is now incorporated and has charitable tax status.

Another country reported that groups are forming with special interest themes, groups are changing and evolving. Language differences can cause friction. Some larger areas split into smaller ones. Online groups became much more popular.

Another country reported that they hold daytime meetings to include stay-at-home mothers.

Simon said that they're at an early stage in the development of their structure. They still only have groups and Intergroup.

Steve said that they created a board about 10 years ago. They had to do this when they became an incorporated society. Now, they are a charitable trust

Sarah shared that in MERCAA they still only have delegates from each country. In Egypt, they'll probably separate into English and Arabic structures.

Cultural and Linguistic Adaptation: How does your country's structure address cultural or linguistic challenges? What has been effective in ensuring the AA message reaches the local population?

The delegates all reported issues with translations. Some languages do not have direct translations for some of the words in the Big Book. These included Japanese and Te Reo Maori. Therefore, the translations are to indicate the intent of the book rather than literal.

In Hong Kong, there is a bi-lingual hotline.

Another country reported that their translation of the Big Book is not perfect and that translating it had been challenging. They are using a translator to

iron out the problems. We need to avoid using slang and to translate uniformly. We need to meet the needs of indigenous communities, focus on helping the family and sharing our cultures.

Greg said that they face challenges getting Aboriginal people into meetings. The only thing that has worked is when they get a whole community sober.

Steve shared that indigenous people in NZ suffer greatly from alcoholism. 62% of the prison population is Maori. They have a national Kiwi/Maori team who go to indigenous areas. They draw people into a sleepover. They've written guidelines on cultural appropriateness. They are translating lots of literature. Indigenous people are becoming delegates now but it's been a long process. Maori is becoming more widely seen. NZ used to broadcast a live radio show in Pacific languages.

Simon said that all meetings in Singapore are in English. They can ask volunteers to help when non-English users call the hotline. He said Singapore would need to consider holding meetings in other languages.

Sarah said that MERCAA has done a lot of work. They need to educate people in that Alcoholism is as serious a problem as drugs. Newcomers identify more as addicts than alcoholics, even though alcohol brought them or caused them to relapse.

Mary said that it helps to talk to district nurses in their local language. She talked about how members view Kava. Most do not take it.

4. **Learning from Differences: What can we learn from the differences in service structures across the AOSM zone? How can these learnings help us improve our own structures?**

We have learned from countries with a longer AA history. We've gained insights from AOSM. For example, we pass basket twice when we need to. AA is very strong and we can all learn from other successful structures.

We need to bring back what we learn from this AOSM to own country. How can we help others learn from us?

We've learned how to deal with problems with the use of facilities without a GSO in the past. It's been a journey of learning. We've learned that a sound service structure equals success with recovery. We still need to work hard.

We've learned that we have a responsibility to keep to the principles as individuals so that we can keep AA going.

Fellows considered that if their fellowship is small, do they really need to set up a structure which mirrors the larger countries' structure?

Steve shared that, in New Zealand, legal requirements have driven developments.

How can we effectively use country-to-country sponsorship to help build our service structures?

Most reported some country-to-country sponsorship, although not always official. Russia reported they had been unable to continue their relationship with Ukraine.

Sponsorship also includes non-monetary support. Some countries do not understand the 7th Tradition and 'keep on taking' without contributions for their members. So sometimes, support other than money is appropriate.

The delegates felt it important to check with GSO NY and the country being offered sponsorship and/or visits, to find out what had already been happening. This is to ensure that 'no toes are being trodden on', that efforts are not being repeated and that cultural sensitivities are respected.

We should set up a group of similar speaking countries versus a blended culture in AA. We could help other nations by passing it on and supporting the building of a structure in their country. Lend information to another country, not just money.

We can sponsor a country in two ways; money and service. We are setting up documentation to do this.

On receiving country sponsorship: our islands are very remote and may need assistance in building a local structure.

Sponsored another country many years ago with the help of GSO. Invited members to local conferences and round ups. We need to educate our membership on this topic. We want to pass it on to countries and raise awareness of opportunities.

The Literature Fund is a way to help and to sponsor countries in need.

We can list sponsors by language. We can provide country-to-country financial sponsorship. Singapore needs guidance on growing a structure. We can share experience of running CPC events. We can conduct international speaker meetings.



Section D

Country Reports



D.1. Australia

Greg Byrne – 2nd Term Delegate & Brian F. – 1st Term Delegate

Australia was the first country to receive the lifesaving message of Alcoholics Anonymous from our friends in America in 1945. We adopted the General Service Structure as suggested by Bill W. and have produced our own Service Manual. Australia consists of six Regions and twenty Areas, who are represented at our annual General Service Conference.

At our last survey there were approximately 20,000 members in 2,000 groups in Australia. This year we conducted a “snapshot” survey, the results of which are at the link below.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_AolZq8L4NKDoEB7Oi796uJvzzHQnrgy?usp=sharing

GENERAL SERVICE BOARD

The GSB of AA Australia is made up of six Regional Trustees, two General Service Trustees and, now, three Class A (Non-Alcoholic) Trustees. (We are very pleased to have enlisted two Class A Trustees to the Board this year.) Our Trustee Emeritus and two World Service Meeting Delegates attend Board Meetings but are not voting members of the Board. The General Service Office (GSO) is staffed by one manager and two assistants who also attend Board meetings. The Board meets four times a year.

CORONA VIRUS

Like all countries in the world the Corona Virus has caused disruptions to our Fellowship over the past few years. Most Virus restrictions are now eased in Australia and most groups have returned to normal face-to-face meetings. However, there are still plenty of Zoom Meetings available and the grey cloud of the Corona virus has its silver lining in AA’s discovery of Internet

communication channels. In the past much communication between AOSM Delegates was restricted to the actual AOSM Meetings themselves. The Internet has overcome the tyranny of distance and regular meetings of the various committees are now possible.

NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Each year, generally during the Easter holidays, Australia holds a National Convention. The venue for these Conventions is usually one of the capital cities. Along with three days of caring and sharing, at this event the World Service Delegates organise a table where international literature is displayed and international information is passed on to interested attendees.

CONFERENCE

Due to the Corona Virus our annual General Service Conferences have been held virtually but this year we will be back to a face-to-face Conference. Prior to the Conference the various committees will meet virtually and their recommendations will be discussed at the Conference.

INTERNATIONAL SPONSORSHIP

The Australian and New Zealand Fellowships have combined to financially support Fiji in hosting this AOSM. We have also supplied some literature to the Fijian Fellowship. In Australia the funds to provide this assistance come from an “International Sponsorship Fund” which represents money collected in our annual “Brown Paper Bag Appeal”. In that appeal each Group is asked to contribute to the collection from the meeting held closest to the tenth of June which is known as Founders Day.

Acknowledgements

The AA Fiji fellowship has benefited tremendously from country-to-country sponsorship. We wish to thank both the Australian and New Zealand General Service Offices for their generosity. Their sponsorship has enabled Fiji to be able to host the 2023 Asia Oceania Service Meeting (AOSM) and allow two delegates and four volunteers to participate in the 15th AOSM from 6-9 July 2023 at the Novotel Hotel, Nadi. We are indeed grateful for this tremendous support and privileged to be a part of the meeting with delegates from all over the Asia-Oceania region.

Background and History

Fiji is a Pacific Island country made up of 330 islands, including the two main islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. Our membership is spread out from the capital Suva to four other smaller islands. To maintain our sobriety and carry the message to the alcoholic that still suffers, we have, since the 1990s and long before the COVID pandemic, relied heavily on the virtual platform; Skype mainly because our membership span across the islands. Those who lived in Fiji as expatriates, and returned to their home countries, continued to stay connected through this platform. We have also been able to connect with members from other neighbouring Pacific Islands in previous years including Norfolk Islands, very recently. The role of technology has been a vital tool in reaching out and staying connected. The fellowship has continued to grow since then to currently 14 members, 11 of whom are permanent residents or citizens of Fiji. In 2016, through the support of GSO-Australia, the Australian National Convention was brought to Fiji and created an opportunity for the Fiji Ministry of Health to bring in 140 ministry officials to be part of an AA information day. A total of 400 participants, including, AA members were in attendance and came from all over the world including Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. While the convention has spurred our growth and awareness of Alcoholics Anonymous in the islands, there still an existing need to create awareness of what

alcoholism is and the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

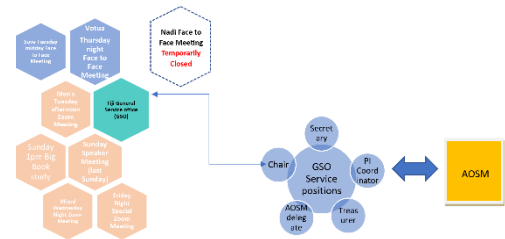
General Service Structure

The General Service Structure for Fiji is relatively new and evolving. Fiji AA has been added to the International website in 'AA near you'. Our fellowship is small, so the meetings are close to the General Service Office currently with only two levels in the structure:

i) Meetings

Two face-to-face meetings, one in Suva (Central) and one in Votua (about an hour and a half drive from Suva). A third face to face meeting in Nadi is temporarily closed.

There are five zoom meetings available including a Men's Tuesday meeting, mixed Wednesday and Friday night meetings and a mixed meeting on Sunday afternoon (once a month this is an international speaker meeting).



ii) General Service Office

The General Service Office (GSO) conducts its business meeting once a month and has done since its inception in 2018. The Inaugural Meeting was held on 7 November 2018. When this report was written, 50 meetings had been conducted with a set agenda including Finance Report, Public Information, Hotline Services, Meetings, AOSM updates and other business. The service positions include chair, treasurer, secretary and recently PI coordinator which cuts across our social media work, website, literature, and hotline services.

The GSO has a *draft* service structure guideline (refer to Appendix 3) that has been tailored to our specific setting.

iii) Asia-Oceania Delegates

Fiji has been fortunate to be represented and undertake service work outside our National Service Structure through the AOSM for 5 years now (2019 in Hong Kong, 2021 virtually and 2023 in Fiji). Although we are not represented at a World Service level yet, the AOSM is a gateway where we are able to access support and updated information, share our experience and where our voice is included in decisions.

The AOSM Delegate is elected at the GSO and usually would be selected from members in an existing service position, for example the Chair and Secretary. Per AA traditions, the group conscience has the final say in all matters.

AA Services

i. Virtual meetings

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we identified the need to move from the Skype platform to the Zoom platform to encourage optimum participation and access. Members were having increasing difficulty creating Skype accounts that preserved anonymity, and Zoom had grown to be a preferred platform around the world. We had some teething problems at the start, but we were able to address these, and members have enjoyed a more intimate connection since. The details of our meetings can be found in Appendix 1.

ii. Hot-line service

Our 24-hour hotline number (+679 939 2190) has been operational since (approximately) 2018 and has helped carry the message of recovery. The GSO has developed Hotline guidelines (refer to Appendix 3) outlining key roles for members who are rotating into this service position.

iii. Educational Materials

The PI Committee has achieved significant progress in revising and publishing educational materials in the past two years. Major revisions have been made to the following:

- Women's Poster (English and I-Taukei/Fijian versions)
- Mens Poster (English and I-Taukei/Fijian versions)
- Stickers
- Business cards

A major piece of work developed has been a (Canva) presentation that includes audio recordings of shares from members.

iv. Website

We continue to update our [website](#) where appropriate, particularly the meeting times and venues. There are plans to build content, a work in progress as part of our outreach and public information.

v. Facebook Page

A [Facebook page](#) has also been established to increase awareness and is another platform to carry the message of recovery. It's a closed platform that features our 24-hour hotline number (+679 939 2190) as a cover page and has slowly increased its number of followers/members. We have also utilized the Facebook messenger platform as a way in which our members can keep in contact, study the Big Book, carry the message, and receive updates/news. Our Facebook page now has over 550 followers and weekly engagements on the page for meeting times, monthly messages for general enquiries via FB Messenger as well as the Hotline phone. Our Facebook messenger chat groups are organised as follows:

- Bula women's chat group – share daily reflections and share.
- Bula blog – mixed chat group, share readings, updates including meeting times.
- Big Book study chat – Members share their experience strength and hope on 12 steps and 12 traditions.

vi. Phone Directory

Our hotline number is registered in the National telephone directory as the first number to appear and with our outreach to the Ministry of Health and the Fiji College of General Practitioners, our hotline number is now featured on the Ministry of Health website and the [Fiji College of General Practitioners](#) website.

Banking and Seventh Tradition

Our bank account remains operational, and we have a healthy prudent reserve which the GSO strives to maintain to support carrying the message of AA to those who still suffer. We have recently included ongoing deposits from our face-to-face meetings, particularly from the Suva meeting which previously was collected and kept their funds separately. The support from our AA friends around the world (particularly from Australia and New Zealand), and country connections through the AOSM has been a tremendous help toward our aim to be fully self-supporting. Still a work in progress, but we are grateful.

Conclusion

Our Fiji fellowship is growing and we continue to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers a day at a time. We are grateful to have found hope and recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous, that we have been given an opportunity to live usefully and humbly by the grace of God.

Vinaka vakalevu and loloma levo from the Fiji Islands!

Fiji included the following appendices. Please ask the Fiji delegates to share these with you directly.

- Appendix 1: Meeting List
- Appendix 2: Educational Materials
- Appendix 3: Fiji General Service Office Manual
- Appendix 4: AA Hotline Guidelines

The first A.A. meeting in Hong Kong was held at the Mariners' Club in Tsim Sha Tsui in 1969 by two British expatriates. A few weeks later, the first Chinese member joined.

Hong Kong has a culturally diverse population, and this is reflected in the membership of the AA fellowship. The Hong Kong group structure hasn't grown much in the last two years but it continues to diversify and divide into more autonomous groups. Groups include two English speaking women's groups, a Cantonese speaking women's group, a mixed Cantonese speaking group, an agnostic group, an LGBTQI+ group and a group hosted in one of the local Hospital Authority's Substance Abuse Units.

The fellowship comprises 18 autonomous groups, which host 45 meetings a week for a fellowship of several hundred. As the pandemic restrictions began to wind down in 2022, we slowly returned to our core face-to-face meetings. Even so, we still held 1,145 meetings via Zoom in 2022 to meet the needs of the community.

Hong Kong Intergroup (HKIG) conducted the first ever Membership Census of Hong Kong Alcoholics Anonymous (HKAA) in November 2022. The HKAA Census was conducted to gather some foundation information about key membership characteristics, as well as feedback preferences for face-to-face, online and hybrid meetings. The Census recorded 67 individual responses. The sampled membership includes diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, although disproportionately Chinese-ethnic representation is relatively low compared to local population trends. For example, the linguistic ability of Chinese language (Cantonese and Putonghua) is 25% combined compared to 68% English. Almost two-thirds of the sample reside on Hong Kong Island, where the majority of the regular meetings are held.

After many years of persistent effort, HK Intergroup achieved the status of a tax-exempt entity. This means that the fellowship, led by the HIPI committee, can carry the message at lower cost, for example on public transport and via government channels. With support from the fellowship in India, our HIPI committee continues to

carry the message to ethnic minorities and asylum-seekers by translating literature and by displaying it at community centers. We have also placed all three versions of Big Book (English, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese) in all public libraries in Hong Kong. We have also established lively relationships with professional associations such as the HK Psychological Society and the Family Law Association, as well as valuable relationships with universities and international schools. We invite students of psychology to our open meetings to witness the role of spirituality in the treatment of alcoholism. Fellows often share their experience, strength and hope at schools.

Our expenditures increased in 2022 because our new tax-exempt status gave us access to advertising programs only available to NGO registered societies here in Hong Kong. One of these successful programs was our cooperation with the MTR Corporation Limited in the final quarter of 2022. Our public service announcement posters were widely displayed throughout the MTR transportation system from late October into the Holiday season.

We have also continued our other efforts to educate the professional and educational community about alcoholism and how A.A.'s Twelve Step program can help alcoholics to recover. We received 448 incoming calls or messages and 182,044 visits to our website during 2022.

The HKAA website is provided and maintained by the Website Committee of Hong Kong Intergroup. Our website (www.aa-hk.org), that provides public information and outreach to the Hong Kong community, was completely redesigned in 2021 and was further refined in 2022.

Our greatest challenges are (1) the transient nature of the expat community and (2) carrying the message across the cultural divide to the local community. The transient nature of the expat community, coupled with a lack of awareness of the 12 Traditions, means that we have found it difficult to nurture a service-orientated mindset. Carrying the message across the cultural divide is becoming easier as we translate literature and

incorporate Cantonese speaking groups into the HK Intergroup service structure. However, the cultural resistance to admitting problems such as alcoholism and to speaking about personal issues does inhibit the growth of the fellowship among local people.

Hong Kong's group conscience is to endeavor to select a Chinese speaking delegate as one of our international delegates to AOSM and as our

primary delegate to WSM. We expect this to support the outreach into the Chinese community as those delegates share their experience of service at the global and regional levels.

Hong Kong's annual convention continues to attract speakers and participants from all over the world. We conducted a hybrid convention in 2021. We will be hosting the 2023 convention from November 2-5, 2023.

History of AA India

The fellowship of AA in India is in its 67th year. It has been a long journey, with vivid culture, different languages and uneven growth of AA nationally.

Here is an account of how AA came to India and its growth in the subsequent years. Though there are no accurate records from the early days, what is definitely clear is that Harold M., a schoolteacher by profession, was the first person in India, to stop drinking and gain lasting sobriety through the spiritual principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. He stopped drinking on 5th May 1957, and hence that date is nationally acknowledged as the “Founders Day” in India.

How did Harry M. get the message?

A Canadian member of AA named Charley M. was posted to the Canadian Embassy in New Delhi. He arrived on 12th January 1957. He then began to post ads in local newspapers offering help to those with a drinking problem. It was one of these ads to which Harry M. responded that enabled him to call on Charley M personally in New Delhi. Harry M. spent some days with Charley in Delhi learning about the disease of alcoholism, the programme and the spiritual principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. He returned to Mumbai armed with the literature given to him and stopped drinking from 5th May 1957. He remained sober till his death on 5th June, 1967.

Out of approximately 2,500 groups, West and South India has about 1,900 groups and North and East has about 600 groups. We have very minimal presence in North-east region of India

Our General Service Office is located in Mumbai and managed by four Working Trustees: Vice Chairman/ Chairman-Public Information, Treasurer, Literature Chairman and the Secretary. A coordinator and three assistants manage the office.

The General Service Board has 9 Class-A non-alcoholic trustees and 18 Class-B trustees. Out of the 18 Class-B trustees, 4 trustees serve as working trustees, namely Vice Chairman/ Public Information Chairman, Treasurer, Literature Chairman and the

General Secretary. They shoulder the responsibility of the General Service Office.

67 delegates represent all parts of the country. We have had 53 conferences so far. Our 51st GSC was held physically last November in Mumbai. We still do not have District Committees or Area Committees even though we adopted the idea at Conference in 2004. However, recently, a few regions have begun to implement these. Group services are largely provided through 85 service entities, including Inter-Groups, District Committees and Area Committees across the country.

We publish and distribute A. A. books and pamphlets in 16 languages, and we publish ‘The Twelfth Step’ magazine bi-monthly. Apart from the national magazine, regional fellowships publish periodicals. GSO India publishes a newsletter occasionally.

The Trustee Committee for Charters & Reports has undertaken an uphill task of updating the Charter and Byelaws and the GSC 2023 has adopted a General Service Manual.

We are witnessing an exciting and phenomenal period of growth. Across the length and breadth of the country, AA as a resource is becoming known and accepted at various public and private levels.

Cooperation with Government agencies:

- **Defense:** In 2010, AA was invited at PSYCON (conference of psychiatrists attached to hospitals for the Armed Forces). As per the last information received, more than 25 AA meetings are held weekly at base stations of the Air Force. Because of security reasons, participation is restricted. Para-military forces (SSB, CISF, CRPF, BSF) keep on inviting AA for awareness sessions.
- **Railways:** Indian Railways is the largest employer in the country. After we received permission from Rail Board, we were able to conduct awareness sessions in many railway workshops and railway premises.
- **Govt Hospitals:** The Health Department of the Central Government has given us permission to conduct awareness sessions and to put up information boards and banners in all government run hospitals.

- **Treatment Facilities:** Nowadays, many members from treatment facilities are coming to AA. The TF committee is exploring ways to bridge the gap.

Media

Another great friend of AA is the media. The print and electronic media have accepted us and are always receptive to our needs. Newspapers have been particularly cooperative with us by highlighting various facets of our program and carrying stories of recovering alcoholics in a series of articles.

Online Meetings

We were able to hold 250+ online meetings in more than 10 languages through different online platforms to keep our fellowship united during the pandemic. Still today, we have several online groups covering practically every hour of the day.

Carrying the Message Online

We were able to do PI activities online with the kind support of the Rotary Club, Lions Clubs, NGO's etc. to reach out to the still suffering alcoholic.

Conventions

Annually, conventions are held in different regions and cities within India and close to 8 to 10 National Conventions are held annually and more particularly this year post-pandemic.

PI Conference

The fellowship had its 3rd National PI seminar, organised by General Service Office, on 28th to 30th of October 2022 in Jabalpur. One representative from each service entity participated to share our collective experience and wisdom.

Reaching Where A.A. is not there

In the year 2010, we began efforts to carry the message to alcoholics in areas where A.A. does not exist. Towns were selected on the basis of population, local recoveries – either migrated from other areas or discharged from Treatment Facilities, the number of rehabs, and the support

available from nearby existing fellowships. Since then, towns like Ujjain, Lucknow, Rajkot, Indore and Roorki, Chattisgarh, Jamnagar, Rajkot, Kanpur, Washim, Andaman Nicobar have been covered and A. A. meetings have been started.

Literature to Gulf Countries

GSB India regularly sends literature in Indian languages to expats in Gulf countries.

Country to Country Sponsorship

We have sponsored our neighboring countries, Bhutan/Nepal/Sri Lanka/Bangladesh, by sending them literature, and by keeping in touch with them by phone and mail.

Challenges

Perhaps the greatest challenges facing A.A. in India are the social stigma surrounding alcoholism and the concept of woman alcoholics. Due to changing social conditions, the number of women alcoholics in India is rising and women from all strata of society are falling prey to alcoholism. At present, there are only five women's groups in India and it remains a major concern for the fellowship to approach them with the message.

Following a visit of AA Women through an initiative from AOSM, there was sudden impact on fellowship and many women came forward. But reasons best known to them, again there is apathy in suffering women to come forward and seek help.

India is seen by its neighbouring countries as an A.A. resource. We sincerely want to be of help to China, Pakistan, Malaysia etc. We are trying to assist them with our experience in translation of literature in local languages. We do extend an invitation to them to attend our GSC.

The major challenge still remains of reaching the Northern and Eastern states, where 65% of the population resides and the fellowship has virtually no existence. Many alcoholics still die for want of message. With the collective efforts, we are sure that the fellowship will reach those areas.

Thank you,

“GOD Bless Us”

My name is Reza V. and I am an alcoholic. Once again, Iran is proud to participate in the 15th Asia-Oceania Service Meeting (AOSM) 2023, which is held in Fiji, from the 6th to the 9th of July 2023.

The message of AA reached Iran 52 years ago, when no active groups were yet formed in Iran. After many years, in around 1994, the first AA group started in the homes of Iranians living in the United States of America. These first members introduced the program into Iran.

In 2023, on the occasion of the 88th anniversary of AA, two conventions took place in Iran; one in the capital, Tehran, and the other in the provincial city of Kerman. The purpose of these conventions was to raise awareness of AA and of its effects on Iran. More than 1200 attendees attended these conventions.

Another important event was that for the first time, the trustees of GSO Iran started to prepare and edit the GSO Service Manual, with help from the GSOs of US/Canada and Australia. GSO Iran will print and distribute it once it's approved.

The last thing to mention is that our country has a second GSO, in the city of Mashhad. That fellowship is called "Recovered Alcoholics" and it has approximately 350 groups. They have no connection with the World Service Structure or with surrounding countries. It has been operating for several years with the view that the structures can be autonomous. Therefore, they translate, print and distribute most of the AA publications without obtaining the relevant permits. I would like to announce that, for AA unity and to respect the first tradition, some discussions have taken place between the trustees of the two structures, and I hope that soon we will reach unity. Also, I would like to ask all friends who read this report from different countries of the world who have similar experiences like us in Iran to email me so that we can use their experience to achieve unity in Iran.: My email addresses are:

iranaa@gimal.com or rezav9333@gimal.com

The General Service structure of Iran (inverted triangle) consists of 19 districts of 24 provinces, which include approximately 370 face-to-face groups and 55 online groups that are held via Free Conference, Zoom and Skype.

It is necessary to explain that in the structure of Alcoholics Anonymous of Iran, only publications licensed by the AAWS are printed and distributed.

Books with licenses:

- 1- Alcoholics Anonymous
- 2- 12*12
- 3- Living Sober
- 4- As Bill sees it
- 5- Our great responsibility

Pamphlets with licenses:

- 1- Is AA for you?
- 2- This is Alcoholics Anonymous.
3. Frequently asked questions about AA.
- 4- Twelve concepts in the form of images
- 5- AA in correctional centres

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Yours truly,

Solmaz Aslanian

In March 1975, the first Step meeting in Japanese was held in Kamata, Tokyo, marking the beginning of A.A. Japan. Two long roads led to that point – one came from the U.S. military. In the early 1950s, non-Japanese A.A. groups were spreading within the U.S. military bases throughout Japan and locations in downtown Tokyo. The Far East Round-Up was held in 1967 at the Minami Tama Air Force Base in western Tokyo. By 1972, there were 20 English-speaking groups. Exchanges between these groups and Japanese members in various locations continue to this day.

A separate group of Japanese alcoholics attempted to start A.A. in the late 1950s with the encouragement of medical professionals. The “A.A. Association” group was formed in two parts of western Japan. Still, it eventually fizzled out because they didn’t attempt to carry the message beyond the hospital walls. In addition, another organization to help alcoholics was formed, but they rejected our anonymity principle because it was incompatible with Japanese society. Rather than continuing as A.A., they chose another path and still exist today (as described in *A.A. Comes of Age*).

The impetus for the first Japanese A.A. group began in June 1974 when Father M., an American priest living in Japan, who had recovered from alcoholism through A.A., attended a meeting at the so-called Japanese “Sobriety School” and shared the A.A. message with them. Eight months later, on March 16, 1975, the first official A.A. Step meeting was held in Japanese in Kamata, Tokyo. The Kamata Group still exists today. A Japanese alcoholic priest who was fluent in English, Father P., also attended the meeting, and over the next four years, he led the efforts to translate the A.A. Big Book into Japanese.

The Beginning of the General Service Organization

In 1985, more than 100 groups from all over Japan participated in the First National Representative (GSR) Assembly, held in conjunction with the A.A. Japan 10th Anniversary Celebration. At the GSR meeting, Japan’s first WSM delegate, Susuke H.,

was elected, and he attended the Ninth WSM in Guatemala in 1986. After seeing and hearing about the situation in other countries, Susuke returned home convinced that a national General Service Conference structure was necessary to develop A.A. in Japan. During his WSM report, the vision of a “National Service Structure” was discussed for the first time. The following year, it was decided to initiate a General Service Meeting (GSM) as a preliminary step to the General Service Conference. The GSM met seven times, and in 1995, the National Group Delegates Assembly approved the establishment of the present General Service Board. Then, in March 1996, the historic first A.A. Japan General Service Conference was held. A.A. had Come of Age in Japan.

The 28th General Service Conference was held in February 2023.

Service Structure

As of February 2023, there are 604 groups in eight areas and 47 districts listed in Japan, with an estimated 5,800 members. The number of groups stopped growing around 2015; a membership survey conducted in 2019 found that members are most likely to be in their 50s, accounting for about one-third of all members, and about 25% of members are women. Many groups outside urban areas have fewer than 10 members, and maybe only a couple of groups in the entire prefecture. The General Service Conference is held annually in February over three days. The Conference is made up of 20 delegates from eight areas, plus 13 members of the General Service Board. There are three subcommittees. The recording secretaries are A.A. volunteers. Due to Covid-19, both the 2021 and 2022 Conferences were held online. The three-day long 2023 General Service Conference was online for the first day, and face-to-face for remaining two days.

The General Service Board meets four times a year and consists of 13 members: eight trustees (two nonalcoholic Class A and six alcoholic Class B), two WSM delegates, and three GSO staff. The chairperson is a Class B trustee. All eight GSB meetings were held online over the past two years.

Service Offices

- **General Service Office:** The Japan General Service Office (JSO) was established in Tokyo in 1981 and is officially registered with the New York GSO. There are three full-time paid employees; all are alcoholics. We survived the Covid pandemic in 2020 by working remotely, rotating shifts, and shortening the office operating hours.
- **Local service Offices:** Currently, Japan has seven central offices operating autonomously and supported by local groups.

Finance

The General Service's annual budget is approximately 40 million yen (US\$348K). The three sources of income are contributions (49%), literature sales (26%), and the monthly magazine *BOX-916* (25%).

Staff and office expenses are 75-80% of our fixed costs, primarily administrative costs for JSO staff and office maintenance costs, such as rent (approximately 30 million yen (US\$261,000)). Literature publishing and other expenses account for 15-20%, and General Service Conference and General Service Board activities are approximately 3-5%. In the past two years, the trustee expenses were significantly reduced as many meetings and events were held online; usually, we cannot afford to fully reimburse trustees' travel and other expenses due to a lack of budget. The total cost of services per member averages around ¥5,612 (\$49.22) per year, yet contributions per member average ¥3,127 (\$27.42) per year. Literature and monthly magazine sales cover the shortfall of approximately ¥2,485 (\$21.79) per member.

The current General Service reserve fund is about 10 million yen, equivalent to about 3.3 months of JSO expenses. Despite the pandemic, our board has operated the last two years in the black, although reserves have recovered the losses of prior years.

Literature/Publishing

The First Edition of the Japanese Big Book with stories by Japanese members was published in 1979. Since then, JSO has offered about 70 different publications, mainly translations of AAWS literature and some original Japanese publications, including the audio Big Book on CDs. However, due to cultural differences and publishing costs, not all AAWS literature is translated. In 2021, 20,067

books and pamphlets were distributed, with sales totaling ¥96.72 million. Books and publications are distributed through the JSO and local central offices. In addition, we currently distribute seven books and pamphlets on consignment through Amazon.com. Publication pricing was revised in 2019, lowering the price of the BB hardcover edition to ¥3,000 (~\$26.10) but raising the price of the "Twelve and Twelve" and many other publications. The price increase is due to the cost of ordering small lots of many different products and the need to make up for the shortfall in contributions with profits from publications with large distribution numbers.

The 2016 General Service Conference recommended the "Personal Stories" section of the Big Book be updated and a translation review be done. After two years of careful consideration, at the 2022 General Service Conference, 53 changes to the translation of the BB were approved. The revised Big Book will be released by 2025. In addition, we plan to publish the first e-book, *Living Sober*, as an Amazon kindle edition.

BOX916 is our national "meeting in print" magazine. As of 2022, around 1,800 copies are distributed monthly to A.A. members, and 440 copies are distributed free to hospitals and other interested parties. *BOX916* sales account for about 25% of revenues and are a stable source of income with many subscriptions. Still, subscriptions have been gradually declining for several years, so a *BOX916* Subscription Promotion Committee was formed in 2020, led by the trustee. Subscriptions can be made directly on the JSO website from 2021. During the pandemic, the past year's editions and audio recordings of some articles were posted on the JSO website. JSO also publishes a quarterly newsletter.

Public Information & Correctional Facilities

Japan's population is about 120 million. A 2013 national survey indicated that about 10% of the population are at-risk drinkers, and about 1% (more than 1 million people) are suspected alcoholics, but only about 50,000 people receive alcohol treatment. The year 2014 saw the Basic Law on Measures for Alcohol Health Disorders enacted. A.A. is listed as a self-support group on the websites and in brochures published by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and local governments. A.A.s have been invited to participate as panelists at forums of government agencies and

alcohol-related conferences. Despite this, A.A. is still not well known to the Japanese public.

Each area has an active Public Information Committee and a Corrections and Institutions Committee. In Japan, most of the activities of the Public Information Committee are focused on cooperating with professionals, but at the 2022 General Service Conference, a recommendation was made to create an official video of A.A. Japan as a PI tool and to utilize YouTube. Discussions have just begun regarding the creation of a video.

Members have been carrying the message into correctional institutions nationwide and are currently in 37 of the 75 prisons and 26 correctional institutions. The General Service Board and the regions sponsored Corrections Forums where local officials are invited have also been effective. The 2022 Conference decided to hold the future Corrections Forums across the eight areas on a rotating basis.

Information Technology

- **Development of Website:** The GSO Japan website <https://aaajapan.org/> was redesigned in 2015. The website receives hundreds of hits daily and updates information as needed. In addition, all seven central offices have their own websites that provide meeting listings and event information.
- **Technology Committee:** In response to the 2020 pandemic, the General Service Board has appointed a new Technology Committee. The first task was coordinating the launch of the online meeting portal site. The Technology Committee demonstrated its ability to provide frequent updates to the JSO website, facilitate online General Service Conferences and

Regional Service Forums, and implement online contributions. The committee plays a central role in many projects and provides digital support, including requests from various functions within the General Service Board. They are currently working on the creation of e-books, the introduction of the Meeting Guide app, and studying the creation of YouTube PI videos. When India could not host the 2021 AOSM in Hyderabad due to the pandemic, the tech team pulled together to provide all the hosting support required. This was a huge honor for us and was only possible because of the experience gained by shifting the General Service Conference to an online platform.

- **Web Meeting Listing:** The General Service Board coordinated an online meetings portal site in April 2020. Two years later, aaajapan-online-intergroup.org now lists 133 online meetings per week and is maintained by its committee.
- **Online General Service Conferences:** In addition, the 2020 and 2021 General Service Conferences were held entirely online. The General Service Board also meets online. While there are some regional differences concerning technology implementation, several areas have area assembly, and area committee meetings held either online or in a hybrid format. While some members are conservative about online meetings, the digital divide appears to be slowly closing. It is NOT about choosing between digital and face-to-face meetings. Rather online, it has become one of the most important ways to communicate with alcoholics in remote areas, on remote islands, overseas, or nearby who, for various reasons, have difficulty participating in face-to-face meetings.

Salaam Alaikum from the Middle East. It is the combined privilege of the member countries from the Middle East to include this consolidated Country Report for the 2023 AOSM Conference.

Membership of Countries

The Middle East Regional Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous (MERCAA) incorporates:

- United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- Kingdom of Bahrain
- State of Qatar
- Sultanate of Oman
- Lebanon
- State of Kuwait
- Kingdom of Jordan
- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)
- Egypt
- Sudan

Each of these member countries functions as an area-like entity unto themselves. Some have multiple groups across cities / states / emirates, and some remain a single city with single or multiple groups. AA has been in some of these countries for many decades now, the UAE claiming to have started its first AA meeting in excess of 40 years ago. The spread and growth of AA in these countries has been encouraging although COVID has impacted many areas regionally. The attempt to carry the message into new areas has also been somewhat impacted. The region's fellowships support a predominantly Western and Asian expatriate population, as well as a large transient / traveler population.

In most countries, typical AA functions like Intergroup, Central Office, and Public Information are relatively low key. A common observation across the member countries is that the local Arab & national populations are poorly represented. This is most often due to a variety of factors including language barriers, cultural sensitivities, reluctant and minimal government and institutional support, and a lack of cost effective, approved AA literature.

History of MERCAA

MERCAA was established in 2005 at the Bahrain Middle East AA Convention and over the next few years, set itself a charter of objectives. Its objectives are to:

- Conduct recovery workshops, which are usually hosted in Dubai as a central location and as having maximum membership.
- Develop and maintain the MERCAA website (www.mercaa.com) as a valuable resource and contact portal for all travelers and newcomers, for all those who want to know more about AA.
- Carry the message into the low income, Asian labour camps where alcoholism and alcohol abuse are prevalent. This initiative started in the UAE and is relevant across the region.
- Hold an annual AA convention for the Middle East a celebration of sobriety and of carrying the message. It is held in rotation between member countries and is in its 18th year.
- Support AOSM and other GSO activities by contributing 7th tradition funds.

MERCAA participated in AOSM for the first time in 2007 at the Tokyo AOSM, as an observer. Ann D. of Kuwait presented the first MERCAA report. Since then, MERCAA has attended all AOSMs and hosted the AOSM in 2015.

MERCAA Trusted Servants

MERCAA has had a consistent format of elections since its inception. The structure of MERCAA is as follows: Each position has voting rights; each country delegate also has voting rights.

- Chairperson & Alt Chairpersons: two-year terms.
- Treasurer – two-year terms.
- Secretariat – two-year terms.
- Translation & PI Committee Chairperson – voluntary
- Web Servant – voluntary.
- Current MERCAA Trusted Servants
- MERCAA's current trusted servants are:
 - Chairperson: Bertie S.
 - Secretary/Treasurer: Ann D
 - Translation & PI Chair: Faeq
 - Webmaster: Craig B

The pandemic created a major disrupt in the region with some countries facing airport closures, a ban on in person meetings, to name a few challenges.

It is intended that elections for the MERCAA service board will occur in November 2023. Delegates will participate in the scheduled MERCAA meetings and report MERCAA & AOSM Activities to their respective countries.

2022 MERCAA Annual Convention

Bahrain hosted the two-day Hybrid convention, which took place on the 18th and 19th November. The atmosphere was one of gratitude at being together to celebrate solid recovery and fellowship made all the more special following a somewhat of a hiatus for in person gatherings during the Pandemic.

Two members of GSO International Desk US & Canada were represented and brought with them valuable information and support. A keynote speaker from USA brought a very strong message of ESH.

The Literature Committee displayed the recently obtained license for printing the Arabic version of the Big Book for the region. Having access to the literature at a greatly reduced cost and in the regions own language will provide a valuable resource to the community who suffer from alcoholism.

Arabic Translations

MERCAA, with the help of Intergroup Bahrain, has so far translated the following literature, which has been revised based on an approved Arabic Glossary Index by GSO New York:

- Big Book
- 12 X 12
- Living Sober
- A Newcomer Asks
- This is AA
- Is AA For You?

The MERCAA translation committee is currently translating other literature as well and coordinating the official approval and licensing with GSO.”

Recovery Workshops in the Region

Recovery workshops in the region were halted. However, on-line workshops were held covering sponsorship and the steps.

Insights Gained from Country Reports

From the various Country Reports and our collective experience of the service and recovery in the region, we feel the following points are important to share with the worldwide service structure. The fellowship in most of the member countries comprises expatriates. This means that:

The nature of population is transient and temporary.

Many long-term sober and active members have started to return to their home countries due to political and economic circumstances – the number of members, groups and service volunteers are all decreasing.

Local PI efforts have not been as effective as we would have liked them to be - we still find it difficult to attract the local, primarily Arabic speaking population.

Local government support is rare, which means that carrying the message can be difficult and meeting locations can be hard to find.

MERCAA has put considerable effort into gaining GSO status, which will help in many ways to carry the message more effectively. Our priority remains to help the smaller and newer fellowships to become self-supporting and to get a fellowship and meetings going in countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, and Egypt. The Region continues to need more and more Arabic language literature to effectively carry the message, but much progress has been made in recent years.

The MERCAA Annual Convention remains the highpoint of the region’s gathering of fellowships and is a much-awaited event every year. The region also receives international speakers from time to time. Their workshops are well attended.

Bahrain

Bahrain is a small city-state in the Arabian Gulf with a population of almost 1.5 million people. Expatriates and migrant communities make up 52% of the population. While AA has existed in the country since the 1960's, it has had a sustained presence since 1981 with a dedicated room at the American Mission Hospital in Manama. As a country with a highly transient migrant population, AA faces sharp expansions and contractions in membership.

Groups

Currently, there are two English-speaking groups in the city-center (Manama) and the northwestern suburbs (Saar) attended almost entirely by non-nationals. The Saar group is a multi-meeting group with regular meetings as well as a Men's meeting. As of mid-2023, regular members total around 10 people down from around 25 people a few months prior. Finding members to commit to service positions is an ongoing challenge as is the lack of sponsors, particularly for Arabic-speaking newcomers. Without Arabic literature, attracting and retaining nationals is impossible. Potential members with dual addictions end up in NA instead. In contrast to AA, NA has grown vastly in the last few years. It is made up entirely of nationals demarcating the demographic difference between the two fellowships.

Service Structure

Last year in 2022, it was decided that with more than one group present, Bahrain could do with an Intergroup; each group elected G.S.R.'s from the home groups and the representatives to MERCAA from Bahrain. The Intergroup hopes to carry out workshops and P.I. sessions and flesh out the service structure in Bahrain. Bahrain also hosted the MERCAA convention in November 2022.

Carrying the Message Hospitals and Institutions

Meetings are conducted on a regular basis at the government Psychology Hospital.

Egypt

History

The first contact with GSO was established by an AA traveler in 1957, but it was not until 1973 that the first AA group in Egypt was established; the Oasis Group. The current Maadi group was established in 1978 and thereafter, meetings such as the Gouna, Arabic and Russian meetings have continued to carry the message of hope to the still suffering alcoholic.

Attendance and overall service flow has been consistent, and AA Cairo has experienced a vibrant growth and momentum specifically with the much-welcomed addition and joint cooperation of both the Arabic and Russian AA's service and recovery.

Service has been distributed between various keen and energetic trusted servants, to ensure carrying the AA message to the still suffering alcoholic.

Furthermore, Committees such as a translation, convention and events / outreach sub-groups have been devised to tackle and address AA Cairo's needs. Suggestions are highly appreciated.

Meetings

To date, Egypt AA comprises two districts - Cairo and El Gouna. We have recently added a contact in Alexandria in the hope of expanding the hand of AA to the still suffering alcoholics there. The Cairo AA fellowship caters to daily meetings in either English, Arabic or Russian. They are in the form of in-person, zoom or hybrid meetings to ensure inclusiveness and access to recovery for the still suffering alcoholic.

El Gouna has two English speaking meetings. It has a consistent flow of visitors, as well as AA Gouna regulars.

- Arabic meetings**
 - two in-person
 - one zoom.
- English speaking meetings**
 - three in-person
 - one zoom
 - one hybrid.
- Russian Speaking meetings**
 - one in person

Service Structure

The service structure consists of an Area with the following voted in trusted servants:

- Area chairperson
- Area secretary
- Area treasurer
- Literature Representative
- Website Representatives
- GSR member from each meeting (also the secretary of the meeting due to lack of service members)
- MERCAA country representative

Website: <http://www.aegypt.org/>

The AA Egypt website caters to the needs of Cairo AA. It's all in English. Visitors, newcomers and enquiries are primarily accessed through the website. The website includes AA readings such as the preamble and the daily meditation as well as meeting lists and AA contacts for support.

Challenges

Cairo District

- Access to a consistent flow of literature, specifically Arabic Big Books and chips.
- Influx of newcomers from hospitals and institutions.

These members are still navigating their own recovery and attend in both AA and our sister fellowship. Unfamiliarity with the necessity to identify as an alcoholic within AA rooms is a challenge being faced- written as well as requests to the institutions staff members to clarify and explain the importance of adherence to our singleness of purpose for both their own recovery as well as the health and growth of AA have been addressed.

Jordan

Meetings

The Amman group remains relatively constant in its core membership numbers, holding face-to-face meetings on Saturdays and Tuesdays, and Zoom meetings on Mondays and Wednesdays. Average attendance at face-to-face meetings is around 4-8, while Zoom meetings command around 5-7 participants, with 2-3 international attendees. Our Tuesday meeting is a dedicated NA-AA meeting,

following the NA format, with participation open to all. Most of our members are both AA and NA, but the NA community isn't large enough to branch out on their own, although they now have a dedicated phone number.

WhatsApp

We have 41 participants on our WhatsApp feed, which we use to post updated information on meetings, as well as daily reflections, and other recovery-related information.

Website

We have updated our AA website to include Arabic translations of:

- 12 Questions
- Who is an Alcoholic?
- Information on AA
- The Promises

These generated a lot of traffic from the Middle East/North Africa.

Moreover, we have used Google Small Business for Search Engine Optimization (SEO) which gives us prominence when looking for an AA meeting in Jordan.

Through Google Small Business, on the sidebar of a web search for AA in Amman, there is a condensed version of the important information, such as meeting times, contact info and a link to the website for further information. There are also photos of the meeting location to help visitors find this nondescript location.

Hospitals, Institutions, and Public Information

Our outreach effort to the National Center for the Rehabilitation of Addicts is currently nonexistent due to a lack of volunteers. As discussed in previous reports, the center is located quite a distance from Amman center, with poor public transportation options. However, a member who was recently an inpatient, reports that the director of the center is aware of our existence. But, as a group, we have not yet returned to introduce ourselves to the new administration.

As the pandemic has receded, we are seeing more one-time visitors to our meetings who are passing through Amman, either on business or as tourists. Several of these visitors have come back to our Zoom meetings.

Goals

The group's goals for 2023 are to continue to reach out to the alcoholic and addict who are still suffering through word of mouth and contacts through the professional community in Amman.

Kuwait

Kuwait hosted the MERCAA Convention in 2019, which was attended by over 50 members from MERCAA countries. Ms. Eva attended from the International Desk at GSO, New York.

Meetings

No changes to report. We now only have 3 zoom meetings.

Members

The population is more transient than ever with intermittent in person meetings at a member's house mostly due to small numbers in attendance.

Lebanon

Currently, we have 58 members in our fellowship WhatsApp group. However, half of these members do not live in Lebanon full time. Lebanon has just one group, which is in the capital, Beirut. We hold three meetings a week:

- Tuesday – Step Meeting.
- Thursday – Open Topic Meeting.
- Saturday – Big Book Meeting.

The number of attendees in any given meeting ranges between 3 to 15.

PI Outreach

There is very little awareness of alcoholism in Lebanon. We are in talks with psychiatry units in hospitals to spread awareness about AA as a whole and about our own activities. We have also printed cards which we place in treatment facilities and pharmacies.

Expansion

We are also discussing with fellows who live in other cities the feasibility of setting up other groups and more meetings in those cities.

Socializing

Being such a small Fellowship, we do quite a lot of social activities together. We have just launched a book club, which has attracted 11 fellows so far.

Sultanate Of Oman

Sultanate Of Oman is the oldest independent country in the Arab World. It shares its land borders with UAE to the Northwest, Saudi Arabia to the West, and Yemen to the Southwest. It shares its marine borders with Iran and Pakistan.

From the late 17th century, the Omani Sultanate was a powerful empire. Historically, Muscat was the principal trading port of the Persian Gulf region. Muscat was also among the most important trading ports of the Indian Ocean.

Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said was the hereditary leader of the country, which is an absolute monarchy, from 1970 until his death on 10 January 2020. His cousin, Haitham bin Tariq, is the country's new ruler.

Oman is a member of the United Nations, the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. It has sizeable oil reserves, ranking 25th globally. In 2010, the United Nations Development Programme ranked Oman as the most improved nation in the world in terms of development during the preceding 40 years. A significant portion of its economy involves tourism and trading of fish, dates and other agricultural produce.

Meetings

AA began in Oman five decades ago.

Oasis – The first ever AA Group in Muscat was founded in 1973 at The American Hospital at Matrah.

Currently, there are two more groups operating in Oman; 'The Sunflower Group' for ladies and the 'Serenity (Prashanthi) Group', which conducts meetings in Malayalam, a regional language of India. The 'Serenity (Prashanthi) Group' started in March 2021 as an extended arm of Oasis Group.

Due to the pandemic and consequent government-imposed protocols, all meetings are convened online. The physical meeting place for Oasis was

the Al Harub Clinic in Shatty Qurum before the pandemic spread.

Literature

We have a Librarian, who takes care of our AA literature needs, and a Treasurer and a GSR who are elected through Group Conscience.

Qatar

History

AA in Oman was formed by John L from India in 1988. New Members were initially Expatriates who were Members in their Home Countries. But we are seeing more Qataris joining the group since 2000s. And many expats who are finding their sobriety right here in Qatar. In the beginning Meetings were in Members' homes. However, in 1989 Doha College provided the first official AA Venue in Doha, this ran for six years with two meetings per week. Between 1995 and 2002 the Meetings went back to Members' homes. The group was small but solid. In 2002 the Group got a room in the Parish Centre with Meetings every Friday. In 2003 a third Meeting each week was introduced as Membership had increased due to the growth in population. The Sofitel Hotel and Qatar Red Crescent Society were both added as Venues. The former no longer hosts meetings. In 2004 the Group got a Meeting Room in the Psychiatric Hospital where – after a brief hiatus just before and during the pandemic – is back on and the mtgs continue to this day.

The Present

AA has a fairly strong fellowship in Qatar. The Group has approximately 50 active members. The majority of the group are Westerners. However, there are a number of Qataris, South Africans, a Sri Lankan, an Indian and members of GCC countries represented. The majority of members are male although there is a thriving women's group that is growing.

Zoom has also made mtgs more accessible for fellows and as a result we are seeing a greater number of people from outside the country jump into our mtgs.

As of this writing, most new members are referred by family members, friends and employers.

The Group meets in a few locations throughout Doha. However, most mtgs continue to take place

via Zoom during the week. When the Group does meet in person it does so the Hamad Medical Corporation's Psychiatric Hospital and the Qatari Red Crescent. There is one more in-person mtg taking place at a coffee shop in the downtown area of Doha but it's new and not on the official website as yet.

Meetings cover a wide range of AA topics to suit Newcomers and established members alike and there is strong support in terms of sponsorship and support calls. Meetings take a standard format: Speaker meeting, AA speaker tapes, Big Book Study, 12 Steps and Traditions, As Bill Sees It, Daily Reflection and Living Sober.

The Qatar Fellowship adheres to the 12 Traditions as a guide to the day-to-day management of the group, as such declining outside contributions and ensuring anonymity for members.

The Group plans to support groups in other towns along the coast.

Challenges

Finally, it must be noted, that despite the group's best efforts, the Doha Recovery Group – our home group – has taken a hit during and after the pandemic. Many of its most senior members have left Qatar and this has created a leadership vacuum. Mtgs still take place, fellows still support one another in the greatest ways possible and a few key members hold it all together -- but it's been disjointed of late.

Website

AA Qatar has a regularly updated website that details all Meetings and locations, helpline numbers and emails contacts for support and information. The meetings are chaired by Fellowship members who attend business meetings to take care of business arising.

Saudi Arabia

(Riyadh only because the rest of KSA Report is not available)

In Riyadh, we have a small fellowship that has been here for a few decades, albeit with ups and downs. We have a new updated website:

www.aariyadh.com.

We have two English language open meetings a week at a medical center on Takhasussi Street in

Riyadh. The attendance varies between two to 14 fellows per meeting, with an average of eight people. Currently, all meetings are being held over Zoom.

We have a varied fellowship with locals and expatriates of different nationalities who often move out of Riyadh. We receive visitors regularly. We are grateful to have a good amount of literature brought in by fellows during their travels.

Two to three fellows regularly attend the yearly MERCAA Conventions.

United Arab Emirates

AA in Dubai started in the late 1970s. Since then, it has become well established with many meetings every day, and with meetings in nearly all the major cities of UAE.

Finding meeting venues is a challenge in the UAE so each venue hosts more than one weekly meeting. UAE Intergroup meets bimonthly and the service positions are regularly rotated.

Meetings

Here's a list of meetings in the different cities of the UAE. Currently, all meetings are being held virtually over Zoom:

Dubai – 32
Abu Dhabi – 10
Al Ruwais – 1
Al Ain – 1
Sharjah - 3

Public Information Meetings

Intergroup UAE has a PI Committee which is segregated into various subcommittees. The PI

Committee meets monthly to discuss ways to spread the AA message and put them into practice. More efforts are being put into carrying the message to the labour camps and to the schools in Dubai. Intergroup has bought literature in different languages to be distributed at the awareness meetings and AA meetings in the labour camps free of charge.

During the pandemic, we have managed to conduct some virtual awareness meetings for the labour camps but not in any other places.

Literature

We place regular orders through GSOs (UK, USA and India) and sell the same to the groups at cost plus shipping.

- 7th Tradition Contribution
- The UAE regularly makes contributions to MERCAA, AOSM and GSO.
- Service Committees
- Service Committees are set up on an ad-hoc, as-needed basis.
- Licensing AA as a Not-for-Profit Association

Currently UAE Intergroup is working with the Community Development Authority, Dubai, to fulfil its obligations to apply and receive an Organizational and Operational license. This will allow AA to exist as a legal entity under the category of Not-for-profit Association. This Not-for-profit Association will have local and expat members as Directors and Founders. An ad-hoc committee to complete this task has been formed and is operational.

D.8. Mongolia

On November 28, 1998, it was started in room 35 of the Department of Narcology of the State Medical Center, with the participation of 3-4 people who had participated in Minnesota-style treatment. On that day, the first "We" group of AA was formed, and twice a week.

Next 07-09 July 2023, Mongolian AA will celebrate 25th Anniversary! Welcome!

The Mongolian AA General Service Office has been working in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, since 1998. Now, Mongolian Alcoholic Anonymous NGO has 4,000 members in 160 groups (statistic data from XIY conference Mongolian AA 04- Feb 2023, Ulaanbaatar Mongolia)

Conventions and Conferences

Mongolian AA has held nine conventions and 14 conferences. The XIII conference was held twice; once on 13 January online and again on 24-25 April in-person. The 74 delegates voted to create an AA SERVICE MANUAL for Mongolian AA.

We held our IX Convention on 13-14 August, 2022, at the JANJIN Convention Hall with 350 AA members.



Figure 1: Opening ceremony

Munkhtuvshin (Deegi) OYUN – 2nd Term Delegate



Figure 2: Opening Ceremony

Our "Delgerekh saikhan", ("Good morning") group participated virtually in the 75th Anniversary Convention in Africa.



Figure 3: Our "Delgerekh saikhan", ("Good morning") group

On 20th May 2023, our AA group in the Selenge province, 320 km from the capital, celebrated its 20th Anniversary. This convention attracted around 600 recovery alcoholics.



Figure 4: 20th Anniversary Convention in Selenge Province

Service Office

The Mongolian AA General Service Office employs one full-time member of staff. The address is: 2 khoroo, Ikh toiruu-15, RENTALON LLC building, Room No 300A, Chingeltei District, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Phone:

+976-1135-1056; E-mail: gso@aa.mn; Web page: www.aa.org.mn; Postal address: P.O.B 26/48 Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Service Structure

District and province committees: 3 Areas (West, East, and South). Each committee has a chair & a secretary. General Service Board includes two Class-A trustees and five Class-B trustees. With nominating, finance, professionals working 3 committees.

AOSM Participation

Mongolia has been a member of AOSM since 2013. We have been making a yearly contribution of 100 USD to AOSM since 2017, and to World Service Office AA 100 USD since 2021.

WSM Participation

The Mongolian AA General Service Board nominated our delegate to the XXVII AA World Service Meeting on 02-07 October 2022. Our delegate, Dagva T. (nickname: Tsetsegmaa) participated virtually.

Literature

In 2017, we have received two licenses for printing the Big Book, and the 12n12 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. In 2022-2023, we have received copyrights from World Service Office for translating & printing the Twelve Traditions Illustrated, the Daily Reflections, As Bill Sees It, Living Sober, the Circle & Love pamphlet, and the 12 Concepts into Mongolian.

Sponsorship

Japanese AA has been sponsoring Mongolian AA, assisting with official procedures.

Thank you so much to my Higher Power to keep me sober.

Brief Historical Summary

A.A. has been in Aotearoa New Zealand since 1946, when our founder, Ian McE., read an article in the *Reader's Digest*, and wrote to GSO New York, seeking help. The A.A. service structure was initially established in 1964 at a National Conference in Te Papa-i-Oea Palmerston North.

Current AA Structure

The Aotearoa New Zealand Service Structure begins with the individual AA groups which elect General Service Representatives (GSRs) to represent the views of the groups at District Committee and Intergroup level and the three Area Assemblies.

The Area Assemblies elect three delegates each to represent them at the General Service Conference (Conference) keeping in mind that they must act for AA as a whole.

This Conference structure is how AA functions nationally in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is a framework whereby the collective group conscience of our AA Groups are able to guide our trusted servants with their primary purpose of carrying the message.

General Service Board (Board)

The New Zealand General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. (Board), was incorporated on October 7, 1991. This incorporation provides a legal safety net under Aotearoa New Zealand law that protects individual office bearers from punitive action. The early days of the Board were largely procedural, merely adopting financial statements and the like. However, since 2007 the Board has been reorganized to operate separately from Conference.

The Board operates under the statutory legal framework of an Incorporated Society, the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of AA, and the Board By Laws. It is the legal arm of the fellowship and has the ability to contract on behalf of AA. The Board produces policies and guidelines to allow AA to comply with its legal obligations. The Board carries out all

instructions (Advisory Actions) from Conference to enable it to achieve its objectives.

The Board has its own By Laws as well as being part of the Conference Charter. The Board's primary function is to serve the General Service Conference and act in a legal capacity on the Fellowships behalf.

It provides a vehicle for selling AA literature, and holds the licenses, leases, trademarks, patents, and other property interests, if any (whether intellectual or not), in the name of Alcoholics Anonymous.

It promotes awareness activities in relation to Alcoholics Anonymous, controls the management and operation of the General Service Office (GSO); and carries out all instructions from Conference to enable it to achieve its objectives.

The Board membership consists of a maximum of two non-alcoholic (Class A) members and a minimum of six ex-alcoholic (Class B) members, a chairperson, secretary and treasurer. The Class B members can be appointed for a required skill set but there is always a number who have previous Conference experience.

The Board has six working committees: Archives, Communication, External Relations, Finance & Administration, Governance and Membership. An IT Development Committee is a subcommittee of the Communications Committee.

The Board meets before each Conference. It holds its AGM each March to enable the Auditor's Report to be discussed and filed with the Charities Commission in order to comply with its legal obligations. Online meetings between each Conference ensure that the Advisory Actions are on track.

The Board is responsible for the Fellowship's finances with the treasurer reporting to the Conference on the state of the accounts including trends in contributions/expenditures. A Prudent Reserve policy is maintained.

General Service Conference (Conference)

The General Service Conference (Conference) meets biannually and is composed of nine elected area delegates, eight board members (two Class A and six Class B), the two World Service delegates, the Conference chairperson and the Conference secretary. The only Conference members with voting rights are the nine area delegates, the two Class A Board members and the chairperson of the General Service Board. The Conference Chairperson has a casting vote only. All members of Conference have speaking rights.

Services

Conference currently has five subcommittees:

Public Information (PIC) – coordinates the Public Awareness week and liaises with national media organizations to ensure AA gets maximum value for media placements.

PIC is always seeking input and Initiatives from local PIC and Area Assemblies.

Treatment and Correctional Facilities (TCF) – facilitates requests from members and groups who are interested in carrying the message of recovery to alcoholics in treatment centres and correctional facilities. The TCF Committee is always seeking suggestions for initiatives from local TCF Committees and Area Assemblies. The Prison Correspondence Coordinator sits under this committee. The primary function is to be a “national point of contact” between AA and inmates and to facilitate the “carrying of the message” into Correctional Facilities by correspondence.

Cooperating with the Professional Community (CPC) – fosters relationships with the professional community which includes health care professionals, educators, members of the clergy, lawyers, social workers, union leaders and those working in the field of alcoholism.

International – makes decisions about the level of funding NZ provides to the International Literature Fund for translation of AA literature into new languages. It also agrees on the level of funding toward Asia Oceania Meeting (AOSM).

Convention – Three Delegates – 1 from the Host Planning Committee in each Area - **and** the Board

member responsible for overseeing the Annual Convention.

District, Intergroup and Area meetings generally have PIC, TCF and CPC service committees.

General Service Office (GSO)

Our GSO is located in Te Whanga-nui-a-Tara Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand’s capital city, and is staffed by one paid employee, who is assisted by voluntary A.A. members and one part-time paid assistant. The office services a Fellowship of an estimated 5,000 members and approximately 500 registered groups. The office is open daily from Monday to Friday and outside these hours a telephone answering service operates.

Literature

Our GSO carries most books and literature published by A.A. World Services, Inc. and the AA Grapevine, Inc. An occasional newsletter is also sent out to the Fellowship. GSO has published translations of the Serenity Prayer and 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous in Te Reo Māori, one of Aotearoa New Zealand’s three official languages, and a booklet containing stories from members who received the message of AA in prison.

Information Technology

In 2019 AA New Zealand conducted a website redesign and you can see this at www.aa.org.nz

This redesign was managed by our GSB and completed by a website design company. The money for the redesign was raised during our Gratitude Month.

The web site served us well during the COVID-19 pandemic locked down and all our meetings were moved onto an online forum. As we emerge from the pandemic face to face meetings have resumed, however there remains a growing permanent online meeting community in New Zealand which attracts local and overseas visitors.

We have had a amazing stories where people have come to AA through this on line community and have found sobriety.

Meetings

The A.A. movement in Russia started at the end of the 1980s. The first A.A. meeting in Moscow was registered in the G.S.O. in 1987.

There are 765 groups registered in Russia. Basically, groups exist in big cities, but A.A. groups have expanded in small towns and countryside as well. Some of them hold their meetings every day. Around 37 groups have online meetings (zoom, skype, telegram).

The first AA group in Russia for people with hearing problems has been registered.

Structure

The General Service Conference is held annually in Moscow in the beginning of April and lasts for four days. Conference members with the right to vote are: Delegates of AA meetings that do not yet have local service boards, delegates of local A.A. service committees, members of the General Service Board for A.A. Russia, delegates representing AA. Russia at international congresses, Chief Editor AA magazine and the head of the General Service Office.

It was decided to form a new committee for the development, support and coordination of the activities of AA Russia to convey the ideas of recovery in the online space.

The Committee promotes the formation and development of Russian-speaking online groups and the unification of Russian-speaking online groups in the delegate district of the Conference on General Services for AA Russia. It develops thematic content in social networks, messengers, which corresponds to the traditions of AA with a link to the official website of AA of Russia. Fills and modernizes the site and etc.

In April 2023 was organized the 34th meeting of the General Service Conference of the AA of Russia. It was attended by 96 people from all over Russia, 55 of them with the right to vote.

Was founded Archival Service (Committee). The purpose of the work is to preserve the experience

of the Russian commonwealth for the next generations.

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

Finances

The expenses of the service structure from April 2022 to February 2023 amounted to \$81,000, donations - \$95,000. literature distribution income - \$54,000 from \$95,000.

Literature

The Russian G.S.B. supplies A.A. literature to individual A.A. meetings through the regional service structure (committees on literature, intergroups). The local service structures establish the cost of literature, depending on the local conditions, but not exceeding 20% above the cost established by the General Service Board.

We sent literature to Kazakhstan, Czech, Latvia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova, as well as Germany, France and Spain.

In addition to the main popular publications of Fellowship literature, the following books and booklets were published in 2021-2022.

Brochures: "A guide to going to treatment facility" and "A guide to going to penitentiary", "Let's be friends with our friends", "Women Stories" from the cycle "AA about yourself", "Non-AA Meeting Talks", "Women in AA", "AA Members on Drugs and Other Drugs", "AA for Alcoholics with Mental Disorders".

An information leaflet for groups about working according to the 7th tradition and a postcard for a beginner with empty fields have been developed.

Assistance was provided in printing the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" in the Tatar language – "Anonymous Alcoholclar" - at the expense of the AA of Tatarstan. The circulation is 500 copies.

Translated the brochure "AA and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic", the text has passed the expert evaluation of the copyright holder.

Finished draft translation of «Pass It On».

Decided not to make an audio version of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The work on refining the translation of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" is almost completed. The previous translation is dated 1989.

We got our national A.A. magazine called GAAR. Permanent columns of the magazine: AA News, 12 Traditions, Crossroads of Opinions, Group/meeting/experience, My story, Book review, AA Archive.

On the website of AA Russia – www.aarussia.ru – information for Russian-speaking groups outside the territory of Russia about the possibility of paying for literature and transferring donations to the account of the GSO of Russia.

PI & CPC

Medical institutions

The Russian G.S.B. committee for interaction with medical institutions is in close contact with the chief Russian medical doctor specializing in substance abuse and, along with the representatives of local structures, takes part in various events related to carrying the message — such as roundtable conferences with doctors, events related to the sobriety holiday celebrations, and the conference of medical doctors specializing in substance abuse in Russia.

Exhibits with A.A. information are being mounted in hospitals and in a smaller scale at local medical centers. A large number of A.A. meetings in Russia are also taking place in substance abuse clinics. Recently on the website of the ministry of health, they allowed us to post information about AA.

Correctional institutions

Gradually more prisoners get AA messages in Russia. The local service structure committees are providing Twelfth Step possibilities for AA members in correctional facilities, as well as providing books, brochures, and pamphlets. During the pandemic period, we are continuing to carry the message in treatment and correction facilities via

teleconference and providing AA literature. And we continue to replenish stands and AA cards where there is an agreement.

Religious institutions

Traditionally, the most contact we have is with the Russian Orthodox Church, then the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church. The representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church take part in roundtable discussions, as a result of which we have AA meetings opening in church halls, and AA information is being made available there.

Social institutions

Lately we have increased the interaction with the representatives of social services — round table discussions are being held with the representatives of those organizations, as a result of which, more AA meetings are being held on the premises of such organizations, and AA information is being made available there.

In 2021, in one of the regions of Russia, an agreement was reached with the Federal Penitentiary Service on the creation of a library on the territory of penitentiary. Conducting broadcasts on the regional radio of penitentiary of the speaker AA. Organizations of meetings.

AA Events

Traditionally, the AA groups hold large annual celebrations dedicated to the birthdays of AA in their local areas. In Moscow, there are the "August meetings"; Saint Petersburg has "White Nights," where friends of AA are also invited — priests, doctors, social workers, etc. Besides the large celebrations, the AA community holds out-of-town meetings, rallies, etc., with the purpose of carrying the message and stopping in areas that do not have access to AA.

The local service structures hold various local congresses for AA service — intergroups, committees, assemblies, etc. Sharing experience with other cities helps the AA movement's growth.

The 32nd AA Forum of Russia in December 2021 was held online for the first time in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia. The forum was held for three days.

In 2022 the 33rd Forum was held in Kaliningrad.

Relations with Other Countries

The Russian G.S.B. is in contact with the AA structures of Moldova, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Kirgizstan, Estonia, and the UK. The Russian G.S.O. also provides service for Russian-speaking meetings in Kishenev (Moldova), Pavlograd (Kazakhstan), Ulan-Bator (Mongolia), Mogilev (Belarus), Haifa (Israel), Stockholm (Sweden), Helsinki (Finland), New York (U.S./Canada), and London (Great Britain). We stay in constant contact with the G.S.O. in New York.

Presentations were prepared for the Commonwealth of AA Donetsk, AA Spain, assistance was provided to AA Spain in the preparation and selection of materials for the creation of a website of Russian-speaking alcoholics anonymous living in Spain.

International delegates from Russia took part in the WSM (Worldwide Service Meeting) in 2022 (Zoom).

Speakers are held about ministries and the structure of service with foreign speakers. On the Zoom platform, speakers of AA members were held on various topical topics, for example, the experience of the inventory of the group or the use of traditions in the regulation of conflict situations at the group level or the service structure.

AA members regularly take part in meetings with city administrations, representatives of medical institutions and religious denominations. A lot of work is being done to interact with social workers, we do a lot of work with dysfunctional families.

Such events were held in Khabarovsk, Bratsk (Irkutsk region).

In Ulan-Ude (Buryatia), posters with information about AA are posted free of charge in public transport.

In Krasnoyarsk for several years information about AA has been placed in transport. There was also a broadcast on radio and television with the AA members.

Professionals who understand the problem of alcoholism helping those who suffer, help us bring recovery message of AA in the region.

The Assembly of the region of Eastern Siberia and the Far East take place one per year. Delegates from cities see each other face-to-face and discuss common problems.

In 2022, it was in Khabarovsk. In June 2023, Blagoveshchensk will bring together delegates.

Singapore A.A. is grateful for the opportunity to participate in AOSM 2023. The message of A.A. was brought to Singapore over 64 years ago. Dick D., who regularly corresponded with G.S.O. New York, wrote that the Singapore group founded in 1957 had 12 members and two likely prospects. Singapore A.A. listed its first meeting with the Records Department on December 8, 1959.

We estimate our membership at around 250-300 members who attend meetings regularly. Singapore's meeting count has grown steadily over the past five years to now have daily meetings from morning to night across the city-state. Daily meetings number anywhere from 6 to 20 depending on the day of the week.

Post-pandemic, most Alcoholics Anonymous groups in Singapore have transitioned back to physical or hybrid meetings. There are currently 21 online, 36 physical and 2 hybrid meetings per week. During the pandemic, one of the A.A. groups was formed as purely online. This group remains healthy today with attendees from around the world. This allows service commitments regardless of geographical location. For the groups that transitioned back to physical meetings, attendances were initially low. However, attendance levels have gradually crept back up to pre-pandemic numbers. Many members in Singapore found connection with online groups during the pandemic and have continued to attend these meetings. For some, they can attend meetings from their hometowns or where they originally got sober.

The fellowship's service structure is supported by an Intergroup that meets at least four times a year. In addition to representatives for each group, Singapore's Intergroup has chairs for HIPI, AOSM, a Newsletter, Website, Hotline, Round Up, Literature, Treasury and Social Committee. For the time-being, the decision to establish a General Service Office (GSO) or not remains on hold.

A weekend Roundup is held in Singapore at the beginning of every year, usually in March, April or May. Most attendees are from Singapore, but we host visitors from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and other nearby countries. In 2022, Singapore was able to hold a physical roundup where there were keynote speakers from Indonesia and Japan. Members from one of the groups also recently held a sponsorship workshop, which was well attended.

At most meetings, expatriates from around the world represent most attendees, but Singapore A.A. is making efforts to strengthen its outreach to the local community. A key driving force to strengthen our outreach to the local community is driven by an HIPI committee. During the pandemic, many HIPI activities were put on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, with the easing of these restrictions, the HIPI team is beginning to get back to many of these reach out activities.

In addition to strengthening ties to the local community, Singapore's A.A. fellowship is excited to participate in AOSM and through it, evaluate ways to contribute resources and support to smaller fellowships across the region.

Brief History of AA in South Korea

Alcoholics Anonymous and its recovery was first introduced to Korea by the Irish Catholic Father, Arthur M (widely known as “shin-bu” to Korean members) in the 1970’s.

In the early 1980’s, some AA groups were established in Seoul and Kwangju City. The Gyeoja-si (Mustard Seed Group) started the meeting in Bapo-dong in Seoul and “An shinbu” was a member of this group. The Go-ma-um (Thankfulness) Group was established in Sang-gye-dong in Seoul. The Irish Father, Mortimer K., was one of the founding members. The Pyeong-on-ham (Serenity) Group was permitted to use the employee lunchroom of a hospital located in Gwangju City as its meeting place in 1984. These three groups are the oldest groups in South Korea and are still functioning to carry the message to suffering alcoholics.

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous was first translated into Korean in 1986; the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in 1990; Living Sober in 1994; the Daily Reflections in 1997; and As Bill Sees It in 2003.

AA is active in South Korea in two languages: Korean and English.

The English AA is independent but in cooperation with the Korean AA Organization. We often have Korean members in English AA meetings.

Groups and Members

In **Korean AA** there are 3,000 members in 186 groups in 9 districts.

There are 254 meetings each week, available every day.

The Korean GSO office is located in Yeong-deung-po-gu in Seoul and has an English-speaking full-time manager.

In **English AA** there are about 60+ members in 14 groups in 6 districts. We used to have 200 members, but COVID made this a much smaller number. It is hard to get an exact accounting. Since the country has opened again, new members are popping up.

There are 14 Zoom, 2 of them hybrid (online and face-to-face) meetings each week, available every day, twice on Sunday in Seoul. There are 2 Zoom meetings for Dongducheon, 1 for Busan, 3 Camp Humphries meetings, 2 for Osan, 1 for Daegu, and 1 monthly for Keyo. That makes 26 meetings a week, and 1 monthly. We often have people from the USA in our Zoom meetings.

The English GSO office was located in Osan City in Gyeonggi Province but is now in Seoul.

Service Structure

Alcoholics Anonymous Intergroup Korea (AAIGK) is the equivalent of: a) District Office b) Area Committee c) GSO (AA New York) and d) Intergroup Office. We provide services to the expat communities in Seoul and all other parts of South Korea. We run a volunteer telephone answering service; keep and update a list of AA meetings; maintain an inventory of AA literature (or individual groups ask the former USO group to order for them); and organize AA-related events that groups may not have the resources to do themselves. We try to keep track of meetings in the following places: Seoul; Dongducheon; Osan; Pyeongtaek; Daegu; Busan; and Keyo (the hospital for alcoholics).

I have been elected to a 4-year term as Delegate for Korea to attend the AOSM this year.

The other positions we maintain, in accordance with The AA Service Manual, are: Chairperson; Secretary; H & I; Literature; PI; Treasurer. We also have a new Roundup Committee each year.

Public Information; Hospitals & Institutions & Cooperation with the Professional Community

There are a total of twenty-two facilities available in Korean AA. Fortunately, one of them, the Keyo Alcoholic Treatment Hospital has an English-speaking psychiatrist (he is my former student) who has offered his undivided attention to any English-speaking alcoholics who require his services. He has provided us with a list of the twenty-two facilities in Korea for us to distribute our English information. He also regularly travels to all other hospitals in Korea to teach them about the importance and the

effectiveness of our 12-step program to help them with their patients afflicted with our disease.

Currently, the only institution for English-speaking alcoholics is located on the American Military Base and unfortunately, new members view AA as a form of punishment rather than an opportunity.

International Efforts to Carry the Message

Most of our English-speaking members have longer lengths of sobriety than the Korean-speaking members, so we regularly take turns speaking, with a translator, at their AA Conventions. We also provide an English speaker to their AA meeting in the Keyo Alcoholic Treatment Hospital, on the last Thursday of every month.

Translation & Literature

We are currently working with the Korean GSO Office to print publications & information pamphlets in both Korean and English. We are also creating coins that are printed in both languages to distribute. We also did a huge project to make a Meeting in a Pocket in both languages.

AOSM Participation

In the past, a delegate from South Korea attended the AOSM in 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, & 2003. This delegate represented the Korean-speaking AA in

Korea. He was even instrumental in helping to organize the AOSM in South Korea in 2001.

This will be the second time that English-speaking AA will be in attendance as our representative. Peter J was both blessed and excited to have been chosen to have the honor and the responsibility to come to Hong Kong with his wife, Lisa, as the Acting Delegate for my first term.

In any event, I have been around this beautiful program for a long time, so now it is about time I am involved in being of service.

Any Other Comments & Needs

This year we are not having a face-to-face Roundup. We have had it online for the last few years. For further information about us or our Roundup, visit our website at www.aainkorea.org You can also visit the Korean website which has some English at www.aakorea.org

I am really excited to meet as many of you good people this summer in July. After all, you are my family of choice. I have loved being on the policy committee and I look forward to seeing you soon!

I am grateful to have alcoholism because it used to run my life. Now it has created a life full of meaning, purpose, and fellowship.

In The Fellowship of The Spirit & The Spirit of The Fellowship.



Section E

Reflections





E.1. Outgoing Chair

Bertie Sawhney



Now, it is time for us to go back to our fellowships around the region and to fulfil our responsibility. In sharing what we've learned here, we are, as Dr Bob said, "paying our debt to those who have passed it on to me"; that's to everyone in our fellowship who has contributed to the 7th tradition funds which got us here. In your fellowship, how many donations would it have taken to pay for your travel and your fees?

How can we share what we've learned here?

Prepare a single sheet, or even a PowerPoint, which presents the key outcomes. Go, meeting-to-meeting, to present the outcomes. Share stories of how AOSM helps struggling fellowships and share from your heart about your own experience of service at this level. You'll see people's faces begin to light up. You'll likely have people lining up to ask questions. You'll ignite a little fire in the heart of your country's next delegate to AOSM or WSM.

I'm extremely grateful for the support I received from Simon, who was secretary to the PAF Committee when I was the Chair and to AOSM now that I am the chair. I'm

grateful to my Service Sponsor, Doug G. (Japan), who guided me all through my journey in all 5 AOSMs, from when I was an observer to now, when I complete my term as Chair.

I have learnt that the three most important things in service are to:

- have a Service Sponsor
- take a group conscience as often as possible.
- pick up the phone and talk if there's any doubt.

Our enthusiasm is high now but let's admit that it is in our nature for that enthusiasm to soon begin to fade. We have other work to do and lives to lead.

What can we do about that?

Solution, get a service sponsor!

In the pamphlet, 'Questions and Answers about Sponsorship', on p25, Dr. Bob also said that he passes on what he learns because it's a pleasure. It's a pleasure being here and it's a pleasure sharing what we learn here.



E.2. Incoming Chair

Doug Grude



At the end of the 14th AOSM (held online), the world was still in the midst of a pandemic, and countries in our zone were understandably reluctant to bid to host the 15th AOSM. However, with great faith and a willingness to ask

for help, the tiny Fellowship of Fiji raised its hand, and what a blessing it was! My personal thanks go not only to Fiji but also to the fellowships of Australia and New Zealand for their unwavering support.

On the 6th of July, we all learned the joyful greeting “Bula Vinaka! From the moment Anna met us at the airport, I knew we were in good hands. This was my eleventh AOSM; the first nine were as an interpreter for Japan. This 16th AOSM wasn’t just another meeting; it was a testament to collective resolve, shared values, and willingness to “go to any lengths.” The seamless nature of the event didn’t happen by accident. It was a direct result of the incredible teamwork by everyone involved, each of whom showed their commitment to helping those still struggling with alcoholism. I extend a huge *Vinaka Vakalevu* to Anna, Martha, Mary, Maraia, Mele, and, of course, Phylis, who were tireless, focused, creative, flexible, patient, loving, tolerant, and always present and willing to do whatever it took to make this AOSM a success. More than a few delegates commented about the strength of the AA women in Fiji.

Despite being so far from Riverside Drive in New York, Racy and Bob from GSO accepted our invitation. Their presence linked this beautiful island in the Pacific to the broader tapestry of AA, providing us with invaluable insights and creating a channel for our voices to be heard within the larger fellowship.

Unlike previous years, the committees could meet regularly online, so we felt we already knew each other. Those who couldn’t travel to Fiji were conspicuously absent, but we certainly felt their spirit. However, meeting face to face certainly had benefits we couldn’t experience online - the corridor chats, the free discussion and exchange of ideas in the workshops, the ability to follow up on the excellent presentations, and the making of new friends. There is very rich information in this Final Report, and I hope you will read it in its entirety and take away much experience, strength, and hope.

I would like to thank the officers, Bertie, Simon, and Yasuhiko. So much planning goes into the AOSM, and having faced so many bumps in the road, they showed grace and fortitude in meeting each challenge as it came, embodying the spirit of Tradition One and Two throughout the journey. Bertie and Yasuhiko will move

on to whatever your Higher Powers have in store. Simon, Steve, and I will be working closely together as we prepare for the 16th AOSM in Singapore; we hope to standardize many of the things we do, making the work much easier for the Trusted Servants who will come behind us.

My heart was full after the finish of the AOSM on Sunday night, where we had great food, culture, and fellowship. Then, to top it all off, the AA Fiji Professionals Workshop organized for Monday morning could only be described as outstanding and a 100% success. The Fiji committee had taken what was a crumb of an idea just a few months earlier and baked a beautiful cake. One new “Friend of AA” took to Facebook in the parking lot leaving the hotel to share her joy and hope with her 22,000 followers. In just ten weeks, 3,300 people have viewed that video. I pray that the workshop will be Fiji’s “Jack Alexander moment” and that you will continue nurturing relationships with our new friends so AA can flourish in Fiji.

Finally, on a personal note, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of you for entrusting me with this role. To serve as Chair of the 16th AOSM is an honor and privilege beyond words. When the Japanese GSB asked me to attend my first WSM in 1998 and AOSM in 1999 as a Japanese interpreter, I could never have imagined that I would get to serve not only as Japan’s international delegate let alone as Chair of AOSM. Having watched from the sidelines year after year, just interpreting what everyone said into a microphone, I hope I have learned a few things. I will combine this with my 14 years of General Service in the USA/Canada and four years in Japan, and I will bring it all to bear in our zone in whatever way my Higher Power sees fit so that we can overcome the barriers that exist in our mission to help the still-suffering alcoholic. The AOSM zone has grown and changed over the past 28 years, and we are on the cusp of a new turning point. Most of our pioneers, such as Bob P., Trevor G., Alan N., Harry W., and Yukie Yamamoto (non-alcoholic), are now gone. But we stand on their shoulders and continue to fulfill their dream.

The journey doesn’t end here; it is a checkpoint on the road we will continue to travel together, full of challenges but also full of opportunities for love, service, and hope.

Vinaka vakalevu.

Doug Grude

16th AOSM—Chair

“One Message—Many Languages—One Fellowship”



E.3. Outgoing Treasurer

Yasuhiko Morita



My name is Yasuhiko Morita, an alcoholic, and I have just finished my term as treasurer of AOSM. Thank you very much for everyone's support for the past four years. I have just returned to Japan from Fiji and this weekend I

compiled the treasurer's report. The next treasurer will be Steve from New Zealand and I will be able to take over to him.

I came to AA in 1993 and was given this sorority. The 1st AOSM was held in Japan in 1995. When Japan became the host country for the 7th AOSM in 2007, I was the Chair of the Japan General Service Board and welcomed the delegates on the side of the Host Committee. Time passed and in 2016 I was elected as World Service Delegate. Then I attended the 12th AOSM in Mongolia as 1st term and the 13th AOSM in Hong Kong as 2nd term. Fortunately, I was also able to attend the WSM in 2016 and 2018, so I was able to perform the role of reporting the contents of the AOSM at the WSM, and the contents of the WSM at the AOSM.

Officer elections were held on the last day of the 13th AOSM in Hong Kong in 2019. I was interested in serving as an officer, but I knew I would not be able to chair the meeting because it would be difficult for me to speak and hear English without an interpreter. However, I heard that a past Japanese delegate was running for Secretary, If she was elected as Secretary I thought I could be the Treasurer with her who could speak English. Then we were elected as their roles and so this treasurer role began.

As I mentioned in my report, due to circumstances, I was not able to receive my predecessor's assets at the beginning, and the new AOSM bank account I had set up in Japan contained only 1,000 yen. This is my \$10 donation. I sent the information about the new account to all the delegates and asked for country contributions, but the response was very slow and donations were hard to come by. Then the pandemic broke out, and the atmosphere was getting worse. The future of the AOSM looked bleak, as the chair and secretary were not getting along. The debate was whether to cancel the India meeting or to put it online, and I could do nothing but sit. But thanks to the efforts of the committee chairs and the technical staff in Japan, the online event was realized. All I could do was to account for the small balance and pay and settle the technical expenses for the ZOOM event. The quality of the AOSM sharing was unexpectedly high, the number of participating countries and delegates was unprecedented, and the message of the welcoming committee from the members in India, where the event

was to be held, was conveyed, even though it was via video sharing.

Then the preparation for this 15th AOSM began. Bertie from MERCAA, who was with me in the PAF committee from Mongolia, became the chairman, and Simon from Hong Kong, who like me had taken over the reporting between the WSM and the AOSM, became the secretary. We may not have had such a fortunate combination of officers. I prepared for the meeting online, relying on interpreters for those parts of the meeting where it was difficult to speak and hear English. Once Fiji was chosen as the host country, country contribution suddenly started pouring in. When the reality of the event materialized, countries were willing to pay for it. The frozen funds were restored and we no longer had to worry so much about money. However, since AOSM is not a legal entity registered with a government agency, there are great difficulties and challenges in opening bank accounts, money transfer procedures, also Paypal and Wise matters. While registered organizations and individual accounts can remit overseas remittances easily and remotely, my account was registered as a voluntary organization, so I had to take time off work during weekdays to go to a real bank counter every time I wanted to remit overseas. Moreover, I had a hard time because the only branches that allowed overseas remittances were in Otemachi, Nihombashi, and other limited branches. In addition, since the treasurer was not directly involved in maintaining the AOSM Web site, we had to delay payment of maintenance costs and lost information on the old AOSM site. There were concrete proposals to improve these issues at this AOSM, and I am sure the next people will work to resolve them.

Although there were some problems in the selection of the Fiji hotel in the middle of the selection process, finally we were able to hold a wonderful AOSM at the friendly Novotel venue. This was the result of the ongoing and patient efforts of the host committee and I would like to thank Mary, Anna, and Phylis for all their hard work. On the day of the AOSM, I exchanged cash with various people, and I would never have been able to fulfill my role without Wada-san as Japanese interpreter. The Japanese delegates who participated this time were Doug, who has a great deal of experience in AOSM and WSM, and my sponsee Masaya, so I was able to spend the week without any worries at all. I was also encouraged by the participation of Kuniko, who was a past delegate, and I was able to spend an enjoyable week in this tropical Fijian country with delegate's partners Ron and Hiromi. I have been blessed with the support of many people who have helped me fulfill my role as treasurer.



E.4. Second Term Delegates



2nd Term Delegate – Greg Byrne (Australia)



My name is Greg Byrne and I am an alcoholic. I am a World Service and AOSM Delegate from Australia. I began my four-year term as WS Delegate in Australia in 2020, the same time the Corona Virus crippled the world and prevented international travel. Up until this year all my World Service work has been virtual and although AA has discovered many advantages in the virtual world, it was wonderful, in Fiji this year, to finally meet other Delegates face-to-face instead of on a computer screen.

My time in AOSM has been spent on the PAF (Policy Admission Finance) Committee. It has been a time of collating past decisions and experiences. Thanks to a lot of assistance from Secretary Simon, it has seen the construction and delivery of an Orientation Session and Booklet for new Delegates. In the not-too-distant future the Committee will oversee the production of a “Service Manual” to guide procedures of future AOSM’s. The PAF Committee has also drawn up a table for the allocation of costs for each AOSM. The structure and procedures of the AOSM seems to be coming of age.

Listening to the experience of members from “younger” AA countries makes me realise how

much I take AA for granted in my country. In capital cities, I can attend three or four meetings every day of the week and I am struck by the lengths some members go to in order to hear our message.

My involvement as a Delegate has shown me that alcoholism is a human disease – regardless of race, creed, religion. Because it is a universal disease, it brings similar problems worldwide but because it is universal it also brings similar solutions to those problems. Sharing these experiences is the value of World Service and AOSM gatherings.

The project of more established countries (in this case Australia and New Zealand) sponsoring another country (Fiji) to host an AOSM was highly successful and should be kept in mind for future years. For some countries this may be the only way they can host an AOSM. The opportunity to hold a Professional Awareness function while Delegates were present in Fiji added to the success of the mission.

My service as an AOSM Delegate has strengthened my sobriety and my understanding of the disease of alcoholism and has widened my vision of the universal, spiritual Fellowship that continues to grow and save lives around the world one day at a time.

2nd Term Delegate – Sheli Bowman (Hong Kong)



BULA! As the 2nd term delegate from Hong Kong, the 15th AOSM in Fiji was my first in-person gathering, the previous one having been online. However, I’ve had a sponsor and a sponsee who were involved with the AOSMs in India, Mongolia, and Hong Kong, so I was really looking forward to the incredible fellowship they’d both experienced. I was also really looking forward to finally meeting face-to-face all the people I’d been working with online for the last two years.

From being met at the airport until our farewells, there was a feeling of homecoming, one I’ve felt worldwide wherever our friends and fellows in the rooms of AA gather. We went from little faces on Zoom, to finally giving each other proper, heartfelt hugs. Still, we knew we also had a lot of ground to cover, as the two years

since the 14th AOSM had been incredibly productive and there was a lot to officially implement in our short time together.

The presentations throughout the AOSM, from the opening addresses to the country reports and workshops, all brought insights into the running of AA in the region and worldwide. I am grateful to have information about the experiences of both larger and smaller fellowships to bring suggestions back to Hong Kong.

As the chair of the WLP committee, I had an interesting kick-off two years ago: the previous domain expired, which consequently eliminated the old website and all its content. There were no records of that content, so we were left to start from scratch. Through our monthly WLP committee meetings, quarterly committee chairs’

meetings, and using existing approved AOSM material, we pulled together a basic wireframe and phase 1 level of content, which was enough to have the site live with information for new delegates and the AOSM 2023.

In our two WLP committee meetings during this AOSM we brought the two new 1st term delegates on the committee and our recorder, Bob (N.Y., GSO), up to speed and hammered out six recommendations to take the website to its next phase of full functionality and optimal usefulness to all in the region. I am very happy to report that all the recommendations were unanimously accepted, and we have Anastasia (Russia) as the new WLP committee chair and Masaya (Japan) as the Alternate Chair.

The Fiji host committee put the AWESOME in this AOSM, warmly welcoming us and pulling everything together! Of note is their perseverance through a last-minute venue change and juggling limited hotel rooms. Plus, they hosted a very inspiring Outreach Meeting for Fiji Professionals, the day following AOSM. It was not only well-attended by relevant community leaders and officials, but the attendees really appeared to be gaining eye-opening information that they were excited to take into their respective workplaces and communities. I am in awe of Phylis's long-term dedication and service in Fiji, and I very grateful to all the host committee members for everything they did for us. Vinaka!

On a personal note, my luggage took its time arriving, and sleep was mostly fleeting. Plus, and perhaps because

of the lack of sleep, I was on an emotional rollercoaster, with tears coming often as incredibly moving stories were shared and we were surrounded by living miracles. What hit hard is how much one drunk helping another can change not only one life, but the lives of children, families, and whole communities. The hand of AA has always been readily available during my journey in the rooms, and I can take it for granted. But in the remote islands of Micronesia, and all the far corners of the Asia Oceania region, it really brings home the reality and significance of our AA Responsibility Statement and the importance of the AOSM's work.

I would like to thank my fellows who consistently showed up for our monthly WLP meetings: dearest Mary (Fiji), Steve (NZ), John (Israel), and more recently Masaya (Japan), with incredible input and service from all of them. Also, to Ranjan (volunteer, India), who showed up late in the game but could take all our input and build the website in time for the 15th AOSM.

On a final note, individuals and groups in Hong Kong answered a rallying call to donate much-needed AA material to Fiji. 54 books and over 30 information packs were delivered to very grateful members in Fiji. Thank you again to all who stepped up!

Once again, it never ceases to amaze me the mountains that can be moved by a dedicated group of drunks.

Yours in service, Sheli

2nd Term Delegate – Mary Raori (Fiji)



My name is Mary and I'm an alcoholic. My home group is the Fiji Bula group, and I am rotating on as second term delegate serving as alternate chair on the Website, Publishing and Literature Committee, since 2020. It's been an

incredible journey, as I reflect on my four-year term. Both a learning and fulfilling one, for which I am eternally grateful for today. For a developing GSO such as Fiji, it has enabled me to learn from other more developed GSOs on service structures and areas where we could potentially build on back home to help fulfil our primary purpose. The latter included developing GSO guidelines, facilitating business meetings, applying the concepts and traditions which included sub-committees to name a few. Being part of the website, publishing and literature committee also inspired the upgrading of the Fiji AA website and how to work with others to progress service areas, including public information. The AOSM has provided the opportunity for continued country to country sponsorship, that's essential for a growing fellowship such as Fiji. Being a part of the wider AA family, ensures ongoing support and sharing of

experience, strength and hope outside of the group, contributing to AA unity and service. Similarly, to having a sponsor in recovery, a country sponsor has helped guide our GSO to grow toward being self-supporting and to be able to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic in our islands.

We are grateful to both Australia and New Zealand for their sponsorship enabling Fiji to be represented at the AOSM from 2019 at Hong Kong, 2021 at the 14th Virtual service meeting and this year 2023 in Fiji. Their support has also enabled Fiji to host the 15th AOSM meeting, in Nadi from the 6th to the 9th July 2023 together with hosting an information session for 25 professional groups on the 10th July. Fiji has benefited immensely from this honor. We have been gifted with AA literature including Big Books from our friends. These gifts have been shared and distributed to professionals and potential members, seeking help. We have received calls through the hotline number and our Facebook messenger. Two of our professional groups including the Fiji Medical Association and the Fiji Pharmaceutical Society will create AA awareness at their respective

conferences at the end of this year. A popular social media personality who was also present at the professional workshop had posted a piece on AA and her own learnings and reflections after the workshop. The post has since been viewed by more than 2500 members of the public. Our Nadi meeting has reopened and Savusavu is also starting up a meeting. We have connected with the medical fraternity and plans are underway to link up with the Corrections services for AA awareness sessions. We have received a referral from the Psychiatric hospital. These are results of our link to the AOSM and member countries and friends for which we are grateful for.

AOSM has also provided a link to the World Services Office in New York. At the Nadi AOSM, we were able to clarify and confirm the requirements for membership at the World Service Meeting and Fiji is in the process for applying to be represented at the next meeting in 2024. We are grateful to the AAWS reps for their guidance and Fiji is both humbled and excited to take this next step. As a past delegate, the service opportunity has also helped

with my own personal recovery with closer contact with my fellow recovering alcoholics, my sponsor, sponsees and my higher power. Although my term has ended, I will continue to support the WPL committee in the handover process and when needed and our new delegates from Fiji, as they now embark on their own service journey through AOSM. I wish to thank my fellow delegates, especially Sheli and the WPL committee members, past and present. The AOSM chairs committee, in particular, secretary, Simon for his support throughout the preparation leading up to the AOSM and the host committee in Fiji for the love and hard work that it has taken to help host our friends from the region during the 5 days.

AA has saved my life and I am forever grateful for the opportunity to give back what was so freely given, a day at a time.

Vinaka Vakalevu. Your trusted servant. Mary



Appendices





Appendix A: List of Participants



Officers					
MERCAA	Bertie Sawhney	Chair			
Japan	Yasuhiko Morita	Treasurer			
Hong Kong	Simon Miles	Secretariat			
Delegates					
Australia	Brian Ferguson	1st Term	Japan	Doug Grude	2nd Term
Australia	Greg Byrne	2nd Term	MERCAA-Egypt	Sarah Nader	Alternate
Fiji	Maraia Rogogo	1st Term	New Zealand	Christine Hart	1st Term
Fiji	Mary Raori	2nd Term	New Zealand	Steve King	2nd Term
Hong Kong	Michael Jacobs	1st Term	Russia	Anastasia Astashina	1st Term
Hong Kong	Sheli Bowman	2nd Term	Singapore	Simon Ashby	1st Term
Japan	Masaya Osako	1st Term	South Korea	Laura Stephenson	1st Term
Guests					
US/Canada	Racy J. - US/Canada General Service Office: International Desk			Presenter	
US/Canada	Bob Willcox - US/Canada General Service Office: General Manager			Presenter	
Interpreters					
Atsushi Wada (Japan)					
Recording Secretaries					
George Phillips, Judy Woolstencroft, Ron Frausto., Simon Miles, Racy J., Doug Grude					
Host Committee					
Anna O'Keefe, Phylis Gandy, Mele Walai, Martha Wight					



Appendix B: Committee Membership



Policy, Administration and Finance

Australia	Greg Byrne	2 nd Term
New Zealand	Christine Hart	1 st Term
South Korea	Laura Stephenson	1 st Term

Site Selection and Agenda

Japan	Doug Grude	2 nd Term
Singapore	Simon Ashby	1 st Term
Hong Kong	Michael Jacobs	1 st Term

Website, Literature and Publishing

Hong Kong	Sheli Bowman	2 nd Term
Fiji	Mary Raori	2 nd Term
New Zealand	Steve King	2 nd Term
Japan	Masaya Osako	1 st Term
Russia	Anastasia Astashina	1 st Term

Working with Others

Australia	Brian Ferguson	1 st Term
MERCAA	Sarah Nader	Alternate
Fiji	Maraia Ragogo	1 st Term



Friday 7 th July	
8:00	AA Meeting (optional)
9:00	Committee Meetings #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, Admissions, Finance (PAF) – Chair: Greg Byrne • Website, Literature, Publishing (WLP) – Chair: Shelly Bowman • Site Selection & Agenda (SSA) – Chair: Doug Grude • Working with Others (WWO) – Chair: Brian Ferguson
10:30	Break
11:00	Presentation 2: Cooperation with Professionals Communities and Government Authorities - Greg Byrne Presentation 3: Reaching out to Remote Communities (Language, Culture, Geography) - Anastasia Astashina. Discussion/Q&A
12:00	Lunch
13:00	Workshop 1 (in 3 groups) Understanding the Seventh Tradition—Overcoming Challenges to Supporting our Services – Workshop Facilitators and Recorders
14:00	Break
14:30	Presentation: Report from World Service Meeting (2022) – Steve King Discussion/Q&A
15:00	What's On Your Mind?
16:00	Break
16:30	Country Highlights #1 (4 mins each country + Q&A) - Australia, Fiji, Hong Kong, Japan
17:15	Presentation 6: Creating local literature in local languages—Examples - Masaya Osako Discussion/Q&A
18:00	Dinner
19:00	Bid Presentations to host the 16 th AOSM (SSA Committee and bidding countries only)
19:30	AA Meeting (optional)
20:30	
Saturday 8 th July	
8:00	AA Meeting (optional)
9:00	Committee Meetings #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, Admissions, Finance (PAF) – Chair: Greg Byrne • Website, Literature, Publishing (WLP) – Chair: Shelly Bowman • Site Selection & Agenda (SSA) – Chair: Doug Grude • Working with Others (WWO) – Chair: Brian Ferguson
10:30	Break

11:00	Presentation 4: Understanding Anonymity Inside and Outside of AA – Steve King Presentation 5: Anonymity on Digital Platforms – Simon Ashby Discussion/Q&A
12:00	Lunch
13:00	Workshop 2 (in 3 groups) Using Traditions to Find Solutions to Adversity and Maintain Unity – Workshop Facilitators and Recorders
14:00	Break
14:30	Country Highlights #2 (4 mins each + Q&A) - MERCAA, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, South Korea
15:30	Break
16:00	What's On Your Mind?
17:00	Workshop 3 (in 3 groups) Service starts at the group-setting up structures. How having a structure can be helpful. – Workshop Facilitators and Recorders
18:00	Dinner
19:30	AA Meeting (optional)
20:30	
Sunday 9th July	
8:00	AA Meeting (optional)
9:00	Workshop Report Backs – Workshop Facilitators
9:30	Committee Reports & Recommendations Policy, Admissions, Finance (PAF) – Chair: Greg Byrne
10:30	Break
11:00	Committee Reports & Recommendations Website, Literature, Publishing (WLP) – Chair: Shelly Bowman
12:00	Lunch
13:00	Committee Reports & Recommendations Site Selection & Agenda (SSA) – Chair: Doug Grude
14:00	Break
14:30	Committee Reports & Recommendations or 'What's On Your Mind?' Working with Others (WWO) – Chair: Brian Ferguson
15:15	Break
15:30	Elections - of Chair and Treasurer + Affirmation of Secretary
16:00	Farewell Remarks - from 2nd Term Delegates - from 1st Term Delegates (if time permits)
17:00	Closing Remarks - Chair / Treasurer Serenity Prayer in all languages present
18:30	Dinner Lovo hosted by Fiji Committee
20:30	



Appendix D: Job Specs and Quals

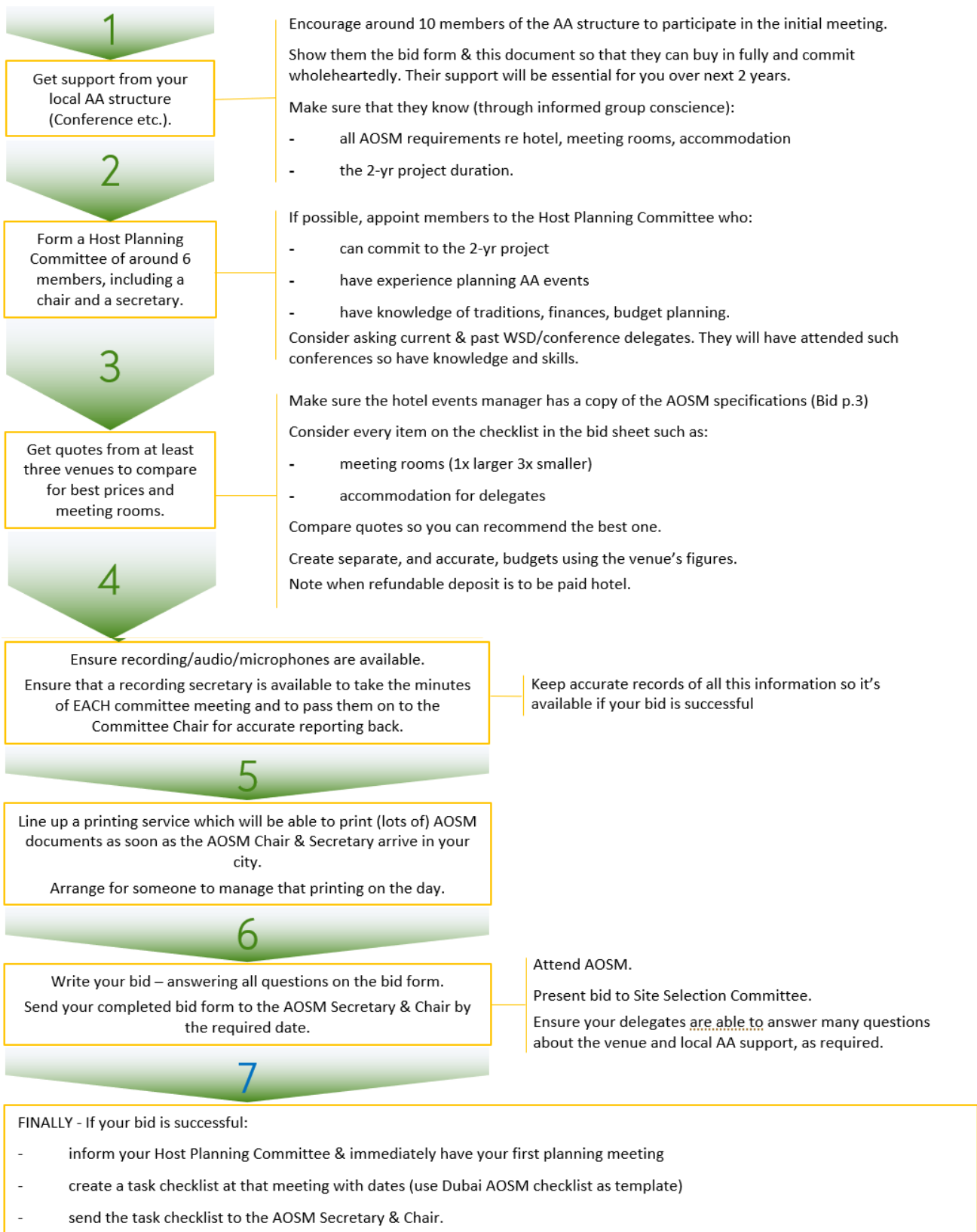


Agreed at the 10th AOSM (Irkutsk, Russia)

	Eligibility	Voting Procedure	Primary responsibilities
Chair	Must have attended two previous <i>consecutive</i> AOSM meetings and be present at the AOSM at which the vote is held.	Third Legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairs AOSM meeting. • Works in coordination and consultation with Host Committee, being mindful of and working within the guidelines and traditions of AA. • Receives and follows up on reports and communications from Committee Chairpersons, to encourage completion of action items required prior to next AOSM. • Publishes bi-annual updates of committee Action progress reports. • Encourages consistent implementation of AOSM guidelines and concepts. • Calls for items for Agenda for AOSM meeting. • Liaises with Agenda Committee and Secretary when preparing AOSM Agenda. • Acts as custodian of AOSM bank account password.
Treasurer	Must have attended one AOSM and/or one WSM as a delegate or alternate delegate. Does not have to be present at the current AOSM in that role.	Third Legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guards AOSM funds. • Receives and administers funds. • Sets up bank accounts. • Sends password of bank account to AOSM Chair. • Advises the account pin number to Finance Chair. • Maintains electronic and hard copy of any transactions made whether incoming or outgoing expenditure. • Publishes finance reports bi-annually. • Sends report for inclusion in AOSM Final report. • Confers with Secretary on any transaction required.
Secretary	Must have attended one AOSM and/or one WSM as a delegate or alternate delegate and be present at the AOSM at which the vote is held.	Third Legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administers and keeps safe all AOSM documents, including Treasurer’s reports. • Assists in archiving certain documents and completion of service. • Acts as liaison between delegates, host committee, and AOSM Chair – ensures correct communication channels are followed, including for information sent to web master. • During AOSM, records motions made and minutes agreements reached. • Collates minutes of meetings • Obtains prior email approval for expenditure from AOSM Chair and Finance Committee Chair. • Writes AOSM Final Report, incorporating changes and addendums, and circulates it to delegates. • Maintains a list of country delegates and their contact information.



Appendix E: Bidding Flowchart



Flowchart passed at AOSM Ulaanbaatar 2017



[Please have the facility's function manager read the specifications on page 3 and carefully explain any variations before you fill in this form and email to the AOSM Secretariat at aosmsecretary@gmail.com]

City:	<input type="text"/>	Country:	<input type="text"/>
Email Delegate 1:	<input type="text"/>	Email Delegate 2:	<input type="text"/>

Host Country Support

Approximately how many AA members are there in your country?

Approximately how many AA members are there in the proposed city?

Is your bid supported by your Fellowship? YES NO

Which of the following bodies in your country have said they will provide support?

General Service Board General Service Conference General Service Office

Intergroup Committee Intergroup Office Area/District Committee

Other (please describe)

How many local members would be available to serve on the host committee and provide help with things like: drivers, clerical help, photocopying and collating, setting up literature displays, looking after delegates' spouses, liaising with hotel staff, etc.?

Transportation

How far is the conference venue from an international airport? (km)

Airport's name?

Which major airlines service the airport?

What transportation (airport to venue) is available?

Cost of airport shuttle, per person (US \$)

Is the accommodation within easy walking distance of the conference facilities? YES NO

Facilities

Name of hotel:

Website:

No. of rooms:

Does it provide all the required facilities listed in the specifications?

YES NO

If no, where will the meetings be? Please give full details and a website if possible:

Any variations from the list of specifications?

Cost

What will be the **total cost** of accommodation, meals, refreshments, and hire of function rooms for the threedays of the meeting and for four nights' accommodation?

If 25 people attend

US\$

(US\$ per person)

If 30 people attend

US\$

(US\$ per person)

If 35 people attend

US\$

(US\$ per person)

If some attendees want to arrive earlier than the Thursday night or stay longer than the Monday morning how much will the hotel charge for each person's extra accommodation per night?

Single room

US\$

Double room

US\$

What methods are available for payment?

credit card

cash in US\$

cash local currency

Any other comments?



I am responsible...

When anyone, anywhere,
reaches out for help, I want the
hand of AA always to be there.

... and for that, I am responsible

