

Fulfilling Our Mission

In 1996, the World Service Conference adopted a vision statement, which in part, states that one day:

- NA communities worldwide and NA World Services work together in a spirit of unity and cooperation to carry the message of recovery;
- Narcotics Anonymous has universal recognition and respect as a viable program of recovery.

Today we at World Services are taking steps to bring about this vision. We do this by participating at international conferences where we can carry the message of our Fellowship to those professionals and government officials who can affect the lives of thousands addicts.

And importantly, we are striving to work with local members of NA communities to enhance our presence at these professional events. We ask these local NA members with public information experience to join our team of trusted servants to strengthen our expertise for the presentations.

This common experience helps the local fellowship gain important knowledge in participation at such events. It also allows us to find new human resources for NA in the future of World Services

Just this past December, two trusted servants of World Services were assigned to attend the 16th International Federation of Non-Government Organizations Conference for the Prevention of Drug and Substance Abuse in Jakarta, Indonesia. Garth Pople, Trustee, and Erik Rogers, WSC Public Information Vice Chair were given the responsibility to present NA to the professionals at this event.

Unique to this event was the additional choice of a trusted servant from the Malaysia Public Information Committee, Ramli Samad. We found he qualified for our needs by having the clean time, public information experience and the background of a professional in the field of addiction treatment.

We want to share with you our experience and our hope that the vision expressed by the NA Fellowship lives in our service to the you.

Again, this event was the 16th International Federation of Non-Government Organizations Conference for the Prevention of Drug and Substance Abuse. The dates of the conference were from December 1 through December 6, 1996. The theme for this conference was "Government Organizations and Non-Government Organizations Together Empowering Society for Drug-Free Human Resources".

Participants came from thirty-two countries, totaling 429 persons. The countries with the most participants were Indonesia (205), Malaysia (116), and Singapore (32). That's 82 percent of the participants. This fact was very important considering our use of a local NA member who spoke the most common language in these countries.

The first three days of the event consisted of opening ceremonies of the conference, host committee social events and plenary sessions of the conference. One program event of note was the official opening of the conference by the President of the Republic of Indonesia, H.M. Soeharto, on Monday, December 2. What made this noteworthy for all of us attending is that we were allowed to greet and shake hands with President Soeharto, along with Maj. Gen. Pol. (Rtd.) Drs. Putera Astaman, chairman of the local NGO sponsoring the IFNGO and Dra. Endang Kusuma Inten Soeweno, Minister of Social Affairs.

Unexpectedly on the same day, at a luncheon hosted by the Governor of the Special Territory of Jakarta, the IFNGO awarded World Services of Narcotics Anonymous a special medal to acknowledge NA's contribution as a world wide organization to the IFNGO. Also awarded medals at this ceremony were the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), and the International Council on Alcohol and Addictions (ICAA). Garth accepted the award on behalf of World Services. In our follow up discussions, we came to understand that this was a significant event, even allowing for the ceremonial circumstances of the award. This is the first time that our Fellowship has been recognized at the IFNGO as a contributor. This recognition adds to our public relations, indicating to the attendees that NA is a beneficial "international institution".

The last three days of the conference concerned itself with workshops, field excursions to local institutions and hospitals, and the closing ceremonies on Friday, December 6. We attended them to see if there were opportunities to network with interested participants.

Both Garth and Ramli presented papers developed by Garth. Garth utilized past papers, the Institution Group Guide, input from the KLNA members (Malaysia), and past reports to develop the our presentation papers. The papers were then sent to all EAC members and executive staff at the WSO for review and any editing that was necessary. The office did a great job in formatting and presentation of the papers.

The title of Garth's paper was "Narcotics Anonymous-Development of A Society of Recovering Drug Addicts in the Asia Pacific" and the title of Ramli's paper was "Narcotics Anonymous in Your Community: Getting It Started-Keeping It Going".

As in previous events of this nature, we requested a plenary session and a workshop if possible at this event. A plenary session is a presentation to all of the participants at the event, versus a workshop where only those interested in the topic would attend. We had requested to deliver a paper to a plenary session and for Ramli to be part of a workshop. Apparently we had a verbal agreement from the program chairperson for this arrangement. However, she was re-appointed to new duties, leaving us without a contact within the program committee. As with such events, it is normal to jockey for position in the delivery of papers. Garth tried to get a plenary session scheduled with the new program director, and was able to succeed in gaining a second workshop scheduled. We took what we could get!

Networking is the name of the game at these events. Everyone does it. Which makes it easier to get around and meet people. It was indeed fortunate that Ramli was with us to facilitate conversation with Malaysian and Indonesian participants at the conference. Ramli is well known in these circles for his previous work as a professional in the addiction treatment field. He introduced Garth and Erik to many Malaysian participants, allowing us to invite them to our presentation. We believe that our introduction and interaction with the Malaysian participants allowed for tact recognition of NA in Malaysia as being part of a world wide Fellowship.

We had some challenges with setting up our display of NA literature and our presentation papers. We had written permission for our display of literature at this event. However the person in charge was unaware of our requirements (a table, bunting and two chairs). Ramli's presence and Garth's persistence, armed with an official letter in hand, helped us greatly in getting the requested table, et. al., delivered.

It seemed like all of our troubles were planned for by our Higher Power because by the time we got the display table set up, the only room left for the table was directly in the pathway of the participants who were exiting from the large hall used for the plenary sessions. Normally, we would have been placed in the exhibition area, which was located in a room off to the side of the to the large hall.. When the first session released for break, Erik was almost pushed right through a glass door by the rush of people to get to our table! He had to walk around the perimeter of the

room to get back to other side of the table. We must of had fifty people or so standing around our table. We lost a few Basic Texts before I was able to get them off the table! (We could not bring very many Basic Texts due to the high cost of shipping to Indonesia.)

We were really pleased by all the ruckus, not to mention attracting the conference media. Our display table got a lot of attention. We distributed a lot of literature, our presentation papers, and our business cards. It reminded us of a merchandise sales at the World Convention or at the World Service Conference.

We kept our display table stocked with literature and the translated presentation paper through out the week. The Malaysian translation of Ramli's paper had to be reprinted several times due to popular demand. It was translated by the Kuala Lumpur NA Literature Translation Committee. We estimate we gave away about 90% of the literature we brought. Almost all of the presentation papers were distributed also. It was mostly IP's, a few Basic Texts, a handful of Group Starter Kits and the "Just for Today" video that remained. These left over materials were given to Ramli to take back to the Malaysian NA Fellowship for their use.

There were was another member of World Services who attended the event, although not officially as a member of our contingent: Tata Montilla, WSC Translations Vice Chair. Coincidentally in Jakarta for a personal business, Tata assisted us at the presentation by passing out literature to those attending the presentation, and more importantly, participated in a role play demonstration of how an NA meeting is conducted.

Before we made our presentation, we met in our hotel room to rehearse the delivery of our papers. We decided that Garth would go first with his paper, then letting Ramli deliver his paper. With that done, we decided to have a role play to demonstrate of how a meeting may unfold. We decided that we would each of us to share for 5 to 7 minutes, sharing a little of how we found NA, what we did to stay clean, etc. We decided to focus this sharing on the importance of meetings to staying clean.

We made the Group Starter Kits available to those attending the presentation. Tata M helped us by greeting the attendees at the entrance, handing them a Group Starter Kit, our presentation papers in English and the Bahasa Melayu translated paper (Ramli's). We had more than enough and made sure that as many as possible were distributed.

There was one other speaker after our time slot, so we were told to reduce our time in presenting so that all presentations could be made. It all worked out OK, our total time for the presentation and role play meeting was over one hour.

Garth and Ramli's delivery of their papers were excellent. Our role play meeting went well, being as impromptu as it was. The audience was interested throughout the presentation, in our opinion. Two thirds of the room was full, approx. 35-40 delegates, most of them Indonesian and Malaysian, with two attendees from Hong Kong. This was about average for workshop attendance at this event.

All four of us shared our experience, strength and hope. We quite aware of how important it was to present to these attendees that Narcotics Anonymous was an international society of recovering drug addicts. We knew that we were presenting addicts from Australia, Malaysia, the Philippines and the United States. We all shared a common message that we were proud to be allowed to share in those moments.

We had planned for Ramli to speak in Bahasa Melayu during our role play meeting. However the other featured speaker on the program complained to the protocol attendant that Ramli was not speaking in English (the official language of the conference) when he was about halfway through his share, Garth, aware of the objection, suggested to Ramli that he swap back into English, which Ramli did. You could see the difference in how the audience responded to his

sharing in Bahasa Melayu, they moved forward in their seats, stopped reading literature, focusing on Ramli. Too bad he couldn't continue! At least for the Malaysians and the Indonesians.

The question and answer session was dominated by questions about NA. One man in the audience could not believe that we were now "ex-addicts", meaning that he could not imagine us as using addicts. There were many questions asked, Garth and Ramli answering them well. They emphasized meetings as the core of our recovery and that the addicts had to take ownership of the meeting for long term success.

A wonderful opportunity came about as a result of this workshop. The workshop protocol attendant just happened to be a local health services worker. She asked for help in starting an NA meeting there in Jakarta! We gave her several Group Starter Kits and a lot of advice. Over the rest of the conference we would meet her in the hallways and we would engage her, asking and answering questions as best we could. Ramli offered her his experience, strength and hope to her for this endeavor seeing as he understands the language and is closest to Jakarta.

We are all in agreement that this is where we need to do more work. When we go to these events, we make a positive impact. We recognized that we needed to follow up with these types of contacts to fulfill our vision and mission for World Services.

As in previous events, we worked together to network with the attendees. We gave out our business cards and all cards received were given to me for archiving. These cards will be given to the WSO for specific follow up and addition to the mailing list for the "NA Update for Professionals" with this report.

Having a person with us who knew local customs was helpful in socializing and communicating with the local participants, the Indonesians and Malaysians. We were taught some of their customs by Ramli; to use both hands when handshaking, not wearing sunglasses when speaking to another person or pointing with a single finger at other persons.

The second contact was with a gentlemen named Rabi Raj Thapa, Drug Advisor for the Colombo Plan Bureau. The organization he represents is most like the ECC in Europe, although it is not a law making body. I don't have the list of countries, however I was told it was all the countries from India to Korea. That's over half the world's population! He is very interested in NA and asked if we could get together with his staff for training on how to start NA meetings among the members of the Colombo Plan. He said that he could commit \$20,000 for such a meeting. In our discussion with him, he understood our policy of declining outside contributions. He was certainly still willing to make an opportunity for us to make further presentations and training of the Colombo Plan Trainees he could bring together.

Simply put, his organization would bring the trainees together, provided them with accommodation, meals, meeting rooms etc. We would have to fund a representative to wherever the training workshop would be held and provide information and training on how to start and help facilitate addicts to maintain their own meetings. This would certainly be an excellent opportunity. We will be including it as one of the teams recommendations.

As you know, one of the objectives in the PR Plan was to train members of international organizations about NA and how NA meetings could be started. This is a wonderful opportunity to fulfill this objective and gain much needed experience in conducting this type of training.

Travel Arrangement

All travel arrangements were carried out within the guidelines set out in the Travel Policy and the Professional Events checklist.

Recommendations:

Below we have listed our recommendations.

1. That World Services attend the next IFNGO Conference in Bangkok 1998.
2. We review each individual event re the need for drayage of display booths. This event was fine with its simple display table. We suggest investigation by World Services into acquiring a small display that can transported as luggage, even as carry on luggage.
3. We continue the excellent presentation style of the papers that the office did for this event.
4. All events in non-English speaking countries always utilize an experienced local member(s) for the purpose of effective communication. That this members preferably be a Health/Correctional professional.
5. To make available one or more items of literature, presentation papers or other written materials in the local language for distribution at the event.
6. That the display booth/table and networking, continue to be the focus of our participation at these events, and the paper presentation be the icing on the cake.
7. We put the WSO web site address on our business cards.
8. That NA endeavors to promote itself as an International Organization at these events and not as a Organization whose secretariat is in the USA.
9. That Haji Ramli Samad be considered for the ICAA being held in Cairo, should we attend this event. This would be due to cultural sensitivity reasons.
10. That World Services follow up with BERSMA (host organization for the IFNGO event in Jakarta) to start the 1st NA meeting in Jakarta.
11. That World Services investigate a cooperative exercise with the Colombo Plan executive re a Training exercise as outlined in the WSC 1996 PR Plan.
12. After discussions with a program committee member for the upcoming ICAA in Cairo, that we submit an abstract ASAP so that we may be considered for a favorable position on their program.
13. Follow up on a lead we got at the IFNGO, re communications with a World Health Organization executive in regards to cooperation.

Respectfully submitted
16th IFNGO Team for World Services