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# Final Report of the 2023–2025 Area 41 FUNction Ad Hoc Committee

(Agenda Item 2022-04-02-005)

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## Historical Context

The 2023–2025 Area 41 FUNction Ad Hoc Committee was formed to take an honest look at how the Area operates, following several years of discussion about participation, communication, and the overall effectiveness of our structure. The purpose was not to criticize, but to explore whether the current format continues to serve the groups and trusted servants of Area 41 as effectively as possible.

This conversation developed over multiple rotations and reflected a shared desire to strengthen communication, simplify service, and maintain unity.

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# Background and Purpose

The committee's charge was simple but far-reaching: to review current practices and recommend changes, if necessary, to improve how Area 41 functions in service to groups and individuals.

Our work was guided by the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts for World Service, with the understanding that any structural or procedural changes should align with A.A.'s spiritual principles and our collective experience in service.

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## Committee Process

The committee met monthly or more throughout 2023–2025, both in person and virtually. We held open sharing sessions at Area Assemblies and invited input through surveys, questionnaires, structured discussions, written notes, breakouts, and informal conversations.

Topics reviewed included Assembly structure, leadership appointment, communication, translation and accessibility, orientation for new servants, and long-term sustainability.

Our intent was to practice an informed group conscience by listening broadly before forming any recommendations.

Based on discussion and Area feedback, the committee identified three primary areas for review: meeting frequency, meeting location, and meeting content and service leadership.

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## Reunion (currently Area 41 State Convention)

After discussion, the committee determined that although the Area Reunion falls within the scope of this work, it would be inappropriate to address it at this time. A separate ad hoc committee had recently completed a review of the Reunion and submitted an agenda item that was under consideration by the Report and Charter Committee. To avoid duplicating or interfering with that work, the FUNction Ad Hoc chose to leave the Reunion unchanged unless directed otherwise by the Area body.

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## Findings and Observations

Across our review, these themes frequently overlapped; challenges related to communication, participation, access, and cost were often interconnected rather than isolated issues.

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### 1. Communication

The magic of A.A. works when information flows freely from both ends of the service triangle.

Reports are sometimes delayed, newsletters arrive inconsistently, and many members rely on informal word-of-mouth for updates. Some groups reported limited awareness of Area activities and schedules. The fellowship depends on consistent follow-through by trusted servants, not just digital tools.

These challenges appear to reflect a cultural issue rather than solely a structural or technological one.

Future rotations may wish to establish a clearer framework for communication—such as a standing communication review or a simplified contact system—to ensure every group has both a voice and an ear within the Area structure.

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## 2. Participation and Structure

Through our review and comparison with the *Areas with High Participation Rates* study, we observed that participation is not primarily a matter of willingness, but of access and connection. Areas with stronger participation patterns tend to hold shorter, more focused Assemblies, offer regional pre-assemblies or mini-workshops closer to home, and maintain consistent contact between districts between meetings. Where participation is lower, contributing factors are more often geographic distance, inconsistent communication, or limited digital access rather than lack of interest or commitment.

Participation also appears to increase when service is structured around preparation, clarity, and a clear sense of contribution, consistent with Concepts IV and IX. Effective education and training—particularly for GSRs, DCMs, and committee chairs—help trusted servants understand not only how service works, but why it matters. Areas that emphasize discussion-driven cultures over motion-heavy processes tend to create more meaningful engagement. Assemblies are often more effective when a majority of time is devoted to workshops, sharing sessions, committee work, and informal connection, with less emphasis on reports or procedural business. Positive service experiences are strengthened when the link between service functions and A.A.'s primary purpose is clearly demonstrated.

Structural and communication choices also influence participation. Considerations such as how often the Area meets, whether meetings rotate locations, and whether appointments are used to provide continuity in committee leadership can affect stability and accessibility. Regular communication through newsletters, consistent contact between the Area and districts, and clear communication infrastructure help reduce passivity and keep members informed. These findings suggest that participation grows when trusted servants know where to plug in and when districts feel seen and supported. Future committees may wish to explore mentorship or pairing models, regional pre-assembly sessions, rotating or hybrid formats, and other approaches that support broader participation and a more informed group conscience.

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## 3. Appointment and Service Roles

The committee supported the principle that trusted servants be selected through spiritual principles of trust and accountability. Consistent Orientation and Third Legacy workshops were emphasized to strengthen understanding of service roles and help incoming servants begin their terms with confidence.

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## 4. Accessibility and Transparency

Hybrid access, bilingual interpretation, and document revision tracking were discussed and tested in part. Progress was made, and continued focus on inclusion and clarity in Area communications is recommended.

Concurrently with the FUNction Ad Hoc Committee's work, the Technology Committee developed recommendations for hybrid Assemblies, which were approved and implemented during this rotation.

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## **5. Financial Stewardship**

Several potential cost-saving measures were reviewed, including reducing the number of Assemblies, rotating meeting locations, and limiting printing. While cost savings were not the primary focus of the committee, financial prudence was affirmed as a responsibility to members who contribute through the Seventh Tradition. Resources may be better directed toward supporting participation and access.

As noted in several Agenda items, the current combination of hotel costs, contractual obligations, and meeting structure does not appear fiscally sustainable over time. This is especially true for smaller groups, where the cost of participation can limit a GSR's ability to attend, resulting in Area representation that reflects who can afford to be present rather than the full voice of the Fellowship.

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## **6. Business**

The committee frequently heard concerns from the fellowship regarding business processes and observed that a significant amount of time is spent on procedural detail. Time is often devoted to debating semantics, rules, and wordsmithing.

Greater emphasis on studying the Concepts, training future leaders, and fostering connection and a sense of enjoyment may better support effective service. Across multiple discussions, this concern consistently pointed back to the same theme: when service feels accessible, engaging, and purposeful, participation improves.

The committee further observed that when GSRs, DCMs, and Area Chairs have a clearer understanding of their service roles, and when outdated structural elements are addressed, fewer agenda items focused on procedural business are necessary.

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## **7. Trust**

As trusted servants, we experienced firsthand how the Traditions and Concepts come alive in discussion and decision-making. Throughout this work, we practiced patience and tolerance, sought informed group conscience rather than personal opinion, and were reminded that unity requires understanding, not uniformity.

This process deepened our understanding of trust. We learned that not every detail of an agenda item needs to be resolved at the committee level, and that the Area is capable of carrying work forward once it is presented. Allowing the process to unfold—rather than forcing outcomes—strengthened both the work and our confidence in the Area structure. Area 41 demonstrated a willingness to trust the process, including engaging with proposals that were new or unfamiliar.

When committees focus on preparation and clarity and then allow the Area body to exercise its responsibility, collective decision-making can work as intended.

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## **8. Long Lunch, Workshops, & the Vibe...**

During the 2024–2025 rotation, the Area Chair, having reviewed the *Areas with High Participation Rates* study, made adjustments to the agenda and workshops that differed from prior practice. These changes provided valuable insight. The committee affirms any Area Chair's right of decision and documents these experiences for the record.

Extended lunch and dinner breaks were overwhelmingly positive. Attendance at post-dinner workshops increased significantly, rising from approximately 25–50% to near full participation. Defined topics for post-dinner sharing sessions appeared to be more effective than fully open-ended formats.

Overall, the committee observed reduced conflict, decreased stress, and an increase in unity and restfulness. Feedback indicated a preference for shorter, more focused workshops with multiple presenters and opportunities for sharing.

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## **Spiritual Principles Practiced and Lessons Learned from the Traditions and Concepts**

### **Tradition One – Unity:**

We function best when placing the common welfare first and cooperating with one another.

### **Tradition Two – Informed Group Conscience:**

Patience and trust in the process are essential. Allowing discussion to unfold and ensuring all voices are heard supports sound decision-making.

### **Tradition Five – Primary Purpose:**

At times, discussions drifted toward policy rather than carrying the message. We learned that clarity of purpose keeps debate grounded in spiritual principles rather than procedural detail.

### **Tradition Nine – Service Structure:**

The Area exists to serve, not to govern. Transparency, integrity, and respect for established processes support effective service.

### **Concept Three – Right of Decision:**

Committees need the freedom to act responsibly within their scope in order to carry out the work entrusted to them.

### **Concept Five – Right of Appeal:**

Honoring minority opinion protects both unity and clarity and strengthens informed group conscience.

### **Concept Nine – Leadership as Responsibility:**

Effective service leadership is both a gift and a duty. When leaders accept responsibility with humility and consistency, participation increases and trust grows.

## **Concept Eleven – Rotation:**

Rotation invites new perspectives, sustains spiritual balance, and creates shared opportunities for service.

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## **Mistakes, Growing Pains, and Spiritual Experiences**

We gathered broad input throughout the rotation but did not always establish clear prioritization. In some cases, we underestimated how deep-rooted certain communication challenges were.

The scope of our task exceeded the time and resources available within a single rotation. Coordination with other committees occasionally lagged, highlighting the importance of earlier and more consistent collaboration.

We also learned—sometimes the hard way—the importance of designing workshops that encourage participation rather than relying on lecture-style delivery. In keeping with the spirit of shared experience and informed group conscience, we became more aware of our tendency to overwhelm others with information and data. This prompted us to refine both content and delivery to make materials clearer and more accessible.

Missteps ultimately became opportunities to learn humility and strengthen our processes.

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## **Advice to Future Ad Hoc Committees**

1. Begin with a defined scope and clear endpoint.
2. Keep minutes brief but accessible for the record.
3. Build early partnerships with Finance, Report and Charter, and Agenda Committees.
4. Use technology, but remember that conversation builds trust, and adjusting the pace may sometimes be the solution.
5. Have a plan to rotate new people into the work.
6. Anchor discussions in the Traditions and Concepts.
7. Avoid overloading Assemblies with excessive information.
8. Ensure the “why” of an agenda item is clearly understood before it comes to a vote.
9. Allow committees flexibility in how approved changes are implemented.

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## **Ideas Worth Revisiting**

- Explore forming a standing Communication or Translation Committee.
- Revisit discussion of changes to Assembly structure and rotation of locations.
- Develop measurable participation tracking.
- Limit reports and procedural business to less than 40% of Assembly time.
- Expand bilingual and hybrid accessibility efforts.
- Consider professional translation partnerships.
- The committee recommends that future Area 41 Chairpersons experiment with alternative committee meeting structures at Assemblies, including staggered or joint committees or other formats. While the current approach has limitations, additional exploration may help identify more effective models.

Participation research from other Areas suggests several approaches that could serve Area 41 well, including regional pre-assemblies to engage outlying districts, mentorship networks pairing experienced servants with new GSRs or DCMs, and broader digital distribution of background materials through QR codes or shared online folders. Each of these ideas respects our traditions of autonomy and self-support while offering practical ways to strengthen the informed group conscience.

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## **Hopes for the Future**

We hope future servants continue this work with openness and practicality, guided by rotation and informed group conscience. Communication, inclusivity, and accessibility will remain ongoing responsibilities, and each rotation builds on the last. When information is clear and service feels approachable, participation follows naturally.

Possible signs of progress could include broader district representation at Assemblies, increased participation in workshops and service discussions, and more consistent two-way communication between the Area and groups.

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## **Closing Reflections**

The 2023–2025 FUNction Ad Hoc Committee did not solve every challenge, but it carried out its responsibility faithfully.

We learned that structure should serve the spirit of service and that progress is best measured in cooperation rather than conclusions.

We leave this record for future trusted servants to build upon.

“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”

**In love and service,**  
**The Area 41 FUNction Ad Hoc Committee (2023–2025)**

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