



THE WORLD SUBUD ASSOCIATION  
Subud Youth Coordinators & Executive Committee  
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## ENVISIONING THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH STRUCTURE

### IDEAS FOR INTERNATIONAL YOUTH COORDINATOR STRUCTURE:

We feel the need to possibly re-think the concept and maybe try out something quite different.

An idea could be to have, instead of simply two international youth coordinators, rather two (2) youth coordinators per Area (same areas as International Helpers) a guy and a girl, who would make six in total (see finance further down). This would then do away with the need of ZONE youth coordinators, which will also avoid a confusion of role and responsibility that seems to have developed. We feel that experience shows that for two international youth coordinators to communicate and cover all the countries around the world is unrealistic, that having the possibility to have a closer personal interactivity with the youth and the national youth coordinators, is much more productive, and it would make it easier to develop communication between neighbouring youth and youth coordinators.

From this group of six we feel that one or two (changing each year) could be present at the World Subud Council meetings, if necessary. The reason for the youth presence at a council meeting is to bring the youth voice to these meetings....but....we feel that more important and effective is to create a good yearlong relationship with the WSA executive team, or even with certain council members (such as international helpers), this could mean that the presence at a council meeting is less important than say the presence of the coordinators at youth gathering or events where a number of youth or youth coordinators are present.

Encouraging bridge meetings is very important and can also thus replace the presence at a council meeting, for example youth meeting with two or 4 international helpers present, or youth being invited to a zone meeting...or youth gatherings with the presence of the WSA chair and or executive. This will give the youth confidence that there is a constant awareness of their needs and interest in what they are doing.

So where as communication between the youth and the World Subud Council is vital, it doesn't necessarily have to take place at a council meeting and could be more productive and beneficial when spread over the year in different formats.

In this way costs for travel could be reduced or spread out in a more efficient manner.

## DEFINITION OF THE ROLE:

The first quality or requirement that we feel is important is the capacity to listen and to try and find out what the youth needs are. Experience shows that the youth (as well as older people) do not want to be told what they could, should or must do....Youth coordinators should not come with an agenda, but should be out there trying to evaluate the needs, concerns issues that the Subud World Council should be made aware of. This may be helper issues, or support for projects, or personal development support, etc....

The second quality is to be a good communication channel, passing on the general feeling or message coming from the youth, as opposed to ones personal opinion, to the organization at the international level.

The third quality is to encourage and support the youth in their endeavours, be they projects they wish to develop (video website, earth data base, gatherings, news letter) or in their wish to take on an active role in Subud.

Experience shows that there is a lot of helper work involved and where as we do not feel that this is necessarily the role of the youth coordinators, being a helper can be an advantage.

It is also an advantage to have some capacity in facilitating meetings, as it seems that many young people also like to give more content to their gatherings and meetings, than simply having fun, and that these are great moments for them to share concerns and projects and develop projects.

## COMMUNICATION:

As in everything, communication with the youth and coordinators is the key as well as encouraging the cross communication between the youth from different countries in a given area, but then also worldwide. It is clear that today the youth are adept to using the internet. Experience shows that e-mails are good for more organizational exchanges, but that Facebook is a widely used means for simply exchanging and keeping in touch, after any gathering or meeting or congress, all the youth that participated tend to continue sharing their experience, photos and ideas as well as projecting the 'next gathering'. We also see that the Facebook group set up by Hugo and Elysia Weaver '**I am planning to attend the 2010 World Congress in Christchurch!**' has 313 members signed up. The advantage of course of this communication is that it is basically free.

Still, nothing really replaces person to person communication so, it is important to:

Give the opportunity for national youth coordinators to meet and share the varying concerns from one country to another.

Encourage participation of the youth in national congresses both at home and abroad, giving some the opportunity of using the International Youth Travel Fund.

Encourage the organization of camps and gatherings where the youth can meet and exchange experiences, and where members of the council can also be present.

## **FINANCE:**

The idea in the case of six International Youth Coordinators would be that there is a mixture of finance coming from the WSA budget and also from zone budgets. This of course would be balanced among those zones with money as opposed to those without. But we feel that the work that could be done and the results achieved would warrant the International Youth budget being put up. Budgets can go further if travel is less far afield.

## **FROM LISTENING TO THE YOUTH, CERTAIN THIS HAS COME UP:**

In Subud Britain many more young people have come to Subud, than in other countries. It would seem that many of these young people discovered Subud by going to a camp, gathering or even congress with a Subud friend... This then makes it clear that young people come to mainly through being with young members....

So, apart from continuing to promote and support the organization of these events, apart from creating space for the youth at all national congresses, we also encourage establishing more young helpers. These helpers may not need to take on the typical role of a group helper; they may be more 'roaming' helpers, attending gatherings and events where there are youth, as well of course as being involved with the youth in their group. Even when young people have good relationships with the 'older' generation, there are still many things they find easier to talk about with someone closer to their age. This is an idea that should be discussed with the International helpers and national helpers, to create a specific denomination, as clearly some young helpers cannot take on typical group responsibilities, simply due to their schedules and life styles.

Another suggestion made by one young person was that a social evening could be organized (by the youth) in a group, for an applicant to meet all the members of the group. This should be encouraged, and we need to move away from the concept that 'applicants' must be 'protected' from any input other than from helpers.

It seems that for children, being able to create their own relationships (other than exclusively through their parents) by going to events and gatherings is very important. Also this social connectedness seems fundamental after a young person has been opened to help them in their first years of being a member.

It is also probably the experience of many people that 'children' feel the inclination to be opened when 'away' from their own group and family. This feeling should be acknowledged and respected, thus having both young and experienced helpers at these gatherings is important. Also many young members like to take these opportunities to do general testing with experienced helpers.

## **NETWORKING VERSUS PROGRAMS:**

Globally the feeling of the role and the reason of International Youth Coordinators is not to 'create programs,' it is to communicate and encourage communication and interaction between the youth and all the different elements of the organization. To support and encourage their involvement in the organization and to support the projects that they wish to develop.

We are convinced that this is the key to the development of the youth's activities and involvement in Subud; it isn't a question of creating programs, but rather of encouraging and supporting the projects and ideas that the youth have themselves.

This can be achieved by the reinforcement of these networks, but also by the presence of council members at the different events and ideally someone on the executive team to be a constant link.

### **SOME POSITIVE EXAMPLES:**

Since the meeting at La Source last summer, three very interesting projects are finished or in progress:

**Subudvideo.net** webmaster Pierce Vaughn and taken on by SICA International (on-line since December 25<sup>th</sup>); a website where all videos about events, Bapak and his travels, members shorts documentaries or fictions can be uploaded and accessible to all. The next step is to create within the site, an interactive network data base for filmmakers.

**Subudearth:** data base being created by Immanuel Bryson Haynes. The data base will be built in a user friendly way to give group details around the world, for people travelling or wanting to get in contact with specific groups. Details of latihan times, a 'contact us' button, an easy way for groups to update their information etc...A prototype for Subud Britain and Subud France is being built.

**Growing up in Subud** (a guide for parents) this book project is being carried out by Immanuel Bryson Haynes and Fabian Bastiman. Immanuel has begun by interviewing Subud children and youth at every opportunity, to have their stories of growing up in Subud the positive and the less positive. The aim is to have a first edition for World Congress.