



SUBUD VOICE

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SUBUD VOICE ONLINE
CONTACT DETAILS:
editor@subudvoice.net

Number 7
August 2011



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Harris Smart writes...

The end of June was a busy time for Subud in Indonesia with a Gathering held at Wisma Subud in Jakarta June 17-23, followed by the annual World Subud Council (WSC) meeting in Rungan Sari, Central Kalimantan, June 23-July 1.

Suzanna Dayne, one of the organizers of the Wisma event, said, "The Gathering hosted approximately 30 international guests from India, Japan, Singapore, France, Spain, Chile, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the U.S. and the Netherlands as well as around 50 Indonesians. The theme was "From Members to Members" – sharing experiences in Subud.

"Ridwan Umar, a long-time Subud member in Jakarta, had felt to organize such an event for some time. With the World Subud Council and Zone 1-2 Meetings already planned it seemed like a good time. We formed a small team and later worked with the South Jakarta Subud Group, the local Youth and the Bapak's

Pak Haryono cuts the rice mountain and gives the first slice to WSA chair Luke Penseny (left). (Photo: Mariamah Vernon.)

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Birthday committee to arrange a culture night, an enterprise day and kejiwaan activities.

“Many of us remember the time when Bapak was with us and many people would travel to Wisma, so this Gathering was a bit of an experiment, a pilot project so to speak.”

Visitors from overseas and many Indonesian Subud members also attended, particularly for the celebration of the birthday of Bapak Muhammad Subuh, the founder of Subud, on June 22 in Wisma Subud. This would have been Bapak's 110th birthday. (He died in 1987.) Unfortunately, Ibu Rahayu was not able to attend the events in Jakarta or Rungan Sari because of ill-health. She was greatly missed and our prayers go out to her for her speedy recovery.



*Bapak's mausoleum at Suka Mulia.
Peace and reverence.*

Wisma Subud Now

Many people commented that the visit to Wisma Subud was like returning to the “heart” or “source” of Subud. A number of Subud members came to live and visit here while Bapak was alive, especially at times like his birthday or the Islamic fast of Ramadan. Many wondered how they would find the compound now. A place of the ghosts of former times? Or still a living community?



Young fashionista at the fashion show.

There have been many changes in the compound in the years since Bapak's death. It is no longer a place where only Subud members live and a certain architectural integrity which the compound once possessed has to some extent been lost with new buildings.

Nevertheless, for the time of this gathering, Wisma Subud was once again a vibrant Subud community. There is a current initiative to have Wisma Subud declared a heritage site because of the tangible and intangible assets associated with it as a place from which spread this worldwide spiritual movement with its achievements in many fields including cultural, educational and social projects. (This was later discussed in much detail at the WSC meeting in Rungan Sari.) And how wonderful it was to do latihan again in the Wisma Subud latihan hall with its great dome and mysterious echoes.

There were many activities during the Wisma Subud gathering including a series of kejiwaan (spiritual) workshops and also discussions on enterprise. (Reports on these are included in this issue). There were cultural events and entertainment evenings and a lively “bazaar” had been set up in the forecourt of the latihan hall with food stalls and mini Indonesian entrepreneurs selling clothes and souvenirs. There was also a visit to Pamulang (through horrendous traffic!) to the house where Bapak was living when he passed away and we did latihan there.

There was also an opportunity for many of us to see for the first time, Adi Puri, the splendid renovation of Bapak's former home into a reception center and small concert venue. Displayed on the walls are a series of world maps with accompanying photographs showing Bapak's travels round the world. A statistic often given for the distance that Bapak travelled is that it was the equivalent of going to the moon and back. It is most impressive to see the number and extent of Bapak's travels inscribed on these maps, some of the journeys taking hundreds of days, the many places visited and the events attended such as World Congresses.

Bapak's Birthday

For most people the most important part of the gathering was the celebration of Bapak's birthday on the night of June 22nd, and the opportunity to visit Bapak's grave-site on the following days. Around 600 people attended the birthday celebration held in the latihan hall. Dinner was preceded by choral performances and a traditional Javanese gamelan orchestra. Pak Hayrono, Bapak's son, officiated at this event, cutting the traditional mountain of yellow rice and giving the first serve of it to ►



Pak Kuswanda, three times former chair of Subud Indonesia, sang cowboy songs at the Gathering. Don't fence him in!

Luke Pensoney, chair of the World Subud Association (WSA).

Then, on the 23rd and 24th buses took us to the hills of Cipanas several hours drive away (horrendous traffic again!) to Bapak's mausoleum at Suka Mulia where he is buried along with members of his family and other Subud members.

After the heat, noise and hectic traffic of Jakarta, it was profoundly refreshing to turn off the main road to this place of quiet, clean air and a pristine environment, and then to walk to the mausoleum built in traditional Javanese style with its feeling of peace and reverence. Some were moved to tears or other emotional and spiritual experiences expressive of gratitude to the man who brought us this "Gift of God", the latihan, which has become so central in our lives. It was a fitting conclusion to this "return to the source of Subud".

A fitting conclusion to the return to the source of Subud

Planting the seeds

Harris Smart writes...

The annual meeting of the World Subud Council (WSC) was held in Rungan Sari from June 23 to Friday July 1. Winding up the meeting on Friday afternoon, Luke Pensoney, chair of the WSA (World Subud Association), said, "I feel as if we have been living in a beautiful garden. We have received so much. We have experienced Susila, loving and caring for each other.

"So much has happened here. The international helpers, the zone reps, the WSA executive, the wings, and the people who have observed the meeting – all of us have contributed to make this a wonderful meeting. We have shown we have the ability to work together. We can do it!

"We have learned to trust in God and work hard. I give thanks to Almighty God for all we have been able to do. What we need to do now is take back to every corner of the Subud world the seeds of what we have experienced and received here."

A great deal happened at the meeting. Here are some of the highlights. A complete list of reports, resolutions and minutes of the meeting will be available on www.subudworldnews.com in the WSA section.

Some Highlights

Bachtiar Lorot was selected as the new chair of the Muhammad Subuh Foundation (MSF). Bachtiar, from France, has held many positions in the Subud organization including Zone rep and chair of SICA. He has worked in development in many places around the world and is known for his meticulous attention to detail.



Bachtiar Lorot, new chair of MSF.

Amalijah Thompson gave an extremely detailed report on the Archives, outlining a program to preserve the tapes of Bapak's recordings. An important decision for the meeting is that the WSA will delegate this work to MSF who will fund the project. It will cost US\$150,000 of which MSF currently has \$40,000 in hand with a further \$110,000 to be fundraised.

Fundraising was a recurrent topic at the meeting. At one point the treasurer, Hammond Peek was heard to remark, "We need more money, bucket loads of it." A workshop discussion was devoted to the topic and a list of initiatives drawn up. See the Resolutions at www.subudworldnews.com for the complete document.

A very detailed report and discussion was held about the intention to seek heritage status for Wisma Subud and other places associated with the Bapak's life such as his birthplace in Kedung Jati and the house in Semarang where he was living when he first received the latihan.

Josephine Bacikin outlined what needed to be done to make applications to the ▶



The Subud World Council.

Indonesian government and/or UNESCO for heritage status based on the “tangible and intangible” assets of these places from which arose the worldwide spiritual movement of Subud with its many accomplishments in social welfare, education, culture and enterprise.

A topic which threaded its way through the meetings was the responsibility of the WSA towards International Centres which had been broadly supported by Subud members and the Subud organization including Wisma Subud, Amanecer and Rungan Sari. The need of WSA to be “attentive and supportive” towards developments in these places was frequently expressed.



Alex Woodward, one of the SYAI reps.

The Wings

“A phoenix arising from the ashes” was one comment about the SICA (Subud international Cultural Association) presentation from the SICA chair, Latifah Taormina. SICA has indeed been very quiet in recent years and Latifah’s presentation of the new SICA website www.subud-sica.org was indeed a burst of new energy and vision for this “wing”. “Culture is the latihan of life.”

SDI (Susila Dharma International) has long been the most successful of the “wings” and the presentation by Kumari Beck confirmed this “wing’s” ongoing strength with 24 national organizations and 50 projects, including three new ones this year. The impressive Annual Report which Kumari distributed showed the breadth of SDI’s achievement. Of particular interest was news of a developing relationship with the Buchan Foundation to fund health centers in the Congo. There was also a discussion of the need to co-ordinate our disaster relief efforts with Susila Dharma and the World Subud Association working together so that Subud members can donate easily and with clarity to situations such as the tsunami in Japan and the earthquake in Christchurch.

SESI (Subud Enterprise Services International) is also showing a new dynamism. The presentation by the chair Ruslan Morris spoke of a return to Bapak’s advice about how to run enterprise and news of an investment fund to support enterprises. The meeting empowered SESI to establish an investment and financial service company to support the growth of Subud enterprise particularly in Kalimantan.



*SIHA chair, Matthew d'Haemer.
SIHA is to be recognized a a “wing”.*

Youth was also well represented by Alex Woodward and Lucinda Young who spoke of SYAI (Subud Youth Activities International) who led a particularly lively presentation of their work and the challenges they face. They talked about projects like the Human Forces camps where young volunteers go to work in Susila Dharma projects. Several have been held in various parts of the world and there was to be another after the WSC meeting, working in YUM projects in Cipanas.

After a strong presentation by SIHA chair, Matthew d'Haemer, it was resolved that SIHA (Subud International Health Association), which has been something of a “lame duck”, should in future be included as one of the areas of activity (“wings”) of the World Subud Association.

World Congress

External Relations has been through a difficult period and the meeting resolved that in future the WSC encourages the self-funded, independent activities of Subud members to engage with outreach activities such as conferences, events, interfaith and other forums for the purpose of providing points of engagement and explanations about Subud.

Osanna Vaughn talked about the “Space for Grace” initiative which is exploring new ways for Subud members to express their care and support for each other.

There was of course much discussion of the forthcoming World Congress to be held in Puebla, Mexico, in 2014. Those who had visited Puebla recently spoke of its

*We have
received so
much*

excellent conference facilities and safe, friendly atmosphere. It was hoped that the relatively low costs of holding the congress there might mean affordable registration fees enabling more young people to come.

The timing of the congress was discussed and while no definite decision was reached one possibility was that it might be late July into mid- August following Ramadan and taking advantage of school holidays in many parts of the world. The need to provide good translation services at the congress was emphasised. ◆

Promoting justice... An unexpected life in Subud

Livingston Armytage has been a Subud member since 1971, and is a child of Subud parents, Sofyan and Halimah. He served as National Chair for Subud Australia between 1981/3, and as a regional and local helper. He has lived and worked with his wife Miyako in about 25 countries mainly in Asia, and is presently leading a judicial development program across the Pacific region. His Ph.D entitled: Reforming Justice: a journey to fairness in Asia, is being published by Cambridge University Press in early 2012...

I originally trained as a lawyer in the early 1970s and practised law for about ten years. I then became increasingly convinced of the importance of promoting justice. So I left my law practice to make training judges and reforming justice systems my vocation. Since then, I have worked to promote justice in many unexpected places like Afghanistan, Cambodia, Palestine and Papua New Guinea. While there are rarely Subud groups in such places, I do my best to bring the latihan to keep in touch with that ‘quiet place’ amid all the challenges that I encounter.

All human beings have rights. These rights may be economic, social, political or cultural. People’s lives are, however, all too often blighted by injustices. In many countries, citizens – usually the poor – are routinely denied their fundamental entitlements by the powerful who exploit inefficiencies and subvert justice through corruption and impunity.

I have encountered many examples of injustices as a practitioner reforming the courts. While courts are only one focal point for redressing injustice – and many people in developing societies live in the traditional or customary domain beyond the remit of formal justice systems – they are nonetheless the key mechanism of the state to do so. In Port Moresby, Papua



Girl on Phnom Pehn rubbish dump. The need to redress injustices affects the rights of people across the spectrum of human life.

New Guinea, the physical safety of colleagues was daily threatened by extremely violent crime which fell beyond the control of the justice system.

In Multan, Pakistan, I met farmers whose grandparents’ dispute remained entangled in the courts for 60 years. In Ramallah, on the West Bank, the court staff were so poorly paid that they openly procured commissions. In Panjshir, Afghanistan, I worked with judges untrained in even the basics of secular law. In Phnom Penh, Cambodia, judges knew that confronting the government for stealing land from customary owners had career-terminating consequences. In Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, I worked with courts unfamiliar with the notions of enforcement of contract. In Dhaka, Bangladesh, I worked in court-houses which had no electricity or record-keeping systems. Clearly, justice cannot be administered under these deplorable circumstances.

I have found that injustices continue largely unabated despite increasing quantities of development assistance worth hundreds of millions of dollars to improve what governments like to call ‘the rule of law’. These reform efforts have mainly focused on alleviating poverty. While economic growth, good governance and public safety are worthy goals, global efforts have however seldom directly addressed injustices and more often than not success has been elusive. The best efforts of development practitioners seem to go awry.

As a result, I found myself grappling with the challenges of becoming more effective. The difficulties of this work impelled me to embark on a ►

All human beings have rights