

LOVE IN SERVICE



**21ST EUROPEAN
SERVICE MEETING
2021**

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European Service Meeting

Statement of Purpose

The primary purpose of the European Service Meeting is the same as that of all AA activity – to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, whoever he may be, whatever the language he speaks. The European Service meeting seeks ways and means of accomplishing this goal by serving as a forum for sharing the experience, strength and hope of delegates who come together from all parts of Europe. It can also represent an expression of the Group Conscience throughout Europe.

Experience teaches us that developing a sound structure enables us to deliver our services more effectively. The European Service Meeting encourages the planning of the sound structures suited to the needs and capabilities of the various countries and the exploration of expanding AA Services to reach the alcoholic through internal communication, community relations and institutions work.

Summary

Due to the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic after consultation with all delegates it was decided that the 21st European Service Meeting (ESM) should be held virtually in Zoom this year.

The European Information Centre at York issued invitations to European Service Offices and as the meeting was held online observers were also able to attend. Listed below are the countries which attended this 21st ESM.

Austria	Ireland
Belarus	Italy
Belgium (Flemish Speaking)	Latvia
Bulgaria	Lithuania
Croatia	Netherlands
Czech Republic	Norway
Denmark	Poland
Finland	Portugal
French Speaking Europe – (France, Belgium, Switzerland)	Romania
Germany	Russia
Great Britain	Slovakia
Greece	Slovenia
Hungary	Sweden
Iceland	Turkey
	Ukraine

Two test meetings were held in advance of the weekend to ensure that all delegates had chance to test the technology and to meet each other virtually.

On Friday morning the 21st European Service Meeting was opened by the Chair, Yury T (Ukraine) who welcomed all delegates and observers as well as Ranjan B, the General Secretary and the staff from Great Britain. From the US/Canada Bob W - General Manager, Racy J - International Co-Ordinator, David R - Publishing Manager, Marita L – Trustee at Large US and Trish L – Trustee at large Canada were also welcomed. He then presented an opening address which was inspirational and uplifting, thus setting the mood for the whole of the weekend.

Following the reading of the 12 Traditions a roll call was held and all attendees were invited to introduce themselves. It was then time for the first half of the presentation of country reports, the second half were presented on Saturday morning. One delegate from each of AA's national was invited to share highlights of activities which had taken place in their countries since the last ESM in 2019.

After a break for lunch the ESM reconvened and the presentation of the 26th World Service Meeting was given by Nana K (Greece). This was followed by the keynote address given by Bob W, the General Manager at GSO New York, and a report on Literature, Licensing & Translation given by David R, the GSO New York's Publishing Director.

A brief report concerning the finances of the ESM was made by Ranjan B, General Secretary from Great Britain.

On Friday afternoon and Saturday, the committees and workshops then went into action, with delegates sharing their wide and varied experiences as it applied to their individual structures. Each committee and workshop chair reported back on the discussions held within their meetings to the full meeting on Saturday afternoon (committees) and Sunday morning (workshops). All the committee reports were approved unanimously.

The meeting closed on Saturday afternoon with a broad ranging question and answer session. The surplus of the ESM Fund was discussed and after being proposed (Ivo C, Portugal) and seconded (Tadeusz C, Poland) it was agreed by a simple majority that £25,000 be transferred to the International Literature Fund.

On Sunday morning the day began with the Sharing meeting. Presentations were given by Daniel G (Romania) and Juha I (Finland) on the theme 'Adapting and Adjusting to the Pandemic'. This was followed by general sharing around the room.

Then the business concerning the 22nd ESM was conducted. Following elections, we were delighted to welcome Tobias D (Denmark) as chair of the 22nd European Service Meeting to be held in 2023.

Elena S (Lithuania) and Iza A (Poland) will jointly prepare and present a report on this 21st ESM to the 27th World Service Meeting (WSM) which will take place in 2022. They will then report back on the 27th WSM to the 22nd ESM in 2023.

The Agenda Committee for the 22nd ESM will consist of the following:

Tobias D, Denmark	Chair of the 22 nd ESM
Ranjan Bhattacharyya	General Secretary of EIC
Andris K, Latvia	Chair of the Service Committee
Krisztina R, Hungary	Chair of the Recovery Committee
Julianne L, Norway	Chair of the Unity Committee

The Agenda Committee will meet up in July 2022 to discuss all questions forwarded to them via the EIC until June 2022. The programme of the 22nd ESM will be finalised, and the agenda set.

Four second term delegates were invited to share their experiences both this weekend and of the previous ESM. These were Nana K (Greece), Ray L (Sweden), Tadeusz C (Poland) and Zdravko Z (Slovenia), all of whom recalled their feelings with positive emotion in moving addresses.

To conclude the meeting a heartfelt closing address was given by Yury T, the ESM Chair, who spoke with inspiration and encouraging all in the room.

To bring the 21st ESM to a close all delegates were invited to take turns to share the Serenity Prayer in their native language, ending with all delegates speaking the Serenity Prayer in English as one.

Agenda Digest of the 21st European Service Meeting 2021

Friday 22nd October

Welcome and Opening Address

Twelve Traditions

Roll Call

Country Reports (Part One)

World Service Meeting Report

Keynote Address

Literature Address

Report on the ESM Fund

Committee Meetings

Saturday 23rd October

Country Reports (Part Two)

Workshops

Presentation & discussion following Committee Reports

Questions and Answers Session

Sunday 24th October

AA Sharing Meeting on the theme: *“Adapting & Adjusting to the Pandemic”*

Presentation & Discussion Workshop Reports

Questions and Answers Session

22nd European Service Meeting

- Time and Place
- Election of Chair
- Election of ESM Delegate to prepare ESM Report for WSM 2022 and report back to the 22nd ESM in 2023
- Formation of the Agenda Committee

Closing Addresses

Close of 21st European Service Meeting 2021

Serenity Prayer in all languages

Opening Presentations

WELCOME ADDRESS

“LOVE IN SERVICE”

CHAIR – YURY T, UKRAINE

Good afternoon and good morning. I am an alcoholic and my name is Yury. It is an honor and privilege to be your chair for this 21st European Service Meeting. Thank you for allowing me to serve.

I want to welcome everyone to the 21st European Service Meeting – the first time it is being held “virtually” on Zoom. I want to welcome the ESM delegates from throughout Europe, our A.A. guests from the US and Canada, and the staff from the UK General Service Office in York, England.

Regrettably, due to the pandemic, we were unable to gather together at the Park Inn Hotel in York as we had in past years. But, thankfully, we have learned to overcome yet another obstacle and are able to meet on Zoom. And we have seen, and at this moment are witnesses to the fact, that A.A.’s message of recovery can be carried over the internet by way of Zoom and that we can carry on our A.A. work in love and service, or, of love and service, without missing a beat by making use of this modern-day technology.

And that brings me to the theme of this year’s European Service Meeting – Love and Service – two words, two concepts, two principles, two values that define Alcoholics Anonymous.

Our fellowship’s co-founder, Dr. Bob, underlined this in his brief remarks, often referred to as Dr. Bob’s Farewell Talk, which he gave at the First International A.A. Convention, 71 years ago in July 1950 in Cleveland, Ohio in the United States. “Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words “love” and “service.” We understand what love is, and we understand what service is. So let’s bear those two things in mind.”

OK. That sounds simple. So let’s.

I was still drinking, when in the summer of 1982 I heard for the very first time an individual calling herself a sober alcoholic. Betty K. was her name. She was sober 14 years in A.A. and she was director of a small halfway house for female alcoholics about 70 miles from New York City. At the time, I was living in the US and working as a newspaper reporter, and had come to interview her and write a story about the halfway house. I felt something special in her presence and during my visit to the halfway house – today I believe that it was love., A.A. love. She was also an example of a life or service – in and out of the rooms.

I drank for another 8 months, before the miracle happened to me and on March 12, 1983 I was relieved of the obsession to drink. In my work as a newspaper writer over those 8 months I continued to research and write about alcoholism - that happened to be my assignment and I believe God’s chosen path for me to find sobriety. During this time, I met many more A.A.’s over coffee, over the telephone, in their counseling or medical offices, at conferences on addiction, at press conferences, at rehabilitation centers, at government buildings, and at A.A. meetings. I met these A.A.’s mainly in their regular day jobs – they were practicing these principles in all their affairs. They acted in the spirit of love and service.

They were putting out the message of hope and recovery to me and for others to hear and see. That attracted and impressed me, and I believe began to effect a change in me – until I finally got sober.

When I joined A.A., and I did this consciously on April 23, 1983 – six weeks after I stopped drinking – I also felt the special A.A. love in the rooms. I still feel it today, although I now also contribute to the loving atmosphere and consciously try to make sure that I do my part in being an “instrument” of love as St. Francis laid out in his prayer, which is written out in the 11th Step of our Step Book, the 12 and 12.

It's not the easiest thing for an alcoholic like myself, self-centered, egotistical, and so full of pride that it took me almost 25 years to recognize it within me, to talk about love. But A.A. has plenty of good teachers, mentors, sponsors, friends who have taught me about and showed me love. My sponsor, who passed away earlier this year, often reminded me, “Yury, don't forget that you need to be kind.” Both he and many other A.A.'s showed me what that was – how to put others first, how to care, how to listen, how to extend a helping hand or give a smile, and how to forgive. Another sponsor used to say, “You need to give till it hurts, and then give more.” To them love was an action word.

In A.A. I was also taught that love is unconditional. I would often hear at meetings in the US where I got sober: “You don't have to like everyone, but that you need to love everyone.” This meant that I needed to reach out and be there for everyone, that I couldn't just pick and choose. And I began to believe, understand and accept that I was living under the protection and care of a loving God, as I understood Him, Whose love is unconditional, limitless and healing – a freely given, life-transforming gift. And also, that I needed to give it away to keep it – this gift of love.

I was taught about service right from the start in A.A., when I was encouraged to put away the chairs and sweep the floor after meetings, greet newcomers, call A.A. members between meetings and drive them to meetings. My service continued by getting involved with speaking commitments as soon as I was three months sober, carrying A.A.'s message of recovery into correctional institutions every week for 23 years and later, service work in the US as a GSR and DCM. After relocating to Ukraine in 2013 I was privileged to serve in the A.A. Ukraine service structure, most recently as past International Delegate and General Service Board member and also be involved in translating A.A. literature into the Ukrainian language.

All this has and continues to make my sobriety – and hence my life – fuller and richer, and I trust more useful to A.A., God and my fellows.

I have met so many wonderful A.A.'s through service work, and I am so thankful that God placed them in my path-life. One thing that I have noticed and have shared with many, is that I find that most if not all A.A.'s involved in service appear to be happy, joyful and grateful. Service work feels good, is good and produces good. It's a win-win situation.

Being of service in and to A.A., as well as to the world and its people, has given me a purpose and meaning in life, a sense of belonging and a place in the world. In trying to live a life of love and service, I am becoming a more responsible person and a better human being. Being led by a spirit of love and service brings me closer to God and others.

A.A.'s 12th Step tells me, and, I would say, instructs me, that I am responsible for living according to the A.A. program's principles "in all our affairs," meaning in every aspect of my life – wherever I am with whomever I am. That also means that love and service – taught, modeled and nurtured in A.A. – need to be carried out into the rest of the world, one action at a time, one day at a time.

Often, we see "In love and service," used in the closing, just before the signature, in letters written by A.A.'s.

And so too, will I end my Opening Talk today here with you.

Thank you for the gifts of love and service that you have passed on to me. I will do my best in treasuring them and continuing to try to "pay it forward."

Yours in love and service.

Yury, a grateful alcoholic

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

“LOVE IN SERVICE”

BOB W, GENERAL MANAGER, GSO US/CANADA

My name is Bob and I am an alcoholic. My sobriety date is March 30th 1993. I am currently serving as the General Manager of the General Service Office of the U.S. & Canada.

Thank you for this opportunity to join you this week at this wonderful gathering. What a blessing for all of us to be here sober. I am truly grateful to have been asked to share with you today. The theme you chose for this European Service Meeting, “Love & Service”, is such a great guide for all of us this week as we share about the life saving work of our individual structures.

To begin I reference an excerpt from our Preamble: “Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.” Our Fellowship was founded on this very basis when Bill Wilson finally realized, through the loving counsel of Dr. Silkworth, that his failure at sobering up other drunks was because he was preaching to them rather than sharing his own experience and struggles with alcohol. Bill followed Dr. Silkworth’s suggestion and adjusted his approach when the opportunity came to talk to Dr. Bob. Dr. Bob himself, had been preached to by so many others through the course of his drinking troubles.

Bill’s approach of sharing his own troubles with alcohol, allowed his message of experience, strength and hope for recovery from alcoholism, to find its way into Dr. Bob’s heart and that there was a solution to his alcohol problem. This is perhaps one of the finest examples of “Love & Service”. Bill went out of his way to carry the message to Dr. Bob and delivered it without judgement and love. From that fateful day to this, millions of alcoholics have broken free from the shackles of alcohol with the same approach, including me.

In the short six years I drank, alcohol took all I had emotionally and spiritually. I went from a relatively happy young man to a selfish, self absorbed alcoholic contemplating suicide on a regular basis. When the day came that I finally realized how powerless I was over alcohol, a man entered my life who shared with me in a similar way that Bill Wilson shared with Dr. Bob. How simple yet powerful this basic idea has been to the growth of the Fellowship worldwide.

This is our world service, carrying the A.A. message – that there is a solution for the alcoholic who still suffers, and we carry that solution through sharing our experience, strength and hope. Our disease knows no boundaries and doesn’t discriminate against any race, color, gender or creed. Each of us here knows all too well the horrors and pain alcohol caused us and all those around us. We have an obligation to do all we can to carry this message to all who need it.

The evolution of the Fellowship has brought the development of our current world structure which continues to evolve. Most of our zonal meetings are well established and they and our World Service Meeting have proven effective in establishing and strengthening structures to serve as the conduits to carry the message. I am a past International Delegate as well, so I have first hand experience in participating at Zonal meetings like this.

Sharing our individual structures strengths and weaknesses within these forums has proven very useful for each country that participates and that is evident in the fact that this very convention is happening this week. It has also done well through the encouragement of country-to-country sponsorship which has been so vital to the development of our structures. The other zones throughout the world have done similar work and our World Service Meeting brings us together, connecting us, to share on a global basis. This great work has helped Alcoholics Anonymous find its way into virtually every country throughout the world.

Although we have laid the groundwork through our world service structure, there is much work to be done. Sobriety has to come first before structures can strengthen. In some nations A.A. has not grown to a level where there is enough membership to fill the 7th Tradition baskets which allow for services to be established to help carry the message. At one time, all of today's established structures were at a point where their A.A. populations were small and not capable of participation outside the A.A. group. We recognize so much hope and potential for nations where A.A. hasn't taken a firm hold yet. We must have patience but not rest on our laurels. It is our duty to explain to them how to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic just like Dr. Silkworth did with Bill Wilson, with the spirit of "Love & Service". Through country-to-country sponsorship, we can help them establish sound public relations policies through engaging their professional communities. Share with them how we did it, how it works for us. The more we stick to these basics, the better chance of success our message has of reaching the millions falling into oblivion each day.

Literature has always lead the way. Our Big Book was first published in 1939 and shortly after A.A. membership began to increase. In 1940 A.A. entered Canada, its first foreign country, solely because of the Big Book. A non-alcoholic minister read a review of the book, which left him hopeful and impressed. He ordered a copy for an alcoholic he had been working with who had resisted all the minister's other attempts at help. Certainly, another great example of "Love & Service". Similar stories manifested over time and today the Big Book is translated into 73 languages with others in process and other A.A. literature translated into 110 languages and counting. The translation process is exhaustive making sure our message is protected and kept universal.

We have accomplished a lot in the 85 years since the inception of our program. A solid foundation has been laid. But although we have a presence in so many nations across the globe, in many of those nations there are so many who have not yet had the opportunity to receive our message of hope. It is incumbent upon all us here, to do our part to participate in the world service to Alcoholics Anonymous. This European Service Meeting, and certainly all of us individually, can take an active role to carry out ideas and plans generated from our zonal and World Service Meetings. As leaders in service, it is my hope that as we participate here this weekend, we keep those in mind who are not here. Not just countries but the many members we know who also serve A.A. in so many ways. Let us all be inspired through the power of this body, to pass on our experience, strength, and hope, the way Bill did to Dr. Bob, with love and gratitude. As a group you can organize efforts to reach out to countries who aren't present and encourage them to participate at future zonal meetings. As individuals we can encourage others to get and stay involved in service. Rotation is one of our most important principles and it is vital that our roles as service leaders be passed on to others. Passing on the joy of your service is essential to attract them to stay involved and carry the torch you now carry.

Our world is a very big place and the thought of the millions of still suffering alcoholics is incredibly sad. We all know too well how terrible and lonely being in that state is. As humans it is natural that we have many different opinions about the many issues that affect our world. Thank God for the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, that our individual politics or religious beliefs don't enter into our A.A. work. Our common suffering with Alcohol cements a unity, deep within all of us, allowing us to put aside any differences we may have.

As members of the Fellowship, the deeper we allow ourselves to become familiar and practice our Steps, Traditions and Concepts, the more naturally we will carry out our service with love. Thank you for this opportunity to be here and share with you this weekend. I wish you a wonderful "European Service Meeting" and may our Higher Power bless all of you and Alcoholics Anonymous.

LITERATURE ADDRESS

“LITERATURE, LICENSING AND TRANSLATION”

DAVID ROSEN, PUBLISHING DIRECTOR, GSO US/CANADA

Hello A.A. friends old and new. My name is David R., and I am an alcoholic. As many of you know, they call me “the Publishing Guy.” I have served as publishing director of A.A. World Services, Inc. since 2016, and prior to that, held the position of licensing manager in the G.O.O. beginning in 2014.

I’m delighted to share with you today a brief presentation on:

What’s new in A.A.’s global publishing efforts: innovations in attraction, inclusion and accessibility – with a focus on digital distribution

Let’s begin with. . . the “why”

Why do we do what we do?

All of our painstaking attention to our items of our literature, carefully attending to the accuracy of translations? To the licensing and distribution of literature within our international structures? Why do we do this?

One answer:

We work together to help ensure that the message of hope that we carry is not “*garbled*,” to use one of our co-founder Bill W.’s favorite phrases.

And what is more: We work together to ensure that we respect and support the international structures of our Fellowship.

Our primary purpose and our great responsibility to keep the doors of A.A. open both inform our work.

We extend the hand of A.A. to the next sick and suffering alcoholic -- and help those who help alcoholics in recovery everywhere.

“*I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. . .*” and in that hand: perhaps an item of literature, say, a Big Book.

The “what”

In particular, we are making great strides forward with our items of literature in the significant areas of **accessibility, inclusion and attraction**.

Around the world, working groups, service committees, translation committees and teams -
- working together hand in hand in teams with writers, designers and production professionals
-- are immersed daily in dozens and dozens of translation and distribution projects – each one
moving forward in efforts to ensure that the powerful message of hope that our program of
A.A. offers can be most effectively shared.

The emergence of digital and online access

Looking back -- for several years running now, and becoming most apparent since the
onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 -- we have seen increased online
participation in our Fellowship. And what has followed is the subsequent increase in expressed
need for materials to be made available in digital formats (via PDFs, ebook, and audiobook
among them).

All this, ***in addition to and not replacing*** print materials.

For the past year and a half and counting. . . -- during this “new normal” – when so many in-
person gatherings have been cancelled or suspended, we in Alcoholics Anonymous have
participated in the astonishing enduring resilience of our Fellowship **in action** – connecting
on platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams, and the like, providing vital access
to A.A. meetings, workshops, workgroups, committees, conferences, conventions, and other
gatherings focused on service, such as this one.

We are mindful that not all people everywhere have access to digital or online communication
devices and gadgets, Wi-Fi, personal Hot Spots, and all the rest. But more and more, data
shows that folks of all ages and backgrounds *are* becoming comfortable with the digital arena.

Still teachable! Bravo to us!

Let us now turn to our miraculous homegrown translations of A.A. literature...

For more than a decade running now, the A.A. World Services publishing department has
seen a steady surge in translation and licensing activity, worldwide.

We say “*homegrown*” because almost every new international translation of our literature
begins with a local A.A. group or local service committee expressing a need and moving a
project forward.

Today, our office is immersed in the continued surge of activity in licensing, translation and
distribution – for items to be distributed globally:

- a) in print, as previously – and
- b) digitally –

We are seeing a marked increase in interest in -- and queries coming to the General Service
Office regarding -- digital, ebook and audiobook formats.

Our Big Book

The Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, published in English in the United States in 1939, our basic text now in its English-language Fourth Edition, is translated into 72 languages worldwide... *and counting*, in addition to the original English (so it is available in **73 approved languages total**), which includes the two latest translations: Tatar (Russia) and Oriya (India). Fifty-one (51) languages are printed and distributed by A.A.W.S., Inc. and 39 languages are licensed to be printed and distributed by local entities abroad (with 22 printed by both A.A.W.S., Inc. and international entities).

There are 24 Big Book languages in translation pending, at various stages of completion, which includes 19 new translations in progress and 5 revisions/retranslations.

Since we have last met, the first-ever Tatar - Kazan language Big Book was completed with assistance of A.A. Russia and approved. Other new and revised translations are also moving forward.

A word about: a Fifth Edition English-language Big Book...

"...perhaps you may have heard"

Note: This past April, by Advisory Action of the 71st General Service Conference of the United States and Canada, a draft Fifth Edition of the Big Book has been called for us to begin to develop, to begin work on. As we all know, based upon experience, a new edition of our Big Book, with new stories to be solicited, reviewed and selected to represent the widest possible range of A.A.'s current Fellowship, may take a few years to complete.

A word about: a Fourth Edition Alcoholicos Anonimos...

Also of note: by Advisory Action of the 71st General Service Conference, a Fourth Edition Big Book in Spanish translation has also been called for to start its draft process.

- Along with the Big Book, our items of literature range across more than 1,000 items in print, digital, audio, video and other formats. All told, these are translated into more than 110 languages ...*and counting*.

Since we have last met, we have seen robust translation requests, submissions, review and licensing activity (especially regarding pamphlets) across these countries, among others:

Belgium, Czech Republic, French-speaking Europe, German-speaking Europe, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Turkey, Ukraine, and many others.

The "how" – our time-honored process for translations review and licensing

Our A.A. World Services board-approved Process and Policy for International Translations and Licensing -- including submission & review, permissions and licensing are available in English, French and Spanish on aa.org -- under "Terms of Use."

I will briefly walk through a few important particulars of the process here – notably, for today's presentation I have been asked to cover **information relating to digital materials**.

Contact us:

- Please know that our Licensing Administrator Rosa Rodriguez and I are available for setting up individual phone calls and/or Zooms with representatives from individual countries to review your active licenses, needs for renewals, and address any questions you may have.
- Email us at translationsandlicensing@aa.org; rosend@aa.org; rodriguezr@aa.org.

Please be patient: As many of you are aware, we are swamped with a backlog of individual licensing and translation review requests. *But hope is here*—we are in the process of training a new licensing assistant, who has recently joined our team.

Sign up for individual country Zooms with us:

We have established a sign-up sheet for this ESM, so folks who would like to book individual -- private -- meetings with us after this ESM, in November and December, may do so. We are looking forward to personally meeting with you and to catching up and better serving everyone's requests.

The process

Each translation begins with an expressed need. Local committees drive this process. **IMPORTANT:** We work best with one point person, one contact such as a literature chair or designated representative from each A.A. local. What is not efficient is for us to receive emails and calls from different folks about licensing items of literature in any given international locale. It causes confusion and delays. **We ask for one contact person, please.**

Translations submissions

When a committee deems a translation is ready for submission to our office to have it independently reviewed, meaning -- **that the translated text best represents the integrity of the original English text**, the contact person -- one point person -- then submits it to our office in a word document attached to an email -- to then be shepherded by our Licensing Administrator Rosa Rodriguez to be reviewed 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 and adherence to the sense, spirit, tone, and passion of the original English work -- **the translation's overall integrity**. As we all know: "*Translation is an art not a science*," it is often said, and many factors contribute to a successful translation. (Please note: Google translate has its uses -- but sadly does not create publishable text).

Translation review

When we in the office get the report back, suggestions for improvement and a critique may be included. Examples of corrections to grammar. And so forth. We will next pass the report on to the local committee's contact person, and the committee may then use this report to revise, correct and polish the text further.

Final texts are then submitted back to the office -- and licenses to reproduce and distribute may then be generated. **The Finish Line!**

Electronic exchange of licenses

Note: As of the past year – we have changed according to international best business practices – we now may exchange licenses for signature and counter-signature **electronically**. In the past, we had shied away from this practice -- but it is now universally accepted as valid. Also we no longer can accept licenses via fax.

Ebook licenses

Any text for an item of translated and licensed literature, which has been approved via our translation-submission and review process -- for print distribution -- **may be licensed for ebook format**.

Our office does not participate in the format conversion process from text to EPub 3 ebook, nor do we need to review these conversions. That format change is handled by each local committee.

To obtain a license to distribute an approved item in ebook format, simply request to license ebook format for an item of literature. Our Licensing Administrator will send you the appropriate documentation for distribution of the item in ebook format.

Note: We have had sharing from many countries that confirms – consistent with the sales of all books worldwide, in general -- ebook sales do not replace or harm print sales.

Audiobook licenses

Similar to ebook format, you may request licenses to distribute in audio format. Our office will not need to review the audio. You will need to provide “Narrator release” documents, which we shall provide you.

Posting on websites

Licenses to post an item of literature on a country’s official A.A. website (in PDF or ebook formats, for example) may be requested for any licensed item as well. Multiple items may be included in one license. Simply request the license accompanied by your list of titles you intend to post. Our Licensing Administrator will need the name / URL of your official A.A. website. It is included in the license.

A note about. . .

Use of items of literature in A.A. meetings

Just as is the practice in physical, in-person A.A. meetings, whereupon printed books or booklets may be handed out for use in that meeting and then collected at the end – and not distributed further, many groups are visually sharing digitally --in Chat, perhaps or via Screen share -- excerpts from books and other items of literature in the course of their meetings. This use of literature does not require any additional licensing or permission. It is for a given group’s use. If the group wishes to share / distribute items of literature beyond that meeting, that is another matter.

Some forthcoming A.A. Literature projects. . . .

New pamphlets coming soon:

Approved by the 71st General Service Conference and in the works now in print:

- A pamphlet that includes shared experience by Spanish-speaking women, “**Mujeres hispanas en A.A.**” (Also available in English and coming in December translated into French.)
- A new illustrated pamphlet: “**Our Experience Has Taught Us: An Introduction to Our Twelve Steps Illustrated.**” Now available in English, French and Spanish.
- *And, also of note:* The pamphlet “**Members of the Clergy Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous**” will undergo editorial changes and will be retitled “Faith Leaders Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous.” Now available in English, French and Spanish.

Newly redesigned, revised and updated A.A. Service Manual 2021-2023

As you know, we encourage each international A.A. entity to craft its own service manual to tailor it to best reflect its structure and best serve its own Fellowship. Our own service manual, tailored for use by the United States and Canada Fellowship, has been redesigned, revised and updated, and having been approved by the 71st General Service Conference of the U.S. and Canada, it will be available first digitally, then in print form in the late Fall.

Other innovations

Audio format is seeing a major increase in “readership” worldwide.

We have undertaken re-recordings of our Big Book and 12 x 12 in English, French and Spanish as well as new professional recordings of *Living Sober* and *The Twelve Concepts for World Service*. Next up is *Daily Reflections*.

Video formats of A.A. literature and other material are also are being actively pursued.

- An A.A. World Services, Inc. “owned and operated” YouTube channel has been recently populated with more and more of our A.A.W.S.-produced content, and is being continually populated with our videos.
- Another project includes leveraging the experience of our Class A Trustees for short videos. As you know, Class A. trustees are wonderful ambassadors of A.A., for example, as professional talking to professionals, and as A.A. friends speaking to the public at large about us.

Conclusion

Our service corporation A.A.W.S, Inc. has been assigned the deep moral and spiritual responsibility for preserving and protecting the integrity of our literature.

Our efforts move forward projects for the sharing of A.A.’s profound spiritual message and together with our global A.A. able helpers we achieve real, tangible results.

In conclusion, from Bill W's "Message" of 1964 (found on page 348, *The Language of the Heart*):

"Millions of our pamphlets and hundreds of thousands of our books are today in circulation. **A.A.'s message can never be garbled**; anyone at all can find out about us with ease. What the dividends of this single project in world communication have been, only God himself knows."

The effect of all these efforts? To borrow one of Bill W.'s favorite words: ***Incalculable***.

We cannot even begin to measure these life-saving dividends! They are too massive to be neatly tallied up.

Thank you very much.

REPORT ON THE 26TH WORLD SERVICE MEETING – A VIRTUAL EVENT

“THE PURPOSE OF OUR SERVICE: SOBRIETY WITHIN EVERYONE’S REACH”

NANA K, GREECE

On November 28- 30th 2020 delegates representing 44 countries, zones or service structures gathered via videoconference for the 26th World Service Meeting (WSM), focused on the theme “The Purpose of Our Service: Sobriety within Everyone’s Reach.” Originally scheduled as a face-to-face event, because of the Coronavirus pandemic, the three-day event was held virtually for the first time in its history. I am honored and grateful for being assigned and trusted to attend and present this great event to you!

Hosted by the trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous in the U.S. and Canada, numerous logistical and technical challenges had to be overcome once the shift to a virtual meeting had been determined in response to the global pandemic. “This has been such a challenging year for everyone,” said Mary C., acting as International desk coordinator at the A.A. General Service Office in New York, who led the team which put together the virtual WSM. Nevertheless, she noted, “It’s especially important to communicate openly with each other and to share ways in which we can keep A.A. sustainable and available to everyone.”

Noting the historic nature of the meeting, the chair of the A.A. General Service Board (U.S./Canada), Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee, Michele Grinberg, warmly welcomed all delegates and support staff at the opening session, expressing gratitude for the sacrifice each one had to make to participate in this truly global event. We all shared this feeling of gratitude for being able to make Bill’s vision to carry and live the message around the world come true, despite the unusual and tough circumstances! Meanwhile, we felt amazed and moved to be able to host so many AA friends in our houses!

There followed a Virtual “Red Ball Meeting”, where we had to introduce ourselves shortly as country and/or zone delegates. Zonal Service Reports – among them the ESM Report, as well - were heard. Due to lack of time, Country Reports and Highlights were not read, but were saved in a digital dashboard together with the final WSM report accessible to all delegates.

Bolstered by lively music provided by most of the countries in between sessions throughout the event, delegates relaxed, ate, danced, and shared with each other through the chat function noting that this informal, offline sharing was as vital to our WSM experience as the formal sessions were. During the three day meeting the following presentations were heard:

PRESENTATIONS

International Literature Fund

Greg T., general manager of the General Service Office U.S./Canada, reported on the International Literature Fund, which was established at the 11th World Service Meeting to provide start-up literature for those countries unable to finance their own translations and acquisitions. “Contributions to the International Literature Fund have been provided by a large number of participating service structures around the world. In years of international financial difficulties or crises (such as 2008-09 and this year, 2020) contributions have not always been as great, but A.A.W.S. has continued to apply such funds as are available to support translation, production and distribution of literature upon documented request,” said Greg.

- **Licensing and Translation**

David R., A.A.W.S. publishing director, provided an overview of the many translation and licensing projects underway in different countries and highlighted a number of improvements in implementing some of the policies and procedures involved in licensing and publishing A.A. materials around the world, despite these challenging times. Out of this effort, an International Literature Fund was established, to be managed by A.A. World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S.), whereby those countries who were interested and able could make monetary contributions to help defray the costs of translating, producing and distributing literature aimed specifically at carrying the message around the world.

The presentations on **International Literature Fund** and on **Licensing and Translation** by Greg T. and David R. were followed by presentations made by delegates on the following topics:

- **The Importance of the Group Conscience Process**

Aliaksei Y. made an amazing presentation on **“Reaching an Informed Group Conscience”** based on the principle that *Alcoholics Anonymous is a spiritual community, and therefore, such a spiritual concept as “Group Conscience” acts as the “Highest Authority” here. Its voice is heard when a well-informed group gathers together to make a decision. This decision-making relies on something more than simple arithmetic, or a simple calculation of all the pros and cons.*, providing examples on how the structure of his country gave solutions to challenging issues that arose during the pandemic, claiming that mistakes -even made by a group-may lead to progress by hearing the right direction from God.

Daniel G. from Peru shared on the topic **“Sharing the Group Conscience Throughout the A.A. Structure: A Two-Way Process”**

“In these difficult times, we have been able to demonstrate in our fundamental principle of Self-Support that good two-way communication translates into individual and collective responsibility,” he said, presenting the ways that his structure dealt with financial matters and defects, making use of the principle *“Love and Service”*.

- **Encouraging Women into General Service**

Helen H. from Ireland made a wonderful presentation on **“Sharing the Joy and Benefits of General Service,”** explaining how she was helped by the difficulties the first women in A.A. had to overcome by taking responsibility and service to spread the message to the suffering alcoholic women and persuading them to get involved In General Service. She also added how putting our three legacies into action helped her with her own recovery.

Maria do C.I.Z. from Brazil shared on the topic **“Sponsorship on the Service Structure”** pointed out the importance of Sponsorship especially during the pandemic through the use of the means of technology within the limits of our traditions, thus *“ensuring our efficiency, safety and survival.”*

Esmeralda F. from Cuba shared on the topic **“Overcoming Barriers that Prevent Women from Participating in Service,** referring to prejudices, harassment and low self-esteem that women face in her country and how these barriers are overcome *“by treating them with respect and consideration so they can enjoy a new life and the spiritual benefits that are available through the practice of our legacy of service.”*

- **Young People in A.A.**

Massimo F. from Italy shared on the topic **“How can we Improve Digital Communication between Newcomers and Oldtimers?”** and stressed the assistance given by young people to the old in the use of technology at the age of the pandemic and the mutual help between the Oldtimers and the Newcomers.

Jan K. from the Czech Republic presented the topic **“What Are We Doing to Attract Young People in AA?”**, suggesting the use of an attractive webpage and closed groups in social media, co-operation with schools and professionals, providing specific pamphlets addressing the young to help them identify and get familiar with the benefits of the programme.

- **Anonymity**

Yasumichi H. from Japan presented the topic **“Anonymity and the Internet”**, sharing the difficulties with the online meetings during the pandemic.

Cipriano C. from Spain shared on the topic **“Anonymity in the Home Group”** and the importance of our spiritual principles such as humility, a safeguard for the newcomer.

Oleksandr F. from Ukraine shared on **“Personal Anonymity”** that should be kept especially with journalists and professionals so as to avoid jeopardizing the AA Fellowship.

- **Safety in A.A.**

Krishnamurthy V. from India shared on **“The Role of Sponsorship and Our Literature in Regard to Safety”** and suggested ways of achieving this principle.

Trish L. from Canada presented the topic **“Safety for the Newcomer – Our Own Responsibility,”** stressing the challenges provoked in the age of the pandemic helping the newcomer feel safe in AA.

Nigel P. from Great Britain presented the topic **“What are Groups Doing to Maintain a Welcoming and Safe Meeting Environment?”** stressing the importance of keeping our First Tradition.

- **The International Literature Fund**

Brian S. from Australia shared on the topics “Encouraging Country Participation” and “Sponsorship in Other Countries”.

Michal F. from Poland presented the topic: “Raising Awareness of the Importance of the International Literature Fund”.

Ray L. from Sweden “Shared experience on How Countries Support The International Literature Fund”.

On Saturday afternoon four committees with about 18 delegates in each were held in separate digital rooms on the following topics:

COMMITTEES

I) AGENDA

The committee reviewed the Composition, Scope and Procedure and made no changes.

The committee recommended the following theme for the Twenty-seventh World Service Meeting: “Carrying the Message of A.A. in the Digital Age” and recommended the following topics for the Twenty-seventh World Service Meeting:

1. A.A. and New Technologies
2. What is our attraction? Recovery, Unity, Service
3. The Seventh Tradition: Fully self-supporting in the Digital Age
4. Our nonalcoholic friends
5. Alcoholics Anonymous has already come of age. Is there any danger that it may get too old?
6. How to invest in the future of A.A.

The following workshop topics were recommended for the Twenty-seventh World Service Meeting:

1. How to encourage the Seventh Tradition in the time of a Pandemic/Social Isolation at each level of the structure.
2. Virtual Groups: How can they be integrated into the General Service Conference structure?
3. A.A. in Society: Relationship with networks and social media

The committee elected Tobias D. of Denmark as chairperson and Amanda S. of Great Britain as alternate chairperson.

2) Literature/Publishing

The committee reviewed the Composition, Scope and Procedure and made no changes and accepted the A.A.W.S. Report on the International Literature Fund. It was discussed that the report substantiates the continued need to provide literature that is accessible to all (e.g., indigenous cultures, young people) and available in varying formats (e.g., digital, large print).

The committee addressed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as it relates to A.A. literature as follows:

Accessibility

A couple of structures experienced little to no impact in their ability to translate and/or print literature, while many countries reported that the pandemic lockdowns adversely affected the availability of print literature. It was discussed that there is a critical need to provide downloadable and purchasable literature from websites.

Financial impact

Although one structure reported an increase in the demand for literature because of Cooperation with the Professional Community and Public Information outreach efforts, many structures reported a severe drop in literature sales as a result of the pandemic, which initiated a wider discussion on the tradition of self-support versus the reliance upon literature sale profits.

The committee elected Doug G. of Japan as chairperson and Uliana M. of Russia as alternate chairperson

3) Policy/Admissions/Finance

The committee reviewed the Composition, Scope and Procedure and made no changes.

The committee approved the requests of Bulgaria, Greece, El Salvador and Guatemala to participate at the 26th World Service Meeting. The committee appreciated Moldova's and China's requests for participation but agreed that neither of them met the qualifications based on the information received. The committee reviewed World Service Meeting finances and delegates' fees. The committee affirmed that the \$1,500/USD delegate fee will be restored for the 27th World Service Meeting.

The committee recommended that the 27th World Service Meeting be held October 1-6, 2022 and discussed a request to hold the 27th World Service Meeting in New York and took no action. The committee noted efforts of several countries to prepare bids for the 27th World Service meeting.

The committee elected Trish L. of U.S./Canada as chairperson and Moira S. of Ireland as alternate chairperson.

4) Working with Others

The chairperson shared that for her the word “together” is the key — we can do *together* what we cannot do by ourselves.

Given the time restrictions, the committee dove right into its two topics

- How has your structure been able to carry the message during the pandemic?
- What have you been able to do in terms of public information and cooperation with the professional community?

a) Nearly every country found itself, sometime in March, moving abruptly from face-to-face A.A. meetings to online meetings . Many countries struggled early on with maintaining an accurate database of groups. One delegate explained what they tried hardest to avoid: sending a newcomer to a group and having them find no one there and losing hope that A.A. can help them.

For several countries the shift to online meetings was led by their board or General Service Office; however, others observed that the local groups were actually way ahead of the structure.

Some delegates reported a digital divide in their countries. Countries addressed this in a variety of ways:

- Many increased the availability of hotlines and expanded their hours to 24/7 coverage. Several reported a large increase in phone calls.
- Some structures created guidelines to help members learn to navigate video-conferencing platforms, address anonymity concerns, and deal with “zoom bombers.”
- Many offered newcomers individualized help, enlisting volunteers to accompany them to their first online meeting or offering break-out rooms for one-on-one contact.
- One delegate helped start more “hybrid” meetings and found they encouraged unity.
- Delegates reported that unfortunately there are still populations that are simply not able to access online A.A., often communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

Many countries were able to resume face-to-face meetings over the summer. In general, members followed guidelines related to social distancing, hygiene, and face-coverings, but there were also “COVID-deniers” and recently there has been “pandemic fatigue” affecting members’ compliance.

Other “positives” during these challenging times were also reported.

- Members who could only attend one meeting a week because of the travel distance now find themselves attending several online meetings a week, all over the world.
- Many newcomers find it easier and less embarrassing to try A.A. when it is online.
- Young people feel safer in a virtual group and navigate meetings with less apprehension.
- The pandemic has brought more media awareness to problem drinking.
- A.A. service meetings are easier to attend. This has led to more interaction and cooperation between countries as well as service boards meeting more frequently.

- Attendance at some conventions and other A.A. events has actually increased.
- More professionals are attending panels and forums.

b) Public information and cooperation with the professional community during the pandemic.

Several delegates shared about the cooperation between A.A. and their country's Ministry of Health, especially in the area of information-sharing, while there are still situations where the government will request a kind of cooperation that A.A. is not able to offer (for example reporting on members' attending meetings) but members continue to communicate to resolve these situations.

At the beginning of the pandemic, many service committees reported less contact and cooperation with hospitals and treatment centers. However, several countries reported increasing contact with treatment centers and their patients, including requests for online meetings, several articles about A.A. and recordings shared on WhatsApp and other platforms.

Some countries reported their Class A trustees are actively sharing the A.A. message during the pandemic.

The one area where there was not much success to report was prisons which are now in lockdown and not allowing meetings or even visitors. One structure was able to send in issues of the magazine they publish, while another reported success with a prison correspondence program.

The committee elected Emre A. of Turkey as chairperson, and Nana K. of Greece as alternate chairperson.

5)Site Selection

After a thorough review of the specifications of each bid, the committee recommended to the 26th WSM that the site of the 27th World Service Meeting (2022) be Japan and that the alternate site be Iceland.

During the three Workshops held on Sunday the following topics were discussed related to the circumstances in the pandemic:

WORKSHOPS

Workshop I

Communication – A Key to Unity

1)What communication Methods are being used?

- a) To reach those who do not know about Alcoholics Anonymous.
- b) To communicate with the members of the Fellowship in our country.
- c) Among members of the service structure.
- d) Among members and service entities at the local level.

2)How effective is this communication? How could it be improved?

WORKSHOP II

The Use and Value of our AA literature in Sponsorship

- 1)What Literature is most helpful in Sponsorship?
- 2)How are sponsors using Literature to share all three Legacies of A.A. – Recovery, Unity and Service?
- 3) Would changes to current literature or additional pieces of literature be useful to sponsors in reaching or helping newcomers? If so, what would these be?

WORKSHOP III

The Importance of Our Non-Alcoholic Friends in our Structure

- 1)In your country, what role do nonalcoholic professionals currently play in the service structure
- 2) *How are these nonalcoholic friends helped to grow in understanding of the A.A. program and Fellowship?*
- 3) What new avenues might nonalcoholic friends pursue to introduce A.A. to other professionals?
- 4) What else could be done to create friendly relations with additional nonalcoholic professionals?

As the meeting neared its end, delegates shared freely in general sessions, expressing their gratitude for the entire experience of the World Service Meeting, with many remarking on how important it is to work with other countries in developing service structures and practices that work, while at the same time continuing to carry the message in their own countries.

Providing some closing thoughts for the proceedings, Michele Grinberg noted, “I started the weekend, as I told you, filled with gratitude, and that gratitude — I didn’t think it was possible — but it has increased as we have shared the language of the heart...”

The meeting officially came to a close with delegates reciting the Serenity Prayer, one by one in each of the languages spoken in participating countries — a moving display of A.A.’s global reach.

On December 12th delegates had the opportunity to attend a Gratitude in Action sharing session and a virtual visit to Stepping Stones, the home of Bill and Lois W., an exciting event that twenty AA members from each country had also the opportunity to attend, thus reaching the end of this historic virtual event!

Thank you all for listening! I’m grateful for the trust and love I shared being in service to this Wonderful Fellowship!!

Country Reports

AUSTRIA

Brief Historical Summary

In 1960 first meetings started in Salzburg, where AA's from Germany came to us to help establishing an AA Meeting near the Austrian/German border.

At nearly the same time two women in Vienna came back from a journey to Germany and install the first Meeting in Vienna. At the beginning it was really hard, nobody wants to join meetings. But they get stronger and in the late sixties and early seventies the numbers of meetings rise very quickly. Our first service office was opened in Hallein (Salzburg) later it came to Vienna. A structure as in Germany was found. 1986 South-Tirol which belongs politically to Italy, connected to the Austrian AA.

In 1991 we connected with Germany and Switzerland to the German speaking zone and work together in many AA belongings.

Current AA structure

Austria/South-Tirol has a service board, we have 10 regions and about 200 groups/meetings, since the pandemic started we've also zoom meetings.

Other services

Every region make meetings in prison, we have information meetings in hospitals monthly, some meetings are directly installed in hospitals so patients can attend meetings weekly. In May there is every year a big Information Week in Austria. All our meetings are opened for the public and there are many Information Events in schools, hospitals and other Social Institutions. We are also connected with time newspapers and invite journalists to meetings for writing articles about AA.

Sobriety time

3 years for service in the region and 5 years for all other services.

General Service Conference

We meet twice a year (spring, autumn) for two days in Linz. Each region has also Service Meetings twice a year.

Service Manual

Germany and Austria/South-Tirol are using the same Manual Service Book

Literature /Publishing Overview

We have a literature team for translation in the whole German speaking zone. In Austria we have folders and visite-cards and there is an Austrian tv-spot, who runs on the Austrian Private TV Channels.

Financial Overview

From 1st. January to 31th of July we have an income from contributions, literature sales and (CLT - Corona Country Meeting) 16 781€ expenses including donation to the GSO NY and GSO York 14 905€.

Relations to other countries

We work together with Germany and Switzerland on our General Service Conference and have a very good co-operation with both. There are also many friendships between the members of the countries.

Internet/Websites

Austria/South-Tirol has an own Website: www.anonyme-alkoholiker.at

BELGIUM (FLEMISH SPEAKING)

Milestones of AA Flanders

1953 AA Belgium was founded by Mr. André De Boe who was a social worker. Under his impulse an AA group was founded in the Marollen district in Brussels.

1956 First Flemish AA-group “Brabo” in Antwerpen

1961 First National Convention of the Flemish AA was held in Brussels. Topic of the Convention was “being together”

1969 Representatives of the Flemish AA Participated to the 1st World Convention . As from this date AA Flanders will always send a representation to the World Service Meeting.

1970-1975 Pre General Service Conference was held in Bonheiden, Antwerpen

1971 Foundation of the Association Without Lucrative Purpose ALDINEA-BEL on June 17th.

1975 Organisation of the First National Public Outreach Day : “ Public Outreach serving the alcoholic”.

1976 First General Service Conference of the Flemish AA. Goal: Defining the structure of the Flemish AA.

1981 Participation of a delegation of the Flemish AA to the 1st European Service Meeting. As from then AA flanders will send continuously representatives every year to this meeting.

1985 Foundation of the AVDB on Oktober 1st. in Antwerp. (This will be later renamed as “General Service Office”)

1999 First version of the Flemish AA website is launched on internet : www.aavlaanderen.org

2003 Celebration of the 50st. Anniversary of the Flemish AA

29 November 2015 André De Boe , founder of AA in Belgium, passes away.

Structure

The basic elements of the structure are all AA members gathered in the 331 groups (an equivalent of 422 meetings every week) widespread throughout the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium (Flanders).

The five provincial workgroups are the pivot points of the structure. Each province sends two delegates to the GSB. These delegates are expected to have at least 4 years sobriety and a good knowledge of the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions and the structure of AA.

The workgroup provides opportunities for the groups to share their experiences and problems; and also functions as the “ service hatch” between the groups of the province and national services and vice versa.

National Service Committees

Admission Committee- ADCOM

Responsible for the organisation of the biennial General Service Conference ADC and also general supervision of the work of the service committee within the Dutch speaking AA.

Committee for Public Outreach- COI:

The main task is to provide information about the AA recovery program to the general public and to people who are professionally involved with the problem of alcoholism. This committee tries to provide the needed information through the available media, open meetings, contacts in schools, hospitals, prisons, etc.

To achieve results at this level, its necessary that PI workers are well informed about AA Traditions.

The internet workgroup

Is responsible for the maintenance of our website www.aavlaanderen.org and is also working on improvements like online registration for weekend gatherings or online web shopping. There is also a reserved part for members only, where members can consult all minutes of the different meetings. More and more people are consulting the internet for information about AA so this workgroup is becoming more important to spread out the message of AA. In 2018 the internet workgroup worked hard to be in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Distribution centre – DC:

This service is responsible for the distribution of AA literature and for the distribution of the monthly magazine “5 to 12”.

Financial Committee – FINCOM:

This service monitors all financial transactions. It is the place where money and spirituality need to be divided in their correct proportions. Our income comes mainly from group contributions, from the sale of our literature, our yearly convention and other occasional events. The service structures must strengthen their efforts to make clear the spiritual meaning and importance of the Seventh Tradition.

Literature Committee – LITCOM

This committee is responsible for developing, updating and translating AA literature. At this moment, AA Flanders has a selection of 37 titles of AA Conference Approved literature.

Committee for editorship magazine “ 5 to 12”

This magazine publishes ten issues a year and is fully supported by texts which we receive from our members. Articles published cover personal testimonies, interpretations of the steps or traditions, theme of the month, announcements about open meetings, conventions, weekend gatherings, etc.

New for this year is a digital form of the magazine.

Committee for written meetings – LONERS

Some people cannot attend AA meetings for several reasons (illness, traveling or simply due to the fact that they are in prison or rehab). In these cases, members can participate in written meetings. The loners are responsible for the content of the bimonthly magazines they make and they stay in contact with their members via questions and answers.

The General Service Board

The GSB supports and encourages everyone in carrying out the resolutions of the General Service Conference. The GSB ratifies the reports of the national service committees before decisions or advisory actions are implemented. The GSB does not have the right to make structural changes, but if a case it would become so urgent that it cannot wait till next General Service Conference, the GSB has the right to make a decision on the issue (by 2/3 majority). These decisions are valid until the following General Service Conference, that must ratify this decision.

The board is composed of a chairman, who is a Class A (non-alcoholic) trustee; one Class A trustee from every province; two Class B (alcoholic) trustees; the secretary and seven national service representatives.

Six other members participate in an advisory role: The Secretary of the Aldinea-Bel Association, a GSO employee, two WSM and two ESM delegates.

The Aldinea- Bel Association

The Aldinea – Bel Association, a registered and legally recognized non-profit association, acts as a corporate body to represent and manage the business of AA.

Aldinea - Bel is composed by 10 AA members (2 of each province) and 2 Class A Trustees. The association is managed by a board of 5 members: one Class A Trustee (non AA member), three Class B Trustee (AA members) and the Secretary/Treasurer (also AA member)

The association is also responsible for the work of the General Service Office (GSO –ADB). The GSO is located in Berchem near Antwerp. The Association hires one full time employee (non- AA member) whose job is to answer the phone, replying to demands for information and act as a liaison officer between members, services and the non-profit organisation.

The General Service Conference

The 21st General Service Conference was held in March 2018 in the Abbey of Drongen. The theme for the conference was “ AA in the future”.

The final report is edited by the Adcom Service and is available online. A printed document was sent to all the groups and delegates.

Around 65 participants took part in the conference. There were two observers from the Netherlands and one from Wallonia (French speaking region of Belgium).

The National Convention

This yearly convention is a celebration day for all AA members, their families and friends, the spontaneous expression of happy sobriety and gratitude to AA.

This year the Convention took place in the province West- Flanders, the theme “ Sober, Happy, Helping”.

Next year the 60st. National Convention 2022 will be organised by the province East Flanders the theme “ Consciously....continue....in life”.

Final remarks

AA flanders has become a well structured organisation and still tries to improve its work by attending the works of different international AA conventions and organisations such as the ESM and WSM. After 60 years of existence AA Flanders tries to meet also the new developments in means of communications such as Internet and other media in order to reach more effectively the changing world.

Covid 19 and AA.

The year 2020, the first lockdown due to the corona pandemic. Groups are no longer allowed to meet, meetings may no longer take place. AA looks for alternatives and finds them by organizing Zoom meetings. Not only the regular AA meetings but also the services meetings will all start organizing video conferences. The groups are still finding alternatives so that the members can stay in touch. Some groups organize walking meetings with 4 people, messages are sent with WhatsApp, emails are circulating and telephone contact is also maintained.

Every day a newsletter is forwarded to the members who have registered, this means about 200 newsletters to +/- 1.500 members.

We are coming out of lockdown and a first protocol is made in collaboration with our administrators A and the Ministry of Health. This protocol is regularly updated and adjusted, even a second protocol is issued. We can have our normal meetings again but with restrictions and rules. Mouth masks, disinfectant gel, restriction of participants, ventilation of the room, CO2 meter etc... Some people do not yet dare to come to meetings and there are groups that drop out and cease to exist.

October 2021 : at the moment it is almost as before Corona but with the difference that many things remain as alternatives to the meetings, just as a bonus or because it is sometimes easy. It is advised that the physical meetings take precedence and remain the most important.

AA has adapted and has continued "No matter what!"

BELARUS

Conference

AA of Belarus appeared in Minsk in April 1990, although the first Service Conference was held only in 2003. Since then, Conferences have been held annually in October.

Groups

Currently, there are about 107 groups in the Fellowship of AA in Belarus. The coronavirus forced most of the groups into self-isolation. This resulted in number of operating groups significantly decreased. Since no one informed the office about the termination of the work of some groups, their number nominally has not changed, but the actual figure has dropped. To date, only 78 out of 107 registered groups continue to work in Belarus. Most of them are located in large populated urban areas. There are but a few groups in rural areas. The total number of Fellowship members is about 2,000 people.

General Service Board

In 2010, the Conference decided to transform the Belarusian Service Board into a Board of Trustees. Currently, the Board of Trustees consists of nine members: six Trustees from the Provinces and three Trustees, who are also General Service Trustees. The number of Trustees is regulated in accordance with the needs of the Fellowship.

AA Belarus General Service Office

In 2006 AA Belarus General Service Office was registered with the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Belarus as a public association. Over the past five years due to the rises in rental prices we had to move the Office three times. The costs of the Fellowship are covered by approximately 75-80% of the amount of group contributions.

Committees

At present, the activities are carried out by the following committees: Minsk Regional AA Service Committee, Public Information Committee, Correctional Committee, Finance Committee, Treatment Facilities Committee, Literary Committee, International Committee and Statutory Committee.

Public Information Committee

The main task of the committee is to inform the public about the activities of anonymous alcoholics and the AA program, to increase public understanding of AA or to prevent the formation of a misconception about the AA program. The committee prepares and holds presentations for authorities, social, public, religious organizations, enterprises. The committee works through the media, radio, television and the Internet. Information about AA is available in public transport, pharmacies and medical facilities, in enterprises. There is a news feed on television showing our AA message.

Our national website provides all the necessary information about the Fellowship so that suffering alcoholics or people interested in AA can learn about us and come to a meeting. We also work with the clergy. Many meetings take place in temples and churches.

The committee helps groups conduct round tables and presentations locally. Many groups celebrate their anniversaries, where professionals and clergy are always invited. For the last conference, a video and a presentation about the AA Belarus were created, which are now posted on the website and are used to educate the public. Cooperation with the media has increased. Articles are published, stories are broadcast on state and regional channels, seminars, in particular on international experience, are held.

Corrections Committee

Members of our Fellowship carry the message of AA to the correctional facilities of different regimes. We carry the message of AA in 13 prisons for men and 4 prisons of different regimes for women. The Committee actively collaborates with the Department of the Execution of Sentences of the Republic of Belarus. Today there are groups in two prisons in Belarus. The Committee meets with law enforcement officials outside prisons. We constantly inform AA members about the possibility to carry the message behind bars. We deliver AA books to correctional facilities and we hope to further expand our cooperation with them. Much work is being done in prisons. Members of the Fellowship not only visit penitentiary institutions to carry A.A. message, but also become sponsors for people serving sentences, who in turn become sponsors for their cellmates. A.A. meetings take place in several penitentiary institutions. Meetings are also held in some rehabilitation centers. We have established close and strong contacts with medical institutions.

Treatment Facilities Committee

The main task of the Committee is to search for new forms of cooperation, establish and maintain contacts with medical workers and treatment facilities (hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and similar institutions).

The Committee collects and archives materials approved by the General Service Conference of AA Belarus, service materials from the GSO AA, AA world experience and other materials that help effectively cooperate with treatment facilities, and distributes them in the regions, districts and AA groups in Belarus.

The Committee also prepares and, if necessary, updates the forms of presentations to various medical, health and rehabilitation organizations that by nature of their activities come in contact with persons suffering from alcoholism.

International Committee

The main task of the International Committee is to maintain good communication and exchange of experience between our GSO and other structures and to appoint and prepare delegates to the WSM, the ESM and other international AA events. "The International bulletin» translated, printed and distributed by the Committee shares information about AA events held around the world. Over the past year our national representatives attended General Service Conferences in Poland, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine and the UK.

Members of our Committee regularly turn for experience to our friends in Russia, Poland, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Ukraine, France, Switzerland, Portugal, England and the United States. Also, we have recently obtained permission from the GSO Great Britain to print the booklet "Hints and Suggestions on Internet Safety" in Russian for the AA Fellowship in Belarus.

We hope that in the future we will be able to independently provide for the travel of our delegates and observers to the Conferences in different countries. Our national delegates took part in the International Convention of Russian Speaking AAs, in the speakers' online marathon in honor of the 85th A.A. anniversary, in the formation of the regional committee of the CIS and Baltic countries and its subsequent work.

Literature

For four years starting in 2003 AA USA/Canada helped us acquire literature in Russian. We are very grateful to them for it.

In 2006-2014 we cooperated with the General Service Office of A.A. in Russia, which published AA books. In 2014, AA Belarus obtained the license for publication and distribution of AA literature in Russian in Belarus, and three years ago we published our first 1,000 paperback copies of Alcoholics Anonymous and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in Russian. For that purpose, we had to create a subsidiary publishing company, since non-profit organizations are not allowed to sell books according to the national legislation of Belarus.

BULGARIA

Brief History of AA in Bulgaria

AA originated in Bulgaria in 1989. Psychiatrist Dr. Toma Tomov returned from a business trip to the United States, where he became acquainted with the movement. He told about what he learned in front of a group of alcoholics, who were recovering with Dr. Sonya Toteva at that time, head of the largest state clinic for the treatment of alcoholism. The alcoholics were impressed by the story and several of the patients were eager to bring AA to Bulgaria as well. This was done with the assistance of Dr. Toteva.

The first meeting was held on December 5, 1989 in the capital Sofia in one of the halls of the Psychiatric Clinic. The second AA group appeared four years later in the city of Burgas. With the mass penetration of internet, the groups in Bulgaria were increasing relatively quickly, and since 2006 groups have appeared in another 15 cities in the country.

Structure

The main purpose of AA in Bulgaria is the same as that of each AA group in the world – to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholics wherever they are and whoever they might be.

Bulgaria has 29 AA groups in 3 regions. Meetings are held in 17 cities. There are 2 English-speaking meetings and 5 on-line meetings.

Due to the *COVID-19* lockdown, face-to-face meetings were completely suspended from March to June 2020. Most of the meetings were held online during this period. Currently, despite the complicated situation in connection with the pandemic, most of the face-to-face meetings are held. Some groups comply with the requirements for social distance, a limited number of members at meetings and wearing protective equipment, but in other groups safety measures are not taken into account. The two English-speaking meetings remain on-line until further notice.

Conference

Although AA has existed in Bulgaria since 1989, the first AA conference was held in 2017. In 2020, due to the pandemic, the Fourth conference was postponed to March 2021, but later to June 2021 and was held live.

The General Service Conference is composed of:

- a) members of the General Service Board, consisting of 5 alcoholic Trustees, each of them responsible for service in the disciplines of Literature, Public Information, Prisons, Finance, Drafting a Service Handbook; a non-alcoholic Trustee, a Treasurer and an International delegate who serves as the European Service Meeting and World Service Meeting delegate representing Bulgaria;
- b) 9 delegates elected by the regional assemblies (each Region sends 3 delegates);
- c) editor of the Grozdov sok newspaper;
- d) observers from home and abroad.

One of the proposals to the Fourth General Service Conference was put by 4 online groups in connection with the creation of an online region. The conference acknowledged that there is not enough experience on this issue so far and recommended that these groups join one of the 3 existing regions.

General Service Board

The General Service Board consists of 5 alcoholic Trustees, 1 non-alcoholic Trustee, a Treasurer and an International Delegate.

The non-alcoholic Trustee the head of the men's ward at the largest state psychiatric hospital.

The 5 alcoholic Trustees were elected during the Second Conference - one nominated by each of the three regions and two nominated by the Fellowship as a whole. Each Trustee and the International Delegate has specific responsibilities in the national service committees: literature, public information, finance, drafting a Service Handbook, prisons, international contacts.

One of the trustees responsible for the Public Information Committee resigned this year and so until the next conference in 2022 this position remains vacant. In 2022, the other 4 trustees of alcoholics will be rotated out.

This year's conference received a new nomination of the Stara Zagora prison psychologist as a Class A Trustee. The conference decided that she would attend the Board meetings until the next conference, when her election will be voted on.

This year's conference also elected the next international delegate. For one year, the current international delegate, who will leave the rotation in October 2022, will bring the new one into service to ensure continuity.

General Service Office

We do not as yet have a General Service Office, but we do have a postal address where all mail communications can be sent.

Literature

This committee is responsible for the translation and distribution of AA literature. In 2018, thanks to the financial support from the Development Fund of AA Great Britain, were printed: the 4th edition of the Big Book, the book "12 Steps 12 Traditions", the booklet "Living Sober" and the brochure "This is AA".

In the last two years there has been a trend of a growing wave of young people joining AA in Bulgaria. This gave rise to the idea of translating the brochure „Young People and AA”. This year's conference set a budget for its printing as soon as we received approval for translation and printing from the GSO US / Canada.

This year's conference also set a budget for the printing of the AA Great Britain brochure "AA as a resource for the medical profession". In 2019 we received a translation license for it from the GSO in York.

Public Information

The Committee recognizes that our structure is very young and needs assistance in matters related to the media, medical establishments, universities, social services, employers. For this reason, in October 2019, the first Public Information seminar was organized and held together with friends from the AA Fellowship in Poland.

Here are some activities of the PI Committee in the last two years, presenting AA in the media, in keeping with the tradition of anonymity:

- Haskovonet, a publication that reflected a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous with included interviews taken by members of AA, as well as with the participation of our non-alcoholic Trustee Dr. Ivan Dobrinov.
- A series of publications in the electronic media and national radio with: personal shared stories from AA members, information about AA, link to the AA national website; announcements that in the conditions of the pandemic other than face-to-face meetings are also held online.
- A report in the news of the largest private television media bTV with the participation of AA members.
- Black Sea Information Agency – publication about the increase of alcohol consumption due to the isolation imposed by the pandemic and a share of a sober AA member.
- Press release for the service in prisons. We carried out publications in national and regional media in order to inform the public of AA.
- Assisting the AA regions to organize open meetings with professionals on the occasion of 30 years AA in Bulgaria. Such were held in the cities of Sofia, Varna, Stara Zagora and Veliko Turnovo.

A contact was made with the Dean of the Faculty of Public Health to Medical University in Varna. We conducted preliminary conversations to arrange meetings between AA members and students from the University. The idea was these meetings to be held regularly, twice a year. Guidelines on how to run them, as well as information materials (scenarios and presentations) were provided from our sponsors in service - AA in Poland and AA in the UK. The project has been postponed for now due to the pandemic. We hope that the management of the faculty will support our idea for meetings online.

Contact was made with the Head of the Toxicology Department of the Military Medical Academy - Varna. Permission was obtained for AA members to meet with alcoholics admitted for treatment. Due to the pandemic, this is currently happening in the yard of the hospital.

The Public Information Committee sent gratitude letters to the media that helped with the publication of materials, reports and programs for spreading the information about AA activities.

Finance

The main purpose of the Finance Committee is to prepare and allocate the budget, approved at the General Service Conference, for the next financial year. Also to prepare a report on the financial management for the previous year.

It is also responsible for spending the funds, received by the 7th tradition, literature sales and the National Convention.

For the period from June 2019 to May 2021, the time between the Third and Fourth GSC of AA Bulgaria, the reported revenues show 50% from 7th Tradition, 44% from sales of literature and 6% from the National Convention held in 2019. Revenue from the sale of literature increased during the pandemic (compared to previous periods). However, more is desired in order to achieve a greater predominance in literature revenues.

Service Handbook

In 2018, a committee was formed to draft a Service Handbook. Translations of the AA Service Handbook of Slovakia, AA Service Handbook and AA Structure Handbook of Great Britain have been made. The text of the AA Bulgaria Handbook is an adaptation of these guidelines to meet Bulgarian needs. At the Conference, held in June 2021, the text of the handbook was submitted. The goal is for the groups to get acquainted with this material in the next year, until the next conference. And also a workshop to be organized with the participation of committee members, representatives of the groups and anyone who is interested.

Prison Service

Until the end of 2019, AA served in four prisons and three prison dormitories. Before the pandemic in March 2020, AA managed to start holding meetings in two more dormitories in the country. With the introduction of strict anti-epidemic measures nationwide, all prison institutions closed for visits.

The Prison Service Committee then decided to send letters and packets of AA information to all prisons in the country. The letters suggested that any problem drinker be associated with AA upon his release, as well as sponsorship by letter. At this stage, this venture failed to develop.

At the beginning of 2021, the holding of AA meetings in some of the prison institutions were gradually re-instated.

Website

The site <http://www.aa-bg.info> was born 10 years ago. The contact form of the site is linked to the e-mail of the association: aabulgaria@abv.bg
The e-mail is served by several people and responds to inquiries and requests for help.

At our Third General Services Conference in 2019, it was decided to update the system that supports our site, thereby engaging a professional member of the Fellowship. The moderator completely updated the site, giving it a completely new look.

In August this year came the good news that the presence of AA Bulgaria in the world site aa.org, in the section AA Near You, is already a fact. There, along with the postal address and email address, is the link to our website.

AA Newspaper

In December 2014 the first edition of the newspaper "Grozdov sok" (Grape Juice) was published by group "Priyateli" (Friends) in Sofia. In 2017, at the First Conference, the newspaper became the official A.A. publication in Bulgaria. Its 13th issue came out at the end of 2019. There are no further publications since.

National Convention

The National Convention is held annually, usually in late August and early September. Over the years, the number of participants has increased with members from both Bulgaria and other countries. We usually have a presence from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Russia, the United Kingdom, Moldova, Spain, USA. During this event, meetings are held in native, English and Russian languages.

Due to COVID-19 the convention committee decided last year to postpone the 13th National Convention for the next 2021. Thus, in early September 2021, we were able to hold the Convention live, albeit without foreign participation.

Relationship with Other Countries

Close relationships and experience sharing are gained from AA Great Britain, AA Poland, AA Slovakia, AA Czech Republic. In 2010, for the first time we invited guests from AA in Slovakia and Poland to a service working meeting to share their experience, strength and hope for service and worldwide services. Since then, until the AA pandemic, Bulgaria was invited and participated annually in the Polish Conference, as well as in seminars for service in prisons.

AA Bulgaria has been participating live with observers in AA Great Britain Conferences since 2016. Our observer also participated in this year's AA Great Britain GSC, which was held online.

Thanks to these attendances and the shared experience of these developed structures, many Bulgarian observers have taken an active part in service to build the structure of AA Bulgaria. We are grateful for the financial support of AA GB for opportunity to attend conferences in Poland and Great Britain, as well as European Service Meetings in since 2017.

In November 2020, Bulgaria took part for the very first time with its national delegate in the World Service Meeting, which was held for the first time in its history virtually.

We believe that one day the barriers that this pandemic has created will disappear so that we can share experience, strength and hope with our friends around the world face to face.

CROATIA

Brief Historical Summary (national A.A. development)

The fact is we are still toddlers in Croatia in terms of national AA development. On the upside, we are beginning to grow during the last year or so, faster than we ever have. There are currently scheduled 'in person' meetings in Zagreb, Split, Osijek, Zaprrešić, Rijeka and Ajmaš. We have by appointment (i.e., one willing to meet recovering alcoholic in place) in Zadar. We have 'temporarily inactive' mtgs in Labin and Tisno.

Current A.A. Structure (board, regions, service offices, number of groups/meetings)

We do not currently have a national board, regional or service offices. We have 2 groups in Zagreb, Split, and Osijek, 1 in Ajmaš. Each week we have 14 mtgs in Split, 4 in Zagreb, 3 in Rijeka, 2 in Osijek, 1 in Ajmaš, and 1 in Zaprrešić.

Other Services; for example, Prisons, Hospitals, Public Information, etc.

We have brought AA meetings into 2 large hospitals in Zagreb, 1 in Split, and 1 in Pula. We have reached all the way up to a government minister and will soon have access, reportedly, to Zagreb prisons. Currently, there is no progress due to Covid numbers in the system.

Sobriety time required for service positions

Again, we have no Croatian delegate/rep/hero with national information/data/numbers. Our knowledge in Zagreb is that we are likely the only city with regular 'Rotation' of service positions. And this is new here as well. 1 yr. for meeting chairs, 90 days for room prep and clean up, 3 years for Treasurer.

General Service Conference (processes, frequency, etc.)

None

Service Manual (does your country have its own manual?)

No

Literature/Publishing Overview (print/audio/video)

In the late 90's, the group in Split translated many pamphlets and the first 164 pages of the Big Book into Croatian. We are not aware if all were approved translations, but I know that we have 7 pamphlets in the Croatian language for sale on the AA website.

We have so far translated, in the last few years, the full Big Book (with a critical grant from GSO York!), the 12&12, and Living Sober all approved by NY. The Daily Reflection samples have been sent to NY and the full translation will be sent within weeks from now for approval and publication.

Finance Overview (you may like to include the approximate percentage of annual income from contributions/literature sales and expenses, etc.)

We have no information about the finances of any other cities, only Zagreb. Our prudent reserve in this city is almost entirely from contributions. Zagreb is essentially the distribution point for all literature that we send out to any city that requests some. Much of the time, we do not charge for literature, as few cities other than Split, have funds available to match the need for books.

Relations with other countries (country to country co-operation, how does this work?)

We have a similar relationship with Serbian AA as above. They do not have approved translations of literature into Serbian, so we send them our books when requested as Croatian is close enough for most Serbs to understand. We have long been working with Slovenian AA, some of their members have come to our International Convention in Trogir, Croatia and some of us have attended their Slovenian convention in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia.

Internet & Websites (if applicable)

Website: <https://aahrvatska.hr/>

CZECH REPUBLIC

Brief Historical Summary (national A.A. development)

Due to the political situation (Czechoslovakia belonged to the Communist Soviet bloc) the first AA meetings took place in Prague in 1988. After the “Velvet Revolution” of 1989 the circumstances changed a great deal for AA as well. The first GSM took place in Prague in April 1991. The first Czech national convention was organized in June 1997. Together with an official new structure the Board of Trustees was created in 2010.

Current A.A. Structure (board, regions, service offices, number of groups/meetings)

Board of trustees has 9 members: 7 alcoholics and 2 non-alcoholics, and meets on Skype once a month. The same more or less applies to all the committees: having around 10 members, meeting once a month online.

Groups are active in all the regions (all regional capitals plus smaller cities and towns).

We employ one AA member in the central office, responsible for paperwork (e.g. tax report), keeping the stock of AA literature and dealing with orders of the same.

68 groups meeting usually once a week all around the country, 3 online groups (2 of them meeting every day).

Other Services; for example, Prisons, Hospitals, Public Information, etc.

- Board of trustees
- Financial Committee
- Organisational Committee
- Committee for Literature
- Public Contact Committee
- Committee for Prisons
- Committee for Manual

Sobriety time required for service positions

Depends on the service, usually 1-3 years.

General Service Conference (processes, frequency, etc.)

Online GSM 13 February 2021, takes place every year Jan/Feb.

Service Manual (does your country have its own manual?)

Yes, we have our own Manual, whose contents are updated (if necessary) following GSM resolution, and we've established special Committee for Manual.

Literature/Publishing Overview (print/audio/video)

The Committee for Literature has been preparing audio version of the Big Book and electronic versions of all the books (currently 6 translated to Czech) and pamphlets (currently 12 translated to Czech). 5 translated pamphlets have been waiting for independent review and final approval from GSO NYC for about a year.

Finance Overview (you may like to include the approximate percentage of annual income from contributions/literature sales and expenses, etc.)

According to the last financial review (GSC Feb 2021) about one third of our income is from the 7th tradition, two thirds from the sales of literature.

Relations with other countries (country to country co-operation, how does this work?)

We gladly welcome regular guests to our events, usually from the neighbouring countries like Slovakia, Poland, or Hungary, but also from the countries further away.

Internet & Websites (if applicable)

www.anonymnialkoholici.cz

DENMARK

Brief Historical Summary

Bill W. visited Denmark in the 50's. After the visit Alcoholics Anonymous started in 1955 in some private rooms. Up to the late 70's only 4 or 5 meetings were registered at the GSO New York. In the late 70's the fellowship reignited, most likely on the account of some homebound travellers. In 1978-79 a regular meeting was started up in Ryesgade, Copenhagen. This is to-date the oldest still active group in Denmark. The group just celebrated 40 years. In the 80's more groups were active. In this decade the active members in Denmark started up the process of translating The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. In the late 80's more meetings started up, and especially the rehabilitating methods from Iceland started up in the country (in Denmark called the Minnesota-model). This gave the fellowship a huge boost in numbers. In the space of a few years the fellowship went from 25 meetings a week national wide, to 100+ meetings a week. The rehabilitating centers were a private sector and not involved in the public health care system. Though a lot of the governmental employers covered the expenses for the people sent into rehabilitation. Naturally they continued their development into Alcoholics Anonymous voluntary. The rehabilitation centers were not in any way affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous. This is purely mentioned to specify why the numbers of AA members expanded so much in the space of a few years. Now we have about 430 meetings a week national wide. 7 of them are English speaking. 2 of them are Polish speaking, 2 of them are Greenlandic speaking and 3 of them are Icelandic speaking meetings. At last we have 5 meetings online. Due to the pandemic (Covid-19) this number is rapidly growing and there are at least 20 – 30 meetings online permanently.

Current AA Structure

GSB: 15 trustees. The board is constituted of the following: 1 chair, 1 vice chair, 1 secretary and 12 elected in the regions. Furthermore 2 international delegates, 2 nordic delegates, 1 general service conference chair and 2 reporters take part of the meetings though without being able to vote.

Regions: 6 regions.

Service office: 1 service office located in Copenhagen. Open with voluntary staff members every Monday from around 12 pm - 4 pm.

Groups/meetings: approximately 430 a week.

Other Service Structure

National Public Information: The committee is constituted of the following: 1 chair, 6 elected in the regions, 1 from the GSB.

Box 334: The committee is constituted of the following: 1 chair, 1 vice chair, 4 voluntary members, 1 from the GSB. a magazine published to AA members from AA members 6 times a year.

Telephone and Email: The committee is constituted of the following: 1 chair, 6 elected in the regions, 4 coordinators, 1 from the GSB. The committee is responsible for having a telephone number open all days from 8 am – 12 am. Making sure voluntary AA members answers the phone from their own home. The committee is also responsible for having an email service open all days 24 hrs. The responding time is within 24 hrs.

Economics: committee consists of the following: 1 chair, 3 voluntary members, 1 from the GSB.

ALL COMMITTEES OF THE SERVICE STRUCTURE HAVE A ROTATION PRINCIPAL OF 6 YEARS FOR EACH POSITION. THOUGH 4 YEARS AS ELECTED CHAIR OF A COMMITTEE.

Because of this principle two committees have been turned into work-in-progress under the GSB, as we need to maintain a service structure:

Service Manual: currently consists of the following: 3 voluntary members, 1 from the GSB. The committee have temporary turned into a working structure under the GSB. To be evaluated in 2 years.

Literature: All handling of new literature is currently referred to the secretary of the GSB.

Sobriety time for service positions

Most positions on a national scale are recommended 5 or 3 years of sobriety. There are some positions where the recommended sobriety is 1 or 2 years.

General Service Conference

The General Service Conference is held once a year. We have 55 delegates. Also participating are the GSB and one representative for each of the committees under the GSB. The conference is a 2 day conference. First day the delegates are split into 4 committees, working with different proposals from the national fellowship. Second day is started with an hour for the regions to discuss the outcome of the proposals in the different committees. After this the conference continues, where all of the proposals and the committee decisions are read out loud, for the conference to take a vote on. We follow the democracy procedure as it is stated in structure of US and Canada. So for a proposal to go through it needs 2/3 majority and a representative for the minority can be heard before we take a new vote. If it is still 2/3 majority the proposal is for the GSB to follow through. If it is between 2/3 and 1/2 majority it is a recommendation to the GSB. Under 1/2 majority and it is cast aside by the conference and the GSB need not do anymore on the proposal.

WE DO NOT VOTE ON THE PROPOSAL, BUT ON THE COMMITTEES DECISION ON THE PROPOSAL. SO IF A COMMITTEE REJECTS A PROPOSAL, WE VOTE ON THE COMMITTEES REJECTION RATHER THAN THE PROPOSAL. SAME GOES FOR A COMMITTEES ACCEPTANCE OF A PROPOSAL.

Service Manual

Denmark has its own Service Manual and Structure Manual.

The Service Manual is updated and approved by the General Service Conference every year. The Structure Manual is updated and approved by the General Service Board after every meeting (8 times a year).

Literature/Publishing Overview

- The Big Book 4th edition (price 225 dkk)
- The Big Book 4th edition, paperback (price 195 dkk)
- The Big Book pocket 4th edition (price 120 dkk)
- The Big Book 3rd edition (price 225 dkk)
- The Big Book 3rd edition, paperback (price 195 dkk)
- The Big Book pocket 3rd edition (price 120 dkk)
- 12 & 12 (price 125 dkk)
- AA comes of age (price 150 dkk)
- AA in Denmark (price 70 dkk)
- Living Sober (price 125 dkk)
- Came to Believe (price 125 dkk)
- As Bill Sees It (price 125 dkk)
- Daily Reflections (price 140 dkk)
- Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers (price 150 dkk)
- Pass it on (currently in latter stages of publication. Realistically published in 2022)

All of the mentioned literature are translated and published in Denmark by acceptance from the GSO in New York.

Finance Overview

These are the actual financial overview from Denmark in 2020:

Income:

Donations from groups: 515.662 dkk.

Literature: 307.996 dkk.

Box 334 (voluntary member magazine): - 16.937 dkk.

Income Total: 806.723 dkk.

Expenses:

General Service Office: -349.195 dkk.

Service Work: -283.897 dkk.

Expenses Total: - 633.092 dkk.

Minor costs: - 5.584 dkk.

Total for 2020: 168.047 dkk.

From this years profit 70.000 dkk goes to The International Literature Fund and the collaboration with ESM.

Relations with other countries

We have a Nordic collaboration with Sweden, Norway and Finland. We meet twice a year. We have 2 delegates in Denmark participating. We have been greatly rewarded by the collaboration to take inspiration from the different countries service structure and service conferences. Our delegates usually also participate as observers in the different service conferences and we send invitations to the countries when we host our Service Conferences.

We also have collaboration with the GSB of UK. We participate in the General Service Conference UK as observers and they send observers to ours.

Internet and websites

The Danish website is to be found at the following link: <https://dkaa.dk/>

The Danish website also have a brief information for English speaking people: <https://dkaa.dk/information-in-english/>

FINLAND

History and Structure

A.A. has been in Finland since 1948. Today we have some 600 groups. The total number of members in these groups is estimated at approximately 8,000-10,000.

The highest decision-making body in the Finnish A.A. is the Annual Great Meeting of all Finnish A.A. groups, which elects and/or accepts the trusted servants and delegates to the A.A. Fellowship as well as approves the annual reports, plans and budget. The Annual Great Meetings are arranged along with the national AA spring conventions. Between 900 and 1,500 members gather each year at these conventions.

Every A.A. group in the country is entitled to send one delegate to the Great Meeting. Each group can also propose motions to the Annual Great Meeting.

Structure, Activities and Finance

The Finnish AA is divided into 17 regions. The groups or AA regions organize two to four open national conventions yearly. In these conventions there are among others Q/A sessions for members to have a dialogue with the trusted servants. Groups and members also arrange several smaller local/area events in different regions. The groups do active Twelfth Step work and cooperate closely with AI-Anon.

The General Service Office in Helsinki employs two people. Along with administration and communications and other member services the office takes care of updating the Fellowship's website to improve it becoming more user friendly. Several AA regions have their own websites, too.

The A.A. Helpline, supported by the A.A. groups, covers the whole country and receives thousands of calls yearly. AA-groups throughout the country keep up approximately 70 local helplines. We also have a monthly A.A. radio program – a direct one-hour broadcast managed by Helsinki AA region. All programs (past and present) are also available through our website.

Our financial situation is stable. The reserve covers 4-6 months of expenses. Due to the pandemic group contributions decreased about 11% and literature sales 25% in 2020 as many groups where closed. The situation has been improving during 2021.

Finnish A.A. Service

The Finnish A.A. Service consists of the delegates (20) who are elected by the regions in the region meetings to serve for a period of two years. The Annual Great Meeting of Finnish A.A. groups confirms the final composition of the Finnish A.A. Service, which then chooses from among the delegates the chair and the secretary for the Service, as well as the members of the committees. The committees include: Policy and Admissions; Literature; International Affairs; Information and Carrying the Message. The Finnish A.A. Service, as well as the committees, have six meetings per year.

In addition to AA service and its committees we have four independent committees: Prison, AA Helpline, Youth and Travel Planning.

Publications

The Finnish A.A. Publishing, Inc. is the legal entity and consists of six trustees who serve three-year terms. Meetings are held every other month. Group representatives select the trustees at the Annual Great Meeting. The main task of the corporation is to monitor and support the office and staff, and take care of legal affairs, contracts, finance, public relations, and publishing activities, such as copyrights and printing of A.A. literature

We publish two bulletins: *Ratkaisu* (“Grapevine”) and *AA Tiedotuksia* (“AA Information”). *Ratkaisu* is published 10 times a year with a distribution of 1,600 copies and it has articles and stories about alcoholism, written by both alcoholics and others. Among the others, the President of the Republic of Finland and the Archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland have kindly given input in the bulletin.

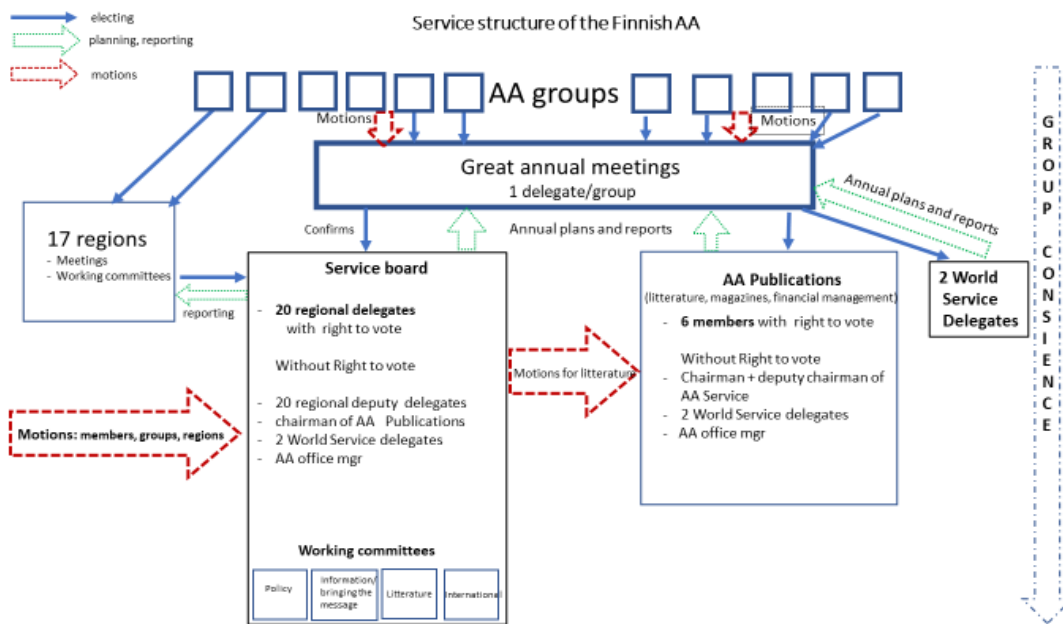
AA Tiedotuksia comes out every month in an edition of 1,700 copies. This bulletin is an internal newsletter with information on events, anniversaries and memos of Service and Publishing, Inc. meetings. Also a financial report of all incomes and expenses of the legal entity is monthly published in *AA Tiedotuksia* bulletin thus allowing continuous control by AA members.

International Activities

At the Annual Great Meeting of Finnish A.A., the groups choose WSM delegates who serve four-year terms, rotating in such a way that the starting delegate serves as a first-term delegate while the older one serves as a second-term delegate.

Both delegates take part in the WSM and ESM. They cooperate closely with Scandinavian countries, especially Sweden; communication with other countries occurs on a case-by-case basis.

Both WSM delegates report to the Annual General Meeting, in other words to the groups, and their travel and other reports and overviews are published in our bulletins.



FRENCH SPEAKING EUROPE - EUROPEAN FRANCOPHONIE

The European Francophonie is made up of 3 French-speaking countries of Europe: Belgium, France and Switzerland

Harmonization scheme for the European and World Delegate Service Position

Starting this year (2021), the international delegation for the profit of the European Francophonie, which includes French-speaking Belgium, France, French and Italian-speaking Switzerland, brings together two services: the World delegate and the European delegate, as is the practice in many countries.

The principle is to have two “international delegates” to represent our three countries at the European Service Meeting and the World Service Meeting. This implies that a country will not have a delegate for a period of 2 years.

	2021-2022	2023-2024	2025-2026	2027-2028	2029-2030	2031-2032	2033-2034
Country A Switzerland	A	A		A	A		A
Country B Belgium		B	B		B	B	
Country C France			C	C		C	C

This service is for four years, with a first term of two years and a second term of two years. One term involves a European service meeting, a World service meeting and participation at the yearly Conference of all 3 countries. In this way, the “second term” delegate can sponsor of the “first-term” delegate.

Switzerland elected the first international delegate from 2021 to 2024, Belgium will elect its delegate from 2023 to 2026 and France will elect its delegate from 2025 to 2028 until it is again the turn of Switzerland.

French-speaking Belgium did not participate in the European meeting since 2011 as there was no delegate for this service. With the new harmonization system French-speaking AA Belgium, as well as the other 2 countries, is represented by Marie-Paule M. from Switzerland.

BELGIUM – FRENCH SPEAKING

Situation due to the Covid rules

The past year was turbulent with the arrival of Covid 19. As a result of this pandemic, the groups had to suspend their physical meetings. After clarification of the proper use of the 4th tradition, groups closed and ways were found to meet by holding online meetings. Due to the improvement of the sanitary conditions the great majority of the physical meetings have been able to resume. For various reasons, a few meetings are continuing online. Information can be found on the website of AA Belgium.

The lockdown had some benefit for some members. For example, a person with a disability was able to attend a meeting for the first time in 6 years.

Even though the GSO also had to close its doors it responded to requests of isolated people, both for literature orders and for the mailing of the magazine “Partage.”

With the pandemic, no Congress and no Conferences were held in 2020, nor in 2021.

History of the development of AA Belgium

The first AA group opened in Brussels in October 1953 after Jean L. read the book “Alcoholics Anonymous” at the C.N.A. (National Committee against Alcoholism). Their founders are Jean & Louis.

Current AA Structure

Number of groups

At the present moment, there are 201 groups in French-speaking Belgium including 1 in English, 4 in German and 5 in Polish. The English and Polish groups are also members of their national structure (AA UK and AA Poland). There are groups in prison, accessible only to prison members, not to other AA members, so not listed on the "public" site.

There is one new online meeting in addition to the two pre-existing online groups since about the beginning of the century (one “audio” and one “text only format”).

2 online meetings will be offered for the end of this year (2021): one at Christmas. It will be organized by the digital cell with the help of the groups that organize online meetings. And a more festive New Year's Eve meeting will be organized by AA-Unit and relayed by GSO.

GSO General Service Office

The General Service Office is the official administrative and documentation center of the AA Fellowship in French- and German-speaking Belgium, available to anyone seeking information on the problem of alcoholism and the organization of the AA Fellowship in Belgium and throughout the world. It employs one person for the administration work (including literature sales) and one for the accounting.

General Service Conference

The General Service Conference is usually held in March for 2 days. Switzerland and France are invited to participate. The CEFE meeting (European Francophone exchange forum), regrouping the 3 countries, takes place the evening before the beginning of the Conference. Members of the Editions - ASBL for the European Francophonie - are invited to participate at the meeting of the CEFE.

With the pandemic, no Conferences were held in 2020, nor in 2021.

The next Conference will take place from the 18th to 20th of March 2022 in Heer-sur-Meuse.

General Service Board

Composition of the board

At the present moment, the General Service Board (GSB) is composed of the 9 trustees.

- President of the General Service Board who is also Administrator of Internal Affairs (i.e., Literature and Publications, Conference, Committee and Conference office).
- Administrator of the Finance Committee / National Treasurer
- Administrator of the GSO (also referent to the youth unit, Loners, Archives)
- Administrator of the Coordination and General Policy Committee
- Administrator of External Relations (Public Information, Health, Justice, National Convention, Answering Services/Helpline)
- Administrator territorial of the Brabant-Brussels Region
- Administrator territorial of the Namur-Luxembourg Region
- Administrator of the Hainaut Region
- Class A trustee (non-alcoholic) with no definite function

At the moment 3 positions are vacant:

- Administrator of the Liège Region
- President (without any other function)
- Vice-president (without any other function)

CCPG - The Coordination and Policy Committee

The CCPG meets on the same Sunday afternoon, when other committees meet. The delegates specifically appointed by their region, the administrators, the committee delegates and the observers participate in the CCPG meeting.

The mission of the CCPG constitutes a permanent organization intended to exchange the experience of AA at the level of the Regional Committees, the National Committees and the other Services. Its mission is to ensure the coordination of the work of the various National Committees and to define the policy of the action of all the Committees, taking into account the remarks and desires of the regional delegates. It will also see to the realization of the recommendations of the Conference.

Meeting Frequency of the Committees

Each Territorial Committee sends 2 delegates for each of the following committees: telephone, public information, justice, health, finance and conference committees, to meet once a month (except July/August and March) in the morning. Interested volunteers can also join them.

On the same Sunday, in the afternoon, the delegates of the morning come to report to the Coordination Committee. The Coordination Committee then takes care of what has been brought to them and of other aspects of internal general politic.

Internal Communication

The AA fellowship in the French-speaking part of Belgium has been experiencing communication difficulties between the different level of the structure. People have left their services, and new servitors are needed. They are now working on improving communication within the movement to ameliorate the situation.

Service Manual

The Service Manual has been revised. A supplement has been added for Belgian particularities. The statutes were amended and also unanimously approved to read: To be in agreement with the "AA/Finance Policy" that splits gifts, legacies and the anniversary plan, and the 2019 US/Canada, the Conference decided to raise legacies to \$10,000 and replace Article 10 by:

1. annual dues of AA members, the amount of which is set by the Board of Directors and which at present cannot be less than 15 € nor more than 150 €
2. donations, in cash or in kind, from AA entities without limit of amount, from AA members not exceeding 5000 € per calendar year
3. donations, as an "anniversary plan," in cash or in kind, from AA members, not exceeding 5000 € per calendar year
4. legacies, in cash or in kind, from AA members not exceeding 10,000 €, at once and not in perpetuity
5. miscellaneous income resulting from activities within the scope of its social purpose

Other services: Prisons, Hospitals, Public Information, etc.

Public Information

Miscellaneous public information events are slowly starting again after the lockdown. They mostly consist of going into schools, nursing schools, sometimes medical schools and police stations when requested. Display actions are done on the metro, bus and streetcars using the national budget. Some public information is done using regional budget as well.

Public relation

Having contacted journalists on the basis of lists recovered from past actions, several press articles have been published on the way AA faces the confinement, both in newspapers and especially in local TV stations.

Inviting journalists to open meetings is priceless. Their understanding is total. It is hardly necessary to bring clarifications afterwards. They often cannot hide their emotion. The meetings take place in a very normal way.

Digital Media

A “testimonial” section has been added to the website and online meetings are also announced directly on the website. Groups can now place their orders directly through the website using the online store.

Now that AA Belgium is present on Facebook since 2019, it is planning to also have a presence on Instagram, which is used more by young people.

As part of GSO activities, a Zoom meeting is being considered for the Loners program.

Finance

Following Covid 19, income is limited. While the groups were closed, the 7th tradition and the sale of literature diminished greatly. It was necessary to take from savings to cover current expenses. Things are slowly stabilizing since the meetings reopened.

Budgeting is impossible at the moment, as revenue no longer cover expenses and estimates are unreliable.

The Belgian financial contributions to York are at a standstill. The account number communicated inaccessible: Belgium has stopped contributing.

FRANCE

Situation due to the Covid rules

On March 17, 2020, all of the meetings had to close their doors by decision of the State. At the initiative of the groups, many online meetings were born. The website was set up to allow as many people as possible to continue to meet. There are now 91 meetings online listed on the site. French AA has proven to itself and to the French society that it has great resources and this message has been relayed by the French press.

The face-to-face meetings have progressively restarted since June 9, but people must follow mandatory safety precautions. In some of the meetings, the sanitary pass has been made mandatory by the renters.

With the pandemic, no Conference was held in 2020.

History of the development of AA France

French's history with Alcoholics Anonymous goes back long before the first French-speaking group was formed in 1960. It was in France that Bill W met the drink while serving as a soldier in World War I. The first English-language AA meeting was held in Paris on April 21, 1950, when six alcoholics met. In June 1950 Bill and his wife, Lois attended this meeting.

The first French-speaking group was created in Paris, following articles by Joseph Kessel on alcoholics anonymous in the United States. Joseph Kessel was the first (non-alcoholic) president of the General Service Conference Board (GSB).

Alcoholics anonymous groups have also been established in Martinique, Guadeloupe, Reunion Island and French Polynesia. AA contacts are also present in New Caledonia.

Current AA Structure

Number of groups

To date, we have 541 groups in France and in the overseas regions (Polynesia, Reunion, West Indies, French Guiana and New Caledonia - there are 12 groups in the Overseas Territories).

They include 473 French-speaking groups, 50 English-speaking groups, 5 Polish language groups, 2 Russian language groups, 1 Spanish language group, 10 groups in prison, 24 groups in hospitals.

There are groups created by expatriates abroad. One in Kobe, Japan, one in Hanoi, Vietnam, and one in Thailand.

At present, France has 22 regions included in five territories - CPI, South-West, South-East, North-West, North-East. It is divided into those 5 geographical territories mainly for the use of interregional activities, especially the Service Forum and the National Annual Convention.

The Service Structure of France Is Inscribed in an Inverted Pyramid

GROUPS - RSG Group Representative to General Services

DISTRICTS - RDR District Representative to the Region

REGIONS - Area Committee Servants
Service Committee Trustees
Conference Delegates

TERRITORIES
Territorial Administrators

CONFERENCE
Heads of Service Committees
class A and B
administrators
of the GSB

WORLD SERVICE
International Delegate

GSO General Service Office
Located at 29, rue Campo Formio, 75013 Paris, France

French GSO has 2 non-alcoholic full-time employees.

General Service Conference

The General Service Conference is usually held in March or April for 2 days. Belgium and Switzerland are invited to participate. The CEFE (European Francophone exchange forum), regrouping the 3 countries, takes place the evening before the beginning of the Conference. Members of the Editions - ASBL for the European Francophonie - are invited to participate at the meeting of the CEFE.

*The next conference will take place from the 22nd to the 24th of April 2022 in Paris.
The theme will be "To evolve without denying oneself."*

General Service Board

Composition of the board

It is composed of twelve members:

- 4 Class A (non-alcoholic) trustees - including the chairman of the Union of Alcoholic Anonymous (UAA)
- 8 Class B (alcoholic) Trustees including 3 attached to General Service and 5 to territorial Service

The GSB meets 4 times a year.

National Service Committees

Service committees

In France, there are 7 service committees. They are grouped into 4 areas:

- finance, structure and general policy
- publications and archives
- collaboration with professionals (justice, health, social services, businesses and communities)
- communication (offices, internet, social networks and media).

Themes addressed by the General Service Conference and by the different committees

Conference 2020

No Conference was held in 2020 by French AA, but it could not do without, as it had to discharge the National Treasurer, vote on the 2020 budget and elect representatives to the General Service Board. So, the Board decided to hold the General Assembly of the Union of Alcoholics Anonymous in September 2020, in person since the state health regulations still allowed them to do so at that time, and to take care of what they could not do at the Conference.

Conference 2021 - The slogan was "To evolve without denying oneself."

FINANCE Committee

A PayPal account has been provisionally put on the AA French website for the 7th tradition contribution of online meetings. The finance committee affirms its commitment to the traditional AA money channel (group, district, area, AAU); however, in the current situation, it recommends that the General Service Board considers perpetuating a 7th tradition payment method specific to online meetings, with the ability to identify the origin of the group and the type of contributions.

French AA ended with a deficit of almost 30,000 Euros, but this result is only possible because it benefited from a significant discount from the landlord and the short-time working measures implemented by the State. The group's contribution has decreased by 60,000 Euros and the literature sales by 40,000 Euros. Without the reductions, French AA would have faced a deficit of 100,000 Euros and dented its prudent reserve very deeply. During the lockdown, the general service office continued to function. French AA continued to pay the salaries of their two employees and to pay the rent and utilities for the offices.

STRUCTURE AND GENERAL POLICY and AGENDA Committee

A procedure for establishing a new AA region was adopted.

The online group "Perenne" will be attached to the region of residence of its G.S.R., on the sole condition that it lives in metropolitan France.

The creation of an Intergroup would seem to be the most appropriate solution to meet the needs of online groups.

The CEFE will be able to make requests and resolutions to the French Conference, as it is already done in Belgium and Switzerland, in order to harmonize the functioning of the CEFE.

PUBLICATIONS & ARCHIVES National Committee

For copyright reasons it is impossible to adapt the brochure "The AA Group, where it all begins" and the "Manual of Service" to the realities of the organization of the AA groups in France.

A suggestion was made to members who practice the 5th tradition to write testimonies that can be sent to the magazine "Partage."

A collection of suggestions on moderation and presentation of literature in PDF format will be available on the website for groups who wish to consult it.

COMMUNICATION Committee

Permanence

Calls to the national number show a steady annual increase of approximately 10% since 2016, reaching over 90,000 by 2020. Two thirds of the calls concern daytime duty, one third nighttime duty.

The day permanence is insured by friends from all over France who sign up for 4-hour slots. The regional correspondents are in charge of the organization of the night duty.

A new operator (Dialoga) has been chosen to reduce the cost of calls, which are, at the present moment, billed to the party being called - AA.

Public relation

This committee helps establish a relationship of trust with the journalists who contact them. It is sometimes difficult to explain AA's desire for anonymity, which is the opposite of what is often sought from the media and by those we speak with. But when this desire is understood, it opens the field for a relationship of trust.

The YouTube channel "Alcoholics Anonymous Official" includes videos submitted by French AA. It can be accessible directly from the AA French website (YouTube icon at the bottom of the home page).

Inquiries posted on the Facebook page of "Alcoholics Anonymous" are handled via private Messenger or are forwarded to the National Permanence Committee or GSO.

COLLABORATION WITH PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

Health - Justice - Social services – Communities Committee

It is clear that the actions of the 5th tradition came to a standstill in the majority of the regions due to the health crisis. The commission also has difficulties at the moment due to a lack of members, despite repeated calls for nominations.

Understanding the role of the trusted justice servant is not, and should not be, limited to carrying the AA message behind bars because the majority of alcoholics placed in the justice system are not incarcerated.

The Conference recommends that the General Service Board ensure compliance with the legal requirements for hosting minors at meetings and would like to see a minor, who wishes to participate in an AA meeting, to be offered a 12th-step interview to determine his or her motivations and to inform him or her of the legal provisions to participate in the meeting. The Conference requests that the General Service Board study the feasibility and cost of implementing automatic captioning of video meetings for the deaf and hearing-impaired.

SWITZERLAND – AA FRENCH AND ITALIAN SPEAKING

Situation due to the Covid rules

As everywhere in the world, Switzerland AA meetings were confronted with the lock down due to the Corona Virus pandemic. The groups reacted rapidly and the majority of groups went online. A big solidarity movement took place. AA members more competent with the use of modern technology helping those who did not know how or were afraid to go online. Since July 2020, the groups were able to reopen progressively.

The experience brought a lot to some of the people. They were able to attend meetings in regions they would not normally go, making more real the feeling of unity so dear to AA. For others who did not manage to go online, it has meant a long period without any meetings. Newcomers found their way to the meetings and stayed sober even though they met people only online.

History of the Development of AA Switzerland

Switzerland is divided into four parts with four national languages (French, German, Italian and Romansh). In all of Switzerland, there are more than 200 groups.

In 1955, after reading Dr. Norman Vincent Peale's book "The Power of Positive Thinking" in which the AA phenomenon is described, a woman living in Geneva gathered documentation on the subject. In 1956, under the impetus of the same person, a few alcoholics got together to form the first AA group in Switzerland. The "Léman" group in Geneva.

French Switzerland will hold a convention to celebrate 65 years of AA on the 11th of December 2021 via video conference.

Number of Groups

At the present moment, there are 56 groups in the French and Italian-speaking Switzerland (AASRI). 5 new groups were started between 2020 and 2021.

5 groups are in the Italian-speaking Switzerland. 51 groups are in the French-speaking Switzerland.

Of those 51 meetings, 49 meetings meet again in person. 2 are online meetings only and 3 of the 49 meetings run, simultaneously, a face to face and online meeting.

The 24 English-speaking meetings in the French part of Switzerland are still for the majority meeting online or using a hybrid format with some people in a room and the others online. There is as well a "seasonal" trilingual group (French, English and German) that meets in Zermatt during the holiday seasons.

A French-speaking international online meeting "les Pépites du Gros Livre" was started in 2021 to study the Big Book. It brings French-speaking people together people from Switzerland, France, Canada and America.

Current AA Structure

AASRI is divided into three territories which cover 5 regions. They are represented at the General Service Board by trustees who are elected by the Conference. In these three areas there are five Inter-Groups, four in French-speaking part and one in the Italian-speaking part.

The Service Structure of Switzerland Is Inscribed in an Inverted Pyramid

GROUPS - RSG Group Representative to General Services

REGIONS

Intergroup GE / VD / BE-JU-NE / VS / TI

TERRITORIES

Territorial Administrators
(GE & VD) / BE-FR-JU-NE) / (VS & TI)

CONFERENCE

Groups General Assembly
GSB

GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

GSO

WORLD SERVICE

International Delegate

General Service Board

Composition of the board

At the present moment, the General Service Board (GSB) is composed of the 12 trustees.
2 class A - non-alcoholic trustees, one of them being the president.

6 class B - alcoholic trustees which include the vice-president, the secretary, the treasurer and 3 territorial administrators.

1 International Delegate representing the European French-speaking region which includes French-speaking Belgium, France and French and Italian-speaking Switzerland.

3 trustees for the Conference office, the Literature office, and the Public Information office.

The General Service Board meets 4 times a year and carries out the affairs of AASRI as a whole including, where applicable and execute the decisions of the Conference. It manages the day-to-day business of AASRI between Conferences.

At the moment, there are trustees position vacant at the GSB. As of yet, no one has shown interest yet for these positions. This became the theme of one atelier at the last Conference to look at what the best solution is to raise interest in AA members.

Other Services; for example, Prisons, Hospitals, Public Information, etc.

Public Information

Each of the 5 Intergroup public information committee is responsible for carrying the message in hospitals, prisons, local authorities, etc. The Chairman of such committee is a part of the public information office (BIPI) which is presided by a trustee responsible for public information. This way each action tends to be harmonized in order to act in unity. Various actions, like advertising on cantonal or federal levels are managed at the level of the General Service Board.

The lockdown, due to the pandemic, has affected the number of public information possible. Some of them took place via video conference and others were suspended until recently when AA members were again able to go into the various hospitals and rehabilitation centers with whom they collaborate.

This health situation led to several featured articles and broadcasts related to recovery in general and AA specifically.

The wide yellow billboards are having a lot of success and making AA more visible for everyone; it is quite effective and commonly considered as an excellent tool in the ratio of price and quality. As of 2019, in some canton, billboards are done in both French and English languages and have both hot line numbers. The collaboration with the English-speaking groups continues and they help finance the project yellow billboards.

The prisons, in French-speaking Switzerland, were again approached but it continues to be impossible to carry the AA message into the prisons. The differences in the law and the systems of each canton in Switzerland make the cantonal authorities very reluctant to let AA come in. It implicates active involvement of these authorities (giving assistance before, during and after AA public information meetings) and they are not willing to do it yet.

The distribution of big books in the libraries was slowed down by the Covid but can start again.

Phone line

The AA phone line is a free number people can call 24/24 hours 7/7 days: 0848-848-846. The different regions share this service. A working committee was formed to review and improve the functioning of the telephone helpline.

General Service Conference

The General Conference of AASRI takes place each year in March and lasts two days. Each group is supposed to send one delegate (with voting rights) and one substitute (without voting rights).

In 2020, the General Conference was able to meet shortly before the lock down while respecting the sanitary measures put in place.

In 2021, it was not possible to meet in person and the Conference managed to rapidly organize a video conference which was a success. There were no major technical problems. A meeting was put in place prior to the Conference to explain to people how to connect to the various events, how to name themselves based on their position of service and how to vote.

The next conference will take place from the 11th to the 13th of March 2022 in St-Maurice.

Sobriety Time Required for Service Positions

GSR – General Service Representative / Conference delegates	2-year term, renewable 1 x -The group defines the length of sobriety. The brochure recommends 1 year
Alternate GSR – Alternate General Service representative/Conference Delegate	2-year term, renewable 1x - The group defines the length of sobriety. The brochure recommends 1 year
PIG - Intergroup Trustee	2-year term, renewable 1x - 2 years sobriety - Must have served as GSR
CIP - Public Information Committee	2-year term, renewable 1 x - 2-year sobriety term
Intergroup (Regional Committee) Member	2-year term, renewable 1 x - 2 years sobriety
CSG - President - Class A non-alcoholic	3-year term, renewable 1x + additional 3-year option
CSG – Simple member - Class A Non-Alcoholic	3-year term, renewable 1x + additional 3-year term
CSG - Vice President	4-year non-renewable term - 5 years sobriety - Must have completed 2 years of service at the regional level or in a CSG office
CSG - Treasurer	4-year non-renewable term - 5 years sobriety - Must have completed 2 years of service at the regional level or in a CSG office
CSG - Secretary	4-year non-renewable term - 5 years sobriety - Must have completed 2 years of service at the regional level or in a CSG office
CSG - International Delegate	2 x 2-year term - 5 years sobriety
CSG - Territorial Administrator	4-year term, non-renewable - 4 years sobriety - Must have served as an Intergroup member for 2 years
CSG - Literature Office	4-year term - 5 years sobriety - Must have completed 2 years of service at the regional level or in a CSG office

CSG - Conference Office	4-year term - 5 years sobriety - Must have completed 2 years of service at the regional level or in a CSG office
CSG - Public Information Office	4-year term - 5 years sobriety - Must have completed 2 years of service at the regional level or in a CSG office group representative

Themes addressed by the General Service Conference committees

Conference 2020 - The slogan was “Keep it simple.”

The Conference accepted to post on the AASRI website information concerning the “Safety in AA Groups.” A tab “Security in the “Groups” was created in the “Members” part of the AASRI website to include the three texts read during the commission:

AA.org (French) - smf-209-fr = Security in AA.
 FF211 = card on Security for the groups
 AA France on verbal violence

The architecture of the telephone permanence and the contract with the current operator will be re-examined to see if there is a less expensive, less complex and more innovative telephone or computer solution.”

The service positions that need to be filled and the working groups open to new members will be mentioned on the AASRI website. In the meantime, those interested can contact the leaders in their region for more information.

Conference 2021 - The slogan was “To serve in gratitude.”

1) The inverted pyramid and abbreviations will be placed at the beginning of the Service Manual.

2) The Conference did not accept the following proposition: “To amend the statutes to read: “Tradition 3: The desire to stop drinking is the only requirement for AA membership. In addition, members must have a good working understanding of the 12 traditions and the service manual”, since a change to the third tradition is not possible or acceptable.

3) The theme of the “Empty Chair or Hot Potato?” was addressed. “Is it better to leave a service position unoccupied than to pass it on hastily?” The committee proposed the following wishes to the Conference:

It is better to leave a position unfilled than to encourage a member to return to service against his or her will, as there is a danger of relapse.

Groups should not settle for an empty chair policy, but should encourage the taking up of a service by attraction.

Regular moderation on this topic is also suggested.

Sponsorship and service sponsorship are encouraged.

The committee encourages the organization of a session to present the positions to be filled. General Service vacancies could be posted on the AASRI website.

Literature Office

All operations related to the rotation of trusted servants have been done. The reception and processing of orders, payments and visits to the literature office have been somewhat disrupted by the health crisis, but without detrimental consequences. However, a number of actions are necessary to complete the transition in the longer term.

With the new suspension of physical meetings, there was a slight downward trend in the sales of literature material over the long term. It corresponds to a drop in revenue of almost 2,500 francs. The evolution of sales being still uncertain it is not yet possible to make a payment to General Services.

New tariffs have been established to recover and to prevent the finances of the AASRI literature from going into the red.

Finance

The situation due to the Covid pandemic did not affect the finances of AA. The groups made contributions as they went along and were generous when they returned to the rooms. It has not been necessary to go into the prudent reserve.

AASRI functions with a budget of about 40,000 francs each year. The biggest expenses are for the telephone, the rent for the literature local, the public information actions and the website. The groups send money to the intergroup and to the General Services. November is gratitude month. Groups send the full amount of a hat to support this action.

The sobriety dollar is practiced. The money circulates through the General Services and an amount of 2500 francs will be paid to the world fund of New York for literature.

AASRI donates the excess of what it does not spend to the World Service Office.

Internet & website

The internet manager responded with brilliance to many last-minute requests concerning the cancellation of physical meetings and links for the video meetings during the period of confinement.

The website of AASRI was down for a few weeks due to a fire in the office of the website host. This gave extra work to our internet manager and to the hotline people who had to answer many questions.

Further AASRI Meetings

Valais Convention: 22, 23 & 24 October 2021. In person or by video conference? To be defined.

Convention to celebrate 65 years of AA: 11 December 2021 - via video conference.

Convention Delémont: 26 & 27 February 2022

AASRI 2022 Conference: 12 & 13 March 2022 in St-Maurice

European Francophone Service Forum: 8, 9 & 10 April 2022 in Ressins France

Congress in Sursee: 27 & 28 August 2022

Relations between Belgium, France and Switzerland

CEFE: European Francophone exchange forum

The CEFE is a committee which meets at each 3 Conferences – it is made of French-speaking Belgium, France and French and Italian-speaking Switzerland GSO trustees. The international delegate and the External Relations Trustee also participate in CEFE, other trustees or other trusted servants may also participate in the committee.

The Editions - ASBL are invited, to the 3 Conferences, to take part in the work of the CEFE, to represent the Editions during the plenary session and to answer any questions.

The committee brings its motions back home and then each respective Conference votes in its own country.

Update on the progress of decisions taken by the CEFE in the previous year

The European Service Forum

One of the common actions of the CEFE has been successful. A proposal was made in the 2019 AASRI Conference to organize a common European Service Forum. After having been pushed back one year, it will take place from the 8th to the 10th of April 2022 in Ressins - France.

This Forum is about organizing a service-oriented convention. The goal is that each trusted servant will bring a new friend to the convention to inspire them to serve and to allow for rotation.

Literature – The Editions – ASBL (publishing company)

Collaboration between the European Francophonie and the non-profit organization AA Editions - ASBL (publishing company) for the European Francophonie Belgium hosts the Editions that print the AA literature for Belgium, France and Switzerland. It is a separate entity from AA French-speaking Belgium. They do collaborate because the copyrights are officially given to the GSO of AA Belgium which then transfers them to the Editions.

A new Board of Directors was voted in at the last General Assembly of the Editions. In order to reduce costs and avoid travel, video conferences have been set up. They clarify certain points, make decisions and move forward between two physical meetings.

Three new books came out recently: - “Perpetual Calendar”; “The Word GOD” and “The Meeting in the Pocket.”

Other books are being printed again: “Bill's best articles” - “Young people” (produced by young people in Belgium) - “I'm going out tomorrow” (which will replace “And now what am I going to do?”) - “Is there a problem drinker in your professional environment.”

In order to reduce printing costs of the “Partage” magazine and due to the drop in subscriptions, it was decided to publish 4 issues per year instead of 6 and to keep the price of the subscription the same. A call for articles about miscellaneous sharing of members' experiences, in the service of AA, will be launched.

A welcome package for the online meeting was created.

Copyrights

Copyrights are given to the GSO of French-speaking Belgium. The GSO gives them then to the Belgium Editions – ASBL. An agreement was made with AA WSO that the Belgium Editions - ASBL can only sell the literature to Belgium, France and Switzerland - and nothing else (like Africa for example). It is a non-profit organization. It adapts the price of the literature to stay within this rule.

The agreements made with other AA editors depend on the copyright holders. The Grapevine society incorporated in the United States, translate its own materiel in French, as for example: “The Best of Bill” and “The Language of the Heart.” It does not grant any copyright to AA French-speaking Belgium. The Editions buy directly from them.

AA WSO grants copyright fairly easily but it might take some time. They also translate the AA literature in French themselves. AA WSO manages all the sales of the French digital literature which they have translated.

York - England grant copyrights when they are requested.

Once the GSO (General Service office) of Belgium gives the Copyrights to the Editions, the Editions has then the right to edit, print, publish and distribute the literature.

Financial Situation at the Editions Due to Covid

Considering the cash flow difficulties due to the health situation (no sales or very few), the Editions asked if the GSO's of the 3 countries if they could take over the rent for 2 periods. Belgium, France and Switzerland GSO agreed to this request and sent money.

In 2020 the demand for literature was very low, practically zero. The amount of literature sales decreased by 46% compared to the year 2019.

To remedy this situation the selling prices of the literature were increased and more competitive prices were obtained from AA WSO. The new price list has been sent to the different BSG and became effective on 01/01/2021.

Reminder of the Place of the Editions in the 3 Conferences

The management of AA Editions - ASBL should not be dependent on any one Conference, as there could be a contradiction with one country blocking the others. They need to focus on their sole objective which is to offer quality literature, in the respect of AA traditions, to alcoholics who are still suffering.

In addition, the 3 countries, are now represented on the Boards of the Editions (2 trustees per country). General Services are therefore informed of what is happening at the Editions by their representatives. The CEFE can express wishes addressed to the Editions or resolutions common to the 3 countries.

The collaboration at the Editions is a good proof that the harmonization between the three countries works. The Editions have done everything possible to provide all three countries with all the literature.

GERMANY

Preliminary Remark

My predecessor did a great job on explaining the following topics detailed and illustrated at the 19th ESM 2019. For details, see 20th European Service Meeting Final Report 2019 pp. 52–55. Because I do not want to bore you or waste your time, I will restrict myself to the changes.

Brief Historical Summary

As in other countries, the Corona pandemic had a big influence to the current state and development of AA groups, meetings and structures in Germany. Many groups had to close for a while and/or moved to videoconference or phone meetings. Some groups died, some did not re-open again and new online meetings on the internet were founded.

Secondly, our service structure was and still is affected. Some service meetings could not take place, others moved to videoconference systems. This includes our GSB meetings too. Our General Service Conference (GSC) was cancelled twice and finally took place as a hybrid event from September 3rd to 5th, 2021.

Thirdly, the two German conventions in 2020 and 2021 did not take place as f2f events. Thanks to very engaged friends two videoconference based events could be performed alternatively.

Current A.A. Structure

For general information, see 20th European Service Meeting Final Report 2019 pp. 52 and 53. Apart from this, the number of groups has continued to decrease. Currently there are 1887 groups registered and some of these groups are still closed due to the Corona pandemic. We currently do not know which ones will re-open again or died during the last two years. Furthermore, the demographic development does not stop at AA and young people are rare – except at meetings held on the internet.

During our best times when we had between 3.000 and 3.500 groups in Germany. This number now nearly has halved. However, what did not change (so far) is our service structure itself, especially the number of delegates, boards and services. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that our GSC recognized that we have to change our service structure in the very near future.

Driven by an investigation into how the three countries in German-speaking Europe can improve their collaboration, we will have to adapt the number of delegates and committees, boards and services to the reduced number of groups. This will be a long ride and I did not expect first results before March 2023 when our next GSC will take place.

Other Services; for example, Prisons, Hospitals, Public Information, etc.

We had to reduce our great engagement in all of those due to the Corona pandemic restrictions. Nearly no prisons and hospitals allowed AA meetings during this time to take place neither on a regular basis nor just with informational character.

Many smaller Public Information events were cancelled by organizers, most of the bigger ones took place but as videoconferences or hybrid events.

Sobriety time required for service positions

For details, see 20th European Service Meeting Final Report 2019 page 53, please.

General Service Conference

In general, our GSC takes place annually on an extended weekend (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) in March or April. But in 2020 our GSC was cancelled due to the Corona pandemic 2021 the GSC appointment in spring was cancelled again and was moved to September.

Held in September 2021 as hybrid event, i.e. in six rooms for six committees. Delegates are not allowed to leave or change their committee's room; committee independent attendees are not allowed to change the committees. The general assembly was organized as videoconference interconnection of all committees. Thank God we had pretty good weather and could meet other delegates in the garden which otherwise would not have been possible. This made us realize how important the personal exchange with other delegates outside of one's own committee is.

General processes: Until end of August each year, every AA member is free to send a so called 'inquiry' to the conference team. The team decides if the inquiry will be admitted to the conference or if it will be rejected. If admitted, it will be assigned to a committee, which discusses it and makes a recommendation. Afterwards, the general assembly will vote on these recommendations. If the general assembly agrees, the inquiry will be forwarded to the GSB that will initiate the necessary measures.

Service Manual

For our Service Manual please have a look at the 20th European Service Meeting Final Report 2019 page 54.

Literature/Publishing Overview

Changes and additions since 2019:

Living sober – revised and new print edition

AA comes of age – revised and new print edition

12 steps and 12 traditions – revised and new print edition

Big Book – available as audio book now

10 brochures revised, 6 reprinted, 4 prepared for reprint

Jack Alexander Article and brochure „AA for the Older“ translated to German, AAWS license pending

AA DACH Magazine now available as printed and as digital media edition

Our entire offer of printed literature and digital media is available at our Webshop <https://shop-aa.de> now.

Finance Overview

For the approximate percentage of annual income from contributions/literature sales and expenses before the Corona pandemic see 20th European Service Meeting Final Report 2019 page 54, please.

Between 2018 and 2020, our liquid funds have decreased by a third. To end of 2021, we expect a further reduction to half of the liquid funds in comparison to 2018. Reasons for this development are the decreasing number of groups/meetings in general and the closure of the still existing groups/meeting during the Corona pandemic as well as the decline in literature sales. Although a big number of videoconference and phone meetings were founded during this time, they could not absorb these losses.

As first and quick response we reduced the number of GSB presence meetings to one per year (the rest will be held as videoconference meetings) and postponed the move of our general service office indefinitely. However, of course these two measures are not enough.

Because we recognized this tendency (except the Corona pandemic) already in 2019, our GSB set up a working group to find tactics and solutions for our current financial situation. Furthermore a five years forecast was set up and is adapted permanently. However, the problem cannot be solved by saving alone.

It is urgently necessary to make our friends in the groups and meetings personally aware of the tense financial situation and to get the principle of the overflowing hat going again - Corona pandemic or not. In addition, we have to expand our efforts in Step 12 and Tradition 5. Last but not least, we have to face the demographic change, i.e. we have to look for young people. A look at the newly founded online meetings and the two big online events shows their presence and their interest in our program.

Relations with other countries

In general, most of our relations with other countries are based on the use of the same language, namely German. Therefore, the most relations we do have with Austria, South Tyrol and German-speaking Switzerland.

Currently Austria/South Tyrol and German-speaking Switzerland are represented by two trustees at our GSB.

However, each of these three respectively four countries has its own legal system and laws. Therefore, Austria/South Tyrol, Germany and German-speaking Switzerland have their own registered associations, which act as legal entities in external relationships. On the other hand, 60-80% of the discussions and decisions of our joint GSB are related to purely German AA topics.

Because of this, our GSC has commissioned our GSB to set up a working group to investigate how our service structure could be improved. The proposal of this working group was presented at our last GSC just a few days ago. However, this proposal was not detailed enough to make a final decision.

At its core it was suggested to remove the two trustees from Austria/South Tyrol and German-speaking Switzerland from the German GSB and to treat these two Intergroups as own independent structure elements at GSB level.

Internet & Websites

Website: <https://www.anonyme-alkoholiker.de> (slightly reworked and improved)
Webshop: <https://shop-aa.de> (books, brochures, CDs, service manuals, magazines, posters)

GREAT BRITAIN

Groups, Intergroups (IGs) and Regional Assemblies

Although it changes frequently, at the end of September 2021 there were a total of 5623 AA Groups registered with Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain (AAGB), 786 of these being English-speaking Groups in the Continental European Region (CER). Great Britain consists of the countries of England, Scotland and Wales, within which there were a total of 4837 AA Groups.

The figures indicate that AAGB grew by approximately 10 % in two years. It has been estimated that there has been between three and four million attendees at AAGB meetings in the past 12 months.

Each AA group is represented at its local intergroup (IG) by a Group Service Representative (GSR). IGs in turn are represented at their regional assemblies by Region Representatives (Region Reps). IGs and regions are geographically arranged, and there are 120 IGs and sixteen regional assemblies. Of the regional assemblies, nine are in England, five are in Scotland, one is in Wales and one is the Continental European Region.

IGs and regions have Liaison Officers who serve in the following disciplines: Public Information, Employment, Prisons, Health, Probation / Criminal Justice Services, Telephones, *Share* or *Roundabout* magazine, Archives, Electronic Communications, Armed Services, Young People. These liaison activities are reported upon below. Also included is a report from the Literature Sub Committee, which revises and creates AAGB literature based on recommendations from the General Service Conference.

General Service Conference

The Fifty-Fifth General Service Conference was held in April this year, entirely online through the Zoom platform. It had been postponed from 2020 due to the pandemic. The theme was 'The Missing Link'. Eighty-nine Delegates from sixteen regions and 22 members of the General Service Board attended.

Marc D, Conference Chair (South West Scotland Region), Ranjan B, the General Secretary, and ten members of staff from the General Service Office attended. Also in attendance were seven Observers from the following countries: Bulgaria, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, and Romania.

The main content of the Conference consisted of: A keynote address from the Conference Chair, the annual financial report from the Fellowship's Honorary Treasurer, annual progress reports from various Trustees, and the six Conference Committees Chairpersons' reports detailing the deliberations on the elected Questions for Conference which had originated from the grassroots of the Fellowship.

These deliberations and recommendations were voted upon by the full Conference on the Sunday morning.

The voting system employed by Conference is as follows:

- A two-thirds majority in favour of the recommendation makes it binding upon the General Service Board to take action.
- A simple majority is just a recommendation to the General Service Board to take action if the people, time, and finances are available.

General Service Office (GSO)

GSO in York provides a focal point for the Fellowship which links individual members, groups, IGs, regions, the General Service Board, and the General Service Conference. Acting as the European Service Centre, GSO responds to enquiries worldwide, co-operating with service structures within other countries for mutual benefit. The staff of GSO and the two satellite offices (the Northern Service Office in Glasgow and the Southern Service Office in London) provide services that maintain these communication links.

General Service Board (GSB)

The GSB consists of a Trustee from each of the sixteen regions, as well as Trustees occupying the positions of Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer who, along with the General Secretary, form the Executive Committee.

The General Secretary is also General Secretary of the General Service Office in York and our Northern and Southern Service Offices. Currently there are also four Non-Alcoholic Trustees, who are able to relate to the general public without having concerns of personal anonymity.

Four full Board Meetings are held each a year, plus an annual workshop in July when Board Members reflect upon their personal effectiveness, their relationship with the Board, and the Board's effectiveness in serving the Fellowship of Great Britain as a whole. Each Trustee has specific responsibilities and works within the disciplines that are listed under groups, IGs and regions above and reported on below.

Sponsorship

As in previous years, to assist in the development of AA in other countries, we have contributed to the International Literature Fund and provided financial assistance from our Development Fund.

Sponsorship of the Sub-Sahara African Service Meetings in South Africa continues, shared equally with USA / Canada. The General Secretary, Ranjan, and Barbara O, General Service Board Trustee from the South Midlands Region, attended the Sub-Sahara Africa Service Meeting in September 2021, which was held online.

AAGB also provides the accommodation for observers to our Conference.

Finance

The Fellowship's finances have remained in a stable position despite the pandemic. The annual Gratitude Week continues to take place in the week following Founders' Day (10 June). During Gratitude Week all AA members are invited to contribute to the 'Gratitude Pot', in addition to their usual contributions.

AA Service News, Share, and Roundabout

AA Service News (AASN) is the General Service Board's principal medium for communication of service events and developments throughout all regions of AA Great Britain. It is published quarterly, with articles that emphasise, in particular, matters affecting our primary purpose: to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. The Winter issue contains the Conference Questions and the Summer edition the recommendations from the General Service Conference pertaining to those questions. Additionally, news and details about Parliamentary events in England, Scotland, and Wales, and other notable service events are published throughout the year in articles written for and by the Fellowship. These include General Service Board Sub Committee vacancy notices (and information on how eligible AA members may apply), regional Seventh Tradition and In Memoriam contributions, as well as a Concept or Tradition and a Calendar of AA Events in Great Britain and overseas.

Normally, copies of AASN are posted to the mailing contacts for all groups registered in AA Great Britain. During the pandemic, as we could not confirm which venues remained available for groups to use for in-person meetings, digital-only editions were produced and sent to all registered groups' email contacts. Each issue of AA Service News is also posted on our website, which continued through the pandemic. Because of the uncertainty around venues and events, the digital-only editions did not contain a Calendar of Events.

Share and *Roundabout* are our Fellowship's 'meeting between meetings' magazines which contain personal shares and useful information for the AA member. *Roundabout* is the Scottish magazine and *Share* is for members south of the border. *Share* 2022 diaries and calendars have been printed and are available from GSO.

Archives

The Archives Sub Committee and the Archivist Network was able to continue meeting on Zoom during much of the pandemic. The latest sub committee meeting, however, was held in person in York, while the recent Network Meeting was a hybrid, with some people in York and others, including the CER Archivist Peter S, present via zoom.

The three-year project to transfer the General Service Office Archives to the University of York's Borthwick Institute has continued. This involved a comprehensive assessment of the Archive held at GSO, along with the Archive material already in their storage facility. The catalogue has been completed. The three-year period will end on the first of December 2021, and the Board is reviewing the future relationship between AAGB and the Institute.

The 75th Anniversary Publication Working Group

The Anniversary Working Group was set up by the Board to oversee the production of a special publication along the lines of *Share* and *Roundabout* to commemorate this momentous occasion in the history of AAGB. It will also celebrate *Share* magazine's 50th Anniversary and commemorate the major contribution that *Roundabout* has made to AA's history especially in Scotland. It comprises of members from the Archives, *Share*, *Roundabout*, and 75th Anniversary Sub Committees and provides regular reports.

The working group has met regularly over the last year and its work continues. Nearly all the draft regional histories have been received along with some service discipline histories.

75th Anniversary Convention

At Conference 2016, the decision was taken to hold a celebratory convention celebrating 75 years of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain. The work has continued over the last two years and we are very excited about the event. Tickets are on sale and the sub committee reports progress in the registration for the convention, a growing number of volunteers (over one hundred so far!), and the appointment of Regional Ambassadors by several regions to help promote the event – to be held at the Leeds Arena.

Registration and full information are available on the convention website (www.aa75.co.uk), where the days, hours, minutes, and seconds until the convention are being counted down.

We hope to see you in Leeds, 10th to 12th June, 2022!

Armed Services

There was quite a bit of activity before lockdown – we were invited to Army Health Fairs and to give talks to senior ranks and to give presentations to medics. All this fell by the wayside as the barracks went into total lockdown in March 2020. We have continued, however, to have some communication.

The Armed Services Sub Committee has continued meeting on Zoom and we have tried to keep in touch with the various branches to maintain our contacts and create new ones wherever possible.

We've been able to have some presentations with Health Departments (e.g., Nursing Staff and some frontline staff) and these have been well received. The Armed Services 12th Stepper list is being updated and we are seeking additional volunteers.

One of the things that has been started in the Armed Services was the Blue Light Initiative. There has been contact with the Police and the Paramedics and we have a contact for the Fire Brigade. We are expanding this to include the HM Coastguard, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), and Mountain Rescue – although because of the pandemic, there hasn't been a lot we've been able to do.

The Blue Light Initiative has also become part of other disciplines.

We continue to offer support to the intergroup and region Armed Services Liaison Officers (ASLOs).

Electronic Communications

The website (www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk) has been very busy with the addition of a Coronavirus News page, with which we've attempted to keep members up to date with changing government regulations. Online meetings were new to many and we offered tips on how to set up and securely run online meetings using a few of the platforms available. As the pandemic progressed, some face-to-face meetings were able to reopen and we tried to indicate these when the format changed.

All of this involved a huge effort by GSO staff and we are grateful for the many hours devoted to the task and for their help in providing practical suggestions regarding online meeting security.

The format of our mobile Meeting Finder has been changed to offer a better experience for mobile phone users.

The pandemic also had an impact on were our email based Online Response Service (ORS) and our one-to-one live ChatNow Service. Many members and newcomers used these services to check on meeting statuses, and / or to take the first step on the road to recovery. It is gratifying to note just how many suffering alcoholics have been helped by ORS, ChatNow, and of course the Telephone Helplines.

To preserve anonymity and to comply with GDPR, we continue to offer generic email addresses for posts at Intergroup and Region.

Employment

This has been a particularly difficult year for all of us and we in Alcoholics Anonymous are not immune. There have been a few high spots in Employment.

There has been communication in various areas. The AXA Insurance company asked us to give a presentation to its senior management teams. We arranged to have two, a week apart, and the tech was taken care of by a member. On both occasions it was a success. Several people asked questions in the Q & A sessions and told us they now knew where to send anyone who asks for help.

The Blue Light Initiative has been active and we have quite a few contact details for the Police, Fire Brigade, and Ambulance service. We are looking to expand the list to include HM Coastguard, River Police, RNLI, and Mountain Rescue.

We have been reaching out to intergroups and regions to give support to their Employment Liaison Officers (ELOs). Alcohol Awareness week saw Human Resources directors being sent a summary of stories. There has been contact with the actors' union and the BBC has been sent a pack of Literature.

We have produced a leaflet called "Now You Are an ELO" and have had some pull-up banners made.

Health

Last year was an important year for the Health Sub Committee (HSC). For the first time in five years a Health Seminar was organised with the approval of the General Service Board (GSB).

The Professional guest speakers were invited from within various sections of medical services, treatment centres, and relevant external agencies. The Health Sub Committee members were pleased with the response.

Then the pandemic forced all activities by Health Liaison Officers (HLOs) to cease overnight. Undaunted, the Health Sub Committee members were able to assist HLOs to adapt and find innovative ways to continue to fulfil our primary purpose. Throughout lockdown in most regions of AAGB, members of the HSC and HLOs communicated with health professionals whenever and in whatever way possible via emails, posting literature, and maintaining telephone contact.

Literature

The Literature Sub Committee submitted revisions to two pamphlets this year, resulting from the suggestions of the 54th General Service Conference in 2019, as well as needed updates to two other existing pieces, one card and one pamphlet. The revised pieces submitted and approved were:

- “Carrying the AA message to people who are deaf or have hearing loss”
- “Hints and Suggestions for 12th Steppers”
- “Growing into Service”
- “Now that you have stopped: 15 points”.

In addition, needed updates to our *Structure Handbook* and *Service Handbook* were submitted to Conference Committees and approved by Conference. For Conference 2022, revisions to two pamphlets and several sections of the *Structure* and *Service Handbooks* are being sent forward. All literature is available to order through the online shop on the website.

National Conventions

We have four National Conventions in Great Britain: the Northern, Southern, Scottish and Welsh conventions. Each convention has a sponsoring body made up of the surrounding regions. Each region has the responsibility of electing an equal number of members who together form the committee, which is directly responsible to the regions through an agreed Terms of Reference. Last year and this year, due to the pandemic, it was not possible to hold these conventions as face-to-face events, although the Welsh National Convention did hold a one-day online version in June 2021.

Work is progressing on all fronts in the hope that all four will be able to be back in 2022. The Northern National has been scheduled as a face-to-face convention for March of 2022.

Prisons

Normally, AAGB holds meetings within prisons in England, Scotland and Wales through the work of Region and Intergroup Liaison Officers working with local members. The Board Trustee with responsibility for Prisons liaises with the National Offender Management Service to discuss issues around access to prisons.

But with the pandemic, we had to look at various other ways of carrying the message. One was Postal Sponsorship, which is working quite well. Liaison Officers in HMP Verne received an award for reaching out to prisoners by mail. GSO holds a database of members willing to correspond with prisoners.

Another way was by Zoom, which was rapidly taken up. We worked to develop an Electronic Training Programme for Prison Liaison and Postal Sponsorship.

We also delivered *Roundabout* and *Share* magazines whether it be hard copy or online which was appreciated by inmates.

Probation

Throughout the country there are various liaison arrangements between intergroups and Probation Officers (in England and Wales) and Criminal Justice Social Workers (in Scotland). AA members working in this discipline will make themselves available to meet offenders who are being supervised in the community and offer to take them to an AA meeting. A proof-of-attendance ('chit') system also operates in some areas when the offender is subject to an Alcohol Treatment Requirement.

Activities this year have been severely affected by the pandemic. Our sub committee meetings have been successfully run via zoom and we have maintained contact with those in service by phone as well. We have dealt with various queries and information requests and we continue to manage the chit system, which is now adapted for online meetings.

We will be having a presence at the 75th Anniversary convention to include a history of Probation Services in AA.

We hope the work in the Probation Service will continue to grow and when situations become more normal, we can continue to build new relationships by which we may carry a message of hope.

Public Information and Communications (PIC)

Due to a growing overlap in responsibilities, the Public Information Sub Committee and the Communications Sub Committee (formerly Communications Working Group) were combined this year to form the Public Information and Communications Sub Committee (PIC).

The pandemic has introduced constraints and new opportunities for our Sub Committee. Our meetings have been maintained online and our annual meeting with Regional Public Information Liaison Officers (PILOs) was well attended, enhanced by the convenience of the meeting being held online, with a useful exchange of ideas and experiences.

We circulate a monthly *PI Service News* (PISN) throughout our Fellowship by email, sharing current and reflective PI experiences, event advertisements, and information related to our primary purpose. Two ‘extraordinary editions’ were published early in the current pandemic to share ideas and experience of how to continue carrying our message.

The main national events are our annual presentations at the three seats of government in Great Britain: Westminster in London, Holyrood in Scotland, and the Welsh Assembly. These events raise our profile with professional bodies including Members of Parliament, medical experts, police, members of the prison and probation services, and other professionals. We explain what we do and what we don’t do and how we can co-operate with the health, judicial, social services, and other organisations.

Survey

The Board set up the Survey Sub Committee to meet the remit of Conference 2017. A survey has been conducted approximately every five years since 1972. This time the sub committee was delayed in the implementation of the survey by about six months. The original plan was to do a postal survey but just as we had finalised the survey the pandemic occurred which threw our plans into disarray. The decision was therefore made to try an online survey, which was completed and the preliminary results reported at our General Service Conference in April (on Zoom). The response rate was lower than in the previous postal survey in 2015. The data showed that 93% of meetings were able to switch to an online format following the first lockdowns.

Telephones

The main source of enquiry for the person who asks about receiving help with their drinking problem is our free-phone national helpline (0800 9177650), which is answered locally through a divert system.

The National Telephones Sub Committee (NTSC) has continued supporting Regional Telephone Liaison Officers (RTLOs) and TLOs, especially in the time of disruption to the normal functioning of AA. Office based helplines were replaced with home based systems. The ability to reroute 0800 calls allowed calls to be shared nationwide. A ‘virtual’ 12-Step service set up to fulfil the gap left when face-to-face meetings became impossible. Telephone administrators (i.e., RTLOs) and responders use the AA website in their work. The ‘Where to Find’ has details of local helpline numbers for every meeting. Callers are put through to a responder in their locality.

In November 2019 a major restructuring of the Scottish helplines was completed, and now Scotland (as has been true in Wales for some time) has a national service.

The NTSC produces a newsletter twice yearly and in August of this coming year we will have a Telephone Seminar, to which all RTLOs and TLOs are invited. During this event we will look at what we do and how we can do it better. The Helpline depends on the RTLOs, TLOs, Telephone Responders, and Twelve Steppers, all of whom combine to provide an essential service.

Young People

Since Conference 2015 the role of the Young People's Liaison Officer (YPLO) has been formally incorporated into the service structure. Conference in 2016 agreed the addition of Chapter 12 about the role to the *AA Service Handbook for Great Britain*.

In the last two years the Young People's Sub Committee (YPSC) has continued to encourage those in intergroups and regions to take up the service. The sub committee had one face-to-face meeting in York just before the first lockdown where we were planning our next roadshow for June 2020. This was put on hold. Sub committee meetings since have taken place on Zoom. We have looked at all the literature available for young people to see if it needs refreshing. The Conference Steering Committee (CSC) was able to pass the new video and posters so that they can now be used by the Fellowship for 12 Step / Public Information work. In November 2020 we held the Region YPLO Workshop, on Zoom, and were able to invite intergroup YPLOs. As this is a relatively new post some of the Liaison Officers are the first people in the position. The workshop was a great opportunity for sharing of information and helpful suggestions on how to proceed.

GREECE

The background

The first groups in Greece started in the middle of 70's. They were taking place in the American bases, especially for the American soldiers. They were also open to all English-speaking alcoholics of the overall population. The Greek-speaking groups started in 1981 in Athens, which in time spread all around the country.

Bibliography

The books (recovery guides) of the AA which are handed out in Greek are:

- "Alcoholics Anonymous", 4th Greek edition 2010 (with four Greek stories)
- "12+12", 1st Greek edition 2000, ISBN 1-893007-02-2
- "Living Sober", 2nd Greek edition 2002 ISBN 978-1-893007-29-1 (newly translated)
- "As Bill sees it", 1st edition 2011, ISBN 978-0-916856-81-6
- "Dr. Bob and the Oldtimers", 1st edition 2016, ISBN 0-916856-07-0
- "Forming True Partnerships"
- "12 Concepts"
- Emotional Sobriety
- At the time being, the following books are being translated for publishing:
- "Daily Reflections"
- "Pass it on" (has been translated already)

A Translation Group, which is working out new titles for translation, has been created. In the past, the books used to be published in the USA. Today, they are printed in Greece with the treasury money of the Greek GSO. The books are disposed to the groups and members at the printing cost price.

Leaflets

In Greece the following leaflets are available:

- "My chance to live"
- "A newcomer is asking"
- "Is AA for you?"
- "Alcoholics Anonymous in your region"
- "Understanding Anonymity"
- "44 Questions"
- "Inside AA"
- "Public Information Guide"
- "What is AA? What does AA do?"
- "A message to the Young"
- AA as a result for the Health Care Professionals

There are also English copies of the following books:

- Big Book (hard and soft cover)
- 12+12 (hard and soft cover and pocket size)
- Daily Reflections
- Living Sober
- Came to Believe
- AA in Prison
- There are also books in other foreign languages:
- Big Book (in Spanish, French and Italian)
- 12+12 (in Spanish and Italian)

You can find information on our web page <http://aa-greece.gr/>

Each group locally can publish its own leaflets. For example, Athens group has printed 2 leaflets under the titles "who we are" and "members stories". Bibliography service includes translation, printing, storing, stock-taking and distribution of the books and pamphlets/leaflets. This service is supported by the treasurer and two assistant servants in co-operation with the translation group.

Every year, books (recovery guides) and pamphlets are printed and distributed to the groups, the Pan-Hellenic Committee of Public Information and to those interested, as well. Big Book has reached its 4th Edition as an indication, from January to May 2019, 450 recovery guides were disposed to groups, while at the time being (June 2019) there are still about 1000 guides on the shelves of our library.

Finances

A.A are self-supporting, declining outside contributions. Every group has its own treasury, supported by the contributions of the members who want and can afford a small sum of money. Every group spends its money on activities supporting its primary purpose of the A.A, as well as on the running needs of each group, which decides separately on its contribution to the treasury of the Greek G.S.O. Regularly, the Greek G.S.O. contributes to the treasury of the New York, USA G.S.O, with a certain amount of money.

The money of the Greek G.S.O. is spent on the translation and publishing of books and pamphlets, on the support of groups when they reasonably ask for financial help, on the holding of conventions and the running expenses of the office. The money is handled by the elected treasurer with his/her assistant in co-operation with an accountant, who is an outside collaborator. The treasury money is deposited to AA's bank account. The treasurer is authorized to make all the transactions using the bank account. The accountant takes care of all the necessary actions so that A.A are legal towards the Greek State and he is paid with the treasury money. The Greek G.S.O. has suggested the realization of a "business meeting" with the treasurers, for the carrying of the experience of this service.

A.A groups in Greece

Nowadays in Greece 23 Greek-speaking (4 new ones), 19 English-speaking, 2 Russian-speaking and 1 Polish-speaking groups are running.

In Attica there are 9 Greek-speaking groups (Athens, Ilion, Brahami, Phaliro, Chalandri, Glyfada, Stathmos Larissis, Attikon Hospital – this one is used by the patients of the hospital) and 3 English-speaking (Parthenon Group, North corner Group, South Corner Group.). The rest of the groups are all around Greece (Thessaloniki, Grevena, Kastoria, Katerini, Serres, Trikala, Corfu, Hydra, Mykonos, Paros, Patra, Preveza, Rhodes). However, since March most of them are running through Skype or Zoom due to Covid-19. Members from all around Greece and overseas Greek people can take part in this group, as well.

There are also several loners, Greek and English-speaking in various regions of Greece, like: Giannena, Zakynthos, Kefallonia, Kalamata, Sparti, Levadia, Lamia, Serres, Komotini, Rethymno, Chania, Heraclion, etc. The groups communicate with each other and exchange experience through Intergroup. In Athens three English-speaking groups are held, while during summer months English-speaking meetings are held in Chania, Corfu, Hydra, Preveza, Patmos, Rhodes, and Zakynthos (Zante), Folegandros, Kythera, Lefkada, Lesvos.

General AA Structure

AA groups in Greece take part in the Greek Intergroup with representatives that they vote themselves. Intergroup consists of five members of the Greek GSO (General Service Office) and of the group representatives. It is open to all AA members. Intergroup holds meetings six times a year, every two months. According to the Greek legislation, since we print and distribute books and pamphlets, our fellowship should have a legal basis with a head and a Taxpayer's Identification Number. For this reason, 15 years ago, the least possible legal society was created in the form of a non-profit organization under the name "Association for the Co-ordination of the AA Group Activities". For this purpose, a lawyer was assigned to draw up the relevant articles, which are deposited in the qualified institutional organ (Court of the First Instance).

According to the articles, the goals of the society are:

1. "The accomplishment of sobriety through abstinence from alcohol based on Traditions and Steps, in the way they are expressed by the universal fellowship of the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), as well as the bibliography, which comprises the copyright of the Alcoholics Anonymous.
2. The co-ordination of the work of AA Groups in Greece, so as to achieve the biggest possible carrying of their message.
3. The presentation of the work of the AA to special scientists of mental health, correctional institutions, as well as to social Groups.
4. The promotion of the AA work to the mass media in agreement with the Steps and Traditions of the AA.

The society will seek to become a member of the international Confederation of similar associations of European or international unions which it will co-operate with and to which it will announce its activities."

Every year elections based on the Articles are held and the five-member "Board of Trustees", which consists of the chairman, the vice - chairman, the treasurer, the secretary and the representative in the International General Service Office, is elected.

In the language of our fellowship, the Board of Trustees is a committee of Trusty Servants (Greek General Service Office), which consists of the co-ordinator, assistant to the co-ordinator, secretary, treasurer and the fifth member who is in charge of the bibliography. The elected members as well as the representatives are willing members to assume service, who fulfill certain conditions, such as their sobriety time and experience in service. These conditions are defined by the conscience of the Greek General Service Office.

The sobriety time required for each service is:

- Chairman /Coordinator: 3 years
- Assistant to the Coordinator: 2 years
- Secretary: 2 years
- Treasurer: 2 years
- Member in charge of bibliography: 1 year

There are two more substitute members elected to serve as assistant to treasurer and e-mail handler/ GSO Contact person.

The five-member committee holds separate meetings (business meetings) six times a year, every two months, for the purpose of preparing the Intergroup topics as well as for the operational and administrative central issues. These meetings are open to all members of A.A. Both in the General Service Office and Intergroup, members from all around the country can take part through Skype. Totally, six meetings of the Greek G.S.O and six Intergroup meetings a year take turns, while open business meetings of secretaries and treasurers are being programmed within the bounds of service of the Greek G.S.O, service committees formed for a short period of time, are brought into action.

These committees are the following:

1) Pan-Hellenic Committee of Public Information: The aims of the committee are the sharing of experience in Public Information issues, the activities of Public Information, the support and carriage of experience to groups who carry out their own activities of Public Information, in case they ask for it, the communication with authorities who ask information about A.A, etc. The committee holds meetings open to all A.A members twice a month. Representatives of groups from all over the country take part in this committee either physically or through Skype.

2) Pan-Hellenic Convention Committee. Each year a new Convention committee, which consists of members from one specific group of members from various groups, is elected. The aim of the committee is the organization and holding of the annual Hellenic (Greek) Convention, which takes place each October.

3) Bibliography group: It consists of the treasurer, the assistant to the treasurer and willing members who are called for support. The aim of the committee is organizing the library, the book distribution and the financial support of bibliography and printing.

4) Translation Group: It's formed by members willing to translate new book titles and pamphlets, as well as the elaboration of texts to be republished.

The money of the committees is money of the Central treasury. Every committee is an autonomous group which functions on the basis of the 12 traditions and refers to the Intergroup.

The means of communication (telephone and mail) are handled by members of the Pan-Hellenic Committee of Public Information.

G.S.O co-operates with the Committee holding the International Convention, which takes part in Greece in May every year.

Other services

Regularly and repeatedly both P.C.P.I and groups in Athens and the rest of Greece hold local activities for the service of our primary purpose. These activities are:

Presentation of the A.A program to radio and TV programs.

Presentation of the program to institutions, such as hospitals, prisons, police schools, etc.

Insertion of informative spots and publications in press, radio and internet.

Carrying of the message to alcoholics who are treated in hospitals or imprisoned.

Informing the relevant authorities associated with the issue of alcoholism, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, institutions of mental health and hospitals, church, government agencies as police, correctional institutions and mass media with forwarding letters with informative bulletin.

Dispatching our books to libraries of institutions and schools.

Sticking up bills in central public sports of cities.

Forwarding invitations to government agencies for their participation in the Greek Convention and in our open meetings.

Specifically:

For the last two years a great progress has been made concerning the spreading of the message to the still suffering alcoholic:

- 1) One-day conferences in various cities of Greece open to professionals and the public have been held.
- 2) A lot of interviews in magazines, newspapers, radio and T.V. channels have been held.
- 3) Internal training to groups of Public Information has been made taking into consideration the Greek mentality.
- 4) Visits to hospitals, prisons, schools have been paid. As a result, an A.A. group inside a hospital has been created.

- 5) A satisfactory contact with the ministry of Health - Addictions department- has been made. As a result, A.A. was placed on top of the biggest Addiction Supporting Centers.
- 6) The Chairman of the High Court was informed about the A.A. for the first time and was sensitized to take alcoholism into consideration in bringing about modification of the legislation.
- 7) The Chief of the Police Force was informed about the A.A. and the 24hour call has been proposed to be used.
- 8) The Mayors of three big cities were also informed about the A.A. and as a result, 3 new groups have been created in these cities.
- 9) The website of the Municipality of Athens included the A.A. web page, to which the professionals can turn for information and help.
- 10) Recently a lot of new online meetings, as well as Workshops on 12 Concepts and Service Workshops based on the material from the ESM YORK.

In conclusion, 5 new Greek, one Polish and two Russian groups have been created. Also a new online group “Rethymno 2021” has been created

Relationships with other countries

AA in Greece wish to promote the development of communication and relations with the AA all over the world, so as to enrich our experience continually and bolster up our primary purpose. The annual International Convention which is held in May each year, makes up an ideal opportunity for countries from all over the world to meet and experience to be exchanged. Our country keeps in continuous contact with the GSO of the USA, not only for bibliography items but for the carrying of experience and support that the Greek groups demand for various issues, as well.

In 2017(one delegate) and in 2019 two delegates took part in the 20th European Service Meeting, which was really helpful for the development of the Greek AA. This year one of the delegates was voted in York to present the 20th ESM Report to the Virtual WSM in New York and report back the WSM Report to the 21st ESM in York.

Internet and websites

For almost 17 years we have registered website page under the address www.aa-greece.gr Our page includes all the relevant information about us, like: "who the A.A. are", "what the A.A. do", "what the A.A. don't do", our bibliography, our meeting lists, announcements about conventions and events, related links, etc. In this page there's also the link in English.

So far, the page was informed and supported by trusted servants with relevant knowledge. Recently, the updating of the page was decided to be done by a professional - outside collaborator. There are also pages that contain entries about the A.A in Greece and our activities.

The committees of the Central Office inform the groups and members, after each meeting of the Greek G.S.O. and its committees, through e-mail.

Covid-19, despite the annoyance it provoked, created the need for a variety of online meetings, a fact that helped the message to be spread more widely to the still suffering alcoholic!

Two Marathons (whole day meetings) were also held virtually by a newly formed group, which were extremely helpful and interesting (based on relationship in couples and parenthood)

There's also the possibility to join the Continental Europe Region's online Skype meeting (aa- europe.net).

HUNGARY

AA in Hungary

In 1988 Budapest hosted the first ever Hungarian AA meeting, thanks to a local doctor, who had a Big Book, and a German alcoholic, who brought the message for the first Hungarian fellow. Within two years, AA's message reached the country, and after ten years there were 34 meetings in Hungary (11 in the capital). The Hungarian Service Office has founded at 1991. The first ever National Meeting.

Current AA structure

Our Board has eight serving, as the ninth (media) is unfilled at the moment. All of them alcoholics

- Katinka - Office
- Gergo – Literature
- Sandor – Carry of the message
- Gabor – Call center
- Norbert – Financial
- Zoltan – Archives
- Andras – Inter-groups
- Karoly – International contacts

Hungarian AA has no Regions. We have about 130 groups and 5.000 members.

Other Services

Here in Hungary, groups have contact with local prisons, hospitals and other services, like family doctors, social institutions.

Sobriety time required for service positions

In groups this time could be different, but usually it's six months. In the board, it's two years

General Service Conference

GSC meets four times in a year. Every Hungarian group has one seat. Online groups has a mandate too, as well.

Service Manual

Five of our most experienced fellows started to write our main Service Manual some months ago. Hopefully it could be done within a year.

Literature

We have nine books, and 23 pamphlets translated to Hungarian. Pamphlets are available online too. The only one book is available on our website is the Big Book, as we are waiting for the permission to post the others. We have a monthly printed newspaper too.

Finance Overview

We have three accounts: one for the 7th traditions, one for the national meetings and one for the literatures. All of these has a positive balance.

Relations with other countries

We don't have relations with other countries, but some of our groups keep contact with Slovak, Polish, Serbian and Romanian groups.

Internet & Websites

We manage <https://anonymalkoholistak.hu> site. Hungarian AA distance oneself from social media, but lots of Hungarian groups have Facebook-groups. There are online groups, like csakamainap.hu (which is a Facebook-alike site without real names and online meetings on it) and Skype, Zoom or E-mail groups

IRELAND

Brief Historical Summary

Alcoholics Anonymous was introduced to Ireland 75 years ago. An Irishman named Conor F. emigrated to America in 1929 and eventually got sober in 1943. He returned home to Ireland on holiday determined to carry A.A.'s message with him and met another alcoholic, Richard P, who was a patient at St. Patrick's Hospital in Dublin. They found four or five others and began to meet in one of their homes. They held the first closed A.A. meeting in Dublin on November 18th 1946 and the first A.A. group in Ireland was formed. The second group was formed in Bundoran, Co. Donegal in April 1948. When Bill and Lois W. visited Ireland in 1950 there were six groups in existence. By 1956, A.A. had grown to approximately 650 members in 15 groups. A.A. in Ireland is now in its 75th year and continues to grow and carry the message of hope to alcoholics with an estimated membership of approximately 15,000. There are in the region of 900 groups and meetings can be found in most towns and villages throughout the country.

The first meeting of the All-Ireland National Intergroup Committee was held in Dublin in 1968. At its second meeting in Newry, Co. Down, it was renamed the General Service Conference of Ireland. At the third meeting of the General Service Conference of Ireland in 1969, it was decided to set up a General Service Office. In 1970 premises were leased in Dublin and our first GSO was opened. The GSO relocated a number of times, settling in its current location in North Dublin 2007. In 1975 we established a Central Services Office in Belfast.

Current A.A. Structure and General Service Conference

This service structure begins with the A.A. groups. The groups send two General Service Representatives to a local Area Committee. Each Area Committee then sends four representatives to their Provincial Intergroup (Leinster, Connaught, Munster and Ulster). Each Intergroup in turn sends four elected Group Service Conference Delegates and the Intergroup Secretary to the General Service Conference of Ireland. Sobriety time required for service positions is clearly detailed in our General Service Handbook (see next section on Literature). The General Service Conference of Ireland therefore consists of seven Trustees (four alcoholics and three non-alcoholics), the 16 Conference Delegates, the four Intergroup Secretaries, the two World Service Delegates who serve at European and World Service Meetings, and a Secretary to the Board.

Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland comprises two separate but closely connected organisations: (1) The Fellowship of A.A. comprising Groups, Areas, Provincial Intergroups and the General Service Conference (A.A.) and (2) The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG (GSBAA).

The Fellowship of A.A. is what is known as an unincorporated body and as such it is not subject to Company Law or Charity Law. The Fellowship of A.A. is run in accordance with this handbook and in accordance with custom and practice built up over decades with its constituent parts being guided by their Group Conscience.

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG on the other hand is both a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital and a registered charity, so the company is subject to both Company Law and Charity Law. The Company operates in accordance with its Constitution and the seven Directors of the company are both Company Directors and Charity Trustees with specific legal responsibilities imposed on them by the Companies Act 2014 and Charities Act 2009 respectively. The company provides a range of services to the Fellowship including:

- Publication of *The Road Back* Magazine and the AA News Sheet
- Literature Publications
- Maintenance of AA's National Archives
- Management of national Public Information activities
- Management of the funds of the Fellowship that are not retained at Group, Area or Provincial Intergroup level for their own use
- Operation of the General Service Office (GSO)
- Management of the AA Website

The seven trustees form the General Service Board which, on behalf of the Fellowship in Ireland, runs the GSO in Dublin. The Central Services Office in Belfast is operated by Ulster Intergroup. The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous meets once per year with the GSCDs, Intergroup Secretaries and WSDs to exchange views and discuss any issues relating to their Provincial Intergroups (Conference, 1988). All Conference of Ireland decisions come by way of motions from the groups or through board recommendations. The GSB has now produced a Strategic Plan for 2020–2023 with a vision of providing clear and effective guidance to the fellowship.

Conference Sub Committees

At the 2021 General Service Conference of Ireland four subcommittees were formed to deal with pertinent concerns amongst members: Literature, Young Peoples Liaison Officer, Service, and Digital/Online Meetings. Each subcommittee met over a period of six months and brought proposals back to a Special Meeting of Conference where they were passed. In summary:

- Relevant Literature and pamphlets will be amalgamated into a pack to help GSRs
- A Young Person's Liaison Officer post will be created for first time in Ireland. The YPLO subcommittee will continue to meet to provide parameters and guidelines for the post.
- Guidelines for Digital Online Meetings and an updated Meeting Format to include online meetings will be published in the Green Service Handbook.
- In the Green Service Handbook emphasis will be placed on retired Conference Delegates to return to their home groups to serve as officers.

Conventions

The first All-Ireland convention was held in Dublin in 1958. The convention rotates yearly among the four Provincial Intergroups. The 2020 Convention was cancelled due to COVID and the subsequent lockdown. The 2021 Convention was held online and was very successfully and professionally hosted by Connaught Intergroup in Sligo. The next All-Ireland Convention will be held in April 2022.

There are normally about 15 area conventions held around Ireland during the year. Many areas and groups also hold gratitude days throughout the year. Some of these are now online.

Sponsorship and Service

There has been much discussion about encouraging members into service, the importance of member-to-member sponsorship and the benefits of service. To address this, at the 2019 Conference, Service Workshops were held exploring these themes: How can we improve Service? How can Conference members lead by example? What action can we as Conference take to encourage Service? How can we implement changes and in what timeline? Numerous suggestions came forward after discussion at areas and intergroups, which are being successfully implemented and the discussion continued at Conference, where important recommendations were made and sent out to all groups.

Country to country sponsorship is working well with ongoing sharing of experience and information. It was decided at Conference that a contribution to the International Literature Fund would be made in 2020. Ireland has been a strong contributor to this fund over the years but, due to the downturn in the economy, has not been able to contribute for the previous few years.

Services

Until March 2020, all the services such as Telephone, Public Information, Hospital and Prison were functioning well. The telephone service has continued throughout COVID, but visits to prisons and hospitals by members have not been allowed. These are going to slowly resume soon with the easing of restrictions.

Public Information

A public information kit was assembled by a Conference sub-committee and is available to PI committees throughout the country. It is proving to be a valuable resource in providing information about AA to areas such as Social Services, Police, Education, Hospitals and Company Human Resource Departments. It also inspires and informs members interested in PI. Business cards with phone numbers of the various area/intergroup telephone services have been provided and are available to the Fellowship. The board has also placed A.A. numbers in telephone directories, in such a way that these numbers will be featured in the main sections of the directories and not just the emergency and yellow pages sections. Our DVD *The Road Back*, continues to be widely used by public information committees and has been translated into a number of languages other than English. It is also available online and has Irish Sign Language and subtitled versions.

Literature

There are a wide range of A.A. books and literature available in English and some in Irish. *Alcoholics Anonymous* and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* are also available in Chinese, Polish, Russian, Spanish, French, Korean, Latvian and Lithuanian. A directory of meetings in Ireland, for use within the Fellowship, is produced and revised a couple of times yearly, and includes meeting times, locations, contact names and phone numbers.

A new Group Financial Guidelines and Record Book has been approved as an aid to service. The Group Information Sheet has been updated and is available for download on the website as well as in hard copy.

Service Manual

A *Service Handbook for Ireland* was first published in 1978 and since 1992 has been updated to reflect Conference of Ireland decisions on a yearly basis. All Conference of Ireland decisions are updated into the *Service Handbook for Ireland*. Considerable work was put into updating the current handbook at the General Conference Conference 2021 and it is now available online on the AA Ireland website.

Road Back and the News Sheet

The board publishes our magazine *The Road Back* every two months. It is called a meeting in print because it contains stories of recovery written mostly by members of the Fellowship. *The Road Back* was first published in April 1949. It is the longest continuously published A.A. magazine in Europe and is distributed worldwide. A News Sheet is also published bimonthly and is intended as an aid to service and to give information on A.A. events in Ireland and elsewhere. The News Sheet is a general service update for members, containing articles on the Traditions, articles on the history of A.A. and items relevant to service in the Fellowship of Ireland. The News Sheet is a bi-monthly publication produced by the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland. It is an aid to recovery and service and lists AA conventions and one day events. Each group receives approximately five copies per issue. It is now also available to view under the member's area of the website. Surplus copies of the magazine have been brought to Area and Intergroup Committees for distribution to Hospital and Prisons.

Archives

A great amount of archival material was donated to the GSB in 1980 and was made available to be seen in the GSO. A mobile archives display started in 1988 so that members around the country could more easily view the archives. During 2005, an archival company was engaged to review the archives and to put it into a database. The emphasis on archives remains on maintenance and the board is very grateful to everyone concerned and especially the many area committees who cooperate by sending in their minutes, which are preserved for posterity in digital form. The archives are available for visitors by appointment and for conventions on request.

Finance

Through the generosity of our members and their adherence to the Seventh Tradition, Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland is financially secure with a Prudent Reserve. We are 85% self-supporting from member contributions; the remainder comes from the sale of literature and convention surpluses. The Audited Accounts up to 2019, showed that the ongoing concerted efforts to reduce expense, as well as the generosity of the members of the Fellowship meant that contributions to GSO were healthy. However, the migration to online meetings with COVID has had a massive impact on contributions in 2020 and 2021 and we may soon need to dip into our prudent reserve if this trend is not reversed.

It is offset to some degree by a reduction in costs due to online meetings for room hire for AA meetings as well as Area, Intergroup and Conference meetings.

Website

The GSB operates the only official A.A. website in Ireland, which is for the use of members as well as serving as an aid to public information. It displays times and venues for group meetings, whether physical or online, who wish to have this information on the website and includes a translation service and maps giving the location of groups. Also displayed is a calendar of events from around the country, along with price lists and order forms for literature available from GSO.

The site includes many new features, including an online payment system which is particularly being availed of by members all over the country due to the pandemic. There is also an email facility included in the Members area where members of groups can email other groups and area and keep each other informed of AA news and events. Minutes from Area, Intergroup and Conference meetings are made available on the website thus ensuring that there is transparency at all levels of service in the fellowship. Group information can also be updated online which has been very useful during the evolving and everchanging situation of the pandemic. A link to all officially required information including a list of directors, annual accounts and company reports is now included on the homepage.

On the public area of the website there is information on meetings along with an area for professionals in the healthcare field. The AA film *The Road Back* is freely available to view or download and there is also a short-animated film titled *One Minute to Save Your Life* which offers information on alcoholism. We continue to update the site and add stories from *The Road Back* magazine.

Online Meetings

In March 2020 with the arrival of COVID 19 and the subsequent lockdown, physical meetings were temporarily stopped in Ireland. Groups from all over the county responded quickly and set up phone and online meetings which are a vital lifeline for members of AA and newcomers. The General Service Office of Ireland responded to these changes and physical as well as online meeting details are now available on our official AA website. The Department of Health has clarified to the General Service Board that alcohol support groups are an essential service which can remain open during lockdown. Hence, physical meetings that can adhere to government public health guidance are opening up again. Whilst there are limits on the numbers that can attend physical meetings right now, for many who did not adapt to the online environment, they are crucial.

ITALY

Good morning

My name is Massimo , I am an alcoholic and member of AA Italy.

Our **Structure** has not changed and you can refer to my previous report for details. It has not changed except for rotation reasons. The number of groups/ meetings during the pandemic might be reduced although the number of “online only groups” is growing and we are trying to find a solution for the listing of these groups in our structure. We are working for an up-to-date photography of AA Italy.

Other Services like Prisons, Hospitals and Public Information have been affected during the last year but a slow restarting begins along with the reopening of groups in presence with the precautions recommended from the Italian Government for the safety of every member and AA itself.

Sobriety time for Service position are foreseen in our Service Manual which is based on the original American one and it has been adapted to some Italian needs since the beginning. In our last Conference we have revised it completely and the Conference decided to revise it every five years.

Our **General Service Conference** was online for the first time, due to this method a first part of it was a 2 days Conference and we will complete a second part of it in October hopefully in presence.

Literature: a new edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous will be published in 2022 in coincidence with the 50th anniversary of AA Italy. It will have a new preface we are working on now, the graphic and colors of the cover will be the same as the first American edition of the Big Book.

Finance overview: pandemic affected groups in presence but contributions also. On the other hand with digital platforms we experience new forms of service and a drastic reduction of expenses for meetings, committees, trustee boards. Until November 2020 the balance contributions/expenditures was negative, but by December and beginning of 2021 this trend changed and there is a new start. In these up and downs we always keep in mind our first purpose “Carry the message” and we commit to balance income from contributions and literature sale with expenses to reach a modest credit balance to have also a prudent reserve, following the principle of the administration of a good family father.

Relations with other countries have also been affected for well known reasons, but AA Italy sends regular contributions according to the possibility: one year to the WSM and one year to the International Fund for Literature.

Our **Website** is always a “Work in Progress” to make it winning and more and more easy to reach and carry the message to the alcoholics that still suffer.

LATVIA

The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Latvia

Latvijas Anonīmo alkoholiķu sadraudzība

The first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous in Latvia took place on November 8th 1988 when four alcoholics came together to share their common problem under the patronage of a doctor/alcoholism counselor. This marked the beginning of a Fellowship that is about to see its 33rd anniversary this year. The medical profession played a key role in early AA in Latvia, as many alcoholics joined the Fellowship after leaving 28-day treatment facilities that began to spring up after the country's transition from Soviet rule to the capitalism of the 1990s. Being effectively a bilingual country where people speak both Latvian as well as Russian, the early groups depended heavily on Russian-language AA literature and odd pieces of local translations. In 2004 the official translation of the Big Book in Latvian was officially published.

According to the latest information available from the Latvian General Service Office, there are currently some 70 groups across the country, including 13 Russian-speaking groups and two online-only groups. Roughly a third of the groups meet in Riga, the capital and the largest city. Also, the GSO website lists a couple of Latvian meetings in Ireland and Chicago, USA.

Up until the last GSC meeting, which took place in May 2021, the Latvian general service structure consisted of a Board of Trustees comprising two board members (legally registered as such with the State Enterprise Register) and six independent service committees, namely, Corrections, CPC, PI, Finance, Literature and Conventions committees. All service positions were elected by and directly reported to the Conference. The previous Conference voted to commence a structural reform and elected a General Service Board consisting of nine Trustees, who were authorized to carry out the structural changes, one of which being the formation of their own service committees that would report directly to the Board and take over the planning and administrative work according to the principles of service set out in the Twelve Concepts.

The Fellowship is serviced by the General Service Office which is located in Riga and employs a part-time special worker, an alcoholic. The GSO provides support to groups, sells literature and carries out other vital service tasks.

For years the Fellowship has been publishing its own magazine, "Vīnoga", an equivalent of *The AA Grapevine*. Since July 2021 the magazine has gone fully digital and can be read here: www.aavinoga.org

At the moment the General Service Conference consists of group GSRs directly representing their groups, annually coming together at the GSC meeting. This is because the regional and intergroup levels of the service structure are in their infancy, which is hopefully going to change very soon. Latvia as a country has five geographical regions, including two in the west, two in the east, and Riga as a region in its own right. Groups in some regions have been known to regularly come together to discuss their local service needs; we hope these initiatives will provide the necessary impulse for the formation of active service centers, intergroups and, on a larger scale, regions.

The delegates to the Conference with voting rights are group GSRs and a couple of World service representatives.

In May 2021 the Conference held its first online meeting, resulting in a decision to organize another online meeting in November 2021. Although it has not been confirmed in the long run, suggestions have been voiced to stick to the two-annual-meeting format in future as well.

The Latvian Service Manual has been in the making since 2018, when the Conference authorized a group of trusted servants to begin the work on what is going to become our own Conference-approved set of guidelines. Much has been done already, but the crucial part of the process has been the drafting of the Conference charter in order to protect its integrity and traditional authority in light of the ongoing restructuring of the Board and its legal bylaws.

We've been lucky to have a wide variety of AA literature translated into Latvian, thanks to the continuous effort by our Literature committee. The list of items available in Latvian translation includes the Big Book, the Twelve & Twelve, Daily Reflections, Came to Believe, The Twelve Concepts for World Service Illustrated, The Twelve Traditions Illustrated, Living Sober, Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers, and a large number of pamphlets.

According to the 2020 financial report, 67% of the GSO income consisted of individual or group contributions; 19% came from registration fees for that year's Conference and conventions, and 14% came from the literature sales.

As with many Fellowships across the globe, Latvian AA too was deeply impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, with groups closing their in-person meetings and going online. Our website aa.org.lv played a crucial role in keeping the Fellowship and the general public informed of the current ways to join AA and recover from alcoholism. The Fellowship relocated to Zoom and Google Meet formats fairly quickly. The pandemic saw a considerable increase in literature orders by phone and email, which led the Board to consider improving the mechanism for online sales of literature and other service materials.

Thanks to the online format, Latvian AAs enjoyed the opportunity to discover many international meetings; many trusted servants were able to participate in service forums, seminars and conferences across the globe, which would not be so easily possible were it not for the Internet. Contacts have been made, which, hopefully, will develop into a productive cooperation for our greater good, serving our primary purpose.

To sum up, the five bullet points:

- The Conference has commenced a restructuring process
- To serve the Fellowship, a General Service Board has been created, consisting of 9 Trustees
- The Conference charter has been drafted
- New GSB bylaws are being prepared in cooperation with a lawyer
- The Fellowship is making use of the opportunities to carry the message via the Internet, including prisons, treatment facilities, as well as neighbouring countries where AA is just being born.

LITHUANIA

Brief Historical Summary (national A.A. development)

- A.A. Fellowship in Lithuania was established on 30 June 1988. First meeting of A.A. in Lithuania.
- 13-16 June 1991 – was held first Conference. First statute approved.
- In 1993 there was 8 A.A. groups, 3 translated AA books.
- In 1994 was opened A.A. Service Office.
- In 1995 was established A.A. Service Board, modified in 1998.
- In 1998 there was 46 A.A. groups, 5 translated AA books.
- In 2008 was approved new A.A. Service Structure with 7 regions that remains unchanged until this day. In 2008 A.A. counted 128 groups in Lithuania, 10 Lithuanian-speaking groups in foreign countries.
- In June of 2018 A.A. in Lithuania celebrated its 30th anniversary. The event was held in the Sports Hall of Palanga City. More than 1.000 participants arrived from Lithuania and other countries, including special guests – GSO members.

Groups and Membership

There are currently a total of 140 A.A. groups in Lithuania. 3 of these are English-speaking groups and 6 - Russianspeaking. There are 5 groups located in prisons, 16 Lithuanian-speaking groups are in foreign countries (United States, England, Ireland, Sweden, Norway).

Open A.A. meetings are organized by 18 A.A. groups. A.A. meetings for A.A. members with hearing impairments are held twice a month.

During the long-term restrictions of managing the COVID 19 pandemic, most A.A. groups held only online meetings on *Zoom*, *Skype* and other platforms. Once the restrictions have been relaxed and live A.A meetings have begun, some A. A. groups are also organizing A.A. meetings online.

Current Service Structure

Current Service structure was approved in 2008. A.A. groups in Lithuania are divided into 7 regions: Aukštaitijos, Dzūkijos, Kauno, Panevėžio, Suvalkijos, Šiaulių, Žemaitijos. The General Service Board consists of seven trustees, one from each of the region, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, the Vice-chairman, the Treasurer and the manager of the A.A. service Office. A.A. in Lithuania hires two employees – the head of the office and the accountant.

Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference takes a very important place in the A.A. Service structure. Usually Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference is held each year in November, for two days. Voting members are: Board of Trustees, five delegates from each region, representative of Lithuanian-speaking groups abroad, editor of A.A. magazine plus our ESM and WSM delegates. Also we are inviting guests, usually from neighbour countries (Latvia, Poland, Belarus, Russia). Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference work is assigned to the several committees (Finance, Internal, Public Information and Literature/Publishing) which prepare recommendations for the Board of Trustees.

Last year, for the first time, the Lithuanian AA Service Conference was held on the Zoom platform.

The Lithuanian A.A. Service structure is described in the Service Manual, created in 2008 and updated annually.

In 2016 it was additionally decided to hold convention of all groups representatives, just as it was before 2008. This convention meets in the spring, where most representatives of groups meet to share their group experience. Due to the pandemic restrictions in 2020 the convention wasn't held. This year (11th-12th September) more than 60 representatives from A.A groups and regional services met in general convention of representatives of Lithuanian AA groups to share their group experience about inventory meetings.

Other Services

Open A.A. meetings are held regularly in hospitals, detox-centers, addiction disease centers, psychiatrics, and other type of hospitals. We collaborate with the police, probation/criminal justice services, prisons, the army corps, and other various social work places. Due to the severe pandemic restrictions there where no opportunities to organise live A.A. meetings, but now they are gradually being updated.

Literature/Publishing Overview

A.A. Service Office in Lithuania publishes General Service Conference-approved A.A. literature. So far there have been published and distributed 15 A.A. copyright pamphlets/brochures and following books: *Alcoholics Anonymous (1991/2006)*, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (1992/2007)*, *Living Sober (1993)*, *Daily Reflections (1994/2008)*, *Came to believe (1996/2010)*, *As Bill Sees It (1999/2008)*, *A.A. Comes of Age (2011)*, *Twelve Concepts for World Services (2015)*. We also have an audio CD of *Alcoholics Anonymous (2008)*. Our latest book is 30 years history of A.A. in Lithuania. The publication is called literally *AA in Lithuania in 1988–2018 (Anonymous Alcoholics in Lithuania 1988–2018)*. In the words of compilers of the book, "The 30th anniversary of A.A. in Lithuania is just an excellent opportunity to try, at least in part, to look back at the events of our fellowship, to show that it works, and how it works."

Our periodicals are: quarterly magazine *Penktas kampas (The Fifth Corner)* and service leaflet *Aušra (Dawn)*, by the name of first A.A. group in Lithuania). All literature is on sale in our General Service Office, some books can be found in major bookstores and online bookstores. The book *Alcoholics Anonymous* can be read online on our website.

Currently a new edition of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" is being prepared (translating original stories and collecting stories of Lithuanian A.A. members). We have received translation approvals for the newly translated "The Twelve Steps Illustrated", "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated" and "Speaking at Non A.A. Meetings". These brochures should be released shortly.

Finance Overview

The financial situation is slightly worse than in previous years - income in 2021 decreased by 30% compared to 2020. Incomes from sale of the books and incomes from 7th tradition in recent years became near 60/40 percentage of annual income.

Relation with other countries

We keep in touch with A.A. in Latvia, Estonia, Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, England, Ireland, U.S., Canada and other countries, but recently there was no opportunity to participate in their A.A. events live.

Contact Information and Website

A.A. Service Office location: J. Basanavičiaus square 16, Birštonas city, LT-59211 Lithuania. Phone +370 319 45141, mobile phone +370 683 67786, e-mail: info@aalietuvoje.org. Website: www.aalietuvoje.org.

Today's challenges

1. The severe pandemic restrictions have made it difficult to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers and to attract newcomers to online A.A. meetings. The old-timers are slow to attend remote meetings, less of them are returning to live A.A. meetings.
2. On 13th September the conditions for covid pandemic management restrictions will change - this limits the ability to attend A.A. meetings for those who do not have a National Certificate (A National Certificate is for people who are either vaccinated, have had coronavirus or have been tested).
3. The current composition of the Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference does not fully correspond to the concentration of A.A. groups in the regions (some regions have many A.A. groups, new ones are established, in other regions the number of A.A. groups decreases). The disproportionate distribution between A.A. groups and elected delegates to the Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference no longer ensures equal representation of A.A. groups. In order to implement the changes that will ensure a more equal representation at the Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference, very careful preparation in good faith by all A.A. groups is required.
4. Internal communications of the groups, regional collaboration, unwillingness/ lack of motivation to serve, the gap between General / Regional Service Board and groups.
5. Class A (nonalcoholic) Trustees. The procedure for nominating/electing Class A trustee's is approved at Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference, but we still have no candidates for Class A trustee's. The challenge consists in novelty of the question, lack of experience.
6. Disagreements based on Traditions 1, 2, 4.

NORWAY

Norway has about 5,5 million inhabitants. That translates to about 14 inhabitants per square kilometers, or 36 inhabitants per square mile. The city of Barcelona has the same number of inhabitants as our whole country. Norway has currently 180 home groups, plus six groups abroad, with a total of 2000 members. This makes for great distances between A.A. groups in some areas, and from time to time, difficulties in getting the service structure to work properly. Particularly it is a problem to maintain the structure in the northern part of the country.

Historical Summary

The first group of Alcoholic Anonymous was established in Norway in 1947 in Oslo, the capital of Norway. One year later a group was established in Bergen on the western part of the country. Norway was the second country in Europe to introduce the AA-program to a suffering alcoholic.

From the start in 1947/48 to the middle of the fifties there were an enormous increase in members and groups from 2-3 groups counting 200 members to 50 groups counting approximately 2000 members. The visit of Bill W. and his wife Lois in May 1950 was obviously a great inspiration to growth and resulted in establishing of many new groups in most part of the country. The establishment of several A- clinics in the fifties and sixties resulted in an increase of members in AA-groups.

The “Clondyke-periode “ in the fifties and sixties is definitively history. The number of members are approximately at the same level to day as it was thirty years ago while the number of groups has increased to 180. The result is difficulty to maintain the enthusiasm and will to do service in groups with few members. In rural areas we notice closedown of some groups.

However, the pandemic situation when the Covid 19 resulted in lockdown of most groups, many groups established digital meetings not only for their own members which made it possible for members in every part of the country to find a meeting. The lockdown of the country has resulted in thinking otherwise how to reach a suffering alcoholic.

Structure

The Group : (180)

Each group has a Group Representative (GR) elected for two years by the AA-members
Represents the group in the district meetings.

The District : (21 districts)

The District Representative (DR) is elected by the groups in the district for a period of three years among the members with at least three years of sobriety and represents the groups in the district on the annual General Service Conference.

The Region: (five regions)

The DRs and the member of the General Service Board representing the region meet to inform and discuss matters of importance.

The DRs and the groups are responsible to find the right candidate to be launched as a member of the General Service Board.

The General Service Board

The General Service Board consists of three Class A trustees and seven Class B trustees; one of those as alternate.

The GSB class B members are responsible for a committee; finance, literature, public information, policy and communication within AA.

The General Service Board choose among at least two candidates the new candidate to be a member of the GSB for a period of five years.

GSB are responsible to carry out the decisions made of the General Service Conference which is arranged once a year in April/May.

General Service Office

The General Service Office is located in central Oslo with one fulltime employed general manager. The opening hours are 10.00 – 14.00 five days a week.

Our Service Manual, Handbook for AA in Norway, contains the most current information needed for doing service at any level in the AA-structure.

The Literature committee is working on a new addition of this manual.

Finance

Financially we have a current budget of NOK 2,0 mill. (\$335,000USD). Roughly half our income derives from Seventh Tradition self-support and half from sale of literature.

The pandemic situation has resulted in less income last year, both in Seven Tradition self-support and sale of literature even many groups have digital service for payment.

Literature

We have translated most of the relevant, approved literature. The Big Book is now also published in pocket-size without any reduction in the regular-size Big Book sales.

The literature committee is working on a new translation of the Big Book and most of the literature has been recently updated and given a modern layout. We also have audio-editions of the Big Book and “Twelve and Twelve.”

Boks 205, our national “ Grapewine “ has its own author and a print-run of 800 copies.

Telephone and Internet

Technically, we are well equipped both to inform and communicate.

Our website www.anonymealkoholere.no is continuously being updated and improved.

Our national service phone, which is operated by local groups on a rotating basis one month at a time, is working satisfactorily but a new and better organization of this service will be launched autumn 2021.

Service and Information

The Intergroups and groups around the whole country are doing service and set up meetings in hospitals, treatment centers, prisons, schools and other institutions which may have interest and possibility to reach a suffering alcoholic.

Relations to other countries.

For the last two years the co-operation within the Nordic Countries has been cancelled.

Lack of obvious items in common resulted in an agreement to take a break.

The Swedish International Delegate has now taken initiative to a digital meeting to discuss the future co-operation between Sweden, Denmark and Norway as a start.

POLAND

Brief Historical Summary (national A.A. development)

Here is the list of selected “ THE FIRST” events in A.A. structure in Poland

- Autumn 1957 - The first idea to set up the first A.A. structure in Poland resulted in an unsuccessful attempt.
- September 1974 - The first A.A. group was formed in Poznan.
- 15.10.1983 –The first intergroup started in Poznan.
- 13-14.11.1982 – The first Provisional National Service Committee of A.A. was set up.
- 06-07.10.1984 - The first National Congress of Alcoholics Anonymous was held in Poznan – attended by GSRs from 34 AA groups mandates. Trustees’ Body comprised of seven trustees was formed.
- 21-25.10.1984 The first participation of Poland’s A.A. structure representatives at the World Service Meeting in New York.
- 08–10.03.1985 - The first official participation of Poland’s A.A. structure representatives at the European Service Meeting in Frankfurt
- 23.03.1985 – The first National Service Conference of A.A. Poland was held in Czestochowa.
- 23.03.1985 - The first edition of the "Anonymous Alcoholics Movement" bulletin was published
- 04-07.07.1985 - The first official participation of Poland’s A.A. structure representatives at the A.A. International Convention in Montreal
- 01.08.1986 - The first edition of Poland’s A.A. national bulletin “Zdrój” was published.
- 15.06.1991 – The first official edition of the Big Book "*Anonymous Alcoholics*" was published and distributed throughout Poland A.A. structure.
- 18.12.1993 - The first A.A. region in Warsaw was formed, one of the current fourteen regions.
- 01.06.1995 - The Foundation “Alcoholics Anonymous National Service Office in Poland” was registered. The Board of Foundation was formally set up, and all members of the Board of Trustees were included .
- 09.09.1995 - A.A. National Service Office (GSO) was established in Warsaw. The first director of GSO Management Board was appointed.
- December 1995 – The first edition of the national newsletter "Skrytka 2/4/3" was published.
- 01-02.03.1996 - The first National Convention was held in Gdansk.
- 17-19.03.1996 - The first licenses to reproduce and distribute 4 books and 22 brochures were obtained from AAWS.
- 18-20.04. 2002 - The first International East European Service Meeting was held in Warsaw, attended by representatives from 26 countries.
- 12-16.10.2014 – The first hosting in Warsaw, Poland of the 23rd World Service Meeting.
- 16-18.08.2019 - The 45th anniversary of A.A. in Poland.
- 49 GSC made decision to change the time of conference from autumn to spring.

Current A.A. Structure

The main purpose of A.A. in Poland is the same as that of each A.A. group in the world – to carry the message to still-suffering alcoholics wherever they are and whoever they might be. Poland has 3100 groups divided in 94 intergroups in 14 regions including the European Region, which comprises over 300 Polish-speaking groups in 16 countries.

General Service Conference

The General Service Conference is composed of:

- a) members of the General Service Board
- b) 56 delegates elected by 14 regions
- c) General manager and GSO staff cooperating with the Conference committees.

The Conference is held annually in a location chosen by the Conference delegates in the preceding year. The delegates work on four Conference Committees: Agenda, Finance, A.A. Literature and Publications, Public Information and Cooperation with Others outside A.A. Topics and questions addressed to the GSC come from the whole A.A. in Poland to the Conference Steering Committee to be reviewed, selected and passed on to four Conference Committees for drafting final answers and voting by the Conference.

General Service Board

The Board of Trustees is made up of 14 alcoholics (one from each of the 14 regions, currently we have 1 alcoholic trusty B position not fulfilled), 5 nonalcoholic members and 2 national delegates serving as the European Service Meeting and World Service Meeting delegates representing Poland.

Each trustee and national delegate has specific responsibilities and works on one of the trustees' committees. The trustees and national delegates are also available for other A.A. services activities as requested by the GSB and GSC.

General Service Office

The General Service Office is a registered foundation providing effective and efficient legal, financial and administrative services for the whole Polish-speaking A.A. Fellowship. Its functions also cover publication and distribution of A.A. literature, coordination of national conferences, workshops and other A.A. events. Finally after many years GSO has moved to modern office.

Service

Service starts at the group level. Groups have a chair, a secretary, a general service representative (GSR) who serves in the intergroup, a treasurer, often a literature representative and sometimes a welcoming committee.

The intergroup responsibilities include carrying the A.A. message locally, often to hospitals, correctional and treatment facilities, and organizing information meetings for professional communities.

The regions run contact offices, telephone and online service; they also provide public information. Their additional task is to ensure that Conference delegates have easy access and adequate logistical and financial support to visit the intergroups and groups in their area and discuss with them the Conference agenda and report back the Conference conclusions and recommendations.

For over 30 years we have been carrying the A.A. message into correctional facilities. Due to covid 19 pandemic there are no meetings in person instead many groups have moved to the internet.

GSO general manager along with class A trustees participated in 24 – 26 June 2021 in the 46th Congress of Polish Psychiatricians.

Due to coronavirus most of activities such as yearly AA Convention, regional assemblies, intergroup meetings and General Service Conference took place on internet platforms like Zoom, Discord etc.

AA co-operate with professional communities, real friends of our Fellowship, and of course in the time of pandemic, contact and public information activity were restricted significantly. In some cities and towns A.A. groups and intergroups started providing public libraries with "Alcoholics Anonymous" to make it available to the professional community.

Sobriety time required for service positions

- Trustee Class B and National Delegate- eight years of continuous sobriety, desirable but not mandatory.
- General Service Conference Delegate – six years of continuous sobriety, desirable but not mandatory.

Relation with other countries including country- to- country sponsorship

We have established warm relations and inspiring cooperation with A.A. structures in other countries through common attendance at national and international A.A. events and through country-to-country sponsorship rendered at various levels of A.A. structure: groups, intergroups and regional services.

Our goal is to encourage those countries to participate in ESM and WSM. Our financial contribution to the ESM fund helps delegates to attend from countries who could not normally afford to take part.

In 2020 we were invited as observers to participate in GSCs in Great Britain and Ukraine.

Other forms of country-to-country sponsorship carrying the A.A. message worldwide have been applied for years to help jumpstart and develop A.A. in other Central and Eastern European countries, including but not limited to organizing workshops on Steps, Traditions, Concepts and Spirituality as well as seminars on Conference Charter and Service Manuals. Last August a group of Poland's AA's travelled to Moldova to organise workshop and informational meeting for professional community.

We try to be responsive to queries raised in email correspondence with current and past ESM and WSM delegates.

Finance

The A.A. structure in Poland is self-supporting. Before Covid 19, 38% of the costs of the GSO activities coming from members' contribution and the remaining 62% covered from literature sales. In 2020 sales of the literature went down over 60 % and response of the fellowship in those difficult days was magnificent, the members contributions went up over 100 %. Our prudent reserve remained untouched.

Workshops on self-support are held regularly at various levels of the A.A. structure including national workshop for all AA. treasurers that is held every year in September.

During last year GSB wrote the letters to all members of our A.A. structure to remind all of us that generous contributions and other financial support is needed to effectively carry the message of recovery.

Literature

Our GSO publishes GSC approved A.A. literature. So far we have published and distributed: *Alcoholics Anonymous, Living Sober, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, A.A. Comes of Age, As Bill Sees It, A.A. in Prison: Inmate to Inmate, Came to Believe, Daily Reflections, Pass It On, Dr. Bob and the Good Old-timers, and The Best of Bill and Twelve Concepts for World Service.*

We were granted a license to translate and distribute the book "Our great responsibility". Next Conference is going to make a decision for a new pamphlet for atheists and agnostics members of our fellowship titled "The word God". Third edition of AA – Service Manual will be printed and distributed shortly.

New book dedicated to alcoholics in jails, prison and correctional facilities comprising original stories of Polish AA's "A.A. in Prison: Inmate to Inmate" is already in distribution.

Our bulletin "Zdrój" and a service bulletin "Skrytka 2/4/3" are published bi-monthly. A special bulletin for professionals "Więści z AA" is emailed every quarter to over 700 persons. A new bulletin for inmates in prisons and jails "Nadzieja" is edited every quarter.

Our own pamphlets "Alcoholics Anonymous co-operated with professionals", "The treasurer service commitment – practical advices" were published.

For a few years we have had the ESM and WSM reports translated into Polish.

Each year the A.A. Fellowship in Poland contributes a sum of \$1,000 to the International Literature Fund.

Internet, Helpline and On-line Duty

Our GSO maintains an official A.A. website which receives over 1 000 000 **visits** yearly and it continues to grow.

Our IT trustees sub-committee is working on new website.

Internet is also used for internal communications between A.A. services, including GSB and Conference committees' forums and chats.

GSO, GSB and regions has started to use new internet communicators, replacing old one EMITENT which became outdated.

Our National Telephone Helpline has been operated for ten years by over 300 volunteers; last year more than 10 000 people were offered a helping hand.

Internet communication platforms such as Zoom, Go to Meeting, Discord had become very useful tool in carry the message, organizing the workshops and mainly AA meetings for groups which moved to internet during the time of the pandemic. Over 300 meetings weekly is taking place on internet.

PORTUGAL

The “formal” AA service structure in Portugal has now 22 years.

The 1st General Services Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous of Portugal was held in Colares, from 30 April to 2 May 1999, subordinated to the motto "To Serve United to Grow". This Conference recommended that the National day of A.A. be celebrated on 19th of March (date when, in 1994, all groups of Portugal were gathered for the first time in a service meeting).

Structure

Due to the pandemic, gradually, the groups were closed and most of them began having online meetings.

It was fantastic how quickly the community managed to overcome the difficulties caused by the pandemic, holding together so that we can continue to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Many newcomers arrived at the meetings and some, fortunately, have stayed sober to this day and are already doing service in their groups, despite being online.

Currently we have 69 face-to-face Portuguese speaking groups, 12 English speaking and 1 German speaking, totalizing 82 face-to-face groups.

We also have, 4 online Portuguese speaking groups and 2 online English speaking groups.

As the restrictions due to the pandemic ease, the groups began to open, respecting all recommendations of the Health Authorities and some of them now are also having hybrid meetings.

In what concerns the online groups, it was recently born an intergroup that intends to be integrated in the structure, subject being discussed.

Portugal is divided in 12 Areas (one of them hasn't had any A.A. group for a long time now and unfortunately we don't expect the scenario to change soon), and the groups belonging to a specific Area, through their GSR's, elect a Delegate.

The Areas Delegates are members of the General Service Conference, along with the General Service Board (with three Head Office Trustees, three Trustees for the Regions - North, Centre, South and Islands (Madeira and Azores) and two non-alcoholic Trustees).

The General Service Office is directed by the General Secretary, which is one of the Head Office Trustees. A non-alcoholic employee takes care of most of the daily duties and tasks: accountancy, answering the phone, receiving and posting mail, sending the literature packages... It is where the literature and archives are kept, and where the General Service Board and the National Committees' meetings take place.

All groups are linked to the AA service structure via their GSR.

Today, four of these Areas don't have any Conference Delegate but the others have one Delegate each. We have 11 Areas so the annual meeting of the Conference should have 11 delegates, the board of trustees (3 Regional Trustees, 3 AA servants who manage the GSO and deal with every aspect of AA and 2 non-alcoholic Trustees) and the Chair of the Conference.

At this moment we have 7 delegates and 7 trustees, that includes 2 non-alcoholic trustees who are mostly available for PI actions.

We still have just a few fellow members to serve at all places in the structure, and one of our highest concerns is lack of service structure servants. We see some good prospects, but for now they are still lacking some time and service experience. We hope to see this serious problem improved over time.

Other Services

The Head Office Trustees manage the General Service Office and the five National Committees, which are the following: Answering Service, Events, Literature and Publications, Public Information, Institutions and Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Internet and Websites.

Answering Service

This committee oversees receiving and answering help and information requests that come by phone or by e-mail. Our helpline (+351 217 162 969) is available for immediate answer every day from 10 am till 10 pm. Usually the calls are redirected to a cell phone, so that the servants don't need to be in the General Service Office to answer them. The Committee Chair answers the e-mails.

The committee servants meet once a month to share their experiences and discuss ways to improve the service efficiency.

All the data related to this service is registered for statistical purposes.

We also have a Service to Loners or Isolated Members that need to have some attention to grow.

Events

The Events Committee takes care of surveying the best facilities for the yearly National Service Forums and General Service Conference meetings, as for the biennial National Conventions.

Also, they help the General Service Board and the other National Committees to organize occasional service meetings.

Regarding the National Service Forums and Conventions, all the arrangements, such as registrations, rooms booking, invitations, agendas or pamphlets, are up to the Events Committee.

Once again, the restrictions resulting from the pandemic made us have to circumvent them by holding these events online and the final result was gratifying not only for those who participated in their realization but also for those who participated with their presence.

In particular, the Convection, which normally lasts for two days, this time, because it would be a new experience, was a 1 day conviviality.

We always left with a heart full of all the events, but because everything is new, because we all managed to overcome this difficulty that plagues everyone together, the union characteristic of our community was even more felt.

Literature and Publications

These used to be 2 separate committees but, due to lack of servants, they were united. This Committee is responsible for publishing our quarterly publications: magazine *Partilhar* and bulletin *Os Três Legados*.

The books and pamphlets publication is also their responsibility. The majority of such items is authorized translations from the English versions of AAWS Literature.

Public Information, Institutions and Cooperating with the Professional Community

Despite the lack of servants and the pandemic, this Committee has succeeded in corresponding to all the invitations for members sharing or lectures in schools, universities, polytechnics, college and police and army academies, which occur on an average of twice a month.

Regular contacts with the media are kept. At least twice a year a newspaper, magazine or TV channel asks for interviews. The non-alcoholic Trustees have been very cooperative in this matter.

A press release is issued to announce each National Service Forum, General Service Conference meeting and Convention.

The Areas Committees carry most of the service in prisons (with the pandemic this service is suspended because it is not allowed to enter) and treatment centres, but the National Committee is still busy organizing regular meetings with all the servants in order to provide new ideas and means to carry the A.A. message to more institutions.

This Committee is composed by four A.A. members, plus one General Service Board Trustee. They meet fortnightly.

Internet and Websites

This Committee keeps working on turning our website (www.aaportugal.org) more appealing, with the upload of videos and media contents, and improving its facilities, such as the online shop, the diffusion of all A.A. events, the constant updating of meetings information.

The visits to the Portuguese A.A. website have increased constantly, having now surpassed 6.000 monthly visits. New ways of IP through internet are being discussed.

In 2021, an app developed to mobile devices, called “AA num Clique” that provides direct, quick and easy access to some of the most useful materials on our website was developed by the Committee.

This Committee is also responsible for maintaining all the GSO computer and electric hardware, as well as keeping the computer archives safe.

General Service Conference

In 2020, due to the pandemic, the General Services Conference took place later than usually, in December and it was held online and the same will happen in 2021 as it will be held in early October.

But usually, The General Service Conference meets for three days, usually on the weekend before Easter. Actually, the General Service Conference is also the yearly Assembly for the non-profit association which is compulsory to exist according to Portuguese law.

The General Secretary is responsible for compiling the Conference Agenda contents, which are mainly the General Service Board activities and accounts reports, the Areas reports, the General Service Board Budget and 8 theme questions.

In June of the year before, the Agenda Committee asks all the groups to send suggestions of the questions to be discussed by the Conference. In September, the Agenda Committee meets to select the 8 questions that represent the majorly concerned subjects and again asks all the groups to answer to what are by that time called the pre-Agenda questions.

It's the Delegates task to sum up the groups answers and send their report to the GSO until the end of December.

The Agenda is distributed to all the Conference servants in February, usually at the National Service Forum.

The Conference has two Committees, each one taking care of discussing four of the questions, plus the Nominations Committee that only is formed when there are candidates for being Trustee for a Region, and the Agenda Committee which chooses the themes for next year's National Forum and General Service Conference.

Finance

Our finances are still short. Anyway, even during this pandemic period that we are going through, almost all groups are contributing to GSO and this is really good news.

Other subjects

As we have been explaining throughout the Report, the way to overcome the restrictions caused by the pandemic was using the new technologies that are currently available to us.

Given the fact that this is a new situation for all of us, more than ever it has been very important for us to share opinions and experiences with other countries that will help the community to reflect.

Above, we also said that, nowadays, there are four groups in Portugal that work exclusively online and created an Intergroup which integration in the Structure are being discussed.

One of the groups is an all-female group in which, as it is a special purpose group, several questions arise that will also be presented at our next conference for the community to reflect and decide on.

Relations with other countries

We continue to participate in all European Service Meeting, thus we feel that is a good and correct way of sharing experiences and to continue to grow in Unity.

We believe that, from this European Service Meeting, we will learn a lot about this new reality.

ROMANIA

Brief Historical Summary (national A.A. development)

AA Romania's history is a living history' one day at a time. This year "*The 30th Anniversary of AA in Romania International Convention*" celebrated our history as a legacy of experience, strength, and hope, passed on to other suffering and recovering alcoholics from its beginning on February 20, 1991, in Timișoara City to the present.

Current A.A. Structure

AA Structure at a first glance:

- 60 Romanian-speaking groups (one for women only), 1 International English-speaking group, 1 Hungarian-speaking group.
- 3 Regions and 3 Intergroups.
- GSO and its workgroups.
- GSB currently consists of 12 members (only one of them is a class A Trustee; GSO Manager is a non-voting member of GSB).

Other Services; for example, Prisons, Hospitals, Public Information, etc.

All existing collaborations (mostly with hospitals and members of clergy) with the professional community are maintained and improved.

AA Romania is developing a cooperation proposal for 112 Emergency Service through which some of the alcohol-related ambulance calls should be ended with the recommendation of the AA Recovery Program (our helpline phone number and website will be provided) by the 112 call center operators.

We don't have any groups and collaborations in/with prisons yet.

Sobriety time required for service positions

Recommendations for serving positions: GSR/GSB/GSO Manager/ESM or WSM Delegates: a minimum of 1/2/3/3 years of sobriety period.

A new guideline with the recommended minimum required sobriety and period for serving on different levels of the AA Structure was introduced in our AA Service Guide.

General Service Conference (processes, frequency, etc.)

The General Service Conference is held annually since 2016 (with a pause due to the pandemic in 2020).

The Conference sessions are divided into four Committees: *AA Literature, Prints and Archive; National and International Communication; Finance; Cooperation with Professional Community.*

Service Manual (does your country have its own manual?)

Since 2008 our own *AA Services Guide* provides us direction in the continuity of work in AA. A new version of the *AA Services Guide* was approved in 2021.

Literature/Publishing Overview (print/audio/video)

AA Romania legacy has a selection of:

- 6 translations of AAWS approved books (“*Alcoholics Anonymous*”, “*12 Steps and 12 Traditions*”, “*As Bill Sees It*”, “*Daily Reflections*”, “*AA Comes at Age*”)
- 2 translations of AAWS approved booklets (“*Living Sober*”, “*Came to believe*”)
- 21 existing pamphlets/9 are works in progress
- “*Noi Înşine*” is the national journal of AA Romania Fellowship
- “*Pass it on*” translation is in a draft version and needs to be edited for its approval, licensing, and printing
- A project of a new version of “*Alcoholics Anonymous*” translation is about to begin

Finance Overview (you may like to include the approximate percentage of annual income from contributions/literature sales and expenses, etc.)

The main sources of our income are: groups contribution, AA literature.

AA Romania has a unique telephone number for the 24/7 helpline, +40770CALLAA which allows everyone interested in the AA recovery program to contact us (we still have problems with paying a system for redirecting the calls to several phone numbers).

Currently, we are using a free service for the email helpline workgroup of GSO (a paid service will be mandatory to have for statistics and more volunteers to answer).

Yet, we don't have any experience with projects financed or supported directly by the AA members' contributions.

Relations with other countries (country to country co-operation, how does this work?)

“*30th Anniversary of AA in Romania International Convention*” was a landmark of 2021 in AA Romania. Held on February 27, 2021, the Convention helped us to strengthen our relations with AA members around the world.

We have a close relationship with the Moldavian Fellowship and cooperate with them in matters of AA literature and participation at events.

Internet & Websites (if applicable)

AA Romania virtual identity consists of:

alcoolicianonimi.ro - AA Romania website

noiinsine.ro - “Noi Înşine”, the national journal of AA Romania

We are also present in the *Meeting Guide Mobile App*

facebook.com/alcoolicianonimiromania - AA Romania Facebook page

Migration to an online environment for most of the AA meetings/events due to pandemic times:

- Plenty of online meetings (on Google Meet and Zoom platforms)
- The idea of creating a dedicated online meetings/events GSO workgroup was born

RUSSIA

According to the Central Service Office of AA Russia, 730 groups were registered as of August 2021. AA meetings are held in 70 regions of Russia. In large cities, several meetings are held daily, there are groups in which meetings are held from early morning until late at night. In smaller towns, meetings are held daily or several times a week.

Structure

There is officially one Russian AA General Service Conference, one General Service Council and one General Service Office (Alcoholics Anonymous Unity Foundation), which can be confirmed by the presence of more than $\frac{3}{4}$ Russian AA groups represented by delegates. In April 2021, the 32nd meeting of the AA Russia General Services Conference was held. It was attended by 41 delegates from 627, 7 trustees, the executive director of the office, 15 deputy delegates, 6 observers.

Conference participants are: delegates from groups that do not yet have local service bodies; delegates from AA serving local committees; members of the AA Russia Service Council; Russian AA delegates to international AA service meetings; executive director of the AA service office.

During the meeting of the Conference, committees are working to discuss issues on the agenda and recommend decisions on the main areas of service for AA Russia.

Decisions are taken by all participants in the Conference. At the meeting, the members of the Russian Service Council AA (RSO AA) are elected.

The recommended period of sobriety for delegates and Council members is 5 years. The conference in its work is based on the "Handbook for servicing the AA Commonwealth of Russia".

Literature

At the meeting of the Conference, the Working Group of the Literary Committee of the RNO AA was instructed to clarify the translation of the full text of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous". The work has been going on since 2008. Separate chapters of the currently updated translation are ready. translators work closely with GSO in New York. Traditions from the "Grape Vine" magazine will be published; it was decided to publish the brochures "Guidelines for Messaging in Health Facilities" and "Guidelines for Getting the Message in Correctional Facilities";

Unfortunately, the publication and distribution of unlicensed A.A. literature, an unofficial service structure called FOAA, continues at this time.

Interaction with Organizations

We have concluded many contracts with correctional and medical institutions. Due to the self-isolation regime, all kinds of contacts were blocked, and visits to institutions were suspended due to COVID 19. Where agreements were made, A.A. members delivered the message via teleconference and provided A.A. literature.

Finance

The main sources are voluntary donations, which make up 30% of the proceeds, 70% comes from the distribution of literature.

The Internet

The official website of AA Russia: aarussia.ru. District service structures also have their own sites. The RNO Committee for the development, support and coordination of the activities of the AA Commonwealth of Russia for the dissemination of ideas of health improvement in the online space was created. Over the past year, AA online groups have grown significantly, with about 300 groups holding online meetings. We conduct online seminars and meetings, to which we invite speakers from other countries.

Cooperation with Other Countries

GSO Russia maintains contact with AA in Belarus, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Great Britain. GSO also supports Russian-speaking groups in Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia), Mogilev, Lehde (Belarus), Haifa (Israel), Stockholm (Sweden), Helsinki (Finland), New York (USA), London (UK). For many years, our delegate has been participating in the AOSM.

We also participate in the world meeting of AA, interact with the GSO on licensing of literature, audio and video materials.

SLOVAKIA

Brief Summary

Slovakia, officially “the Slovak Republic”, is located in Central Europe, bordering with Austria, Poland, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Hungary. Its population is 5.3 million, the capital city is Bratislava and the official language is Slovak. In 2020, the Slovak AA celebrated its 30th anniversary.

Current AA Structure

In 2021 we have 52 registered groups in 33 cities with approximately 450 members across 8 regions. There is one Ladies and one Gentlemen group, both located in the capital city. Apart from the meetings conducted in Slovak we have one English, one Hungarian and one Russian-speaking group. Groups can choose to participate in their local area intergroup.

The fellowship is registered as a “*civic association*” with the Slovak Ministry of Interior under its legal name “Združenie pre služby Anonymným alkoholikom v Slovenskej republike” (Association for Services to AA in the Slovak Republic). The *civic association* is required by law to create a *general assembly* and this function is performed by our annual General Service Conference. The *civic association* has three statutory representatives, who are members of the General Service Board at the same time.

Most of our groups have a formally elected group secretary, a treasurer, and a General Service Representative (GSR). Those clustered in an intergroup also have an intergroup delegate. The GSRs often serve as the group’s delegates to the General Service Conference.

Other Services

We have regular AA and information meetings in 6 hospitals, 3 prisons and 3 rehabilitation centres. Our Public Relations Committee has been organizing and attending conventions and conferences of psychologists, doctors and other professionals, conducting interviews in media. The Bratislava-Trnava Intergroup co-ordinates activities of its member groups to organize local workshops, events and meetings.

Carrying this Message is the most important service. Sponsorship is on the rise but mostly concentrated in more populated metropolitan areas. Throughout the year, groups with more experience in the Twelve Steps conduct *Step-study workshops* at different locations of Slovakia. This helps us spread the word about the program of recovery; promote sponsorship and involvement in service. Some members use online technologies to sponsor newcomers in remote locations until more sponsors become available there. In the last 18 months online sponsorship has grown dramatically and has become an important tool for working with others in the ongoing pandemic crisis.

This year we hosted the 23rd Slovak National Convention in Eastern Slovakia from 10 to 12 September. The event was also attended by our friends from other countries, namely the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. At conventions we always co-operate with other 12-Step fellowships, the members of which are welcome to attend ours and organize their own meetings.

We established cross-country co-operation including sponsorship between groups, members and service structures, mainly with Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the UK, Denmark and the USA. We have been blessed to be able to participate in the European Service Meetings which have been a tremendous source of information and experience. Our upcoming plans include organizing Service and Traditions workshops because we see some room for improvement in understanding and, more importantly, practising these within our Fellowship.

General Service Board (GSB) and Sobriety Time

The General Service Board currently consists of 22 members:

- 1 Class A trustee (*non-alcoholic*)
- 8 Class B trustees (*sobriety time required: at least 6 years*)
- 1 Chairperson (*6 years*)
- 1 Deputy Chairperson
- 1 General Service Office Administrator (*4 years*)
- 1 Treasurer (*4 years*)
- 2 ESM/WSM Delegates (*4 years*)
- 1 “Prameň” (Water Spring) magazine representative (*4 years*)
- 6 Committee Chairpersons (*usually 3 years*)

There are six permanent Committees: Literature, Organizational, Service Manual, Public Relations, Online Communication, and Financial.

The GSB member nominations, elections and their service responsibilities are guided by the Conference-approved Service Manual. The GSB oversees our General Service Office, located in the city of Nitra, Western Slovakia. The Office is managed by the Conference-elected GSO Administrator.

General Service Conference (GSC)

Each year, generally in April, we hold our *General Service Conference* in a city approved by the previous conference. In 2021 the GSC was held online via Zoom.

The GSC is made up of one delegate from each group (*sobriety time: at least 3 years*) willing to participate in the GSC and members of the General Service Board. Standing committee-chairs participate as well. International and local AA observers are encouraged to attend and they are regularly invited to our GSC.

Our AA members attended some GSCs in other countries, which proved to be an invaluable source of experience. During the past General Service Conferences we dedicated great amount of time to present, explain and amend our Service Manual.

Service Manual

We use “*The Service Manual AA Slovakia*” approved by the GSC. Its overall composition resulted from work of the Service Manual Committee a couple of years ago. We took experience from other countries’ service manuals as a starting point and customized the information to better fit our local needs.

The material also includes „The AA Charter „and „The Statutes of the Association *Združenie pre služby Anonymným alkoholikom v Slovenskej republike*”. Every single amendment to the Service Manual proposed by the Service Manual Committee has to be approved by the GS Conference.

At the previous GSCs we focused on presenting, explaining and amending our Service Manual, which has proven to be a very useful asset to our fellowship.

Literature

AA Slovakia distributes numerous General Service Conference approved literature in the Slovak language.

The Books:

- Alcoholic Anonymous (3rd edition excluding personal stories except Doctor Bob's Nightmare)
- Living Sober
- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions,
- Daily Reflections (a reprint published in April 2021)
- As Bill sees it
- Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age
- Experience Strength & Hope.
- We have been finalising the first Slovak edition of “Pass It On”, which should be published and printed by the end of 2021.

The pamphlets: The AA group...Where it all begins, Is AA for you?, AA as a Resource for the Healthcare Professional, A Newcomer Asks, 44 Questions, Many Paths to Spirituality and others.

The magazine: Since April 2002 we have been publishing our magazine “PRAMENŇ” (Water Spring): It is being issued quarterly with about 300 copies per issue. The magazine provides personal stories of AA members about their experience, strength and hope, articles from guests, features about the 12 Steps and 12 traditions. Furthermore, there is information about AA groups, AA events and AA literature. Copies are distributed to treatment centres, libraries and AA groups. The magazine is self-supported.

Finance Overview

Our service structure is made up of AA volunteers with no paid positions. Our costs are mainly those for the GSO space rental, printing and publishing costs, PR-related costs and for organizing conventions. Our major source of financing comes from the sale of literature (60-65%) and also from group/intergroup member contributions (35-40%).

Note: Some groups associated in one specific Intergroup had decided not to contribute funds to the GSO but rather keep their funds at their local Intergroup level. They had also decided not to participate in any nationwide activities. This was mainly due to personal disagreements between some members within our Fellowship. We are making efforts to explain the importance of applying all of our Traditions at conventions and meetings and through articles published in our magazine.

Relations with other countries

AA Slovakia has very close and warm relationship with our fellows in the Czech Republic as there is no language barrier. We attend each other's events (conventions, 12-Steps seminars and workshops). In 2021, the members of Slovak AA participated as observers in the Czech General Service Conference and, reciprocally, the Czech members participated in our GSC. Our members are taking parts at different AA events all over the Europe more and more often.

We have an inspiring and flourishing relationship with AA Poland through common attendance of the AA events.

Internet & Website

Our official website (www.alkoholici-anonymni.sk) contains mainly group and meeting information (including phone numbers) and is regularly updated. In 2018 we established a telephone helpline for people looking for assistance and advice. Currently, we have been upgrading our website to become more mobile friendly. We have also enhanced the “search-for-meeting” tools.

The pandemic crisis brought about a rise of online meetings, mostly using the Zoom and Skype software. We currently register 10 online groups which, compared to the pre-pandemic number of 2, is a significant increase in Slovak terms. The General Service Board purchased Zoom licenses to enable groups to go online. The licenses are also used for Committee and Board meetings.

One of the original two online groups is an AA e-mail group called “Sober Space” where members share their experience, strength and hope on a 24/7 basis. The group was established in 2006. At present it has more than 750 Slovak and Czech speaking members living all over the world.

The other group is the Czech-Slovak Skype group named “Special Connection” which offers daily meetings (two meetings on Wednesdays). The online groups participate in our GS Conference and represent an invaluable resource for people unable to get to a physical meeting in their area.

SLOVENIA

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

First A.A. group in Slovenia was established on November 6th 1989. As the membership and number of groups grew constantly a need for some sort of connection between groups had to be organized. An Intergroup was established with an aim to exchange experience between groups, first of all concerning new members, public relation and anonymity. Soon intergroup was too weak for growing membership and in 2002 decision was made to establish democratic organization as it is in U.S.A and Canada, adjusted for possibilities, circumstances and conditions in Slovenia.

A.A. STRUCTURE TODAY

Today there are 33 groups "IN PERSON" and 14 groups ON LINE in Slovenia with approximately 450 members. Other words – Covid 19 epidemic eliminate 19 groups "IN PERSON" and established 14 groups "ON LINE – yet – the number of all active members (participants) reduced from approximate 600 to 450.

This data is changing as epidemic situation in the country changes almost "a day at a time". The Conference of AA on March 21st 2015 established new/improved Organization of AA Slovenia: Each group (of course – groups ON LINE organize themselves differently) has a chairman, treasurer, literature man and a delegate (General Service Representative), elected for two year period.

General Service Conference (GSC) takes place once a year. Each group among its members elect one GSC delegate. All delegates join at the Conference, listen to Committee reports of last year and discuss the next year program. Every second year the delegates elect one third of new GSB members. Administrative and technical tasks for the Conference are done by GSO.

General Service Board (GSB) is responsible for all the activities accepted at the Conference. It consists of 9 members (1/3 are non-alcoholics, who promote the management of alcoholism in various fields of the society and support the activities of AA, 2/3 are alcoholics that are sober for at least 5 years, know well the structure of AA functioning, are able to serve with their knowledge and have the capacity so lead and connect people). The members of GSB are: Chairman, who is Class A -non-alcoholic trustee, the secretary, 2 members – non-alcoholics and 5 members – alcoholics, that are also leaders of one committee (*for public relations, for publications, finances, for electronic communications and for AA meetings*). Each committee consists of three members with four years mandate. Previous, present and future (previous delegate cooperating in, but is not member of GSB) leader rotate on their posts every two years.

General Service Office (GSO) is formed by the members of GSB. They function also as administrative workers of the Board. We don't have professional employees in GSO. 24hrs service for still suffering alcoholics is covered by AA servant.

Finances committee takes care about planning, disbursing and reporting to Conference about finances once a year. Covid crises reduce One year budget of Fellowship under 3,000 € (before Covid - 10,000 €.) Main incomes are from contributions 75% and literature 25% (last year and a half – just opposite)

Committee for Public Relations Collaborates with media: notes about AA in newspapers, occasional TV shows, we have announcements in national TV station CPC with Medical school (yearly informative meeting for doctors specializing in psychiatry), Faculty for Social Work, and Centers for Social Work. Several times a year we arrange informative meetings for patients at alcoholic clinics. One AA group is in penitentiary where inmates are convicted for more than three years, inmates in other penitentiaries are allowed to join AA meetings outside.

Committee for publications is comprehensive. Included are, besides three elected rotating members, several A.A. members with professional skills: translators, editors, editor of Slovenian A.A. magazine Koraak and webmaster for webpage.

Alcoholics Anonymous, 12&12, Living Sober, Daily Reflections, and As Bill Sees It, ten pamphlets and three leaflets were translated and printed so far, all licensed by AAWS. Our magazine Koraak is printed twice a year, containing contributions of A.A.'s. This year we have published publication on our 30th anniversary of AA aimed at professionals and interested public.

Relations with other countries runs mainly through the connections we established with our cooperation at ESM and WSM meetings. Past Delegates supply our fellowship with information and encouraging members and our structure to make international connections and ask for experience.

ON LINE MEETINGS specially make possible relations with other countries – more maybe members from other countries.

From 2012 we organize **International AA Convention** in Gozd Martuljk- Kranjska Gora which is growing and is increasingly welcomed among members.

In 2021 will Convention take place in spite of critical epidemic situation (of course – with regulation measures).

Committee for electronic communications: All information for the alcoholic who is still suffering are available on telephone: +386 [69 665 478](tel:+38669665478). There is also the web page www.aa-slovenia.si with relevant information and the list of meetings in Slovenia. E-mail addresses: info@aa-slovenia.si international@aa-slovenia.si

SWEDEN

Structure

A.A. in Sweden was founded in 1956. Today we have about 460 groups; there are also English, Finnish, Icelandic, Polish, Russian and Spanish-speaking meetings. There are also about 20 Swedish-speaking groups abroad and three online groups.

The General Service Board consists of eight trustees, one from each of the six regions and one Class A members and two international delegates. The trustees of the board and the international delegates are elected by the Service Conference.

Assisting the General Service Board is:

- the members of the Board of Association Alcoholics Anonymous in Sweden
- the following committees: Finance, Economy, Information, Literature, Nominations, Policy, IT, National Hotline and Archive
- the General Service Office

The committees are composed of members with sound professional knowledge in conjunction with solid A.A. experience, which facilitates their handling of their various agendas. The person who calls the committees together is a member of the General Service Board, except for the Nomination Committee.

The Alcoholics Anonymous Association in Sweden is a registered non-profit association, founded in 2001 and represented by the General Service Board. The association runs the publishing business and is also responsible for the General Service Office. The General Service Office has one full-time and one half-time employee.

For all the above assignments a clear description of the service post and the qualifications desired is provided.

A.A. in Sweden has had its current structure since 1999. The GSB decided in December 2012 to review the structure for central service and appointed for that purpose a working group, which has submitted a final report in December 1, 2014. This report is implemented since august 2015. The final report also includes a comprehensive review of our *Service Manual*, which now has been in work for one and a half year.

Literature/Publishing

The approved A.A. literature today consists of 11 translated books and one book published by A.A. in Sweden. There are 20 booklets and pamphlets, in addition to decals, shades, CDs, DVDs in Swedish.

The magazine *Bulletin* – “the meeting between the meetings” – is published six times a year and is economically self-supporting through subscription fees.

We also have an excellent newsletter, *Service letter (Servicebladet)* published four times a year, which contains service information from GSB, International delegates, The Alcoholics Anonymous Association Board in Sweden, GSO and *Bulletin*.

Information

The Swedish website, www.aa.se, has been expanded and is an important link in the network of carrying the message. The meeting list is available. During the past year about 1,500 literature orders were made via the web shop, i.e., 90% of the total sales.

There are today about 15 local information committees.

The new website is now working with the latest technology since august 2015.

Finances

A.A. in Sweden is still not self-supporting by own voluntary contributions. Approximately 50% of our income comes from the sales of literature.

A.A. in Sweden has decided to pay the full fee for two foreign delegates to the World Service Meeting, hoping that by doing so will make it possible for new countries in A.A. to participate in this very important event.

A.A. Sweden has also been able to contribute to the International Literature Fund (ILF)

Working With Other Countries

Norway, Denmark, Finland and Sweden are normally taking turns in hosting the annual Nordic Meeting. We are now working to start up this meeting again since they have been postponed due to the Pandemic.

Events during 2020/2021

The Service Conference 2020 was held in June as a Zoom Meeting and so were also the Service Conference 2021.

The two World Service delegates participated as delegates in the World Service Meeting in New York 2020 it was a digital (zoom) conference since the world was impact with the pandemic.

The Country Meeting in 2020 where cancelled due to the Pandemic. It should have been held in August. Unfortunately the Country Meeting 2021 had to be cancelled as well. Our hope is that the Country Meeting could be held in August 2022 as planned.

The Big Book is now translated into Swedish (3 TH Edition) and we are happy to say that it sells very well. The Literature Committee is now busy working with booklets and pamphlets, so they are in line with the new translation of the Big Book.

We also translate Our Great Responsibility.

The special situation during 2020/2021

2020 was a very peculiar year. In the beginning of the year a group were working with a document for educating groups in the structure of AA. As the material was ready, Corona came. In Sweden we did not have a lock-down, but still a lot of restrictions.

We learned to wash our hands, keep distance to each other, to stay outdoors if we could, and did not travel if we did not had to. And of course this affected AA. Many people did not go to meetings, because they were afraid. So many on-line meeting started. Convents and bigger meeting were cancelled. GSO did not meet physically, they had Zoom-meetings.

Our office in Stockholm closed down for visitors, and the two employees worked from home most of the time.

Many members took contact with AA-friends that felt bad in this peculiar situation. They often meet outside, for an “AA-meeting while walking in nature”.

Members in groups who met physically kept distance, washed their hands in hand-disinfection, no hugs, and prayed the Serenity-prayer sitting down, without holding hands.

And of course, no physical WSM!

TURKEY

In the year 1988, the A.A. members living in Turkey, after having gone through meetings with Aegean University Psychiatry department, they have initiated first A.A. Meetings, gathering once a week taking place in the University Hospital. The same year İstanbul and Ankara groups were formed.

In 1989 in Ankara 7 Turkish AA members and 11 American AA members gathered together to realize the first Turkey AA Convention. After this convention AA Groups in Turkey started to form all over Turkey. Today we have about 32 active groups all around Turkey. Today we have a big convention twice a year and regional conventions 3-4 times a year. During these conventions AA members find the opportunity to discuss how to best run the fellowship in their own cities, groups and also on a country level.

In the year 2001, A.A. Turkey General Service Committee and Office were established. In year 2010 yılında working principles of 12 concepts adjusted to Turkey and Committee Office Job Descriptions were adapted and accepted. Turkey General Service Committee organizes a country wide convention twice a year. Regional committees organize other regional meetings several times a year. Turkey General Service Committee, Regional Committees and Groups organizes panels, speeches and meetings to transmit A.A.'s message. They provide a helping hand to any alcoholic in need and directs them to a related group.

Turkey General Service Committee provides all book and booklet needs of all A.A. group translates books to be published. Since the year 1988 when first AA Meeting was held, the AA literature started to be translated by our fellows. After year 1994, the process of getting AA Literature translations approved started. Today all of the main AA Literature exists in Turkish, however a committee of English Speaking alcoholics worked on renewing the translations. Our Big Book and 12x12 books have been translated and approved by the WSO and we are merge of printing it.

GSC maintains and updates www.adsizalkolikler.com - website. The website is a very big website with vast amount of information for both the newcomer and the current AA member. AA website has been renewed concerning newcomers, al-anons and professionals. Our website is 90% complete right now. We are currently working on Professional aspect of the site.

General Service Committee coordinates relationships between groups. Most importantly, it serves as the protector of 12 Traditions & applies 12 Concepts while representing A.A. in national addiction related conventions and government institutions.

ADSIZ ALKOLİKLER YARDIMLAŞMA VE DAYANIŞMA DERNEĞİ – ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS SOLIDARITY AND SUPPORT ASSOCIATION, has been formed on 7th February 2018 with all necessary legal approval and authority taken from government offices. The official address has been changed and registered as: KOCAREİS MAH.İLKİZ SOKAK 22/8 ÇANKAYA ANKARA.

The Association now, with its legally recognized identity, joins and organizes panels, conferences in hospitals, prisons or other governmental associations and supports the AA groups activities with the necessary Literature.

All AA Turkey activity is based on application of 12 step recovery program, protecting the 12 Traditions and following the 12 Concepts in Service. At each hour, at each city, there is an alcoholic helping another alcoholic to recover in line with AA principles.

UKRAINE

The first group of Alcoholics Anonymous appeared in Ukraine in 1989, so this year we are celebrating the 32nd anniversary of A.A. in our country. At present there are about 130 active A.A. groups in Ukraine. They are attended by about 1,500 A.A. members. (NOTE: For the time being some groups are conducting their AA meetings online on Zoom, Skype, Viber, etc.)

There are five functioning regional service structures: Kyiv, Volyn, Western Ukraine, Poltava and Prydniprovyia. Fourteen groups in Crimea, and 10 groups in Donbass, which were formerly in A.A. Ukrainian's service structure, continue to function and are listed on the website of A.A. of Russia.

General Service Conference

Our 23rd General Service Conference was held in Dnipro in May 2021 (22nd Conference was held on Zoom). Participants in the Conference included five trustees representing five A.A. regions, our Class A trustee, the international delegate to the World and European Service Meetings, delegates to each of the four Conference committees, the chairman of the "Pravlinnia" (the committee overseeing the General Service Office), the office worker at the General Service Office.

During the three-day Conference many important questions were dealt with and resolved and newly elected trustees and delegates assumed their service positions, while those whose terms were up rotated out.

Unfortunately, due to quarantine restrictions related to COVID-19, none of the three invited foreign observers were able to attend our Conference.

Our Class A trustee, who was elected to the General Service Board in 2019 to help the Board with its service work, was reconfirmed again. Nadiya Pyrkalo, who is a psychiatrist from Poltava and familiar with Alcoholics Anonymous, was elected onto the Board at the 21st General Service Conference in May 2019.

The Southern Ukraine Region, comprising A.A. groups from the cities of Odessa, Mykolayiv and Kherson, did not send any representatives to this Conference.

General Service Board

The General Service Board of A.A. in Ukraine at present consists of seven members: five Class B trustees elected at regional service conferences, a Class A trustee and one international delegate to the World and European Service Meetings. We meet monthly (more often if necessary) on Zoom and have two board meetings where we meet face-to-face. (COVID-19 has impacted our ability to conduct our quarterly Board meetings in person, and as a result we also will be conducting them online for the foreseeable future.)

Committees

We have four active standing Conference committees: Literature, Information, Organizational and Finance.

General Service Office

At the 23rd Conference, a new chairman of the Ukraine's General Service Office was elected - Olena S., from the Western region.

The office of the Ukrainian Service Center of A.A. (Ukraine's General Service Office) relocated from Kyiv to Poltava in May 2016. It is open three days a week and has one part-time paid employee. Calls and emails are answered daily. The office manager, who volunteers his time, is also head of the Office's oversight committee ("Pravlinnia").

Literature

There is a large number and adequate selection of A.A. books and pamphlets approved by General Service Conference in the Ukrainian A.A. service office. A.A. literature is distributed through the office by mail, through regional service structures, as well as at weekend forums and conventions in several cities in Ukraine.

We continue to focus our efforts on building up an inventory of A.A. literature in Ukraine. This includes preparing layout for printing, and working on translations and licensing agreements. We are working in close contact with A.A.'s G.S.O. office in New York.

The literature committee continued to translate brochures into the Ukrainian language in 2020 and 2021. Two brochures were translated and printed in Ukrainian – «AA and Internet», «Treasurer's notebook».

All newly translated and printed pamphlets, as well as those that are reprinted, are designed to look like the A.A. literature currently printed by A.A.W.S in New York.

In 2020 we printed an updated translation of the Big Book in the Ukrainian language. We received editorial approval for it from A.A.W.S.

In August 2021, the newly printed Service Manual of AA Ukraine was presented at a seminar in Poltava: "Service at All Levels of the A.A. Structure." The manual was developed based on manuals of several A.A. structures, including U.S./Canada and Poland. Our aim was to have our own service manual, which describes the service structure in Ukraine, to inform those already active in service work, while also attracting other A.A. members to become involved in service.

We are continuing our work of gathering recovery stories from A.A. members in Ukraine and will be translating selected stories from the English language Fourth Edition of the Big Book. They will be included in future reprintings of the Big Book in Ukrainian. This work is moving slowly.

AA of Ukraine also received 500 copies (the first translation) of the Big Book in Ukrainian from the GSO. We are distributing these books free of charge to our «professional friends» and rehabilitation centers.

Our A.A. magazine, *Dzherelo* ("Wellspring"), is published twice a year and is distributed mostly among A.A. groups and A.A. members in Ukraine.

The magazine is printed in Ukraine's two most widely used languages, Ukrainian and Russian. We print 200 copies of the magazine and almost break even.

Finances

Our projected expenses in the budget for 2021 total 262,000 UAH (app. 8,300 EUR). Projected total income from literature sales was 220,000 (7,000 EUR). Projected income from the 7th Tradition was 20,000 UAH or about 8% of the total projected income. However, due to uncertainties created by the COVID-19 crisis we may find ourselves operating at 70-90 percent of our projected budget, both with regard to income and expenses.

This year we were also able to make a contribution to the International Literature Fund, something we have not done in a while.

Informational materials and A.A. group directories are published with funds from contributions from A.A. members and groups.

Our monthly income allows us to pay for office rental, wages for our part-time office worker, office supplies and equipment, telephone and Internet access. We have also been able to provide some free Ukrainian language A.A. literature to several European countries that have Ukrainian residents, including Poland, Italy and Portugal.

Meetings, Forums

More than a dozen major A.A. celebratory forums are held throughout Ukraine during the year. One quarterly meeting of the General Service Board was held in Dnipro (May) and other two were held on Zoom.

Our International Delegate attended the World Service Meeting in New York, USA (Zoom), in November 2020

We also continue to organize service workshops to share, learn and carry the message within our own A.A. community. Seminars on Steps, Traditions, Concepts, Carrying the Message, Sponsorship, Home Group and other topics have been organized by Regions.

In March 2020, the General Service Board's organizing committee held a seminar on carrying the message into correctional institutions in Stryi. The seminar was attended by AA members from throughout Ukraine. Our AA friends from Poland assisted us with the seminar, which was also attended by corrections workers, several of whom were guest speakers.

In January 2021 a seminar geared to group treasurers was held on Zoom. Topics covered were the importance of the 7th Tradition and the distribution of money in A.A.

In June 2021, a seminar: "Steps, Traditions, Service" was held in Kriviy Rih. Participants and speakers shared their experience of working the steps, studying and applying Traditions and carrying the A.A. message to prisons and "closed" institutions.

Our General Service Board continues to reach out to Ukraine's A.A. members. Board members and A.A. members involved in service at the regional level attended several special outreach meetings held mainly in cities with new groups.

Public Information

Over the past two years, much work has been done to produce audio and video clips to inform the public about A.A. These videos are broadcast as free public service announcements on television and radio (FM stations)

We use the print and online media by supplying them with informational articles about A.A., as well as announcements about the time and place of A.A. meetings. We have also organized press conferences with television journalists before A.A. forums/conventions. Additionally, radio interviews are an important part of the work we do in bringing A.A.'s message to the general public.

We have had fruitful results in our interaction with state social service agencies from sharing our experience about alcoholism and recovery with them. We also provide literature racks with A.A. brochures to hospitals, detoxification and rehabilitation centers, and prisons and make sure that they are refilled with literature.

Prisons

Before the introduction of the lockdown due to COVID-19 in March 2020, A.A. of Ukraine was actively carrying A.A.'s message of recovery to prisons in Chernihiv, Poltava, Zhytomyr, Drohobych, and Kryvyy Rih.

It is not possible to visit prisons now. But we hope that in the near future we will receive permission from the government to visit prisons again. During the lockdown, we collected and put away money for this purpose.

Internet

A.A. Ukraine's official website (www.aa.org.ua), which has been in operation for 14 years, was improved and upgraded. It has information about the Twelve Steps of A.A. and Twelve Traditions of A.A., and lists addresses and meeting times of A.A. meetings in Ukraine. The sections "Announcements" and "News" are constantly updated with information about upcoming A.A. events held in various cities in Ukraine and in other countries. The section titled "Service" provides the minutes of the last three General Service Conferences and our Conference and service structure by-laws. The literature section describes the literature that is available in both the Ukrainian and Russian languages from the General Service Office. Other sections of our website provide information for newcomers, professionals and the media.

We make use of the internet for service meetings as we continue to hold committee and General Service Board meetings on Skype.

International contacts

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, international cooperation was minimal and mostly took place on the Internet.

We interact with the A.A. service structures in Poland, the European office in the UK and the G.S.O. in New York. Often (before COVID-19 lockdown) members of our national and regional service structures regularly take part in service conferences and conventions in neighboring countries.

As mentioned earlier, our international delegate participated in the 26th World Service Meeting in New York, USA (Zoom), in November 2020.

Committees & Workshops

Service Committee

Chair: **Tobias D** *Denmark*
 Alternate: **Juha I** *Finland*

Aliaksei Y – *Belarus*
 Aleksandr M – *Russia*
 Andris K – *Latvia*
 Dunja P – *Croatia*
 Guido H – *Germany*
 Joseph A – *Malta*
 Karl G – *Iceland*

Marius L – *Lithuania*
 Massimo F – *Italy*
 Moira S – *Ireland*
 Nevena B – *Bulgaria*
 Oleksandr S – *Ukraine*
 Rene F – *Czech Republic*
 Tadeusz C – *Poland*

The Chair will open the meeting with the Preamble and welcome the delegates who will be invited to introduce themselves.

Format of committee: delegates will be invited to share any relevant experience on the topics below very briefly, followed by open discussion.

- I. A) On what basis are decisions made about what literature gets translated? Discuss the process your country uses to ensure that translations are accurate and do not change the message from the original.

Tadeusz C – Poland: At the beginning our publishing history, decisions were made by individual members. Because of it we got the 12/12 translated first instead of the Big Book. Now we have a literature committee, and sub- committees, they make recommendations, and all the positions are approved by Conference. Recently we have heated discussion on publishing the small brochure “The Word God” designed for atheists and agnostic members. Before Conference make final decision, wide consultations are in process. Now we concentrate on accessibility. People with different kind of difficulties, not only newcomers. They are among us, and sometimes we don’t see them. There is a need for large print, sign language, audio format books and pamphlets.

Rene F – Czech Republic – we have translated most of the books and leaflets, now it is just the remaining leaflets. When I was there, we ask the participants of national events to tick their priorities regarding what to translate next, and then we follow the results in the Literature Commission.

Oleksandr S – Ukraine: In Ukraine, we have a Literature Committee that meets and makes the decision which books and brochures to translate. In Conference we talk about which to send forward and receive approval from GSO. We are working on the Ukrainian Big Book with Ukrainian stories and are working on the Daily Reflections.

Aliaksei Y – Belarus: We use literature in Russian and have never translated to Belarusian Russian. When I am working the programme we read the Big Book in the best translation, from a special committee in Russia. Conference voted against the regional translation, as it was not a reliable translation. Our main task is to prepare the message clearly, without distortion.

Nevena B – Bulgaria: We registered as a non-profit company in 2015 and held our first Conference in 2017. We have existing translations of the Big Book, 12 x 12, Living Sober, Daily Reflections, Living Sober, Dr Bob, Came to Believe and As Bill Sees It. They were translated by non-professional translators within the family of AA Bulgaria. The translation decision is made by needing to carry the message, for instance we have a book on serving the prisons, we ordered it from online and it has been translated by members of AA, but this is not an official book which is licensed. We are waiting for a licence from GSO New York to translate and print the Young People leaflet.

Moira S – Ireland Everything that is agreed at Conference in the GB is adopted by Ireland, which makes our lives easier. We had special permission to translate some of the cards like the Serenity Prayer into Irish. As we have a strong Polish community, we also have their literature, along with Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian.

We made our own Public Information film called 'The Road Back' which is available on our website with subtitles and Irish Sign Language. We also have published our own pamphlet 'Guidelines for Public Information'. Our GSB publishes a bi-monthly newsletter as well as a magazine 'The Road Back' to keep members informed. We haven't translated the Big Book into Irish as we think it would be too expensive and may only sell a couple of hundred copies.

Massimo F – Italy: All the official literature of AA has been translated and published in Italy. We will probably translate anything new from the United States. Some old-timers talk about a 'Yellow Book' translated by amateurs, but nowadays our members of AA – 2,3 or 5 of us- translate, and a committee look at the translation, modify it if required, before sending it for license approval.

Marius L – Lithuania: Our service office publishes general publications, which are usually approved first by our national Conference. They decide what should be published. All translations are done by professionals and checked by AA members, and always edited by a professional editor, then sent to New York for licensing and permissions. We have 15 copyright pamphlets and books. Today we have 9 books and 13 pamphlets in Lithuanian.

Juha I - Finland: We have AA for 73 years in Finland, so all the main literature has been translated. We have the AA Literature Service Committee which looks at new publications from World Services / Grapevine and looks at whether to modernise old literature. Any of our Groups can make a suggestion, which goes to the Service Committee to look at. The Service Board make a recommendation and AA Publishing Inc makes the final decision, then the literature is sent for licencing.

The Language of the Heart was translated by a professional translator who is also a member of AA. The new edition of the **Big Book**, which the Service Board has formed a new committee to look at, will also incorporate member's stories from Finland.

Guido H – Germany: The German literature is also read in Austria, South Tyrol, German-speaking Switzerland, part of Romania (Transylvania) and East Belgium. Parts of our literature are available on different media.

For example, we have four versions of the **Big Book** (pocket book, large print, audio and e-book) with the same content. The Conference agrees to translate new literature and the recommendation goes to the **General Service Board**. They refer it to the literature team which does the translation free of charge. Afterwards the translation will be sent to **GSO** for approval and licensing. The ideas for items like e-books and audio books come from within our community and are sent to **GSO** for agreement before we start the production process.

Andris K – Latvia: It is from private initiative from someone active in the service area. In my knowledge there hasn't been any Conference proposals to recommend that we need a certain piece of literature. We don't have a procedure, so this has been an issue for some years. If we read something that we want to translate, we don't have a process, so it is down to individuals to get it done. But we are beginning to see the need for this so that we can have a process for translation and production.

Alexsandr M – Russia: The decision on new translations is made by the **AA Russia Conference** (based on the proposals of the **Literature Committee**). A new translation (or a new revision of an old translation) is sent to **GSO** to verify consistency with the original. The printing and distribution of literature is subject to approval by the **GSO**.

Tobias D - Denmark: We have all literature translated. We have decided that the **General Service Conference** should decide if any new literature is needed, as we have experienced some people thinking we will publish anything that is translated. We have made a new translation of the **4th Edition Big Book** and it is interesting to ask how the message is kept relevant and true to the originals.

Karl G – Iceland: The **General Service Board** in Iceland appoints a special committee to translate AA material. New version of the **Big Book** is under way in few months. It will be the third time the book is translated, first it was in 1976 and second time in 2003.

I. B) Has your country an adequate variety and supply of literature to serve the fellowship's needs? What criteria do your country use to determine the price of literature.

Moira – Ireland: We add a small amount to the cost of books coming from the US which covers the cost of postage. Publishing can be very expensive, so we haven't published an Irish language version of the Big Book. Our income is 80% from contributions, 20% from literature.

Juha – Finland: We cover our costs and in some cases a bit above if needed. AA Publishing Inc. will make the final price decision. For example: the current price for the Big Book (in Finnish) is 12€. Next edition will probably be a bit more expensive. We have also outsourced the storing and shipping the literature orders.

Tadeusz C – Poland: We haven't raised prices in 10 years but feel we need to now, as the price of the paper has tripled rapidly. We keep prices so that we can also help build our prudent reserve until everything is clear, and no-one objects to this 'surplus' on sales as it can cover the cost of many leaflets which we give away freely to hospitals, professionals etc. So we have to raise the prices, but it is balanced.

Tobias D - Denmark: I see the American price is much less than Denmark prices, ours is almost double the cost. I don't know why. I am not sure how much it costs for publishing, I haven't seen the cost although I have been several years on the General Service Board. I know in Iceland they are selling it to only cover costs and do not make any profit.

Nevena B - Bulgaria: I have been told the price of books is determined by the publishing costs, we usually have a surplus on the cost to help our reserves.

Massimo F – Italy: I can't say exactly how much we charge over the cost price for publishing, except to say we start with the cost of the printing, but I don't know what we charge on top of that. We have a different - lower - price for the Service Manual and Public Information.

It does not mean we are making a profit, but we are having a balance of contributions from literature sales and helping us to keep the service alive, like a good father would.

Alexandr M – Russia: The conference of AA Russia in 1997 decided (and in 2011 it confirmed it) that the maximum mark-up for literature published in our country should not exceed 50% of the cost of publishing. At the meeting of the Conference, the Working Group of the Literature Committee of the GSB AA was instructed to clarify the translation of the full text of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous". The work has been going on since 2008. Separate chapters of the currently updated translation are ready. translators work closely with GSO in New York.

Oleksandr S – Ukraine: About 80% of income for General Service Office is from sale of literature, usually our price is double the publication costs. For instance, the Big Book costs about \$1.50 dollars to print in Ukraine and we sell it for \$3.

Andris K – Latvia: Most of our income for GSO comes from Group contributions, only 15% from sale of literature. This is looked at as extra and determines the cost of the literature. The printing cost is one factor because we are a small Fellowship, we wouldn't sell a lot of books.

Guido H – Germany: During the last 30 years the price of the books has been nearly constant, except when we switched to the Euro. For example, as an e-book the Big Book is 7.50 €, more expensive in pocket book (12 €) or hard back (14 €). Our literature available as audio books (CD) costs 12.50 €. So the price depends on the media. We have to keep a balance on the costs / profits but as we are registered as a non-profit organization, we have to keep profits down so that we aren't liable for extra taxes or will lose our non-profit organization state.

Marius L – Lithuania: Our GSO is good at ensuring we don't have a shortage of literature, even during lockdown we could buy literature online. Our trusted servants are working hard to make it better, we have a wide variety of literature and easy access. In the future we want even more convenient ways to order, the cost depends on various factors, like cost, distribution, etc. and in my opinion, they should not cost too much money so that they can be bought and given to a newcomer.

Nevena B – Bulgaria: We have a different income from literature which is separate to Tradition 7 and is used for printing. We work with the literature committee and hope that literature will increase.

Karl G – Iceland: We have an adequate variety and supply of literature.

2. Share experience about co-operation with professionals: participation in seminars, exhibitions, conferences etc. and do we pay for our participation in these events? Is paying a participation fee in keeping with our Traditions?

Andris K – Latvia: That is an interesting question. My initial thought is it would not violate any Traditions, in the same way as an AA Group would pay rent. In my experience, in Latvia, we do not have the precedent of paying to attend a conference.

Aleksandr M – Russia: In August 2020, we took part in the annual forum "Health of the Nation". There, we rented an exhibition space. All the necessary literature was presented at the stands. We are guided by our traditions and regulations.

Guido H – Germany: Our main principle is cooperation but no merger. We must decide at which level this question is allocated. On the General Service Board of German speaking Europe level, we participated in symposiums at congresses of the German society for Psychiatry and Psychology.

We participated in the self-help conference and the addiction conference both organized by the German headquarters for addiction issues.

Additionally, we were present at the German Protestant Kirchentag with a small information booth where around 10,000 people passed. We do not have to pay as we were invited, we just cover our own travel and accommodation costs.

Juha I – Finland: We have run free webinars for students and professionals. Prior to that we have been participating in some exhibitions that we paid a fee for. As part of our celebrations, we attended an Occupational Health seminar we had a small booth with our leaflets, we did not pay a fee, but the next time they asked us for 2000 euros which I didn't feel was right. We are not looking to recruit members or make money. If we pay a fee, is that not promotion as opposed to attraction? On the other hand, we do pay for adverts. Some members feel that if we pay, it is promotion.

Marius L - Lithuania: It is not common to participate in events that have a fee. We invite people to our open meetings or by going to hospitals, prisons etc. we don't get the point of paying.

Massimo F -Italy: We work with professionals in hospitals and such like, and most of the time we are invited to these events. When we invite a professional, for instance to our annual convention, we pay for their tickets and accommodation. But usually AA is invited in, if there is a fee, we put it to the Conference and GSB whether we should participate or not.

Moira S – Ireland: In general, we respond to invites from the professional community. In some provinces, co-operating with the Professional Community is part of the Public Information service. We have long-standing service in the prisons, hospitals, and schools, and we organise regular talks about what we do. Likewise in treatment centres, there is no cost to us. My thinking is that there could be conflicts of interest to be at an event, it could look like we are endorsing something.

Nevena B – Bulgaria: We worked together with a Government Penal Institution for service in Prison and paid for their accommodation. We have also invited fellowship friends from Poland and the second time, Trustees from the UK.

Oleksandr S – Ukraine: We are not paid to take part in some professional seminars / exhibitions. Usually, when AA organise a meeting for professionals, we pay for it all.

For several years we paid for press conference on A.A.'s birthday on June 10th in the information agency for some journalists for TV / radio and we also paid for some billboard advertising.

Tadeusz C – Poland: We participate at many events and conferences at PI level. There are two kinds: one that we pay for, and we invite people, the other way is we are invited to take part in an event. In general, the rule is the cost is covered if we are invited; we are not paying.

One event was a Correctional Facilities event, a big event, we took part, and we didn't pay as we were invited. And now we are invited to the Police Psychiatry event, we didn't pay. We do not participate in business enterprises that we have to pay to rent some space. Small costs like tea, coffee is fine, but for participation itself we should not pay.

Tobias D – Denmark: We have a long tradition called a “Peoples Meeting” representatives of the whole country meet on a little island for a weekend, everyone from companies, organisations etc. We pay for our Team to attend as we cover their costs. We have printed T shirts for them saying on the front “I am an Alcoholic” and on the back “But I don't Drink”. We look at the motivation to want to be at the event, a lot of people are making money from suffering alcoholics, and I would have liked to know that AA is there for me, and that we are free.

Karl G – Iceland: We have good access to professionals in health care and can participate in seminars without payment.

3. Each committee should suggest one theme for the 22nd ESM. A vote will be taken on Sunday to choose the final theme.

The Service Committee proposed the 22nd ESM Theme: Looking Forward in the Digital Age

4. Elect a Chair and Alternate for the 22nd ESM Service Committee.

The committee elected Andris K, Latvia as Chair of the 22nd ESM Service Committee and Moira S, Ireland was elected as Alternate.

Recovery Committee

Chair: **Ivo C** *Portugal*

Andrey M - *Russian Observer*
Antti L – *Finland*
Daniel G – *Romania*
Ekaterina G - *Belarus*
Emre A - *Turkey*
Flor C – *Belgium (Flemish Speaking)*
Iza A – *Poland*
Jo F – *Great Britain*

Krisztina R - *Hungary*
Marie-Paul M – *French Speaking Europe*
Nana K – *Greece*
Peter R – *Slovakia*
Tatjana R – *Netherlands*
Terje O - *Norway*
Zdravko Z – *Slovenia*
Zita Z - *Latvia*

The Chair will open the meeting with the Preamble and welcome the delegates who will be invited to introduce themselves.

Format of committee: delegates will be invited to share any relevant experience on the topics below very briefly, followed by open discussion.

- I. How can we find a balance between the need and demand for online meetings and retain the elements of fellowship within person-to-person contact? Discuss experience of online sponsorship and promoting literature online.

Most of the communities opened online meetings during lockdown when face-to-face meetings were forced to close due to the pandemic. Being in some cases the number of online meetings were larger than face-to-face meetings.

Some delegates experienced issues which were quickly overcome for example:

- **By helping members to solve technical difficulties to attend online meetings.**
- **One-to-one meetings**
- **Telephone meetings**
- **WhatsApp Groups**
- **Encouraging members to attend and sponsor newcomers**

Some delegates experienced the benefits of online meetings such as the increase of members and the opportunity to attend meetings worldwide. Online meetings could be attended at any time giving the opportunity to those that would normally have struggled to get to a face-to-face meeting.

The online meetings encouraged more young people to attend AA meetings for the first time.

Many members lost contact with the meetings and still haven't come back with the reopening of face-to-face meetings.

There is some resistance for those newcomers that only experienced online meetings to go to a face-to-face meeting.

Some General Service Boards are now dealing with questions derived from these new times, such as anonymity and members safety in online meetings.

There were questions on where the online meetings fit with the structure of AA such as Intergroups and registration of groups.

Some groups created new service positions within online meetings for example:

- **Technical assistants**
- **Meeting host and co host**
- **Troll patrol**
- **Group administrator**
- **Mute control**
- **Screen sharer**
- **Greeter**
- **Wash-up (stay behind at the end of meeting)**
- **Timekeeper**
- **Meeting etiquette**
- **Chat monitor**
- **Announcers**

Some groups found balance with hybrid meetings.

Some groups faced new challenges with online sponsorship with newcomers resisting to accept or to ask for sponsorship given the fact that they didn't know the potential sponsors personally.

Some experience was shared on the increase of sponsorship due to the fact that more members are available to sponsor online than there used to be face-to-face.

Lists were kept of available sponsors.

Members maintained contact with their sponsor and sponsees using phones, Skype, WhatsApp, Zoom and various apps.

Literature was made available by email, downloadable and available to read, purchase through websites, online stores, literature servants, streaming audio books online and delivering literature locally by members.

Members promoted literature in online meetings.

Some countries had some time to think of new translations and revision of existing literature.

2. How can we make AA more attractive to younger members?

- **Having a younger member sharing to young newcomer**
- **Ask for the younger newcomer to help in technical matters**
- **Encourage young people into the service structure and translation for young people's leaflets**
- **Using online means to do PI in schools for example, making podcasts**
- **Sharing Young Person meetings lists with other countries**
- **Organising young people's events both physically and online**
- **Share our experiences and hope to live a happy life without alcohol**
- **Exchange telephone numbers**
- **Encourage to sponsorship**

3. Each committee should suggest one theme for the 22nd ESM. A vote will be taken on Sunday to choose the final theme.

The Service Committee proposed the 22nd ESM Theme: Unifying Roads to Recovery

4. Elect a Chair and Alternate for the 22nd ESM Recovery Committee.

The committee elected Krisztina R, Hungary as Chair of the 22nd ESM Unity Committee and Daniel G, Romania was elected as Alternate.

Unity Committee

Chair: **Erik A** *Great Britain*

Asger J – *Denmark*

Dany De B – *Belgium (Flemish Speaking)*

Efi Z – *Greece*

Elena S – *Lithuania*

Emil M - *Croatia*

Julianne L – *Norway*

Karin F – *Austria*

Lars D – *Sweden*

Leonor P – *Portugal*

Peter P – *Slovakia*

Ray L – *Sweden*

Uliana – *Russian Observer*

The Chair will open the meeting with the Preamble and welcome the delegates who will be invited to introduce themselves.

Format of committee: delegates will be invited to share any relevant experience on the topics below very briefly, followed by open discussion.

1. Share experience about the challenges that your country's service structure is facing as a result of the proliferation of online groups.

All countries reported significant challenges but that was balanced with the realisation of the opportunities and possibilities that online platforms offered.

The perceived challenges included fear of the unknown, such as adapting to new technology, dealing with difficult behaviour online and questions of how meetings and groups would integrate into the structure and receive tradition 7 contributions.

Lack of physical belonging and computer fatigue.

Opportunities included greater access to those with physical challenges, fellowship across the globe and a greater diversity embracing previously marginalised communities. For some Tradition 7 contributions became simplified through online payment options.

2. Share experience about how AA groups in your country determine, by the group conscience, their policy about meeting attendance? For example (a) non-alcoholics attending and/or sharing at meetings; b) barring an alcoholic from a particular meeting for unacceptable behaviour.

For most AAs regular attendance at a particular meeting is determined by their ability to identify with the sharing. Members firstly take responsibility in establishing whether their meetings were open or closed and as such determine the qualification of non-members to attend and/or share.

Secondly create a code of conduct by which the group operates and clarifies appropriate behaviour at the outset of the meeting (blue card, safeguarding, etc). This empowers the group to deal with persistently inappropriate behaviour.

For drunks attending meetings it was thought best they be removed if they became rowdy and taken outside to talk – have a cup of tea. When calm they would be welcomed back into the meeting and given a biscuit.

3. Each committee should suggest one theme for the 22nd ESM. A vote will be taken on Sunday to choose the final theme.

The Unity Committee proposed the 22nd ESM Theme: AA in Changing Times

4. Elect a Chair and Alternate for the 22nd ESM Unity Committee.

The committee elected Julianne L, Norway as Chair of the 22nd ESM Recovery Committee and Leonor P, Portugal was elected as Alternate.

Workshop: “Allowing our Group Conscience to Guide our Service Work”

Chair: **Moira S** *Ireland*

Asger J - *Denmark*

Daniel G – *Romania*

Efi Z – *Greece*

Emil M - *Croatia*

Erik A – *Great Britain*

Flor C – *Belgium (Flemish)*

Iza A – *Poland*

Joseph A – *Malta*

Julianne L – *Norway*

Karin F – *Austria*

Marie-Paul M – *French Speaking Europe*

Oleksandr S – *Ukraine*

Peter P – *Slovakia*

Uliana – *Russian Observer*

The Chair will open the meeting with the Preamble and welcome the delegates who will be invited to introduce themselves.

Format of workshop: Maximum 2 minutes share from each delegate followed by open discussion.

Share experience from your country on the theme:

“Allowing our group conscience to guide our service work”

Asger J – Denmark: It is a hard process and takes a long time. We can be 2 – 3 months taking a decision as I want everyone to say their opinion. I have experienced anger if, for example, newcomers are confused or not understanding something, so I think it is important they learn how we do things in AA. It is a slow process and can take a long while, you have to learn to be patient.

Daniel G – Romania: The subject sounds difficult at first glance. It is a two-way process from the structure to the Fellowship, and from the Fellowship to the structure. Practically, here in Romania, we realised that we had few Regions so Conference this year suggested we introduce more than three Regions to help communication in the country’s fellowship. We have one national service meeting which has no executive position, but it is done in order to help us share valuable experience from all the Groups in the country. I noticed in the new Service Guide we introduced a month of studying the Traditions, so December will be the month that Groups are invited to study and share the Traditions. We also working to come up with some new pamphlets regarding the structure and service leaflets.

Efi P – Greece: We believe we should be well informed with service manuals, workshops on Steps, Traditions, and recently the Concepts. When we have good information, we are more likely to have trust and be humble with the group conscience decisions. We know we have a Higher Power to guide us.

Emil M – Croatia: We've come a long way in Croatia, from even a year or two ago when there was division, not Group Conscience. Since implementing the 12-Step / 12 Traditions journey for one year – one month for each Step and Tradition – we have had really positive results from studying these with sponsors and taking a look at what the structure of AA really looks like. It's taken a long time, but I am very pleased that, one day at a time, we are coming together as a Group. Amongst us is growing a Fellowship, finally.

Erik A – Great Britain: What I can say in terms of structure, I very much see our service structure as being reliant on Group conscience, from the top of the inverted triangle to the bottom. For instance, at our Region, there can be strong discussions.

Iza A – Poland: In our country we have a similar structure to Great Britain; the most important is the Group Conscience, and for me the experience is that I have to lower my ego to allow other people to have their say. It is very important that Group Conscience is well-informed. We also have the opportunity to send questions to Conference where they can be discussed, this then is the Group Conscience of our country.

Karin F – Austria: We have one manual for Germany, Austria, German -speaking Switzerland, but this is not working so well now, so we have asked people to work on giving us a new structure. I have gone around the meetings and this has been discussed for several years. This year the Conference discussed the paper and said "Yes, keep going" so I presented it to the Austrian Conference, but they said they did not know about the work that had been happening. This makes it difficult in Austria, but I am keeping going!

Julianne L – Norway: We have been working on the structure for the last 3 years, to get every group to have a GSR. It is working well now, as we have a structure to communicate between the Board, Region and Districts and on to the GSRs. This makes the Groups more informed and helps them communicate with the Board. Three years ago we discussed whether we are supposed to translate the Big Book again, to modernise it, only one or two opposed. But because we listened to them, we turned it down, so I think this is a good example of turning off the ego. We are now re-translating it.

Marie-Paule M – French Speaking Europe: I represent three countries, and I know each country follows the same structure and principles, but the way they apply it is very different in each country. We have put in place the European Service Forum with members of the three countries. They meet before each Conference in all three countries to discuss common themes. Otherwise, it is the same – inverse triangle structure. When there are reports, they go on to the website, and GSRs are supposed to read it and send it or let their members know. When there are themes, the Groups want to discuss at Conference, they can send questions to Conference. Conference decided which questions to look at, chooses three, and invites contributions from groups.

After everyone votes, if there is one person opposing, they get to talk again and this might change people's minds and we can take another vote which may result in a different decision. One way we work on Group Conscience is to take Group Inventories.

Peter P – Slovakia: This is a difficult question. In Slovakia, each Group can send one delegate to Conference, and the Service Board Trustees are responsible for all transmissions from the Groups to the Board. Last Conference we had a question about income tax and Conference decided that it was not possible to apply the benefit. Creating a Group Conscience is very hard.

Moira S- Ireland: It is an interesting question. Our Service Structure is that the Groups are at the top, and that works its way to the Conference. We have a strong Group which has business meetings monthly and using the online options has made participation very strong. There can be division – but we have a strong structure which means that we can fall back on the structure. Although we acknowledge that Covid has had a strong impact on our structure, in both positive and negative ways.

Open discussion

Asger – I read 'Pass it On' in English and again recently in Danish, as I was asked to proof read the translation. All the arguments and struggle that Bill had, to make the structure possible, was just incredible. When this book comes out in Danish, I will really campaign for it! I think we have to just carry on, it's the same to-day, as it says in the literature.

Marie-Paule: I feel I was in the dark about this question, so I thank you for making this more understandable to me. I have a lot of respect for the newer countries in this process, it is important we can gather here and share.

Daniel: Is your country encouraging Groups to use the suggested Group Inventory Sheet? How is your country using it?

Marie-Paule: And I hear a little bit in the question, is everything that comes from World Service Office culturally appropriate for translating for your country?

Moira: Countries are also autonomous and can create their own literature.

Erik: Our Literature Sub Committee decided 8 or 9 years ago to revise 'The AA Group' leaflet for Britain, but the protests from the Fellowship were loud and clear, so we have not touched it since! We have adapted some US literature, such as the sponsorship pamphlet, and we are making adaptations to the British version now.

Select a theme for the 22nd ESM Workshop

The theme selected was: How do you take your Group's Inventory?

Select a Chair and Alternate for the 22nd ESM Workshop

The workshop voted Karin F, Austria as Chair and Asger J, Denmark was elected as alternate.

Workshop: Spiritual Freedom

Chair: **Zita Z** - Latvia

Aliaksei Y – *Belarus*
Andrey M - *Russian Observer*
Antti L – *Finland*
Elena S – *Lithuania*
Emre A – *Turkey*
Jo F – *Great Britain*
Krisztina R - *Hungary*

Lars D – *Sweden*
Leonor P – *Portugal*
Massimo F – *Italy*
Tatjana R – *Netherlands*
Terje O – *Norway*
Tobias D - *Denmark*
Zdravko Z – *Slovenia*

The Chair will open the meeting with the Preamble and welcome the delegates who will be invited to introduce themselves.

Format of workshop: Maximum 2 minutes share from each delegate followed by open discussion.

Share experience from your country on the theme “Spiritual Freedom”

The committee discussed their experience of what spiritual freedom meant to them:

- **Unity across the Fellowship with helping each other locally and nationally during the pandemic**
- **Freedom to change and adapt**
- **Personal religious views are not forced on members**
- **Some committee members expressed that they would not have attended AA meeting if religious views were pushed upon them**
- **Spiritual freedom gives member the opportunity to accept who they are**
- **The closer they got to the programme the more freedom they felt**
- **Talk to newcomers before the meeting start to help them understand when the word God is mentioned in the meeting**
- **Learning to accept and respect everyone’s personal understanding of God/Higher-Power**
- **Freedom to choose**
- **To help each other and help those still suffering**

Select a theme for the 22nd ESM Workshop

The theme selected was: Love and Tolerance is our Code

Elect a Chair and Alternate for the 22nd ESM Workshop

The workshop voted Tatjana R, Netherlands as Chair and Emre A, Turkey was elected as alternate.

Workshop: “How to make a newcomer feel part of the group”

Chair: **Ray L** – Sweden

Aleksandr M – *Russia*

Andris K – *Latvia*

Dany De B – *Belgium (Flemish Speaking)*

Dunja P - *Croatia*

Ekaterina G – *Belarus*

Guido H – *Germany*

Ivo C – *Portugal*

Juha I – *Finland*

Karl G – *Iceland*

Marius L – *Lithuania*

Nana K – *Greece*

Nevena B – *Bulgaria*

Peter R – *Slovakia*

Rene F – *Czech Republic*

Tadeusz C – *Poland*

The Chair will open the meeting with the Preamble and welcome the delegates who will be invited to introduce themselves.

Format of workshop: Maximum 2 minutes share from each delegate followed by open discussion.

Share experience from your country on the theme “How to make a newcomer feel part of the group”

- **The newcomer is the most important person**
- **Make them feel safe, welcome and part of group**
- **Encourage them to come back**
- **Sponsorship advice**
- **You are not alone**
- **Translate AA language**
- **Meeting before meeting and after meeting**
- **Gentle approach, trust, believe**
- **Leave the door open**
- **Share contact details**
- **Share First Step**
- **AA literature e.g. newcomer pack**
- **Attraction rather than promotion**
- **Website**

Select a theme for the 22nd ESM Workshop

The theme selected was: Keep the History Alive

Elect a Chair and Alternate for the 22nd ESM Workshop

The workshop voted Karl G, Iceland as Chair and Dany de B, Belgium (Flemish Speaking) was elected as alternate.

Sharing Session

SHARING SESSION

PRESENTATIONS ON THE THEME: “ADAPTING & ADJUSTING TO THE PANDEMIC”

DANIEL G (ROMANIA) ON BEHALF OF ELENA L (ROMANIA)

Good morning, my friends. My name is Elena and I am grateful to be here. I'm a second term ESM delegate and it is lovely to be back among you all. I would've preferred to hold you close and feel your energy as it happened in 2019, when I first attended the European Service Meeting.

But, as a recovering alcoholic and thank God, as I understand Him, I look at the bright side - that I'm sober today and we are living in the 21st century when we have this communication tool - the Internet.

Looking back to this past year like no other, and 'zooming in' into it, I found our Fellowship has experienced challenges we never anticipated. I have noticed members and groups struggling to find new ways to keep AA going and available to the alcoholics all over the country.

Face to face meetings in churches and hospitals were closed as the pandemic began. Last year, in March, everybody started to be somehow worried, unsettled and a little bit nervous because we missed each other. Thanks to our tech colleagues we started online meetings on Google Meet and Zoom platforms. It wasn't easy because we have lots of 'tech-unsavvy' members who are unknowledgeable. Many don't have the ability to connect to the Internet from their devices or their devices don't meet the technical requirements to do that. Some of us, who have a better knowledge of online platforms, created guides to help our members. Others bought themselves the necessary devices that allowed them to participate.

Surprisingly, online meetings had many participants and new members, most of them young people. They preferred online meetings as they felt more simple or comfortable attending through the Internet. One of the benefits of online meetings in Romania was that AA Romanian members outside the country could attend more meetings with their brothers and sisters from home.

In the summertime, when restrictions were not so strict, many groups held their meetings outside, in parks, where they strived, sometimes, to find private spaces; even the adverse weather conditions could not prevent us from sharing the experience, strength and hope.

It was difficult for us to find corresponding serving positions in online meetings, as those we have in face-to-face meetings. Sponsorship took place by phone or Zoom, but it wasn't the same as before, when we met our sponsor/sponsee face-to-face. Even in these circumstances, we didn't give up. The good thing about online meetings was that Romanians everywhere could refine their home Groups. We were also lucky that we didn't have any additional costs as we freely used the Google platform.

We're encountering issues, as other countries did, with anonymity, vulnerability and safety of members in the online environment – issues for which we don't have concrete solutions yet.

By phone or by video calls, by visiting an old-timer, by sending a text message or a letter, by broadcasting local anniversary events or getting more in touch with our loaner members - connection was the solution.

Grateful to "log on" today! Don't forget to check your mobile phones notifying you about your next online meeting. It's time to "get on with it!" 😊

Thank you!

JUHA I (FINLAND)

In the country highlights I have reported the effects of the pandemic on the national level in Finland. In this sharing I shall enlighten what we have seen on group and individual levels.

Groups reacted with a very short notice and wanted to start web-meetings when the pandemic spread. So did we in my home group. Which platform to choose? Zoom was widely used but rumours told it might have some security problems, leaks were suspected. So, we tried first Google Meet as some of our members were convenient with this solution from their job. Some members said they will not attend any on-line meeting. However, the number of participants grew after few first trials. Question arose: what if the group will grow too big, shall we have two meetings? This led to suspicious background talks. Is someone trying to divide our group and prevent other one's participation against AA's traditions! The conclusion was to start an additional group on another day than our usual Sunday. Then some people felt this is not a real meeting of our homegroup as it takes place in a wrong day! Well, we are alcoholics and all new needs to be discussed with patience.

Web meeting technics became a challenge as well. Not all – especially the elderly members- were familiar with virtual environment- or computers and smart phones in general. We decided that everybody who wants to join, must be helped, we won't leave anyone alone. So numerous cases and hours were spent outside the meetings to install the application, teach the use and solve problems some of us faced.

Google Meet had some limitations, and one IT -professional member started to search other platforms. As the next step we tried Skype for a month, but the decided to switch to Zoom. This "IT-servant" checked the guidelines from AA UK's website. New platform, new technology ... and teaching and guidance were needed again. Finally, everybody learned how to log in, mute their microphones, hide their full names to protect anonymity etc.

How did people feel about this new way of recovery? Those participating on-line-meetings were extremely happy, that they could hear familiar voices and see faces of their dear AA-friends under conditions, where personal meetings with other than people in the same household were rejected. Many members felt that loneliness was creeping in. Those not joining web meetings were really suffering. This was heard among others in many phone calls to the AA-helpline.

One characteristic of an AA-group is the 7th tradition, how to arrange this in virtual environment? Prior the pandemic a possibility of mobile payments had been discussed in my home group but been rejected. Now it became a must. We learned new habits to contribute to mutual welfare and success. However, we have seen in Finland, that quite good number of on-line groups have not been contributing to the 7th tradition. A positive consequence of the on-line meetings has been newcomers who felt it was easier and less scary to join AA first time through the web. This led to a challenge: how to meet these newcomers? We started to offer a chance for an informal discussion after the meeting and even meet outside with one of our members in a personal discussion- if the newcomer so desired. Another positive consequence has been, that some AA-members have found it fascinating to become familiar with the global AA-fellowship through participating online meetings in other countries.

As the pandemic was easing up during the summer 2020, many of the closed groups re-started in person meetings. So did my home group. However, quite many members did not want to be present and there were also limitations of the number of people allowed to meet inside. To solve this dilemma, we started a hybrid model meeting. One of our members picked up a microphone and video camera system allowing those sitting in remote locations to be connected to the group. Microphone and camera were circulated in the meeting room and after that people from the web had their word. After some time, we stopped using the video camera in the meeting room as a newcomer may feel it inconvenient and thus only speeches were broadcasted.

Security and health protection requirements led to some debate in the reopened groups. The government guidelines advised to use disposable medical masks when meeting inside. Clear majority of the groups decided to require the use of masks, some kept it voluntary. As we are alcoholics, of course there were some people who refused to wear a mask and claimed such a requirement is against our 3rd tradition! My gut feeling is, that the group may require the use according to the 1st tradition. Otherwise, the common welfare may change to become common losses. Early December 2020 groups started to close again as the pandemic was escalating again. Smaller groups with less than 10 members usually continued especially in the countryside.

12th step work at municipal detoxification centres, prisons etc. has not been possible until now. This has cut an important service from the groups for a year and a half. Hopefully this will not impact in the long run how we commit to and practise the 5th tradition. A virtual solution to contact professional audience was found through AA-info webinars. These have been held to inform municipal nursing and social staff as well as students. I believe through these webinars we have reached a wider audience and been able to build new contacts.

Lastly some personal experiences. The online meetings have supported my recovery as face-to-face meetings were not available or I did not feel them to be safe enough to participate. But as alcoholism is also an emotional disease, I've been missing the personal contact: eyes, faces and body movements, laugh and tears, as well as personal sympathy - these are not so obvious in the virtual environment. In Finland we quite often celebrate the sobriety anniversaries in open meetings with family members present and eating cakes. These have not been possible during the pandemic. Last year I had not been thinking the anniversary meeting at all until it should have taken place– but now it didn't. Became an empty feeling, something vital is missing: the strong feeling of gratitude. Sobriety anniversary meeting is not a one where I'm the subject of celebration. Sobriety anniversary meeting has been my Thanksgiving Day, my turn to stand in front of my homegroup and thank the group and the entire AA- fellowship for pulling out from the prison of alcohol.

The pandemic restrictions are easing up gradually and AA-groups re-opening their in-person meetings. Unfortunately, some groups have permanently been closed during the 18 months of the pandemic. From now on, there will probably be more online meetings than we had before the pandemic, but my personal feeling is, that recovery of such a disease as alcoholism, requires – at least for me- face-to-face group meetings.

Closing Addresses

Nana K (Greece)

Good evening everybody! I am Nana, an alcoholic from Greece.

When yesterday I was asked to prepare one of the four closing addresses, I thought: Who? Me? What an honor to be in service once more in this wonderful meeting!! I have to admit that at first I didn't know what to say but Yury comforted me asking me to just express my feelings!! Ok, then I'll let God speak through me.

In 2008 when I entered the rooms of AA almost defeated and met those clear faces who were in service to share their hope, strength and experience, I couldn't imagine that I could be one of them in a few years and be in such an honorable service as this one. It took me three and a half years to quit drinking, relapsing, each time hitting worse bottoms but always coming back because I saw so much light in those rooms! God had plans for me when he was saving me each time! On December the 17th 2011 I drank my last drink and I realized that I had to adopt and follow the whole programme, that is sponsor, steps, traditions and Service. At that moment I couldn't imagine that Service would complete my recovery in spiritual terms, and would help me practice my defects and learn to live in humility, acceptance and love! As I heard earlier in this meeting "I don't have to like everyone but I have to love them!", which is the best I was taught doing this service.

In 2017 when Greece took part in the ESM for the first time, I was asked to translate the Greek Report, which was actually my first contact with the structure of AA in Greece. Since then, I have been in service in various trusted positions, where I really practiced my resilience in tough situations and handle my ego!

In 2019, I was elected to be the delegate of Greece in the ESM, which was the greatest present I received during my sobriety! I was so amazed with this service but anxious to be "perfect"! Later on, I was soothed to learn that I don't have to be perfect in AA, that mistakes lead us to progress and not take myself too seriously!

The experience I gained from that first meeting was unbelievable! The feeling that I am one of you, that I belong to such a huge fellowship of people, where the only requirement is not to pick up that first drink and spread the message to the still suffering alcoholic keeps growing in these meetings and gave me a goal for the rest of my life! Even though in that first meeting in 2019 I came to realise that the Greek AA structure is rather poor and we have few groups compared to the rest of the countries in Europe and the world, I was made to feel so much at home when I was told that Greece is like the newcomer who first enters an AA room! It was so nice to get so many hugs from AAs all around Europe! I miss those hugs in this meeting, although I can feel them in the camera with most of you! I got so much help and experience to take back to Greece, which really helped us to develop our structure, in service and recovery difficulties we faced. We worked with these two reports in special workshops and we solved problems, while my fellows were enthusiastic with all this material we got back and translated. They are looking forward to the new material!

There followed a second gift for me, which was my election to be the ESM Delegate to the WSM and report back the WSM to the ESM this year. Even though the joy of being responsible for such an honorable service was accompanied by the enthusiasm of visiting New York was shifted to the challenge to attend a virtual meeting for the first time in my life- and in AA's of course – , the experience I gained there was transcendent!

Once again I realised that AA backed by its HP always find out ways to surpass any kind of obstacles and convert them to challenges! The same route was followed by all the groups around the world, as this was revealed in that first Virtual meeting, opening new ways to reaching the still suffering alcoholic through the use of technology.

Having gained the experience from that meeting, this year this wonderful meeting was made to happen in an even more perfected and mature way. My personal disappointment of not visiting York once more wandering around that picturesque city and meeting and hugging you all in person was soon eased. Meeting again on the screen of my laptop my old fellows I also had the chance to meet in the WSM and in Workplace during the last two years and a lot new ones was still an exciting feeling! Moreover, I realized my actual duty, that is to be more concentrated on service to AA and give away to my fellows the gift of my sobriety I once received freely!

To sum up, what I gained in this year's ESM was that no matter what the circumstances are, I belong to this huge family of AA learning to live a happy life with the support of my Higher Power. The opportunity to deal with new ways of approaching the suffering alcoholic and the professionals with the innumerable uses of the technology proved to be invaluable!

Last but not least, the meaning of the theme of this meeting "Love and Service" was fully accomplished reminding me that service not only in AA but in my private life as well, when practiced with love, compassion, acceptance, flexibility and vision can and will bring about a happy, joyous and free life!

To soften my sadness for the end of this wonderful event, I would like to end up my address with a quote from "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" p.131 as it appears in today's Daily Reflections:

"By faith and by works we have been able to build upon the lessons of an incredible experience. They live today in the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, which-God willing-shall sustain us in unity for so long as He may need us".

Thank you all for the assistance, trust and love you showed to me throughout my service! I'm so grateful!!

Ray L (Sweden)

Hello Everybody, my name is Ray and I am an Alcoholic.

First of all. Thank you for let me attending to this ESM meeting.

In the beginning and when I was so to say hopeless. I am now hopeful. The most spoken language is bad English. I am some talks very fast, and then I forgot the correct English word. Then you maybe will notify that invent a new word. So we can give the English language a new dimension.

Thanks to the staff GSO UK and GSO US/Canada and Yuri. Without your great work. This had not be possible, to perform. And thanks to all of you fellow participants.

I was attending the first ESM 2019, and that was a meeting in real life. Which I prefer. And my impression after that was positive. And I learned a lot.

However I can say after this meeting that, this was a kind of success. 31 Countries and about 50 participants. In which other any constellation could this works so well. With discipline (this word does not have to be a negative word). And with common efforts we did it. So for me and Sweden this meeting was very fruitful. To share our experiences and to have other countries experiences. And I can fully understand that there is a higher purpose than me. And that is the AA fellowship overall. So my impression is met concerning this. But I hope that ESM 2023 can be in real life. And of course after this ESM meeting we have a lots of impressions. And much to melt down, and give back to AA Sweden

Even if zoom works, it hampers a little bit. Since we have to be short and concise. And we do not have the full time or possibility to express everything.

The meeting between meetings is also what I miss. That is one of the big benefits with meeting in real life.

I also feel comfortable that we are quite similar how we perform our important work, in countries all over Europe. And after each ESM we will be even better.

The Pandemic situation will hopefully decrease. And we can go back to normal routines again.

A benefit we also got is to meet each other in Zoom, and other platforms. Which means that we can reach out in a good way, to those guys who need it This fellowship has now been living in 86 years. It is a strong fellowship, acting world wide. May it be so. It is almost like the tale, Fellowship of the ring. That AA we are going to Mordor and finally throw the ring in the doomsday mountain. And defeat Sauron (King of Alkohol) and allow a better life for many people.

And may we continue with this. It is a never ending work.

We have all in our life met people, which seem hopeless. Dependence of Alcohol. And then we give away our gift. The solution. And we can see the lights up in their eyes. And that is our reward.

(It almost like Sisyfos, he had to take a stone up to the top of the mountain. And then Zeus throw it down again. So he had to start again the next day). Same as have mention above. It is a never ending work, to perform.

Me and Lars would like to wish all of you a Merry white (with snow and no alcohol) Christmas. Stay safe and have a good life.

And from Toronto declaration, do not forget.

I AM RESPONSIBLE

When anyone, anywhere

Reaches out for help,

I want the hand of A.A.

Always to be there.

And for that I am responsible for

Once again, thank you all.

Tadeusz C (Poland)

My name is Tadeusz and I'm an Alcoholic from Poland.

I'm sober and relatively sane today. All credit for that goes to Alcoholics Anonymous. It is honour and privilege to share some of my experience with you today. Thank you, Yury.

What a journey! I will talk about the journey, My journey, solitary one, as the hopeless alcoholic and then journey with you together, trudging on the road of happy destiny.

It started when I took my first drink, at the age of 16 in small town in eastern part of Poland. At this very moment, I become citizen of the Kingdom, where alcohol was the King. At the beginning there was some fun, easy and comfort but very quickly it all gone. Journey become an escape, from real world, from real life, from real people, from any responsibility. Basically, I have destroy everything in my reach, including my family, relation with my daughter, friends etc. Then I made geographical escape to United Kingdom, where I reached my rock bottom, finding myself on the edge. Jumping off place as Big Book describes.

And another chapter of my story had begun. Journey from streets and benches of London, where I lived, to.... Freedom, happiness, and joy. Journey with Alcoholics Anonymous, with everything what this wonderful fellowship has to offer. Big book, strong sponsorship (in my case), home group and service. Love, compassion and understanding.

It was 10th of March 2010, which is my sobriety date.

It is not the date of my first AA meeting. There is big gap between 1991 and 2010. Almost 20 years. I become member of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1991, but for some reasons I was unable to surrender. Back to drinking, coming back to AA, back to drinking again. Vicious circle. As you can imagine, my first 20 years in AA was quite opposite to the present time. No Big Book, no sponsor, no involvement, no service and consequently, no freedom, no happiness and no joy. Just life full of misery and self-pity. Life without any hope.

Today I'm grateful for this hardship, grateful that I find myself in the hopeless condition. Because that creates the space for the hope. Real hope. And opportunity to surrender my self-sufficiency. Last house on the block as they say in AA. And then with the help of my sponsor I did the step work, very specifically, blow by blow, out of the Big Book. Obsession to drink was removed and never return. At least up to date. It was beginning my RECOVERY. Wonderful experience, not to be missed. You all know that very well. And then first time in my life I was able to experience of UNITY. With God, (of my understanding), with myself and with another human being. First of all with my sponsor, then with my home group, with people around me. Inside and outside our fellowship.

I would like to say, that those experiences brought me into the wonderful word of SERVICE, our third Legacy. But I can't. I have to admit, my sponsor wisely manoeuvred or strictly speaking manipulated me into it. Thank God for that. Service. Up to that time I was the person to be served, not the one who do the service to others. I had my dreams. And one day after AA meeting in London, one old timer said to me: Don't even dream my son. Just sacrifice some of your time in service to others, stop thinking about yourself for few moments, and you will see that reality of your life exceed all dreams you have. He was right. I have to admit. If

someone would told me at the beginning of my service commitments in AA, “very important commitments” such as emptying ash trays, stacking the chairs, making tea and coffee, buying the milk (no milk no meeting in UK), that one day I will be with you as the representative of Polish speaking fellowship, I would not believe. I even did not know that this kind of events or service commitments exist. Probably at this time my dream was to get out of the kitchen, by the meeting hall. And maybe to read loudly the pledge, or “How it works” at the meeting. From ash tray to international delegate in 11 years. Not bad, and definitely not dreamed or expected of, at all. All the way I had and still have wonderful opportunities to serve on intergroup, region and general service level. There is no time to share in details and express gratitude for those fantastic experiences. Difficult sometimes as you all aware. Heated discussions, overcoming obstacles, making decisions as a part of the group conscience. We can do it. Together, because service has to be done together.

To be surrounded by you, amazing people, united with one purpose in mind, be part of it, this is “creme della creme” of the service experience. Or as someone said it better, To be in AA and not be involved in service is like to be in amusement park and not ride on roller coaster. You are missing the best of it. I have to agree again.

ESM gatherings, like this one. For me it creates opportunity to grow, to learn, to discover, and finally to look at the things from completely different angles. Every service commitment is important, but there is something unique here. Perspective. Wider than anywhere else. We have chance to see it. Principles are simple and the same on every service level. And being here is like to be on regular AA meeting. To hear and share experience, strength and hope, to see how fellowship develops and grows in other countries, is like looking on the young fellow in my home group, newcomer who is getting better and better. What an opportunity, to admit our shortcomings and asking for help. You can even find the sponsor here, on country-to-country level. We talk about money, in similar manner as in our groups, and this subject always stirs up discussion, and raises temperature. Everything is new and nothing is new, in this same time. Contradicted, confused, head full of questions, new ideas? ? Welcome to AA and its wonderful world of service.

I’m personally passionate about our history. One of my AA mentors, an old timer from US said once something I could not get at first. He said that no one invented AA. It just happened. It was happening. And it is happening right now, at this very moment. Here, today, and in the countless meeting halls around the globe. In many places when one alcoholic is talking to another, sharing his experience strength and hope. For me our only reason for our ESM meeting is to create more opportunities that help anonymous alcoholics to speak to those who still suffer. One to one, modem to modem or in the meetings halls.

Let’s hope that something what has happened to us will happen to others. To succeed with that, only two factors are needed. Love and Service.

Dr Bob was right!

There is a time to rotate out, of the service position. This is my last ESM. Experience never to be forgotten.

Ash trays, cups and chairs are waiting in my home group. I'm in the circle again. But not in the vicious one, this time. This is the circle of RECOVERY, UNITY and SERVICE. Circle of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Thank you all for keeping me sober today

Zdravko Z (Slovenia)

Dear friends, dear delegates, my name is Zdravko and I'm an alcoholic.

Just make sure you thank everyone you need to thank, make sure you don't leave out anyone so they don't get offended. That's the only thing I was thinking about when starting to write this. First Sophie, of course, »The Smilesine« of ESM, and the guests from the US, don't forget Racy (she woke up in the middle of the night) and Yury, Jenny, Ranjan... and and and ... when I got to about twenty I realised this makes no sense. So, my dear fellows, I am thankful to each and everyone of you that was attending this ESM, and all the AA members from 1935 till today and all those who still will come to AA when I will be long gone.

I would like to share with you a story about how the »group consciousness of leadership« that we learned attending ESMs touched my country and our AA fellowship 10 years ago. This was when our first international delegate went to ESM in Frankfurt. Also a Slovenian conference was approaching, where delegates of 30 different groups would be deciding on which translation of the Serenity prayer we'd be using at meetings, which one to print in books and which one to put on the posters for the wall. Slovenian AA was divided in two. Those who were in the favour of the first translation from 1989 and the ones for the new, updated version of the translation.

Debates started already months before the conference, some delegates would visit groups they usually didn't just to lobby for their own version of the prayer, we were fighting at AA picnics, oldtimers would put themselves on this or the other side, friendships would be suffering, there were phone calls, convincing, accusations.

The day of the conference finally came and the delegates gathered in silence as before a big battle. Armed with arguments, with the support of their own, proofs from professional translators and what not, we each sat on our side of the room. We were prepared for the usual – word fights, all speaking at the same time - red faced, yelling, people leaving the room, interrupting.

Then two miracles happened.

First – the international delegate suggested, as they would discuss at the ESM, to first discuss the most crucial topic, to all sit in a circle and to each share what the translation preference of their group is and what it makes them feel. For the first time we were able to speak without interrupting each other. Delegates would share calmly, but firmly about their attachment to their version of the serenity prayer.

Then we voted and the second miracle happened. The result was 14 versus 14. At that time I did not get it. But later I was often wondering how God, not having anything better to do that day, had visited our young AA fellowship with his grace. After the vote (that we even repeated – result was equal) everything was settled very quickly.

We decided that every group chooses the version they prefer and prints their materials. The AA members that visits a group that is not their own, they of course adapt. The books we print, we will use one and then the other version and so on.

From that day on we never argued about the subject again. We were freed, touched by the group consciousness they stayed with us.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to carry home to Slovenia a fresh basket of experience. Grateful to have again realised at this ESM the importance of the how to tell something, not just what, how I express my disagreements, how to inform that time is up, how to patiently wait for someone to finish their thought and how I suggest that a question is asked later, at the question & answer section.

A month, a week, a day before the start of ESM 2021 I was still resisting. My disease is so powerful and witty. I was wrapping my head around the HOW can I make it, three full days, while I have all this work to do that can't wait. All that money I need to make, all the books I have to write and castles to build and all those Nobel prizes that are waiting for me ... However, the feelings I felt when yesterday I was saying the »Declaration of unity« with you were just so priceless and indescribable. And I could take off my glasses as the letters were so huge!

I know you are tired, especially those who spoke in a language that is not your mother tongue, that is especially hard. After the first half of the ESM I was exhausted, now, at the end, gratefulness washed away all tiredness.

My personal ESM miracle is that I have lost the fear of speaking in English, a fear of saying something stupid, wrong phrase, grammatical slip. I told my wife yesterday, thank goodness my English is so bad, otherwise I'd all the time want to play this big ass boss.

If I didn't like any of you at first, I can assure you that spending time together in service is an amazing melting pot that converts pride into joy and that I truly love you now.

At ESM and in AA in general you have given me the »licence to make mistakes« and comforted me that I don't need to drive myself towards perfection. I can be nervous, that's quite OK. When I am loving, I am perfect, if I try to recover each day, one day at a time - my whole life is perfect, I did absolutely everything in my power.

I will close in the rhythm of rock and roll, next year it will be exactly half a century since the cult Deep Purple album MAADE IN JAPAN – so – see you, LIVE, in Japan!

Peace in your hearts,