

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It has been three months now since the world congress, and the new WSA team has been extremely busy getting to grips with our new roles. Most of our time has been spent on the current and 2019 budgets. I shall spare you the details, but the big picture is not pretty.

The missing ingredient, and it has been missing for a while, are Subud-owned enterprises (as opposed to enterprises owned by individuals) that would generate the necessary income for us to be able to provide the services expected of us.

The history of Subud-owned enterprises is sad. It would probably be true to say that we were tempted by the power of the *latihan* to believe that we are infallible, and we tried to run before we even learned to crawl, with some painful results. The conclusion of most Subud members was to stay away from Subud-owned enterprises altogether. But, in reality, many groups are involved in an enterprise whether they perceive it this way or not:

They own their Subud house property, and need to manage it.

As the 'Centerprise'-related presentations during the world congress showed, it is time to actively embrace this relatively safe opportunity to run an enterprise in our groups. It doesn't require new capital or great expertise to use our Subud properties effectively. The capital has been invested by those who came before us. What is needed is our intention to cooperate harmoniously and support each other in using our properties to generate significant income from rentals. While this requires our time and effort, this does not require putting money at risk.

I therefore ask every group that owns a Subud house to make an effort to lease their property to non-Subud paying clients - usually our use of our houses is during *latihan* times only, and otherwise they stand empty. This is an absolutely scandalous waste of resources that we cannot afford. If your Subud house is poorly suited for such dual use, I urge you to sell it and buy a more suitable property.

If you believe that your group can afford to continue without such commercial use because you are willing to pay for maintenance out of your own pockets and you do not care for commercial activity, I would ask you to consider the wider Subud community - not just you and your group.

My hope is to see the Muhammad Subuh Foundation (MSF) sharpen its grants and loans policies to direct funds to groups who will use such support to leverage and multiply the benefit for all of Subud, and that Subud Enterprise Services International (SESI) would provide the knowledge and support for groups to move in that direction.

We would like to see each group generate enough income for the long-term maintenance of its property and then some - with the excess-over-maintenance-needs split three ways between the national, zonal and international spheres to support national congresses, zone meetings and travel of the zone representative, as well as World Subud Council meetings, International Helper travel, Archives and the Wings.

While this sounds straightforward enough, in what follows I shall describe some typical situations that demand a fundamental change in attitude among us, to elevate our cooperation to a much higher level. Such cooperation is at least as important in Bapak's concept of enterprise as the profit. It would be a mark of our development as SUBUD people if we manage to cooperate harmoniously and productively in such a manner. To the extent that such activity also provides an opportunity for us to interact with the public, it may also create opportunities to be better known in the community than we are today. We could also provide a couple of hours a week free of charge to the local authorities for a humanitarian activity.

Case 1.

It is all too common among Subud groups not to let Subud houses for use by non-Subud people – there is a wish to keep the place ‘clean’ and ‘pure’.

I would consider it to be against the spirit of everything Bapak told us about being spiritual *in this world*. Bapak talked often of the people who sought the spiritual in forests, deserts and caves, isolating themselves so as not to be influenced by the lower forces – and remarked how blessed we are with the *latihan* – that we can have this without isolating ourselves from the world. But this is what such groups do – they bring and recreate the cave, the desert, to their own house...

In the process, they completely relinquish any responsibility to use what they have to generate income and help other, less fortunate groups that have nothing – this is NOT who we aspire to be!

Case 2.

This is another common one. Such a group may let their premises, but just barely enough to pay for their running costs. They don’t save for future maintenance (and will probably ask MSF to help them in due course), and they certainly don’t feel they should make an effort to extract the maximum benefit from their asset so that they could help the rest of Subud.

Case 3.

This is another variation on the previous ones:

Sometimes the property the group owns is not really suitable for dual use – *latihan* and commercial. There may be many reasons – the type of building, zoning, taxation, etc.

This requires a greater effort. A group like this should look around for a different place, sell the one that isn’t suitable for commercial use and buy another one, putting their capital into a more productive use.

This situation brings out another common difficulty – lack of energy in the group, or lack of harmony, with some members who just can’t be bothered, and others who want to do the right thing but feel that it is too much to have to struggle with their brothers and sisters who would rather stay with what is known, familiar and safe.

In the examples above, the groups that own the property do not consider it their duty to make the most of what they have, and they do not see it as their obligation to help the rest of the Subud world. This is wrong, and we must change this culture. We need to overcome our self-centered, insular approach, where, as long as we have a space for our own twice a week *latihan*, we do not care about anything or anyone else.

In this, we fail to be truly ‘*Susila*’ and we fail in operating harmoniously in an enterprise – in short,

We fail to follow Bapak’s guidance.

Case 4.

Another situation where mutual responsibility would significantly help is the fairly typical case where a dwindling, ageing group “A” sits on a dilapidated property that they can barely maintain but won’t let go of.

Here is a path for better action:

“A” should cooperate through their national or zonal organisation with another group, “B”, that is better-positioned to generate income from a property.

“A” sell their old property, give the money to “B” which would reciprocate by providing the rental expenditure required for the *latihan* premises of “A”.

If that seems too complicated to find just such a group in their country or zone, then why not sell their property and create an endowment to be managed by WSA or MSF that would generate sufficient income to send enough money back to group “A” to rent a space, and hopefully would generate a lot more – allowing group “A” to instruct WSA/MSF what to do with the surplus beyond their rental needs – they could re-invest in their own endowment, or distribute to their national, zonal and WSA offices, or leave it to WSA/MSF to decide which groups or wings to help.

Case 5.

Here is a nice little dilemma;

Let us say that MSF can provide \$50,000 to a group in a country with a strong history of using their property to generate income. The group needs to refurbish its property so that they can generate significantly more income,

OR

Provide the same \$50,000 to a group in a low-income country for a house that at best will just about generate enough for its maintenance, if that.

The first is in a country with secure property rights, the second, often not as secure.

The mandate of MSF is not just to support Subud houses anywhere, but to ensure the lasting financial capacity of Subud - guess which of the options above is better for that?

Well, you may say this means that only groups in countries with already-developed economies will get help from MSF.

Shouldn't we help our brothers and sisters in less-developed countries to obtain their own houses?

Surely, if we didn't, this would not look nice? Certainly not very brotherly?

One possible solution, which will require work, is to make the loan to the first group subject to a business plan that generates enough net profit to allow them to pay for rental of a *latihan* space for the group in the less fortunate country!

They could do so directly, supporting the second group, or they could use a WSA endowment under MSF to channel funds in such a way.

Some good examples already exist;

Go to <http://subudspaces.slack.com/>

access by request from Raynard von Hahn rvh@genesislaw.ca

If you have another positive example - ask him how to upload it