

Inventory update

The World Services Inventory Composite Group held its first meeting 24-27 June 1993 at the WSO in Los Angeles. The Composite Group was created to coordinate most of the work related to the inventory plan approved by the World Service Conference this April. The group is composed of three RSRs, two trustees, one WSO director, and one member of each WSC committee. Three WSO special workers have been assigned to assist the Composite Group, and two outside consultants were hired to work with the group at its first meeting.

The group had three key tasks for the June meeting:

1. Begin working together as a service body.
2. Develop surveys for the fellowship to use in evaluating world services.
3. Compile tools for world service boards and committees to use in assessing their own operations at a world services meeting to be held later in the conference year.

Early in the meeting the group discussed the various roles each member would play in the project. Members were assigned to serve as contacts between the Composite Group and other world service boards and committees.

The group decided to rotate a new group member into its leadership position at each meeting. The rotating leaders will have the same responsibilities as other world-level committee chairs; however, the Composite Group expects them to delegate responsibility to other committee members as much as possible so as not to become overburdened. If rotating leaders so frequently creates continuity problems in the future, the group will reconsider the idea.

With preliminaries resolved, the Composite Group focused on the development of fellowship surveys. The group began with the surveys because the WSC-approved inventory plan called for the surveys to be translated and mailed in July 1993, while the world service board and committee self-assessment tools were not to be used until October at the earliest.

The Composite Group's two consultants led the group through a very thorough survey development process, identifying the decisions the group had to make at each stage before going further. First, the consultants asked the Composite Group two questions: What had led to the call for an inventory of NA world services? What was the inventory's purpose? Two themes surfaced. Narcotics Anonymous had grown quickly over the past fifteen years, maybe too quickly for world services to keep up. Composite Group members also talked about spiritual rifts that had divided the fellowship's "minority voice" from NA world services. Group members shared their hope that the inventory would identify any problem areas that might exist in world service operations and begin the process of healing any breaks between the fellowship and its world services.

With more than ten thousand NA groups with current addresses logged in the WSO database and more than five hundred area committees, the Composite Group concluded that the mails would provide the only realistic means of administering the inventory survey to the fellowship. Self-addressed envelopes will be included with all surveys to make returning the forms as simple as possible. Return envelopes for responses from the USA will be marked postage-paid for even greater ease in response; unfortunately, it is not financially feasible to mark returns from countries other than the USA postage-paid.

The Composite Group chose to use closed-ended questions in the survey, making it possible to inexpensively tabulate large numbers of responses in a variety of languages. Most questions were framed to accommodate the Likert response scale, asking the respondent to say to what extent she or he disagrees or agrees with a particular positive statement. The consultants told the Composite Group that respondents would probably find it easier to understand the survey if most of the questions used the same kind of response scale, and recommended the Likert scale as being one of the most useful.

Another matter to resolve was, who will answer the questionnaire? When a questionnaire is sent out to an NA group, for instance, will the Composite Group expect the GSR to fill it out on the group's behalf, using his or her own best judgment? Should each survey response show the number of group members who agreed with each option for each question? Or should the responses show a single answer to each question, reflecting the views of each group-as-a-whole? The consultants told the Composite Group that it is important that all respondents answer in the same way; if they don't, the survey results will be skewed.

The Composite Group decided to ask that the survey responses reflect the group conscience of whatever body is being surveyed. The RSC survey should reflect the response of the regional committee, not a tally of all its members or the response of the RSR alone. Similarly, the ASC survey should reflect the conscience of the area committee, and the group survey should register the group's collective conscience. Members responding to the survey who have more input than just their survey responses are encouraged to write out their remarks on separate pieces of paper to ensure their notes are given attention.

With this foundation established, the Composite Group was ready to begin building the group, area, and regional surveys themselves. First, the Composite Group established the categories of inquiry for the surveys—the kinds of issues the group would be asking the fellowship to consider in evaluating NA world services.

The basic categories were drawn from two sources. Four categories were drawn from page 11 of the *Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure*: "The basic purposes of our world services are *communication, coordination, information, and guidance*." Three more had been identified at the February 1993 world services leadership meeting that developed the original administrative plan for the inventory project: *perceptions, expectations, and service delivery*. Once these categories had been identified and prioritized, the Composite Group divided into three teams and developed the actual questions to be asked in the fellowship surveys.

Composite Group members decided to administer a small number of trial surveys in their home areas in

August and September 1993 to help ensure that the questionnaires were understandable and useful. The questionnaires will then be revised as needed and finalized at the September Composite Group meeting for mailing to the fellowship in October. The returns will be ready for tabulation and analysis in January 1994. The Composite Group will evaluate them at its scheduled meeting in February 1994, and will deliver a complete report on the surveys in particular and the inventory in general at WSC'94 in Atlanta.

Once progress toward completing first drafts of the surveys was well under way, the Composite Group turned its attention to considering whether it wished to make further use of the consultants contracted to help the group at its June 1993 meeting. To engage fully in that discussion, the group had to begin looking at the inventory administrative plan as a whole and consider its viability. The plan is very ambitious, calling for an enormous amount of work to be done in very little time. The consultants presented a program for completing the plan, but the consulting costs involved were substantial.

The Composite Group was overwhelmed by the enormity of the task facing it and the estimated costs for consulting assistance. Some group members suggested that the inventory plan, as originally approved, simply couldn't be accomplished and that it would not be prudent to rush into a decision about consultant spending when the group lacked confidence in the plan. It was time to pause, these members said, and redesign the inventory administrative plan before going any further. Other members said that the next step should be to get a second consulting quote based on the plan already submitted. Still other members said that, without a clearer idea of what the inventory project was meant to produce, no consultant could give such a second quote.

Though this fundamental uncertainty was not resolved, the Composite Group realized it had to make some decisions about future work on the inventory project. The group affirmed its belief in the value of qualified outside consultants to assist with certain technical responsibilities. However, the group did not believe it necessarily had to use outside consultants for every phase of the inventory project, especially given

consulting costs, and left its options open for the future.

The group identified three task areas it intended to complete this conference year:

1. Fellowship questionnaires.
2. World service board and committee self-assessment tools.
3. Planning for WSC'94 as a total inventory event.

The group decided that, at its September meeting, it would finish the surveys first. Then it would begin preparing board and committee self-assessment tools in-group with facilitator assistance. The Composite Group selected four of its members to work among themselves to develop a first draft of the self-assessment tools before the whole group gathered again in September.

One sticking point in preparing for development of self-assessment tools was the identification of standards to use in measuring world service board or committee performance. Should these evaluative standards be drawn solely from approved board and committee guidelines, handbooks, and the *Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure*? The Composite Group felt by-and-large that such an evaluation would only determine whether the boards and committees were living up to their guidelines. The group was more inclined to put its time and energy into developing self-assessment tools that would help boards and committees measure themselves against a standard of usefulness to the fellowship and NA's primary purpose, not just against official guidelines.

Along similar lines, the Composite Group discussed the part of the inventory plan that calls for World Service Office staff to prepare "comprehensive histories" of each world service board and committee as background for the self-assessment process. The question is, *how* comprehensive? For now, WSO staff will gather all relevant files, catalogue them, and make those catalogues available to the respective boards and committees for future use.

The next meeting of the Composite Group will be held 16-18 September 1993 in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. All Composite Group members, all inventory staff members, a liaison from the inventory Support Team created to ensure the availability of the resources needed by the Composite Group, and one consultant are to attend. The

meeting will be open to observers. However, no open forums or other types of structured interaction with the NA community in the Atlanta area will be scheduled so that the fellowship in that part of the US does not have a greater opportunity to impact the inventory project than other NA communities will have.

The Composite Group believes it may need to ask for an additional meeting in November 1993 to complete self-assessment materials for the world service meeting and begin preparing the WSC'94 program. The group will not know whether such a meeting will be necessary until after the September meeting is concluded.

The date and location for the world services meeting during which all boards and committees will assess their own performance have not yet been determined. It had originally been hoped that this meeting could be held in October 1993. However, until the Composite Group has a much better idea of how long it will take to complete the self-assessment tools that will be used as the core of the agenda for that world services meeting, the group is unwilling to make a scheduling recommendation. Right now, the only certainty is that the meeting will not be held in October. The Composite Group is aware that the uncertainty and delay are frustrating for many world service participants. The group encourages you to be patient and asks for your understanding.

The final Composite Group meeting of the 1993-94 conference year called for by the inventory plan is scheduled for February 1994. That meeting is to be used to evaluate inventory information received thus far, prepare reports, and make final logistical preparations for WSC'94 in Atlanta.

This concludes the digest of the Composite Group's 6 August 1993 report to WSC participants on progress made in the world services inventory project. That report was the second made to conference participants on the inventory. The first, dated 9 June 1993, came from the inventory Support Team. If you wish to receive a copy of either of these reports, or if you have any questions or ideas about the inventory, write, call, or fax World Services Inventory, Box 9999, Van Nuys CA 91409 USA, telephone (818) 780-3951, fax (818) 785-0923

INVENTORY UPDATE

During its meetings at WSC'94, the Composite Group reaffirmed its belief in the effectiveness of small working groups, based on their efficiency during the previous inventory year. Consequently, nearly all Composite Group work in the second year of inventory will be accomplished by small working groups. The Composite Group, as a whole, will then review and revise or approve each small group's work before implementation.

With this in mind, the *Inventory Updates* for 1994-95 will focus primarily on the activities, goals, and accomplishments of each of the four small working groups, which include: 1) the Survey Analysis Group, which is assigned to organize and analyze the data obtained from the group, area, and regional surveys; 2) the WSC Evaluation Group, which is assigned the task of organizing and summarizing the information generated by the conference's self-evaluation; 3) the Committee and Board Evaluation Group, which will organize and summarize information generated by world service committees and boards in their self-evaluations; and, 4) the WSO Evaluations Group, which will assist the office in its inventory this year. Last year, this group developed (in cooperation with WSO staff) a self-assessment/evaluation tool for use by the office.

On 7 June, the small group leaders held a conference call to report on the progress of their groups' tasks. The following is a summary of that conference call.

Survey Analysis Group

This group reported that the final round of data entry would be completed by the office on 7-8 June. Two members of the group are currently developing more adequate means of representing survey data, based on comments, suggestions, and criticisms received at WSC'94. The group was asked to present a proposal for the Composite Group's consideration about the data analysis of the survey results.

This group has also been assigned the responsibility of working on the multiregional forums, as described in the inventory plan, and is developing recommendations to the Composite Group regarding these events.

WSC Evaluation Group

This group reported that the initial stage of its work included dividing up among group members the

hefty amount of information generated by the conference's self-evaluation so that it may be summarized. This group will have a conference call on 6 July to review and discuss individual work and to prepare a proposal to the Composite Group regarding the integration of all inventory information into the CG's final report. This proposal will be mailed to the Composite Group for its consideration at their upcoming meeting.

Committee and Board Evaluation Group

This group reported that it had contacted the leadership of all world service entities regarding the committee and board self-evaluations. All committees and boards have made plans for their self-evaluations, which are scheduled to occur at the world services meeting in September. The exceptions are the World Convention Corporation Board, the World Services Translations Committee, and the Interim Committee, which will do their self-evaluations during their respective meetings held prior to the September world services meeting.

WSO Evaluation Group

This group reported that its activity is on hold pending the office's final decision regarding its self-evaluation schedule. The office management's current projection is that the WSO hopes to have its self-assessments and evaluations completed by the end of August.

Other items of note

The inventory plan calls for the Composite Group to forward its data and findings to a systems consultant for analysis and recommendations. The search for a consultant is progressing, with at least four prospective candidates having submitted information to be considered. The consultant search will be discussed on the Composite Group conference call on 7 July and will be an agenda item during the group's July meeting.

The inventory plan, as it was revised at WSC'94, has been rewritten to include changes resulting from conference actions. It will be sent out for review by the Composite Group and the Interim Committee by 27 June. Further revisions may result from Interim Committee input, Composite Group conference calls, or the group's meeting scheduled for 29-31 July in Los Angeles.

If you have any questions about the inventory, please feel free to contact Composite Group, through the WSO.

INVENTORY UPDATE

WORLD SERVICES MEETING

The full Composite Group met during the 14-17 September 1994 world services meeting. The following is a summary of discussions and decisions from that meeting.

First on the agenda, the Composite Group heard a report from the group which met in Baltimore on 2 September 1994 to resolve perceived differences between the Composite Group's ideas about the resolution phase of the inventory project and the single project proposal from world service leadership. The group made the following three recommendations: 1) that the Interim Committee approve the Composite Group's request for a consultant. 2) that the Interim Committee include Composite Group members in the pool of trusted servants to be considered for attendance at multi-regional forums regarding the problem resolution phase of the inventory; and 3) that members of the Composite Group be considered for any group formed for the resolution phase of the inventory. All three recommendations were accepted by the Composite Group.

The Composite Group also heard a report from the Report Team, which has been charged with the responsibility of writing the Composite Group's final report on the inventory project. The Report Team outlined the process which would be used for the drafting and revisions of the final report. The process entails a three-draft writing and revision process, to be finalized by early to mid March, when the full Composite Group is tentatively scheduled to hold their last meeting. The entire report is scheduled to be mailed to the fellowship no later than 24 March 1995. A WSO staff member has been assigned as the writer of this project.

A determination was made to postpone a decision on whether or not to include a small report in the 1995 *Conference Agenda Report*, pending clarification from the Admin. Committee. The Composite Group also decided to cancel its previously scheduled 4 November 1994 meeting, and scheduled a conference call for 15 October 1994.

15 OCTOBER 1994 CONFERENCE CALL

The full Composite Group met by conference call on 15 October 1994. The following is a summary of that call.

The group listened to a report from the WSO staff member assigned as writer to the Report Team. He stated that he had begun to review all of the gathered material with the exception of the WSO evaluations, which would be available in early November. He also stated that although the project would be difficult, he nonetheless anticipated its completion according to schedule. The group also elected to add Jane Nickels to the Report Team.

The group decided to postpone the decision as to whether or not to include the "don't know" responses in the Survey Analysis portion of the Final Report until February, when they will have had a chance to review a draft of the final report. The group did decide to send a copy of this draft report to five RSRs who had volunteered their expertise at WSC'94, for their review and input.

The group also agreed not to require a summary report from the WSO sr. management as originally decided. The rationale for this change was that there would be a duplication of efforts between the staff writer and WSO sr. management.

The group then heard a report about the work of the Consultant Team. The Consultant Team reported that they held a conference call on 26 September 1994, and had agreed on hiring procedures for the consultant. After receiving input from two members of the WSO BOD, the Consultant Team developed a hiring protocol which was approved by the Composite Group. The Composite Group also decided to add an Admin member to the Consultant Team who will be present at the initial "educational meeting" for the Consultant. That Admin member will also remain on the Consultant Team until WSC'95.

The group then addressed its role at WSC'95, and decided to request from the Admin Committee, an eight hour time segment

(one day) at WSC'95 for the full Composite Group to answer questions regarding their final report and interface with the conference. Finally, nominations were opened for the election of a new Composite Group leader. Two individuals were nominated, and the votes were to have been called in to the WSO by an 24 October 1994 deadline. Neither nominee received a majority vote, therefore, no new leader was elected. The Composite Group leader elected in April 1994 continues to serve in this capacity.

The group then revisited its discussion on submitting a report for the *Conference Agenda Report*. The following motion was made and accepted: That the Composite Group ask the Interim Committee to allow a report from the Composite Group to be included in this year's *Conference Agenda Report*. If Interim denies this request, that the Admin Committee consider allowing the Composite Group to insert a report in the *Conference Agenda Report* mailings, and that this report be translated.

As always the Composite Group welcomes input, and can be reached at through the WSO.

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INVENTORY UPDATE

The Composite Group would like to take this time to give you a brief summary of activities since WSC'94. We have been working hard to complete the task assigned by the conference. We are happy to inform you that we are right on target with our finish date of March 1995.

The Composite Group has formed a Report Team consisting of Composite Group members who have been team leaders within the Composite Group, and the current Composite Group leader. This team, with the assistance of WSO staff, will compile all of the information gathered throughout the entire inventory process, and attempt to integrate this information in the "scope of the inventory." This scope was the Composite Group's base outline for the development of the tools that were used in gathering information.

The final report of the Composite Group will assist our fellowship in two areas. One, we as a fellowship, will learn what we see as strengths within our service structure. Secondly, we will see areas of weakness that may benefit from a structure change. We have information from the service structure of Narcotics Anonymous consisting of group, area and regional surveys, along with inventories from each WSC board and committee, the World Service Office Inc., the World Convention Corporation and an inventory of the conference itself. We are hopeful that with a full exploration and discussion of all data collected, our service efforts will be maximized and our ability to serve the addict worldwide will be enhanced. Please look for the Composite Group's final report due to be released 24 March 1995.

The Composite Group has also retained the use of a consultant who will provide the fellowship with an objective report of all of the inventory data. The consultant's work began in November, when the Consultant Team of the Composite group met with him to provide information about our fellowship and to give him all of the inventory data that has been compiled. Along with a report of his findings, he will also be offering recommendations for change.

After much deliberation, the Composite Group made a decision not to offer any recommendation with our final report. We believed, that for the integrity of the inventory process, that our involvement would be limited to gathering information and presenting it to you in our final report. This will allow our members to interpret the results along with the consultant's findings. The Composite Group will be attending WSC'95 during sessions dealing with the inventory. There is time allocated during the conference for conference participants' questions and comments regarding the Composite Group's final report.

During our 20 December 1994 conference call, the Composite Group made a decision to limit the draft and input stages of the Works in Progress of their final report to members of the Composite Group. The rationale for this decision was based on the time constraints between now and the 24 March 1995 deadline.

The Composite Group held their final meeting in Van Nuys, California to finalize their final report and will also attend the Dallas world services meeting.

Our final report and the Consultant Report will be mailed to conference participants by 24 March 1995. Please be aware that both reports will total over six hundred pages. Each conference participant will receive one complimentary copy, however, other copies will be available through the World Service Office for a charge not yet determined.

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