

Report to WSA-Exec, SESI, and WSC Finance Team on Zone 4 Meeting, Bad Vaslau, Austria, April 4–9

From: Stuart Cooke: WSA Fundraising Coordinator, SESI Advisory Board
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Delegates from Serbia, Lebanon, Greece, Germany, Switzerland, Poland, Moldova, Lithuania, Austria, Norway, and Sweden met for 5 days to get to know one another better, resolve a particular zonal problem, and pass a budget for the remainder of 2012 and review a possible budget for 2013. The chairs of Austria, Germany, Lebanon, and Greece expressed interest in starting collective enterprises. Suspicion and distrust was expressed among a few individual members, however by the end of the meeting much but not all of this doubt was assuaged.

During my short presentation to delegates and observers, I spoke about the imperative for enterprise, whether it be an individual (job or profession) enterprise, a small business, or a large collective enterprise established for the sake of Subud. Concerning the latter I explained the two-tiered structure of a supervisory and operating board. I said SESI was there to supply experts, vet proposals, and to help identify financing. I spoke about Finco and how we hoped it would become a seed for establishing a world bank, explaining that at this point it was still an idea and had yet to be vetted or approved. I concluded with a statement on the mission of Subud and the excerpt from the Wendhausen talk from the report SESI produced that was approved by the WSC at Rungan Sari, that being Subud-minded meant that each of us incorporate in ourselves the trinity of Subud as one, namely — "I", "Subud", and "God"

Many were inspired by these words, but others expressed doubts. For example, the chairman of Subud Austria asked, "Why should I trust SESI?" I replied he should contact SESI and find out for himself if they are trustworthy. A Peat, Marwick executive said, "I like the idea of enterprise very much and believe it is the way to go, however such efforts should be completely separate from Subud" (in other words, never endorsed by a Subud committee). We spoke at length about this later and have not yet reached a common view, however the conversation is continuing.

Another member, the zone treasurer, reacted strongly to my quoting Bapak saying, "I don't like hearing those words, it's like the past, when this kind of thing was forced upon us." I met with her later and resolved this.

At the end of my presentation a member from Greece said, "Thank you for coming here and telling us this. You give us hope," which was followed by a warm round of applause from delegates and observers.

Later, after individual meetings, the Austria Chair changed his mind and told me he intends to put together a working group to come up with an idea for a Subud Enterprise. Subud Germany will pursue this, but in a quiet, careful manner, as they are a new team. Greece reported that the group in Athens is talking about starting a Taverna. The Lebanese don't know yet but want to get together and see what they might come up with.

In regard to fundraising, the Zone Treasurer is going to look at preparing a new budget for 2013 based on needs to inspire zone members and open up the possibly of change rather than looking only at the current, existing pledges. Subud Germany, one of the 7 countries we have targeted in our fund-raising strategy for this year, has a secure, regular, national fund-raising platform, but it does not change, up or down very much. I formed a good relationship with the chairperson and we will be having regular conversations in the coming months to

hopefully help them increase their in-country income in the future, and thereby, at some point, increase their contribution to the zone, and thus to the WSA.

Parallel to this report is to my mind, a key finding. There is a deep vacuum amongst all delegates and attendees about the larger purposes of Subud and about what's going on outside their individual centres, countries, let alone within the member countries of their zone or outside it. From my work since Rungan Sari, I sense the same vacuum most everywhere. There are very large gaps and disconnects. While visits by the WSA-Chair or myself are great, they are nowhere near enough to close this gap. Frankly, it was searing.

In the beginning, the meeting seemed like it was amongst a group of strangers meeting. After three days, they were strangers no more. By the end, the zonal members were almost a team. (At the end, one observer spontaneously gave a very large donation to Subud Moldova whose members and country are in dire circumstances.) This new unity, care, and love, was due, in my view, to two factors. The first was an honest, open, airing of differences (which were eventually resolved). The second, and perhaps overwhelming factor, was the work of the international helpers assigned to zone 4. Their work created a wide space, an opening to receive and follow that was experienced by everyone.

There are many countries and cultures in Zone 4, more than any other zone, however, despite their surfeit of differences, they resolved their problems, and came together in the end in harmony. It was a privilege to witness this.