

GUIDELINES FOR NATIONAL/LANGUAGE SERVICE BOARDS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Manual is to provide National and Language Service Boards in Region Nine with information about how these Service Boards are formed and operate.

National/Language Service Boards (N/LSBs) were officially recognized in the OA service structure in 1995. However, such Service Boards were already operating in several countries by this time. In each place this happened, the local OA organization established their N/LSB based on their needs and experience. This Manual does not prescribe one fixed model for the structure and operation of these Service Boards. For the purpose of keeping it simple these guidelines will not attempt to describe every single possible structure but will rather try to provide basic ideas that can be easily applied and adjusted.

THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF N/LSBs

The primary purpose of National and Language Service Boards is to provide common services for Intergroups and groups within a country or language group.

The official definition in Overeaters Anonymous, Inc.'s Bylaws, Subpart B, Article VIII, Section 1, states:

"A national/language service board shall be a duly registered service body with the purpose of dealing with issues that require a combination of membership and financial resources of intergroups and groups in a country/countries. The national/language service board shall serve and be responsible to these groups and intergroups. These service boards may also be known as language service boards."

ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL/LANGUAGE SERVICE BOARD

Generally N/LSBs were established as a practical need in a specific country or language area.

Sometimes several Intergroups in a country or language region would exist and the members in the country/language area recognized the need to create a Service Board that would take care of the many common administrative needs of the Intergroups.

In other places there would be one Intergroup in the country/language area, probably with a large membership and serving a large area. The

members recognized that the Intergroup could not take care of all the needs of all the groups spread out over the area, and that it would be wise to maintain a central body to deal with the administrative needs and to create "local" Intergroups to deal with their local group needs. In this case the previous Intergroup would become the N/LSB and new affiliated Intergroups would be established.

In places where OA was smaller and possibly did not require more than one Service Board, yet the members felt that their purpose was to serve the entire country, they decided to define themselves as a NSB.

Why form a National/Language Service Board?

*** Growth and expansion**

Intergroups focusing on spreading the OA message in the area, backed up by a National Service Board that provides essential services to the Intergroups, create a healthy springboard for growth and effectiveness. Sometimes the area and size that a single Intergroup has to cover prevents maximum effectiveness. In one country the IG comprised of about 100 groups and about 50 representatives were coming to IG meetings one evening a month. It was almost impossible to cover more than the basic "business" needs of the meeting and no time was left for hearing about what was happening at the group level and how the IG could support the groups. By creating a N/LSB, the Intergroup can focus on group support and spreading the message in their local area and the N/LSB can focus on providing the resources for all the Intergroups and spread the message on a larger scale.

*** "Together we can do what we cannot do alone"**

When common needs among several Intergroups (beyond geographical borders) create a need for combining resources and joining forces (e. g. language).

*** International ties**

When the different Intergroups within a country or within a specific language group cannot send representatives to OA international business meetings, usually for lack of funding, they could do so through the National Service Board Delegate or Representative who can then represent the entire area, and bring back the message of both the business conducted at the meetings, and the spirit of unity in the fellowship, back to the area.

*** Non-English speaking countries**

Non-English speaking countries have special needs that require extra resources. In these countries, usually only a minority of the members speaks English well and the responsibility of spreading the message by translating OA literature, guidelines, and information received from World Service and Region Nine is great.

In such countries, where there are more than one Intergroup, it is important to have a centralized body for this function.

In addition the costs and resources required for translating and producing OA literature in different languages is great, so it's recommended to combine these resources through the N/LSB.

How do you decide whether to change the OA Service Structure in your area?

1. The first action to take is to establish a "service structure" committee. The purpose of this committee will be for people to get together and to form ideas as to how they believe the fellowship can grow and expand in that country.
2. Discuss the service structure at Intergroup meetings and/or at special meetings held for this purpose. Allow for everyone to participate and to voice their opinions. Don't be put off if there is resistance or people are indifferent and have no opinions. Many of us react negatively towards change and need time to absorb the ideas.
3. Prepare different models for the new structure and how it can possibly develop. At this stage it is important to study both the possible benefits and possible disadvantages that may arise out of the change. Contact people in other countries to hear about their structure, and what works for them. Attached is a suggested guideline (Appendix 2) for some of the questions and issues to be explored during this process.
4. Set up a meeting in which a formal motion to establish a new structure will be presented, formally discussed and VOTE! The motion should already include a presentation of the basic structure of the proposed L/NSB and affiliated Intergroups, the relationship between the Service Boards and basic operations and functions of the L/NSB.
5. If the vote is positive, CONGRATULATIONS. The next step is to register the new Service Board on WSO's form designated for that purpose. You will have to list the Intergroups and groups that are affiliated to the new L/NSB so that WSO will be able to adjust all the records accordingly.
6. The new Service Board will also be required to submit bylaws to the WSO.

NATIONAL/LANGUAGE SERVICE BOARD ASSEMBLY

The National/Language Service Board Assembly is a meeting of the membership of the entire service structure in the country/language area.

Assembly frequency

It is recommended to hold an assembly at least once a year, twice a year, if possible.

Assembly location

Ideally the assembly would be held in a central location, with the same travel time for people coming from different directions out of town. Some countries prefer to rotate the assembly location throughout the country. Ultimately this is a group conscience decision.

Assembly Membership

The membership of the assembly consists of:

- Group representatives
- Intergroup Board Officers and Committee Chairs
- N/LSB members

Election of the members of the N/LSB

The members of the N/LSB are elected at the annual Assembly by all voting members attending the assembly. These are group representatives, Intergroup and N/LSB representatives. The term is usually two years, but this is decided upon by each country separately.

Bylaws

The bylaws of the N/LSB are adopted by the National Assembly, preferably at the first assembly held after the N/LSB is established. If possible, at least a Statement of Purpose should be drawn up and adopted at the very same meeting the Assembly is established. This document will enable the N/LSB to register with the World Service Office (WSO). Guidelines for registering with WSO are attached in Appendix 3.

Policies & Procedures

There are two types of policies and procedures:

- Those adopted by the National Assembly, which will become the policies of the National Assembly, and
- Those adopted internally by the N/LSB, which will govern the way the N/LSB operates and functions.

NATIONAL/LANGUAGE SERVICE BOARD FUNCTIONS

One of the most important issues is defining the responsibilities of the N/LSB and the affiliated Intergroups. We have already established that the role the N/LSB is to provide common services for Intergroups and groups.

The functions of the N/LSB may include:

- * National meeting list

- * National newsletter
- * Translation of OA literature into the local language
- * Printing of OA literature
- * National Public Information work
 - * National PI work with Hospitals, Institutions, Professionals and the Military "HIPM" work
- * National OA Events (marathons, IDEA Day, Unity Day events)
- * Translation of information coming from World Service and Region Nine
- * Representation at WSBC and Region Nine Assembly.

NATIONAL/LANGUAGE SERVICE BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the N/LSB will usually comprise of Officers and Committee Chairpersons:

Officers

- Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Committee Chairpersons

- Bylaws/Policies
- Literature
- Public Information
- Professional Communities
- Events
- 12th Step Within
- Newsletter
- Region Nine Representative/s
- WSBC Delegate/s

As there is as a certain amount of discussion of similar issues, input and flow between Region Nine and WSBC, it is recommended that the delegates be the same people, if this is possible. In one country these delegates form the "International" Committee where, in addition to being representatives to Region Nine and WSBC, they deal with all the issues requiring liaison with Region Nine, WSBC and WSO. This could be particularly helpful in non-English speaking countries. It is recommended that more than one person serve on this committee, even if only one delegate attends Region Nine and WSBC business meetings.

Intergroup Chairpersons

The Intergroup Chairperson is elected by the members of the Intergroup and serves the Intergroup. It is suggested that a good way to ensure good communications with the Intergroups is for the Intergroup Chair to be part of the N/LSB by attending meetings as voting members (NOTE:

Having Intergroup Chairpersons part of the N/LSB is not mandatory and may not be common. However those boards doing this have found this the best method to keep close ties and communications open between the N/LSB and Intergroups).

Elections

The members of the N/LSB are elected at the National Assembly. Usually it takes a majority vote to be elected to the N/LSB.

It is possible to consider setting a quota of members from each Intergroup thus maintaining equal possible representation on the Board from each area. It is also possible to call for elections from anyone who qualifies.

There are three general methods of elections:

- 1) Hold elections for general membership to the N/LSB only. The allocation of the different positions is decided upon by the Board at its first meeting.
- 2) Hold elections for specific positions (Intergroups usually do this) – Chair, Treasurer, Delegate, Bylaws Chair, Literature Chair, etc.
- 3) Combine the two systems – have some positions elected directly and others generally.

The advantage of electing general members at the Assembly is that it gives the board flexibility in filling positions (especially Committee positions), allowing for changes and creating new positions as needed. If members are elected directly to a position then only the Assembly can approve the changes made and this might affect the Board's ability to serve the fellowship best.

Sometimes it may still be important to have some positions voted upon by the full Assembly and responsible to the full Assembly, such as Chair, Treasurer and "international" delegates.

It is entirely up to each country/area to decide what would work best for you, but it is worth considering each method.

Qualifications

Qualifications to serve on the N/LSB are defined in the bylaws of the Service Board. Each Service Board is autonomous to set its own qualifications, but here are some ideas.

Consider the following criteria in general: time in fellowship, service in fellowship, particularly previous Intergroup service (in cases where there will be both an IG and N/LSB), and length of abstinence.

Some positions may require longer time in the Fellowship, such as Chair, Treasurer, Representatives to Region Nine/WSBC (one country requires 5 years for these positions and 3 for other positions). Naturally, the qualifications should not be so high that no one or very few people can qualify! Service boards should note the current WSBC and Region Nine delegate requirements and incorporate these into your own requirements. In non-English speaking countries it would also be wise to ensure that the delegates have a good speaking, reading and writing knowledge of English.

NATIONAL/LANGUAGE SERVICE BOARD MEETINGS

Ideally the N/LSB would meet once a month. In larger geographic areas this may not be possible, so the final decision would be decided upon by the N/LSB. It would seem important to meet at least once in every three months.

One suggestion is to hold a telephone-conference call at least once a month if there is no meeting. If an agenda and motions are distributed in advance, it is found that this is a useful way of holding a meeting. Most countries now have facilities for holding conference calls at fairly inexpensive rates, certainly much cheaper than travel for larger areas. This is a good method getting important business done in between meetings.

E-mail is also an excellent way of transmitting information quickly.

The Internet has many tools for holding "meetings" online and this tool can be used for conducting OA business between meetings.

N/LSB RELATIONSHIP WITH INTERGROUPS

Finances

The financial ties between the Intergroups and the N/LSB are critical. The traditions teach us that each OA service group is autonomous (Tradition 4) and that each OA group should be "self supporting" (Tradition 7). How do we ensure, within the framework of our traditions, that the N/LSB is supported well enough? If we look at the responsibilities of the N/LSB we will see that most of the really big expenses will be the responsibility of the N/LSB – running an office, translating and producing literature, sending representatives to international meetings, funding meetings of the National-/Language Service Board and Assembly, etc.

In many places, traditionally groups contribute to Intergroup and Intergroups would contribute to the N/LSB. There is nothing to prevent groups to contribute directly to the N/LSB as well. The N/LSB is dependent on the contributions from the Intergroups and groups to function and to serve the local fellowship. This means that the two Service Boards depend on one another. The N/LSB depends on the Intergroups to raise the necessary funds to cover the large expenses they have. The Intergroups depend on the N/LSB to provide the necessary services to them. There must be close ties and a true a sense of common purpose between all the service bodies in the country/language area in order for this structure to be successful.

In one country, as the NSB was legally incorporated it turned out that only one bank account was allowed for the entire "organization". Therefore in this country all funds go directly to the N/LSB, which then covers all the expenses of all the Service Boards. While to some this may seem to be a breach of "group" autonomy it does work well and is legally required. Each Intergroup then receives adequate funds for its own operating expenses, which are usually quite small. The amount is approved at the national assembly within the budget approval process.

Division of work

It is very important that the Intergroups and N/LSBs in a country agree upon the division of work between the service bodies as it would be easy to overlap and create misunderstandings. There are some areas in which both services bodies would be active, for example Public Information. The NSB would concentrate on nationwide coverage and events, while the Intergroups would concentrate on local coverage. Another example is OA sponsored events. The Intergroups and N/LSB can find themselves clashing with dates of events so it would seem that some kind of common planning in advance would help. In some areas, maybe the Intergroups would like guidance and assistance from the L/NSB so cross-Service Board meetings could be held to join resources and exchange ideas.

Office

When OA in a country becomes large enough to run an office and hire employees the responsibility for this would reside with the N/LSB. At this point it would seem mandatory for the N/LSB to be legally incorporated in that country in order to be able to legally hire space, employ office workers, and purchase insurance. There is a point where it is no longer feasible to do this informally.

It is not mandatory that there be BOTH a physical office and staff but it does seem to go together. People can be paid to do certain jobs out of their homes but if the decision is taken to have an office then it would seem to require some on hand staff. An office with financial and legal

obligations, operated completely by volunteers doing service could be a very risky undertaking. We give service out of the time we have and cannot always be on the spot to do all the work all the time.

When our homes, spare rooms and cars become packed with OA literature and materials and when the amount of service administration becomes unmanageable, you will know that the time has come to consider hiring office space and employing staff. Read both AA and OA Traditions (Tradition 8) where there is some discussion on hiring staff. The Traditions allow the staff to be either OA members or not. Experience has shown that there is an advantage to having an OA member answer phones from the public. This is an issue for each Service Board to decide for itself.

In one country the office space includes a fairly large meeting area (seating up to about 50 people). About 10-12 meetings a week operate there, various workshops are held there, the NSB and one of the Intergroup business meetings are held there, the National Assemblies are held there, there is space for both an office and storage. This is almost an ideal situation as the meetings pay for use of the room and this goes a long way to help cover the rent costs. Quite a bit of money is also saved by holding the business meetings there too.

NATIONAL/LANGUAGE SERVICE BOARD "INTERNATIONAL LIASON RESPONSIBILITIES"

Representation at Region Nine and at World Service Business Conference (WSBC)

Some countries are lucky enough to be able to send representation from Intergroups and the L/NSB to the Region Nine Assembly and to the WSBC and this is welcome. The bylaws take this into account and ensure that there is no formal duplication of representation. In many places, however, this is not possible and only the L/NSB sends a representative to represent all the Service Boards of that country. In this case, it is recommended that the representative does his/her best to report back to the Intergroups as well as the L/NSB. Reporting back to as many people as possible is an important task as that one person may be the only contact many people may have with OA outside of their area/country.

International Publications

All OA publications are supervised by the Board of Trustees (BOT) and the World Service Office (WSO). OA service bodies throughout the world are permitted to translate OA literature into different languages and to reproduce the literature **provided that they follow the**

guidelines formulated by the BOT and the WSO. These guidelines may change from time to time and are available from the WSO at any time.

Reproduction of OA Conference Approved Literature.

Sometimes OA service bodies around the world find that the shipping costs of OA material and literature from the USA and taxes, result in very high literature costs and that it would be more economical to reproduce the literature locally (in English) for sale to the local fellowship and surrounding countries. Permission to do this needs to be given by the WSO and guidelines are available for following this process.

Translations and publications of OA conference approved literature in different languages.

As most countries around the world do not speak English as their native tongue and there are many countries where most people speak very little or no English or their reading skills are not good enough to fully understand and benefit from the English literature, it is necessary to produce OA literature in local languages. WSO gives permission to different countries to translate and reproduce OA literature. This is a very long and costly process but nonetheless once completed, is usually of great benefit to the local fellowship.

OA Copyrights

OA is a spiritual fellowship. We might not like to concern ourselves with finances and legalities because we feel these are not in harmony with the spiritual side of our program. We have come to realize that this is not so. Taking collective responsibility for our finances is part of our spiritual development. OA, as an organization producing materials, logos and literature, takes simple steps to be the "legal owners" of its products to prevent other organizations and people from "claiming" or using this material and literature for themselves. This is part of our responsibility of maintaining our fellowship for our personal recovery. This is why OA, AA and other Twelve Step Fellowships file copyright claims on their literature. What this means is that OA is the "legal owner" of all its literature and nobody may reproduce OA literature including the OA logo, the brochures, the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of OA Service without permission.

What does this mean for our service bodies? We also may not reproduce any copyrighted material without permission. This includes using the OA logo and OA material in our meetings, events, letterheads, web sites etc. There is a very simple procedure in place to apply for permission from WSO and WSO generally grants permission to OA

service bodies and groups. There is no intent to supervise or control what service bodies reproduce, but simply to make sure we meet the legal obligations that arise out of the copyright process which requires that permission be granted by WSO to use the materials and literature. WSO will more than willing to provide you with the forms and guidelines. It takes just a few minutes to apply for permission each time.

The N/LSB needs to study this issue and to reach a group conscience decision on how best to comply.

OA Royalties

As already mentioned above OA, Inc. is the legal owner of all its literature and material. This gives OA, Inc. the right to receive some return for the literature even if it is not sold or produced directly by WSO. This is called "royalties".

In the music world, every time a song is heard on the radio or video clip screened on TV, we know that the legal owner of the song is entitled to get some kind of return. When people reproduce music without purchasing it (and today this is very simple) – this is called "piracy"! In the literature world, when novels are translated and/or reproduced in different countries by different publication houses, these companies have to pay the legal owner of the novel large sums of royalties for each book reproduced. This cost is included in the price of the novel.

We all understand this concept quite easily outside of OA. Yet we may feel differently when it comes to OA. We may feel resentful that "they" are trying to make it harder and more expensive for us, or that "they" are just interested in making more money!

OA has invested a great deal of time and money to produce each piece of literature. Literature is OA's biggest source of financial survival together with contributions. When we start reproducing the literature locally OA loses that extra return on the investment, which is vital to our survival as fellowship. This goes beyond just the legal issue; it is part of our responsibility to do our part to make sure that OA survives, that OA benefits from the sale of literature as well as our local service groups.

The guidelines mention that a percentage of the sale of OA books and brochures should be sent as royalties to WSO. We need to take this amount into consideration when pricing the sales cost of our literature. Payments can be made annual or more frequently.

It should also be noted that until now OA, Inc. has not taken steps to enforce this procedure and it is unlikely that it will do so in the near future, although this can change at any time. This actually leaves it up

to our good conscience and sense of responsibility to comply. The general consensus is that new and small and struggling services bodies probably cannot manage to meet this requirement. Well established service bodies should start taking more responsibility and make an effort to start paying royalties.

The N/LSB needs to study this issue and to reach a group conscience decision on how best to comply.

WSO meeting lists and updates

The official OA worldwide meeting list is the list posted by the WSO. Therefore, updating the WSO directory is of vital importance and the N/LSB should find the best method for that area/country to send updates to the WSO, especially in non-English speaking countries. Updates can be done via the web, email, fax and post. WSO staff can email the latest print out for an area at request and do everything possible to encourage service bodies to keep information up to date. Possibly this could be the job of a person at the L/NSB level. The importance of this process cannot be stressed too much as the web site is becoming one of the principle ways of finding OA in your area! Sometimes there are bugs in the system and human error causes the updates and information to be lost or incorrect – just keep on sending your updates in, it's never a waste of time.

The Bylaws, Policies and Guidelines produced by the BOT and the WSBC, take precedence over the information in this Manual, which is designed just to be helpful and explain what these procedures are about in a simple matter.

APPENDIX 1 - TERMS

Some of the definitions below have been quoted from other documents: OA Inc. Bylaws, Region Nine Bylaws, WSO web site. These documents may change from time to time, so please check them out occasionally for updates as they will always take precedence over what is stated here.

Groups

(taken from Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. Bylaws, Subpart B, Article V – Overeaters Anonymous Groups):

Section 1 - Definition

- a) These points shall define an Overeaters Anonymous group:
 - 1) As a group they meet to practices the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous.
 - 2) All who have the desire to stop eating compulsively are welcome in the group.
 - 3) No member is required to practice any actions in order to remain a member or to have a voice (share at a meeting).
 - 4) As a group they have no affiliation other than Overeaters Anonymous.

Section 2 – Composition

- a) A group may be formed by two (2) or more persons meeting together as set forth in Article V, Section 2 – Composition
- b) Groups compose the intergroups as set forth in Article VI hereof.

Intergroups

(taken from Bylaws Overeaters Anonymous, Inc., Subpart B, Article VI – Overeaters Anonymous Intergroups).

Section 1 – Composition

- a) Two (2) or more groups may form an Intergroup for the purpose of servicing and representing the groups of which they are composed and acting as the guardian of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of OA service. Each Intergroup should be composed of groups within its region or groups within its geographical proximity.
- b) Each state/province may have at least one (1) intergroups. In a state/province having only one group, that group may function as an Intergroup.

National/Language Service Board

(taken from Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. Bylaws, Subpart B, Article VIII – National/Language Service Boards, Section 1 – Definition)

“A national/language Service Board shall be a duly registered service body with the purpose of dealing with issues that require a combination of membership and financial resources of intergroups and groups in a country/countries. The national/language service board shall serve and be responsible to these groups and intergroups. These service boards may also be known as language service boards.”

World Service Business Conference (The Conference, WSBC)

(taken from Overeaters Anonymous, Inc., Bylaws, Article X – World Service Business Conference, Section 1a) –Annual Meeting:
The World Service Business Conference is simply defined as “the collective conscience of the Fellowship of Overeaters as a whole.”

Regions

There is no definition of the role of Regions in OA's bylaws, just the geographical boundaries of each Region.
The current definition of Region's role as defined in Region Nine Bylaws, Article 2 – Purpose:

Section 1

The purpose of the Region 9 Assembly shall be to carry the OA message within Region 9 to the still suffering compulsive overeater - wherever they live and whatever language they speak.

Section 2

- a) The responsibilities to fulfill this purpose shall include:
- 1) Administering and co-coordinating OA activities common to the various groups, Intergroups and National Service Boards comprising its membership.
 - 2) Establishing and maintaining a regional office mailing address to facilitate communication between Region 9 and the various groups, Intergroups, National Service Boards and members
 - 3) Promoting OA unity within the widely differing cultures and languages included in Region 9.
 - 4) Furthering the OA programme in accordance with the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Overeaters Anonymous as set out in the Bylaws of Overeaters Anonymous, Inc., - Subpart B, Article I and II and III.

Board of Trustees (BOT)

The Bylaws of Overeaters Anonymous, Inc., Subpart A, legally define the operations of the Board of Trustees.

In Subpart B, Article IX defines the power, duties and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees and the individual Trustees towards the fellowship.

Section 2 a) defines the role of the Trustees:

"Each trustee shall serve and represent Overeaters Anonymous as a whole. The members of the board, subject to the laws of the State of California, are expected to exercise the powers vested in them by law in a manner consonant with the faith that permeates and guides the Fellowship of Overeaters Anonymous, inspired by the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous, in accordance with the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of OA Service of OA service and in accordance with the bylaws."

World Service Office (WSO)

Here is a description of the WSO found in the Newcomers packet, which describes the functions of WSO:

"Located in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, we exist to support individual members and OA's thousands of groups worldwide, as well as to carry our message of recovery to compulsive overeaters who are still suffering.

We provide this support in a variety of ways. We produce over 100 literature and recovery-related items, taking member ideas and turning them into polished products. We publish *Lifeline*, a monthly recovery magazine, made up of stories written by and for the OA member. We distribute *A Step Ahead*, a quarterly newsletter, which keeps members up-to-date on OA happenings.

We also maintain current directories on meetings all across the world – we can tell you where to find meetings from Alabama to Zimbabwe! If you don't feel at home at your first meeting, you can call us to find another meeting that works better for you, so don't quit before the miracle happens. We can even connect you with a sponsor or pen pal in another city, state or country, if that is what you need to work your program.

In addition, we provide new groups with everything they need to get started. We also give information about OA to media representatives, health professionals and others interested in OA's Twelve-Step approach to recovery from compulsive overeating.

Although there are no dues or fees for members, the WSO is funded through literature sales and through your contributions. In keeping with

OA's Seventh Tradition, we are member-supported. So, when the basket is passed in meetings, keep in mind that you are supporting your own recovery by helping to maintain your group, Intergroup or National/Language Service Board, Region and World Service Office."

APPENDIX 2 - Should your Service Body become a National/Language Service Board?

Below are some topics and some tips to think about when trying to decide whether or not to establish a National/Language Service Board in your area.

1. In countries where there are few OA groups, mostly one city, the biggest issue for discussion is VISION. How do you want to define yourselves? Do you see yourselves trying to spread the message more in your local area/city at some time in the future? Do you see yourselves trying to spread the message beyond your local area to the rest of the country at some time in the future? Maybe right now there may seem no practical difference between your registering as an Intergroup or as a National/Language Service Board. Your decision will depend on how you want to define yourselves as part of where you think you would like to develop. If you define yourselves as a National/Language Service Board it may give you the inspiration to take action.
2. In countries where there are many groups and only one Intergroup trying to serve all the groups the issues are more complex:
 - a) How many groups do you have?
 - b) How far spread out are the groups?
 - c) How many groups attend Intergroup meetings?
 - d) Can Intergroup representatives travel to the Intergroup meeting within a reasonable time frame?
 - e) How would you benefit from creating a National/Language Service Board with local intergroups?
 - i. Are you currently able to reach out to all the groups in your area?
 - ii. Do you have time to cover all the necessary business at your Intergroup meeting plus hear what's happening at the group level and address group concerns?
 - iii. How would you benefit from separating between the central administrative Service Board and providing local group support and events?
 - iv. How well are your events attended?
 - v. Would you benefit from holding both central and localized events?
 - vi. Would you be able to draw more people into service above the group level by having some members dealing with the localized services?
 - vii. Do you have enough service resources (people doing service) to run separate Service Boards?
3. In countries where there are some separate Intergroups and no centralized National/Language Service Boards:

- a) Are there common needs between all your Intergroups that would make it common sense to have a centralized Service Board – e. g.
- National Meeting List
 - National Newsletter
 - Centralized translation services, if required
 - Central literature publication, if required
 - Purchase of literature from WSO
 - National PI work
 - Centralized representation at Region Nine
 - Centralized delegation to WSBC
 - Centralized payments to Region Nine/WSBC (for places where foreign financial transactions are costly).
- b) Is there cooperation between the Intergroups in attending and organizing OA recovery events?
- c) What benefits would there be to pooling resources of all the Intergroups to take actions that would benefit the country as a whole?
- d) What benefits would there be to pooling resources of all the Intergroups to have common representation at Region and WSBC business meetings? Remember, this will NOT PREVENT larger and stronger Intergroups to still send individual representation. Do you have enough service resources (people doing service) to run separate Service Boards? Do you have enough service resources (people doing service) to run separate Service Boards?
4. When considering the establishment of a Language Service Board the geographical borders of different countries are less important. Language Service Boards can match specific geographic areas. An example would be the German speaking Language Service Board that covers Germany, German speaking Switzerland, Austria and Luxembourg – all clearly defined geographical areas with a common language

Language Service Boards can also join up groups that are run in a specific language that is not the language of the country and exists in different countries fairly close to one another. An example of this is the English Language Service Board of Region Nine that covers English speaking groups from all over Europe outside the UK and Ireland.

It may be considered that communications over such large geographic areas are too large. If so, local Intergroups will exist within the framework of these language Service Boards as well. Their relationship with the Language Service Board would be similar to that between an Intergroup and a National Service Board.

There are also cases where people might feel that they should join forces with speakers of other languages in different continents. However, it does seem that distance in such a case would make an effective formal affiliation impractical. World Service Bylaws also do not allow for a group in Region Nine to be affiliated to a Service Board in Region Eight (for example). It would seem best to have an informal relationship with speakers of the same language in different continents, in which the more established Service Boards could provide literature and materials to the smaller ones.

It should also be noted that sometimes despite having a common language, sometimes dialectic differences discourage the different Service Boards from using each other's literature. A current example is Spanish. There are a number of different versions of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions translated to Spanish by different Spanish-speaking Boards that prefer to read their dialect of Spanish. These issues need to be addressed and decided upon locally.

The most important issues involving the decision to create a Language Service Board are:

- a) What benefits are there for the different groups and Intergroups to affiliate?
 - i. Would common literature translations and publication be helpful?
 - ii. Would a common newsletter be helpful?
 - iii. Would joint representation at Region Nine and WSBC be helpful especially for the smaller and weaker areas?
 - iv. Would it be possible to hold strong recovery events for the area?
 - v. Is it possible to do joint PI work and prepare PI materials?
- b) Is at least an annual meeting of the Language Service Board possible and practical, thus enabling joint business and recovery events for all the affiliated Service Boards to be possible?
- c) How would finances crossing over financial borders work?

Would you elect Board members from all over the areas and how will the Board function? There is a large country in Region Nine that is so big this is impossible, so that National Service Board actually rotates from area to area for certain periods, thus making it possible for them to operate smoothly and cost-effectively.