

### **2010-2014 Area 3 International Helper report to 2014 World Congress in Puebla**

Our term as international helpers lasted longer than most — 4 1/2 years — because it began in January, 2010, at the Christchurch World Congress.

Our Dewan was geographically diverse, with members spanning the hemisphere from Canada, the United States, Colombia, and Chile. Most of us were at least partially bilingual.

We were fortunate to have a full week to get to know each other and the full global 18-member IH Dewan in Christchurch, and to test about our initial travels. In the 4 1/2 years since, we have visited nearly every country with Subud members, with the only exclusions being Costa Rica and the Caribbean.

We based all our trips on testing to determine where to go, when to go, and who among us should go. Some of our trips were to national and zonal gatherings, and others were to individual groups. Both types of visits have advantages and disadvantages. With zonal or national gatherings we were able to do Latihan and testing with many more members at once, but we missed those members who could not attend. The trips to visit individual groups helped close that gap.

Our Dewan also worked quite a lot with national and local helper dewans, trying to help them deal with the difficulties of their jobs. We tried always to receive test questions to the best of our capacity for surrender, rather than relying on questions that may have seemed obvious to the mind or heart, but were not from the deepest place within.

We also worked with helpers to increase their courage and trust that God would guide them in conducting awareness or awakening testing with members. We found that helpers were afraid to really let go and receive questions, and thus were not offering this vital testing to members.

We dealt with some major issues involving the very premise of Subud and the Latihan, including whether to include the "belief in God" statement in openings. We were thoroughly blessed to have our dear Ibu Rahayu's guidance to us on this and many other matters that go to the heart of what Subud is and what surrender to God means.

Another issue was that of the common habit of doing "special Latihan" for members or issues such as world peace. Ibu's guidance reminded us that we cannot force our wishes on God, and therefore should not do Latihan with any kind of wish within us. Only surrender to God.

Now to the challenges. A persistent problem that has existed through several IH terms and continued through ours was the continuing conflict over the Subud community and Latihan hall in Amanacer.

Regarding helper work, in some countries it has been very evident that the behavior of

helpers can have a detrimental effect on the growth and development of Subud.

It will not be news to anyone that when there is disharmony in the helpers' dewan, the negativity has a ripple effect on the members. We knew the best chance to make our visits worthwhile, God willing, was to work with helpers, so that they could see how they could fulfill their responsibilities better. We know that a quick visit from IHs does not change anything in the long run if the local helpers are not able to function well in their roles when the visit is over.

Some countries have been isolated from the rest of the Subud world, particularly Cuba. For decades, the latihan has not been allowed to flourish and grow. Members could not visit each other much if they lived more than a few miles from each other. And yet Subud survived, despite the pressures of communism, poverty, spiritism, etc. But when we are separated from the mainstream of Subud, sometimes helpers lose track of the practice of latihan that Bapak brought to us, and they develop ways and habits of their own that seem out-of-place. It was not uncommon for us to go to Latihan (and not just in Cuba), and find there is no quiet period, or that helpers say prayers and incantations before or after the latihan, rather than simply “begin” and “finish,” helpers who mix with other practices, helpers who keep their eyes open, helpers who never receive anything at all.

One difficulty within Area three is caused at least in part by the geographical distances involved. To communicate between North America and South America on a regular basis is not easy. Phone conferences are plagued by interfering noise so that we have trouble understanding what each other is saying, thus it is hard for us to feel as connected as a dewan as we might like. Monetary constraints also impact this situation. Airfares from South America are significantly more expensive than those from North America. However, it is testing which tells us where we need to visit and who should do the visiting. Therefore some IH's from North America did get to travel in South America and vice versa.

We see for example that the Area Two IH's live relatively close to one another and are therefore able to stay in contact with each other, and even meet on a regular basis. Thus that dewan feels very connected and solid. In Area 3, we felt a bit fragmented. We hope that this communication situation can be improved upon by the next dewan.

On a brighter note, overall we feel that the Latihan is alive and well, despite reduced numbers of members in some countries and some contentious issues. The core members doing Latihan have deep sincerity, surrender and faith in God, and in most places we visited, we felt the Latihan strong and deep.

We were fortunate during our term to work very closely with the 2014 world congress organizing team in Puebla, chaired by Fernando Fatah. His and the team's sincerity and total dedication to organizing a beautiful world congress for their brothers and sisters was a joy to witness, support and participate in. We were truly blessed to be along for the ride!

Finally, we were blessed to be part of a World Subud Council consisting of some of the strongest and most devoted Subud members we have ever known, who made great sacrifices to serve Subud, and who we hope we were able to support in their often difficult work.

We are grateful to God and to our Subud brothers and sisters around the world for supporting us in our work, and hope we were able to support them in return. We sincerely ask your forgiveness for our human failings and the many mistakes we made, and we pray that all our brothers and sisters will be forever blessed!

With love and gratitude,

The Area 3 Dewan of International Helpers, 2010-2014:

Elaina Dodson, United States

Grace Hodgson, Canada

Reynaldo Mosquera, Colombia

Hamilton Schragen, U.S. and Canada

Manuel Urrejola, Chile

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