

The **WSA Care Support Programme** was created to give financial support to Subud members and their families whenever there is no National Almoner Fund, and only after any local or State available support has been exhausted. It includes both the Emergency Fund (formerly the International Almoners) and the Education Fund. It is presently a service of the WSA Executive. Its other mission is to encourage the setting up of Almoner Programmes in other countries, whenever feasible.

Principle of operation:

Initially, the local helpers test whether it is right or not to make a request to the CS Programme. Then, they forward the request and attached documents to the CS Team who examine them, and do the final testing with helpers who are working with them.

- For the **Education Fund**, criteria include: academic or professional results, quality and consistence of the project, educational or professional benefit for the interested person as well as for the community, personal and/or family financial participation, involvement in Subud and/or the community. Then further testing is done whenever the CST feels it necessary. Grants vary between \$200 and \$2000 and cover all costs related to education, from primary school to university or professional training.

- For the **Emergency Fund**, each case is tested as to whether it is right to give financial support or any other kind of support (e.g. advice); the amount is tested too. Grants varied between \$300 and \$5000.

- In both cases, it is a **once-only grant**, but there may be exceptions for outstanding requests.

- Approximately, **2 cases out of 3** receive a favourable response.

- **Controlling the use of the grants** is not so easy, as the procedures should never be felt as coldly administrative or humiliating, and the work of CS must stay confidential. Giving grants to persons or families – and on a once-only basis – is different from subsidizing projects or enterprises, with Memoranda of Understanding and contractual reporting, and where there is always the possibility to discontinue the instalments, in case. Education grants are paid very late in the school year, instead of the first quarter because of the lean CS budget, but all students or schoolchildren give registration certificates and academic results. Emergency grants are often given for extreme poverty. In case of medical treatments we are given pro forma invoices or cost estimates; we may require invoices or bills, but it is not often possible to obtain them. We also try to get news from the local helpers who tested the requests.

Financing:

At the beginning, it was out of a direct grant from the MSF. Many thanks to them. Then, as they realized that they should give grants only to organizations, and not services, as this is the case for the CS Programme, the CS budget is now part of the WSA budget. It oscillates now between \$11,000 (lower hypothesis) and \$16,000 (higher hypothesis). In 2013, it was decided in Poio to increase the budget to \$16,000. **The minimum 2014 budget of \$11,000 is already spent, and there are now \$4,900 requests pending** (4 urgent medical care cases and 1 student grant), not to speak of those that will come.

The Team:

There is a single CS Team, contrarily to before when there were separate Emergency and Education teams with a CS Coordinator. Now the members of the CST handle both kinds of requests.

Coordinator: Arnaud Delune - France (requests in French)

Claire Wells - UK

Constanza Hudson - UK (requests in Spanish)

Hakeem Naibi - Nigeria

There is no specific group of helpers; we do our testing with the helpers we are used to working with: Paris (men) and La Mayenne (ladies) for France, Montreal (ladies) for Canada.

A Big Thank You to all, not to forget Kumari Beck (who started the Education Fund, now Chair of SDIA), Annabella Ashby (former CS Coordinator), Sarah Becker and Sabariah Van Beek (Emergency Fund) and Renata Dunn (Education Fund, now Chair of Subud Canada).

Actions done:

- CS request forms, documents and communication are now available in English, French and Spanish.

- In 2012, a letter was sent to the Zonal Reps, asking them to publicize the existence and availability of the CS Programme in their Zones, but with little results.

- In 2014, a questionnaire was sent to all the National Committees in order to know whether they had an Almoner Fund, or wanted to set up one, or simply knew about the WSA CS Programme.

The few answers received to this day show that many Subud Countries, including some developed ones, have no Almoner Fund and have got to appeal to the International for their own members; others, where Subud has existed for a very long time, did not even know of the CS existence. It also appears that the non-financial needs of the members are rather well understood and cared for.

- The array in annex is showing the CS activities between the 2010 and 2014 World Congresses.

To summarize them, the Education Fund granted \$26,060 to 56 students at all levels, and the Emergency Fund granted \$32,850 to 29 persons in very difficult personal situations, often for covering medical costs (especially in the DRC). It also shows that few countries are making requests to the CS Programme: the DRC uses 40% of the CS grants, but why almost no other African Subud country is requesting our services? Why is Colombia almost the sole South American country?

The minimum 2014 budget of \$11,000 is almost totally spent now, and the 2013-2014 education grants were paid in 2014 and not during the last quarter of 2013 as they should have been, due to the lack of funds.

Recommendations:

- The CS Programme should appear in the WSA flow-charts, as this is not yet the case...

- "Caring for our members in need" should be acknowledged as a priority of the Subud Organisation at national and international levels – as well as the archives or the helpers' travels or the projects for the future.

- There should be an adequate Care Support budget (around \$20-25,000), enabling to respond to the known and estimated international needs, or

- The CS Programme should be allowed to fundraise in addition to the amount written in the WSA budget, which would need some change in the WSA financial procedures, such as keeping money left at the end of the year to forward it to the next one. Also, the current accounting system integrates donations to the budget, and does not add them to it. It is only if their amount would exceed the said budget, that the excess would be added to it.
- As it is unfair that the WSA Directors (Zone Reps) be barred from any WSA grant, the by-laws should be changed to allow allocating emergency or education grants to these dedicated persons.
- In case of vacancy, the WSA Executive should appoint an Interim Coordinator as soon as possible, and not wait several months for the IHs to do the formal testing, as was the case.
- The Team needs always to have one fluent French-speaker (plenty of work with the DRC), a Spanish-speaker (for South America), and all members must have a permanent and easy access to the Internet. They should also be able to easily meet their local helpers to do the necessary testing; if not, a specific CS Helpers group would have to be appointed, not the IHs as, with half of the requests coming from the DRC, this would become a burden to the Area 2 IHs.
- Countries should be encouraged to set up Almoners Teams wherever possible, as it is really difficult to accept that some very much developed Subud countries are still appealing to the WSA CS for supporting their own members in need, as they have no almoner fund.
- We need the support of SESI, as we are getting requests for starting individual businesses or jobs, which is out of our field, especially as we may not give loans and can not afford to do so.

Arnaud Delune,
WSA CS Coordinator