

NATIONAL CONVENTION 2015 RECOMMENDATIONS – 24-26 April 2015

Subject	Recommendation	Response
Membership of SACRE	<i>National Convention requests that the National Spiritual Assembly</i> remind all communities of the importance of maintaining membership of their local SACRE, so that the Bahá'í Faith can be included in the local RE syllabus and lead to hundreds, nay thousands of children learning about the Bahá'í Faith.	The National Assembly is considering the whole area of RE and our involvement in it. In the meantime we encourage ongoing engagement with and membership of SACREs.
Funds of the Faith	The annual report shows that only approximately 16% of the Bahá'í population contributes to the National Fund. <i>National Convention therefore requests that the National Spiritual Assembly</i> look at ways to educate individuals, particularly young people, regarding their obligation to give to the Funds of the Faith.	The Treasury Office will give attention to this. It should be noted that the National Assembly believes that is not an accurate figure bearing in mind that many friends contribute to the National Fund indirectly at Feasts etc and it is not known if a donation is given by an entire household or an individual person. A training programme for local treasurers is also being piloted at the present time and will be made available more widely in due course. Further to this, one of the most effective instruments we have at the present time for deepening all ages and backgrounds on the funds of the Faith is the deepening in Book 2 of the sequence of courses. The National Assembly would encourage friends to use it in deepenings, home visits and other settings.
Funds of the Faith	<i>National Convention requests that the National Spiritual Assembly</i> ask the Finance Office to update the Bahá'í community (via NEWS) regarding the state of the Fund, and make the friends aware of the charges paid by the National Assembly for different methods of contribution, including the benefits of gift aid, so the friends know the most cost effective way to contribute.	This recommendation is accepted.

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Making Better Use of Technology	<i>National Convention requests that the National Spiritual Assembly</i> considers encouraging the friends to use tools such as webinars (e.g. Microsoft Lync / BT conference). This would be to accelerate and facilitate learning, enabling more people to engage in various meetings /deepenings. The costs of bringing people together physically to learn can be high – in time, travel costs, ecological costs etc. Let’s embrace technological change and look at how we can use it to help advance the work of the Faith.	The National Assembly agrees with the sentiment of this recommendation, but believes that Skype, Oovoo and other forms of webinars are used extensively throughout the administration and that this does not need special encouragement at this time.
National Convention Questions	<i>National Convention requests that the National Spiritual Assembly</i> kindly consider sharing the set of questions that was given to delegates with all Local Spiritual Assemblies and Groups to use in their reflection, consultation and planning.	The National Assembly will share the questions, suitably adapted, with Local Spiritual Assemblies & Groups as a resource.
Strengthening Families	<i>National Convention requests that the National Spiritual Assembly</i> highlights the importance of equality, consultation and unity in marriages and families – especially given the fact that Bahá’í families and homes often serve as conduits for core activities, be it home visits, children’s classes etc., and encourage Bahá’ís to strengthen the devotional character of their family units in service to the community.	The National Assembly wrote to every believer in the UK in November 2014 to announce the availability of resources on marriage and family life- and an upcoming book in the sequence of courses will address the theme of family life. Further to this, the National Assembly is convinced that as we serve within the framework of the Plan our lives and the lives of those around us will be transformed, for example through engagement in family devotionals, children’s classes and junior-youth groups, etc. It should also be noted that family life is one of the courses suggested by the National Assembly for Summer Schools in 2015.
Goals of the Plan	<i>National Convention requests that the National Spiritual Assembly</i> provide the community with a brief breakdown of what is happening in each cluster and to clearly indicate what can be done by the believers to assist. For example, to announce that a travel teacher is required for a certain town / city on a specific weekend / week to help with outreach to start a children’s class. This information could be updated and issued every cycle.	The National Assembly believes that it is more appropriate to inspire the friends in every cluster to redouble their activities in their own locality having regard to their own circumstances and the call of their institutions. We will keep the community informed of progress of goals clusters and if friends wish to offer their services, they should do so through their cluster agencies and/or Councils.

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Youth Year of Service	<i>National Convention requests that the National Spiritual Assembly include in future annual reports a section on the number of youth engaged in a “year of service”, the locations they are serving in and the nature of their service.</i>	The National Assembly does not feel that the names of individual youth who have rendered a year of service should be included in the Annual Report, however we will ensure that the Report includes a qualitative report on the movement of youth and year of service.
The Arts	<i>National Convention requests that the National Spiritual Assembly encourage more art at summer schools, bearing in mind that each of us can be creative and art can touch the hearts of all.</i>	The spirit of the recommendation is appreciated. The National Spiritual is striving to understand how the role of the arts and creativity is an integral part of the emerging Bahá’í culture.
Community <i>(this recommendation was accidentally overlooked)</i>	There has been much discussion at the Convention about the intensive programme of growth, the development of clusters and the magnificent programmes for youth of all ages. In this light, <i>National Convention requests that the National Spiritual Assembly encourage the friends, during the forthcoming year, to focus equally on other priorities given to us by the Universal House of Justice, such as: Joining discourses of society and advancing meaningful conversations, and all this entails in the public sphere; The advancement and support of the arts, which seem to have been put on the backburner these past few years.</i>	While it is important for work to continue in these areas commensurate with our resources, as directed by the House of Justice, our primary focus must be the processes of consolidation and expansion in the coming years and our engagement in these areas mentioned will naturally emerge out of these processes.