

**Hello Tony,**

I've been thinking a long time about writing the article you have asked me to write about. I believe it was about "What does it mean to be a Goan?"

To tell you the truth it has been difficult imagining about the subject you requested, because in terms of experience, I have lived outside Goa, with only a few holidays to Goa to see relatives, and so I don't think I will be able to do honest justice to the question. There was also the concern that the subject matter lends itself to a hypothetical situation, as if, Goans were nationalist in their thinking, rather than migrants consisting of Konkani - Indian-Portuguese and English speaking entities. I usually find it difficult writing about a hypothetical or imagined situation, and am better writing about a real situation on the ground, or even a researched situation.

So as a start, I began by observing the institutional GOANSW activities ---- the socials, the fetes, the holy masses, and the Goa Day activities. I use the word [institution](#)<sup>1)</sup> interchangeably with the words club and association, and is intended to mean the same, which is the GOANSW.

To keep matters simple, I will flag certain words and meanings that point to simple explanations at the bottom of the page. This is so that if you want to put this letter on the website, then the active links will lead to websites with simple explanations. However, if you would like to convert this letter format to an article/feature, I can do that too.

The activities of the GOANSW are a good mix of social activities, which can also be considered the normal (traditional?) mix of activities that Goan overseas social clubs and institutions have organised in the past. From attending the mix of activities, it was not possible to discern what subject to write about. There were some incidents, which I could not understand or determine, like for example: A GOANSW trustee was residing in Brisbane, and could a fresh trustee be nominated in Sydney? and the youth activities during the last few months.

However, the recent September AGM (we used to call them General Body Meetings at one time), gave a clarity of understanding to the activities, as well as the future intentions of the GOANSW committee, and answered many questions. I will only mention the two relevant ones that caught my interest.

First, I commend the move to increase the number of trustees from three to five, as a very far-sighted one, because it adds depth and capacity to the institution. We normally call this move institutional capacity-building. Allow me to elaborate.

It is normal for all clubs and institutions arrive at a crisis from time to time, where the leaders are unable to see a way forward for the institution and themselves, or solve immediate problems, and then some of the leaders, in a panic, may want to propose a motion to decide to disband the institution. This is like panicking and looking out to jump over a precipice. It can be viewed as something like the act of suicide.

The institution itself may still be a viable social entity with substantial funds deposited by its members. The institution may still be a viable social entity, because paying members have an expectation of future social benefits, even if they are unable to take part temporarily, for whatever reasons of their own. Because of the subscriptions

held by the institution, and the responsibilities of the committee, there may be other members who would rather wait patiently for new ideas, and a solution to come up, rather than adopt an irrational approach, to disband an institution.

Now, a [Trustee](#) <sup>(2)</sup> (or the holding of a Trusteeship) is a legal term which, in its broadest sense, can refer to any person who holds property, authority, or a position of trust or responsibility for the benefit of another, and in the case of the GOANSW, for the benefit of its members. In the case of disbanding, the responsibilities would fall on the shoulders of the trustees, some of whom may not agree to, or be professionally equipped to handle such an adverse and heavy situation. Increasing the number of trustees to five, and Inducting younger members, builds capacity at the tier/level of the trustees, to discuss and bring forwards new ideas and new social directions that the club may want to adopt, as an era changes, and then move firmly forwards. It also helps to ensure the survivability of the GOANSW as an institution into the future.

I hope that these new trustees may meet regularly during the year to consider, determine and review GOANSW's activities, and forward suggestions to the committee. I also hope that, rules may be formulated so that the trustees are able to [co-opt](#) <sup>(3)</sup> other members to assist whenever needed. Those co-opted can be any member, with the expertise or advice necessary to help the trustees arrive at a recommendation, for the future benefit of the Association, and their advice may be placed on record.

I am hoping that either you as president or the new committee can, discuss this, then draft similar rules, and put it to vote for adoption, where the five trustees collectively may be empowered, to suggest an overall strategic direction of the GOANSW, whatever that direction may take. I imagine that this may be one of three tiers/source of ideas, apart from the tier of the committee, and youth component tier, so that the GOANSW is not a static association, but an association that is able to bend itself, and move towards the future needs of the Association and its heirs. This is also so, that we may make the GOANSW a vehicle for our betterment.

Second, the setting up of GOANSW's "youth component".

I use the words "youth component" because right now nothing about them is set down, except the interim structure comprising Dayne Fernandes, Chloe Do Rozario, and Shelley D'Souza. And you are also right. A formal structure cannot be set down immediately, because it is a work in progress. Again, at the AGM, I realized that this also was a very far-sighted move to ensure the viability and survivability of the GOANSW as an institution, far into the future. The intention is that these younger leaders will be inducted and get firsthand, hands-on experience in organizing people (members) and activities, with mentorship from the older members, within the committee and without. This again can be viewed as an example of intent at institutional capacity-building, where the "youth component" becomes additional tier/level, who work towards the continuity of the institution.

However, work regarding the "youth component" is a very long term project, and will have to be worked out painstakingly, with consensus and agreement from the youth themselves. The question in the forefront can only be "What does the "youth component" want?"

But there is something we can do right now, as a start, to somewhat assist this process of capacity-building. We can impart to them an understanding about institutional

and organizational structures under NSW rules for [associations](#) ( 4 ) and [cooperatives](#) ( 5 ). This is a relatively large body of information, and may be too much for the “youth component” to digest. However, there is a lot of corporate experience among the members of the present committee, who I hope can select the relevant sections for the “youth component”. I will return back to this subject of training the “youth component” further down.

You may think I am straying too far from the purview of the GOANSW, by mentioning cooperatives. But running a [cooperative](#) ( 6 ) is not much different from running an association like GOANSW. I don't know whether you are aware, Goans in Karachi organized and ran cooperatives for the benefit of its members, of which I'll mention one, because I found its historic functioning as very instructive for us all.

Please understand, I am not saying to link up the GOANSW financially to the running of a cooperative. It is fiscally and legally not possible to do this. These two organizations must be kept financially separate. But it is possible that the same people, who are running the GOANSW, the *Dream team*, or an enlarged *Dream team*, may also learn to start up a small cooperative, using the energy of the “youth component” as a resource.

As you know, a cooperative ("coop") or co-operative ("co-op") is an autonomous association of persons who voluntarily cooperate to meet their mutual and common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Cooperatives include non-profit community organizations and businesses that are owned and managed by the people who use its services e.g. a [consumer cooperative](#) ( 7 ) , or by the people who work there (a [worker cooperative](#)( 8 ) or by the people who live there (a [housing cooperative](#)( 9 ), hybrids such as worker cooperatives that are also consumer cooperatives or [credit unions](#)( 10 ) multi-stakeholder cooperatives such as those that bring together civil society and local actors to deliver community needs, and second and third tier cooperatives whose members are other cooperatives.

In Karachi, I don't think these cooperatives were institutionally affiliated with the Karachi Goan Association, or its former name the Goan Portuguese Association. But many of the members of the GPA/KGA initially set up these cooperatives as separate institutional entities, for the benefit of other Goans.

One was a printing press, The Times Press, situated at the corner of Mansfield Street and Preedy Street. This printing press served to teach/apprentice other Goans in all aspects of the business of running a printing press, from managing the machinery, Typesetting, sales, as well as gave long term job security to many Goans. The land, on which the press was situated, was leased, and when the migrations out of Karachi began and there were not that many Goans to run it, and the lease expired, the printing press as a commercial entity collapsed.

I was told, but I cannot verify the details, that another may have been a mutual life assurance company called the Ideal Life Assurance Company, also known as ILACO. Along with other insurance companies, ILACO was nationalized by the Bhutto government in the 1970s. There may also have been a baker's cooperative for the *poders*, to keep functioning. I was told that at one time there were seven Goan-run bakeries in the 1930's, all of whom helped one another when flour ran short.

To return to the subject of nurturing the “youth component” and capacity-building.

My idea is simply, as a start, to offer the “youth component” some knowledge about the Laws and Rules of Association and Cooperatives, as they are prevalent in New South Wales. They should be imparted simple concepts, and also printouts of the current NSW Laws are provided to all who attend, along with some discussion.

What is the benefit of this training to the “youth component”?

At the very least it will give them an idea about the NSW rules about organizing, and organizations, and the liabilities therein. It will teach them citizenship. When the time comes that you want to move the GOANSW forwards, you will have a ready pool of the “youth component”, with the requisite basic knowledge.

Second, it may be a good idea to put out a questionnaire, to ask members what activities and services are needed. Questionnaires are tools to find out what services members need, and what they are thinking. When the responses return, the general committee may examine and evaluate them, to see what can be done.

If you wish, you may put this letter on the GOANSW website to see what feedback can return from members.

Thank you and Regards

**Noel Monteiro**  
Member GOANSW

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1 Institution - Available at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institution>

2 Trustee - Available at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trustee>.

3 Co-opt. Available at: [http://useful\\_english.enacademic.com/26767/co-opt](http://useful_english.enacademic.com/26767/co-opt) Appoint to membership of a body by invitation of the existing members.

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4 Running an association - NSW Fair Trading. Available at: [http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/Cooperatives\\_and\\_associations/Running\\_an\\_association.page](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/Cooperatives_and_associations/Running_an_association.page)

5 Co-operative identity, values & principles | ICA: International Co-operative Alliance. Available at: <http://ica.coop/en/what-co-op/co-operative-identity-values-principles>

6 About co-operatives - NSW Fair Trading. Available at: [http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/Cooperatives\\_and\\_associations/About\\_cooperatives.page?](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/Cooperatives_and_associations/About_cooperatives.page?)

7 Consumer cooperative - Available at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumer\\_cooperative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumer_cooperative)

8 Worker cooperative - Available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Worker\\_cooperative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Worker_cooperative)

9 Housing cooperative - Available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Housing\\_cooperative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Housing_cooperative)

10 Credit union - Available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Credit\\_union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Credit_union)