

WSA Care Support Report to the 2010 World Congress in Christchurch **Submitted by Rayner Sutherland**

Less than a year after the Innsbruck World Congress the WSA Care Support Program and the WSA Subud Emergency Fund were established and up and running smoothly and effectively. The WSA Care Support team is made up of Garrett Thomson as chair, Rosanna Hille, Kumari Beck, and Rayner Sutherland as administrator. Other very actively involved resource and support people are Leonard van Willenswaard and Julia Hurd.

In 2006 the International Almoners, which was based for many years in the United Kingdom, was renamed the Subud Emergency Fund and became an international team with key bases in Vancouver, Montreal, Rotterdam and Bellingham. Rayner Sutherland is the coordinator and Ruth Thomas is the secretary. Ruth is fluent in both Spanish and French. This is very helpful since most of the applications come from Spanish or French speaking countries. Since being formed in 2006 the WSA Subud Emergency Fund has provided close to \$50,000 USD in grants to Subud brothers and sisters in desperate need of help. Additional very significant funds were raised from Subud members to provide further financial support to several Subud members whose needs exceeded what the Subud Emergency Fund could provide. See below for more details of the Subud Emergency Fund's work for 2009.

The Care Support team also started a new program called the WSA Subud Education Fund. Kumari Beck and Laurie Lathrop set-up and manage this program. Both of them are experienced Subud educators. The WSA Subud Education Fund is now fully up and running. Subud members now have much needed support in attending an educational program suitable to their talents and interests (e.g. a university program, a trade school program, or even just to send their child to an elementary school). The Subud Education Fund provided educational grants in 2009 to about a dozen Subud members living in a number of different countries. See the article in the recent MSF eNEWS about the educational grants provided. All of this was made possible through the generous funding of the Muhammad Subuh Foundation on behalf of the WSA. Both Kumari and Laurie have agreed to continue running this program after the 2010 World Congress.

The WSA Care Support program also now has its own webpage on the new www.subud.org website (under the 'Programs for Members' tab). On this webpage members can download the Subud Emergency Fund and the Subud Education Fund applications (in Spanish, French or English). Members can also find out on-line how to apply to these programs.

So, as the World Congress in Christchurch approaches in the coming weeks the WSA Care Support Program is well established and currently has two services: the WSA Subud Emergency Fund and the WSA Subud Education Fund. It is hoped that coming out of Christchurch those taking over this work will continue to build and expand the services and programs offered by the WSA Care Support Program to Subud members in need.

WSA Subud Emergency Fund:

Each year since 2006 more and more members have applied for help and have been supported by the WSA Subud Emergency Fund and the annual budget has been continually increased to meet this growing need. In 2008 alone sixteen grants were provided roughly totalling \$14,000. In 2009 there were another dozen plus grants awarded. In 2009 the grants have gone to members living in South

America, Africa and Europe. One grant alone in 2009 to support Subud members and their families living in Tanzania helped over fifteen newly opened Subud members and their families struggling to deal with the food crisis and drought in Tanzania. A grant of \$1,000 was approved by the WSA Subud Emergency Fund the very same day of being informed of this emergency need and provided for bulk food to be purchased and then distributed among these Subud members and their families. The coordination of this response was handled by SDIA. SDIA also assisted non-Subud members in the same Tanzanian village affected by this severe drought and famine.

The context of many of our brothers and sisters' need for support is that they are often living in a developing country with minimal formal government support programs and where the average monthly income could be as low as \$10-\$15 USD. These same countries often have very high unemployment, sometimes aggravated by issues like social unrest, a lack of easily accessible clean drinking water, little medicine and the need pay a fee to send children to elementary school.

So, in the context of these already very difficult circumstances any unexpected and costly setback or tragedy can often be beyond the means of a Subud sister or brother, their extended family or their Subud group to deal with. If a Subud brother or sister in a developing country has an accident, suddenly becomes ill or is even attacked and needs to pay for an unexpected and urgently needed medical operation, this is often beyond their means. If a Subud member suddenly passes on who has been the sole bread winner in the family, and there are many young children in the family to care for, this will likely lead to real hardship and not much hope of overcoming this situation without some support from the larger Subud community. If a Subud member's home is badly damaged in a natural disaster, such as a flood, earthquake or hurricane, the Subud Emergency Fund can supplement the assistance that Susila Dharma International is likely already providing. If a Subud member and their children have come on hard times, can't find work or enough work and are about to be evicted, and, as is the case in some countries, six months' rent is needed in advance to secure a new residence, then it may not be possible for this brother or sister to come up with such a large sum of money without the financial support from the wider Subud community.

An international helper, who worked very closely with the WSA Subud Emergency Fund these last four years, recently wrote that she personally met and saw first-hand how recently two separate grants to two different Subud members to provide funding for urgently needed operations prevented two certain deaths. Both of these members have since been visited once again by this international helper and are in fact doing much, much better now.

As mentioned, the term for current WSA Care Support Program members finishes at the upcoming Subud World Congress. Announcements were made to the membership, through Subud Voice, Subud World News, the WSA Newsletter and other newsletters, asking for new Care Support members to come forward and take over this work. To date there has not been much of a response. A new coordinator for the WSA Subud Emergency Fund is also needed at this time as Rayner Sutherland became the CEO for MSF in the summer of 2009 and needs to pass this work over to someone else at this time.

If anyone is interested in becoming involved please contact a WSA Care Support Program member now or at Congress to find out how to get involved. You can contact the WSA Care Support Program chair Garrett Thomson or Rosanna Hille, Kumari Beck or Rayner Sutherland for more information. Rayner's email is Rayner@dccnet.com.

I'd like to acknowledge and thank a number of key people who helped to run these programs so smoothly and well. I like to make a special thanks Laurie Lathrop and Kumari Beck for their work in getting the Subud Education Fund up and running and for continuing this work past Congress, to Julia Hurd for her constant and wonderful practical support, to Leonard van Willenswaard for his timely transfer of all funds to Subud members in need, to Garrett for all of his ongoing support, to Ruth Thomas for her translation work, to the MSF Board of Trustees for their ongoing support of these programs and most especially to the other seven Subud Emergency Fund helpers, based in Vancouver, who have said that they are willing to continue serving the membership in this way. These helpers were, without exception, so reliable, incredibly responsive, caring, non-judgmental and such strong team players. Never once was there a single disagreement about how best to support a member in need.

Finally, I wish to thank the Muhammad Subud Foundation and its donors and all of the many National Committees for their contributions to the WSA Executive for providing all of the funds needed, year after year, to provide this service to Subud members. I think it is wonderful that Subud members come together in this way to support our fellow brothers and sisters. I think it strengthens us as a community to do this. I truly hope that those that take over this work will continue to deepen and expand the support provided to our brothers and sisters in real need.