

SPAIN VISIT ~ 20TH April – 4th May 08

Farah and Andrew began their travels in Italy at the Zone 3 meeting in Tirrenia near Pisa where we attended the Zone 3 meeting as well as holding a brief Area II International Helper meeting.

The intention was to visit 8 groups during our 14 days of travels in Spain, culminating in a meeting with the National helpers and the National committee members in Alicante.

IBIZA was our first visit, where there is a small informal group of 4 young members full of enthusiasm for the Latihan. Meeting them in a members' Casita in the hills in Santa Eulalia was a joyful occasion, with Latihan and testing focused on helpers work, awareness testing and some personal testings. We found time for further Latihan and testing along the theme of Latihan in daily life the following morning before the members had to go to work. The wish was expressed to be visited by members from Spain and abroad to feel more connected and integrated within Subud Spain and Subud Internationally. Enrique, one of the members, is SICA chairperson in Spain and is very active in his role, he has started a SICA newsletter which can be looked at: <http://subudibiza.blogspot.com>

ORGIVA: Our flight to Malaga via Madrid left midday, giving us just enough time for a meal and a discussion about the Subud organization in general. Orgiva, a village in the Alpujarras, 2 hours away from Malaga is a well established group of mainly ex-patriot members from all over the world, mostly long standing members. There is a ground swell of enthusiasm for a new direction and possible projects. Working together is, here as elsewhere in Subud, a continuing challenge with the need for a really solid Helpers group, where both men and women Helpers truly feel love and respect towards each other. Testing and sharing showed the importance of that balance for further development. The awareness for the place and the environment was felt of great necessity to create a link to various religious groups nearby. As an action plan it was felt to start with monthly meetings to share and connect to each other on a deeper level, in combination with a common lunch and cultural activities. It is a truly extraordinary thing that so many members have chosen to live together in this beautiful place, and we pray that whatever the members undertake may be blessed with success.

SEVILLA: From Orgiva we traveled on the bus to Sevilla where there is a small group of mainly women and one man. We started the evening with latihan and a series of testings, which were to deepen the receiving of the latihan, how to put it into our daily life, body/awareness testing and some personal tests. The next morning a longstanding Subud sister was tested as a helper. Talking and testing about "being a helper in Subud" helped to have an inner understanding of that role. After latihan and testing with the ladies, we had just time to say good bye before we left for the train to Madrid.

MADRID: We were able to spend 3 days in Madrid becoming close to the members during our stay. The latihan were strong and deep and the testing afterwards could give more understanding about surrender, forgiveness, respect and the willingness for an inner and outer change. Talking about new Subud premises showed that this could be seen as a future project. We were struck by their kindness and enthusiasm for our visit and were able to address many issues together, in a spirit of openness and sharing. There is indeed a renewed feeling of optimism and togetherness among the group which we were delighted to witness. Members from Salamanca joined us in Madrid and were made very welcome by the Madrileños. Salamanca is a young growing group with several new members and a feeling of optimism and energy. We left Madrid, with the feeling that we were leaving close family.

BARCELONA (and TARRAGONA): The fast train to Barcelona takes just over three hours and travels at nearly 300km per hour, and is incredibly smooth and comfortable. On arriving in Barcelona we were taken to a wonderful restaurant and given a splendid lunch. The two days spent with the members there felt really blessed. The Barcelona group has experienced difficult times but with a core of good and loving helpers and an active committee it has the potential to grow really close, and experience the incredible grace of the Latihan together, with a feeling of joy. The question for new Subud premises also arose which could open up new vistas and could bring new energy and togetherness to the group. To meet and to deepen the communication on a regular base was felt to be of importance for the development and liveliness of the group. Members from Tarragona came to Barcelona since time was too short for us to visit them, and although the time spent together was short, we were able to share much together. Our visit took place mainly during the week whilst the members worked, and hence we had a little spare time to explore this fantastic city, something we had always wanted to do!

ALICANTE: From Barcelona we flew to Madrid and onto Alicante. (Andrew was very excited to see the new Barajas airport in Madrid, sorry - sad but true!) Alicante is one of the larger groups in Spain, with many experienced members and a strong core of dedicated members. Helpers work formed one of the main themes of our time together, and as Bapak so often said in his many talks, is the key to a successful group, whereby the members may feel loved, accepted and cared for. There is a feeling of a little disappointment among the members that the group has not been able to achieve more of its goals in the past. Here as elsewhere the challenge of setting aside differences and working together can be a difficulty. Meeting all helpers and the committee gave us the opportunity to talk and further on to test on the emerging themes, which helped a lot to open up for a change and improve. The care and love shown to us was truly very touching.

ELCHE: One evening we did Latihan and some basic testings with the Elche group nearby and stayed over night before returning to Alicante. This is a predominantly young group which needs nurturing. The wish for welcoming visitors from other groups was expressed and would help them to feel closer and more integrated in Subud Spain. We were delighted to spend time with the members here, although time was shorter than we would have liked.

On the last full day together we arranged to meet the national helpers and committee members of Spain, to share our impressions, discuss the work, and to share aspirations. This meeting was characterized by an open feeling, a wish to listen, and a willingness to look at things afresh. Like other 'older' Subud countries Spain has experienced difficulties and hurts. Some of the hurts are difficult to set aside, but set them aside we must for our own sake as well as that of others. In Subud the longer we do Latihan the more we come to understand the need to ask forgiveness, to acknowledge our mistakes and to set things right. We do this so we can set ourselves and others free, renew our optimism in the goodness of our brothers and sisters and trust that God will show us the way forward.

Whilst traveling in Spain we were deeply impressed with the sincerity and love shown to us. It is not always easy to travel among members in Subud who have many more miles on the clock than we! We wish to convey our thanks and gratitude to all our brothers and sisters in Spain, who took such wonderful care of us during our travels, and further, to ask for forgiveness for our mistakes and any offence we may have caused.

With love – Farah and Andrew