

Maya Korzybska, WSA Vice-Chair gives her view on the work of the WSC

Members often wonder what the Subud World Council does at its meetings. Each meeting costs around 75.000 \$ US, as we bring approximately 40 people together. It is a legitimate question and concern, which the council members themselves discuss, but somehow I would like to try and convey an explanation, an answer, something to reassure the members that we are not simply wasting their contributions.

Why the WSC meets

Samuel Simonsson as prior WSA treasurer, often asked himself, what is the real purpose even of the entity 'Subud World Congress' (when all the delegates of member countries meet and make proposals and resolutions) as well as the Subud World Council (which carries forward those resolutions between world congresses). Samuel came up with a simple but at the same time complex answer: the Council represents the network of all the World Subud member countries, and its reason to be (apart from the admin involved in running an international organisation with 56 official country members and a total of 82 countries where Subud members are present) is the body whose role is to keep Subud moving in one direction simultaneously, on the understanding that, the direction is established together, through policy and decision making processes at world congress. What does that mean fundamentally? Well for me the main objective is to protect, nurture and make available our heritage, which we received from Bapak. Even though Subud is an individual process, the Latihan kejiwaan of Subud was given to us via Bapak, this is an undeniable fact, and those who choose to serve on the council, be it the international helpers or the zone reps and wings are working towards preserving, nurturing and making that legacy available to those searching for it in a harmonious way worldwide. This means of course protecting the understanding and the uniqueness of 'our' specific spiritual path, which in no way belittles other spiritual paths, simply that this is the one we have chosen. Some members would like to change aspects of Subud and the guidance that Bapak gave us to follow, there is nothing we can do to stop individuals doing this or in believing that this is how it should be but, our role as an organisation is to try and keep the integrity of our specific heritage. This includes of course helping members develop the Latihan for their personal benefit in their lives as well as for the ultimate benefit of humankind, thus we have the wings who help develop the talents of the members, to be able to put into practise what they have received through, social, cultural and entrepreneurial activities.

Still World Congress and the the councils that come and go, also look to evolve and to be a learning organisation, Bapak always said that we should feel things for ourselves and not just follow his advice blindly and this is what we try to do, also we should not be judging each other, we should only be concerned and responsible of our own development.

Those 'Terrible' Meetings

Before speaking specifically about the WSC meeting in Vancouver I would like to touch on comments that come up every now and then....some people refer to heavy terrible meetings that they were witnesses to, or say things like, the council meets to simple decide where and when to have their next meeting....yet when you ask them when they witnessed this (if they ever actually did) they might say something like 1969...We may still not be perfect, but I do believe that there is a constant evolution towards and I see that the new councils are more and more active and committed to trying to do things well, to make use of this time and money spent and to really represent those members who are interested in and involved in the activities of the World Subud Association, whilst also

trying to follow their own inner guidance. Even when something may be sticky and a council member holds on to his or her particular idea, it usually stems from their sincere belief in what they are trying to do for the benefit of Subud. So be reassured council meetings may be intense and busy and may still have their moments of disharmony, but over all, (as our observers may attest) we are far from some of the crazy meetings of the past.

Vancouver

The council meeting in Vancouver went on for 12 days non stop, constantly working and looking at the current issues. Thus one of the first days was spent looking at each area (geographically) to try and evaluate the specific needs and concerns of each....these vary from spiritual concerns such as why do members leave Subud ? Why do new members not have that deep inner experience which convinces them that Subud is their path ? Why are older members losing faith in Subud ? Where did the belief and courage to bring Subud to the world go ?....to financial concerns in Africa for example, where survival and even being able to afford to travel to the local Subud group are primary concerns, beginning with even having adequate latihan facilities, access to information and the need to feel connected with the rest of the Subud world. These are things that many of us may take for granted and may even forget to appreciate !

A Democratic Process

What the membership needs to understand is that every decision made goes through a democratic process, as we allocate a budget to each aspect....we work by consensus which within Subud is actually a process. In fact following requests for clarification from some members countries, as to how WSA works by consensus, this was a topic discussed by the council in Vancouver, to come up with a Subud definition of consensus (as practised historically within the WSA), that can be communicated to all members, so that they can understand the process of consensus that we apply, which gives a real voice to all countries, so that their opinion is heard and valued and that we finally come to a majority agreement or acceptance.

What we also need to understand and accept is that countries and individuals within Subud can feel strongly and differently about every different aspect of Subud, and so we try to create a + + situation rather than an either or one.

Key Priorities

The latihan, international helper travel to support the national and local helper work, is the number one priority that the council members all agree on, but following that, also most of the member countries feel strongly about translation and that English should not be the language you 'have to speak' in Subud to be able to 'understand' and know what is going on. This in itself is an enormous job involving many dedicated members which needs to be coordinated to be effective. Others may be particularly concerned with supporting the youth, whilst others are concerned with looking after the elderly, others believe in the extreme importance of archives and protecting our heritage, whilst others consider that enterprise and cultural activities are the most important aspects. Some feel we should have a voice 'out in the world' whilst others believe we are not ready, the balance between outreach and trying to sell Subud. Most all agree in some degree to all these aspects and of course everyone is right and the council's job is to try and look at all of these needs, aspects and concerns and to come up with a budget that can support all these program's and activities. And still many feel that their specific concern is not supported enough, but

the truth is that the council has a real job juggling finances to try and satisfy everyone. Sadly at this point we cannot keep everyone totally happy, because our financial income is based at this point on limited country contributions and donations, and a few enterprise and individual donations. (Only 40% of member countries donate anything at all and yet expectations are high).

Financial Transparency

Members ask, but what does their money get used for, how does it serve me ?...well on the one hand the financial statements are available for all to see, budgets and accounts on www.subud.org, as well as massive reporting through all the Subud media, one must make the effort to read. What I feel that we as members all together should be considering is, that if we all contributed an average of 50 \$ a year (not a lot of money, some give more some less, but each and everyone giving a little something) to the international organisation, our income would be around 600.000 \$ a year and with that amount we would be able to allocate many more funds and satisfy a lot of needs, to all the programs that the members are interested in or concerned about. If our budget was 600.000 \$ then our council meetings would only represent 12% of the total budget (much more reasonable), trust that we would not suddenly decide to stay in 5 star hotels or travel first class, the council meeting budget would remain pretty much the same, where more money would be spent is on all those things that would directly affect the members...supporting kejiwaan activities and gatherings where we can really try and help members feel the reality of the Latihan, supporting youth effectively with workshops and yes quests to help them understand where their talent lies and how to set up enterprises....working on projects of old people's homes, understanding health and well being from a Subud standpoint....having creative workshops where we can explore what we can contribute to humankind and so on and on....

Support

Well my intention wasn't to turn this into a fundraiser (though it has decidedly taken that direction), but to hopefully convey that the council do feel concerned about the costs of the meetings, the money is not spent lightly, though we are convinced of the need for these meetings, confirmed overwhelmingly each time we question and test it. Still, why don't we all collectively try to imagine what the WSA could do for the members if we weren't working on a shoe string budget and at the same time have the faith and trust that the people on the council, who are simply Subud members taking on a role for 4 years to serve the membership, are sincerely trying to do their best and that this effort warrants love and support, not criticism or negative speculation.

At the end of the day, I personally believe that money and our collective and individual attitude towards it, may be one of the things that is holding us back from becoming more of an active healthy organisation that is able to give back to the world something in exchange of this incredible gift that we have received.

I do wish to finish by thanking the many many members who do in fact support us, financially either through direct donations or in kind, but also through messages of thanks and kindness that we receive.

MK August 2012