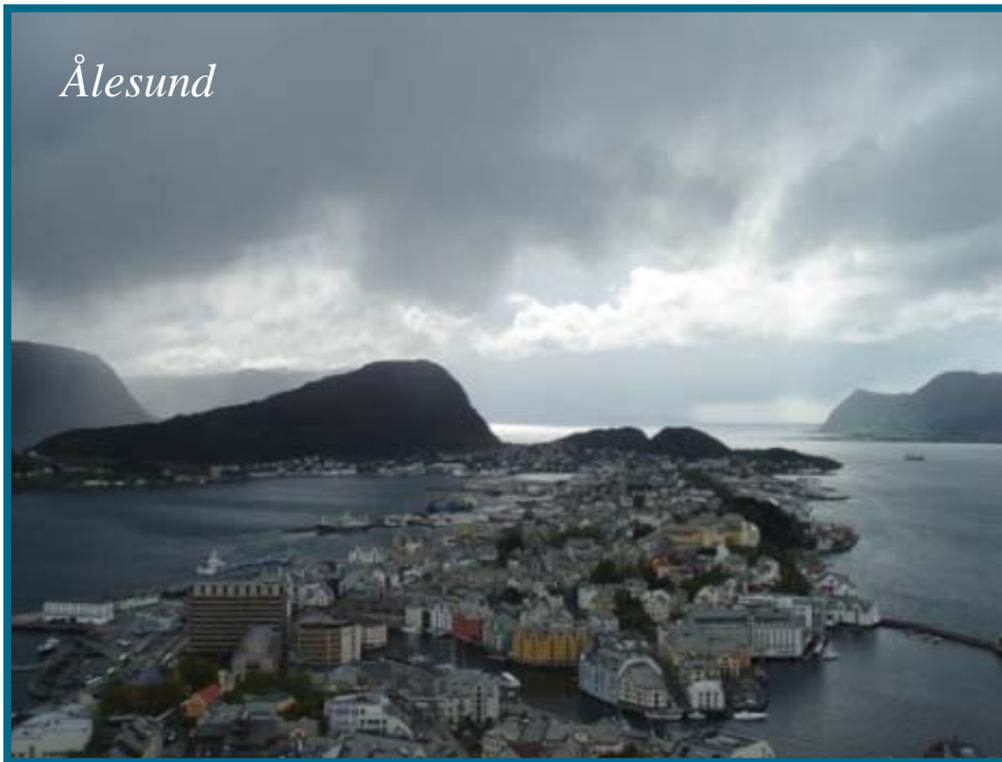


REPORT ON SUBUD NORWAY CONGRESS

May 2007 v3

In European terms, Norway is a large country inhabited by few people. Out of the population of 4.6 million people, half live in the south-east, around the capital, Oslo, and most of the rest are concentrated along the west coast, jagged because of the famous fiords. So, the mountainous centre of the country is quite empty like the far north. The wide landscapes are beautiful. At this time of year, late May, the sun sets at midnight and rises at three AM. With large oil reserves and other natural resources, the country is very wealthy; it has the second largest GDP per capita and ranks highest in terms of the UN human development indices in the world. Yet the country gained full independence only in 1905, which perhaps partly explains its failure to join the European Union. This and the low population density, perhaps, also explain the strong sense of local community that exists in Norway, including in Subud.



Subud Norway has 90 members in four groups. Oslo has around 60 members and a Subud house located in the centre of the city near the Vigeland park. The other three groups have between 8 and 16 members each. Hamar is a group 125km to the north of the capital. On the west coast there is Bergen in the south, and further north, Sunnmøre, which covers a wide area around the city of Ålesund. There are a few isolated members along the coast, including some as far north as Honningsvåg, not very far from Northcap.

This was the first Congress of Subud Norway to be held outside of the Oslo region. It was held on the island of Vigra, which is where the newly emerging and exciting Vestavind projects are located, and where the Sunnmøre group does latihan.

Back in early nineties, Hugo Flem started developing his farm into a Subud project by converting the barn into a small hall, and then building four large huts at a rate of about one a year. The old barn is now turned into two halls, a kitchen, and upstairs, a flat, a guestroom and an office, all built in shining wood. While he has done most of the work himself, he has also had the support of the local group and from members from abroad. In the last three years he has used a professional worker to speed up the construction. Hugo's wife, Maya, has played an important role looking after and making guests welcome. The huts have two bedrooms, a living room and a bathroom and can accommodate four persons each. Two of them are permanently rented out. During the congress, about 20 participants were accommodated at the farm.

They are now constructing a new edifice, called rather modestly 'the New Hut.' It is not a hut at all. It promises to be a wonderful hotel lodging with eight rooms each with private bathroom, which should be complete in August. An engineer from Scotland, Solihin Roberts, has been volunteering his help with the construction over the last few weeks.

The first project is an enterprise, called 'Vestavind Eiendom,' began in 2003 when Raymond Hensen and Markus Hoff Berge joined with Hugo. The business will rent out the halls and the rooms for weddings, birthday parties, seminars and other events, and will also function as a bed and breakfast. The island of Vigra currently has no tourist accommodation, and the international airport, which serves the tourist town of Ålesund located on a nearby island, is about 4 minutes drive from Vestavind. Direct flights to Vigra from London's Gatwick airport start on June 1st. From Ålesund, you can cruise the famous Geiranger fiord, and visit the bird sanctuary at Runde. So, the enterprise has good potential.

The second project is a social program. Back in 1994, Hugo established a charity and started a local youth club with support from the municipality. Since then, with the participation of the growing local Subud group, he and Maya have hosted three Subud youth camps, the most recent of which was a work camp held last year over a two-month period attended by 10 young people from 6 countries. During this period, a big step was made in laying the foundations of the "Big Hut."

The goal of the social project, called 'Praksisplass,' though, is to help with local needs. The immediate area has about 70 young people who are unemployed school drop-outs and the larger municipal area about 170. The aim is to provide a set of personal development, educational and training programs for these young people, to show them care with the hope that they will find a better way in life. The program is being spearheaded by Elias Ryberg, a smiling and bearded social worker from Hamar, and national helper, who is moving to Vestavind. In part the program is to prepare the young people to work with the elderly in the area, who also need care. To this end, Elias, Hugo and Taufik Waage have had extensive meetings with the local municipal authorities, whose participation is required.

The program, which has been developed by board of the charity, will enable to the young people to support the elderly and vice versa. The elderly need assistance and visits, and the young people would be paid for helping the elderly with household chores and with other daily needs such as reading and social visits. They would be supervised by the local nurses, who also visit the elderly regularly, and by the project counselor, who would provide and

coordinate other educative and training programs for the young people. In some cases, this might include working with the bed and breakfast/tourist project at Vestavind. However, the charitable project and the property company are independent from each other, even though Hugo is the initiator of both and the charitable project will rent rooms at the farm. At the moment, Elias is trying to find financial support from the government, local enterprise sponsorship and from charitable foundations.

About 35 people attended the Congress. There was a spiritual (kejiwaan) workshop, the AGM of Subud Norway, and a national Susila Dharma meeting, as well as a presentation of the project. The AGM was conducted in a very smooth business-like way by Hustin Lorentzen, the chairman who was re-elected to another term following testing. Most of the discussion centered around three major themes. First, Taufik Waage, who coordinates the Being Present Initiative internationally for ISC, presented the work of groups in Norway for this program. Norway feels the importance of this theme because many of the members are from the older generation and there is still work to be done to integrate the younger people into the group and to open up the Subud community to newcomers. There was also a long discussion about the Subud Norway website and also about the fixed contributions that members have to make to be eligible to vote on legal issues concerning the assets of Subud Norway. Both of these items were potentially divisive but the whole group managed to settle their differences in a very peaceful and respectful way, which was wonderful to watch.



Subud Norway is also active in other ways. There were beautiful paintings and artisan work around the hall, including this landscape by Sara Tunheim. Subud Norway has had at least two enterprises that have been consistent and generous supporters of Subud internationally, Flo-Chem and Raymond Hensen's company. Susila Dharma Norway has recently received a large donation, and has supported projects in India, Colombia and Indonesia. Leonore Waage advocated twining of projects and countries or groups, and gave a report on three development projects in Bangalore:

Anisha, Mithra and Suddah. Of course, ICDP (international Child Development Program), which is now practiced in several countries in Africa, South America and Europe was born and bred in Norway. Rukman Hundeide was recounting how the Norwegian Government has officially adopted this methodology for caring for children and how the basic framework of ICDP can be adapted for different caring situations, such as for teenagers.

Garrett Thomson