

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS



European Zonal Meeting (EZM) 2021

3rd – 5th September

SUMMARY

“Sponsorship”



Hosting structure Germany (online)

Delegates (order by country/structure):

Veronique (Belgium, French)	Renia (Poland)
Diane (Belgium, Flemish)	Mário (Portugal)
Ann W (Denmark)	Olga (Russia)
Anne L (Denmark)	Anders (Sweden)
Kadri (Estonia)	Johanna (Sweden)
Sanna (Finland)	Simeona (Slovenia)
Eila (Finland)	Miriam (Spain)
Johane M (France)	Emilie (Switzerland, FR and IT)
Rayanne (France)	Pierrette (Switzerland, German)
Britt M (Germany)	Miriam M (UK & Eire)
Edith (Germany)	Marina K (Ukraine)
Eugenia (Greece)	Khrystyna (Ukraine)
Tatiane (Greece)	
Margrét (Iceland)	Jean L (WSO)
Una (Iceland)	Kerri K (WSO)
Ola (Poland)	

Britt M (Germany)

Heidi (Germany) Technical Assistance

Helen J (notes)

29 delegates. Voting strength: 20 (structures) over weekend

Friday, September 3rd**Welcoming and Introduction of Participating Countries**

The meeting opened with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer and the Al-Anon Preamble. Edith, chairman for this 9th EZM, welcomed all delegates. She made reference to the three Legacies as a guide to proceedings and read from the Service Sponsorship leaflet on service: *“putting love into action”*.

The EZM host team was introduced: Britt (General Secretary, Al-Anon Germany), Heidi (technical support) and Helen (report). Kerri and Jean from the WSO attended the weekend.

As general housekeeping for this first virtual EZM, delegates were asked to flag any questions by using the raised hand icon. These would be answered at the end of each session. Delegates were reminded to stay on mute and on camera. The chat function would be open for use during breaks. There was to be no recording or filming.

Each delegate introduced themselves with a short personal share and an outline of the service structure they were representing.

Highlights:

France (Johane): around half of the groups went online in response to the pandemic. A possible development are hybrid meetings (running face-to-face and online simultaneously). Rayanne introduced herself as a new EZM delegate.

Belgium (Vero): some of the 30 groups or so have not yet reopened, nor have the 3 Alateen meetings. Each Alateen meeting has a minimum of 2 sponsors.

Sweden (Anders): some Areas and District boundaries have been changed to balance the number of groups in each one. There are some meetings in Finnish that do not connect to the Swedish office given their language affiliation.

UK & Eire (Miriam M): while addiction support groups could meet as an exempt service under Covid guidelines, some couldn't due to the closure of venues. The legal requirements for Alateen are very stringent in the UK, and in Eire where Alateen is suspended. We are currently undergoing a challenging process of creating a legal entity for Eire following changes in the charity law.

Switzerland (Emilie – Fr/It.): 19 groups and 3 languages: the country is small. One official online group. Some groups continued online, which was a challenge for older members. Meetings can be face-to-face again. Wanting to translate the website for Italian members. Seeking advice on creating a members section. Currently do not use social media as it is very labour-intensive.

Switzerland (Pierette –Gr.): we have a paid worker at the office for 2 hours per week. Financial issues as a result of the pandemic. 20 groups, 3 Alateen. Any new member for Alateen has to call the hotline as these groups do not meet regularly.

Spain (Miriam): 7 of 20 Areas are without a delegate, whether due to Covid or other factors. In addition to Spanish there is also Basque: only Public Outreach material can be published in this language. Teens must have parental approval to attend Alateen meetings which can deter possible members. Had an official Zoom meeting at the start of the pandemic which helped. Committee structure includes an online committee.

Portugal (Mario): have a GSO and a Board. During Covid, members who continued did so with enthusiasm. 9 groups of 17 went online, using Skype, Zoom and Facebook. We now seem more connected to a worldwide fellowship.

Denmark (Ann W): we have no Districts or Areas and Group Reps go to Conference. Now have 3 online meetings, 1 hybrid: newcomers have joined from across the country. There are meetings in Polish, English, Islandic and 1 Faroese. Greenland is part of the structure and we believe there are 2 meetings. Young people are not coming forward for Alateen as Denmark has a very popular professional support service for teenagers. Attended the 2020 German Al-Anon Conference that was helpful in forming a non-trading organisation as the legal entity for the country. Denmark has always had a virtual office.

Greece (Tatiana): first time as a delegate. Greece is an evolving structure and so has no GSO. We are building our structure now. 21 groups pre-pandemic. 10 met on Skype. We have 1 Alateen coordinator and 3 Alateen sponsors. We are updating our website and have a translation committee. One meeting is in Cyprus. Greek Al-Anon is growing through participation.

Germany (Britt): we have implemented new Alateen safety policies with 2 sponsors verified by the Board. Some meetings have met on Zoom and or ran telephone meetings since the pandemic outbreak, and we now have 3 new permanent online meetings. We are setting up an online shop.

Finland (Sanna): We had some temporary online meetings (Zoom, WhatsApp); interested in knowing more about organising electronic meetings. No Alateen. Interested in how the World Service app works. Over 420 subscribers of a newsletter. Had a committee creating a new website and an online store last year. We closed the members' site, so happy to learn of other structures' experience especially for communicating Board papers etc. (In response to Sweden: Finland has 2 registered Finnish-language groups that meet in Sweden).

Poland (Renia): we have 400 groups, more Polish-language groups abroad and 1 group on the WSO site. We had planned a 40th anniversary last year, and we hope to celebrate it in the future. Many groups started temporary electronic and hybrid meetings. We are active on Facebook.

Iceland (Margrét): 30 groups and 37 meetings weekly, and 1 Alateen group. We are interested to learn more about child protection and organising Alateen meetings. Icelanders were quick to use Zoom. We could hold an in-person Conference in May. Since 2014 the office only has volunteers, not staff. Our literature committee translated *Paths to Recovery* 2 years ago which has helped groups.

Slovenia (Simeona): 35 groups before the pandemic, now 25. During the pandemic, we have had a meeting running online every day. We were founded in 2001 as a legal entity and have had groups since 1989.

Russia (Olga): we have had groups since 1988 and are an evolving structure. We are in the process of registering a GSO and have 6 work groups. We have had an online shop since 2020. Some complications with Alateen due to differing laws from region to region.

Estonia (Kadri): 3 face-to-face groups, 1 Russian, 2 Estonian. We have a website, email address and telephone number but are not a legal entity: we are too small to be registered. Al-Anon has existed in Estonia for 28 years with the support of Finnish members.

WSO: Jean and Kerri gave a brief overview of the WSO and of circumstances in light of the pandemic, including a reduction of staff. The Twitter account is to be reviewed as social media is very labour intensive. Last month was the first year anniversary of the mobile app.

Added note from session chat: WSO does not register Alateen meetings taking place on any virtual /electronic platforms. The meetings in the mobile app are ones that used to take place on the chat site of the WSO website. They are moderated by WSO-approved members. WSO has not registered any other Alateen meetings on the app.

Google Group/connect.al-anon.org

Charlotte (Netherlands) was unable to attend and gave her apologies. In an email she outlined that 1-2 members are needed to take on the role of administrator(s). She asked for anyone interested to contact her. The role does not take up a great deal of time.

(See Framework Document section for discussion on Google Connect and AFG Connects).

IAGSM Report

Miriam, Spain, gave a report on the 2020 IAGSM. The report is available via AFG Connects In summary:

- Held 3rd to 12th October (final 24 hours for voting) on the platform AFG Connects.
- 40 Delegates from 28 different countries and 5 representatives from the International Coordination Committee (ICC) participated. The WSO decided to pay all the IAGSM costs and so countries which normally would not have been able to participate due to the cost were able to attend.
- All sessions and interventions were available in writing from 3rd to handle differences in time zones. Some subjects were open all week. The 6 main topics were open two days at a time. These were: Practicing our Principles – 2020 Challenges and Successes (EEUU/Canada); Cooperation between Structures (Mexico); Public Outreach (Germany); Electronic Meetings (ICC); Leadership Skills as Tools for Conflict Resolution (France); Work Meeting on the Topic “Representation, with voice and vote, for the International Groups at the World service Conference”.
- Under ‘Practicing our Principles’, the biggest challenges reported related mainly to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic such as the fall of donations and literature sales; cancelled face-to-face Board meetings, Conferences, service seminars and Public Outreach events; increase in some WhatsApp groups posting photos of CAL; difficulty in communicating with the WSO. An ongoing challenge is access to affordable literature in English but also other languages due to distribution costs.
- Under ‘Cooperation Between Structures’, the Delegates from Mexico and Peru spoke of the cooperation between structures in the IAGSM and of South and Central American countries in the Ibero-American Meeting of Al-Anon Services (IAMAS in English and RIASA in Spanish). When the financial situation permits, Spain also participates in the IAMAS.
- Under 3 ‘Public Outreach,’ a common concern of most countries is how to use social media for public outreach without breaking anonymity.

- ‘Electronic Meetings’ was chosen by the WSO as “The Big Question” for 2020. The topic ‘International Representation with voice and vote at the World Service Conference’ is an ongoing debate on the 2018 proposal to study the subject of representation of the international groups with voice and vote at the WSC.
- The biggest success in Spain was a Zoom videoconference during the July Board meeting to deal with urgent matters requiring the Delegates’ vote (2019 expense report, approval of 2020 budget approval of Trustees candidates).

For the full IAGSM 2020 report: [2020-IAGSM-Summary.pdf \(al-anon.org\)](#). The report appears in English only.

Saturday, September 4th

General Session Sponsorship

Olga, Russia

A full slide show is available via AFG Connects. Highlights:

- 1989-2000: “To Russia with love” campaign, supported by members from many countries, is an example of sponsorship and sharing experience, strength and hope.
- Sponsorship support of Russian-speaking Al-Anon groups in many post-Soviet states has been provided since the foundation of Al-Anon in the Russian Federation. We are a unique case: a huge country broken into 15 independent countries with Russian as a state language.
- Problems of the Russian-speaking groups include small numbers, no opportunity to buy or print CAL, and barriers to sending or receiving parcels of CAL over territorial borders.
- The main message to all post-Soviet states: “you are not alone”. Types of sponsorship support include sharing experience and knowledge through group or structure events; sharing on opening Alateen groups; service sponsorship to individual members of service arms in territories.
- Purchasing CAL in the Russian language has always been a challenge. According to the WSO permission to translate and print literature, CAL can only be distributed in the territory of the Russian Federation.
- Ways of getting CAL to Al-Anon members in the post-Soviet states has included Russian members bringing CAL when invited to share, parcel post, or delivery with train conductors.
- Problems with solutions have included the weight of carrying parcels, the cost of purchasing CAL, a member feeling they are taking on responsibility for solving a problem of a whole country, and problems with receiving money transfers from abroad. A key issue is distance, such as the distances across Siberia.
- The Policy Committee decided that Service Board members and staff are to refuse to assist in purchasing CAL. A request for solutions has been submitted to the WSO.
- Members note the benefits of CAL: Twelfth Step work, learning the limits of personal and service structure responsibilities, and carrying out the Al-Anon Declaration. Russia has overcome a lot of difficulties and we can get the best results with God’s guidance and mutual help and support.

Discussion- highlights:

Kadri (Estonia): Are electronic publications the solution?

Olga (Russia): We do not produce electronic books in Russian. We only have permission to print.

Anders (Sweden): CAL distribution is a problem as a number of countries have large Russian populations. This highlights what we discussed in Slovenia. In Sweden, once literature has been translated, it is sent to the WSO. The WSO then has the copyright. If so, why not distribute copyright to all countries that want to sell it?

Vero (Belgium, French): the presentation demonstrates that others have problems with CAL translation and distribution. There has been a lot of discussion but little change. How could ebooks help?

Rayanne (France): It is troubling to hear that individual members have to buy and distribute CAL as this can lead to disillusionment. Ebooks could be a solution as printing books is expensive for small structures.

Miriam M (UK & Eire): It is disturbing that CAL keeps coming up time and time again at the IAGSM and the EZM. If we want to get a worldwide solution, we need to be guided by spiritual principles and find a balance with legal principles. If we lose our spiritual principles, we lose the fellowship. Any member is entitled to CAL. I feel for any member who cannot grasp literature from a shelf as I can.

Eugenia (Greece): Al-Anon Greece only gained association status three years ago. We have a committee that sends CAL; within Athens we distribute among ourselves. We have WSO permission to translate and are currently translating *Hope for Today*.

Kerri (WSO): Structures can get permission to produce ebooks but experience shows that members don't buy them to the degree that they say they want them. The current situation was not designed to work the way that has occurred in Russia. The WSO stocks English, French and Spanish but no other CAL; it is now the responsibility of local structures. The WSO has tried to act as a broker in the past, but it becomes unaffordable. The WSO has no control over the inventory of other structures and does not have the authority to ask another structure to print and send CAL to us. There is no one solution for all the problems. I think the problem has got worse as people have become more mobile and multinational. We must preserve the opportunity for GSOs to get income. All problems are documented and news of a pilot project with participating structures will appear later in the year.

One principle is trust which is at the base of making relationships successful. It is a violation of trust to go against an agreement that a structure has signed.

Ann W (Denmark): We do not have the distances but we are a small county with a minority language. I am also concerned about the balance between legal and spiritual principles. We don't have access to much literature and that really affects our fellowship, such as different ways of gaining from the programme. Denmark has to buy from the WSO but would like to buy from the UK as we had problems with the courier service.

Simeona (Slovenia): we have no difficulty as we are a very small country. In the digital age, when we are more mobile, literature will become more mobile too. The Kindle app is very affordable and protected, so allows people to have literature wherever they go.

Edith (Germany): this topic has been on the agenda since my time on the IAGSM. At the last IAGSM I was keen to know about the pilot project.

Sanna (Finland): does the WSO have clear guidelines if we want to publish ebooks? Kindle (Amazon) does take income. Finland would like to trial and share our experience as we also have significant distances.

Kerri (WSO): I will need to get the information on getting an ebook onto a platform. Could Finland make contact outside the EZM.

Britt (Germany): we used to sell CAL via Amazon but the fee is 45%. We don't know what the fee would be for ebooks. Bookshops can purchase our books at our shop's retail price; some small ones do as a local service.

Anders (Sweden): We are fortunate to have a large office with a storeroom. A part-time employee handles distribution and works with the printer.

Eila (Finland): A younger generation is used to reading ebooks and audiobooks. As this is coming, we cannot fight against it. We want to publish our most popular book as an ebook. At the beginning of July a new value-added tax was introduced for materials from outside the country. Does any structure have experience of this?

Ann W (Denmark): We have experience of ordering from the WSO after a VAT law change that we can share.

Mario: (Portugal): We are sponsored by Spain and Brazil and have authorization to buy books from Brazil, but it is very expensive to ship.

Diane: (Belgium, Flemish): During the pandemic we had requests from Holland and we have said no, but did help individuals. Some Flemish books and pamphlets are translated by Holland, some by Belgium. We have a local arrangement.

Framework Document

Edith stated that the Framework Document holds information on who participates, when etc.

Traditionally AFG Connects was for registered groups; the Google group was set up for evolving structures. For this event AFG Connects was made accessible to all participants.

Kerri noted that the EZM can decide who is a member; the WSO simply needs a full name and email address to add someone to AFG Connects.

Edith suggested that this be added to the Framework Document. Kerri asked whether Google Group would be continued.

A discussion took place on creating the option of a virtual meeting. Should we have the option of a hybrid meeting (a physical meeting with some participation online)?

Points raised during the discussion:

- It would make it affordable for those structures that cannot afford to come otherwise.
- The interchange between meetings and aspects of the experience of participating could be lost in a hybrid meeting. An example is the chance to talk to other delegates and ask questions.
- A hybrid meeting needs good technical support, lots of preparation and investment, such as a good screen and mics.
- Those participating physically could be asked to go to a podium to speak.
- A hybrid meeting increases the difficulty in planning for the host committee and limits venues to those with good Wifi.
- It would be difficult to justify the expense of sending delegates to attend in person if an online option were available.

- We should be welcoming and inclusive

VOTE. The EZM voted on the question:

Do we want to realise future EZM Meetings as hybrid meetings?

Edith: proposer

Sanna: seconder

RESULT:

10 (37%): YES	8(30%) NO	1 (4%) ABSTAIN	remainder: NON-VOTING
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Two thirds majority was required, and so the proposal was declined.

General Session – Making Crisis Work for us – Handling Covid 19 in Consideration of the European Data Protection Policy

Anne L, Denmark

Full report on AFG Connects. Highlights of report:

- Only commercial activities and corporations must adhere to GDPR as applied in Denmark. Individuals can share telephone numbers and emails.
- As for so many other structures, all physical meetings were affected, as we could not meet as usual. Fortunately in Denmark, the service office was already virtual and had experience that it could share with members.
- Denmark has had one permanent online meeting for some years. It shared its experience, strength and hope to the physical groups who wanted to go online. We now have more permanent online meetings than before the pandemic.
- Online meetings invite the members to login in with first name, switch on the camera and use a headset. This applied to hybrid meetings too.
- Some online meetings have faced difficulties logging on different mobile phones, I pads and computers. This has been solved with a lot of communication, mutual support and instructions on our website. Some meetings switched to Gypsy: it does not need a host and was less likely to be hacked. There were incidences of hacking with Zoom.
- Some members have chosen to stay away from the online meetings. We have more permanent online meetings now.
- Some newcomers have expressed that it was easier to go to their first meeting online. Members who had difficulties coming to physical meetings because of sickness or location can attend meetings more often.
- Had a slow start with financial contributions. Denmark uses the MobilePay app for electronic money transfers. Anonymity can be kept by avoiding use of the AI-Anon name when naming a Group account (e.g. can keep mobile numbers as *A + first name*).
- Only smaller sections of CAL literature can be shared virtually due to copyright. We could share the suggested AI-Anon/Alateen Welcome, the Steps, the Traditions, the

Concepts of Service and the Suggested Closing. We did not sell as much literature in 2020.

- We do not have a register of members. Only volunteers share their personal information as agreed with them (e.g. Board members).

Highlights of discussion:

- ✓ *Germany:* Groups are registered on the website and the office is the provider. WhatsApp groups cannot be registered as every member would have to give permission. A 50% decrease in sales has occurred at the time that WhatsApp groups have posted CAL readings. GSO has spoken to these groups but they do not want to be 'dictated to'. Hybrid meetings are extremely tricky.
- ✓ *Belgium:* this is a very important topic. GDPR applies to the association. We have to have a list but it is kept on paper in the office. Phone numbers of contact people are kept in a confidential document available to telephone volunteers only.
- ✓ *Greece:* we now have 10 Al-Anon Skype groups; people join by invitation once listed. Newcomers have appreciated this. We had a problem with the Seventh Tradition as we had no means of collecting donations. We created a private group on Facebook.
- ✓ *WSO:* we do not register groups on Facebook as even 'closed' groups are not closed. We reached out to all Facebook groups and some agreed to change platforms. A registered group has permission to use the Steps, Preamble etc. as the tools to run a meeting, just as the case for an in-person meeting and for structures registered with the WSO. This includes CAL for the purposes of running a meeting only: a group can 'read' (display) a reading during the meeting, but then must delete and not reproduce it. Al-Anon is not above the law: venues that asked for names and contact numbers for contact tracing could not be used.
- ✓ *Belgium (Flemish):* we do not show Zoom links on our website, so people have to call to get the details. Only two people can post on the Facebook page.
- ✓ *Switzerland (FR and IT):* we had to clear all personal phone numbers from our website. Now there is a link to Zoom or Skype or an email address. Some groups decided not to have WhatsApp as it excluded some members but was being used to make decisions. The official online group (Zoom) monitors arrivals into the meeting.
- ✓ *Slovenia:* meetings are held with the use of cameras and headphones.
- ✓ *Sweden:* we only use Zoom and all are on the website. We have one telephone group. We have not heard of any WhatsApp meetings.
- ✓ *Finland:* We have a secure policy on contacts. We have a question about data collection and storing data on a cloud such as Google, and on instructions for registering online groups. Do we know how many registered online groups there are in the European zone?
- ✓ *WSO:* we do not know how many are specifically in the European zone, as they are online.
- ✓ *Spain:* a Skype group with over a 100 members posts CAL on a parallel WhatsApp platform with a notice: "only for use during the meeting, please delete after the meeting." I think they are making a mistake: they should be sharing the reading on Skype during and for the meeting only. They are also posting four audios recordings per day of pages from the daily readers.

Questions/Status and welcoming WSO:

Kerri and Jean presented. The presentation slides can be found on AFG Connects with links to available resources.

The full 2021 Conference Summary is available at [WSC Summary - Al-Anon Family Groups](#) Summary highlights:

1. Electronic Meetings

- Regular discussion over the past 4-5 years with input from the Electronic Meetings working group and IAGSM delegates.
- Two Motions at Conference 2021: Motion #6 for groups that do not have a geographic location; Motion #7 to remove the 'Electronic Meetings' text in its entirety from the Policy Digest. All electronic meetings are now registered as groups; the registration process will change so that they do not have to select 'face-to-face' or 'electronic'.
- Previously, only the WSO was authorised to register an electronic meeting. Now there will be an option for GSOs or evolving structures to register an electronic meeting as a group within their structure. Many electronic groups may want to be part of a local structure or geographical location based on language. Structures will have the opportunity to accept them or not. A letter has gone out to GSOs which also applies to evolving structures. The WSO can provide support using video conferencing.
- There are aspects to consider: some members from online meetings may not have taken part in District or Area activity and so may need service sponsorship and support.

2. Status of International Representation at the WSC

International representation came up at the 2018 IAGSM. A Knowledge-Based Decision Making (KBDM) process sought a broader perspective to gain consensus. The 2021 WSC had representation from 12 structures who were able to add voice on questions: *what topics do you think are the most important? How do we respect the autonomy of structures (incl. evolving) and also keep unity?* This issue has been a topic for some time and work is ongoing. A survey is planned from October.

3. Communication with the WSO and GSOs

To contact the WSO for a one-to-one enquiry:

- ✓ the best starting point is wso@al-anon.org
- ✓ International Desk: kerri@al-anon.org. We can use Skype, Webex, Zoom, Teams.

4. World Service Conference Updates

- The next Al-Anon International Convention is 29 June-23 July 2023, Albuquerque, New Mexico.
- Two Motions were passed to give conceptual approval to updating CAL: MOTION #12: to add a new introduction to *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage*; MOTION #15: to add a new introduction to *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon*.

IAGSM Delegates at the EZM shared their experience of the WSO following the presentation.

In response:

- Miriam (Spain): We should have voice in matters that affect the international community, not the areas that apply to the USA and Canada. It is a large expense for international structures to attend in the States, so a hybrid format could be considered.
- Anders (Sweden): at the last Board meeting we decided to encourage Swedish electronic meetings to register with the WSO to reach Swedes across the globe, as well as locally with the Swedish structure.
- Kerri (WSO): they should only be registered with one structure.
- Miriam (UK & Eire): we are looking at this at the UK & Eire Conference. If they register, we need to ensure they operate correctly. The danger is that unhealthy groups 'travel', i.e. decide to register in one structure, then another. We all need policies and procedures in place so that groups participate healthily.
- Miriam (Spain): for electronic groups to change registration, both the WSO and the local structure would have to agree.
- Kerri (WSO): yes, but the WSO would agree.
- Renia (Poland): a lot of Polish-speaking groups want to register in Poland because of language barrier issues: the younger generation speak English, the older ones Russian. This may be a good opportunity to resolve matters.

Q&A:

-Khrystyna (Ukraine): if we agree to print literature in Russian with Russia, do we need WSO approval?

Kerri (WSO): at the moment this is not possible due to current agreements. Only Russia can print Russian literature. It is an unresolved issue that we hope to resolve, hopefully by April next year.

-Simeona (Slovenia): why do electronic meetings need approval to use CAL every year?

Kerri (WSO): with CAL being posted etc. we needed to develop a renewable licence for one year. A new form replacing the process is valid for as long as a group remains registered.

-Heidi (Germany): to clarify, if a local structure offers registration to a local electronic meeting, does that allow it to use CAL for meeting purposes?

Kerri (WSO): not exactly. If Germany wanted to register an electronic meeting as an AI-Anon group, it would need to adopt the WSO policy and use it in its structure. The group becomes the responsibility of the local structure.

-Rayanne (France): are phone meetings physical or electronic? And how to advise electronic meetings, e.g. on the benefits of being part of a local structure or being registered with the WSO and be global.

Kerri (WSO): a phone meeting is considered electronic if it has no geographic location. The Non-Geographic Area has not yet become part of Conference. The advantage of an electronic meeting becoming a group in a local structure is that it can take part in District, Area etc.

-Sanna (Finland): Do the Slogans have the same status as other tools? We are seeking to standardise translations.

Kerri (WSO): they are not protected to the degree of the Legacies. We have a style guide and the Slogans are on that list. We use translation software that checks that the language being used is the same.

-Rayanne: How do I find a group in a specific language on Al-Anon.org? The website links to different GSOs, not groups.

Kerri (WSO): members can search English, French, Spanish or 'other languages' in 'advanced search'. We provide the links to GSOs as they have the latest accurate information on registered meetings.

Sunday, September 5th

Next EZM Meeting – Location

Ukraine offered to take a proposal back to their structure to host the next EZM in Kiev which is affordable with good transport links. It was agreed that Ukraine would contact through AFG Connects and aim for late (3rd week of) September.

Delegates were invited to propose a topic through AFG Connects.

In discussion, it was clarified that Essen hosts every four years as it was agreed to have one regular base. This is historical and the EZM can review it.

EZM meetings and themes to date:

2005	European Talk	Finland (Helsinki)
2007	European Talk	Germany (Essen)
2009	EZM	Germany (Essen)
2011	EZM "Our Common Welfare"	UK & Eire (Leeds)
2013	EZM	Germany (Essen)
2015	EZM "Participation is the Key to Harmony"	Belgium (Bruges)
2017	EZM "Discovering Choices"	Germany (Essen)
2019	EZM "Embracing Changes"	Slovenia
2021	EZM "Sponsorship"	Germany (online)

General Session Public Outreach in times of Corona

Veronique IAGSM/EZM delegate Belgium Fr-speaking

Full report on AFG Connects. Highlights of report:

- We did not have a Public Outreach committee before the pandemic; a working group was proposed but has not yet started. The 5 Districts have ideas, for example a proposed video.
- Before the pandemic, Public Outreach (PO) included information sessions in schools or participation in health and wellbeing events. Since March 2020, these activities have stopped or occurred with very limited numbers.
- Little increase in contacts or newcomers to meetings. Some Groups have stopped their activities due to a lack of means or IT skills. Some use virtual means to support newcomers or for schools outreach.

- Currently, face-to-face meetings have re-started with protective measures.
- The Board has ensured the website was updated as well as the Facebook page. Al-Anon has to adapt to new societal demands.

Questions: *What changes were made with Covid? What were the challenges? What improved? Successes? Lowlights?*

Highlights from responses:

- ✓ Diane (Belgium, Flemish): we did Public Outreach through Facebook; we posted our experience and attracted book sales. We have linked to schools and companies via AA. There are few requests specifically for Al-Anon.
- ✓ Margrét (Iceland): we reorganised our PO as we had tended to focus on AA instead of the families. We stopped Alateen meetings due to compliance as we are reorganising; meetings had been beside AA meetings. We want to learn from the EZM.
- ✓ Johane (France): we have had practically no PO activity. We are dependent on Areas to do this. We were invited to 2/3 videoconferences with the medical profession and social workers. At our last Conference we voted to have a member in charge of social media.
- ✓ Emilie (Switzerland, FR and IT): we have a phone line but the message is long as it is in three languages. We have selected two projects: to send two books to each group to place in drop-offs in different locations across France, including libraries; to focus on women's shelters following an increase in violence.
- ✓ Miriam (UK & Eire): we have a project on social media: "Hidden Effects of Al-Anon". Members fill out little cards and then they are posted online. We need about 30 per week to keep the posts refreshed.
- ✓ Anders (Sweden): our IT had been handled by an old webmaster for a long time so we have had a three-year project to set up a new system. Making ourselves visible online is a challenge.
- ✓ Sanna (Finland): we are thinking of planning outreach with schools via virtual means. AA conventions were also cancelled which is usually a good place to inform people about Al-Anon. We have been updating PO materials, the website and business cards.
- ✓ Renia (Poland): we gained inspiration from AA. Radio short spots will be broadcast on some public service stations. Last month we received an invitation to appear on a TV show about life stories around different addictions. Our association has decided to take part (Board member as legal entity representation).
- ✓ Miriam (Spain): we create a bulletin for professionals each year. We sent out USB sticks for Areas to populate with any professional contacts. Every so often, these are returned to GSO to update the central list. We have an Al-Anon YouTube channel for interviews with medical professionals. We have had a huge increase of activity online, including Instagram.
- ✓ Eugenia (Greece): we created a video two years ago that has a link on our website. The site is in Greek and English. The Greek convention rotated and is a good PI tool. This year we could hold it in outdoor spaces; we had a WSO video translated into Greek and showed it on a large screen.

- ✓ Eila (Finland): we had a local PI campaign together with a clinic (foundation), AA and NA. Webinars for the city of Espoo.
- ✓ Ann W (Denmark): we have a new website with a members' section that does not require a login, as inspired by the WSO and the UK & Eire sites. To get the website higher up the listings you need to consult professionals as it depends on the metadata you feed. We spoke to Scott (Associate Director—Digital Strategy)) at the WSO for help.

Edith, at the end of the session invited all participants to post their public outreach ideas and ideas on raising funds for projects on AFG Connects.

Personal Highlights and final notices

Edith reminded everyone to post ideas for the next EZM on AFG Connects.

She thanked all delegates for their participation and shared her personal experience of the weekend: the enthusiasm and spirit of Al-Anon. Delegates thanked Germany for its hosting of this EZM.

Selected highlights:

Helped expanded my view and helped with my service journey

Learned a lot. Good to be with you. Will see more of you next year at the IAGSM

"no situation is too difficult.." Where humility exists, the fellowship will grow

We are tied by common wounds and by shared experience

Wonderful to see everyone and to welcome new people

I had rejected meeting in Zoom, now I have learned

Always a learning experience

Always feel honoured to be part of the worldwide fellowship