

Amanacer - Holy week: a team approach, fresh perspectives on inner/outer realities: Luke Pensenev, WSA Chair, April 2013

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Subud Colombia had informed the WSA & MSF that there would be a Subud Colombia national congress & new development planning meetings at Amanacer March 27th-31st over the Easter period.

We all felt that the goal of this gathering would be a) for Subud Colombia to meet as an organization to review its rejuvenation since the difficulties of 2009-11; b) to review the progress made on restructuring Amanacer in terms of its relationship to Subud Colombia, MSF & WSA as well as the international organization of Subud in general.

The focus was clearly to seek to bring together all of the stakeholders supporting both Amanacer & Subud Colombia in their linked progress towards a new sustainable way of redressing past legal & financial issues as well as outlining a new operating & development approach..

An ambitious agenda for us all!

Initially both Rayner Sutherland as MSF' executive director & I felt unable to attend because of our other obligations..

But testing together in Vancouver, as well as follow up testing with IHs etc. indicated that to not attend would render this important gathering around the future of both a national as well as a major international centre, incomplete. The difference was between, good & the unexpected – possibly a great blessing & outcome to our shared intentions.

The WSA, MSF & the World Subud Council in general (WSA, MSF, wings, Zones & IHs) have all felt how crucial it is for the international as well as national centres to thrive as significant evidence of Subud at work in the world.. But their supporting organizations, both national & international need to be solid, well-structured.

So we journeyed to Colombia with renewed optimism. Since it has been such a long & difficult journey bringing both Amanacer & Subud Colombia back to a sense of stability & renewed prospects for healthy growth.. Rayner & I set out from Vancouver together, Elias, WSA deputy chair from Brazil, Mauricio as Zone 9 Rep. from Chile there even though Rodrigo Zone 8 rep. based in Venezuela, couldn't attend. Also Daniela Urutia & Reynaldo Mosquera IHs from Cali, Colombia. We all set out to join Luqman Rivera, chair of Subud Colombia & his national dewan, 9 of 11 group chairs making up the Subud Colombia national council & the residents of Amanacer led by their chair, Sachlan Bustillo. Also the MSF Rep. for Colombia, Jorge Bustillo to meet along with 70+ other members during Holy Week in Amanacer.

After some flight delays en route, Elias, Rayner & I arrived March 26th, Mauricio, Daniela, Reynaldo & Jorge following the next day.

Day 1:

On the first day Elias (also responsible for supporting Subud centres development) & I set out for a walkabout through Amanacer with Sachlan as our guide.. Having left the now cleaned up hosteria (hostel) on the first leg of our circuit past the row houses facing across the beautiful valley to the cordilleras.. we stopped to say hello to Amanacer's gran madre – Salamah Bustillo matriarch to 72 Bustilos! In doing so we ended up on her porch & a group of 10-12 members gathered spontaneously to talk about the realities of day-to-day living in Amanacer. This was the first of 6-7 spontaneous 'follow our feelings' meetings with the different stakeholders..! Very effective in hearing member's ideas & concerns.

This meeting indicated that the community is now stronger & ready to shoulder more of its responsibilities again after the 2009-11 hiatus.. The focus (given the absence of maintenance funds..) is on maintaining Amanacer based on different neighbourhoods, each looked after by their residents.. Then we said our goodbyes & walked to the now disused Semigitas school formerly sponsored by SDIA as a junior school in need of a modest maintenance program to sustain it until its new use is identified.. We then crossed onto the MSF land – a soccer pitch & sometime pineapple plantation beside the still magnificent Gran Salon/latihan hall/meeting rooms that many recall from '93 World Congress.

Many repairs have been made so that it can be better sustained now as a conference centre/tourist centre-oriented business once more. Then we stopped off at Muchtar's house to be greeted by Masuri new liaison for Muchtar's Indigenous Peoples outreach project in the Quindio district around Amanacer. Muchtar has turned his home over as a library & meeting centre dedicated to Bapak.. Finally we looked at the remnants of the workshops built for projects following the '93 congress – one still in good order almost ready for a new use, the other really dilapidated now.. We also looked at land that may become available for development adjacent to the Amanacer community lands owned by Subud Colombia & MSF.

We concluded a full first day with an initial orientation meeting with Subud Colombia at which we were updated on the restructured Fondation Amanacer (FA), the renewed interaction with the 11 groups of Subud Colombia, the taxes, legal & partnership challenges facing SC, MSF & Amanacer community.

Day 2:

We began with a latihan involving SC members & the international team. Chair Luqman Rivera opened the congress with a comprehensive review of the progress to date. I followed as WSA chair touching on the presence of the international support/advisory team & the commitment to support the process of rejuvenating Amanacer as both a national & international centre.. Then we had a WSA (Luke, Elias & Mauricio) meeting with Jorge Bustillo on the legal & tax situation of the Gran Salon & surrounding land owned by MSF. In short Jorge has assisted MSF in defining the true area of the MSF lands (previously miscalculated by municipal surveys), the tax arrears situation & the resulting cadastral survey update.. Ongoing legal uncertainties/disputes were addressed & are being resolved gradually.

The hosteria & restaurant owned by Subud investors are clearly ready for the next stage of reorganization. There is a new development plan for Amanacer that includes it becoming involved in

Quindio district eco-tourism activities that are generally supported in the municipality's development plan. It was noted that unemployment remains high in the Subud community so that new projects/enterprises are now essential & not an option..

Day 3:

We began with the latihan again & the first spontaneous meeting that arose was with a local surveyor engineer Subud resident – Rafael, who presented us with an outline proposal concerning new land titles for residents. This is being discussed with SC. We then had our second more in depth meeting as the international team with SC dewan. We were increasingly realizing that it was as if we were being presented with pieces of the complex jigsaw puzzle that is renewing Amanacer alongside the rejuvenation of SC.. We were already seeing parallels with challenges faced by the two (2) other international centres: Rungan Sari & Wisma Subud in Indonesia.. i.e. residents + development + national organization interaction/partnerships etc. Most significantly, we felt deeply the significance of ALL being present, all represented in this endeavour to restore, rebuild, rejuvenate Amanacer..& Subud Colombia..

The analogy with the doctor: first, save the patient (crisis time 2011); then do no harm (2011-now); then develop a new healthy regimen (2013-); build new strength/direction (2013-); then repeat steps as necessary! – this analogue was not lost on us as our team that grew closer & closer over the 5 days working together.

Many legal & financial aspects have needed attention after years of neglect: taxes; the status of SC & Fondation Amanacer (FA), land titles..connecting Amanacer with new local municipal land development planning requirements, etc. The SC team & MSF Rep. have been working hard to meet new requirements..

FA, supported by ICDP/Oliverio now works in (9) district communities within the regional '0-future' childhood development program, sponsored by the government (GoC)/president of Colombia. However FA runs at a loss given slow GoC repayment policies & the need for program development. Nevertheless SC as FA' primary sponsor is determined that this program not die out or risk FA becoming only a shell..

In viewing the plans of Amanacer alongside the regional development plans, it is clear that land subdivision for redevelopment, as well as tourism facilities & new infrastructure in Amanacer are possible under the new regional plan. So that SC will work closely with municipal/regional planning authorities towards a new Amanacer development plan.

Day 4:

Began with latihan then a (fairly!) spontaneous meeting regarding the eco-tourism development proposals Jorge has developed. The key to the success of these proposed developments is clearly partnerships with SC, the residents & investors, as well as MSF & the international organization - where needed.

We ended the day with a latihan & testing session with SC, FA reps & some Amanacer residents regarding: 'how was Amanacer in '93 for the Congress?'; 'how was it during the great difficulties of

2010 (2) years ago?'; 'how is it now?'; 'how would God have Amanacer be?'; 'what is the community's role in Amanacer?'; 'what is the international organization's role?'; what is Subud Colombia's role?'; An extraordinary evolution from bursting enthusiasm, to very grim times to great new hope again..

We then had a highly interactive, enthusiastic meeting with 20-30 of the youth gathered from Subud Amanacer, Cali, Popayan & Medijjin.. groups..;

The stand out topic for these young members was World Congress 2014 in Puebla! Great excitement.. 'how can we be helped to attend?; 'what projects can we do to raise money to travel/stay?; 'would there be a YESQuest/HumanForce or other camp before/during Congress?; 'what enterprises would work in Puebla?; etc. etc..

We had a great discussion outlining the joint funding for the International Youth Travel as per 2010 Congress. We discussed small groups of youth having food stands/retail concessions on the terrace or in the MarketPlace Courtyard at the Puebla Convention Centre.. We asked them to state how many would like to attend, how much they would fundraise towards attending, how many could be volunteers during Congress? Also, that it may be possible to have a preliminary youth camp at Usaha Mulia Abadi near Puebla in late July 2014.. So that the youth can come together before The Congress begins..

A vitally important & exciting exchange of goals, visions, practicalities! The future of Subud in Colombia -

Day 5:

Latihan began the day as usual.. we were beginning to feel the pace of so many meetings & late night gatherings.. At breakfast we initially decided to leave by 12 noon.. But for me it became every important to use the final day to really understand what Amanacer's condition is & to record what is needed now.. So..one more 'walkabout..'!

This final walkabout looked again, at what we had first seen! Once again having left the hosteria area we picked up Sachlan again to be our guide as we had a final tour.. Semigitas school definitely needs say US \$100-250 a month to maintain its currently OK condition. Then we looked in more detail at the workshops – 250m² of workrooms, an access road; storage yard + a toilets block + former hydro generating plant.. all in OK condition. But again needing \$250/month or so to sustain roofs, be kept clean etc. Our hope (Elias, Sachlan & Luke) is that Muchtar's Indigenous People's outreach project can make use of the buildings for the fabrication of sustainable hardwoods-based construction of panels & prefabricated structures. Otherwise the buildings could be rented out to local businesses or new Subud projects. We then had a final look at the (7) meeting rooms/workshops encircling the Gran Salon. Already there are SC/FA offices, an art gallery, a small nightclub! & youth centre-room making semi-temporary use of these spaces.. These need to become more established projects over time.

We also hope that the residents now will work with Muchtar & SC to form a new partnership to make this possible.

Then one of the most helpful spontaneous meetings!

Local non-Subud resident Jorge popped up 2-3 times during the congress/meetings. As a successful friendly, very pragmatic local businessman, he is both very warmly disposed towards Subud & Amanacer as well as concerned that Amanacer is not being well maintained & fulfilling it's full

development potential..! i.e. acting somewhat as a local 'conscience' for the community & Subud Colombia..!

He is willing to assist SC, MSF Subud Amanacer to revitalize the centre.. Immediately we all realized (since we were standing beside the Gran Salon/on MSF land) that a small, simple pilot project like a Community Garden on the MSF land could unite & link residents. MSF & SC in a new example of how to collaborate. Jorge seemed to us like a friendly local angel-advisor – who also pointed out the weaknesses that need to be addressed!

A first step in the need for new projects to employ & sustain the community. To provide cash flow to residents as well as SC & MSF to support FA, the maintenance & initial development of the community..again..

This raised the prospect of new roles for leaders within the Amanacer community.. These were discussed in more detail later.

After our enlightenment walk (!) we had a final sharing circle with all stakeholders: SC; residents; IHS; WSA; MSF in the small latihan hall. We reported on these insights & proposals. All met with solid support as a type of final summation of our work together –

With this final sharing & a renewed sense of potential based on partnerships we gathered for our goodbyes. I left for a Cali group visit with Daniela & Mahrus. Reynaldo back to Cali.

Mauricio, Elias & Rayner stayed for another 1-2 days to follow up on the partnership discussions & to examine how MSF could play a supporting role towards the eventual handover of management of the gran salon to SC.. Once a fully developed management/operations plan & full repairs/maintenance status has been accepted by MSF from SC & the residents. WSA will support this process vi Elias' liaison with SC & the community..

Day 6:

Nearly 70 members from Cali group + nearby daughter groups gathered for latihan, a selamtan & to welcome me. We had latihan, outlined our perspective on the current situation in Colombia/Amanacer. How we need to face Almighty God in our working & worship together. Then a magnificent pot-luck supper followed by But first: a comment I felt to offer to the members that we need to be able to be quiet not in preparation for latihan time, but also more immediately in our daily lives so that we can face difficulties in the moment – i.e. not to only be able to be quiet after 5-10 minutes!

Then testing: 'How is when we face Almighty God absolutely with our whole being?'; 'what is the potential of Subud Cali to enact Bapak's hopes for us in the area of projects & enterprises?'; 'what are our obstacles to achieving this?'; 'what helps us to overcome these obstacles?'; finally 'may we receive a latihan that heals us both inwardly & outwardly of all mistakes, hurts & difficulties'. Tests that I have shared everywhere I have travelled.

Subud Cali looked after me so wonderfully – always generous & kind. I spent a 'recovery day' with Daniela, her son & Muchsin (FA Rep.now). And so the 6-day international support mission for SC & Amanacer ended. Elias, Rayner & Mauricio had spent these last days following up with

Sachlan/residents, Luqman/SC & Jorge/legal agreements. Luqman with MSF' assistance was able to finally pay back taxes owed to the municipality for Amanacer/MSF land.

In summary – an extraordinary lesson in collaboration. Of harmony of purpose – despite still lingering obstacles, difficulties in some key relationships & taxes owed/land titles needing new status for residents.. We worked spontaneously. Came together spontaneously around only one or two formal meetings. Achieved so much moiré in this way..

We made our intention to work together & worked hard to move the situation to the next development/operational phase. Despite these outstanding difficulties – the scales feel to have tipped in favour of a new development phase. We shall now see if this work bears fruit.

God willing, with new partnerships, planning, hard work & putting aside self interest where possible!

Luke

WSA/WSC Chair 2010-14