Recent World Subud Council and Zone 7 Council Meetings

Some observations from a Zone Rep

As a Zone Rep I am well aware of my responsibilities as a member of the World Subud Council (WSC) and Zone 7 Council. Each year I attend meetings of these two Councils and report back to the members in Zone 7.

I continually ask myself: “How can I do a better job of passing on what has happened at these meetings to other Subud members?” I know that all Council members (both on the WSC and Zone Councils) ask themselves the same question. Like any organization (Subud or otherwise), there will always be members who are very interested in the organization, some who are not at all, and others who just want to hear about those aspects that affect them. For the most part, I try to focus my reports on the third group.

In June and July of this year, I was fortunate in attending the World Subud Council Meeting and part of the Zone 3 Council Meeting & Gathering in Poio, Spain, and the US Congress and Zone 7 Council Meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

There will be minutes from both the WSC and Zone 7 Council Meetings, which will include the resolutions passed and agreed actions - pretty dry stuff for most people, but they are available for everyone to read.

There were a number of highlights for me during these two meetings, and I will list them briefly here.

World Subud Council Meeting

- The Zone Reps met together and shared what was going on for them and in the countries that they represent. This year we used a world map to help identify the various countries!
- A significant part of the meeting dealt with topics involving the Muhammad Subuh Foundation, including selecting a replacement trustee. Five members, who were qualified for the position, were tested by the International Helpers. Michael Heathcote from England was selected. Another issue was the March 2013 letter from Ibu Rahayu to the MSF and WSC. It clarified the respective roles of the MSF and WSA. Ibu Rahayu advised that MSF should focus on maintaining our Subud assets that are owned by the World Subud Association, provide support for Subud houses, assist International Helper travel and, if possible, support the Wings. MSF should not be involved in fund raising, particularly for the archives. The Council made a clear intention that WSA will repay the $172,000 that MSF has already contributed towards the Legacy Project. There were productive and frank discussions that resulted in a much-improved understanding between the MSF Trustees and WSA Directors,
- Approximately 85-90% of Bapak’s and Ibu Rahayu’s talks have now been digitized. This is a fantastic success story and will help to ensure the preservation of these talks for generations to come.
- The Council was updated on the status of the resolutions passed at the 2010 World Congress in Christchurch. These include a review of, and proposed improvements to, the international Subud organization. Three Advisory Groups have recently been established. Each will start the review by considering two topics: decision-making in Subud (including consensus), and membership in the WSA.
- Council members heard the latest information about the preparations for the World Congress in Puebla. Very important news is that WCOT Chair, Fernando Fatah, supported by other members of the WCOT has managed to negotiate the use of the Convention Centre for free!!! Rida Liobo Loote, Zone 6 Rep., was not able to attend the WSC meeting due to visa difficulties. However, members of the Council spoke to him via “skype” to discuss the idea of a virtual World Congress for members in Africa.
- As an overall comment, I am very impressed by how much the members of the present Council have grown individually and as a group over the past 3 years. There is a feeling that we have matured during our time together, with a respectful exchange of different views, ideas and opinions. Certainly we don’t always agree on everything, but I believe that there is real harmony in arriving at our decisions.
- The Zone Reps and other Council members are concerned that there be continuity after our term ends at the World Congress in Puebla. So we are assembling a collection of “lessons learned” that can be passed on to the new Council.
I have to agree with many of the Zone Council members that this was the best Council meeting since the New Zealand World Congress when I started my term as Zone Rep. How so? We had a full agenda. We covered a lot of interesting topics, learnt how Subud is doing throughout the Zone, enjoyed enthusiastic participation by all Council members, passed 5 important resolutions and came away with 16 action items - all of which resulted from respectful and harmonious discussions. We’re definitely getting better!

At the outset each Council member was asked to express what they wanted to achieve from the meeting. Examples included receiving a complete report from the recent WSC Meeting, an update about Subud in Cuba and plan for how the Zone could further support Subud Cuba, and discuss how to make the Zone more relevant/significant for our members. These, and others, were then incorporated into the agenda that had previously been circulated. At the end of the meeting, we reviewed these expected hopes and outcomes and were pleased to find that most of them had been satisfied!

If I had to choose 3 highlights from the meeting for me, they would be:

**Country Reports & Support for Subud Cuba**
- Each National Chair gave a PowerPoint presentation about the Subud members in their respective countries. These reports helped us to appreciate the differences that exist, in terms of location, size, language, customs and culture within the Zone, whilst emphasizing the one thing that we have in common- the latihan! The reports made us feel closer, much like a large family!
• Particular attention was paid to Cuba, where we now have an effective communication link thanks to Alejandra Martinez (Subud Canada Committee Councillor). In addition to the support that has been provided in the past year (financial and talks in Spanish), the Council brainstormed additional ways to support Subud Cuba in the future. These included making every effort to bring as many Cubans to Puebla as possible for the World Congress.

Staggered Terms
• Like all organizations, continuity from one term to the next is important. At the present time, every four years most members of the World Subud Council (Zone Reps, International Helpers, Wing Representatives, WSA Chair and Executive Chair) are replaced by new people. Much of the corporate memory and experience gained during the previous four years is lost. One possible way of lessening this impact is to stagger the terms of the Zone Reps. The Zone Council discussed the pros and cons of such a change, at some length. There were certainly differing views, but it was agreed that the next step was to seek input from the other Zone Reps, as it would not make a lot of sense for Zone 7 to proceed alone with this initiative.
• Further discussion concerned a suggestion for the possible staggering of the Committee Councillors to ensure better continuity on the Zone 7 Council. Each country agreed to discuss this suggestion and report back on their conclusions before the next Council conference call.

How to make the Zone more relevant/significant for our members?
Council members had many suggestions on this topic. These included:
• Encourage and support improved collaboration between the Wings in Zone 7.
• Regular (monthly?) updates from the Zone Rep. about what is happening within the Zone and internationally
• Hold future Zone Council Meetings in Cuba or the Caribbean.
• Initiate common zonal projects or activities.
• Improved kejiwaan contact, particularly with the isolated members in the Zone.
• Ask the members what they would like from Zone 7.

Every effort will be made to implement as many as possible of these suggestions.

As I said, earlier in my report, minutes of both the WSC and Zone 7 Council meeting will be available. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please let me know.

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