

N.A. world services**A GUIDE TO SERVICE IN NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS**

With this chapter of A Guide to Service, we enter into almost entirely uncharted territory. Narcotics Anonymous has had groups since its founding, and local service committees for more than twenty-five years. We even have some experience with the structure and operation of national services, though our primary example--the World Service Conference--has also attempted to meet the needs of N.A. worldwide. But the idea of a truly world level of service, dedicated solely to projects and issues affecting the fellowship in every country, is a new one for us. We don't even have a model for such a level of service in other Twelve Step fellowships with which to compare our ideas, because none exists.

Necessarily, then, this chapter provides only an outline of our ideas concerning the essential elements of the world level of service in Narcotics Anonymous: the definition of each element, its purpose, its composition, and a thumbnail sketch of its activities. The kinds of details we find in the other chapters will need to be filled in by whatever body is selected by the World Service Conference to prepare a transition plan. The responsibility of that transition team will be to describe how we get from where we are today, to where we hope we'll be tomorrow. We believe, however, that we have provided sufficient detail in this chapter to complete the presentation of our vision for the future of service in Narcotics Anonymous.

The WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service

INTRODUCTION

N.A. world services are just that: services which benefit the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous worldwide. They draw recovering addicts together for the purpose of fostering greater understanding and unity among N.A. members. They bring trusted servants from around the globe together so that they can share their experience with one another. They lend the strength of well-established national N.A. movements to emerging N.A. communities in other countries. They help keep Narcotics Anonymous whole by insuring that the N.A. message remains consistent around the world, despite differences of culture, religion, language, and law. And N.A. world services act as our fellowship's liaison with other international organizations concerned with drug addicts, addiction, and recovery, as well as with the international press.

Our world services function through three different entities. First, and most active, is the N.A. **World Service Board**. Composed of representatives of the national service boards in countries where N.A. is well-established, it performs three basic tasks. First, the World Service Board (WSB) coordinates assistance for emerging N.A. communities, either by linking those young communities with more mature ones, coordinating development workshops, or making translation and production services for N.A. literature available for those communities which are not capable of supporting their own. Second, the board helps safeguard the integrity of the N.A. message, both in the course of reviewing translations and adaptations of existing N.A. materials, and in reviewing new materials developed by national movements on their own authority. And third, the world board serves as a liaison between N.A. as a whole and other international organizations, whether they be professional, business, government, or press agencies. The World Service Board is assisted in its work by the staff of the World Service Office, for which the board is responsible.

1 More on how the board is organized and how it works is detailed in the following sections of this
2 chapter.

3 The second element of our world service system is the **World Service Meeting**. Every three
4 years, delegates from the various national service conferences around the world, along with
5 representatives of less-developed national movements, meet to share their service experience with
6 one another, and to discuss issues of broad importance to the development of Narcotics
7 Anonymous around the globe. The World Service Meeting is an event distinct from the operations
8 of the World Service Board, but the two--along with our World Convention--are complementary
9 parts of a whole: our world service system. While the World Service Board administers direct
10 services on behalf of all the national movements, the World Service Meeting brings national
11 representatives together so that they can share their experience with one another. In that sharing
12 of challenges and solutions, each national movement's ability to carry the recovery message in its
13 own country is strengthened.

14 The third element of N.A.'s world service system is the **World Convention**. Held every six
15 years in conjunction with the World Service Meeting, the convention is a fellowshipwide recovery
16 gathering, designed to increase understanding among N.A. members from various countries and
17 to encourage the unity upon which the personal recovery of each one of us is based. Together,
18 the three elements of N.A. world services--the World Convention, the World Service Meeting, and
19 the World Service Board--nurture N.A. recovery, unity, and service in our growing international
20 effort to carry the message, "that no addict need die without the chance to find a better way of life."

21 THE WORLD SERVICE BOARD--HOW IT'S ORGANIZED, AND HOW IT WORKS

22 The World Service Board for Narcotics Anonymous is organized in much the same way as are
23 national service boards. It is a corporation established to serve on behalf of the entire N.A.
24 Fellowship. The full board meets at least once a year, though it may meet more often. Its
25 members are drawn from the service boards of the various national N.A. movements, and its
26 general officers are elected by the board itself from among those members. The officers serve
27 between full board meetings as an executive committee, overseeing the ongoing work of the World
28 Service Office in carrying out the board's policies.

29 Every national service board is entitled to seat three members on the WSB. Countries with
30 more than ten regions are entitled to seat one additional member on the world board for every ten
31 additional regions served by the national board.

32 The world board has the ability to recognize *associate members*--representatives of those
33 national N.A. movements which have not yet developed to the point of being able to support a
34 national service system of their own. Though associate members do not vote in meetings of the
35 World Service Board, they do have a voice and may share the concerns of the fellowship in their
36 countries.

37 The authority to perform services affecting N.A. worldwide is delegated to the World Service
38 Board by the various national boards, and the board is directly accountable to them by virtue of
39 their ability to select world board members. However, in the words of our Seventh Concept of
40 Service, the WSB has "the ability to determine which decisions fall within [its] own defined authority
41 and which will be brought back to the delegating body for further consultation." The board reports
42 its activities in its newsletter, the *World Service Quarterly*, mailed to registered participants of all
43 the national service conferences.

SERVICES TO DEVELOPING NATIONAL MOVEMENTS

One of the primary responsibilities of the World Service Board is to provide basic development services to young and growing national N.A. movements. Sometimes, that means putting trusted servants in young N.A. communities in touch with more developed national N.A. movements nearby, so that service and recovery experience can be passed along. The board organizes workshops for new service committees forming in countries without a national service structure. These workshops are usually conducted by experienced N.A. members from neighboring countries.

The board also provides limited material support to developing national movements. The WSB assists service committees in these countries in translating and adapting existing N.A. recovery and service literature. It keeps a small stock of translated literature on hand, and, when necessary, provides such material to brand new N.A. communities at little or no cost. When a national service structure approaches the point where it can print and distribute literature itself, the World Service Board helps make the necessary arrangements.

THE AUTONOMY OF NATIONAL MOVEMENTS

The International Basis for N.A. Service describes the foundations upon which our fellowship maintains its identity from country to country. The Basis offers simple descriptions of each element of the service structure, from group to world, broadly applicable to the way Narcotics Anonymous conducts itself in any country. Also included in the Basis are the philosophical cornerstones of the N.A. Fellowship: our Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts for Service. The International Basis describes the barest essentials which a national recovery movement must abide by in order to be recognized as a part of our worldwide fellowship. Beyond what is described in the Basis, a national N.A. movement is entirely free to develop on its own, in a way consistent with its national culture, geography, language, and law.

**TRANSLATING AND ADAPTING EXISTING N.A. LITERATURE,
AND DEVELOPING NEW MATERIAL**

Each national movement is encouraged to translate and adapt existing Narcotics Anonymous recovery literature and service aids to meet its own needs. The basic inventory of N.A. literature--including the N.A. Basic Text, *A Guide to Service in Narcotics Anonymous*, and our book on the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, *It Works: How and Why*--is copyrighted by the World Service Board, and is held in trust by the board on behalf of the entire fellowship worldwide.¹ The board charges a nominal royalty fee for the right to reprint these items; those royalties provide the vast majority of the funds the WSB needs for its development work.

Other materials, developed and published by various national movements, may also be translated and adapted for use in other countries, providing the board serving the nation of origin grants its permission. In such cases, the World Service Board acts as agent for the copyright transaction between the nation of origin and the national movement which wishes to translate and adapt the material.

To insure that challenges in the translation process can be met before they develop into crises, indigenous service boards and committees engaging in the translation and adaptation of existing

¹ The World Service Board also maintains ownership of the fellowship's registered trademarks, including the name Narcotics Anonymous and its translated forms and the various N.A. logos.

1 N.A. materials are encouraged to contact the WSB through the World Service Office as early in the
2 process as possible. Translated and adapted literature, once complete, must be submitted to the
3 WSB for review prior to publication, to insure consistency with the original material and with the
4 International Basis for Service.

5 National movements are also encouraged to develop new recovery and service literature of
6 their own. The only requirement regarding development of such material is that it be consistent
7 with the International Basis. As is the case with translated and adapted materials, new literature
8 developed independently by the various national movements must be submitted for review to the
9 World Service Board prior to publication, to insure consistency with the Basis. Once reviewed, the
10 national movement which developed the new material is free to publish it under its own copyright.

11 From time to time, conflicts may arise from a World Service Board decision concerning the
12 consistency of a new or translated piece of N.A. literature with the International Basis. In such
13 cases, a special arbitration panel will attempt to settle the conflict. The panel, whose members are
14 selected at the World Service Meeting, is composed of five national delegates, each from a
15 different country. Should the panel's attempts at reconciliation prove unsuccessful, the matter will
16 appear on the agenda of the next World Service Meeting, and the decision then arrived at will be
17 final.²

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² At this point, mention of ultimate "doctrinal enforcement" through withdrawal of the right to use the name, Narcotics Anonymous, might be mentioned. However, the very idea of writing such enforcement language into the Guide would seem to run contrary to the spirit of the rest of the document. And since we hope the WSB will never have to apply such enforcement authority, it seems prudent only to note the fact of the board's trademark ownership, leaving potentially "rebellious" elements to draw their own conclusions, rather than alarm the vast majority of the fellowship's members with a disturbing discussion that will never apply to them.