

ZONE 3 SUBUD CENTRE SUPPORT TEAM

A Guide to the Acquisition and Maintenance of Subud Property

Foreword

This Guide has been produced to guide Groups and Nations within Zone 3 through the process of acquiring and maintaining Subud Houses. It is not intended to be definitive (which would in any event be impossible bearing in mind the very different property laws and legal status of the national Subud organisations within the countries in the Zone), but rather aims to give practical advice to try and ensure that no important procedures or processes are overlooked.

Experience to date has shown that it is generally (the members of) a Subud Group who are the source of the inspiration and energy needed to obtain a Subud House. It is appreciated that this may not always be the case, but for the sake of simplicity, this Guide assumes that it is the Group that initiates this process.

The Functions of a Subud House

Each Group will have its own aspirations for its Subud House in respect of such factors as size, location, cost and practical range of uses, both Subud and non-Subud. Because of this, the functions of a Subud property must be considered flexibly. The following list is not exhaustive and should only be taken as a guide.

1. Latihan

The essential function. Preferably there should be sufficient space for men and women to latihan simultaneously, of size(s) to satisfy the needs of the Group and other likely Subud functions (larger latihan and organisational/social gatherings). Also, consider facilities for private testing, helper meetings etc.

2. Committee and Social Facilities

In order to be adequate for the needs of the Group, it should preferably have space for social gathering and refreshments / meals and to allow for group committee meetings.

Toilet facilities should obviously be adequate. This is particularly important for non-Subud functions which are more likely to come under environmental health controls.

3. Visitors

Overnight or longer stay accommodation for guests may not only be considered desirable, but be achievable (though the management of this requires careful consideration).

4. Caretaker

If overnight guest accommodation is provided, the services of a caretaker may well be essential to ensure proper management. This will in turn require permanent accommodation in the Subud House for the caretaker. In this respect, the caretaker's accommodation should be large enough to accommodate a family.

5. Enterprise Use

The property may be used to generate income through lettings in order to allow the purchase and maintenance of the property to be self-financing. This will normally be essential. However the provision and management of facilities must be to a standard to allow this to be achieved.

Other aspects that must also be remembered include:

- Prestige - whilst providing a home for a Group, a Subud property must also be able to show Subud in a good light. It must therefore be well-maintained, clean, well decorated, warm, and above all welcoming.
- Accessibility - with Subud members being old as well as young, and legislation in many countries regarding physical disability becoming increasingly stringent, ease of accessibility and specific provision for disabled users must be seriously considered.

Legal

It goes without saying that the purchase of Subud property has to be undertaken within the laws of the country in question and must have due regard to the legal status of the Subud organisation whether at National or Group level. Where Subud does not constitute a legal entity capable of owning (in its widest sense) property, other arrangements will need to be made (eg ownership by individuals or other appropriate entity).

Where this is necessary, there should be appropriate legal arrangements between the owners and the Subud organisation to ensure that both parties' interests are properly protected (particularly the use of the property by Subud members for the latihan). Financial arrangements should be properly and legally documented, including the repayments of loans, profits generated, and the distribution of any sale proceeds.

By way of example, in Subud Britain it has been the practice for all Subud Houses to be owned by Subud Britain, although in some instances, Subud members have developed properties for enterprise use, and have given local Groups permission to use them for Latihan.

Where this issue has not yet been considered, therefore, it is suggested that the national Subud organisation in the country concerned will need to establish the most appropriate arrangements for ownership. This will help ensure that, when property acquisition is being actively considered, the principles of the legal and administrative procedures will already have been agreed, if not actually put in place.

Steps Towards the Purchase of Subud Property

The following is a suggested checklist of practical actions leading towards "owning" (in whatever way is appropriate to the laws of the country in question) a Subud property. The responsibility within the Subud organisation for undertaking these actions will need to be decided in order that the acquisition can go forward smoothly.

Assume that considerable effort, heartache and frustration will go into the search for a Subud property. To start with, opinions about what is affordable, how the property should be used and where it should be located will tend to be very elastic. Through investigation and detailed consideration of what is actually practical these opinions will be refined into a few 'preferred' options. All options, including building from new should be considered. Specialist advice should be sought whenever necessary. However, acquisition is just the first step. Ongoing management of both the property itself, and of any enterprise activity within it run by the Group, requires skill and dedication.

Of these checklist points, some are matters of principle; others are detailed property-related.

- 1 **SUPPORT**
Obtain sufficient support at local (Group) and National level to make the process of trying to acquire a Subud House worthwhile.
- 2 **DECISION MAKING**
Agree process of decision-making at Local and National level. Who will be the prime-movers? (This may well be self-generating as experience suggests that action results from the energy of a few already-committed individuals).

3 CONCEPT

As a group work out your needs. This may be quite complex, and require the help of someone outside the group to ensure that all voices are properly heard.

Agree (as far as possible) what seems to be practically achievable in terms of cost, financial commitments, size, type and use of property etc (see Functions of a Subud House above).

Consider how it will be managed, who will be responsible for the resulting long term tasks, and whether these tasks should be paid for.

4 SEARCH

Use this as a basis for the initial search for a property (whether existing buildings or land).

5 BUSINESS PLAN

Establish a Business Plan. Prepare a comprehensive and realistic plan of how the property will be bought, built/renovated, serviced and managed. Set out best estimates of capital and revenue costs and sources of funds and income. Include consideration of:

Capital costs:

- Cost of property
- Cost of improvements, alterations, extensions, complying with statutory requirements
- Cost of professional fees and advice (lawyers, banks, architects etc).

Sources of capital funding (gifts and loans):

- Subud members
- Other Subud sources (National or international organisations, MSF etc)
- Commercial borrowing
- Charitable (non-Subud) foundations

NB Please note that ownership of the property by the Subud organisation is presently a prerequisite to financial assistance from the Muhammad Subuh Foundation (MSF).

Revenue costs:

- Repairs, maintenance, periodic upgrading, cleaning
- Heating, lighting, telephone, water
- Replacement of fixtures and fittings
- Payment of property or other taxes
- Insurance
- Any management costs
- Repayment of capital borrowings

Income needed to meet capital repayments and revenue requirements:

- Group contributions
- Enterprise income
- Other Subud earnings

In the above connection, ensure that assessments of costs and income are as realistic as possible at every stage. Consider:

- Will the Group who will occupy the property, be able to maintain its financial commitments to the Subud organisation once it takes on the (assumed) additional financial liabilities of owning its own Subud house?
- Will the Group have the ability to repay short and long term loans (with all interest charges taken into account)?

- Are the assessments of enterprise income realistic, having regard to the location and condition of the property, and its facilities?
- Could the assumptions on enterprise income prejudice the freedom of use for latihan and other Subud use of the property? In other words, could the need to generate income take priority over everything else?

This business plan should be an ongoing one, starting from the beginning of the scheme and being firmed up as more detailed information becomes available. It will need to be adapted to suit changing circumstances and different projects (eg if the purchase of the property on which it is based falls through and a new property is considered).

6. PROPERTY CHECK

In connection with the property search (and in order to finalise the Business Plan):

- Check that the location of the property is right. Will it be suitable for the expected Subud and non-Subud uses in terms of size and facilities? How accessible is it by public and private transport?
- Ascertain the position regarding lawful use of the property. If existing lawful use is not consistent with use for worship etc, can permission for lawful use for worship be obtained? Is this crucial? And then act accordingly.
- Ascertain condition of property. Ascertain cost of repairing, improving, extending, altering, building new property. Get specialist advice when necessary.
- Ascertain situation on compliance with building, public health and all/any other by-laws or statutory requirements affecting the use of the property and the costs of improvement, conversion etc. Get specialist advice when necessary.
- Make a realistic assessment of furnishings and equipment, and include the cost of these in the business plan.

7. APPROVALS

Seek approval from relevant Subud organisations and funding sources to proceed with the acquisition. Make sure that all the above areas have been properly considered before any legal commitment to acquire the property in question is made.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

Depending on relative responsibilities for owning, funding, and managing the property, consider putting in place a Management Agreement which will make these responsibilities clear for future members and Subud office-holders. National and Group Committees will change but our properties will probably outlast those who started the process. Whether or not a formal Management Agreement is put in place, the responsibilities for ensuring that the following obligations are met will need to be agreed:

- Maintaining the fabric of the buildings in good repair.
- Ongoing compliance with local or national laws regarding the use of the property.
- Ongoing compliance with local or national laws regarding extensions alterations and/or building new property
- Ensuring adequate protection against fire.
- Proper usage of the property.
- Provision of adequate insurance.
- Ensuring that all financial commitments are met.
- Ensuring reasonable security precautions are taken.
- Ensuring that non-Subud use of the property does not compromise its use for latihan

9. PROPERTY MANUAL

It may well be worth considering the preparation of a manual listing all aspects of the property and how it is managed, including a maintenance schedule, key telephone numbers, etc. This will provide a single easy reference document for those responsible for managing the Subud House even though they will change in the months and years following its acquisition.

10. DISPOSAL

Finally, if it should become clear that the Subud House that you have acquired is no longer useful or beneficial and has become a burden, be prepared to dispose of it and, if appropriate, replace it with new property better suited to the needs of the Group. Alternatively, the proceeds of a sale can be used for the benefit of the Subud organisation (eg the purchase of a property for another Group).

11. MORE INFORMATION

For more information on Subud Houses and further help on any of the points raised in this Guide, please contact the members of the Zone 3 Subud Centre Support Team:

Santa Raymond: src@sraymond.demon.co.uk
Simon Milan: simon.milan@btinternet.com
Michael van der Matten: michael@vdma.demon.co.uk

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