

2020 World Service Conference Delegate Report

During our “Mega Issue” discussion at the 2019 World Service Conference (WSC), we began “Dreaming Big” about how a “hybrid” Conference might look. Little did we know then that life would soon necessitate that it become a reality.

The Conference Leadership Team (CLT) started planning the 2020 World Service Conference (WSC) soon after the conclusion 2019 WSC. It usually takes eleven months to put all the pieces into place. Due to COVID-19, the CLT worked tirelessly to streamline the agenda, train delegates, set up the technical team, cancel hotel and travel arrangements for all the attendees, and created the first-ever Virtual/Hybrid World Service Conference in just ONE MONTH!

1. Basic facts about the World Service Conference (WSC):

- a. **Who attended?** 92 voting members: 64 Delegates (including Canada and Puerto Rico), Executive Director of the World Service Office (WSO), the Board of Trustees, WSO Executive Committee, WSO Staff. 103 total in attendance, including non-voting WSO Staff, Interpreter, Recorders.
- b. **Schedule? Virtual Conference:** two 4-hour days using WebEx platform plus **Hybrid Conference:** 6+ days (prior to Conference, during, and after) of reviewing documents online with emailing comments/questions regarding several of the documents. Total of 45 documents sent to WSC members, and over 400 emails on topics and overall Conference communications.
- c. **How did we vote?** “Voxvote” website/app was used for confidential voting. Multiple training options for both WebEx and Voxvote were provided prior to Conference for WSC members.
- d. Policy discussions and Conference Approved Literature (CAL) discussions were postponed until 2021 WSC due to time constraints.

2. WSO Financials:

- a. Highlights of 2019 World Service Office (WSO) Independent Audit:
 - Four auditors; high-level review with “unmodified opinion”
 - Total assets increased; contributions (including a major bequest) and investment income exceeded budget; WSO did not need to transfer from reserve fund in 2019.
 - Strong year for Conference Approved Literature (CAL) sales; top selling are still *How AI-Anon Works (B-32)* and *Courage to Change (B-17)*. E-book sales accounted for a very small portion of CAL sales (1%) and don’t negatively impact sales of printed CAL.

- Expenses for General Administrative Services decreased by about 17%.
- Expenses for Program Services (activities to fulfill Al-Anon's purpose ie: Public Outreach, Group Services, Literature, Conference, International Services, AFG Records, Digital Strategy-Technology, Innovation) increased by 11%.
- Literature sales (~54%) and contributions (~ 40%) alone won't support the WSO's work. For this reason, the Reserved Fund (ample reserve) can provide an annual transfer of up to 4% to the General Fund.
- The Reserve Fund currently contains only 8 months worth of operating expenses. The WSO seeks to grow that fund to 12 months.
- There are over 14,000 Al-Anon Groups. **WSO expenses per group in 2019 = \$304. (over \$4,256,000)**

b. 2020 Budget:

- Finance Committee began creating the 2020 budget in fall 2019.
- Budget projection to "actual" is reviewed every month and analyzed to explain variances. Frequent talks between the Finance Committee and Board of Trustees (BOT) regarding how to reduce expenses.
- Budget is revised/updated in July, which is reflected in the July Chairperson of the Board (COB) letter.
- The budget presented at the 2020 WSC predicted a budget deficit of over \$129,000.00.
- The WSO Finance Committee reevaluated the significant decrease in literature sales and contributions due to the impact of COVID-19 and adjusted their predicted operating deficit to reach \$1,600,000.00 at the end of 2020.
- Because of the significant difference between the budgeted and the actual revenue, the WSO has eliminated Staff travel and implemented Staff furloughs and layoffs.

3. WSO 2019 Annual Report Highlights:

- 2019 marked the first-time release of the WSO Annual Report for 2018 in English, French and Spanish.
- In 2019, the WSO processed 92 requests to translate or reprint CAL. Of these, 52 requests were to translate CAL into Italian, Turkish, Slovenian, Finnish, and Icelandic.
- A member's blog was developed to allow members to share on the spiritual principles. It can be found at [al-anon.org](https://www.al-anon.org) under the Member Resources tab.

- Electronic meeting registrations have grown - by 60 since Dec. 2019 - including 116 online meetings and 180 by phone. These are held in a variety of languages and are listed on al-anon.org.
- Electronic meetings Current Mailing Address (CMA) members have now been incorporated into an AFG Connects Electronic Meetings community. Eight web conferences have been held with Group Services staff members to address some of the unique needs of their meetings.
- The *Alateen Service e-Manual*, available at al-anon.org, was reviewed and revised for content. The document is fully interactive with links to all available resources on al-anon.org. Also, the *Alateen Newcomer Packet* (K-18) was made available in a new format and in three languages.
- An automated email, “*Electronic Newcomer Kit*”, was developed containing short narratives from CAL and al-anon.org links helpful to new members.
- *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA)* is offered for sale year-round.
- The WSO International Team provides guidance to Al-Anon in Other Countries organized under General Service Offices (GSOs) including 37 GSOs, 12 Service Boards plus has meeting contacts in 70 other countries. New in 2019: first meetings were registered in Mongolia and Mozambique.

4. Other business conducted at the WSC:

- a. WSC voting members approved the 2019 Audit, 2020 Budget, and 2019 Annual Report
- b. The WSC affirmed new Trustees, both “Regional” and “at-Large” and new Officers of the Board.
- c. Thought Force: Identifying Ways to Look at Service in Relation to Roles, Terms, and Possible Roadblocks
- d. Thought Force: Fear of Change
- e. Task Force: Reaching and Unifying Rural and Large Geographic Populations
- f. Chosen Agenda Item (CAI): Our Envisioned Future sees Al-Anon being a global organization with barrier-free access to the program. How do you see this manifesting?

5. What’s next at the WSO?

- Al-Anon mobile app in 3 languages will be launched soon.
- Free-lance translators will be hired to supplement those on staff (1 French and 1 Spanish) to “catch up” with literature translation.
- Ability for Spanish and French literature to be ordered directly on the WSO web site late summer.

Grateful to serve as your Delegate,
 Susan Brown
 World Service Conference Delegate, Panel 59