

Zone 6 ACTIVITY REPORT (FRENCH SPEAKING AFRICA)

COVERING THE LAST FOUR YEARS

The Zone 6 covers four operational countries among which: Congo/Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Angola and Benin, with a total of 183 members: 138 men and 45 women with 25 male helpers and 14 female helpers.

To my knowledge, Algeria and Cameroon never confirm their legal status.

As members of Subud and of the World Subud Council, I understand my role as to foster the practice of the latihan kejiwaan in the best possible conditions (latihan halls, access to information and to Subud literature, support visits to members in their Subud life....). Consequently, I set myself the following mission, as soon as I was appointed Zonal Rep on January 13th 2010:

- Record the concerns of the Chair persons of countries in the zone, and to support them in organizing and developing Subud in their countries;
- To complement and support the International Helpers and National Committees so that the latter become actually participative.
- To encourage useful activities between the countries of the Zone, by making communication within the zone easier and by fostering south-south cooperation in commerce and the creation of small businesses.

A) MISCELLANEOUS TRAVELS

1. CONGO/BRAZZA

During my mandate, I completed three visits: the first on September 10th 2010: The Brazza group, the village of Kintelé 2km north as well as the Mouyondzi district 240km South-East of Brazzaville for a duration of one week, together with the former International Helper (DRC) and the local Kedjiwaan Councillor.

The second time on October 11th 2013, alone, for a week-end in Brazzaville.

The third time was a visit to Brazzaville on Feb 14th and 15th 2014, together with the WSA Chairman and an interpreter from DRC.

This country counts about 37 registered members (3 years ago): 28 men and 9 women with 5 male helpers and 3 female helpers.

After his nomination at the 2010 National Congress, the Chairman moved to about 500km from the capital city for professional reasons, leaving the interim to a member who did not complete this duty properly, hence a growing inertia that requires the organisation of a new nomination by National Congress.

The National Committee is still expecting to be paid by the Government for the requisition of its land in Kintelé, for an estimated value of 5283\$. This land had been acquired with a part of a property sale, this property had been paid by the 7547\$ reimbursement of the travel expenses for the missed travel of the Congo youth to the World Congress 2005. Renting a studio for the latihan as well as a small space for running a commercial activity become a priority for the group so as to cover some running costs and fees.

A few small enterprises have been created by Subud members.

Receiving Subud literature and support to the local helpers from DRC helpers who are a little more experienced would be really helpful for the Congo Brazzaville group.

2. DRC

Several times on my own, and twice with the two local Kejiwaan Councillors, I visited the groups, Subud houses and centers, the social works and enterprises of members in the capital city and the inland regions.

The number of registered members is 153 among whom 128 are active (99 men and 29 women) with 18 male helpers and 9 female helpers.

Because of its leading status in Subud Africa, DRC had not benefited for many years of the support that was formerly provided by WSA: frequent communication and visits of international helpers, Subud literature and audio-visual materials (video projector, CDs and tapes), financing a budget for national helpers and committee, travels of national helpers and national committee members.

These favours were welcome as some local realities have to be considered even though the whole world is in deep change.

The good will of members will be firmly established only when satisfying their material needs in balance with the practice of the latihan.

a) Kedjiwaan

Very few visits. Even the communication with the International Helpers is nearly non-existent.

For lack of an autonomous budget, the National Helpers could not complete their job properly. Sometimes, they even travel at their own expenses from the inland region where they live to participate in the general latihan in Kinshasa.

The fact that the Kejiwaan Councillors cannot attend to the next World Congress in Mexico, neither to the previous one is rather disheartening to the members.

According to the afore mentioned, very few openings have taken place. One can even say that lethargy has appeared.

b) Subud Houses and Center

There are two houses in DRC: the first in Kinshasa, the other in Matadi, as well as a 61ha Center in Kingantoko, 12km from the city center with a large building of 200m² that is mainly used for the latihan and one of 30m² used as a community Health Center for SD/DRC. These buildings have been acquired thanks to loans from MSF and SDIAA.

The Kinshasa Subud house is an unfinished building: there are only one toilet and curtains. No windows, no water or electricity. It is all the same used for latihan is the part that is saved for them.

It is of the utmost priority to renegotiate the Subud DRC/ MSF/WSA partnership to finish the building works.

The Matadi house needs some refurbishing works. Nevertheless, the MSF debt is progressively paid back thanks to the rents and the monthly subscriptions of members.

In the other Subud DRC groups, latihan are held in the members' homes in conditions that can often be eccentric.

a. Wings activities

1° Susila Dharma

As regards the SD/DRC activities and the SDIA investment into starting CSCOM, it must be said that they have clearly generated positive energies: three CSCOM are running out of the four planned up to 2015. They may lack professionalism in the daily management of some activities.

Some former Health Centers still benefit from the support of Susila Dharma. The same for the support to three primary schools that were started by members, as well as the support to a project of a transit house for unemployed youth in Inkisi.

For the last three years until rather recently, the SD/DRC management as an NGO was somewhat opaque. As there was no report to the Subud National Chair, it created a negative situation that reduced the National Chair authority on its wing with all the consequences: the decision to stop testing for the SD/DRC NGO and the wish to receive a part of the local revenues.

I therefore recommend that the CSCOM management should be put in the open so as to be explained how to manage SD activities on the national level compared to the international level. Hence, the various options could be clarified.

2° Services to Subud Enterprises (SES)

A lot of new opportunities have arisen for multinational companies and expats from the new and quite flexible National Code for Investment. Thus, Subud/DRC issues an invitation to all investors to explore the country. This would be a way to revitalise the national association, so that it helps WSA in return.

The DRC entrepreneurs, who have little experience in management, are in support of a North South cooperation frame to correct the mistakes that have been formerly done. They think it would be useful to set up an International Fund to support various initiatives as well as re-energise existing companies and start new ones.

Two small enterprises of members from the two Kinshasa groups have been funded as an experiment by WSA: 450\$ for the cart business and 680\$ for honey production. They have been in operation for one year.

The first loan (286.50\$) was paid back in January 2014. The first honey collection will take place in June 2014.

The idea is that once the capital is paid back, it is used to fund new local small enterprises or to possibly develop existing ones upon request.

Both enterprises suffered from lack of professionalism in their management and I hope that they will be able to correct this in the future in order to comply with their commitment to WSA.

3° Care and Support

As far as possible, I support the existence and use of the WSA Care Support fund for members in need. Similarly for the Care Support Education Fund for the schooling of children that helps members in need to face their schooling charges. These two funds have had a very positive impact on families and local population.

4° SICA and Subud Youth

For the last couple of years, a slowdown may be felt in these areas for lack of competent facilitators. It must be said that it may be caused by some misunderstanding and sensitivities.

It may be useful to put this situation right as youth is our future and culture sweetens the mind.

3. ANGOLA

Planned trips have been cancelled twice: the first in 2012 for lack of a legal invitation and the second in 2013: the invitation was received only one week before I had to get back to work.

According to unreliable information, there are 9 members in Angola, 6 men and 3 women, with one male helper and one female helper.

The group has been suffering a deep crisis for nearly fifteen years. This has generated a split with two separated groups that are quite distant from each other (from a geographic and relationship point of view). There were many unsuccessful attempts of mediation, the latest one in 2012 by the International Helpers. They had advised them to move into separate groups, with a monthly common gathering for general latihan. Since then, on the contrary, the groups did not come closer.

I recommend that the two groups try a new meeting that would be held by neutral Subud members in order to get to a consensus for appointing a National Chair.

The needs for Subud literature in French and Portuguese are high. The same for enterprises in fields like bakery and fishing.

4. BENIN

The only trip that was planned in 2012 had to be cancelled due to health condition and end of vacation.

There is only one group in this country, in the capital city: Cotonou. There are 9 members (5 men, 4 women) with one male helper and one female helper.

For many years since it started, this group has never benefited from a visit to reinforce its Subud spiritual capacity. There is no place for the regular practice of the latihan. The Subud literature as well as support from the WSA wings is much needed.

B) PROBLEMS FACED

1. During the first years of my term in office, no contribution or opinion whatsoever were received from the various Group chairs regarding the Zone concerns or various WSC fields. My communications by mail, SMS or phone calls never got any positive feedback of any kind.
2. The fact that I did not master the English language, despite efforts from local bodies or the WSC office reduced my ability to participate and contribute to the various debates, even on topics that were important to the Association.
3. Our many missed travels, most of the time for fanciful reasons, despite all the arrangements made by the WSA office undermined my morale, as it prevented all the Zone countries to keep being informed.

C) RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reinforce the International Helpers travels and encourage the official establishment of Groups in countries in crisis. Vote a budget to help the local helpers visit the groups.
2. Support the shipment of Subud literature and audiovisual supports (video-projector, CDs, tapes)
3. Encourage the MSF and WSA efforts so as to complete the Subud houses that are currently being built and start new ones. Efforts have to be made by the beneficiaries to pay the agreed debt back.
4. Acknowledge the local realities wherever Subud is growing so as to satisfy the members in their endeavour to balance the practice of the latihan with their material needs.
5. Make explicit the CSCOM management in order to make it clear to the people who benefit from it. More importantly, explain to Subud members how to manage their group and activities independently from the National executive as regards international activities such as SDIA.
6. Invite potential investors to explore African countries that provide various opportunities so as to re-energise the local associations which, in return, will be able to support WSA.
7. Create a North-South consultation framework for entrepreneurs so as to correct the causes of former failures, as well as an international fund to support initiatives, the growth of existing enterprises and the start of new ones.
8. Support the operations of the Fund for Help and Solidarity to Subud members who are in need as well as the Fund for Schooling, for the children of members in need.
9. Despite the efforts made by the WSC executive to compensate our lack of knowledge of the English language, other additional means would be welcome.

RIDA LIOBO LOOTE
ZONE 6 REPRESENTATIVE
Kinshasa 06/06/2014