



## National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom Supplementary Annual Report 2015-2016, 172 BE

### Clusters passing the first milestone

We are delighted to say that since the Annual Report was written, three additional clusters have recognised that they have passed the first milestone, as follows:

- **STARS OF THE WEST (NORTHERN IRELAND)**
- **HAINSWORTH (NORTHERN IRELAND)**
- **DEVON (ENGLAND)**

This means that 41 of the 50 clusters have reached this goal. However, it can be said for certain that more clusters will pass the first milestone in the coming months, as the sacrificial efforts of many of the friends continue apace with the aim of establishing a programme of growth in their cluster. For example, here is a report from Allan Forsyth on their efforts in West Highlands:

Over the last two weeks we had been focusing on conversations with people in our neighbourhood to see if it would be possible to start a study circle. As a result we have had around 23 elevated and purposeful conversations with a range of people. Many of these conversations will need to be developed further over the next few weeks but a direct outcome has been that one neighbour who attended a devotional, and another who already attends the devotional, started a Book 1 with us tonight.



*A recent reflection meeting in Devon*

These are very humble beginnings, but we think they indicate that significant progress has been made in the growth process. This progress would not have been possible without the love and dedicated support from a whole range of people both in and out of the cluster.

In Dorset, there are several activities happening throughout the cluster, including a fortnightly devotional gathering in Bridport with numbers of participants varying from 2 to 8, mostly friends of the Bahá'ís. There is also a Ruhi Book 1 study circle happening in a neighbourhood in Bridport with 3 youth, all friends of the Faith. The aim is eventually to move to a Book 3 and start a neighbourhood children's class. Other plans are in place for youth gatherings and intensive training over the coming weeks and months.

The Council for Wales reports that their two remaining priority clusters are on the cusp of reaching the first milestone!

## Goal of doubling the number of core activities

Although the goal was not reached, we have seen the total number of activities rise by 253 in the past year, from 689 to 942, with an additional 1,040 participants of which 279 are friends of the Faith. There were an additional 156 devotionals, 18 children's classes and 5 junior youth groups. Moreover, there were an additional 74 study circles running compared to this time last year. Of course many study circles started and finished during the year which have not be included in these numbers.

Wales increased their activities from 24 to 41 and Northern Ireland from 31 to 58, both very nearly reaching the goal of doubling their number. Some individual clusters made great progress by focusing on this goal, thereby increasing their total number of activities during the year as follows:

North and East Scotland from 16 to 27

Orkney from 1 to 4, with the number of community of interest increasing from 1 to 10

Shetland from 5 to 10, with the number of participants increasing from 13 to 37

Isle of Man from 0 to 4, with 7 community of interest as the only participants

Kent from 16 to 27

London from 138 to 198 with an additional 221 participants of which 61 are friends of the Faith

Hertfordshire from 7 to 14, thus doubling their number

The Marches from 7 to 13

Greater Manchester from 39 to 66, the total number of participants increased from 222 to 382

These are truly wonderful achievements.

## Preparations for the launching of the new Five Year Plan

By the end of April every region of the country will have held gatherings of regional, area and cluster institutions, including representatives from Local Spiritual Assemblies, as well as others engaged in the advancement of their clusters, with the purpose of developing a common vision of the provisions of the upcoming Plan and how it might be launched in their clusters. The focus of these gatherings has been the 29 December 2015 message and how, in light of the reality of each cluster, key elements of the Plan could immediately be put in place. Provisional plans were thus made or explored to raise up and develop the capacity of cadres of tutors; to learn how to enhance the capacity of greater numbers of friends to have meaningful conversations; to work intensively in neighbourhoods and villages; to release the potential of youth; and to establish the junior youth programme at a basic level in every cluster with a programme of growth. The outcome of these gatherings will surely be the focus of much of the consultations at National Convention.



*Friends at the north of Scotland gathering*

22 April 2016