

An invitation to transform the world

By Solen Lees Gratiet

“Susila Dharma is like a fabulous story which we invite people to participate in – and who could refuse that?” This is how Rosanna Hille - interim executive director of SDIA – described the work of SD during the European gathering of this organisation held at Lewes (UK) on the last weekend in January.

These words were spoken during a workshop on communication, a theme which came up again and again as being essential for the success of our network. Even the title of the gathering (“networking meeting”) encapsulates the essence of this event where sharing and exchanging on all levels was the order of the day.

The subjects discussed – the role of SDIA, communication between all the actors involved, the best way to support projects, sustainability, among many others – provoked lively debates, even if the atmosphere remained harmonious, often humorous, and sometimes emotional, especially after testing.

Inspiration

For many, there were inspiring or revealing moments. For example, we learned from Paloma de la Viña (SD Spain) about her visit to different projects in Argentina: micro-credit for women, an agricultural project, a theatre group for special needs actors, a cultural project for the women and children of the rural communities near Mina Clavero ... A brief presentation by Lailah Armstrong on ICDP demonstrated that the international spread and recognition of a project can have modest beginnings, boosted by a small grant from a national SD. And Dahliani Drejza (youth representative for our zone) talked about the importance of sewing a seed in the hearts of our children. The seed may remain dormant for several years, but will waken one day to take the form of a desire to help others.

Strength in our unity and diversity

The cosmopolitan nature of this gathering meant that each nationality had something distinctive to contribute. At one point, Dag Lucke of SD Germany asked us to let him express his German angst! But the German delegates also taught us much about their way of operating, giving us a glimpse of a professional and effective methodology.

The Americas were also well-represented, with Lawrence Leetz and Sabrina Castillo of SD Holland, originally from Surinam and Chile respectively, but also Canadians Rosanna Hille and Virginia Thomas, who will replace Rosanna as Executive Director. Between them, these two led many of the meetings and workshops, professionally and with tact. Virginia brings many qualities to her new role and will surely leave her own distinctive imprint on the organisation. We wish her well, and already appreciate her vitality and humour.

Enthusiasm to continue

Personally speaking, I left Lewes full of enthusiasm to renew my work with Susila Dharma France. Meeting people who have up till now been names or email addresses, latihan, eating, sharing and learning with them, make our communications more relevant and strengthens the feeling that what we do has continuity and meaning.

Susila Dharma France financed the participation of three of its board members at this gathering. Despite initial scepticism, I can honestly say that this was a good use of SD funds. We are now ready to work with greater efficiency and dedication in order to put the latihan into action for Susila Dharma, which is after all the very essence of Subud.