

## ***REPORT ON THE BEING PRESENT INITIATIVE (BPI) ~ July 2007***

We would like to thank the many people who have sent responses on the "Being Present Initiative." These have already been summarized and circulated by ISC. Sometimes the responses were different from what we expected, but this is a process which has involved many members, and which takes time. For us at ISC who have worked with this initiative, it has been a privilege to follow-up on an idea initiated at the world congress and to see how many people have really felt this need. However, we have also felt the fears and concerns of some members telling us that we had better leave things as they are or - put in other words - "leave it to God." During this process, we have been witnessing how these fears and worries have lost their grip and the "Being Present Initiative" is felt less as a threat, but rather as a positive impulse to change.



*Taufik*

In this process of change, it is important to remember that the best we can hope for is to be empty channels blessed with the latihan and to work in accordance with our individuality.

Of course, this is not something we can do once and for all. No, this is a constant challenge. If conflicts arise in our relationship with each other, both outside and inside Subud, it is always better to stick to what we can do anything about - our own attitudes and actions.

We know that in order to develop inwardly and outwardly, two basic things are necessary:

1. We have to do latihan regularly.
2. We have to put our latihan into practise in our daily life.

In this area, the helpers have to be the examples to the members because they are the key to the development of Subud. And consequently, there is a great need for strengthening the helpers' work. Given this, it might be appropriate for countries and/or groups to hold meetings about how to receive and follow up new members and what is blocking the growth in my group/country.

Many members have reported that they lack a proper group life, and that is a reason for people leaving Subud. Fortunately, it seems as if this is not the normal situation in Subud. Several groups report that they organise social or cultural events either open to the public or just by inviting family or friends. During some of these events they are collecting money for Susila Dharma projects. These events have brought new members to Subud, and given Subud a positive reputation in their community.

A good way of making Subud known is if people with a certain success or standing in a country write a book where they explain how Subud affected their life or contributed to their success. Rahmaniyah Bowdens' biography is an example of such a book that raised public interest in Subud in Hungary. In Norway, the founders of ICDP and other members with a

certain professional standard have decided to write a book about their relation to Subud to show how latihan has helped them to be successful. They hope by that book, that they can show the public that Subud is a path for normal people, and not a new age movement for those who are emotionally disturbed.

Most groups and countries need a checklist with things that make it easier for people interested in Subud to get in touch with us. For instance, a number in the telephone directory, the Subud symbol outside the Subud house door or on the gate; a poster about Subud available in public places; and the names and telephone numbers of helpers or contact persons in different groups in their country put up on their national web site. Most countries also have a register for organisations, and we could register there.

The fact is that many people expect to find the information they need about our organisation on the internet. They will be looking for a website. Recently, Ibu Rahayu clarified how to use web-pages, underlining that the explanation should be very basic, without making Subud appear like a religion, and just direct them to helpers for further information. The reason, she said, is that what attracts people and makes them want to be opened, is what happens in the personal contact between a helper, who is feeling the latihan, and the applicant.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of poor quality material about Subud on the internet. Subud Norway has asked ISC to work on an international standard for national and international web pages owned by Subud to avoid confusion about what Subud is.

Now that the Subud symbol and the name are registered as the property of WSA, in my opinion, we should restrict the use of these trademarks to the official web pages to avoid disinformation about Subud and to keep our own house in order.

When it comes to the “spread of Subud,” we have no intention to push people to join, as this decision to join is personal and part of an inner individual process. We cannot prevent people from leaving either, as that is also a personal decision. We can, however, try to make Subud more open and available, less hidden. Also, we can try to make people feel welcome. We can be clear about what Subud is and what they can expect.

The ‘Outreach Committee’ in U.S. found that approximately 150 people are opened in the USA every year. However, there have been approximately 2000 members in the USA for the last 25 years and the conclusion that the committee drew was that they should focus on how to help keep the members already opened from leaving, since these were mostly the newer members. The situation may be similar in other parts of the world.

Perhaps, one reason why new members leave is that they expect immediate results. Nevertheless, there may be other reasons too and we need to look more carefully to see if there are things in our culture and habits that we need to change. ISC’s External Relations Committee will propose to ISC to organise a major professional survey on this matter. We propose that Frederic Richard coordinate this work.

Subud Portugal is a very good example of a recent Being Present initiative. They opened their new Subud house to the public and presented their plans, projects and programs to officials and other organisations at a recent celebration event. Sofia and Muchtar Martins were central in this, showing how individual leadership, effort and courage are needed for Subud to be more public and present. You can read more about Subud Portugal’s celebration on [subudworldnews.com](http://subudworldnews.com).

Let me also mention that in Orgiva, Spain, three Subud members ran under an independent party as possible candidates for the city council. This is just to give you an example.

I would like to thank ISC secretary, Julia Hurd and ISC chairman, Garrett Thomson for their support in my role as coordinator of this initiative. They deserve our thanks. I will also like to thank the many members who have responded and the many officers of Subud who have given us their feedback, advice and support. Personally, I am not worried about the future of Subud. From what I have read in your letters, Subud is very much alive and so are our members.

From the information we have received, few countries have been unaffected by this campaign even if not every country has sent us a specific report about it.

Our intention has not been to make your function in Subud heavier by increasing your workload, but we have felt the need to ensure that Subud is available to the general public everywhere. We hope that you would join us in that effort, and we hope that we can really welcome those who would like to join Subud in a way that makes them feel at home. That is all.

Thank you.

With love, Taufik Waage  
[martin.waage@adsl.no](mailto:martin.waage@adsl.no)