

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE 2010 WORLD CONGRESS

- It is widely agreed that the Christchurch Congress was most enjoyable, successful, and well organized.
- However, are there specific areas that can be further improved for Puebla in 2014?
- The following comments, perceptions and recommendations were contributed by Subud members from all over the world. Many were suggested by more than one person. On some there were conflicting views! I hope that I have included all comments and suggestions received to date. They are listed here, in no particular order. Some were condensed to fit into this format.
- Many thanks to everyone who provided feedback.
- Please remember that these are the perceptions and recommendations of many who attended the Congress in Christchurch. There may be a number of practical, economic and organizational barriers or restrictions that they were not aware of, but they are suggested from the perspective of an attendee at the Congress.
- They are not provided as a criticism of the organization in Christchurch, but as respectful and constructive feedback as to how we might be able to build on the successes in New Zealand.

**What worked well in Christchurch?
What didn't work well in Christchurch?**

How could we do it better in the future?

- **Plenary & WSA Sessions**

The Kejiwaan Day for delegates was a very good start for the delegates' work.

Plenary sessions went better than past congresses. Maybe we chose to surrender our desire to be right and to win all the time!

Opening & Closing Ceremonies worked very well.

Arrangement of the program with delegates' meetings in the morning, then official working parties and Zone meetings in the afternoon was a really good idea.

Having a stage for presenters and the rest in a darkened auditorium with theatre seating separates people and emphasizes hierarchy in a potentially divisive manner.

Delegates could sit together in a large circle (like United Nations?), possibly with national chair & C.C. in front, supported by K.C.s behind them, so that they can see who is speaking and make it easier to get into an exchange. This will require an adequate PA system for good communication and simultaneous translations.

Counter comment: Subud is not the United Nations!

Garrett Thomson did a good job in keeping the Business Congress running and facilitating the overall flow of dialogue, although opening part of agenda was a bit slow and confusing.

Preparations before Congress were good, allowing many delegates to come well prepared. After the first two days, most delegates became quite familiar with the procedure.

Some delegates did not understand or fulfill their commitments during the plenary sessions.

Accept the reality that some delegates do not come well prepared. In countries where the organization is not so strong and members do not have much international experience, it is very difficult to discuss topics and come to a conclusion.

My impression was that there was not much interaction between the country groups.

Some delegates felt overwhelmed by the number of business meetings.

Delegates could arrive a day early and meet together, perhaps have an ice-breaker social event and a business meeting to identify delegates, go over procedures, discuss how voting will be handled and other logistics. (eg. The Anglo-American way of proposing and seconding is not common in Germany - and quite irritating at first!)

Endeavour to better explain the responsibilities of the delegates prior to, at the beginning of, and during the Congress.

Provide delegate's agenda 6 to 12 months in advance of the Congress, to allow time for better preparation in the individual counties and at the zonal level.

Therefore, we need to have more time to explain and discuss before it comes to voting. This is difficult to organize, but necessary to include everyone in the decision-making.

Allow delegates more free time, kejiwaan time, time to connect with Wing presentations etc. during the business part of Congress.

Take more care of the "essence?"

Remove the need for delegates and allow all people to participate in whatever they wish. Although everything in Subud might be about something else, delegate meetings arguably produce nothing tangible of value.

Delegates were not clearly identified at the plenary sessions.

Votes were not clearly counted.

For the most part, Garrett and Osanna allowed plenty of time for discussion to continue from the floor until countries were sufficiently satisfied to allow the majority to carry the motion. Consensus and harmony appeared to be achieved.

Some of the formal proposals that had been thoroughly prepared and submitted by National Committees and Boards prior to the Congress were almost lost, due to the presentation of newly introduced proposals from the Working Parties, some of which were not well thought out.

It was good that most international officers were appointed in the first half of the Congress, so that there was time to hand over the business and learn from their predecessors.

Appointment of officers was sometimes unclear.

Some confusion/rush at end with recommendations from Working Parties.

Some official reporting was boring!

Very little in Subud media on the accomplishments of the past WSA/ISC.

Identify each delegation with their flag, name of their country and formal voting card (with country's name on it). Include delegate's function on their nametags to make contact with other delegates easier.

Have someone who is responsible for clearly supporting/assisting the main Chair/Facilitator with the voting process.

Better explanation to the delegates of what consensus means and the voting process to be used for resolutions and the selection of officers - particularly for non-English speaking delegates.

Allow more time for questions, concerns, disagreements, clarification about the voting process and delegations to discuss the proposals before voting, especially for those whose mother tongue is not English.

Newly introduced proposals should be second on the agenda, not first.

Better explanation of the importance and responsibilities of each role.
Better explanation of the selection process to be followed.
Clarification as to the role of the International Helpers in the process.
Be open to some flexibility/changes, as suggested by previous experience.

Improved closure/structure. Clarify "end product" and "what happens now?"

Focus on celebrating what has been achieved. Use video, interactive presentations etc.

Suggest clear, concise reporting on "directives" given at Innsbruck (previous World Congress), compared with accomplishments to date.

<p>Overall Garrett did a good job facilitating the Plenary Sessions. However weigh the benefits versus conflict/stress when Congress Chair is also WSA Executive Chair.</p> <p>Some delegates had never heard of Committee Councillors! More difficult to focus having C.C & National Chair.</p> <p>Good presentations from the countries submitting bids to host the 2014 World Congress. Good decision to disallow presentation from Indonesia, as they had enough time prior to the Congress to prepare and submit an application.</p> <p>Some people on the stage and speaking from the audience assumed we knew who they were.</p> <p>Some people appeared "rushed" on the stage.</p> <p>If we had all been more punctual, we would have had more time to discuss in the plenary sessions and would not have been under constant time pressure!</p> <p>Lessons learned?</p>	<p>Appoint a specific Congress Chair (+ support team) for Plenary Sessions - not WSA or WSA Executive Chair. He or she could start working with the WSA Executive prior to the Congress.</p> <p>Is it better to have just one non-kejiwaan delegate per country?</p> <p>If a country does not meet the minimal criteria, even after revisions and resubmitting, then its proposal should be withdrawn/rejected prior to the Plenary Session.</p> <p>Ensure that everyone introduces themselves, or is introduced to the audience.</p> <p>Give each other time and space.</p> <p>No idea how to improve this!!</p> <p>There needs to be an opportunity at the end of the agenda for delegates to comment on how the process worked for the business part of Congress and to suggest improvements for the future.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congress Administration <p>A warm and individual welcome at Caledonian Hall, especially by the young staff.</p> <p>The Congress Organizing Team and Congress were well organized and the Congress flowed in a good way. The administration was largely invisible to most attendees, running silently and smoothly.</p> <p>From a delegate and member's perspective, given the numbers and different cultures involved, most areas appeared to work well.</p> <p>We need to make it easier for more youth to attend Congress. As well as youth, there are an increasing number of pensioners (and others) who find it difficult to afford World Congress.</p>	<p>Ask Marianne Kay to write a clear report (as soon as possible, so she doesn't forget) explaining the reality of our needs and what she recommends for the future.</p> <p>Involve the Wings more in taking on the responsibility for organizing specific aspects of the Congress eg. SICA for the entertainment.</p> <p>What I believe should have been done was to make the reduced fee available to students of any age, pensioners without other income and those on low income for other reasons. We are doing this for the Z4 meeting. We</p>

<p>Continuing problem of some Subud members thinking they can attend without registering (300?)!!</p> <p>The high cost of registration excluded many from attending.</p> <p>The high commissions asked of vendors led to attempts at circumvention of the official vendor area and to dishonest trading.</p> <p>Criticism of \$100/day registration fee for those who hadn't pre-registered and were required to complete very detailed form.</p> <p>Difficult to make arrangements for meet people vs. others felt that Subud synchronicity meant that they found the people they were meant to find!</p> <p>Problems with the web site, particularly for on-line registrations.</p>	<p>are allowing people to choose the reduced fee themselves, only stating the reason why. We are putting people on trust not to opt for this unless it is impossible for them to pay the full fee. We could be skeptical about the wisdom of this, but can the result be worse than having about 1 in 6 paying nothing at all? If some of them had paid half price that would have been better. For World Congress it might be necessary to ask for proof of status (student, pensioner, etc) via national committees who can actually read the documents, or who know the people, if it is felt that trusting people is a step too far.</p> <p>The fact that there were so many 'freeloaders' who didn't register, suggests that the policy needs radically revising. If we adopt a formula that is 'objective' and strict we also need to be strict in controlling it and generally we are not and don't like to be. Perhaps we have to 'bite the bullet' and have more controls/security in place. Otherwise we can take the view that either we find volunteers willing to do policing, or we calculate the cost of paying for venue staff to do it (much easier) and see if it is really worth it. If neither of these, then we just swallow hard and accept that these people will always exist.</p> <p>Rethink fundamentally how World Congresses are organized with the view to meeting the real needs of the members at very low cost. Every Congress takes in millions and it is all gone!</p> <p>Reduce the vendors' commission.</p> <p>Simplify the daily registration procedure and make it more affordable.</p> <p>Research and implement improved ways for delegates and other attendees to connect up/meet with each other. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting notice board. - Investigate the use of technology eg. give everyone a SIM card, either preloaded with telephone numbers or accompanied by a printed, or online, list. Or, at least, ask people to give their mobile/cell numbers to the registration desk. <p>Bookings/Registration to be handled by a central person or team, leaving more time for the COT to organize local things such as venues, accommodation, PR, etc. Research appropriate "off the shelf" registration programs. Ensure that WSA Executive "owns" the website early on. Suggest</p>
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<p>More help to visitors (especially delegates) in obtaining visas.</p> <p>Sometimes a feeling of “disconnect” between the WSA (who has ultimate authority and financial responsibility for the Congress) and the Congress Organizing Team.</p>	<p>you contact Michael Chapman and Marianne Kay, who can advise, based on their experience in New Zealand.</p> <p>Appoint a liaison person on COT, and have communications in place, to introduce the Congress to the appropriate ministry that deals with visa applications, to assist our members and especially the delegates.</p> <p>Would benefit from having a WSA representative working with the COT in the Congress location.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venues <p>Venues were generally good and clean with water at every corner!</p> <p>Fantastic big hall for women’s latihan.</p> <p>Worked well to have really big auditorium.</p> <p>Some activities were spread in outlying buildings, which were hard to find. Wings events felt separated from the Congress.</p> <p>Some confusion during the first few days as attendees became orientated to the venues.</p> <p>The fact that events and activities were split into many small areas rarely allowed for the emergence of community.</p> <p>Too cold, too much ventilation, air conditioning not flexible enough.</p>	<p>Preferable for some venues (eg SDIA, MSF, SYA, Art exhibition) to be closer to the main venues of the other workshops. Limit the amount of extraneous activities.</p> <p>Print Congress calendar or highlights on back of attendees’ tags!!!!</p> <p>See above.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage <p>Good signage, well prepared maps.</p> <p>Pre-printed programs (tons of paper) became obsolete very quickly</p>	<p>Online program only, accessible through plentiful video screens.</p>

<p>through constant changes.</p> <p>There were various places we sort of commandeered to put up notices for meetings, but then other helpful people would take the notices down!</p>	<p>Better signage in gathering areas as to what was happening that day, particularly at the beginning of the Congress.</p> <p>Display the day and date on TV schedule screens.</p> <p>Larger events TV screens, that are updated quicker with program changes.</p> <p>Have “master schedule” in one central location that is kept updated with schedule/workshop changes.</p> <p>White board signs outside all (workshop/latihan) rooms to indicate what was happening inside during that day and showing changes.</p> <p>Use signage that utilizes international symbols/pictograms (women, men, arrows, circle with a line through it etc)</p> <p>At a central location have different notice boards for, say, Wings, Affiliates, Delegates, Helpers etc. to which attendees could post notices.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official WSA Working Parties <p>Good concept. Worked better than attempting these types of discussions in plenary sessions.</p> <p>We appreciated the effort that was made to give the Working Parties more structure.</p> <p>Some did not work well. Were they too large? Was their purpose not understood properly, resulting in too much time being spent deciding what to do? Recommendations not clearly communicated to, or explained at, Plenary Session.</p> <p>Some issues around new attendees (who came in late to the Working Party), not understanding the discussion and agreements that had already taken place.</p> <p>Seemed to be a repeat of the working party topics at the last World Congress.</p>	<p>We don't want to start all over again in reinventing the wheel!</p> <p>Create a format as to how we want to act/communicate/operate and then do it. eg. a structure that allows everyone to contribute and share ideas in a meeting, rather than just the most articulate/loudest. Allow more time for finalizing the recommendations.</p> <p>Create a “daily news” to pick up at the door of each working party, so you can monitor progress and those joining the working party midway through know what has happened so far.</p>

Appeared that large part of their work happened after the working party had met.

Helpers Working Party had too much structure. There was not enough space to share the needs of the countries. The topics for this Working Party came from top down. Some of the arranged testing sessions the helpers set up were too mental and preconceived - full of an agenda!

The present system doesn't work, as virtually every Working Party resulted in the appointment of a Task Force to do what they had failed to do.

Integrate some testing into the discovery process.

Two hours is too short a time for a working party to meet and develop outcomes of significance. Make the sessions 4 hours x 4 days in the future.

There is a need to be listening openly without judgment. In my experience this is rarely a natural attribute, it's a skill, not a spiritual attribute! It needs to be learned and practiced. Done well, meetings can move forward and create actions that turn into results. This means having more of a guideline in how our meetings and discussions are managed. Those guidelines already exist and there are a number of individuals in Subud who can define them. It would be really helpful if the WSA could move in this direction and demonstrate this now.

Take quality time to review the last 4 years objectively (no other workshops running at that time), in small groups so that participants are part of, rather than recipients.

Have no more than 5 key themes for a congress that can be shared on a daily basis as they develop. Make them important. Have workshops that add value to the theme and are connected to the outcomes eg. if a theme was strengthening group relationships the "forgiveness" workshops would come under this heading.

Start the plan for the next 4 years as early as possible, even before the start of the congress. eg. we plan to have 6 international centres by 2018.

Remember that 45 minutes is the maximum time that most individuals can fully engage before a refresh.

Allow more space for (good) things to grow from the ground. Testing should be more spontaneous. Let the question come. Don't institutionalize the kejiwaan. Allow fewer planned testing questions in groups and more informal kejiwaan time. Allow for the unexpected!

Someone or some group needs to stand a long way back and examine the whole system of the way we do business. There is not much point in tinkering with the system if it needs totally replacing.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Workshops <p>Extremely varied, interesting, colourful and full program that suited all tastes.</p> <p>Too many workshops, which resulted in some being poorly attended.</p> <p>The way the daily program in New Zealand was printed put individual special interest workshops amongst the business workshops/delegate sessions. This was confusing to some.</p> <p>Unofficial “ad hoc” meetings of (some) national chairs were very beneficial.</p> <p>The self-organized events and catering at the Caledonian really served members’ needs.</p> <p>Insufficient time or locations for personal testing.</p> <p>If you wanted to schedule a meeting, you had to go through one particular person. Often couldn’t locate that person. Told to send an email! How?</p>	<p>Maybe the price we pay for our wonderful richness and diversity is that we just cannot see and do everything!</p> <p>Was that the intention? I would like to see clear demarcation.</p> <p>Include a specific space(s) within the delegates’ agenda for national chairs to meet informally. These would be open to observers.</p> <p>Have a team committed to handling meeting requests.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zone Meetings <p>It was good to have specific rooms set aside for regularly scheduled zone meetings, although sometimes equipment “disappeared”!</p> <p>Need for improved communication between the zones</p>	<p>Zone meeting rooms should be provided with a projector, white board & markers and, ideally, be close to a coffee break area.</p> <p>It should be clarified that visitors (non-Council members) are observers and should not disrupt or take over the Zone Council meeting. Are these Zone Council Meetings or simply Zone Meetings?</p> <p>Include the zonal presentations as an agenda item in a plenary session, so that they can be better prepared and attended by all delegates and others.</p> <p>Make the space more dynamic.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDI program <p>Overall a very exciting and rich program. Unfortunate that delegates were unable to attend.</p> <p>More time needed for some presentations.</p> <p>Many people gave up trying to find the location for SDI activities (away from the main Congress event), particularly in the bad weather.</p> <p>Confusion about program announcements/changes.</p> <p>Lack of adequate technical support and equipment requested beforehand.</p> <p>No effective media liaison with the local media for actively sharing our successes and making the general public aware of the workshops they could attend.</p>	<p>Schedule a one/half Susila Dharma Day, so that everyone at Congress can participate in something related to our social development efforts.</p> <p>Have the SDI venue closer to other main Congress events/meetings.</p> <p>Better coordination and communication of program details to the Congress participants.</p> <p>Need to arrange adequate technical support - subsidized, paid volunteers to help?</p> <p>Appoint an effective media liaison person(s) to assist with Subud's "presence in the world".</p> <p>Encourage the Wings to organize workshops and presentations to which the general public is specifically invited.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SYI program <p>Unfortunate that more younger Subud members were not present to be involved in the dialogue at workshops and plenary sessions</p>	<p>Create more opportunities for "connection" between youth and other attendees during the Congress.</p> <p>Recommend and encourage Youth Coordinators or National Delegations to arrange for youth representatives to attend and participate in workshops and plenary sessions.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SICA and Entertainment Program <p>Main entertainment was wonderful (eg. classical concert and fashion show), but these tended to "drown out" smaller cultural activities.</p>	<p>Like Sydney, Spokane and partly in Innsbruck, SICA should be charged with the cultural program, working on the ground with the host country to ensure a local presence.</p>

<p>Pity that most of the choir rehearsals took place at the same time as delegates' meetings.</p> <p>Insufficient or inadequate opportunities for individual Subud members or countries to present entertainment (apart from India & Indonesia)</p> <p>Wing displays were crammed together in a hall for passers by.</p> <p>I missed more opportunities for jam sessions with other musicians.</p>	<p>Schedule an informal Variety Concert/Evening for individual countries/artists to present short performances in front of attendees.</p> <p>Intentional, so as not to create different boxes. Was this effective or successful?</p> <p>It would be nice to have wing/enterprise receptions (wine & cheese in the early evening, tea reception in the afternoon etc), so there would be a time to focus on some nice displays. Could SICA coordinate this?</p> <p>Have more cultural events open to the general public Street party in Puebla?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SES and Endeavour Program 	<p>WSA should take care to develop the SES and enterprises for all Subud members in the spirit of Bapak.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSF program 	<p>Have venue closer to other main events/meetings.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care 	<p>More opportunity for "connection" between children and other attendees during the Congress.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media/Public Relations <p>Not enough press relations with the city of Christchurch, newspapers etc. "Unfortunate" article in Christchurch newspaper during the Congress.</p>	<p>Need for improved Communication/Press interface with local media, although the newspapers will print whatever they want!</p> <p>Recommendations from "Being Present" Working Party in Christchurch, was approved by Congress, that WSA Executive take more proactive role in providing guidelines for hosting country.</p> <p>Draft prepared by Amalia Rasheed, included: Can the conference centre advise on public relations and/or how to identify appropriate local contacts with other spiritual inter-faith groups in the city?</p> <p>Create list of relevant media contacts before the Congress. Start a</p>

	<p>proactive approach at least a month before the Congress.</p> <p>Welcoming reception to which we invite local “dignitaries” to meet representatives of our international organization.</p> <p>Identify appropriate community project(s) that a Congress activity might be part of. eg youth theatre workshop/performance at a local children’s hospital.</p> <p>Create specific/daily press releases on different aspects of the Congress for the media.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congress TV & Media <p>A fantastic idea and realized by so many young people!</p> <p>It was great to have Congress TV, so Subud brothers and sisters who were unable to come to New Zealand could feel connected to what was happening at the Congress.</p> <p>Except for coverage of the venue for the next Congress and the appointment of office bearers, there was little Subud media coverage of the business of congress. ie. Resolutions/Decisions on what WSA, WSC and Wings/Affiliates will do over the next 4 years.</p>	<p>A bit more serious news would have been nice.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation Services <p>Provision of adequate simultaneous translation appeared to be inconsistent and unsatisfactory for some.</p>	<p>Review needs and delivery prior to the Congress. This may require paid translators, instead of relying on volunteers? Or else attempt to recruit proficient volunteers with a more disciplined commitment.</p> <p>If possible, there should be simultaneous translation also into Russian and, if necessary, German.</p> <p>Arrange for experienced translators at all plenary sessions and formal delegate meetings, including working parties (and workshops??)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers <p>Personally, I was less than thrilled with the support received from some of the youth at Congress in assisting with some of the presentation preparation (i.e. PowerPoint and projector issues in the final days of Congress). It was like pulling teeth to get their assistance and when it was finally committed to (and re-confirmed twice) the support wasn't there at the time promised and our PowerPoint presentation had to be subsequently terminated half way into the actual presentation.</p>	<p>There should be stricter/clearer guidelines as to what is expected of volunteers (who have received some kind of financial break to attend Congress). Improved "enforcement". Easy to say, difficult to do!</p> <p>Volunteer program should offer several alternatives for different times and activities. Explore possibility of support from local universities or NGO's that could provide formal volunteer time.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Subud Council 	<p>Need for better connection between the Congress Organizing Team and WSC in coordinating the content of the Congress ahead of time.</p> <p>"Hand over" to new Council to take place earlier during Congress, so that new business and decision-making is not so rushed and new Council can accept ownership of the policies they need to carry forward.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Areas/Comments <p>The Congress in New Zealand had a wonderful feeling about it, and flowed well.</p> <p>Two weeks duration is difficult for some, who had work, family etc. commitments back home.</p> <p>Meals were very good.</p> <p>The tours were well organized, very popular and profitable. A big praise for the organizers.</p> <p>Internet facilities were perfect! vs. Unreliable Internet access in the Town Hall and Conference Centre</p> <p>(worked well at the Caledonian where we had our own system)</p> <p>Money changing and other services. It was assumed you'd figure it out.</p>	<p>Reduce official part of Congress to 7 days, with other activities, entertainment etc. following for those who can stay. Using modern technology, complete more of the business/work prior to the start of Congress.</p> <p>Install and operate our own systems with more computer terminals. Do not rely on the venue systems.</p>

Maybe some didn't!

How "useful" was the Congress Book/Program provided to every attendee?

No listing in Congress material of marvelous production of "Anything Goes", performed in Christchurch. Also local art gallery opening of an exhibition of the late Riduan Tomkins work.

Big latihans over one and a half hours demand individual responsibility. Some women talked too much after latihan without leaving the room. This was disturbing.

The function of the Kejiwaan Councillors at Congress was not clear. They were not involved in the helpers' work (This was organized during the first meeting of the delegates) and there was only a very short time to share with the International Helpers. There was no co-operation with the International Helpers before and at the Congress.

Research "best practices" with other comparable organizations who hold similar conferences/gatherings.

Provide more information about local (non-Subud) events during Congress.

In the job description of WSA for Kejiwaan Councillors it is said that they should work together with the International Helpers. At the end of the period of working together, it would be helpful to have feedback. The only place where this can take place is at World Congress. So we suggest something like an "area kejiwaan delegates meeting".

As at June 25, 2010