



## AA in SA – Second Edition 2017

### Striving to improve communication between GSO, the Members and Groups of the fellowship

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#### ABBREVIATIONS & TERMS

There are many abbreviations and terms used in A.A. meetings, minutes, reports and other documentation. To name a few (used in this publication):

- AAWS – Alcoholics Anonymous World Services
- AASA – Alcoholics Anonymous South Africa
- GSO – General Service Office
- Conference – Annual service meeting attended by Delegates, the Board of Trustees, World Service Delegates and GSO committee members
- GSR – General Service Representative
- DCM – District Committee Member
- CPC – Cooperation with the Professional Community
- PI – Public Information
- TF – Treatment Facilities
- CF – Correctional Facilities
- ASA – Archives, Structures and Administration
- SSASM – Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting
- WSM – World Service Meeting
- WSD – World Service Delegate
- P – Proposal
- D – Decision
- Class A Trustee – Non-Alcoholic Trustee
- SAYPAA – South African Young People of Alcoholics Anonymous
- Regmaker – AASA's meeting in print (magazine containing shares by members)
- Alco-Solo – Meeting in print for loners & members. Available electronically at no charge.

#### SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA SERVICE MEETING

The bi-annual SSASM was held from 9 – 11 June in Alberton, Johannesburg. This event is sponsored by AAWS and G.S.O. UK with administrative assistance from South Africa. This year's theme was "Working with others". Countries represented were: USA/Canada, United Kingdom, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The primary purpose of the Sub-Saharan African Service Meeting is the same as that of all AA activity – to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, whoever he or she may be, whatever language he or she speaks. The Sub-Saharan Africa 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 the Sub-Saharan Africa region. It can also represent an expression of the Group Conscience throughout the region. Experience teaches us that developing a sound structure enables us to deliver our services more effectively. The Sub-Saharan 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's services to reach the alcoholic through internal communication, community relations and working in institutions.

#### WORLD SERVICE DELEGATE MEETING

The sixty plus delegates at the Twenty-Fourth World Service Meeting held in Rye Brook, New York, came from 41 countries and zones around the world. This was a substantial showing from the 64 General Services Offices and Distribution Centers covering the 180 plus countries that A.A. is present in.

- Argentina held their fiftieth General Service Conference in 2013.
- Australians attended the inaugural Australasian Convention in Fiji over Easter 2016.
- In 2016 Belarus published their first 1000 paperback copies of *Alcoholics Anonymous* and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* in Russian.
- Brazil has been publishing *Vivência*, their magazine, on a bi-monthly basis for thirty years with a current print run of 8,000 copies.
- Colombia has a voluntary monthly contribution plan which realises 55% of their income, the balance coming from literature sales.
- With a population of about 5,000,000, Finland have some 660 AA groups and almost 10,000 members. The young and young-minded Fins have been very active in events organised by the European Young People in AA (EURYPAA) and the Scandinavian Countries' Young People in AA with conventions in Italy, Sweden, Norway and the U.K.
- Great Britain has two parliamentary AA presentation events, at Holyrood in Scotland and Westminster in England.
- The Indian General Service Board currently has eight Class A Trustees and sixteen Class B Trustees. The country has seventy-five Intergroups.
- ITALYPAA held their first convention in Milan in April, 2016.
- Japan held their 40th Anniversary Convention in Yokohama in February, 2015. There was no registration fee and the budget of five million Yen (USD 50 000) was funded by group contributions. The event was attended by over 1,800 members and 250 Friends of AA.
- A.A. in Mexico has about 200,000 members, 15,112 registered groups, 600 groups in correctional institutions 201 groups in clinics and hospitals.
- New Zealand with a population of about 4.7 million has some 5,000 members in 500 groups.

Detailed World Service Delegate Reports are available in the Library section of the website's World Service Meeting folder. ([www.aasouthafrica.org.za](http://www.aasouthafrica.org.za))

## WORLD SERVICE MEETING OCTOBER 2018

AASA was awarded the bid to host the 2018 WSM in Durban. A team consisting of KZN members, GSO members, SA's World Service Delegates and Board members have been put together to assist with arrangements. This huge undertaking includes arrangements for a closing dinner for 100 people, entertainment and events for spouses during the day, airport shuttles, coordinating and receiving literature samples sent by all attending countries and much more. We wish to thank the KZN members who will be doing the bulk of the work for their dedication and service.

## CONFERENCE 2017

Listed are some of the decisions made at Conference 2017. Please contact your Area Office for a copy of the complete document.

P - Propose that Conference approves that each group ensures that all newcomers receive a copy of the free leaflet "Problems other than alcohol" and that all active members are made aware of the singleness of purpose of A.A. by giving them a copy of said leaflet as well. This is necessary as so many of the present members do not understand the traditions and are confused of who is entitled to be a member and whether drug addicts with an alcohol problem can be members or not. This leaflet deals with all these issues.

*D - This proposal was approved. The free leaflet "Problems other than alcohol" should be given to all newcomers with their Welcome Leaflet.*

P - Proposal that A.A. SA service manual election criteria for GSR's and DCM's should be amended to reflect that "it is suggested that past Delegates should not return as DCM's and GSR's." Members felt this should be done to avoid controversy.

*D - This proposal was approved. The ASA Committee will amend all areas in the Service Manual (Chapters 2, 3 and 6) in this regard.*

P - Proposal that the one year cooling-off period between certain positions be revisited and clarified.

*D - The cooling-off period was removed entirely. We are a society of equals and all members should be given an opportunity to do service. The ASA Committee will update the Service Manual to reflect this.*

P - To request the Regions of AA, via their Area Assemblies and Districts, to identify/recruit/nominate at least 1-2 non-alcoholic community members (NACM). These persons could be volunteers at the District level but should be approved by the respective Area Assembly. They should work closely with the Area Assembly and the Class A Trustees to initiate/support/promote/conduct mutually agreed upon projects. A request is also made to the Area Assembly to consider how any budget for such projects (if applicable) could be set aside.

*D - This proposal was accepted with the following changes/provisions and guidelines: Appointment of Non - Alcoholic Community Members (NACM) to support the work of Class A Trustees. One or two NACMs shall to be appointed by the respective Area Assemblies and shall function within the particular Area.*

P - Propose that the term of the Delegate be increased to 4 years to get the most out of Delegates.

*D - This proposal was rejected. The 3 year term still applies.*

*P - There are many demands on our Class A Trustees and more demands will be forthcoming in the years ahead. They also have a personal life. Furthermore, whenever one rotates out, there should always be two experienced trustees on the Board. Thus it is proposed that the number of Class A Trustees be increased from two to three.*

*D - This proposal was rejected. The proposal to adjust the Conference balance over the next 7 years would require for 2 more Delegates if another Trustee is appointed. It would also cause additional cost to the fellowship. NACM's have already been set up and there is no need for an additional Class A Trustee at this stage.*

*P - Most members do not know that they belong to a huge, vibrant organization due to their lack of knowledge or exposure. It is therefore proposed that GSO prepare workshop material to explain the dynamic nature of the A.A. structure and how it operates so that all regions can use that format.*

*D - This proposal was approved as well as the video's being developed and produced by GSO. Material will be made available to the Fellowship to use at workshops/forums etc.*

*P - Propose that each service arm committee at Conference develop a workshop kit for use by all areas.*

*D - This proposal was approved. Each Service Arm Committee at Conference to develop a kit.*

*P - Conference to provide guidelines on how to deal with SAYPAA.*

*D - This proposal was rejected. SAYPAA members are AA members and do not need to be dealt with separately.*

*P - Conference to adjudicate whether the Free State continues to fall under Johannesburg/West Rand Area jurisdiction.*

*D - JWRA has traditionally raised funds for the Free State Delegate to attend Conference. It has always formed a part of the Central Region. It was a 1999 Conference decision that we re-affirm. JWRA is the largest area under the Central Region and as such is best to finance the cost.*

*P - There is a dire need to reach out to the black population in the townships. How can we respond effectively to this?*

*D - This proposal was approved. Suggestions and guidelines available in complete document.*

*P - How to ensure continued support for a small group to carry the message, especially in outlying areas and keep going "Back to Basics".*

*D - How can we support other groups? Members should attend meetings of other groups/areas in addition to their own group. Take newcomers to the other groups as well. We need to adhere to the principle of singleness of purpose. Try to bring in a variety of, and dynamic speakers. Try to rather have upcoming groups joining other groups nearby instead of opening new groups.*

*P - A need for the ongoing refinement of social media guidelines is important.*

*D - The existing AASA Social Media Guidelines together with the AA International Internet Guidelines were more than adequate. A link to the latter document:*

*[http://www.aa.org/assets/en\\_US/mq-18\\_internet.pdf](http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/mq-18_internet.pdf).*

*Both Social Media and the Internet are fast moving targets that change daily. Both documents are routinely kept up to date and it was felt that the mater need not be brought to conference every year. The committee would recommend against registering WhatsApp groups as registered meetings or placing links on the AASA home page.*

*P - What can be done to increase contributions from groups and other revenue streams?*

*D - The literature stands proposed by CPC & PI should be actively marketed by all and not only the CPC & PI Area office bearers. This wonderful innovation also brings with it repeat income every time the stand is stocked. Finance committee members are asked to actively encourage this initiative in their Areas of among their friends in the Fellowship. We need to think outside the box in terms of promoting literature sales. Hospitals, Social Workers, SANCA, Psychiatric professionals, Churches, books shops online retailers are all potential outlets which we are not being exploited. We suggest the need to incentivise people who know "the solution" to sell our products, by paying a small commission, (for example 5%). We are not suggesting paid 12th stepping, but increasing the sales of the Big Book, and 12 by 12 in four languages to those that need it, their families and those in the caring professions. The Committee brought to attention the definition of a Rally page 154 – 2.1 in the Service Manual as being event primarily aimed at "...the general public, Medical Institutions, Social Welfare Departments, Corporates, Law Enforcement Agencies, etc." this is exactly the market we should be selling our literature and prominent sales points need to be set up and manned by knowledgeable members.*

*P - Should the project on the SA version of the Big Book be continued and if yes, what will be the story selection criteria?*

*D - It was decided to continue with research on this project. The National Committee will gather opinion from the Fellowship on whether members want this book to be published. Feedback to be given at Conference 2018. The National Committee will investigate how this book will be sold online, the costs thereof, practicality, systems needed etc. and report back at Conference 2018.*

## CONFERENCE APPROVED PROJECTS

The ASA Committee will focus on converting cassette tapes with AA shares to digital format and to scan documents in order to build digital archives. Work will be done at GSO with the help of local volunteers.

The CPC/PI Committee will extend workshops to other disciplines eg. Insurance, HR and Labour Industries. Chairperson of the committee will compile a database of conferences. Area Assemblies to contact social workers who attended workshops in the last 2 years, to assist in reaching out to outlying areas.

The Literature and Publications Committee will investigate what other countries have done to market their version of the Regmaker so that subscriptions and sales can be increased.

The TF/CF Committee will communicate with correctional supervising officers in all districts with a view to create meetings for offenders who have been granted correctional supervision. We will assist in conducting AA meetings at these facilities and encourage attendees to attend AA meetings in their areas. Speak to prosecutors and magistrates about the advantages of having offenders attend AA meetings. Address clinic nurses in rural areas regarding outpatients and what AA can do for them. Members who share at private rehabs are asked to speak to staff and encourage literature sales to these institutions.

The Finance and IT Committee will continue research on digitalisation of the Regmaker and other literature. The Fellowship is asked to look at ways to contribute more to Areas and GSO. Some suggestions are: ask one or two group members to pay venue rent; ask members to donate coffee/tea etc. for meetings; quarterly raffles; signing up for the new Gratitude Pledge system; Delegates to visit groups and educate members on how contributions are used and sensitively suggest that more affluent members consider including a bequest in their wills; Delegates to visit non-contributing groups and find out why they are not helping the Fellowship; Group conscience meetings to be held to find ways to get more newcomers to stay. Literature stand with leaflets for CPC/PI purposes to be actively marketed by all members of the Fellowship. Promotion of literature sales is important – we need to sell literature to outside entities eg. HR departments of companies, rehabs, hospitals etc. Literature stand for companies:



## ARCHIVES MONTH - OCTOBER

Very soon it will be Archives Month again. We've had specific themes each year. It would be fair to say that all of these themes are actually ongoing themes (Group, Area histories; Recording of Old-timers talks, Collection of memorabilia etc.) We at GSO would like to see all areas and groups continue with these themes in earnest as very few group/area histories were sent to GSO thus far. We need to compile a comprehensive data base to put on our website. You may want to target October as the time in which to do this. In the meantime, other on-going activities may take place at group and area levels - invite old times to share at your groups/areas; set up Archives display stands at your group/area meetings, rallies, public spaces, etc.; invite personnel from the area office or any other member with a good knowledge of the subject to talk to members on Archives, its origins, its purpose, etc. Encourage members to donate archival items to the group/area. Areas/groups may be creative in some of the activities they engage in. Most importantly, use the month of October to highlight Archives in general, and Archives at the Group, District, and Area levels, in particular why it is significant in the life of an A.A. member. In a sense, this is a month-long awareness campaign driving home the status Archives occupies amongst the other A.A. portfolios.

## CONVENTION 2018

Convention 2018 will be hosted by the Eastern Cape and will be held at the Nelson Mandela University North Campus in Port Elizabeth from 30 March to 1 April. Arrangements and fundraisers are on track. Please contact the Port Elizabeth Area Office for fundraiser raffle tickets. The theme is: "Unity – The Heartbeat of A.A."

## GSO USA/CANADA MEETS GSO SOUTH AFRICA

The General Manger and International Desk liaison of GSO USA/Canada visited GSO SA in June. Various administrative and literature issues were discussed. GSO SA obtained permission to print leaflets for the PI Company stand in South Africa and received the green light on this project. Some licensing issues were discussed and cleared up and GSO SA will be able to produce an exciting new literature item pending approval at Conference 2018. Watch this space for details!

## GROUP HANDBOOKS

The Southern African Group Handbook proves to be a very popular item. The kit contains a handbook consisting of guidelines, information on how to run a group and loads of suggestions eg. Meeting topics, conducting group conscience meetings, social media guidelines, literature, archives, group records, finances etc. The kit contains copies of Regmaker, Alco-Solo, AA in SA and 31 leaflets/cards. Please contact your Area Office to obtain a Group Handbook.