



MUHAMMAD SUBUH FOUNDATION
THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD SUBUD ASSOCIATION
<http://www.msubuhfoundation.org>

History & Purpose of MSF



Photo by Mikhail David

To respectfully acknowledge and honor

The Muhammad Subuh Foundation is named in honor of the man who made, and is still making, a huge impact on the lives of many people throughout the world by conveying the spiritual practice known as Subud, and by providing rich and meaningful explanations contained in thousands of talks given in the course of his life. This man was known as Bapak Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo, or simply “Bapak”.

Varindra Tarzie Vittachi¹ was one such person who was touched deeply by Bapak and Subud, and he served for many years as the chairman of the World Subud Council, appointed by Bapak.

During his tenure as chairperson in the mid-1960s, Varindra had a dream:

“I saw a big building and on its white marble façade were the words: ‘Muhammad Subuh Foundation’. When I entered the building, it seemed to be a formal place like a bank, but instead of money what I saw was a stack of legal documents which turned out to be people’s Wills and Testaments in which Subud members had willed a portion of their assets as bequests to the Brotherhood.”

Varindra told his dream to Bapak, who explained:

“Your dream is a true dream. It is right that you start work on establishing such a Foundation to look after bequests of Subud members. But Bapak asks that as long as Bapak is in this world it should not be called Muhammad Subuh Foundation. Better call it Subud Brotherhood International Foundation.”

¹Varindra Tarzie Vittachi served in a variety of United Nations positions for more than two decades. He retired as deputy executive director of the United Nations Children’s Fund in 1988.

In the 1970’s, he served as director of information of the United Nations Population Fund. He joined the Children’s Fund in 1980 where he served until his retirement. Following this, he lectured and wrote extensively about poverty in underdeveloped countries.

Born in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, and educated there at the university in Colombo, he became an editor of The Ceylon Observer. He wrote a book, *EMERGENCY ’58 – THE STORY OF THE CEYLON RACE RIOT*, about the Government’s involvement in the country’s race riots that won him the Magsaysay Prize in 1959 and led to his being declared persona non grata. Varindra’s book is available for reading online at <http://www.tamilnation.org/books/Eelam/vitachi.pdf>

From 1960 to 1965 he was Asian director of the International Press Institute, an organization of editors devoted to promoting the freedom of the press. He was, at the same time, a correspondent for The Economist, the BBC and The Sunday Times of London and was a contributing editor for Newsweek. He was known as the ‘newspaper doctor’.

The seeds of Varindra's dream spread and took root and, in 1971, the Subud Brotherhood International Foundation (SBIF) was established. Bapak further clarified its role:

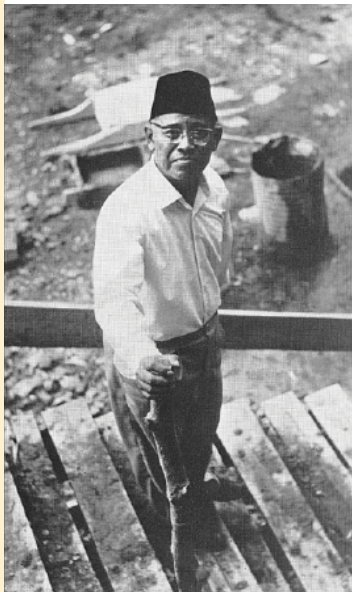
"SBIF is like a go-between, an intermediary body to receive the funds derived from the enterprises of Subud members and distribute them to the various Subud centers for the establishment of latihan premises, guesthouses, hospitals, schools, and the homes required for the old and needy."

In 1991, four years after Bapak's death, the Muhammad Subuh Foundation ("MSF") was established to assume the role of SBIF as a non-profit, tax-exempt body in the Commonwealth of Virginia, USA. The Foundation's first project was the construction of the meeting hall for the International Subud Center at Amanecer in Colombia, where the 9th Subud World Congress² was held in 1993.



Photo by Lavasir Nordrum

In the 1990s, the Foundation's financial base grew significantly through the generous support of individual donations and bequests, as well as contributions from private enterprises. In 1995 Daniel Cheifetz established the first MSF donor-advised endowment fund named in honour of Lucienne & Francois (Feri) Farkas. In 1997, Yayasan Muhammad Subuh, a registered foundation in Indonesia, established a working relationship with MSF, and brought with it an array of Indonesian land assets and shareholdings. As the rate of contributions increased, so did the number of projects funded.



Initially, the Foundation focused on providing financial assistance to build or acquire meeting facilities for its members. While this continues to be an objective, MSF has expanded its activities. For example, in 1996, the Foundation provided its first humanitarian project grant to Cita Buana School in Jakarta, Indonesia, followed by a 1997 grant to Fundación Amor in Colombia. In 1998, it sponsored an international Youth Mentoring Program aimed at helping young people identify a career path and gain important tools to achieve success. The Foundation has also made a long-term commitment to fund the translation and preservation of the talks of Bapak and his daughter, Ibu Siti Rahayu Wiryohudoyo.

The Foundation continued to grow. In 2001, to commemorate Bapak's centennial, MSF was asked to manage the "Bapak Legacy Fund", a permanently restricted fund for Subud in honor of its founder and the gift he brought the world. A few years later in 2003, the Leonard & Aisah Parker Endowment Fund was founded to benefit the efforts of Subud in Australia.

Since then, dynamic relationships and projects have been undertaken, such as providing matching grants for youth travel to Congress in partnership with the Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace, the renovations of Bapak's House (now called "Adi Puri") in Jakarta, Indonesia, and new scholarship opportunities through the Subud Education Fund and the Farkas Fund.

²A Subud World Congress is held approximately every four years in a different location each time. Members from all over the world gather to conduct the affairs of the association, exchange experiences and lessons learned, and share in the practice of Subud.

The purpose of MSF

It can be helpful to be reminded of the original reasons and intentions for establishing the Foundation so that key aspects are not forgotten, left behind, or misconstrued with the passage of time. Here are some excerpts from Varindra Vittachi's letter announcing the establishment of the MUHAMMAD SUBUH FOUNDATION and explaining its purpose; New York, October 1991

Dear brothers and sisters,

The World Subud Association has now legally established the Muhammad Subuh Foundation which many of us dreamed of and worked at for more than a quarter of a century. The Foundation is incorporated in the State of Virginia, USA, as a not-for-profit institution created by the World Subud Association and has received the 10596 certification which provides tax exemption in the United States for the Foundation as well as those who donate funds to it.

The Muhammad Subuh Foundation exists to advance the purposes of the World Subud Association by providing financial and human resources to support the work of Subud bodies such as Susila Dharma International. WSC has selected and appointed a Board of Trustees to manage the funds of the Foundation and design its programs. The Trustees have pledged themselves to follow Bapak's injunction that the Muhammad Subuh Foundation would "look after money well", so that members who make bequests and donations may have full confidence that they will be prudently and trustworthily handled in accordance with their wishes.

At the first meeting of the Board of Trustees we decided that, following the example Bapak set for the International Subud Committee, the Muhammad Subuh Foundation will also have a moving administrative office so that no single country may feel that it is a permanent national institution. For legal purposes the registration must continue to be where the Foundation has been established.

It was also agreed that the Trustees would invite at least two International Helpers to assist them at their meetings.

While the Muhammad Subuh Foundation has been given the degree of autonomy it needs to carry out its functions, it is an integral part of the World Subud Association and it will follow the policies set by the World Subud Association at the World Congress and carried through by the World Subud Council between Congresses. To reinforce the Foundation's responsiveness to the Council the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the WSA are members of the Board of the Foundation. [Ed. note: According to MSF by-laws, the WSA Deputy Chairman may be a member of the Foundation Board in the event the WSA Chairperson is a Foundation life-long trustee.]

The Board will prepare its program of work and submit it to the World Subud Council annually for approval. The financial accounts will also be placed for approval on this occasion.

The procedure will be much like what is practiced at the United Nations where the agencies submit their program and accounts for approval at the annual meeting of their Governing Councils.

The Trustees have undertaken to abide by the important principles of transparency, accountability and informativeness which are essential to an institution which seeks to attain and sustain a relationship of trust and credibility with its constituency of members.



So much for the organizational structure of the Muhammad Subuh Foundation. What will it do?

- * It will serve as a safe repository and prudent manager of testamentary bequests, properties and special donations provided by Subud enterprises and individual members for the advancement of Subud.
- * It will seek additional funds from grant-giving institutions outside the Subud membership who share an interest in one or more of the purposes of the Foundation.
- * It will seek to help hasten the completion of the archival work: the collection, transcription, translation, publication and dissemination of Bapak's words on tape, film and paper.
- * It will promote the social work of the World Subud Association by reinforcing the activities of Susila Dharma, the Subud Cultural Association and the Subud Youth organisation.
- * It will incorporate the functions and purposes of its predecessor, the Subud Brotherhood International Foundation, and administer its assets.
- * It will design and develop, in consultation with the World Subud Council and its affiliated institutions (the "Wings"), programs for the benefit of Subud members and for the communities whose lives they touch.
- * It will concentrate on programs which facilitate members' efforts to obtain and secure suitable premises for the *latihan* [the spiritual practice of Subud] and associated activities.
- * It will assist National Committees to develop Subud Centres in their countries as has now been done by the Yayasan Muhammad Subuh in Indonesia. These Centres may be linked together to form an international chain of Subud Centres. It will assist in finding adequate means for helpers to carry out their duties.



Photo by Simón Cherpitel

Bapak reminded us constantly that the growth and spread of Subud would be accomplished by the "proof" of the value of the *latihan* as demonstrated in our outer lives. He frequently stressed the importance of the social work of Subud which involved education, information, health and caring for "the human community". These are the 'principal concerns' of the Muhammad Subuh Foundation.

There is much to be done to formulate and fund such programs and our work will inevitably be very modest in the immediate future. But if we are able from the beginning to be honest and open and prudent we should be able to earn the trust and active support of our brothers and sisters. That is what we hope.

With best wishes,

Varindra

