

How to Start an Enterprise for Subud

Subud Enterprise Services International

The enterprises Bapak means are joint enterprises, undertaken jointly between you, not by just one or two people only but by a lot of people forming a company, an NV (Naamloze Vennootschap) or PT (Perseroan Terbatas), a Limited Company, which can really be seen to have adequate capital. That means establishing an enterprise with a lot of members working together, collecting a large amount of capital. In this way the enterprises you carry on will really be able to strengthen Subud. If you carry on an enterprise by yourself, according to your own wishes - selling something or other, for instance - then, although that too is a very good effort and could really be the start of a business that might also prove successful, you will not be bound by a regulation stating that so much per cent must be put into the funds of the Spiritual Brotherhood of Subud. [72 YVR 2]

A Base Model: The most likely model for a Subud Enterprise, therefore, is one where a Subud Committee (whether International, National or Center) has got the word out and encouraged a team of business experts to give of their time and energy, and perhaps some seed capital, to decide on a particular kind of business to start. Obviously the kind of business would relate to the kinds of expertise available to them. While doing this they continue to work in their everyday jobs. Eventually the business will take shape as an appropriate kind of limited liability company that will have as wide a range of shareholders as possible, and without any group of investors having a dominant, controlling interest. This, then, reflects the reality that we are not setting up anyone's own "personal" enterprise but a socially-oriented, collectively owned Subud enterprise. Eventually the

company would end up with a Management Board elected by the final shareholders who would, in turn, hire a competent management team to run it. This model can be employed even in a quite small Center enterprise.

“the business that has to be set up should be in the form of a limited liability company in which people buy shares. The purpose of this is twofold. First of all, it is in order that the members can really know that the result of their work, and later on their profit, is really the property of each one of them. In other words, they know that it is their profit and they are the people who have produced it, have brought it about. Secondly, the need to have it set up in this way, as a communal project with shareholdings by the various members involved, is in order to learn how to work together in harmony, to learn how to co-operate, how to work together in a way that really uses the talents of people.” [74 CDK 5]

Motive: The most important principle concerns motive or purpose. If your primary interest is to create something that will benefit you personally, then there's a good chance it's not something you should try to do in the name of Subud. Better to pursue this on your own and create your own enterprise or business. The reason is that the purpose of an enterprise for Subud is just that, it's for Subud. In other words, the purpose is not to benefit or provide the livelihood or increase the status of one member, or a few members, but to benefit Subud, the Subud community and organization, and the larger community through the social projects the enterprise will help fund.

"The enterprises Bapak suggests to you are enterprises of all the Subud members. They are not the enterprises of individuals, because it is no longer appropriate for us to pursue profit just for ourselves alone but, so far as possible, we should do something together, with other partners, other members, so that eventually we also share in harvesting and tasting the fruits of what we do together. To do this implies that the people in Subud are in harmony not only in their spiritual life but also in their worldly life. That means harmony of thought and mind, so that you are really living up to the highest human standards, which makes us be harmonious, both as among ourselves and also between all of you and other people". [72CPT2]

A Social Purpose: So, the primary purpose is to act collectively together so that we need not rely only on the donations we all give to Subud, individually, and we act collectively to fund our Associations needs, as well as to serve the needs of our collective membership.

"... our enterprises, which exist to fulfill our needs and the needs of Subud in the world, are all to some extent social in character. In other words, the ultimate purpose of enterprises in Subud is quite different from the purpose of enterprises outside of Subud. Normally, when people start an enterprise, they have only one aim, and that is to make money for themselves. In Subud, the aim of enterprises is many fold, and these aims are primarily social.

One aim of the enterprises in Subud is to enable us to take in those of our own members who do not have a job, who do not yet know how to work, and to teach them to work. In other words, the aim is educational: to teach these members to use their brains, of course, in order to pursue profit. So we teach those members who are not yet capable of working, how to use their brains and to get the benefit of that in the material sense.

And then, the aim of the profit that we make in our enterprises is primarily to support the needs of Subud, to support the aims and ideals we have in Subud which Bapak has often talked about: the aim of starting hospitals, old people's homes, schools, homes for the disabled and so on. So it is clear that the mainspring of our energy in doing enterprises in Subud is directed in a different direction from what is normal in the world. And this direction is primarily social or charitable. But in order to fulfill these aims the enterprises must make a profit and must work in the normal way." [84 CDK 10]

Working in Harmony: A guideline to keep in mind is that another purpose of doing enterprises for Subud is to learn how to work in an harmonious way. This is easy to say but sometimes difficult to do. But enterprise is a terrific way to get practice at doing it, learning how to adjust to people who are or seem very different from you or are difficult, etc. Because everyone has the same purpose in mind, a purpose outside of their individual benefit, it's easier to maintain harmony and follow one's inner guidance than in a private enterprise. A third guideline or purpose is to choose those business ideas, as much as

possible, which will, hopefully, offer significant job opportunities for the membership as well as internships and training programs for younger members and so on.

"This then is the importance of enterprises; and in doing enterprises – since the purpose of enterprises is not only for material gain, but also to achieve harmony in society – one of the cardinal rules is that in the way we run our enterprises, we must always have harmony among ourselves. The reason why we need to have harmony among ourselves is because if something is to succeed it must be done in harmony. The moment we let disputes and disharmony and mutual distrust and differences of opinion creep in, we are heading for disaster". [77 BRS 4]

What Kind of Business? Enterprises sometimes begin with a working group who consider several types of businesses before deciding which would be best for Subud under the circumstances they are dealing with. For example an enterprise in a centre would be different from one planned at the regional, national, zonal, or international level. It would probably be relatively small compared to the other levels, but might not, depending on available capital and expertise. Working groups must include professional experts. This means people who have special professional expertise in business or business-related professions. But there are no rules about this. Anyone willing to do the hard work and undertake the often difficult learning curves to make a business successful can participate. Those with experience can guide those with little or none.

Any type of business can work, but it may be best to work on proven concepts and not ideas which have never been tried before in order to reduce risk. Examples include a business that's for sale, which could be improved; buying a rental property; etc. The business should:

- yield enough cash flow to become profitable within a reasonable amount of time
- provide investors with a normal return on investment
- employ and/or provide apprenticeship opportunities to members

Committees at every level are enjoined to encourage the development of such working groups, though nothing prevents one or two members from providing the initial stimulus on their own.

"People say they can't do this or that or the other. They say they are not yet used to doing it. If you are not used to it, you must get used to it. If you were already used to it, Bapak would not need to suggest it. If you were already engaged in trade, Bapak would not need to suggest that you should go into trade. If you have not yet done any trading, then Bapak suggests

that you become traders.
It's like that.

This, brothers and sisters, is why Bapak suggests that you should make a start; at once if possible, but, if not, you may do it gradually. But the most important thing is for you to be good at getting together; getting together with your own brothers and sisters. Don't argue and quarrel just at the time of intending to establish an enterprise. That cannot be the right way, the best way; the way to make life in our brotherhood happy is by being harmonious.

Bapak suggests setting up all sorts of enterprises as quickly as possible, forming some kind of body or group to make clothing, some kind of group to produce food, some kind of group for the produce of the soil; forming groups of all kinds. There is no lack of opportunity. People from outside Indonesia are able to do it, why can't you? You can, especially you who are already enveloped by the power of God. Something is born from that later". [73 CDK 2]

"First of all, before you do any enterprises, before you start thinking about enterprises, the Committee should set up a group of experts or a body of consultants – which Bapak has often described. This body should consist of those among you who have expertise in some field. It should combine expertise in whatever fields you have it in – business, trade, technical matters, production, industry, marketing. How many people will be on this consulting body or this group – which is usually called SES or Subud Enterprise Services – depends on what you need and how many people you have available. The purpose of this group of experts is to give guidance, help, and supervision to those who are going to do the enterprise. For example, if a Group Committee wants to start an enterprise in the field of agriculture, then they should be advised, helped, and put on the right track by experts in the field of agriculture. If they do an enterprise in another field, then again they should be guided and put on the right track by an expert in that field" [82 SYD 2].

The Feasibility Study: After meeting several times, working groups usually settle on one idea that makes the most sense for its members. It's then that the real work begins in doing the research to prepare a feasibility study or a business plan for the enterprise in mind. Once the plan is ready, it can and perhaps should be submitted to a national or international SES body for their review. It's the job of these SES bodies to identify experts within the Subud community who can add value to such business plans by pointing out anything that was overlooked, etc. While working on the business plan itself, SES can also help in finding expert members who can assist in writing the business plan or answer specific questions you cannot find the answer to on your own.

Once the study has been approved by the SES body, it is submitted to the appropriate committee for their general approval. "Approval" means the business can seek investment from the general membership while following local laws in regard to the solicitation of in-

vestment funds. It does not mean, however, that the committee endorses the business, implying a guarantee. Risk is risk and should follow local laws accordingly.

"Bapak's reminder to the committee is that they should truly pay attention to the matter of enterprises. What Bapak means by this is that they should promote enterprises among the membership and take an interest in the work that is done by the Subud membership, so that they ensure that there are no Subud members who do not know how to work, who do not have an opportunity to work and to lead a useful life.

...So this is the prime duty of the committee and Bapak advises them to carry this out properly. Bapak advises them to set up a group of people, such as Bapak has often described in the past by the words SES or Subud Enterprise Services, a group of people who are expert in the field of work, in the field of business, and so on, a group of people who can screen suggestions and study proposals and enterprises of the members, so that, when they work, they can really be successful. And if you can really do all this, then it will mean that your group will come to life and New York will not be like a dead city from the point of view of its Subud activities. It will be as though your group is truly something alive in its relationships and in its activities". [81 NYC 6]

"Incubation" Approach: Another way to start a Subud enterprise is where one or more members have an idea they think could be successful and they pursue it on their own, investing their own time and capital to get it started and prove up its value. Once its value is proven, they may then want to expand it, so they go to an SES body with an appropriate expansion plan, and once approved seek additional capital from the general membership. However this approach that, essentially, changes the ownership of an enterprise from an individual or small group's personal enterprise to a Subud enterprise will need to appreciate that they will not be able to maintain a personal, majority stake in the business but only a minority stake (to be defined and agreed in the business plan).. In this way, the purpose of a Subud enterprise (as a collective effort) can be safeguarded.

How much goes to Subud? The by-laws of the enterprise should stipulate that 15–25% or more of the shares of the company (or 25% of the dividends paid to shareholders at least) will be given to Subud, with the specific entity being named. At the international level the primary entity would be MSF, although the company's shareholders may want to elect one or more earmarked recipients if they wish to do so. At the national level, the national organization, would be the primary beneficiary; at the local level the Subud Center etc. If shares are inappropriate, then the donation can be made as a percentage of revenue, with 3% being the guideline, or as a percentage of dividends paid, as above.

Supervisory/ Oversight Board: It's recommended that

enterprises for Subud follow a corporate model used in Europe and Indonesia. The model stipulates that there be two boards of directors instead of the more common single board. The first board is the operating board and the second is a supervising board. The operating board is concerned with day-to-day, month-to-month, quarter-to-quarter operating practices, while the supervisory board looks to the long range strategy of the firm. The members of the operating board necessarily have to all be experts in the enterprise's field(s). The supervisory board should be composed of experts, too, of course, but not necessarily all of them. They can be chosen rather on the basis of their character and good judgment. They may be a member of a Subud committee, or of SES for example. They cannot intervene in the day-to-day management of the company but they must receive proper and correct reports from the Management Board; be free to communicate and advise the shareholders and to, generally, represent all the stakeholders in the company; whether shareholders, Subud Committees, SES(I), suppliers, staff, even clients of the company, and Subud itself.

SOME FURTHER REFERENCES FROM BAPAK'S ADVICE & GUIDANCE

COMMITTEES AND ENTERPRISES

1959 – 1st World Congress Report: "Our International Committee was responsible for establishing charitable activities such as schools and hospitals, raising the funding for them, and administering their foundation 'until such time as they became self-supporting'".

1961 Bapak in Warta #3/4 1961: "...the members of the Committee, beside their ordinary work, should also exert their efforts to establish business concerns from which a part of the profit can be given to Subud."

Sri Lanka, 1967 (67CMB2): "And Bapak also expects, because in the end everything comes down to our material needs or money ... so Bapak recommends that the chair and the committee start a business or enterprise. This enterprise will earn money that will contribute to and strengthen the group finances, the money available to the committee. We will never have enough for our needs if we depend on donations and subscriptions. So, the committee needs to take the initiative to start a business to strengthen the financial position of the group and the Subud association here.

If you start an enterprise, if the committee members start a business, the money won't just benefit Subud and strengthen the group finances. You can also to some extent help members who are unemployed, by giving them work. In doing this you will learn to work based on your own resources; you will learn to stand on your own feet.

What is more, you will learn how to work, not out of

self-interest, but for the common good. As your enterprise grows, the bigger it gets, eventually you – or the national committee here in Ceylon – will be able to build schools to educate poor children, and a hospital for sick people. There the sick will be treated and cared for by Subud doctors. If they are treated by doctors who do the latihan, the sick will receive treatment based on two powers: the power of knowledge as taught in medical schools, and the power of Almighty God.

In this way Subud will fulfill one of the aims God set for it – it will provide charitable funds for the benefit of all humankind. The aim of Subud, the aim of the latihan, of these physical movements, is that God wants us, wants Subud, to be able to guide other people in their outer and their spiritual life – the inner and the outer."

Bapak's Autobiography – Page 67: "Ever since the second International Congress in New York, I have explained the purpose and necessity for all of you Subud brothers and sisters to carry out enterprises in Subud. It is vital to concern ourselves with this because it has an extremely important connection with our aspirations to carry out social work, for example to build schools, orphanages, handicapped children's homes, old people's homes, hospitals, and so on."

FORMATION OF SUPPORT TO COMMITTEES

Cilandak 1971 (71 TJD 18). "So our aim and purpose is to establish enterprises and a bank. For if we merely wait for contributions and donations from members, maybe there will be only ten rupiahs in the treasury ten years from now. Only that little. But it will be otherwise with enterprises. Perhaps contributions will be eliminated eventually, will not be needed, because the Subud treasury will have become strong as a result of running the enterprises and the bank. Who knows, brothers and sisters, if the Subud Bank will not eventually become like those in New York, a Wall Street Bank - but a Subud Wall Street Bank, a Wall Street Bank Kedjiwaan!"

Wolfsburg, Germany, 1975 (75 WOB 15): "Brothers and sisters, it seems necessary for Bapak to tell you about the plans and ideas we have for establishing an S.E.S. (Subud Enterprises Service) body. It is this that will serve all the national enterprises.... This body will provide everything for the enterprises. That means it will provide capital and everything that is required, so that when it gives assistance to an enterprise in some national center it will supply all the requirements and personnel needed. ... Thus besides providing money for the capital it will also select and appoint the personnel. These will be found and trained and directed by the S.E.S. body that is going to be established: S.E.S. International. This undertaking should acquire legal status and authorization from whatever country it may be in, so that it will be a body able to spread its wings all over the world. For this reason, brothers and sisters, it will be established in ma-

for cities, where it will really have influence and a wide scope when it comes to setting up an enterprise".

Cilandak, 1977 (77 TJD 2): That is why Bapak suggests that the organizational committee should select experts from the members to carry out an enterprise in some field; that is, in a field where they are really skilled. Such members can in the first place ensure their own livelihoods. Secondly, they can take into the enterprise other members whose livelihoods are insecure. And thirdly, they can strengthen the brotherhood in the local Subud group, thus enabling the group to grow strong and prosperous. The local Subud groups will thus become better and better as time goes on...

That also explains why Bapak decided that names of experts and specialists in this international Subud body should be collected together and registered - experts in technology, doctors, agricultural specialists, and all others with various kinds of skills. They are not yet working in earnest, it seems; they are still asleep. Yet they are greatly needed by the membership, which is still unable to muster power to meet its worldly needs. Bapak therefore hopes that STS (Subud Technical Services) will be further encouraged to be as active as possible, so that it can grow. Yes, although this seems just an idea, it is already a reality.

Sydney, Australia, 1982 (82 SYD 2): "First of all, before you do any enterprises, before you start thinking about enterprises, the Committee should set up a group of experts or a body of consultants – which Bapak has often described. This body should consist of those among you who have expertise in some field. It should combine expertise in whatever fields you have it in – business, trade, technical matters, production, industry, marketing. How many people will be on this consulting body or this group – which is usually called SES or Subud Enterprise Services – depends on what you need and how many people you have available. The purpose of this group of experts is to give guidance, help, and supervision to those who are going to do the enterprise. For example, if a Group Committee wants to start an enterprise in the field of agriculture, then they should be advised, helped, and put on the right track by experts in the field of agriculture. If they do an enterprise in another field, then again they should be guided and put on the right track by an expert in that field".

Auckland, 6 April, 1972 (72AKL1): "This is therefore the reason why Bapak always says that beside establishing our bank, we must have a group of our own called S.T.S., Subud Technical Specialists. This is in order that we may have, within our own circle, experts to examine things and test them, test not only in the kejiwaan sense of the word, but test them in the outward meaning, so that those of us amongst the Subud members who are running enterprises can run them well, because they are being controlled and checked, examined and guided;

checked, guided and directed by our own experts.

ENTERPRISES OF INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL GROUPS OF MEMBERS

Sao Paulo, 31 May, 1981 (81SAO3): "Bapak wants to explain to you another thing: When you do enterprises, Bapak doesn't intend or doesn't have the idea that each of you separately do your own enterprises. Because everything that we do will become easy, will become light, will become possible, if we cooperate. Organization and cooperation is strength and power.

Cape Town, 24 May, 1972 (72CPT2): "The enterprises Bapak suggests to you are enterprises of all the Subud members. They are not the enterprises of individuals, because it is no longer appropriate for us to pursue profit just for ourselves alone but, so far as possible, we should do something together, with other partners, other members, so that eventually we also share in harvesting and tasting the fruits of what we do together. To do this implies that the people in Subud are in harmony not only in their spiritual life but also in their worldly life. That means harmony of thought and mind, so that you are really living up to the highest human standards, which makes us be harmonious, both as among ourselves and also between all of you and other people".

Cilandak, 12 April, 1974 (74CDK4): "Our need for money is not something that we need to emphasize or make it the principal basis of our worship to Almighty God, yet we cannot avoid it or bypass it.

For this reason Bapak has announced and has informed you all that it is already time that Subud or the latihan kejiwaan of Subud should be accompanied by enterprises. It is precisely these enterprises that Bapak hopes for from all of us, and this needs to be made known...

As far as Bapak has heard and understood what is done by Subud members abroad is not yet what Bapak means by enterprises, a kind of individual enterprise... we should already make arrangements and regulations by way of cooperation and mutual help, that is to set up a P.T. or company of shareholders, that is, a communal enterprise. Not just one, two or three people.

An example, brothers and sisters. Although Indonesia is a country retarded in every way, except in relation to the kejiwaan, yet Bapak regards Indonesia as the first to have truly shown what an enterprise is, that is with the existence of P.T.S. Widjojo, the Bank which has been set up here, I.D.C., S.U.B. etc. This is what Bapak has in mind. The example is as we have done it in Indonesia. You may ask, who has done it? Of course, well, so far it is Bapak who has done it. But while Bapak can only handle the situation here in Indonesia, all of you abroad are certainly clever enough, certainly you can do it better than what has been done here. But as far as Bapak has heard, what you have is two or three man

enterprises, even some one man enterprises. From this one can draw the conclusion that the brothers and sisters there cannot yet demonstrate true harmony among themselves.

For what Bapak has in mind when he urges you to form enterprises are companies of shareholders, in order that they may show the existence of harmony among the members. If you are not yet able to be in harmony in the material field, how much less in the spiritual. So all this is in order that we can organize ourselves, in order that we can make arrangements amongst ourselves which are harmonious, harmonious in this world reaching into the next: harmonious in spirit, harmonious in djiwa. This is what Bapak intends and is also what Bapak has received, and this is the will of Almighty God".

Washington DC, 5 May, 1972 (72WAS1): "As to the enterprises that Bapak proposes, these are not enterprises to be run on your own, so that, for instance, A runs an enterprise on his own, B runs an enterprise on his own, C runs an enterprise on his own and so does D. You should not do it that way. You need to run enterprises jointly and to build up substantial concerns. That means enterprises that really are enterprises, like a P.T. -- a Perusahaan Terbatas (Limited Company)". ... "Thus the way you run the enterprise is united into a really democratic activity; you work together and go through both the bitter and the happy experiences together. It is a different matter if each of you acts alone, so that you are competing for your own needs, regardless of what your friends need. Because of this, Bapak tells you to organize the enterprises you establish in the way Bapak has said".

Sydney, 11 May, 1982 (82SYD4): So don't try to go out and do things on your own so that each one of you is ignoring everybody else, and just thinking of your own needs. The purpose of a Subud enterprise is to cooperate. In the latihan we are taught that we have to know each other, become aware of each other, and understand each other. We have to know each other's problems and each other's needs. We have to love each other, help each other, trust each other and respect each other. So if we are taught that in the latihan, we have to apply it in our everyday life. It is from this source that we build enterprises. The condition for something to succeed is that the people who undertake it together are harmonious and honest. These are the two requirements for successful enterprises. It is clear then that the way we are to undertake enterprises in Subud is to combine. Combine people working together in the form of a cooperation or cooperative, or in some form working together - whether it is ten people, or twenty people, or thirty - the more the better.

Washington DC, 6 May, 1972 (72WAS2): "That is why Bapak urges all of you in Subud, between yourselves, to get these enterprises running soon. And the

way to run enterprises is not for A, B, C, and D each to act on his or her own. Don't have individual enterprises. It is better to act collectively, in cooperation, because if each of you runs an enterprise on your own, you will then always be using the profits for your own purposes; you will each work for your own good, work for your own profit. Whereas if you act collectively, gotong-royong, as it is called in Indonesia, helping one another in a cooperative way, it will make you closer in brotherliness. For the progress of one is then the progress of all; together you go forward, together you lose ground, meaning that if there is a profit, it will benefit everyone. And please don't carry on a halfway or middling sort of enterprise, for if it is a middling one, the running costs will be higher. But if it is large, although the running costs will be high, the profits will also be high, so that you will be able to provide the brotherhood with everything it needs".

New York, 9 May, 1972 72NYC1): "This is why we need to undertake enterprises, brothers and sisters, so that we accustom ourselves to stand on our own feet both inwardly and outwardly. We need to establish enterprises so that everything begins harmoniously; with mutual respect, with mutual consideration, with mutual help. We shall establish these enterprises by joint endeavor, which means you are doing it together. Do not let it happen that A sets up an enterprise, B sets up an enterprise, C sets up an enterprise and D sets up an enterprise, all of the same kind, so that it seems from the first as if all of them are competing and vying with one another for advancement and profit. That will eventually lead to conflict and will certainly not be harmonious. In order for everything to begin harmoniously and with mutual assistance, let the future enterprises be established in the form of cooperatives. That means with many members all in them together. And because such future enterprises will be rather large, you will therefore need not a little capital".

More Information: Finally, check out the tips on starting an enterprise in the paper, "Bapak's Advice and Guidance on Enterprise", review the summary, or better yet, read and reread the entire paper and the talks which underlie it. There's a lot there which can inspire as well as guide you. SESI's web site at: subudenterprise.com carries additional information.