

Clear the Path to the Latihan

By David Week

In order for Subud to operate in the world with credibility, it needs to get out of its 'spiritual egocentrism' and isolationism and start facing a world that tends to consider spiritual movements with great skepticism and prejudice. We have to take this into account, showing respect for others and for the ethical standards of society in general and adjust our language and presentations of Subud accordingly. At the same time we have to do this without compromising what we consider the core values of Subud to be. The basic idea is that the presentation of Subud must be adjusted to the nature of the audience—to the receiver.

—Recommendations of the 2005 Subud World Congress Forum on Presenting Subud in the World: the Image of Subud

The incredible shrinking Subud

Subud is not growing. Because it is not growing, it is ageing. Because it is ageing, it will suffer a collapse in numbers over the next ten to twenty years.

This fact is reflected in the statistics. The number of Subud members over the last forty years has remained largely unchanged, at 10–12,000. We don't know how many of those are active. Over the same forty years, the population of the earth has more than doubled. Thus, although in absolute terms Subud has remained static, in relative terms it is shrinking. Subud stays the same, while the world around it grows.

This fact is also reflected in personal anecdotes. Tony Bright-Paul, who wrote one of the very first personal accounts of Subud, wrote recently of how many of the groups in the UK are composed largely of members of his generation. He foresees that they—and their groups—will be gone within ten years. He also tells of doing a telephone poll in the UK, calling every group to find out how many applicants there were in the UK. The result: in all of the United Kingdom, just one. In my group in Sydney, almost all the members have been in Subud a very long time. Of those that are younger, almost all are either the children of Subud members, or have come to Subud through marriage. It's very rare these days to meet a truly new member—someone who came to Subud other than through family connections.

Subud's Big Bang

The numbers and the stories suggest this: in the beginning there was a Big Bang, during which Subud grew from virtually zero to its present size.

One factor in the Big Bang was Coombe Springs. At Coombe, a group of people who were waiting for something big to happen were told by Bennett that Subud was that big something. They were opened. They spread the news through their networks and families, who in turn became opened. During this time, Bennett also wrote and lectured to the public about Subud. Many of the personal accounts of Subud were written and published at that time. These attracted further new members.

Another factor in the Big Bang was Eva (later Elaina) Bartok's spontaneous recovery from a condition that threatened the health of her unborn child. Elaina attributed this recovery to Subud, and to Pak Subuh. The story hit the cover of Paris Match.[1]

This was a boom time for Subud. Many people were opened. At one time, the San Francisco group's register of people opened contained more than 5,000 names.

Through Bartok and Bennett, Subud was for a while in the public eye. Because people knew about it, it grew. As Pak Haryono pointed out in an article in *Subud World News*: this was really the *only* time it grew.[2]

After the Big Bang, Subud stopped communicating with the world, and as a result entered into its long Steady State phase, in which not much changed.

The marketing taboo

No matter how you cut it, people cannot join Subud if they don't know it exists. This brings us to a Subud taboo: marketing.

One reason it is taboo is that Pak Subuh issued a number of injunctions on the matter of promoting Subud, and these have been subject to numerous interpretations.

Another reason is that the standard descriptions of Subud are not tuned to the place or the times. The explanations are framed in terms of Javanese mythology and theology, and don't bear much relevance to the religious life of people in Chicago, Manchester or Kyoto. Now, you may say: 'But it makes sense to me!' But you are the exception: the one that that joined; the one that didn't leave. Since culturally tuned explanations are thin on the ground, people are more likely to remain silent rather than try to explain the Seven Heavens and the Javanese Theory of the Nasfu to their co-workers down at the office. Even 'renewed contact with the Grace of God', well: you could be a Jehovah's witness, couldn't you? The thought of even trying to do so makes the idea of marketing uncomfortable for many.

Yet another reason is that words like 'marketing', 'promotion' and 'selling' are haunted by certain false images. One image is of the smarmy, foot-in-door, used-car-selling, slick and deceitful sales person of Hollywood films. As one friend of mine asked, 'What are we supposed to do? Go round knocking on people's doors?' Happily, the answer is: no. As Isaac Goff once pointed out: marketing is communication.

Construct a clear path

Good communication respects the audience.

In Subud, the purpose of the communication is to allow people to walk a path. At one end of this path is a person who has never heard of Subud or the *latihan kejiwaan*. At the other end is the experience of the latihan, and their own free choice.

Respect means: no pressure, claims or propaganda. These are disrespectful. It is also disrespectful to keep Subud a big secret: who are we to hide what is good? It is disrespectful to describe it in a way that makes the listeners' eyes glaze over as they inch slowly towards the door. Respect means providing a clear, well-signed path, free of hyperbole, free of weirdness, free of obstacles.

Marketing is communication, and communication builds a clear path. If we build a clear path, then Subud will grow.

This formula assumes the following:

1. The *latihan kejiwaan* is or can be a good thing for some people—at least more than the 10,000 or so who practice it today.

2. There are high levels of sincere interest today in spirituality and spiritual practice. The absence of applicants and stayers is not the fault of the world: it is a situation of our own making, for which we need to accept responsibility.
3. There is so much garbage in the spiritual marketplace, that people are wisely suspicious of grand claims. Grand claims place obstacles between people and the latihan.
4. Few people walk the path to the latihan because the path is so obscured, and so littered with historical, cultural, and personal detritus that it's almost unwalkable.
5. The latihan does not belong to Subud, it belongs to humanity. Subud is only a caretaker of the latihan.

The rest of this article follows the steps an interested person might take as she walks towards the latihan, and what obstacles she might encounter. At each stage, I'll suggest why the obstacles are there, and how they might be removed.

STEP ONE: FINDING THE SECRET SOCIETY

Let's imagine the spiritual seeker who is just like us but without the accidental benefit of a relative or a John Godolphin Bennett to introduce them to Subud. How might they find Subud? Put yourself in their shoes, in the world somewhere, with this question:

“I am looking for a spiritual practice which doesn't come with any teaching to which I have to listen or guru to whom I have to kowtow, which doesn't attempt to interfere with my existing beliefs or disbeliefs, and which doesn't attempt to pick my pocket. Where do I find it?”

The fact that there is a Subud page on the web doesn't help you, because you don't know to google 'Subud'. The fact that Subud is listed in the phone book doesn't help you, because you don't know to look under 'S'. There are 6.5 billion people on earth, and only 10,000 members, most of whom keep pretty quiet about Subud—so you're unlikely to find Subud by word of mouth, either.

Obstacle: Subud's culture of secrecy

Subud tends to be secretive, beyond the bounds of 'no propaganda'. In fact, in so far as 'propaganda' means attempts to make claims or sway people, Subud makes some fairly high-falutin' claims, often invoking God's Will and miraculous events, when it does bother to publish. These publications are, however, placed so that no-one is likely to find them.

There are a number of possible historical reasons why this secrecy might have come about. These include traditions of secrecy in Sufism, Gurdjieff, and Silat, all of which have had an historical influence on Subud. The most compelling, to me, lies in the battle on Java between two forms of religion: '*abangan*' Islam and '*santri*' Islam.

Abangan Islam is also called Kejawen, Agama Jawa, or 'the religion of Java'. It is the indigenous syncretic religion that developed on Java over centuries. Like a layer cake, it is constructed from various influences, one on top of another. The oldest layer is the animist layer, which gives us 'life forces' and various ancestor beliefs. When the Hindu and Buddhist expansions washed over Java, the Javanese aristocracy added another layer ('*jiwa*', '*sukma*', the *wayang kulit* with its Hindu gods). Later came the Sufi missionaries—the famous '*wali songo*' or 'nine saints'—who brought not Islam, but Sufism, which incorporates Islamic elements, but has

otherwise long been in tension with Islam. Each of these influences added to the religion of Java, without displacing the earlier influences. Thus, we have in Kejawen the *selamatan* (from the animist period), the *wayang kulit* (Hindu), *samadi* (Buddhist), and the hierarchy of heavens: material, vegetable, animal, etc. (Sufi).

Finally, in the middle of the 19th Century, traders, often back from Hajj, brought Meccan Islam to Java. Meccan Islam did not assimilate into the Javanese religious melting pot. Rather, the new Muslims saw this mixture as apostasy, and made religious war against it. On its side, Kejawen continued to assimilate, pulling elements of Islam into the mix, but giving them a uniquely Javanese 'twist'. An example is Pak Subuh's stories of Sang Hyang Sis. 'Sis' is the Biblical and Qur'anic figure Seth. 'Sang Hyang' is an honorific given to Hindu gods!

Thus arose the split between the two forms of Islam in Java: *santri* (purist) and *abangan* (traditional indigenous).

Pak Subuh was an *abangan* Muslim. He mixed Hindu theology and myths with Islamic theology in his talks. He held *selamatan*s. He hosted *wayang kulit* performances. He incorporated into his talks *abangan* myths about the Queen of the South Seas, and Anwar and Anwas. He gave Subud a Hindu name. He claimed the title 'Raden Mas', a *priyayi* title from the upper crust of *abangan* society.

The conflict between *santri* and *abangan* was often violent. It culminated in 1965, when the Indonesia military orchestrated the murder of between five hundred thousand and a million people. Although nominally the massacres were against 'communists', in the political divisions of the time, the PKI (Indonesian communist party) had attracted primarily *abangan* followers from among the rural poor. What started as a political battle, turned into a religious massacre of *santri* against *abangan*.^[3]

As a result, *abangan* Muslims were deprived of their right to practice their religion, and forced to declare allegiance to one of the officially-recognised religions, which included Protestantism, Catholicism and *santri* Islam—but not the indigenous religion.

Pak Subuh's explanations are steeped in *abangan*, in Kejawen.^[4] For this reason, he would have had to adopt a low profile to avoid this communal conflict. He would have had to keep his talks secret, for members only, and avoided any form of publicity. Consider the case of Ibu Lia Aminuddin, the leader of a small *abangan* group in Jakarta. She claimed to have received the *wahyu*, and to have channelled the Angel Gabriel. She was tolerated by the authorities and the community, until she made the error of advertising her movement through a local letter-drop. Her *santri* Muslim neighbours then became enraged, pelting her house with stones. She was arrested, charged with blasphemy, tried and imprisoned for two years. This is the reality of *abangan-santri* conflict in Indonesia.^[5] And Pak Subuh's necessary stance against advertising would have influenced Subud around the world.

Indonesia's history is indeed unfortunate. But that misfortune should not determine the way we operate in the rest of the world. Clearing the path to Subud means formulating our own communication policies and strategies, country by country.

Obstacle: The myth of the chosen ones

There is a common myth that you don't find Subud, Subud finds you. God picks you out and lays down a series of breadcrumbs that leads you to Subud. This myth is supported by the ritual of the 'joining story'. 'I was in a book store and saw a book about Subud, but didn't buy it, and then the very next day a friend of mine said, "You

know, I've had this strong feeling that I must tell you about Subud!"

This myth absolves everyone of any responsibility to be good neighbours to their fellow humans by providing timely and appropriate information. That becomes God's job.

To dispel this myth take a look at the racial make-up of your country. Ask yourself if God is colour-blind. Then figure out how many people of each race God would choose, if She were colour-blind. For instance, in Australia, about 2% of the population are Aboriginals. But 0% of Subud Australians are Aboriginals. In New Zealand, 28% of the population are Maori. But I know of only one Maori in Subud New Zealand. In the United States, 11% of the population are African Americans. In forty years, I only ever met two African Americans in Subud, amidst hundreds of white Americans.

Unless God prefers white people, this is difficult to understand in terms of a divine trail of breadcrumbs. It is easy to understand if people are joining Subud through diffusion of information through personal connections—in other words, through earthly communication channels. Clearing the path to Subud means taking personal responsibility for constructing these channels, and not delegating or relegating them to God. That in turn means making the channels more democratic, more available, less dependent upon being a friend of a Subud member.

Proposal: Modest information through appropriate channels

The 10th Aim of Subud is: "To make available information concerning the Latihan Kejiwaan of Subud." Information is not available if it's locked in a Subud library in a Subud Hall. Information is not available if it's on a web page lost among 100 million other web pages. Nor is it available if it's pushed at people that don't want it.

Providing information consists of two steps:

1. Analyse where interested persons are likely to be, and how they like to receive their information, and then provide them information in that way. This is the process of identifying appropriate channels.
2. Provide the information in a form that is simple, modest, and respectful of people's existing religious beliefs or disbeliefs. This generally involves being modest, and very cautious in the use of religious language.

Example: In Sydney, cafés often post a wide range of information about what's going on in the city. Many organisations print postcards and small brochures and place them in cafés. It's a good place to leave information, because people in cafés are often in the mood to read something. Placing information there is respectful of the mood and comfort of the reader. It is non-obtrusive. It is neighbourly.

STEP TWO: EXPLANATIONS

Somehow, our interested person—that person just like us, but without the happy accident of the right friends or family—has found some modest mention of Subud. The interested person then wants to know more about what it is. We enter the realm of explanations.

Explanations are matters of the mind. They are framed in languages, which are learned. Using language, we express beliefs about the way things are. Those beliefs that we can support with publicly accessible evidence we call 'facts'. Those beliefs for which we have only support from our feelings we call 'faith'.

There are a dozen major religions and thousands of minor and local religions on the face of the earth. There are apparently 30,000 Christian sects alone. Each has its own explanations of human life, the cosmos and human history.

Subud is not a religion. Subud is not in conflict with any religion. Subud is not a set of teachings or beliefs. These are our publicly stated values: our promise to the world. Therefore, it is not appropriate to offer explanations about the meaning of human life, the cosmos, or human history, as these will certainly conflict with one religion or another.

Here are examples of disrespectful communication: telling a Buddhist that meditation would be 'mixing' and forbidden; telling a Muslim that Pak Subuh repeated Mohammed's ascension; telling a Christian that the spiritual universe is composed of a series of worlds or realms called Nasut, Malakut, Jabarut, Lahut and Hahut; telling a Hindu that yoga is 'mixing' and forbidden — or should only be practised for health purposes; telling a secular humanist that the latihan is 'the grace of God' or 'a manifestation of the Great Life Force'; telling a Baha'i that their religion is incomplete without the *latihan kejiwaan*.

It's a minefield, and there is evidence that we haven't trodden it very well. Membership of Subud has been ruled inconsistent with being a member of the Baha'i faith. In Malaysia, Subud has been ruled to be a 'deviant sect' of Islam. The Catholic Church has ruled Subud to be a religion, and ipso facto inconsistent with the Catholic faith. And we've accomplished all this despite our small numbers and very low profile. Some people blame 'intolerance' on the part of various religions and countries. We have no control over the attitudes of others. What we do have control over is our own actions and publications, and we can ensure that we do not—in accordance with our stated aims and values—use them to promote particular religious beliefs or viewpoints.

Obstacle: Kejawen

One obstacle in treading the minefield is that we draw no clear lines between the latihan and Pak Subuh's explanations of the latihan. As a result, we publish talks and articles that are full of Kejawen myths, cosmology, theology and symbolism, and put the Subud symbol on them.

Here are some Kejawen concepts you may recognise. From Kejawen's Sufi roots: *Sharia, tariqa, haqiqah, marifa*; a seven level cosmology; souls emanating from God and returning to God; Nasut, Malakut, Jabarut, Lahut, Hahut; '*roh*' and '*nafsu*'; material, vegetable, animal, human souls; *al-insan al-kamil*; fire, earth, air and water as elements; a universal mystical core to all religions. From Kejawen's earlier Hindu roots: *jiwa; sukma; susila, budhi* and *dharmas; rasa*, or 'inner feeling'; Anwar and Anwas. From Kejawen's earliest animist roots: *rajahs, selamatan*, connections to dead ancestors; testing; '*tofakur*'; *prihatin*; Monday–Thursday fasting; creation as filled with 'life forces'; significance of names; the idea of God's power as something that is channelled through people, can 'open' other people, and can reside as 'content' in objects like buildings and crises.

Imagine if instead of being born in Java the founder of Subud had been a Roman Catholic. Imagine then that, when asked by members to give explanations of the latihan, he'd responded by describing the latihan in terms of prayer, contemplation, the Son, the blood of Christ, the body of Christ, the trinity, sin, redemption, confession, priests, bishops, the Pope, saints, churches, angels, archangels, seraphim and cherubim, heaven, purgatory, limbo and hell. Then, that we carefully collated these explanations, printed them, bound them, even produced Special

Editions, and put the Subud symbol on the front. Finally, we took these off to Malaysia, where we made them available to the Department of Islamic Progress. We would not be surprised, then, if the Department were to deem us a Christian sect. When we do the same with Kejawen, we shouldn't then be surprised that the same Department judges us a 'deviant sect of Islam'.

Obstacle: Ignorance

One way to tread the minefield might be to frame the latihan for different audiences: one version for a Christian audience, another for a Muslim audience, and so forth. There are some basic problems with this approach. It would work with the religions that flow from the Indian and Chinese traditions, because they are inclusive. Being a Buddhist does not preclude one being a Taoist, a Confucian, or even a Christian. However, the Abrahamic religions—the other 50% of the planet—tend to be much more exclusive. And google would quickly reveal to a Christian any alternative Islamic explanation. Nonetheless, it seems like a noble experiment to overtly frame the same spiritual exercise in the language of different religions, and a natural way forward for a movement that makes the claims that Subud does. The main obstacle here is that many Subud members came to Subud out of rejection of 'organised' religion, and so we don't have many members who are also deeply informed and practising followers of a major religion. Any attempt to move in this direction would have to be accompanied by a widespread impulse to actually get to know the major religions, in depth.

Proposal: Empty or full

There are, it seems, two ways of treading the minefield, which I'll call 'empty' or 'full'. The 'empty' path is similar to that of the mystical *via negativa*, the theology of negation. It says: since the latihan is an exercise beyond the mind, any description of it is basically false. Therefore, to mislead as little as possible, we should be absolutely minimalist in our description of it.

When I propose this, the first reaction I receive is often, 'But then why would anyone come?' In 2005, I attended a workshop run by Harlinah Longcroft, which asked people to describe the latihan out of their own experience. There were about forty people there, including people who had been practising for thirty and forty years and more. But when Harlinah asked, 'What can you honestly say about the latihan?', the most common answer was: 'It's a mystery.' I think that for many people a mystery that they explore themselves will be more appealing than an exercise with a fully developed theology attached to it.

The alternative is to take a 'full' approach—the *via positiva*—to describe the latihan in the terms and world-views of each religion, separately. I think this can only be a long-term project. It requires a deep understanding of the religions or world-views involved, and can only be carried out by people who are deep followers of these religious traditions. Since these are few and far between in Subud today, it's best, I think, to focus first on the 'empty'.

STEP THREE: THREE MONTH'S WAITING

This step is an obstacle in itself. In Christianity, there is no waiting period. No one tests your sincerity. Similarly with Islam, you recite the *shahadah* and that's it. If we look at other spiritual exercises, such as *qigong*, or meditation, or the Jesus prayer, or the Sufi *dhikr*—there is no waiting period. I monthly receive emails from the Sydney Sufi Centre to come join them in reciting the *dhikr*. The very odd fact is that—despite the enormous taboo surrounding any talk of eliminating this practice, it is surely a relatively late innovation. When Pak Subuh went to Coombe, there was no

waiting period. When he went to Chile, there was no waiting period. Nor Mexico. These I know from witnesses. In Pak Prio Hartono's account of his own opening, we find again that not only was there no waiting period—he wasn't even asked if he wanted to join.

But at the same time as these mass openings, there emerged the threat to Subud of lawsuits, associated with 'crisis', and 'Subud psychosis'—as it was noted in the medical journals of the time. Though I've not been able to track down the exact time at which it was introduced, it does seem that the promulgation of the waiting period was associated with this threat. This practical prohibition seems to have involved into a 'sincerity' test, whereby those who have access to the latihan administer a qualification test on those who wish to access it. The latihan then is far from 'free'.

Proposal: Continuously re-evaluated policy

At the time, the three-month waiting period was an appropriate policy response. It represented a *change* in the way that Subud conducted itself. If things can change one way, they can later change in another way. What is done can be undone; what is considered can be re-considered; what is made can be re-made. Subud is not served by policies that are set in stone.

The policy should be re-evaluated, with a completely open mind. Above all, we should subject the policy to a different kind of testing: against reality. Are all the imagined risks still in place? Are people really going to sue Subud for being opened? Is it really our job to check on peoples' 'sincerity'. Is 2007 the same as 1957?

STEP FOUR: LIVING WITH SUBUD

In various places I've seen estimates of the number of people opened. The low is 200,000. The high is one million. Roughly, the current membership is 10,000—which means that between 95% and 99% of all people who go through all the trouble involved in being opened, turn around and walk away. This is extraordinary. Look at the trouble they've gone through: finding Subud, listening to explanations which may not gel with their beliefs, and then a three-month waiting period which is supposed to test their sincerity (but in this light, would appear to fail on a massive scale). After all that, they walk away.

By many accounts, this process is still being repeated today. It is commonplace. People go through the lengthy rigmarole of joining Subud, hang around for a year or two, and then evaporate again. Subud USA's recent 'Outreach' research confirms this pattern: 2000 long-time members, with about 150 new members opened every year, who don't stay.

Why are they leaving? Theories abound. Unfortunately, facts are in short supply. There is no register kept of why people leave. This is 'not required'. Yet from an ethical perspective, it may well be required. If we see ourselves as caretakers of a spiritual exercise called the latihan, and believe that the latihan is of value to human beings, then it is our responsibility to find out why people walk away.

Why? To ensure that it's not us. What if it is us—our behaviour, our language, our lifestyle, our inter-relationships, our actions, or our inactions that drive people away? Then, by our own lights, we are guilty of a terrible act. In order to ensure that we are innocent of that act, we need to track the facts, and find out the truth behind this extraordinarily high rejection rate.

Possible Obstacle: Fundamentalism and Evangelism

The reason why people leave is still a mystery—and not of the good, intriguing variety. But there are many stories of people leaving because of individual opinions about Subud and the latihan rigidly held, and forcefully put forward. When this happens, we have within Subud an internal fundamentalism ('my way or the highway'; my reality is 'the' reality), and an internal evangelism (allow me to convert you to my point of view).

On the one hand, these are natural human activities that occur everywhere. On the other hand, these are activities that one does not expect to encounter in a Subud hall, having been told—among many other things—that there is no dogma, no teacher, no teaching, and that in the Subud latihan every person experiences what they need for themselves, in their own way. With promises like that in hand, one should not then be subjected to either fundamentalism or evangelism.

Possible Obstacle: Boredom

I can hear an invisible chorus of 'heart and mind!' when I mention the word boredom. And certainly, all things that are worth doing require some patience and persistence. At the same time, however, 'spiritual growth' is about change. One can understand if no change is apparent after one year. Even two. But after ten? or twenty?

I've been told the story of a person (his name was given to me) who after being absent from Subud for twenty years went back to where he was opened—a major metropolitan group. There, he saw the same people doing the same latihans they had been doing twenty years before. This is not evidence. But it's a good parable. If we talk about 'spiritual growth' but in fact little or nothing changes—who are we trying to kid?

Here are sources of dogma that are worth inspecting: the virtue 'patience' interpreted as laziness; the exercise of 'submission' interpreted as passivity in life; the aim of 'harmony' interpreted as 'no one say anything controversial'; the practice of 'consensus' interpreted as 'tyranny of the minority, no matter how small.'

Proposal: Actively promote the recognition that every person's personal belief—even when Pak Subuh agrees with him or her—is still his or her personal belief. It is not Subud. Create a culture in which fundamentalism and evangelism are not allowed to enter our halls. To combat boredom, develop a culture of evaluation, in which we regularly ask ourselves: how are we going? Are we changing; if so, how? If not, how? Even asking the questions creates the ground for change.

Asking questions does not mean forcing solutions. It means keeping the questions alive, instead of letting them sleep. The poet Rilke knew this. In his *Letters to a Young Poet*, he wrote:

Have patience with everything that remains unsolved in your heart. Try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books written in a foreign language. Do not now look for the answers. They cannot now be given to you because you could not live them. It is a question of experiencing everything. At present you need to live the question. Perhaps you will gradually, without even noticing it, find yourself experiencing the answer, some distant day.

The Genius of 'And'

The alternative most commonly cited marketing model is what I think of as the 'fruits of the latihan' approach. The model here is that when we manifest some evidence of the benefits of the latihan, people will go 'gee, that's interesting' and walk the path to the latihan. I have some doubts about this theory. First, it's been pursued for thirty

years, without much evidence that it works. Second, in the centre of Jakarta the founder himself built the nine-storey PTS Wijoyo building. It is difficult to imagine a more public manifestation. Yet decades later, the membership of Subud Indonesia is largely unchanged. Third, it is too ambitious. What Subud Bank will ever compete with the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Grameen Bank? If shown the two, most people are likely to say, 'I'll have some of what the Grameen is having.' Fourth, it doesn't jive with history: most of today's members weren't brought in by projects: why should anyone else be? And, finally, marketing is about communication, and the proposed channel of communication is very expensive, roundabout, and unclear. It's as though I wanted to communicate the benefits of Vitamin E cream by applying it to my face, wandering around, and waiting for someone to notice. Much simpler: let people know it exists, and let them try it themselves with no hassles.

None the less, there are different approaches in every community, and for good reason: many approaches pursued together represent less risk than all the eggs in one basket. As the authors of *Built to Last*, on the longest-lived companies, wrote: 'Shun the tyranny of "or"; embrace the genius of "and".'

For these reasons, I'd recommend that Subud pursue both strategies at the same time. By all means: manifest the benefits of the latihan. It can only help. *And* at the same time: clear the path.

* * *

In this article, I've proposed a number of obstacles that may sit on the potentially clear path to the latihan. You may think of others. You may disagree with these. What seems certain, though, is that there are obstacles. Return to the central image of this article: on the one hand, 6.5 billion people; on the other hand, the latihan, which we believe to be a good thing; and in between, a trickle. If you consider each and every one of those 6.5 billion people to be a sincere, good person—as sincere and good as yourself, yes, maybe even better..., why the trickle?

Either the product's no good, or the path is not clear.

Clear the path to the latihan.

Notes

1. For this story, see <http://www.undiscoveredworldspress.com/cschapthree.html> > http://evabartok.tripod.com/id40_biography_9_10.htm > <http://evabartok.tripod.com/id48.htm>
2. How basic can we go back to basic? By Haryono Sumohadiwidjojo > Subud World News, Volume III, No. 6; May 2000
3. Aspects of *santri-abangan* conflict:

...long-standing tensions aligned with political antagonism created deep hatreds between groups so that the killings, when they came, were not directed simply at destroying communist leaders but at extirpating whole communities. In East Java, where such antagonism was strongest, *santri* communities, represented by the NU youth group Ansor, waged a sustained campaign of destruction against their *abangan* neighbours.
<<http://books.google.com/books?vid=ISBN0810849356>>

These categories became politicized, hardened over time by political competition, and eventually bloody. The culminating episode was the massive

slaughter of hundreds of thousands in 1965–6. Since many *abangan* nominal Muslims had supported the Communist Party and the left wing of the Indonesian Nationalist Party, they were the objects of violence inspired and condoned by the Indonesian military and often carried out by Islamic militants. <<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/ralectures/lecture2.htm>>

Although many Indonesians now describe the episode as a simple struggle between Communists and anti-Communists, the fury of the killings reflected ancient religious and social cleavages. In Javanese society, there has long been a division between the *santri*, the minority of Moslems who take their faith quite seriously—making pilgrimages to Mecca, and regarding religious rules as their guiding principles—and the *abangan*, the much larger group for whom Islam is a nominal religion, grafted onto the older traditions of the island. The *santri* tend to include merchants and traders who live near the coast; the *abangan* tend to be peasants who work the inland rice paddies. The Communists had found many members among the *abangan*, but most of these people took the teachings of Marx about as seriously as they had taken the refinements of the Koran. After the attempted coup, members of these two groups went on rampages against one another. <<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/198206/indonesia/2>>

4. For a brief survey of the Kejawen influence on Pak Subuh's talks, see: <<http://www.sitekreator.com/demystifysubud/index.html>>
5. <<http://www.ahrchk.net/ua/mainfile.php/2006/1464/>>