

VISIT TO THE ITALIAN CONGRESS
By the IHS: Farah Czwertnia , Heloise Jackson and Jorge Guerin
From 15th to 18th January 2009

The congress this year was not going to be a grand affair as there was no money in Subud Italy. The Florence Subud house would provide the venue and the food would be cooked by the members. The foreign visitors, Insyah Gonsalves (UK C.C.), Idina Waugh (UK K.C.), Richard and Marianne Harvey (France K.C.s) and the three IHS would all stay at a nearby hotel whilst many members would be guests of the Florence Subud members.

There had been and still was a malaise within Subud Italy and as we arrived, many people were asking for help to try to resolve this. No-one knew what to do and how to do it, but we felt that with the Grace of the latihan and a willingness to surrender everything to Almighty God, it might be possible to find a way.

An initial meeting with the KCs Suzanna Rafaelli and Clements Urban, accompanied by Andrea Vivit, the National Chairman of Subud Italy and the IHS, showed how great the problem was. The next day, a meeting between all the helpers confirmed and highlighted the situation. The National chair felt unsupported by the male National helper and isolated in his work. The male KC did not seem to be able to fulfil his function for a variety of reasons, including domestic ones. The other men helpers were not often available, so the burden of work rested mostly on the shoulders of the lady KC, the other lady national helper finding it difficult to face the demands of her post at this time.

There were other problems too between the helpers such as communication amongst themselves and between the men and women. Interaction between them was by now virtually non-existent. There was also a continuous lack of money as it was not in the culture of Subud Italy to ask anyone for regular contributions. This made the calling of national or other meetings and/or visits to groups by National helpers difficult, if not impossible. All this painted a rather gloomy picture as we retired to bed. Serious goodwill and surrender by all would be necessary. Hopefully some of the tests done that day on "What was our individual responsibility for the good running of the congress and for the growth of Subud Italy?" and "How each member, in his/her function, could support Andrea, Italy National chairperson?" might help unravel this giant knot.

That same afternoon, 3 new candidates had been opened, 2 women and 1 man, which represented a chance for a "new beginning" as Andrea had remarked.

We started the next day with latihan followed by body testing, for the women, which seemed to widen everyone's ability to deepen the latihan within themselves and to benefit enormously the recently opened members. Meanwhile, the men were trying to test, among the helpers, for another National helper to work with Clements who felt he could still fulfil his role as KC. Valentin Pizzi was tested in, as the person suitable for this job.

The lady National helper, Adelaida, asked to test her role and whether working within the National Committee would not be more suitable for her. This was confirmed and she was later welcomed by Andrea to work with him. Suzanna, by now the only lady National helper/KC, would have to find, among the remainder helpers, someone

suitable to work with her as National helper. This would be done at a later date, when Suzanna felt the moment is appropriate.

A huge step forward had been taken. Yes, there was still potential for conflict because of past history but equally, it felt that at last some growth and renewal was possible. At the last meeting before the closing of the congress, there was discussion about forgiveness and, whilst there was also caution, there was a willingness to try again.

Most members of the various groups of Subud Italy had come to participate and support this congress. We all shared not only the delicious food but also this sense of renewal. There were tests about Bapak: "What was his work and how was his love for us now even if he was no longer physically there?" and also "How was it for us if we read his talks from time to time?"



There was a feeling of great blessing felt by all those present in the last latihan. By the time the last members had left, the gloom which characterized the start of the congress had yielded to a new hope and it felt like a miracle had happened.

Thank you everyone for allowing us to share in this proof of God's Grace. May we each be worthy of it and be guided in this renewal.

Heloise, Farah and Jorge
International Helpers for Area 2

Photo: Bologna Group; May 2008 in Andrea's (far right) house