

## **DIVERSITY WORKING GROUP**

### Conference Call

June 28, 2006

12 Noon, Eastern Daylight Time

**Following are notes from a conference call that was held as a first step in developing recommendations for an international scholarship fund to be administered by Shambhala.**

The following sangha members joined the conference call: Simon Lahayne (France), Carolyn Mandelker (Canada), Javier Murillo (Chile), Cortez Rainey (USA), Terry Rudderham (Canada). Additionally, Raana Bastani (Iran) arrived very late and spoke with Cortez.

Mark Turnoy (Korea) had planned to attend but was unable to because of technical difficulties. Some of his comments, given to Cortez ahead of time, are included below.

Sangha in Australia and New Zealand were notified of this meeting, but since the call was held at 2:00 a.m. their time it was not expected that anyone from those countries would attend. It is hoped that someone from that region will participate later in the email discussion on this topic which is described below.

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### **Purpose of call**

Cortez explained that President Richard Reoch had asked the Diversity Working Group to develop recommendations for creating a mandala-wide scholarship fund to help develop our diverse global community. International input is critical to the success of this effort.

Cortez said the President expressed the hope that recommendations be developed for a fund that would:

- Be governed by sangha members residing in Asia, Latin America, Australia, Europe, North America, and Africa, if there is Shambhala activity occurring there;
- Benefit sangha on all continents;
- Have a clearly established relationship with funds administered by land and urban centers;
- Be funded as part of the central budget of Shambhala.

Additionally, Cortez expressed the strong intention of the Diversity Working Group to develop recommendations for a funding program that would be beneficial to everyone regardless of their race, ethnicity, nationality or the continent on which they live.

The purpose of this meeting was to allow the group to gather information. Carolyn and Terry were invited to share whatever background they could about the history of Shambhala program subsidies and scholarships—what has been tried, what has worked, what has not worked, issues, etc.

### **Summary of discussion**

There are currently numerous funding strategies being used—on the local, regional, and international levels—to make programs more accessible to individuals and groups with limited means and to increase the diversity of the mandala as a whole.

Groups and centers throughout the mandala have been finding all kinds of ways to manage the situation. It is important for Shambhala Core Services to be exploring this situation—help is needed from the center of the mandala.

The strategies being used primarily fall into two categories: scholarships and subsidies. Scholarships are awarded to individuals, while subsidies are given to centers or programs to help reduce program costs and increase affordability.

### **North America**

- Traditionally, scholarships have been provided for all major North American programs—11.5% of the gross revenue from such programs is set aside for this purpose. (“Major programs” include Sutrayana seminary, Vajrayana seminary, Kalapa Assembly and all abhishekas—but not dathun.) This scholarship is open to anyone who meets the income criteria.
- The scholarship amount and costs it covers depend on how much money is available, the number of people who apply, and the amounts people are requesting. A person in a leadership position might be given more. If the program is international, travel funding might be provided, as a supplement.
- Core Services does not provide scholarships for people to attend Shambhala guide, meditation instructor and teacher training programs. By making funds available for this purpose we might be able to develop leaders and teachers in a diverse way.
- Although the North American scholarship fund is open to anyone who wants to attend seminary, people are not always aware the fund exists.

- Core Services and the centers have different criteria for receiving scholarship and subsidy funding, and the criteria might be different from country to country depending on their needs.
- Scholarship criteria based on income can be problematic because some people are supporting families while others are not, and an alternative model that takes those kinds of obligations into account should be considered
- The 11.5% of major program revenue that is set aside for scholarship funding may not be enough.
- Strategies to support programs in various situations include the following:
  - A program manager in Shambhala Core Services might work with a center in developing a program.
  - Core Services might disburse funds to a center with guidelines and allow the center to manage it.
- In some cases a scholarship fund is managed by Shambhala Core Services, and at other times it may be managed by different centers, and sometimes collaboratively by them.

## **Europe**

- The 11.5% for major program also applies in Europe for the same programs
- Europe has its own scholarship fund and sets aside funds to help those in Eastern Europe who are experiencing difficulty attending major programs. Dathuns are included in these programs.
- People have different thresholds when it comes to paying for programs. In Europe, applicants submit a recommendation. This helps to translate the need.
- There is also an Amsterdam Fund for the whole country of Holland. Participants can pay 10% more on the price of a program and receive a tax receipt that reimburse them 20% of the total amount they have paid (these are approximate numbers).
- Centers are encouraged to establish a fund based on the Dutch model." No other country has established it at this point.

## **Latin America**

- In Chile, a different scholarship system was used recently for seminary. People were charged on the basis of where they were coming from and were also provided a scholarship. If the planners had not done it this way the program would not have happened; as it was, the program would not have broken even without the fundraiser that was held at the conclusion of the program.
- Special payment terms (i.e. deferred payments for several months, reduced fees or both) are normally arranged for people who want to attend Shambhala training and other major programs and are going through financial difficulties. However this does not constitute a fund (there is no amount of money set aside for this) and there are no formal rules apart from the good criteria of the person in charge of the program. It is normally decided on a case by case basis.

## **Emerging Regions**

There are no regions that Shambhala has classified as “emerging regions,” but generally it is any area that is growing, an area that has started doing levels and that has around 30 people who have completed Golden Key who want to attend Warrior Assembly.

Programs in emerging regions usually require subsidies. Factors such as variations in exchange rates contribute to the need for scholarships and subsidies. Sometimes the final budget is not clear.

Subsidies may be provided in instances where the Sakyong or a senior teacher is going to lead the program; in the latter instance, Shambhala might pay the Sakyong’s travel expenses so it doesn’t have to be incurred by the center or program.

- Africa
  - Africa was not mentioned during the meeting, but afterwards Cortez was given the names of two people with ties to Shambhala who reside in an African country. Cortez will contact them to see whether they are involved in any Shambhala activity there or wish to participate in this discussion.
- Asia
  - There has been no major program in Asia.
  - The sangha in Korea has indicated a need for teachers and would prefer to receive subsidies to help bring in teachers rather than receive scholarships.

- Europe
  - The fund from the European Donor Group pays for one third of the program cost, Dechen Choling gives a reduction of one third and the participant pays one third. For programs where it applies, the Dechen Choling contribution is often taken from the 11.5%.
  - In Eastern Europe, where the economic level is not healthy, the European Trust puts money in a fund. The fund pays one-third the costs of core programs.
  - Centers in Eastern Europe that are able to organize their own programs are encouraged to charge a little more to Western Europeans to help create scholarship funds for Eastern European who would need to do programs in Western Europe.
  - Subsidies may be provided for an upcoming program to be held in Greece.
- Middle East
  - In Iran there is a small group. It needs financial support, a coach, teachers, even a manual that explains how to start a study group or center.
  - Without receiving support now, this group may never develop the 30 or so Golden Key participants that are needed for it to become an official “emerging region.”
  - If we are really interested in creating enlightened society around the world, we need to provide support in places around the world where the dharma is trying to emerge.
- Latin America
  - Subsidies were recently provided for the Warrior Assembly in Chile.
- Oceania (Australia/New Zealand)
  - In New Zealand, Shambhala Training subsidized a Warrior Assembly recently; no scholarships were provided to participants, but a subsidy was provided for one of the directors.
  - A seminary is being planned for New Zealand.

- There have been no major programs in Australia.

### **Next Steps**

Cortez reiterated that this conference call is a first step in a process that may take several weeks, and he wants the group to continue to participate in this process by e-mail. This will allow those who were not able to call in to also participate.

Next steps are as follows:

Cortez will send out a copy of the meeting notes, and questions that will help us begin our email discussion. The questions are intended to clarify what the present situation is in the mandala regarding program subsidies and scholarships internationally: What problems exists, their causes and effects on centers and groups and efforts to develop a diverse global community?

The questions are simply brainstorming questions to which discussion participants will be asked to reply (to the group). The exchange is intended to help clarify existing problems, determine what needs such a fund could satisfy, and to help us come up with general strategies to recommend to the Sakyong's Council that would help to improve the situation.

When asked by Cortez, Javier, Simon and Raana said they were willing to continue with the working group as it formulates recommendations. Terry asked to be included in the e-mail discussion, and she will be.