



SUBUD INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL ASSOCIATION
Nurturing Human Values Through Art, Culture, and Creativity

SICA 2010 – 1014: THE JOURNEY

When our term began at the Christchurch Congress, the organization of SICA was in disarray. We were being sued. We had no bank account, no office, no website, no network of SICA activists, and no national or international programs.

But . . . we had Ibu's blessings and Bapak's guidance and inspiration. We had a track record that went back to 1983 with many successful initiatives, events, and innovations to SICA's credit. And we had a hard-working, dedicated team to launch our new term: Susannah Rosenthal, Helena Casbolt, Rosetta Narvaez, Rosario Moir, Erica Sapir, and myself.

We also had what entrepreneurs call "fire in the belly" — passion and drive to make things work coupled with a deep commitment to Subud and the latihan. And we had that wonderful word we use so often in Subud: "Begin." So we began.

Almost immediately, the people suing SICA dropped the suit. Next we learned that we had money coming to us from the sale of PTS Widjoyo — from Subud members requesting that some of their returns go to SICA. What a blessing!

So we opened a bank account, set up an office, instituted procedures for meeting our fiduciary responsibilities as a nonprofit organization, revised and simplified our by-laws, and worked with the appropriate government agencies ensure that we were in good standing for our type of non-profit charitable organization and overall, put our house in order.

REFOCUSING SICA

We then held two think tank sessions with key board members and interested others to re-focus SICA prior to our first big meeting with the new WSC in Great Malvern. The Foahs in Atlanta, Georgia —hosted our first session. The second was in Lewes, UK hosted by the Horthys. We did latihan together, tested together, shared stories, receivings, ideas. We reviewed Bapak's vision and guidance for SICA as well as Ibu Rahayu's to plan for the future. Key points that emerged:

- The source of this culture is ourselves (Bapak)
- "Technology is also culture" (Bapak)
- SICA works "in public" (Ibu)

- It has to be alive and have “content” (Bapak and Ibu)
- The involvement of young people is key (Bapak and Ibu)
- Festival possibilities for next world congress

Initial goals:

- Restructure and refocus SICA to inspire and enable engagement, excitement, growth, and ACTION.
- Build a new SICA website that is both a resource and an inspiring showcase for SICA work.
- Set up cultural enterprises, beginning with a global online marketplace, and develop cultural entrepreneurs
- Develop mentors and support systems for initiatives and projects.

Our mission came from Ibu Rahayu's explanation of why SICA exists: to advance and celebrate activities that grow out of the development of the human soul.

LAUNCHING NEW PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

In 2011, thanks the design work of Marcus Bolt, and the tech work of Hassan and Farah Czwiertnia, our new SICA website went live: www.subud-sica.org. The site featured — and continues to feature — information, resources, news, event listings, and networking opportunities for members. It also includes guidance Bapak and Ibu have given over the years regarding the development of talent, art, culture, and the purposes of SICA; and it features stories of Subud members who discovered and developed their talents as a result of their Subud experience. We also set up secure online donations for SICA via Network for Good.

To expand our outreach to our community, we subsequently launched the SICA Update, an opt-in e-news publication, utilizing Constant Contact, a marketing and communication tool for businesses and nonprofits that tracks results and stores our growing database of subscribers. And we created a SICA Facebook page.

We concurrently set up a number of tools and services for SICA and Subud members, all of which could be accessible via the SICA website:

- A seed grant program — with guidelines and a formal application procedure (four grants awarded in 2011; six in 2012; six in 2013)
- A fiscal sponsorship program — with an accompanying manual to help sponsored projects set up their own bank account, manage a budget, create contracts, launch a marketing campaign, seek grants, etc. — tools to help launch individual and nonprofit start-up arts/cultural initiatives. (Uraidah Hassani’s The Women Worldwide Initiative is a SICA sponsored project.)
- A partnership with Fractured Atlas whereby Subud members could become FA Associate Membership (\$95/year value) and access FA's many benefits.

Fractured Atlas is the largest arts service organization in the USA. FA benefits include visa help for artists wishing to perform in the USA, free online courses in marketing and launching a creative enterprise, access to job bank and other services.

- SICA membership in Tech Soup's program for nonprofits that enables us to purchase highly discounted software. (Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office, Donor Management, etc.)
- SICA membership in Americans for the Arts to enable professional development for the Board including access to free seminars and best practices for serving a wide community of arts/cultural workers.

THE ARTS SERVICE ORGANIZATION MODEL

In the nonprofit world, our kind of organization, functions like an Arts Service Organization, or an ASO. So we use the ASO structure as our model and encourage national SICAs to consider working in the same fashion.

The government of Canada defines an ASO this way:

"A non-profit organization that furthers the interests of artists, creators, arts organizations and elements of the arts and cultural community. The organization's activities can include policy development, advocacy, provision of professional services, and production of collective projects."

The only difference is that SICA's brief embraces all fields of cultural endeavor as SICA is for those activities that arise from the development of our individual talents and gifts. This includes arts, humanities, science, technology, health, education, sports, etc. SICA is not just for the arts.

CAPACITY BUILDING

In 2012, midterm, thanks to a grant from MSF, SICA board members and national SICA chairs were able to meet at the America's Gathering in Vancouver to create a shared strategy for taking SICA to the next level of organizational, programmatic, and financial maturity.

Harvey Peters, Zone 5 Representative/WSC Director and Principal of Minerva Consulting UK, facilitated the meeting, and the results were excellent.

Key themes: partnerships and collaborations, creating joint ownership of programs, sharing best practices and core values, building institutional memory, and achieving continuity.

Critical to the growth of SICA is the formation of viable national SICA organizations or chapters (think Rotary International and its chapters) that can partner with SICA, secure public grant funding, and manage their own programs as viable cultural service organizations in their respective countries or zones. This area of our work will require continued efforts and a greater degree of understanding, support, and cooperation from national Subud organizations

We also addressed the kejiwaan side of SICA. The culture Bapak charged SICA to support is a culture that expresses one's inner self. Could a global "What is My Culture?" initiative that begins with the latihan, rather than testing, awaken a deeper experience of one's inner self, one's nature, one's gifts and talents?

POEMS FOR PEACE, A GLOBAL INITIATIVE

In 2012, we also launched Poems For Peace. Never before in SICA's history had SICA launched a global cultural initiative for the general public. In our maiden effort, Poems for Peace reached over 1,000,000 people worldwide.

Its success came from a shared focus, partnership, and collaboration. SICA partnered with national SICAs as well as with local institutions, poetry societies, and a global coalition of NGOs working with UK's nonprofit, Peace One Day. Our focus was celebrating the UN's International Day of Peace, September 21, through shared community action. SICA's action was sharing poetry, songs, and prayers for peace. Anyone and everyone could be involved.

SICA Poems for Peace events took place all around the world — in multiple cities and locations in the USA, UK, Germany, Canada, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, Ukraine, Moldova, Lithuania, and Russia.

We also hosted an international competition, professionally judged, with a \$500 prize, for an outstanding Poem for Peace. A non-Subud member won the prize, but USA Subud member, Devreaux Baker, won honorable mention. As a member of the Peace One Day coalition, we were also able to live stream their Peace Day Launch — a concert with Elton John — on our own SICA website on September 21.

This was the first time, since SICA's beginnings, that SICA worked together with national SICA organizations and Subud centers in Europe, Asia, South America, and North America on a single initiative — a global initiative. We of course repeated the event in 2013 and plan to do it again in 2014 — after the World Congress in Puebla.

Although we began the initiative in 2012, — as well as the concept of partnering with national SICAs — it was in 2013 that we were able to really see the fruits of such partnership and collaboration. This was especially evident in Zone 4. Beginning with an inner prayer for forgiveness and love, the Zone4Peace event in 2013 celebrated the

songs and poems of all the countries in their zone —in all their many languages and heritages — in a magically inclusive environment. A planetarium. We listened to that wonderful poetry while gazing at the stars we would have seen over Java the night Bapak was born.

That Latifah could travel to Zone4 and participate in their gathering and their Zone4Peace event — travel made possible by a generous grant from the Guerrand Foundation for Peace — also helped lay the foundation for a rebirth of SICA in Germany — and a new respect among all the countries in Zone 4 for the potential of SICA to be a tool for positive change in the world — for bringing the content of the latihan out into the world and nurturing the development of real human values

The Zone4 experience also inspired the creation of toolkits in English, Spanish, French, and Italian to help our national SICA partners and local Subud groups join us in celebrating International Peace Day by hosting their own Poems for Peace events in their communities. We again reached over a million people globally with our activities — and we were also honored with a proclamation from the Mayor of Austin here in Texas. But more important, we all worked together. All over the world. Working together like this is how SICA can really make a difference in the world.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

By 2013 the make up of our Board of Directors had changed since Christchurch. Rosetta Narvaez had come on board as Treasurer. Felix Juan Prieto, Halimah Polk, and Sebastian Flynn had become Directors. Susannah Rosenthal and Helena Casbolt had stepped down. When Susannah left, Felix Juan Prieto became Vice Chair. In early 2014, Ismanah Schulze-Vorberg also joined the board. Latifah Taormina, Rosario Moir, and Erica Sapir remained on the Board. Luqman Pensseney and Maxwell Fraval, as WSA Chair and WSA Executive Chair, also served on the Board ex-officio.

Rosetta, the Market Risk Manager for Bank of Hawaii, had served as Committee Councilor for Subud USA, had been active with SES, and had chaired SICA USA and served on the SICA Board during Faustine Sfeir's term as Chair. Felix, a Senior Public Health Educator at Parkland Hospital in Dallas and a Manager with the city's Environmental Health and Human Services Department, is also a local helper and is originally from Colombia. Halimah has a PhD in Education, is an educational consultant and specialist in grants, program development, and evaluations. Sebastian, a professional festival and events manager, is the Senior Manager for Events and Communications at Brisbane's Multicultural Development Association (MDA Pty Ltd.) having previously served as the Managing Director for the Australian National Folk Festival for the past several years. Sebastian also served as the former chair of SICA Australia. Ismanah is a multi-lingual professional fine arts photographer whose work is featured in galleries around the world. She is also the Chair of Subud Germany

SICA SUMMIT

Thanks to a grant from MSF, the Board and other stakeholders met at Wisma Subud in March 2014 to create a strategic plan for the next term. We looked at our strengths and weaknesses as well as our opportunities and threats in the future.

One of the key strategies to emerge was to focus more energy on establishing projects and initiatives such as Poems for Peace as a basis for growing SICA. We all agreed the Poems for Peace initiative was a major breakthrough for SICA. Here was an initiative that was headquartered in one part of the world that could be shared and presented — in accordance with one's own nature, language, and culture — in all manner of communities and countries all over the world. Could this not set the stage for the future? A future that is built around shared projects, each of which has its home base in a single area, or zone, or country.

We felt developing key projects or initiatives that could be headquartered in different Areas, Zones, Countries, could be a much more organic way to grow lively and engaging hubs of collaborative SICA activity that could lead to ever more hubs of collaborative SICA activity. All this time, SICA has relied on national Subud groups choosing someone to be a SICA coordinator or rep to grow. But often a person chosen for such a job in this way is then left alone with an undefined task and little guidance or assistance to go forward. With the exception of those countries that have their own legal, national SICA organization, this has not proved to be the most useful way to grow SICA.

Part of our challenge is that we must not only work within Subud, but also outside Subud in the world. We must also work in the liminal space between Subud and the world. It's that liminal space — the threshold between the two worlds — that often offers the most creative options for innovation and growth.

We therefore need to work closely with and collaborate with all the various parts of our Subud community — as well as the professional fields of endeavor that align with our gifts and talents. That means working more closely with our helpers, with representatives of our sister affiliates, with youth and special interest groups in Subud. At the same time, we must have the practical, real-world experience to act on our guidance. As people become aware of their skills and talents, they will want to network with others in their field. That could mean business, human development, education, health, science, technology, agriculture, and the arts. SICA includes for ALL fields of human endeavor.

As Richard Engels put it in 1984 at the end of SICA's first year, "SICA may become the connecting focus stimulating and assisting the initiatives which arise from within the members . . . a platform for cultural projects and enterprises and such guided activities which counterbalance the working of the destructive forces in the world."

We subsequently had the unexpected blessing of a meeting with and talk by Ibu Rahayu who confirmed the breadth and inclusiveness of our work.

CONGRESS

And now congress is upon us. We have prepared a festival of art, culture, and creativity that we hope will engage and inspire you to become more active with SICA and play a role in its future.

We came to Puebla in January of 2013 to get a feel of where we would be doing things, facilities that might be available, and to get to know our hosts a little better. What I remember most is that in every latihan we did, we all had such a strong feeling of Bapak.

We dedicate our work to Bapak, with love.

Latifah Taormina
Chair, Subud International Cultural Association
2010 - 2014