



## ANNUAL REPORT 170 BE (2013-14)

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## 1. EXPANSION AND CONSOLIDATION

### A. INTRODUCTION – ADVANCING THE PROCESS OF ENTRY BY TROOPS

The abundant guidance and direction of the Universal House of Justice had an enormous impact on the progress of the Cause in the UK and indeed throughout the world this year. Its Ridván 2013 message—which was accompanied by the document prepared by the International Teaching Centre, *Insights from Frontiers of Learning*, and the film, *Frontiers of Learning*—provided vital insights and impetus to the efforts of the Bahá'í

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...the powerful, transformative impact of the educational process fostered by the training institute on the lives of individuals and communities...

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community to fulfil the requirements of the Five Year Plan. Studying the guidance, absorbing the learning offered, and seeing in the film the powerful, transformative impact of the educational process fostered by the training institute on the lives of individuals and communities, gave the Bahá'í community and its institutions greater clarity of the path to be trodden in the remaining months of the Plan. The worldwide Bahá'í community, the House of Justice wrote in its Ridván message, was “refining its ability to read its immediate reality, analyse its possibilities, and apply judiciously the methods and instruments of the Five Year

*Plan.*” This describes well the UK community’s focus during the year.



*Members of the Universal House of Justice, elected Ridván 2013*

The **goal of having a programme of growth established in every cluster in the UK** and thus reaching at least the first milestone along each cluster’s continuum of development came into sharp focus this year. It is proving to be challenging in some

clusters, and this report sets out some of the means by which obstacles are being overcome,

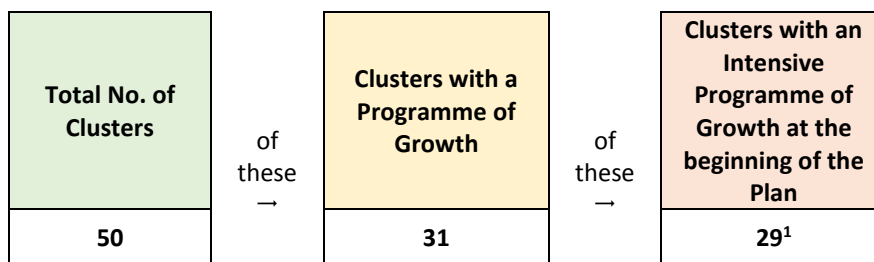
*On each front, ... we see the Bahá'í community moving steadily forward, advancing in understanding, eager to acquire insights from experience, ready to take on new tasks when resources make it possible, agile in its response to fresh imperatives, conscious of the need to ensure coherence among the various areas of activity in which it is engaged, wholly dedicated to the fulfilment of its mission.*

*The Universal House of Justice, Ridván 2013*

as well as some of the achievements won thus far. It is wonderful to report that, through focused effort, **two clusters found that they had indeed passed the first milestone** during the course of this year!

The report also gives attention to efforts to advance those clusters which launched their intensive programmes of growth during the last Plan, thereby reaching the second milestone at that time, and highlights their achievements and challenges as they strive to raise the intensity of their efforts from the current level.

**UK Clusters** (*information as of March 2014*)



At the heart of all these efforts is the institute process, the objective of which is the development of the capacity of individuals to walk a path of service. This report also gives special attention to this, our “engine of growth”, and to efforts to consolidate and refine the scheme of coordination for its tutors, animators and teachers of children’s classes during the year.

...an unprecedented effort was made by the Bahá’í community to reach out to youth...

Undoubtedly the single most important event in the past year, which has given an immense impetus to the efforts of the Bahá’í community to advance the process of entry by troops, was the mobilisation of hundreds of youth into a **powerful movement**, the aim of which is nothing less than to facilitate the desire of this generation “to commit” to “steel themselves for a life of service” and thus to make their unique “contribution to the fortunes of humanity”. The **London Youth Conference**, called by the Universal House of Justice, was held at Warwick University from 30 August to 1 September.

Prior to the conference, an unprecedented effort was made by the Bahá’í community to reach out to youth and invite them to join this movement and the overall effort to spiritually regenerate mankind. The conference itself both **broadened and galvanised the movement**, as the lives of many were profoundly changed by its impact. Since then conversations have continued and, beyond this, many have engaged in the institute courses to develop their capacities to serve their communities. Yet others are engaging with the teaching work and are facilitating core activities, especially junior youth groups, as an expression of their desire to serve.

<sup>1</sup> At the time, 28 clusters had an intensive programme of growth, but this later became 29 when Forth and Clyde split into two separate clusters.

But it was not just the youth that arose, for **the entire Bahá'í community and its institutions rallied in support of this effort.** The Universal House of Justice describes this process in the following way:

*The new levels of collaboration these conferences demanded of the institutions to mobilize and guide such large numbers and prepare the host of facilitators to assist them; the wholehearted collective effort required of the community as it threw wide open the circle of participation and witnessed the profound effect of doing so; the serious commitment evinced by the individual who, drawing on the concepts explored in the conference materials, is joining the tens of thousands occupied with reaching out to hundreds of thousands of others—these, together, have contributed to a marked rise in capacity in the three protagonists upon whom the success of the Five Year Plan depends. And while we acknowledge that the youth are at the forefront of this advance, its distinguishing feature is that the community rose as one to support, encourage, and champion this phenomenon, and now rejoices to see itself progress as an interdependent, organic whole, readier to meet the imperatives of this day.*



It was this development, as well as other advances outlined in its letter of 5 December 2013 to the Bahá'ís of the World, that lead the House of Justice to conclude:

*Given all this, we have no hesitation in recognizing that what these developments reveal is an advance in the process of entry by troops of a kind not experienced heretofore.*

The engagement of the institutions, including the Regional Councils and their agencies, the Training Institute Board and their coordinators, and also Local Spiritual Assemblies, significantly increased their capacity to mobilise large numbers of individuals in service to the Cause. The Auxiliary Board members and assistants also made an outstanding contribution, not least in the support and encouragement that they offered at the grassroots. The processes of training selected youth as facilitators; learning to work intensively to reach out to much larger numbers; preparing the youth for the youth conference; preparing logistically for the conference itself; and facilitating the engagement of the youth after the conference, were **guided and directed by the institutions on a scale never before experienced.** All of this involved a high level of collaboration between the various agencies at a local, cluster, regional and national level, as well as the support of the community itself.

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*Given all this, we have no hesitation in recognizing that what these developments reveal is an advance in the process of entry by troops of a kind not experienced heretofore.*

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This has **built the capacity and strengthened the fabric of the Bahá'í community** in making its contribution to the spiritual and social transformation of neighbourhoods and communities. The learning and experience acquired augurs well for the months ahead as the community

gives focus to the goal of the Five Year Plan—to establish a programme of growth in every cluster.

## B. EMERGING PROGRAMMES OF GROWTH

In its 28 December 2010 message, the Universal House of Justice called on the community of the Most Great Name “to raise over the next five years the total number of clusters in which a programme of growth is under way, at whatever level of intensity, to 5,000, approximately one third of all clusters in the world at present.”

Responding to this soul-stirring challenge, the Bahá’í community of the UK pledged to initiate a programme of growth in each of its 50 clusters by the end of the Plan. To date, **31 clusters have reached this stage**, now including Norfolk and the South West of Scotland, leaving **19 to begin programmes of growth in the eight remaining cycles of the current Plan**. The following clusters are yet to begin a programme of growth:

Cumbria	Hainsworth (north west of Northern Ireland)
Isle of Man	Stars of the West (south west of Northern Ireland)
North & East Yorkshire	Orkney
Lincolnshire	North Highland
Suffolk	Western Isles
Solent	West Highland
Dorset	Borders
Devon	Mid Wales
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly	South West Wales
Channel Islands	

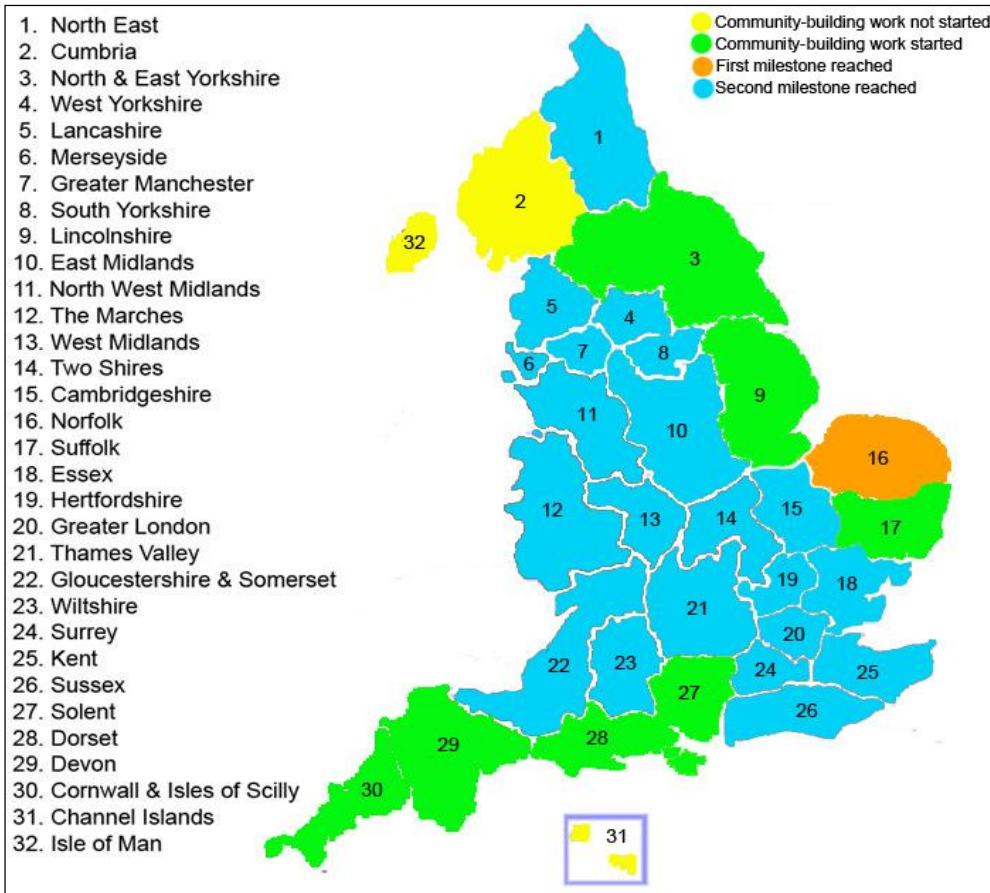
### *Key strategies for growth*

“**Invariably**”, the House of Justice tells us, “opportunities afforded by the personal circumstances of the believers initially involved—or perhaps a single homefront pioneer—to enter into **meaningful and distinctive conversation** with local residents dictate how the process of growth begins in a cluster.” Such conversations give rise to activities that then serve as a “stimulus to growth”, which develop into a programme of growth with the emergence of **two nascent capacities**, as described in the document *Insights from the Frontiers of Learning*:

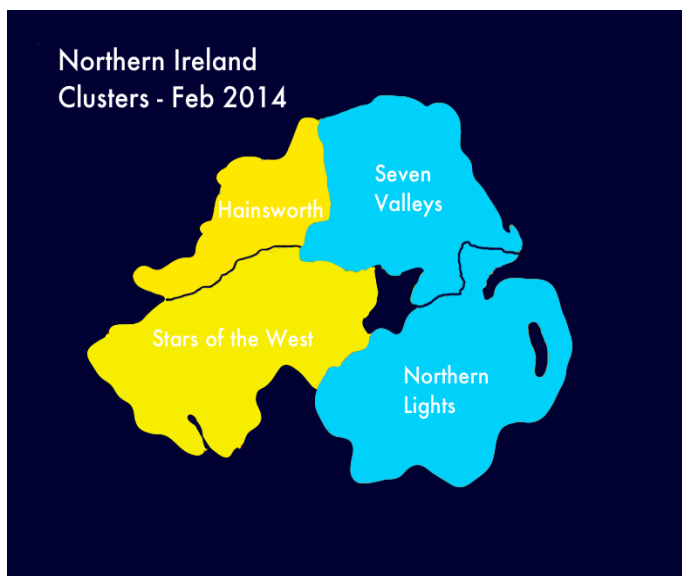
- First one or more friends in a cluster must be able to help individuals study the institute’s sequence of courses and accompany them as they initiate core activities.
- Then these individuals must be able to attract others to participate in the core activities.

How to establish programmes of growth in an increasing number of localities remains a vital area of learning for the UK. **Three key strategies** have, however, been outlined in *Insights from the Frontiers of Learning* that can help us to rise to this challenge: **institutional support**, **pioneering**, and **visiting teams**.

Maps of the clusters in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales



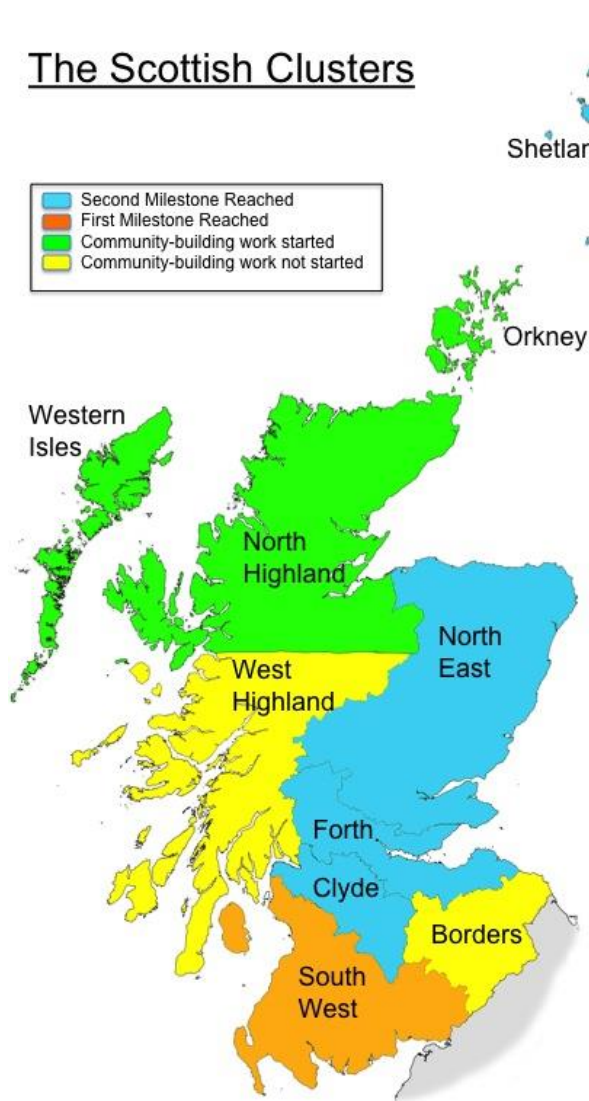
CLUSTERS IN ENGLAND  
 - see key for explanation



CLUSTERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND – clusters in blue have already established a programme of growth



## The Scottish Clusters



*CLUSTERS IN WALES – clusters in blue have established a programme of growth, and those in green have started community building work.*

### *Institutional support*

Over the last year, the institutions have been learning how to **accompany individuals and groups of believers to arise**. The following account from the North Highlands cluster, which is yet to establish a programme of growth, is but one example of how some believers have been assisted to begin systematically harnessing their energies towards growth:

In discussion with an Auxiliary Board member, a group of believers in Inverness resolved to increase their capacity to engage in distinctive and meaningful conversations as a crucial first step in working towards a programme of growth. The group decided that deepening would help enable them to have such conversations, and that it would be important to serve together. After considering carefully the spaces in which the team could try to meet people, they decided to put their trust in the power of divine assistance and to focus their efforts within a week of prayers, deepening, concerted endeavour to reach out to others, and to host an event to which new contacts could be invited, perhaps drawing on assistance from the Council for Scotland. The group committed to make this a cyclical practice so that learning could be systematically generated. Confirmations soon followed, as some members of the group were able to invite someone to join a children’s class – she seemed delighted!

### Visiting Teams

“Visiting teams may be called upon”, the House of Justice states, “to provide impetus to the fledgling set of activities” when a programme of growth emerges. The significance of this strategy for stimulating growth in the UK has been underscored by **many successes over the last year**.

One excellent example of this is in Scotland’s South West cluster, which reached the first milestone of growth this year. Two experienced youth from Edinburgh visited the cluster to support the local friends in advancing conversations with their community of interest to the next stage. With the support of the visiting team, so far a book 1 has started with several seekers, one of whom has now declared!

Consciousness has also been growing more widely as to the importance of using visiting teams. It was wonderful to see, for example, that in some Unit Convention resolutions, communities offered to partner with others to assist them in learning about growth through visiting each other to take part in activities, amongst other things.

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...communities offered to partner with others to assist them in learning about growth...

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Undoubtedly, the use of visiting teams will be of great importance in meeting the goals of the Plan, and their use remains an important object of learning. We might then ask:

- How can visiting teams with the necessary capacities be mobilised?
- Once mobilised, how can they be used to best advantage?
- How can the work of visiting teams be sustained, and how can teams learn to raise the capacity of the population that they are visiting?

### Pioneering

An important challenge in the coming year is to learn how to more effectively **raise up and deploy pioneers** who can assist in establishing programmes of growth. In the 23 May 2011 letter of the House of Justice, it is written:

*Our message dated 28 December 2010 to the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counsellors briefly described the process of growth which begins to unfold in a cluster, frequently as the result of a single homefront pioneer entering into meaningful conversation with local residents. We also indicated that more advanced clusters, in which the pattern of action associated with an intensive programme of growth has been firmly established, will often serve as reservoirs of pioneers who can be dispatched to other clusters, especially on the home front—in some to initiate a systematic approach to sharing Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings and in others to strengthen the processes of expansion and consolidation that have already been established.*



*Charles Dunning, Knight of Baha'u'llah for the Orkney islands and who pioneered there in 1953*

Progress has been made in the past year, and we know of **four pioneers who settled overseas** and at least **ten homefront pioneers**. In addition, there are probably many more pioneers not counted, as students and others make decisions of where to live within a region or cluster on the basis of the needs of the Plan.

The National Assembly, in conjunction with the various other institutions and agencies concerned, is actively endeavouring to refine the process by which pioneers, including youth, are deployed. For the second year running, the UK Pioneering and Travel Teaching Committee has held **meetings with parents and youth** who are

interested in offering a year of service to **encourage, assist and guide them in their preparations**. Conversations are also ongoing throughout the year with parents and youth. In addition, **pioneer orientation gatherings** are planned, as well as spaces for existing pioneers to gather together to consult and reflect on their experience as a means of providing mutual support.

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The National Assembly...is actively endeavouring to refine the process by which pioneers, including youth, are deployed.

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At this time, nearly all of the above listed clusters that have yet to establish a programme of growth would benefit from one or more pioneers who can begin the process or support existing efforts to establish a programme. Given that this process will take time, the National Assembly feels that there is an **urgency in settling suitable pioneers**.

- How can youth and other pioneers be helped to arise and to prepare for the task ahead?
- How can youth, and their parents, be further assisted to understand the significance of offering a year of service? What kinds of conversation are needed and in what spaces?
- What support can communities offer to enable pioneers to settle?

### *Growing a spark into a flame...*

The three strategies outlined above will undoubtedly help us to multiply the successes won to date. The following account from the Norfolk cluster gives one illustration of how, over time, the dedicated efforts of a few can inspire the services of a great many:

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...the dedicated efforts of a few can inspire the services of a great many...

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Over several years, just one or two believers diligently laboured to accompany large groups of believers in Norfolk and Suffolk through the sequence of courses. Between them, the believers who attended this training began 5-7 devotional meetings, which in turn provided opportunities for talks and firesides. Later on, animators were trained and a steady flow of youth, both Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í, were able to participate in the junior youth programme. Some of these youth later began studying the Ruhi books. One youth arose to animate a junior youth group in her neighbourhood, later declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh, and is now continuing to progress through the sequence of courses with her mother (who is now assisting with a fledging children's class!) "Steeling themselves for a lifetime of service", a group of Bahá'í youth is now helping organise two junior youth camps and youth devotionals.

With a discernable community spirit lending impetus to their efforts, initiatives were begun by the friends in the cluster to reach out to others, and these efforts are now being systematised. Recognising the "two nascent capacities" in the cluster, in January 2014 the friends, in consultation with an Auxiliary Board member, came to realise that the first milestone had indeed been reached!

### C. INCREASING INTENSITY

The 29<sup>2</sup> clusters which in the last Plan had intensive programmes of growth are regarded as having reached the **second milestone**. It is recognised in many of these clusters that the necessary elements are in place, and are functioning adequately to accelerate the expansion and consolidation process: in the words of the House of Justice, "a steady stream of friends is proceeding through the courses of the training institute and engaging in the corresponding activities, which serves, in turn, to increase the number of fresh recruits into the Faith, a significant percentage of whom invariably enters the institute process, guaranteeing the expansion of the system." However, in some of these clusters the **level of intensity is less than it was when they initially launched their intensive programme of growth** during the last Plan.

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...the clusters that have passed the second milestone are faced with one of two challenges...

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Therefore, generally speaking, the clusters that have passed the second milestone are faced with one of two challenges:

1. Where a level of intensity exists, efforts to extend the healthy dynamics of growth are giving rise to fresh obstacles and areas of learning, notably in those neighbourhoods where activity is most keenly focused. To accommodate growth, greater systematisation is needed, as well as the evolution of structures in response to the increasing complexity. The quality of the institute process, including the related core activities, also needs to be enhanced.
2. For those clusters that have reached a plateau or have lost some of the intensity reached earlier, the challenge is to overcome obstacles, rekindle activity, attain previous levels of intensity and sustain growth.

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<sup>2</sup> See footnote on page 2.

Crucial to facing both of these challenges is the ability to **read the reality** of our clusters, and as will be discussed in a later section, this is a vital area of learning in its own right.

### *Neighbourhoods*

Several clusters now have experience of intensive activity in specific neighbourhoods. This has been a tremendously **exciting area of learning** in the last year.

In an area of Belfast, a group of individuals comes together at the neighbourhood level to make plans for the expansion phase based on local growth needs. These meetings are beginning to include junior youth and individuals from the wider community, who are gradually starting to shoulder responsibility for advancing the community building activities. During one recent expansion phase, some junior youth participated in an outreach to begin their own class for mothers and toddlers in the neighbourhood in order to give the mothers an opportunity to meet others and create a network of support. In this same neighbourhood, there have been attempts to reach out to receptive youth. Before the youth conference, this resulted in a Ruhi Book 1 with five new participants who all went on to attend the youth conference!

The teaching team involved is now striving to learn how to overcome fresh obstacles. In particular, study and service are often seen as a real dichotomy among youth, and involving the local protagonists in service or training outside of their own neighbourhood is not always easy.

One can see from this account the **early stages of community building** taking place, with capacities being raised in those participating in the institute courses such that they are inspired and empowered to serve their local communities and thus to have an impact on the spiritual and social conditions of their neighbourhood.

Some neighbourhoods have benefitted from the dedicated work of **visiting teams, pioneers** or **full-time resources**, including **full-time coordinators, youth undertaking a year of service**, and other individuals where circumstances permit. The efforts in some selected cases are being augmented by direct accompaniment from the **resource persons** from Northern Europe's learning sites.

The neighbourhood of Hulme, in the Greater Manchester cluster, has had the bounty of the devoted services of two youth, who undertook a year of service there from 2012-13. A focus on outreach last summer resulted in ten youth starting the sequence of courses, and regular meetings to study and pray together. A solid group dynamic was created, with many attending the youth conference. One full-time youth started a junior youth group, and one of the ten who had started the sequence is now actively shouldering responsibility for the movement in his neighbourhood. He regularly accompanies the junior youth coordinator in reaching out to new youth and attending neighbourhood reflection meetings.

A new junior youth coordinator began with intensive efforts to meet new youth. However, drawing on learning and guidance from the learning site, it was noticed that many in the wider community need to see the programme being implemented by those promoting it. The coordinator worked to begin a junior youth group and, with support from one receptive mother in particular, established one with eleven participants.

### *Teaching projects and receptive populations*

**Collective teaching projects** remain a vital aspect of the community's efforts to grow. In London, for example, cluster-wide endeavours have seen teaching teams come together from different neighbourhoods to **pray, deepen, plan, and learn from each other**, and then go back to their specific localities each day to forge ahead with community building work. Recognising the great impetus these collective efforts can give, **further teaching projects are already being planned for this summer.**

Collective teaching projects remain a vital aspect of the community's efforts to grow.

Learning is also continuing to be generated in working with **receptive populations**. Efforts in some areas to invite youth from the wider society to the youth conference underscored the receptivity of the younger generations. Parents concerned for the spiritual welfare of their children or toddlers have also shown particular receptivity, and in some cases have begun the sequence of courses at the same time as putting their young ones in classes. Ethnic populations in certain neighbourhoods have also demonstrated heightened receptivity, notably including groups of Congolese, Nepalese and Nigerians. Many from the Persian diaspora are also drawn to Bahá'í's message, and indeed a significant proportion of those who enrol in the Faith are from this background.



### *Identifying and overcoming obstacles to sustained progress*

In *Insights from the Frontiers of Learning*, we read that “**overcoming challenges is an intrinsic part of [the] journey**”. Challenges heighten learning, lead to greater insights and understanding, build capacity, and are to be embraced rather than shunned!



*Raising funds in Sheffield for the youth conference*

Turning now to the **second main challenge of increasing intensity** as referred to above, Intensive Programmes of Growth were established in many clusters a number of years ago. While the work has continued to advance in many areas, a number of clusters, and indeed pockets within those clusters that are forging ahead, have **found maintaining momentum to be difficult.**

It has been observed, for example, that the friends in some more advanced clusters feel they *ought to be, or must surely be*, at a later stage of development. Yet such thoughts can be disabling.

Rather, we know from the House of Justice that the processes of growth “invariably” begin with opportunities for individual Bahá'ís to enter into “meaningful and distinctive conversation”. Thus, if a cluster is struggling to initiate core activities involving the community of interest, **the**

**focus needs to return to the first step of being able to hold meaningful and distinctive conversations.**

In South Wales, the Area Teaching Committee recognised that the process of expansion and consolidation was drifting. Responding to this they assisted the friends in successive cluster meetings to revisit guidance from the Universal House of Justice on the expansion phase. They reflected on the bonds of fellowship implied by the term ‘accompaniment’ and also the spiritual potency of meaningful and distinctive conversations. After seeing signs of progress, the Committee resolved to focus in the expansion phase on helping the friends to engage in such conversations, emphasised accompaniment and fellowship to extend this focus across the cluster, and supported individuals in taking opportunities to initiate core activities. The cluster agencies then identified individuals who they could personally work with to raise their capacity to accompany others.

The signs of growth were subsequently seen in certain key statistics: The number of individuals from the community of interest engaged in Book 1 has risen from 0 in February 2013 to 8 in February 2014. The number of children’s classes has risen from 2 to 4 (3 of which are new, which one becoming a junior youth group). The number of junior youth groups has risen from 0 to 3. And there is now one neighbourhood with all four core activities involving the community of interest.

*Providing Greater Structure as Complexity Rises*

Structures to support growth, most obviously including cluster agencies, emerge and evolve organically. In the last year, a great many refinements and changes have been made to respond to various needs and opportunities in the UK, including:



*A group of Bahá'ís and their friends in a neighbourhood in London*

- **Neighbourhood reflection meetings** in several areas have been introduced, and have lent significant impetus to programmes of growth at the local level.
- In some clusters, **reflection meetings have been decentralised** to be held concurrently in different areas with a view to improving accessibility, heightening attendance, and concentrating the discussion on local reflection and planning.
- Reports indicate that some Area Teaching Committees are now also ensuring that more time is given at

reflection meetings to **open and candid reflection**, in place of pre-prepared instruction.

- Increasing numbers of coordinators are now working with **helpers**, thereby building the capacity of future coordinators and extending the reach of the coordinators’ work
- While new structures are intended to accelerate the work of the Cause, **establishing structures prematurely can act as an impediment to growth**. In some clusters, three-person Area Teaching Committees were scaled back this year in order to allow individuals to concentrate on their own activities.

- Having reflected on the need for greater grassroots accompaniment in the last 12 months, the Training Institute Board decided to simplify the scheme of coordination. Instead of coordinators being assigned to one of the three educational processes over a large region or sub-region, ‘**area coordinators**’ have now been appointed in most parts of the UK to cover the whole educational process in areas of 3-4 clusters. Gatherings for these coordinators across the UK are now being organised every six months. This arrangement has in fact facilitated new levels of collaboration among the Institutions, especially between Auxiliary Board members, members of the Councils, and the Area Coordinators, who are increasingly consulting together in what has become known as ‘**trios**’.

#### D. READING OUR REALITY

Reading our reality is an essential capacity that the friends and institutions in the UK have been striving to develop over the last year. Accurately reading our reality enables us to recognise opportunities, the real impediments to growth, and the actions needed to overcome these. It also enables us to place our efforts in a much broader context of humanity’s development and the mission of translating Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings into reality.

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At a recent institutional meeting, those gathered endeavoured to describe the reality of their clusters in terms of the **social, material, and spiritual reality** of the population in which capacity was being built.

Such a reading reflects one’s perception of the **nature of the general population**, the **social and economic circumstances**, the **positive and negative forces** influencing the cluster, the **cultural factors** that make people particularly receptive to the Teachings, the **current capacity of the Bahá’í communities** within it, and the **strength of the institutions**. This experience helped participants see the merits of assessing a cluster’s situation through their own eyes and not, for example, through accepting prejudiced generalisations. The advantage of beginning with a simple description of a community that would then become the foundation of an expanding and ever-evolving narrative was also seen.

Drawing on the learning from this meeting, a gathering recently took place in Scotland— involving the Bahá’í Council, Auxiliary Board members, coordinators, a member of the National Assembly and our beloved Counsellor—at which efforts were made to carefully describe each cluster, its journey to date, and the opportunities and impediments to growth. This was found to be enormously helpful in planning next steps for each of these clusters, and helped create a **common vision** of how to advance the work across the region.

#### E. SCHOOLS

The National Spiritual Assembly has, in recent years, been **experimenting with the format of Summer Schools** to see how they can **support to a greater extent the processes of the Five Year Plan**. With the model of the London Youth Conference as an inspiration, all this year’s summer schools will focus the participants on the mission of Bahá’u’lláh for the transformation



of society and how the Plans of the Faith, particularly the current Plan, contribute to this mission. It will also enable participants to experience how this translates into the current endeavours of the Bahá'í community, particularly through engagement in the institute process and the activities that flow therefrom. It is the hope of the National Assembly that, similar to the Youth Conference, the friends will feel **encouraged** and **inspired** to work over the months leading up to the schools to **invite people from the community of interest to participate** and thus capture and experience the spirit of the Faith.

Over the coming months, materials will be adapted and facilitators trained to run the courses.

....all this year's summer schools will focus the participants on the mission of Bahá'u'lláh for the transformation of society....

Cluster based schools continue to be held in some parts of the UK, and the friends involved continue to strive to learn how these can best assist the processes of growth.

## F. THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

As the “**engine of growth**”, we know that the **health and vitality of the training institute process is critical** to our efforts to raise humanity's capacity to administer Bahá'u'lláh's remedy to an ailing world. The following data shows the numbers of participants who have completed study circles in six-month intervals over the last few years, and a snapshot of ongoing study circles in October 2013, (which is the last date for which we have comprehensive statistics):

INSTITUTE COURSES - the number of individuals who have completed each book in the 6 mth period									
	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 3: G2	Book 4	Book 5	Book 6	Book 7	Book 8
Apr-12	148	95	72	12	31	36	32	34	69
Apr-13	92	42	40	8	29	33	16	3	74
Oct-13	93	28	41	0	39	58	19	24	54

STUDY CIRCLES in progress			
	No. of Study Circles	Total No. of Participants	Est. No. of Friends of the Faith
Apr-10	355	1104	322
Apr-11	352	1043	351
Apr-12	302	852	307
Apr-13	306	917	270
Oct-13	267	848	295
% change	-12.7%	-7.5%	9.3%

It can be seen that **activity has generally plateaued** over the last year, and even declined compared to years past. In part, this may be because in many areas the Bahá'ís, who make up a majority of study circle participants, have finished going through the sequence of courses but have not been able to invite growing numbers into the training institute process.

The statistics make evident that much still needs to be learnt by all institutions, including Local Spiritual Assemblies, about how to accompany those who enter the training institute to “enter

the arena of systematic action”, and to utilise the **skills, abilities** and **attitudes** fostered by the sequence of courses to teach the Cause, elevate conversations, deepen those attracted to the Faith, and invite growing contingents from wider society to walk a path of service.

Nevertheless, it is pleasing to see that in some communities specific efforts are being made to learn how to invite others to begin the sequence of courses:

#### *Learning to increase quality*

As the House of Justice indicated in its Ridván 2010 message, “in the final analysis, sustained quantitative gains will be contingent on qualitative progress”. This suggests that the challenge of implementing the training institute process in such a way that it can continually expand as an

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“in the final analysis, sustained quantitative gains will be contingent on qualitative progress”

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“irrepressible movement” is intimately connected to the **quality of the training environment** and the associated pattern of accompaniment. In this context, regular gatherings of tutors to consult, reflect and plan are a powerful tool. It has been found, however, that **tutor encounters are underused in most clusters** at this time and it would seem that a more systematic approach to action and reflection is needed at all levels.

#### *Intensive training*

During the past two years, efforts were made to arrange intensive training for youth in several regions of the UK. In this way, it was hoped that the training would be more affordable and more accessible, especially for friends of the Faith.

However, experience has shown that **regional institute campaigns cannot yet attract sufficient numbers** for the training environment to be meaningful and effective.

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...a particular focus will be placed before each campaign on inviting youth from the wider society to attend these intensive training gatherings.

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For this reason, the Training Institute Board will be offering **centralised training twice a year** from this summer at least until the winter of 2015/16. These courses are wonderful spaces to invite youth from the wider society, not least because of the **joyous, inspirational spirit they invariably foster**. Drawing on the experience gained in encouraging people to attend the London Youth Conference, a particular focus will be placed

In Oxford, a small team of Bahá’í youth focused their energies on how to reach out to others. By dedicating a few hours a day to having conversation with strangers over a two-week period, the team was able to meet over 100 youth in one neighbourhood and begin a study circle with six participants.

before each campaign on inviting youth from the wider society to attend these intensive training gatherings.

### Children’s classes

The following table summarises some of the key information relating to the work of children’s classes across the country:

CHILDREN’S CLASSES in progress			
	No. of Children’s Classes	Total No. of Participants	Est. No. Belonging to Families of Friends of the Faith
Apr-10	130	502	251
Apr-11	106	418	229
Apr-12	120	516	288
Apr-13	110	485	274
Oct-13	111	526	347
% change	0.9%	8.5%	26.6%



*A piece of artwork from a children’s class*

As the table makes clear, overall numbers of classes and participants have been broadly stagnant in recent years. It is heartening to see, however, **that the proportion of participants from the wider society has significantly risen** (26.6%) in the most recent data, comprising around two thirds of the total. Such openness in offering these classes augurs well for the coming year!

The rolling out of training in the use of later grades of the children’s class materials is another notable achievement of the last year, and has increased the capacity of the community to tend to the educational needs and aspirations of children.

### Junior youth

A summary of activities for the junior youth spiritual empowerment programme is provided as follows:

JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS in progress			
	No. of Junior Youth Groups	Total No. of Participants	Est. No. Belonging to Families of Friends of the Faith
Apr-10	63	339	257
Apr-11	67	340	231
Apr-12	65	318	224
Apr-13	69	319	206
Oct-13	58	305	224
% change	-15.9%	-4.4%	8.7%

In common with the other educational imperatives, **the junior youth programme has not grown in numbers** in recent years. The most recent national data is from October 2013 and so the impact of the youth conference may not be so evident, even though **there are many**

**anecdotes of youth arising to serve**, and meeting together to begin processes of growth in their communities.

In addition, while overall numbers are have not significantly increased, new areas are now gaining experience in holding junior youth groups. In Wales for example, where around 10% of the entire Bahá'í population was engaged in studying Ruhi book 5 following the regional conference in early 2013, they now have **three junior youth groups**, with another hoping to start soon, whereas a year ago they had none.

In reflecting on how to advance the work of the training institute, it may be helpful to consider such questions as:

- How can we each endeavour to significantly increase the quality of the training offered in study circles? How do we each contribute to this learning process in our respective clusters?
- How can participants be assisted to understand clearly that study circles are intended to help us enter the field of service, and are not an end in themselves?
- What do we need to learn, as a community, to generate sustained growth in each area of the training institute? How do we go about accomplishing this?

### Devotional meetings

The number of devotional meetings in the UK—**activities that are ultimately vital to the process of community transformation in which we are engaged**—has remained broadly stable over the last two years. A slight increase in participation, including friends of the Faith, since April 2012 is nevertheless encouraging.

DEVOTIONALS in progress			
	No. of Regular Devotional Meetings	Est. No. of Friends of the Faith	Est. No. of Friends of the Faith
Apr-10	363	1793	670
Apr-11	321	1792	694
Apr-12	287	1591	655
Apr-13	274	1647	731
Oct-13	283	1633	718
% change	3.3%	-0.9%	-1.8%

How do we help book 1 participants to initiate such meetings? What is being learnt about describing and inviting people to devotionals?

### G. YOUTH

Responding to the call of the Universal House of Justice, over 1,000 youth gathered last summer for the London Youth Conference. Around one fifth of these came from the community of interest,

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demonstrating an **outward orientation and a capacity to invite others to walk a path of service** never seen before in these islands! Youth from the UK, who comprised the vast majority of those present, were pleased to be joined by their brothers and sisters from Ireland, Iceland, Gibraltar and Malta.



*A youth recounting his story at the conference*

understanding of this auspicious moment. Already, the institutions in the UK were learning much about what it means to work with groups of youth to achieve this. **'Large group facilitators'** who worked with groups of about 80 youth (i.e about 4 groups of 20) were trained in Germany before extending the training to **'small group facilitators'** in the UK, each of whom worked closely with a group of about 20 youth. This system was designed to assist in the ongoing accompaniment of youth and proved to be profoundly effective.

**Study materials** at the conference were provided from the Bahá'í World Centre itself, and focused on five areas: the period of youth; early adolescence; fostering mutual support and assistance; youth and community building; and contributing to the advancement of civilization.

Brimming with **exuberance, joy and artistic endeavour**, yet characterised also by **earnest study and consultation, a broadening of understanding, and newfound appreciation of the opportunities open to youth** to contribute to humanity's development, the conference was a resounding success and an unforgettable highlight of the past year.

Yet the conference was not an isolated event. Rather, it punctuated and stimulated an overall **movement of youth**, a movement supported by the entire community.

It was quite a journey, and continues today! Efforts began, following the House of Justice's convocation of the 114 conferences early in 2013, to reach out to youth across the country and generate enthusiasm and



*Youth at the London Conference*

Inspired and galvanised by the conference, a great many youth have been striving to put what they have learnt into action, to advance along the sequence of courses with vigour, and to extend the conversation begun at the youth conference to their peers.

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Inspired and galvanised by the conference, a great many youth have been striving to put what they have learnt into action...

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Building on **bonds of companionship** forged or strengthened at the conference, youth in communities across the country have also been meeting together with the purpose of **directing their energies towards the betterment of their communities**. Such collective efforts are already yielding marvellous results!



Since the youth conference, two of the Congolese youth in Sheffield have been particularly involved in the interaction with the younger groups in their community. Upon almost completing book 3, one of the youth, a 16-year old girl, is now teaching the children. The other youth is co-animating the junior youth group. They are receiving ongoing visits, especially from visiting Swahili speaking tutors to further deepen and carry out early practice of the sequence in which they are participating.

The youth of South and Southeast London were inspired by a sense of mission leaving the conference. They had a better vision of community building and an understanding that this process involved mutual support, regular reflections, and involving the wider community in the entire educational process.

Planning began at the youth conference itself for three teams in Southeast London: Camberwell, Bermondsey and New Eltham. Youth from other parts of the sector rallied to support these three areas. A unity of vision was built through regular neighbourhood reflection meetings, and over time those involved resolved to concentrate on the junior youth spiritual empowerment programme.

In October, four junior youth groups and a group for youth were formed across the three areas within a single expansion phase! As the protagonists animated the groups and built bonds of fellowship with youth and parents alike, it became clear that classes were also needed for the younger siblings of the junior youth as well as other children in the neighbourhood. Responding to this need, some youth refreshed their training of Grade 1 and then proceeded to train in the later Grades, and also attended sessions to study the junior youth materials in depth.

Efforts were made to engage youth in the community in book 1. It became apparent that the need to establish genuine friendships, to engage the youth in firesides, devotionals and deepenings, is an important precursor to beginning a book 1 in many cases. Book 6 refreshers are now being organised to help advance the work further.

All four core activities are now being used to contribute to growth. What is more, older members of the community are offering ongoing accompaniment to the youth in the field of action, and this has proved crucial for the success of the youths' endeavours



*Studying and reflecting on the youth conference materials*

The work with youth remains an **ongoing and pressing need**. The House of Justice has released a series of videos, collectively entitled *To Serve Humanity*, to assist in maintaining momentum and inviting others to join in the community building processes. Moreover, the **youth conference materials have been studied** by the National

Assembly, the Regional Councils, and a great many Local Assemblies and communities since September. Not only has this been assisting them in **supporting the youth**, but they are also learning themselves from the **many profound insights** that the materials contain.

- How can the work with youth be intensified and extended?
- The youth conference materials, as well as the recent letters of the House of Justice concerning youth and the *To Serve Humanity* films, are a potent resource for youth and adults alike. How can they best be used?
- What are we learning about the support that older members of the community can offer to youth?
- How do we encourage and accompany without inadvertently distorting the efforts of youth who, after attending the conference, may indeed have a greater understanding of the processes at work than their elders?

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The House of Justice has released a series of videos, collectively entitled *To Serve Humanity*, to assist in maintaining momentum and inviting others to join in the community building processes.

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#### H. ENHANCING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO SUPPORT THE MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

The youth conference provided the framework this year for the institutions to make progress in enhancing their capacity to support the movement of clusters across the United Kingdom. A mighty effort was made by national, regional, cluster and local institutions to support the mobilisation of hundreds of youth into the field of action. There was a particular focus on learning to accompany more effectively at all institutional levels, whether this was one institution striving to learn how to accompany another, or members of institutions learning to accompany individual believers in their efforts to serve their communities. The determination of many Local Spiritual Assemblies to learn how to nurture the process of growth and to work with the other agencies in their cluster was also a noticeable development.

In February 2014, a **National Institutional meeting** was held in Rugby where the Counsellor and Auxiliary Board members, the members of Regional Councils, the members of the Training Institute Board and the Area Coordinators, the statistics officers, youth facilitators, members of the pioneering committee and the members of the National Assembly spent a weekend focusing on the following three themes:

- To have a **common vision of the goal of the UK Bahá'í community** and the means by which these goals can be achieved.
- To read **the reality of each region**, to be able to see clearly where each cluster is along the continuum of development and to have clear plans of how the friends in these clusters, with emphasis on the youth, can be accompanied to achieve their goals.
- To have a **unified vision about the development of clusters** and the natural emergence of structures in the cluster.

This was a very fruitful gathering and a greater sense of urgency and renewed focus has since imbued the efforts of all the institutions that attended.

This report would not be complete without mention of the unceasing and wise counsel of our dearly loved Counsellor Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi. Her constant care and attention to all aspects of



the process of growth has been fundamental to the progress made by the community in achieving the objectives of the current Plan.

## I. STATISTICS

The **effective use of statistics** as a planning tool for cluster agencies and other institutions involved in the work of the Plan continues to be an area of learning. The National Statistics Officer reports on the use of statistics that “as more friends are becoming familiar with them, **the quality and efficiency of data management is getting better**. In particular, there was a reported improvement in accuracy of Cluster Growth Profiles in many clusters.”

To date, 23 cluster/sector agencies have received training to date in the use of the **Statistical Report Programme (SRP)** as well as the **Statistical Report Programme for Training Institutes (SRPI)** and the use of the **Cluster Growth Profile (CGP)**; another 10 are still pending. The Statistics Officer writes that “most agencies have reported a more purposeful and effective collection of statistics associated with the quarterly CGP, and a more profound understanding of how the data is meaningful in their service. There are still a number of **technical issues** to overcome, such as using non-Windows operating systems, and how to share data inputs effectively between agency members.”



*Youth involved in a service project*

**application of the teachings** to our individual lives and assisting others to do the same; and through all this, we are also **learning how to learn** together as a community – a lesson of eternal value!

In addition to the countless daily efforts that the friends are making to give practical expression to the teachings, **further systematic steps** have been taken over the last year to apply the teachings for the betterment of communities. Many of these activities take place in the context of the **junior youth spiritual empowerment programme**.

## J. SOCIETY-BUILDING POWER OF THE FAITH

In striving to achieve the immediate goals that lie before us, the UK community is at the same time learning how to contribute its share to no less an enterprise than the transformation of society itself. We are all helping to forge **new relationships** between the Plan’s three participants; striving to adopt **patterns of thinking and action** befitting of a new, divinely inspired culture; exploring the

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...the UK community is...learning how to contribute its share to no less an enterprise than the transformation of society itself...

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One junior youth group in Northern Ireland decided to hold a service project each month. So far, they have raised money for a women’s support charity; conducted a litter cleanup operation in a park; dug up and replanted two flower beds outside a local centre; made mini bird feeders to hang in public spaces; and raised funds for the Philippines Appeal.

A further insight into the society-building power of the Faith was given with the youth conference itself, which not only provided the ongoing work with junior youth a mighty thrust forward, but also saw hundreds and hundreds of youth consecrating themselves to the well-being of humanity.

## K. BAHÁ’Í UNIVERSITY SOCIETIES

The use of Bahá’í societies in universities has been a long-standing feature of efforts by Bahá’í students to promote the Faith on university campuses. However, as the work of the Plan is continuing to unfold, **the role of these societies is evolving.**

Cognisant of these changes, the National Assembly felt it timely to issue guidance this year to students, through their Local Spiritual Assemblies and Groups, concerning the **aims and purposes of Bahá’í university societies** and their relationship to the Bahá’í Institutions.

Briefly speaking, societies may be helpful in a number of ways, such as providing access to university facilities, but there is no general call for the creation of societies. Rather, Bahá’í students are encouraged to see their work as that of **any other teaching team in a cluster**, and to **read their own reality** as to whether a society might assist them in their efforts to promote the Faith.

## 2. DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

### A. INTRODUCTION

The diplomatic work includes the following areas of activity:

- **developing sound relations with Government and the organisations of civil society** with a view to raising awareness of the Faith and contributing to thinking and policy concerned with the betterment of society
- **defending the Bahá'ís in Iran** and in other countries as directed by the Universal House of Justice and the Bahá'í International Community's United Nations Office

The Universal House of Justice has been encouraging a number of National Spiritual Assemblies around the world to develop a systematic approach to working with their Governments and organisations of civil society beyond defence concerns so that they can **share Bahá'í-inspired ideas for the betterment of society**. This work will, of course, become more prominent as the Bahá'í community grows in strength and has greater resources at its disposal.

How do we build capacity to enter into a deeper, more meaningful and constructive relationship with Government? How do we build relationships with key individuals in Government? What are the spaces in which ideas are formed and discussed? How do we introduce ideas in a practical way? These are among the key questions being addressed by the Office of Public Affairs as it moves forward in this specialised yet important area of service.

The diplomatic work, including the defence of the Bahá'ís in Iran, is coordinated by a **task force** of four individuals which has been actively working with an expanding pool of individuals to carry forward its various lines of activity. Some ten individuals have been regularly contributing to the diplomatic work during the past year.

### B. RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT

The efforts of the Office remains principally focused on two Government Ministries, namely the **Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)** and the **Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)**. There has also been a measure of contact with the Department for International Development and the Government Equalities Office, which is situated in the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

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Among the most notable developments were the visits of two Government Ministers to the National Hazíratu'l-Quds ...

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The Bahá'í community's relations with Her Majesty's Government continued to advance during the period under review. Among the most notable developments were the visits of two Government Ministers to the National Hazíratu'l-Quds in London. The visit on 2 July 2013 by the Rt Hon Don Foster MP, at that time the Minister for Integration at the DCLG, provided an occasion for the Bahá'í representatives, which included believers from Mr Foster's constituency in Bath, to share some thoughts about the **role**

**of religion in society.** The Rt Hon Baroness Warsi, Senior Minister of State at the FCO and Minister for Faith and Communities at the DCLG, visited on 30 January 2014 and the **principles and history of the Faith**, the nature of **Bahá'í community building efforts**, and the situation of the **Bahá'ís in Iran** were among the topics discussed.

... the Office has maintained open and regular communication with civil servants in a number of Government Departments.

Against a backdrop of constant change in Government personnel and structures, the Office has maintained open and regular communication with civil servants in a number of Government Departments. Particularly fruitful relationships have been established with civil servants working in the **Integration and Faiths Division (IFD)** at the DCLG and in the **Human Rights and Development Directorate (HRDD)** at the FCO. The latter invited a representative of the Office to address civil servants on 17

December 2013 on the history and teachings of the Faith and the current work of the Bahá'í community as part of the **FCO's religious literacy programme**; it also organised a cross-government seminar entitled **"How should governments do God?"** held at Goldsmiths College, London, on 12 March 2014 at which the Bahá'í experience to date of engaging with Government on a range of matters, including defending the rights of the Bahá'ís in Iran and issues pertaining to freedom of religion and belief throughout the world, was shared by a representative of the Bahá'í community. This meeting was attended by senior civil servants with an outward-facing policy role from across Whitehall as well as officials from a number of local authorities in Greater London.

**Together in Service (TiS)** is a two year programme, being taken forward by the DCLG in partnership with FaithAction, a network of faith based and community organisations serving their communities by delivering public services, that celebrates the practical contribution faith communities make to society through volunteering, and seeks to inspire and motivate new multi-faith social action projects. It is the successor to *A Year of Service* and a Bahá'í has been appointed to the task force charged with providing advice and guidance, support and insight to the TiS programme.

It is likely that the coming years will witness increasing opportunities for further and deeper engagement with Government as it seeks to establish **productive working relationships with faith communities in policy development and implementation**, and to creating the conditions to enable people of faith to manifest and practise their religious beliefs openly and contribute to society.



*Secretary of State, Eric Pickles MP, attending the launch of Together in Service at Westminster cathedral – (OPA were there, and we are involved)*

The Office is also mindful of the need to develop the Bahá'í community's engagement with the devolved government structures in **Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales** through appropriate interaction and representation.

### C. RELATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

The Office of Public Affairs seeks to enter into meaningful relationships with like-minded, non-partisan organisations committed to working for the advancement of civilisation. The past year has seen the further consolidation of working relationships with a range of organisations concerned with such issues as the **role of faith in public life, inter religious education and understanding, and religious freedom**, including the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Forward Thinking, Open Doors, and Oxford House, as well the establishment of links with bodies with whom the Bahá'í community has had little or no previous contact, such as the Christian Muslim Forum, Faith Matters, the Faiths and Civil Society Unit at Goldsmiths College, London, Global Minorities Alliance, and the British Chapter of the International Association of Religious Freedom.

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The Office ... seeks to enter into meaningful relationships with like-minded, non-partisan organisations committed to working for the advancement of civilisation.

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### D. CONTRIBUTING TO PUBLIC POLICY

The Office continues to believe that our engagement in the public policy arena at the national level will naturally flow out of our **participation in the discourses of society** as we strive to develop practical solutions to the pressing social challenges identified through our involvement in these discourses.

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... the Office ... is learning a great deal about the complexities and sensitivities inherent in efforts to offer Bahá'í-inspired ideas to policy discussions...

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During the past year, the Office continued to seek out the spaces associated with the **discourses on development, gender equality, religious freedom and the role of religion in society**, with a view to contributing to thinking and policy in these important areas. As a result of these efforts, it is learning a great deal about the complexities and sensitivities inherent in efforts to offer Bahá'í-inspired ideas to policy

discussions, particularly the standard of rigour required when sharing profound concepts derived from Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation in these spaces.

### E. DEFENCE WORK

#### The situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran

Bahá'ís in Iran continue to face systematic and increasingly violent persecution that is as serious as it has been at any time in recent years. The Office continues to dedicate considerable effort to learning about **effective approaches, methods and instruments** in highlighting the injustices

faced by Bahá'ís in the Cradle of the Faith. Given the long-standing and intractable nature of the persecution, a continuing challenge has been learning how to **accompany receptive contacts in Government, Parliament, civil society, and the mass media** to fully appreciate the nature and scale of the persecution, the ultimate aim of the Iranian regime, and the manner of action that may be most effective in defending the rights of Iran's Bahá'ís and to holding the Iranian authorities accountable for their actions. This has taken on particular significance in recent months given developments in the UK's relationship with Iran; how current issues in Iran affect

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the approaches we take with the UK Government and Parliament, in particular, will no doubt remain an area of intense learning for the Office in the years ahead.

The past year saw the Office begin to take more systematic action in defence of the Bahá'ís in Iran in spaces in which its engagement on this issue has been hitherto more limited. These included **presentations at academic conferences and seminars, enlisting support in national level inter faith spaces, and attending events organised by think tanks and other institutions** with an interest in matters pertaining to Iran.

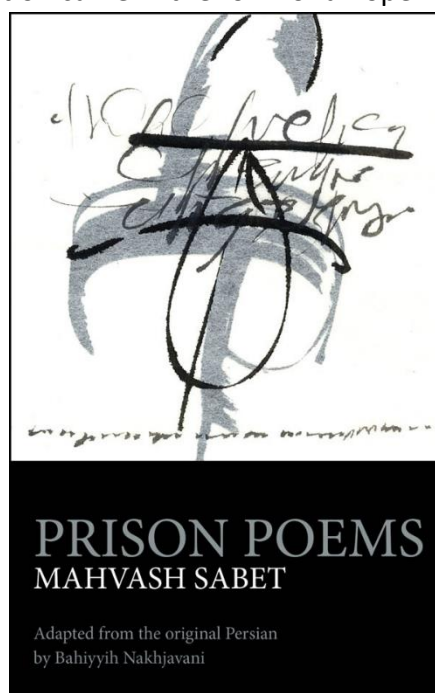
*Campaign to raise awareness of the fifth anniversary of the incarceration of the former members of the Yárán*

14 May 2013 marked the fifth anniversary of the incarceration of the former members of the Yárán. The Office contributed to a **coordinated global campaign of public advocacy** to mark this significant anniversary and highlight the ongoing persecution by endured by countless innocent Bahá'ís and other citizens in Iran.

The most notable contribution came in the form of an open letter signed by fifty senior figures from faith communities across the UK

The most notable contribution came in the form of an open letter signed by fifty senior figures from faith communities across the UK, including the Archbishop of Wales, the Chief Rabbi, the Moderator of the

General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and the Chief Imam of Leicester Central Mosque, requesting the Foreign Secretary to call on the Iranian authorities to release the seven innocent Bahá'ís. The letter, which gained the **unprecedented public support of senior individuals within the Muslim community**, was presented to Alistair Burt MP, then Minister for the Middle East, at the Foreign Office on 14 May by a delegation comprising faith community representatives and Parliamentarians. Other events held to commemorate the anniversary included a seminar on 9 May at the Law Society of England and Wales addressing various



aspects of the injustices perpetrated against the former members of the Yárán. This meeting, co-organised by the Law Society and the Bar Human Rights Committee, featured contributions by **Ahmed Shaheed**, UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran, and **Mahnaz Parakand**, who had served as a legal counsel for the former members of the Yárán, and coincided with the publication of a letter in *The Daily Telegraph* calling for the release of the seven Bahá'ís signed by 18 prominent jurists. On 4 June, guests from the worlds of entertainment and the arts attended an evening reception at the National Hazíratu'l-Quds in London to launch the English translation of **poems written by Mahvash Sabet**, a former member of the Yárán.

The fifth anniversary campaign was the latest in a series of global initiatives, involving a number



*Mahnaz Pa Mahnaz Parakand, former lawyer for the Yaran and Kirsty Brimelow QC of the Bar Human Rights Committee address a seminar on the case of the Yaran at the Law Society*

of external affairs offices around the world and **coordinated by the Bahá'í International Community**, to raise awareness of the persecution of the believers in Iran. It would seem that such campaigns are likely to remain a regular feature of the Bahá'í world's global strategy to emancipate the Faith in the land of its birth; that being the case, they will clearly be the object of ongoing reflection as to their efficacy and impact.

### *Contact with Her Majesty's Government*

The Office has continued to build on its existing strong relationship with the FCO regarding the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran and broader issues of international religious freedom at the level of principle. This relationship has been nurtured through **regular formal and informal communication and meetings** on a range of issues related to the situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran. This may have contributed to continued **robust UK support** for international scrutiny of the human rights situation in Iran, including its treatment of the Bahá'í community. It was heartening to see UK officials again raise the plight of Iran's Bahá'ís during interactive dialogues with the **UN Special Rapporteur** on the human rights situation in Iran at the **UN General Assembly Third Committee** in New York in October 2013 and at the **UN Human Rights Council** in Geneva in March 2014.

The Office's ongoing contact with the FCO has been maintained during a period of significant change in Government personnel, both at the Ministerial and civil servant level, dealing with Iran. At the time of writing and not for want of serious effort, the Office has not yet established a working relationship with Hugh Robertson MP, who was appointed Minister for the Middle East in September 2013. However, it was pleasing that we were finally able to engage Baroness Warsi on the issue of the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran. A particularly frank discussion about the UK government's policy towards Iran in relation to its appalling human rights record took place during the Minister's visit to the Bahá'í Centre in January.

## Relations with Parliament

The Office has continued to systematically reach out to and build relationships with Parliamentarians of both Houses. At its Annual General Meeting in December 2013, the All Party Parliamentary Friends of the Bahá'ís Group was renamed the **All Party Parliamentary Group on the Bahá'í Faith (APPG)** and adopted the following two principal purposes: *“To raise awareness within Parliament of the Bahá'í Faith and the efforts of the Bahá'í community of the UK to contribute to the betterment of British society, and to raise awareness of the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran and other instances where Bahá'ís are subject to discrimination or oppression on the grounds of their faith.”* Previously, the explicit and sole focus of the APPG's activity had been on defending the rights of the believers in Iran.

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The APPG has remained a key tool in raising the situation of Bahá'ís in Iran in Parliament. Its value in complementing the Office's relationship with the FCO and amplifying efforts to highlight concerns for the plight of Bahá'ís in Iran has also become increasingly clear. The APPG has continued to grow in membership over the past year as a result of a more strategic and focused outreach to Parliamentarians of both Houses. Its three new officers, elected at the last Annual General Meeting, have expanded the leadership of the Group and contributed to fulfilling the achievement of last year's goal of establishing a more dynamic and proactive leadership.

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The APPG has continued to grow in membership over the past year as a result of a more strategic and focused outreach to Parliamentarians of both Houses.

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Supportive APPG members have persisted with the regular use of a range of Parliamentary mechanisms that seek information or request action from Government with regards to the situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran. During the past year, a number of **Oral and Written Parliamentary Questions** and **Early Day Motions** were tabled by APPG members. The Office is committed to learning more about how to best utilise the full range of mechanisms available to Parliamentarians and build on its experience to date on the nature of accompaniment they need in taking these actions. In this regard, during the past year the Office has been working with supportive MPs to seek to make use of another specialist Parliamentary mechanism, a **Backbench Committee Debate**, to address the wider issues of international freedom of religion or belief. Whilst initial efforts have not secured a debate of this nature, the Office is actively learning about this new area of possible activity for influencing political debate and has plans for a further attempt to work with MPs on a debate of this form after Easter 2014.

The APPG, in collaboration with the APPG on International Religious Freedom or Belief, hosted a **seminar in Parliament** on 4 December 2013 which addressed the situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran. Ably chaired by Baroness Berridge of the Vale of the Catmose, it featured powerful contributions from Ahmed Shaheed, Bishop Angaelos of the Coptic Orthodox Church and the late Paul Goggins MP, and was attended by an audience which included FCO officials, Parliamentarians and representatives of civil society organisations.



In January 2014, the APPG submitted a memorandum of evidence to a **Foreign Affairs Committee inquiry into UK policy towards Iran**. This was a useful learning experience for the Office in generating content for contribution to an important Parliamentary process.

... the Bahá'í community in September 2013 became a stakeholder organisation in the APPG on International Religious Freedom or Belief...

In a significant development, the Bahá'í community in September 2013 became a stakeholder organisation in the APPG on International Religious Freedom or Belief, which works to raise awareness of international religious freedom or belief as a fundamental, universal human right amongst Parliamentarians, Government, media, civil society and the general public.

The Office has been a **vigorous contributor of ideas and recommendations** to this new APPG from the very outset of its existence and has contributed oral and written evidence to the Group's inaugural report on "Article 18 – an orphaned right". Learning how to collaborate further with this dynamic APPG will continue to be an important area of work in the coming months.

#### *Enlisting the support of civil society organisations and prominent individuals*

Efforts to defend the rights of the Bahá'ís in Iran continued to receive vigorous and greatly valued support from a range of civil society organisations, most notably the Bar Human Rights Committee, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Global Minorities Alliance, the Law Society, Open Doors, and Small Media. Experience has shown that personal friendship has been a key element in forging sound working relationships with these bodies.

With greater attention now being paid to violations of freedom of religion or belief throughout



Mahnaz Para The calligraphy of Ayatollah Masoumi Tehrani

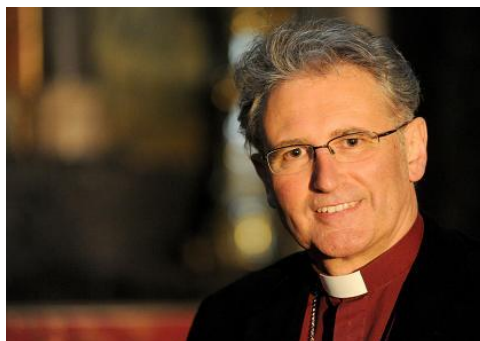
the world, including Iran, there will no doubt be increasing opportunities for the Office to engage on these issues with a wider range of organisations and individuals committed to safeguarding this fundamental right for all, irrespective of religious background or belief system. With this development will, inevitably, come a number of questions that the Office will need to think through very carefully. For example, should it broaden its human rights advocacy work to include the persecution of other religious groups? If so, how should it practically pursue this? What are the challenges posed by this? The Office remains committed to learning about this possible area of work and to building greater capacity within the Bahá'í community for collaborating with others for the cessation of all instances of persecution on grounds of religion or belief.

Opportunities for pursuing the defence work in the **inter faith space** at the national and regional levels continue to be a major area of learning. Efforts to engage prominent figures in other faith communities in raising awareness of the situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran were taken to new heights during the past year as a result of the campaign to highlight the fifth anniversary of the incarceration of the former members of the Yárán. The successful forging of such a **prominent coalition of inter faith support**, speaking with one voice in condemning the ongoing persecution of the faithful in the Cradle of the Faith, was an unprecedented act in the decades-long work in the UK to emancipate the Cause of the Blessed Beauty in the land of its birth.

### Media-related defence work

The media-related defence work is increasingly being understood as an element of the broader diplomatic work and therefore most appropriately coordinated by the task force overseeing the diplomatic work.

The Office has also reflected on how it can further systematise its **media outreach**, applying insights gained from many years of experience in outreach to Government, Parliament and civil society. For example, in seeking to build relationships with Parliamentarians, the Office has had to continuously cast its net wide for new contacts, whilst simultaneously consolidating existing relationships through seeking regular meetings and so on. In addition, of the contacts that the Office is touch with, some will take effective action upon our request, and some will not, for various reasons, though they appear to remain sympathetic to the situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran. It has been found that occasionally an individual who, for whatever reason, has not been active in the past, will come forward and take action, sometimes without even informing the Bahá'í community. It is for this reason that we attempt to maintain open relationships with all those who are supportive, even if only in word.



*The Bishop of Coventry who has welcomed the actions of Ayatollah Masoumi Tehrani in the House of Lords*

In our relationships with media contacts, this kind of regular briefing and open relationship has been rarer, and there has often been a sense that only those who have experience with the media can carry out this work. This is simply not the case. To change this outmoded way of

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...efforts have been made in recent months to dedicating a portion of the regular meetings of the Office's diplomatic relations task force to media outreach

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thinking, deliberate efforts have been made in recent months to dedicating a portion of the regular meetings of the Office's diplomatic relations task force to media outreach, and efforts to contact the media and meet with journalists are now being carried out by a wider range of individuals than hitherto before. This is a most welcome development, and this **regular and exacting reflection on the Office's engagement with the media** has lent a higher degree of systematisation to the defence work.

Recently, representatives of the Office have met with journalists from *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, and *The Times*, and continue to pursue others. The purpose of this recent round of meetings has been primarily to brief rather than to push for a specific article, and this open approach has led to **interesting discussions with journalists** who have offered their candid thoughts on how the Bahá'ís could improve their media outreach or suggested various avenues of approach that have not been considered before. Happily, one meeting led to a column being published in *The Times*, in print and online, which referred to Iran's treatment of its Bahá'í community as the litmus test of the sincerity of its intentions towards the human rights of its citizens as a whole.

Efforts to engage the **Persian language media** on the situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran continued to be vigorously pursued during the past year. With London becoming the home to a number of Persian TV channels, efforts were made to reach out to two relatively new stations with the aim to introduce the Institutions of the Faith as the official channel for obtaining news and views concerning the Bahá'ís in Iran. Appointments were made to visit Manoto TV and Iranfarda, both prominent and popular media outlets broadcasting to Iran. **A direct link has been established with the Manoto TV news desk** with regular dialogue and exchange of information. **Iranfarda conducted a 35 minute long interview covering the situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran.** Relationships with Raha TV and Persian BBC have been further consolidated. Following the attack on a Bahá'í family in Birjand in February 2014, **BBC Persian conducted interviews and covered the incident in its prime time TV and radio news slot.** BBC Persian further reviewed this latest attack and the reasons behind the persecution of Iran's Bahá'ís in a 30 minute programme called "Safheh Dow" which featured contributions from **Shirin Ebadi**, the Nobel Peace Laureate and renowned human rights lawyer, Mr Eshkavari, and a Bahá'í spokesperson.

## F. CAPACITY BUILDING AND FURTHER AREAS OF LEARNING

**Building capacity** in a growing pool of individuals to contribute to the defence work, as well as raising the capacity of the Office itself as a whole to undertake this vital service, remains central to its long term work in this area. The Office continues to benefit from a succession of individuals who offer a substantial period of service to advance this specialised area of activity, and remains **committed to accompanying** those who come to serve in this field.

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...the Office has generated some experience of working in cycles with regular action, reflection, consultation, study, research and planning in light of experience.

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The Office strives to operate in a mode of learning across all areas of its activity, the defence work being no exception. What this practically looks like is itself an object of regular examination, as is the need to **ensure coherence between the defence work and the wider work** in which the Bahá'í community is engaged. To date, the Office has generated some experience of working in cycles with regular action, reflection, consultation, study, research and planning in light of experience. It continues to do its best to

**systematise its learning** and to more consciously draw on the **Power of Divine Assistance** in order to accomplish the tasks before it.

### 3. PARTICIPATION IN THE DISCOURSES OF SOCIETY ON THE NATIONAL STAGE

#### A. INTRODUCTION

In its Ridván 2013 message, the Universal House of Justice highlights that an “especially notable feature of the last twelve months has been the frequency with which the Bahá’í community is being identified, in a wide variety of contexts, with efforts to bring about the betterment of society in collaboration with like-minded people.” The message goes on to outline two significant developments that have enabled the community to participate more effectively in the life of society at the national level:

“The suffering borne by the faithful in Iran, particularly in the decades since the most recent wave of persecutions began, has spurred their brothers and sisters in other countries to come to their defence. From among the notable endowments which, as a consequence of that endurance, the worldwide Bahá’í community has acquired, we mention one in this connection: an impressive network of specialized agencies at the national level that has proven capable of systematically developing relations with governments and organisations of civil society. Parallel to this, the processes of successive Plans have refined the community’s ability to participate in prevalent discourses in every space where they occur—from personal conversations to international forums. At the grassroots, involvement in this kind of endeavour builds naturally, through the same organic approach that characterizes the steady increase of the friends’ engagement in social action, and no special attempt to stimulate it is necessary. At the national level, however, it is more often becoming the focus of attention for these same dedicated agencies already functioning in dozens of national communities, and it is proceeding according to the familiar and fruitful pattern of action, reflection, consultation, and study.”

With these parallel developments, the Office of Public Affairs has been striving to systematically learn about the approaches, methods and instruments regarding the Bahá’í community’s **formal participation in the prevalent discourses of society on the national stage** in the United Kingdom.

#### B. LEARNING TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL LEVEL DISCOURSES OF SOCIETY

*As outlined in last year’s annual report, the purpose of our participation in the discourses of society is to contribute to the reshaping of attitudes and conceptions on fundamental issues pertaining to the advancement of civilisation. The Bahá’í community strives to learn how to make this **contribution to the progress of society at the level of thought** through offering, with sincerity and in a spirit of humility, insights drawn from the Bahá’í Writings and the community’s growing experience in applying them. As this experience grows and becomes richer, we can anticipate that **the knowledge generated by the Bahá’í community on issues relevant to the promotion of the common good will be shared freely by its representatives in***

*an ever-increasing number of social spaces, thus extending the community's learning and experience to more and more people.*

The Office continues to strive to learn how the discourses work at the national level can become more **systematic** and **strategic** so that the Faith can begin to exert a **fuller measure of its potential influence on society**. At the heart of all efforts in this area is the need to proceed in the same learning mode that characterises the work in the field of expansion and consolidation; this involves the **adoption of certain attitudes** as well as **delineating areas and lines of action to learn about**.

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... the purpose of our participation in the discourses of society is to contribute to the reshaping of attitudes and conceptions on fundamental issues pertaining to the advancement of civilisation.

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Some of the key areas which the Office continues to strive to learn about include:

- The general approaches, methods and instruments to aid effective participation in the discourses of society
- How to systematise the experience generated
- How to raise the capacity of a growing pool of human resources to participate in the discourses of society and to coordinate their contribution over time. In particular, learning how to utilise the capacities of the participants of the seminars organised by the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity
- How to develop the capacity to read social reality accurately. Who are the people and groups concerned with similar issues in our society? What can be learned from them? How can we collaborate with them for the betterment of society?
- How do we identify relevant social spaces at the national level which we can effectively contribute? What characteristics are we looking for in a social space? Having identified certain social spaces how will we enter them?
- How to raise capacity to develop distinctive and meaningful content as part of a Bahá'í contribution to a particular discourse
- How to use the Web as a tool for our discourses work
- How to contribute to certain discourses of society through the media
- How to measure progress in our participation in the discourses of society



*A shot from a seminar on freedom of religion or belief in parliament*

*striving to build the capacity of a small group of friends to embark on a learning process regarding participation in these two discourses at the national level.*

*The Office's current efforts continue to be focused on identifying relevant social spaces at the national level, being present in an increasing number of them, becoming familiar with the nature of the discourses underway and the key actors involved. This process of learning is centred on participation in **two national level discourses – the gender equality discourse and the discourse on the role of religion in society**. At this stage, the Office is*

### C. GENDER EQUALITY AND THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN SOCIETY DISCOURSES

In striving to learn about the various areas delineated above in relation to the two discourses identified, the Office has brought together a small group of people with which to collaborate on an ongoing basis in order to **generate insights** and **develop capacities**. Under the guidance of the Office, this small team, who are expected to draw on the experience and talents of other members of the community, is beginning to think about our participation in the discourses on gender equality and the role of religion in society. Although working together on broader issues related to **approaches, methods and instruments for participation in discourses**, the team is loosely organised into two smaller groups each focusing on one of the chosen discourses. This includes an initial “**mapping**” of the respective discourses through research on the **various spaces** in which the discourses take place; the identification of the **leading actors** in the spaces and the nature of their contributions; and the **main themes** and **sub-themes** being addressed in the ongoing conversations that together make up the discourses. Further, the team is undertaking a **systematic study** of the Sacred Writings of the Faith, the letters of the Guardian, the messages of the Universal House of Justice as well as the statements commissioned on its behalf, and relevant statements of the Bahá’í International Community, as part of an effort to generate content for the Bahá’í community’s participation in these two discourses.

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This systematic, deep study and research, should lay an invaluable foundation on which to learn how and where to best participate and make an effective contribution to discourses.

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This systematic, deep study and research, the Office hopes, should lay an invaluable foundation on which to learn how and where to best participate and make an effective contribution to these discourses. It is hoped that intimate familiarity with the spaces and the development of meaningful content through this process should aid our participation in the discourses. Through regular and close consultation and reflection between the team and the Office, capacity should develop in both as they walk a path of learning about how to participate effectively in these important discourses.

*The Office’s capacity to learn about participating in national discourses was greatly enhanced by the participation of some its members and collaborators in a gathering convened by the **Office of Public Discourse** at the Bahá’í World Centre in November 2013, in Acuto, Italy.*

### D. INTER FAITH

The inter faith arena continues to be conceived of as a space in which the Bahá’í community seeks to contribute to the discourse on the role of religion in society. This continues to be the focus of our contributions to inter faith spaces at the national level such as the Faith Communities Forum of the Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom.

The Office continues its interest mentioned last year in learning more about the contribution that Bahá'ís can make to **local inter faith activities** in the United Kingdom and to support, where possible, efforts in this area. The Office received a large number of reports from a number of Bahá'í communities that currently contribute to local inter faith initiatives and has initially distilled the experiences reported and drawn out key themes and questions arising from the wide range of experience that exists among the friends. The Office intends to develop appropriate plans and strategies for supporting local inter faith work in light of the experiences shared.

The inter faith arena continues to be conceived of as a space in which the Bahá'í community seeks to contribute to the discourse on the role of religion in society.

## E. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Office is learning to understand this area as another space where a contribution can be made to the broader discourse on the role of religion in society.

A three person task force appointed by the Office, drawing on the support of a number of believers with extensive experience in religious education and religious studies, supports parents, religious education teachers and **Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)** members with their work in schools and local communities. The number of SACREs in England with Bahá'í representatives in England currently stands at over 70; in Wales, Bahá'ís are represented on six SACREs. In Northern Ireland, a Bahá'í serves on the Religious Education Advisory Group of the Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment. There are two Bahá'ís serving on the Executive of NASACRE (the National Association of SACREs).



*An interfaith delegation accompanied by Lord Avebury and Naomi Long MP present a letter calling for the release of the Yaran to Minister of State, Alistair Burt at the FCO. A Bahá'í was included in the delegation*

In July 2013, two Bahá'ís attended a conference on *The Future of Religious Education*, and in December 2013, the Bahá'í community offered a written contribution to the All Party Parliamentary Group for Religious Education's review of Religious Education and Good Community Relations.

## F. INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN GLOBAL PROSPERITY

Guided by the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity in Haifa, a **UK-based coordinating team** is responsible for the delivery of seminars in the UK. The Institute explains the purpose of these seminars as follows:

If the Bahá'í community is to contribute more and more to the prevalent discourses of society, it seems clear that attention needs to be paid to the development of human resources. One group of great potential consists of young adults who attend university. The Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity aims to help raise the capacity of youth to participate in the prevalent discourses of society by providing spaces for them to come together annually over the course of four years to study a set of materials that helps them build an evolving conceptual framework which, informed by the teachings of the Faith and the accumulated knowledge of humanity in different fields, can guide their thought and action during their formative years as university students.

### **UK Undergraduate Seminars Report 2013 Collaborators Training**

The Institute organised a **collaborators training** in Coalport during July 2013. The training was attended by 23 participants from the UK, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Norway, Italy and Finland.

The training was aimed at raising the number of individuals who can collaborate with the Institute in offering the seminars for undergraduate students. It focused on creating a **deeper consciousness of the nature and purpose of the seminars** and of aspects related to its organisation and facilitation. In addition, the training provided participants with an opportunity to acquire more profound insights into some of the fundamental concepts that lie at the heart of the seminars.

**The training was an important milestone in the development and strengthening of the seminars** in Europe and in particular the UK. With the sizable contingent from the UK present at the training there now exists a pool of collaborators to assist with the ongoing development of the seminars in the UK.

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For the first time, the sessions were facilitated entirely by resources from the UK without requiring support from abroad.

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### **Undergraduate Seminar**

This was the **sixth year** in which the Institute offered its seminar for undergraduate students in the UK. 61 participants attended the seminar, which was held in Wellington College over 11 days in August. For the first time, the sessions were facilitated entirely by resources from the UK without requiring support from abroad.



*Youth at the ISGP Seminar for under-graduates*



## 4. FINANCIAL REPORT

*“O people of Bahá! Ye are the dawning-places of the love of God and the daysprings of His loving-kindness.”*

Bahá'u'lláh, The eighth Ishráq

During 2013, many friends in the United Kingdom made sacrificial contributions. The National Assembly is most grateful to the friends as the life blood of the Cause has been enabled to flow without interruption in response to the needs of a community which is working day and night to further the aims of the Five Year Plan.

Among the numerous Bahá'í funds in the United Kingdom, the National Fund is the core fund where the main income and expenditure of the National Spiritual Assembly are recorded and tracked. The friends are generally encouraged to contribute to this National Fund to allow the National Assembly the freedom to spend according to the changing requirements of the Faith at any one time.

However, there are also other funds to which the community can directly contribute. Deputisation Funds (such as for the Training Institute) are earmarked, specifically designated funds for a particular purpose. Another fund is for the upkeep of the Guardian's Resting Place. From time to time the National Assembly asks the friends to directly contribute to this fund. In 2011 the National Assembly set up a separate Endowment fund, which will provide the necessary funding for the upkeep of the Resting Place in the future. However, for now, we are blessed to have the opportunity to pay for current upkeep as well as contributing to future maintenance in the years and decades to come.

As and when a property of the national community is sold, the National Spiritual Assembly has decided to set the income from the sale aside into a separate fund called the Properties Acquisition Fund to be used for future property purchases. Two properties were sold in 2013; a part of the Liverpool Bahá'í Centre (which had been made up of two houses and was redivided into two houses, one of which, originally funded from the National Fund), was sold; and one of the two storage units housing the holdings of BBUK. And so £294,891 has been added to the new Properties Acquisition Fund.

One of the highlights of 2013 was the London Youth Conference at Warwick University, called by the Universal House of Justice, one of 114 youth conferences held round the world. In the autumn following the summer conference the National Assembly decided to pay the outstanding costs and subsidies from the Growth Fund; and so £88,245 is recorded here as income. However, even after this time the friends continued to make contributions to this expense and so, at the end of the year, a reduced amount of £81,787 is listed under expenditures for the Youth Conference.

All legacy contributions over £10,000 are automatically held in the Growth Fund, which can be used to pay for growth oriented national projects. Last year, through the legacies they left behind, the friends in the Abhá Kingdom paid for half of the London Youth Conference!

Last year the National Assembly decided to move its financial year by one month to be the same as a calendar year, moving from ‘1 February–31 January’ to ‘1 January–31 December’. This gives more time for our auditors to prepare the approved accounts to be ready for the National Convention. In this case the budget and the actual figures for 2013 are for the 11 months from 1 February 2013 to 31 December 2013. However, for the purpose of comparison, many 2013 amounts in this report have been annualised to 12 months. From next year, the budget for 2014 will be for the year 1 January to 31 December 2014.

The National Spiritual Assembly is pleased to present its financial report for the year ended 31 December 2013.

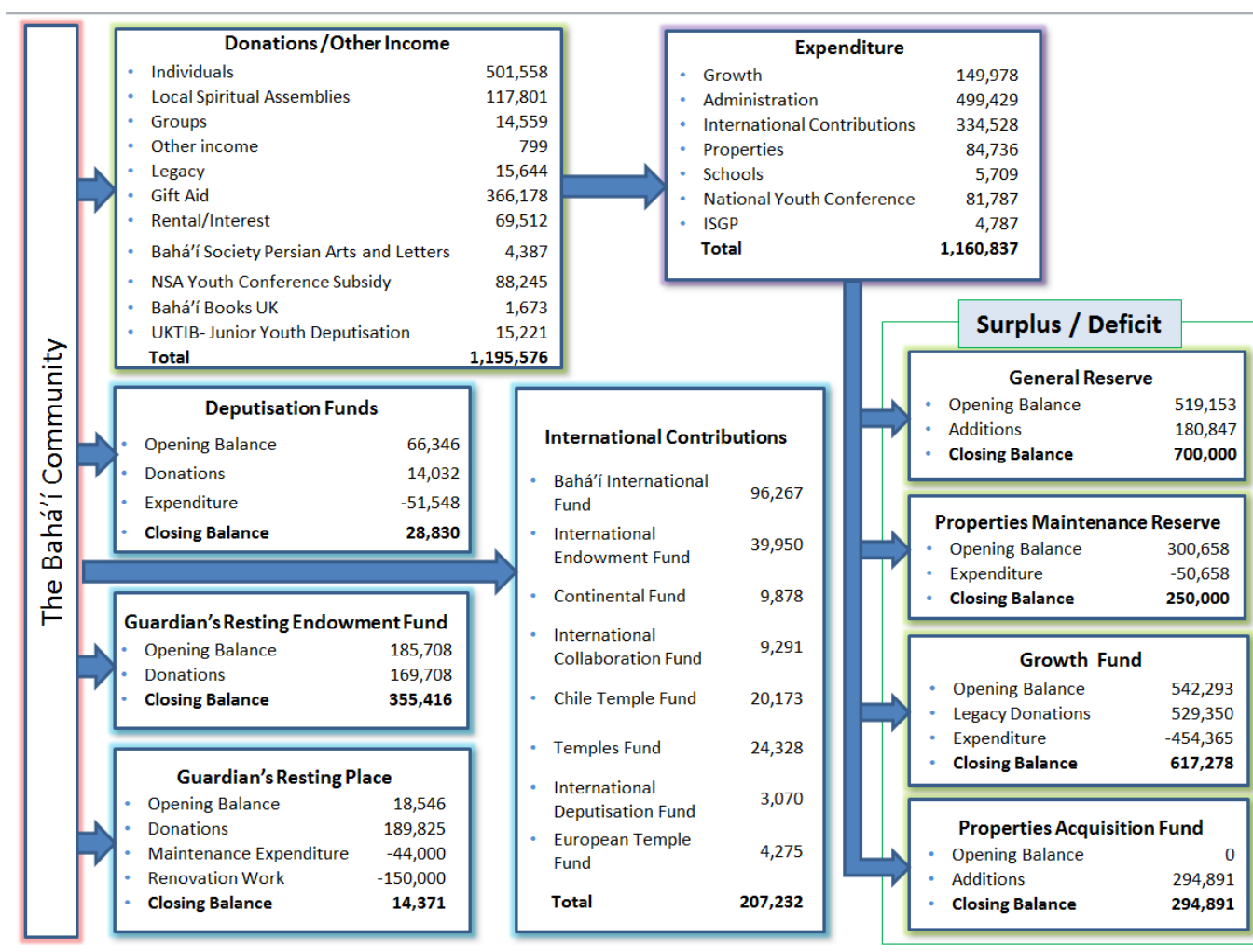


Figure 1: Overview of various Bahá'í funds in the UK

## A. NATIONAL FUND

The National Fund had a surplus of £34,739 in 2013, which reduced the outstanding deficit from 2012/13 of £103,260 to £68,521 in 2013.

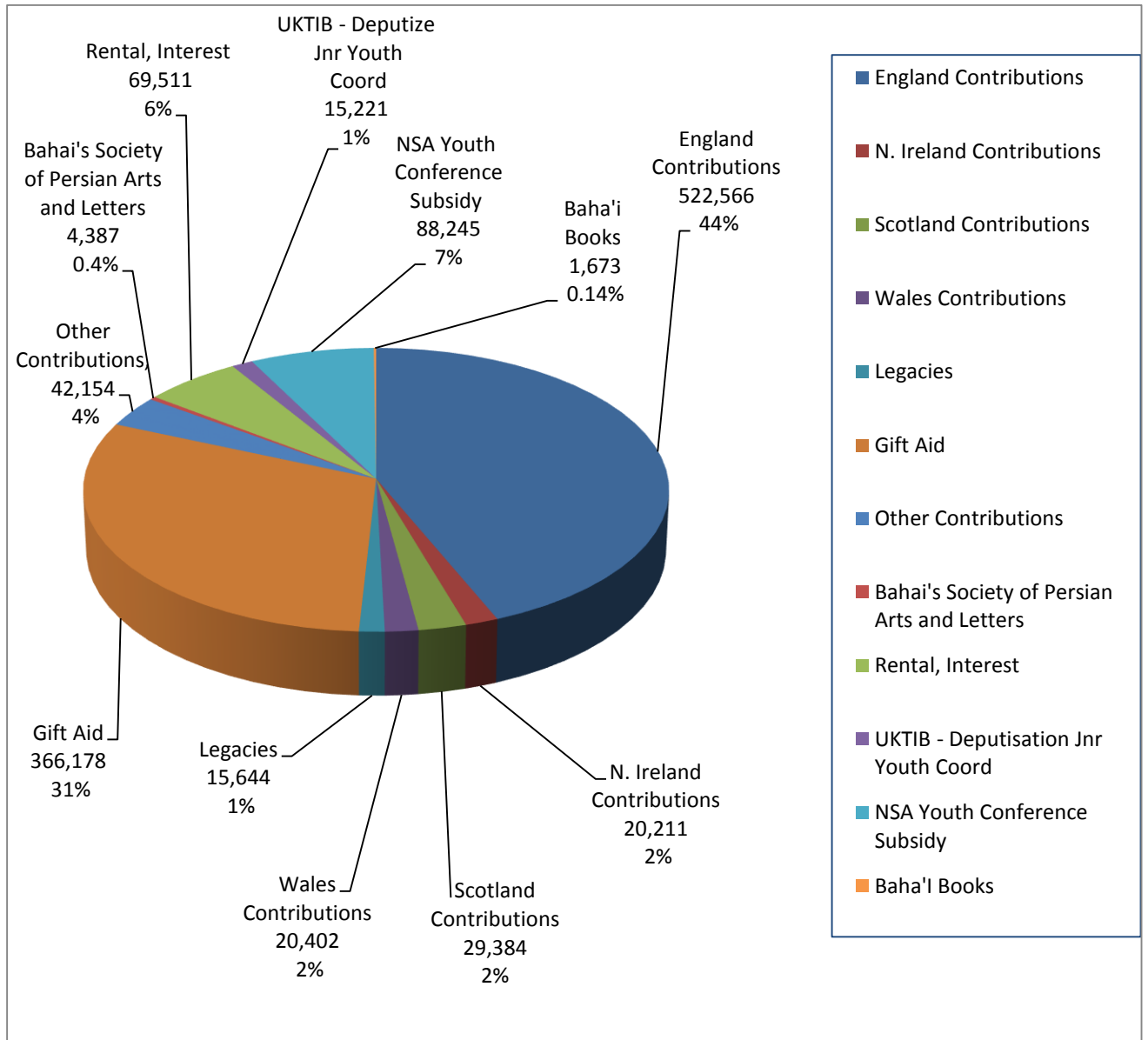
**Income** for the 11 months to 31 December 2013 was £1,195,576 of which the friends in the UK directly contributed £650,361. Included in the total income is the National Spiritual Assembly subsidy of £88,245 for the London Youth Conference from the Growth Fund and £15,221 from the Junior Youth Coordinators Fund for expenses of Junior Youth Coordinators (Figure 2 and 3).

Last year the National Assembly changed the structure of BBUK (Bahá'í Books UK) from a separate entity with its own premises and staff to an internal book sales team of the National Assembly (working like a committee) and supported by a band of dedicated volunteers with a designated coordinator. We are happy to report that in its first year a small profit (of £1,673) was realised even though many titles were able to be discounted after shipping fees, etc. were paid. The National Assembly is grateful to the individuals who are giving of their time and energy for the success of BBUK and are providing an invaluable service to the community.

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of The United Kingdom FINANCIAL YEAR 2013					
Contributions / Income	Actuals 2011/12	Actuals 2012/13	Actuals 2013 (11 Months)	2013 Annualised	%
England Contributions	548,622	658,146	522,566	570,072	43.7%
N. Ireland Contributions	35,056	26,958	20,211	22,048	1.7%
Scotland Contributions	35,209	42,410	29,384	32,055	2.5%
Wales Contributions	20,382	22,212	20,402	22,257	1.7%
Legacies	921	7,000	15,644	17,066	1.3%
Other Contributions	73,245	45,254	42,154	45,986	3.5%
<b>Total Direct Contributions</b>	<b>713,436</b>	<b>801,980</b>	<b>650,361</b>	<b>709,485</b>	
Gift Aid	383,043	381,232	366,178	399,467	30.6%
Bahá'í Society of Persian Arts and Letters	0	0	4,387	4,387	0.4%
Rental, Interest	109,372	68,538	69,511	75,830	5.8%
UKTIB - Deputation Jnr Youth Coordinators			15,221	16,605	1.3%
NSA Youth Conference Subsidy			88,245	88,245	7.4%
Bahá'í Books			1,673	1,673	0.1%
<b>TOTAL Contributions / Income</b>	<b>£1,205,851</b>	<b>£1,251,750</b>	<b>£1,195,576</b>	<b>£1,295,692</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 2:** Income for the 11 months to 31 December 2013  
Total: £1,195,576

Figure 3: Income Graph for the 11 Months 31 December 2013



**Expenditure** for the 11 months to 31 December 2013 was £1,160,837 and is detailed in the table below. The 11 month year has been “annualised” to what the equivalent 12 month year would be for comparison purposes. The (12month) budget for 2014 is also included. The expenditure is broken into broad categories (Figure 4 and 5).

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of The United Kingdom FINANCIAL YEAR 2013					
EXPENDITURE	Actuals 2011/12	Actuals 2012/13	Actuals 2013 (11 Months)	2013 Annualised	Budget 2014 (12 Months)
Growth	243,653	204,334	149,978	163,612	187,393
IT	18,098	31,027	7,792	8,500	11,046
Secretariat, office & building Services	271,393	299,782	272,115	296,853	330,172
External Affairs	153,609	142,686	111,398	121,525	144,376
Legal, Insurance, charges	35,888	27,837	33,929	37,013	37,900
Finance Office	85,587	83,468	74,195	80,940	84,881
Contributions to International Funds	347,085	401,202	334,528	364,940	364,992
Properties Maintenance	117,409	85,684	84,736	92,439	125,358
Schools			5,709	5,709	-
ISGP			4,670	4,670	-
National Youth Conference			81,787	81,787	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£1,272,722</b>	<b>£1,276,020</b>	<b>£1,160,837</b>	<b>£1,257,989</b>	<b>£1,286,118</b>

Figure 4: Expenditure for the 11 months to 31 December 2013  
Total: £1,160,837

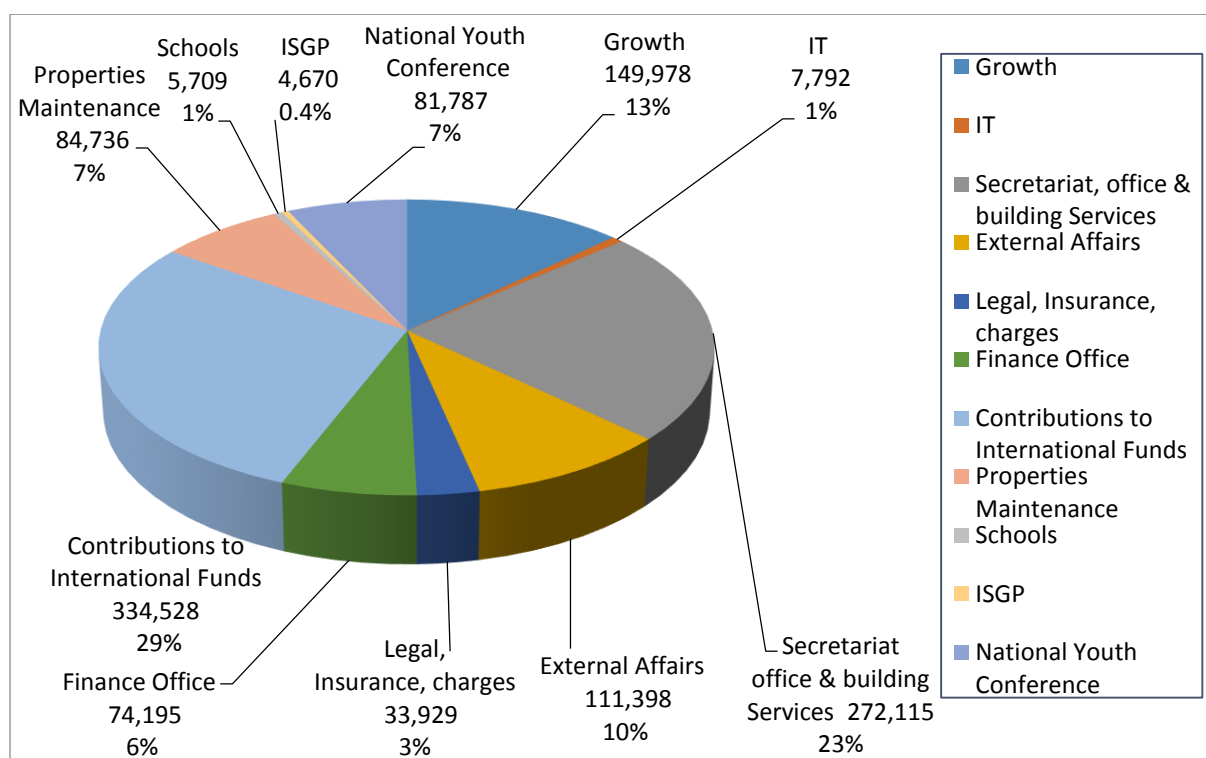


Figure 5: Expenditure Graph for 11 Months to 31 December 2013

*A summary of the year*

The primary source of the National Assembly's income is the donations of the believers in the United Kingdom (Figure 6). For the 11 months to 31 December 2013 this represented 54% (£650,361) of the total income. A further 31% (£366,178) of income was from the tax refund received on all donations to or through the National Assembly under the Gift Aid scheme. The following shows the amount donated in each region with the average amount contributed per person:

Total contributions	2011/2012		2012/2013		2013 (Actual)		2013 (Annualised)	
	Actual £	% Per Region	Actual £	% Per Region	Actual £	% Per Region	Annualised £	% Per Region
England	548,622	86%	658,146	88%	522,566	88%	570,072	88%
Northern Ireland	35,056	5%	26,958	4%	20,211	3%	22,048	3%
Scotland	35,209	6%	42,410	6%	29,384	5%	32,055	5%
Wales	20,382	3%	22,212	3%	20,402	3%	22,257	3%
Total contributions	639,269	100%	749,726	100%	592,563	100%	646,432	100%
Average per person	£131		£129		£100		£109	

**Figure 6:** Regional contributions to the National Fund, including contributions directly to the Bahá'í Councils and the average donation per adult, youth and child in the community (this is an approximation based on the community database).

There has been a slight decrease in the number and value of standing orders (Figure 7), and also a slight decrease in the number of those who are paying using the Gift Aid system. It is clear that, at no cost to the person contributing, use of the Gift Aid scheme greatly benefits the National Fund. It should be noted that, as in past years, the number of individuals contributing is an approximation of individuals, not households.

Number of contributors	2011/12	2012/13	2013
Individuals contributing by standing orders	584	648	636
Assemblies and Groups contributing by standing orders	49	52	43
Gift Aid Contributors to all Funds & Huqúqu'lláh	699	707	698

**Figure 7:** Donations to the National Fund by standing order and the number of Gift Aid contributors to all funds, as well as Huqúqu'lláh, in the months of January 2012, 2013 and December 2013 (the last month of the respective financial year)

This year's total expenditure of £1,160,837 (annualised 1,257,989), including the London Youth Conference's cost of £81,787, was still a decrease of £18,031 (annualised amounts) compared to the previous year, which was due to the National Assembly's ongoing efforts to reduce

expenditure. There was also a decrease in Growth related expenditure (annualised £40,722), because the expenses of the Training Institute Board and the Bahá'í Councils were lower, thus helping to create a surplus of £34,739 for the 11 Months to 31 December and so reducing the cumulative deficit to £68,521. This is a part of the deficit that has been carried over from year to year for the past few years.

Apart from growth (Figure 4), contributions to the international funds, and properties, there was a decrease of £39,969 (annualised) in the functioning of the national administration; also £84,736 (annualised £92,439) was spent for properties, an annualised increase of £6,755 compared to the previous year (£85,684). The increase was mainly due to the Manchester Bahá'í Centre utilities and rates, which are now being paid directly by the National Assembly.

We are still seeking other tenants for Bridge House, which is in Tonbridge, Kent. Because of this, our income from this property was only £62,694, with an expenditure of £19,730 for service charges, utility costs, etc. We are hopeful that two prospect tenants, who have shown an interest in Bridge House, will sign their tenancy agreement by May 2014.

In 2013, for every £1 (excluding Gift Aid and other incomes) donated to the National Fund by the believers in the UK, 56 pence was donated by the National Assembly to international funds, including, among others, the International Fund, the World Centre Endowment Fund, and the European and Chile Temple Funds as well. In December the National Spiritual Assembly was greatly moved by the news of progress on the South American (Chile) House of Worship and £19,000 was pledged as a donation from this community. We are pleased to announce that the £19,000 has already been contributed by the end of February 2014 for the last of the continental Houses of Worship. It is a source of blessing and confirmation to the work of the Cause in the United Kingdom to be able to contribute to these international funds and projects.

## B. DEPUTISATION FUNDS

At the end of December 2013, there were four deputisation funds in the UK.

Deputisation Funds	Deputisation Training Inst	Deputisation General	Deputisation Faroes	Deputisation China
Opening Balance 1 Feb 13	9,910	39,265	5,110	12,061
Contributions	5,101	7,231	400	1,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,011</b>	<b>46,496</b>	<b>5,510</b>	<b>13,361</b>
Expenditure	-15,011	-35,476	-1,061	0
<b>Balance as at 31 Dec 13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11,020</b>	<b>4,449</b>	<b>13,361</b>

**Figure 8:** Deputisation funds during the year and balances as at 31 December 2013

It is hoped that the friends who may need assistance in their efforts to serve the Cause both here and abroad will discuss their situation with the relevant body and that the other friends will remember these funds both in their prayers and their contributions.

### C. GUARDIAN’S RESTING PLACE FUND

The annual expenditure for the maintenance of the Guardian’s Resting Place was estimated to be £66,000 plus £150,000 for the renovation work. The final income and expenditure has been:

Guardian 's Resting Place	
	£
Opening Balance	18,545
Contributions	246,783
Maintenance Expenditure	-38,379
Renovations Expenditure	-155,782
Contributions to the Guardian's Resting Place Endowment Fund	-56,958
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>14,209</b>

**Figure 9:** Guardian’s Resting Place income and expenditure during 2013

In December 2012, the National Assembly shared with the friends some plans “for serious attention to be paid to the site’s maintenance and renovation”. This included replacement of aspects of this site, such as renovation of the entrance gate, restoration of the balustrade, special cleaning of the eagle, the column, and the marble and restoration work, new vases and installation of new walls.

This much-needed work has now been completed. It was carried out at a cost of £155,782 and we are happy to report that there have been sufficient contributions to pay for this improvement to this special and unique site. The next project, which it is estimated will cost approximately £50,000, will be to enhance and beautify the landscaping of the surrounding area at New Southgate Cemetery. The National Assembly would like to thank all those individuals who have worked tirelessly to ensure that the costs of these projects are kept to minimum without impacting the quality of this most holy spot in the UK.

### D. GUARDIAN’S RESTING PLACE ENDOWMENT FUND

In a letter of May 2008 the Universal House of Justice suggested to the National Assembly that “in view of the need to establish a more stable means of income in future for the upkeep of this most important holy place” the National Assembly should “consider the feasibility of establishing an endowment fund for this purpose.” In response to this guidance, the National Spiritual Assembly established an endowment fund for the maintenance of the resting place of the beloved Guardian, with a goal of £130,000 by the end of 2013. By 31 December 2013 a total of £169,708 has been received from the UK community as well as Bahá’ís in other countries, resulting in a surplus of £39,708! It has been decided that 25% of all funds contributed to the maintenance fund for the Guardian’s Resting Place will go to this endowment fund. It is hoped that the friends will continue to generously support this fund, which has a goal of £130,000 for 2014.



Guardian 's Resting Place Endowment Fund	Expenditure
	£
Goal for the year	130,000
Contributions during the year	169,708

**Figure 10:** Guardian's Resting Place Endowment during the 11 Months period with balance as at 31 December 2013

## E. CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND

At the beginning of the year the Capital Projects Fund, which deals with major holdings, such as the Edinburgh Centre, was in deficit by £278,865. A total of £32,682 was contributed by the friends during the 11 months period to December 2013 leaving a deficit of £246,183. On the advice of the auditors this amount was paid from the Properties Maintenance Reserve Fund and the Capital Projects Fund is subsequently closed.

Capital Projects Fund	Edinburgh Centre	Rutland Gate	Total
Opening Balance 1 Feb 13	-233,687	-45,178	-278,865
Contributions	28,516	4,166	32,682
Shortfall 31 Dec 2013	<b>-205,171</b>	<b>-41,012</b>	-246,183
Deficit written off at 31 Dec 2013	205,171	41,012	246,183
<b>Balance as at 31 Dec 13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Figure 11:** Capital Projects Funds during the year and balances as at 31 December 2013

## F. THE INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION FUND

The International Financial Collaboration programme, which was established by the Universal House of Justice, allows those national communities, which are materially blessed, to assist other communities. In a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly dated 17 July 2011, the Supreme Body describes how this programme is "... used to meet a variety of needs: the acquisition of land and buildings for national and local Bahá'í Centres and for future Temple sites; the construction and renovation of Bahá'í properties, including the repair of buildings that suffered storm or earthquake damage; and the purchase of such items as an electricity generator, an office computer, and a motorcycle." Further: "beyond that, the bonds of unity between geographically distant national communities have been strengthened and the worldwide solidarity of the believers enhanced."

The UK Bahá'í community has been engaged in this programme for a number of years. The Universal House of Justice has again invited the UK Bahá'í community to participate in the programme and the National Assembly has decided (17 July 2011) that this community will commit to donating £160,000 toward the goal of £1.5 million, which is more than 10% of the total! Some £86,000 has already been raised, leaving a balance of £74,000 to be contributed between now and Ridván 2016.

During the year the UK Community has been blessed to contribute £16,763 (\$26,000) for the renovation of the Bahá'í Training Institute building in Kadugannawa, Sri Lanka.

Over the past few years the Universal House of Justice has placed great importance on assistance to the development of the Bahá'í communities in the Balkans and the Baltic States. To this end, the Continental Pioneering Committee for Europe financially assisted some pioneers to those areas. The National Spiritual Assembly decided that it would like to assume responsibility for the funding given to British pioneers who were aided by the Continental Pioneering Committee and accordingly reimbursed the international fund for these costs. A total of £31,793 was paid in 2013, representing subsidies over 2012 and 2013.

## G. INTERNATIONAL FUNDS

The people of Bahá in the UK now regularly contribute to the following International Funds:

1. Bahá'í International Fund
2. International Collaboration Fund
3. International Endowment Fund
4. International Deputisation Fund
5. Temples Fund
6. Chile Temple Fund
7. European Temple Fund
8. Continental Board of Counsellors Fund

## H. THE YEAR AHEAD

The budget for the year ahead is available from the Finance Office as a separate document. There are a few highlights that deserve some reflection.

For 2014 managing the budget, which has a forecast deficit included, will be a challenge, as it is feared that we may have a deficit as high as £114,095 (compared to 2013 when the annualised deficit was £94,351). Despite the financial situation in the world, the National Spiritual Assembly hopes that the friends will increase their contributions to the National Fund but at the same time, the National Assembly is always trying to reduce administration expenditure (not growth) so as to reduce the deficit (for example saving by utilising more volunteers than paid members of staff, and asking the community to receive materials such as UK Bahá'í electronically rather than in print, by post).

The budget for 2014 for the growth of the Faith (Training Institute, the Councils, and related activities) has been set at £187,393 representing about 15% of total expenditure; nevertheless there might be some reforecasting during 2014 due to changes in the community's requirements and our efforts and expectations surrounding the growth of the Faith. The National Assembly remains committed to placing an ever-greater portion of its resources at the grassroots level for the growth of the Faith as guided by the Five Year Plan.

The budget for donations to International Funds for 2014 is set at £364,992. This represents 28% of expenditure and, when realised, will mean that for every £1 (excluding Gift Aid) donated by a believer to the National Fund, 53 pence will be donated to the international funds.

We are happy to announce that a new training programme for assembly treasurers has been written. After a meeting with some local treasurers at Rutland Gate it is currently being revised and plans are being made to hold training sessions throughout the country. This is in response to a need expressed at national convention.

As mentioned above, landscaping at New Southgate Cemetery in the environs of the Guardian's Resting Place is about to commence. £50,000 has been budgeted for this project. Also, the commitment of £74,000 to be contributed between now and Ridván 2016, to the International Collaboration Fund must not be forgotten.

The Finance Office enjoys the services of two full time employees and also benefits from eight valiant volunteers without whose support the National Assembly could not run its Finance Office. Our great thanks to them all!

## I. CHALLENGES

These are the main challenges foreseen for the current year:

- Lack of rental income from Bridge House, as 1.5 floors are currently empty. Two prospective tenants have expressed an interest!
- Only 26% of households, which is 16% of the community contributes directly to the National Fund on at least an annual basis (universal participation).
- Replenishing the Growth Fund after it was used for other shortfalls and the youth conference last year.
- In addition to 25% of all funds contributed to the maintenance fund being allocated to the Endowment Fund for the Guardian's Resting Place it is hoped that the friends will continue to generously support this fund, which has a goal of £130,000 for 2014.
- Combatting an expected deficit.

*"Contributing to the Baha'i fund constitutes an act of spiritual discipline which is an intrinsic element of the devotional life of the individual. No believer should be unaware of the privilege of contributing to the advancement of the Cause of God, irrespective of his material circumstances...Divine confirmations redound upon those who offer a portion of their material resources in a spirit of sacrifice, motivated by their love of the Faith and their desire to assist in its progress."*

The Universal House of Justice, letter dated 17 September 1992

## 5. OTHER MATTERS

### A. GUARDIAN'S RESTING PLACE

The **renovation of the Guardian's Resting Place** commenced during the summer of 2013 and was completed by the early Autumn. This entailed cleaning and repairing the marble



monument as well as the balustrade that surrounds it, replacing the red brick wall surrounding the outer section of the Resting Place and the iron entrance gate. The four pre-cast concrete urns at the corners of the balustrade were replaced with newly carved Portland stone urns, as well as the two urns on top of the pillars by the entrance gate. Where something was being replaced, every effort was made to do so with exact replicas of similar or better quality. The eagle was also re-gilded and expertly treated to avoid corrosion, which had begun to set in.

The National Assembly has recently approved **a new landscape scheme for the Resting Place** and the entire cemetery area owned by the Faith. This scheme will be rolled out over a period of a few years.

Other work carried out during the year included renovation of the entrance gate to the Bahá'í section, the removal of a number of trees, and the painting of the extensive outer fence as well as the office and security hut. A new set of rules and regulations has been introduced for the grave owners with the aim of creating a more beautiful cemetery.

### B. UKBAHÁ'Í MAGAZINE

The *UKBahá'í* Editorial team continue to produce an excellent magazine. Their aim is for it to be **informative** and **entertaining**, focusing on exciting community building efforts and core activities in the field and topics highlighted for them by the National Spiritual Assembly.

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The UKBahá'í Editorial team continue to produce and excellent magazine.

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For cost reasons, *UKBahá'í* magazine is now produced **4 times a year**. The principal cost is postage and distribution. Efforts are continually made to encourage the friends to rely on reading the magazine on-line or in PDF format.

### C. BAHÁ'Í SOCIETY FOR PERSIAN ARTS AND LETTERS, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, which has now become a **significant feature on the landscape of the UK Bahá'í community**, took place from 26 to 30 December in London. The gathering was graced by the presence of former member of the Universal House of Justice, Mr. Ali Nakhjavani. 772 participants attended from 35 countries including some **50 friends of the Faith**. The growing attendance of non-Bahá'í Persians, including human rights activists and others, presents exciting possibilities for engagement, and this bodes well for the future. The

programme this year included presentations by eminent Iranian scholars, concerts in Persian, songs and poetry reading.

The National Assembly looks forward to seeing the conference focusing to an ever greater extent on the remarkable series of letters to the believers in Iran that have flowed from the pen of the Universal House of Justice during the past decade.

#### D. PASTORAL CARE & CHAPLAINCY

Pastoral Care, which concerns looking after the welfare of the community and assisting those who, for various reasons, face particularly trying circumstances in their lives, continues to be an area of learning. Considerable experience has now been gathered with **teams of capable believers rendering great service** in the two main areas of pastoral care and the safeguarding of children and youth.



*Community activities*

There are three agencies involved: the **Pastoral Care Committee (PCC)** deals mainly with mental health and marital issues; the **Special Care Committee (SCC)** deals with situations involving certain risks and/or multiple problems; and the **Office for Safeguarding Children** is tasked with safeguarding the wellbeing of children. Referrals to the pastoral committees are made only via the National Spiritual Assembly.

The PCC and SCC between them are currently attending to around 50 situations.

Another area of parallel work is **healthcare chaplaincy**. We currently have 18 chaplains trained and authorised to serve in NHS hospitals and other healthcare settings. A new cohort of eight applicants was trained and authorised in June last year.

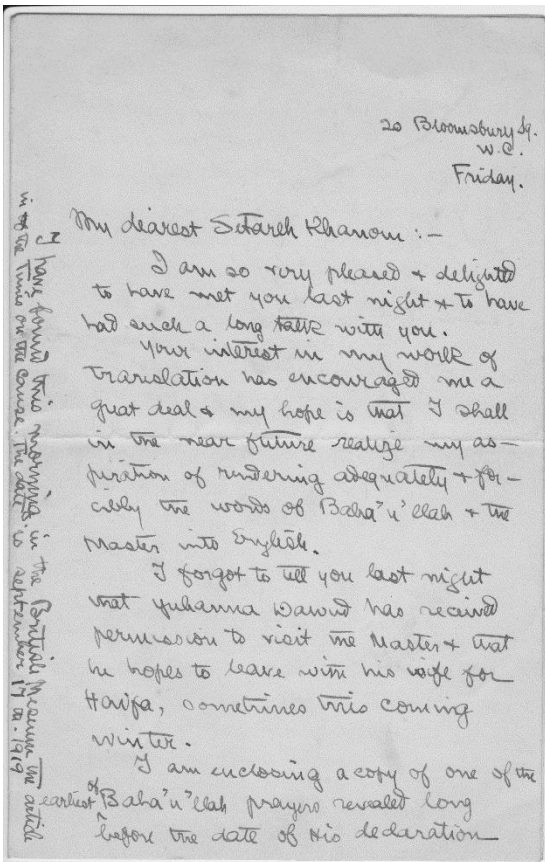
#### E. HISTORY AND ARCHIVES

The aim of the ***Bahá'í Histories Project*** is:

- To collect from individual indigenous UK Bahá'ís their stories about how they became attracted to the Faith, what led to them declaring their faith in Bahá'u'lláh, and any other interesting stories from their life as a Bahá'í
- To collect from individual Iranian-born Bahá'ís their stories about their Bahá'í family history and their experiences when they first settled in the UK
- To store and catalogue these stories in an easily referenced format
- To put forward proposals for publishing the stories in electronic or physical form.

During the past year, approximately 35 new stories have been added and some 20 of the existing stories reviewed and brought up to date, making a total of just **over 400 stories**. The UK Bahá'í Histories website attracts about 40 visitors a day and has 164 regular followers who view the 139 stories on the website: <http://bahaihistoryuk.wordpress.com/>.

The team wishes to collect more stories from younger Bahá'ís about how they found the Faith.



One of the letters of Shoghi Effendi in the National Archives that are in process of being catalogued

In the Autumn, the National Archives received some **precious archival items** from the family of Hand of the Cause of God, Hasan Balyuzi. These included a Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh in the hand of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and handwriting of the Báb when He was a youth. These were forwarded to the Bahá'í World Centre. Also received were the photograph of Bahá'u'lláh, a signed photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, leaves from the orange tree at the House of the Báb in Shiraz, a lock of hair of Bahá'u'lláh and hair of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The samovar used by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His visits to this country was repaired by a metal conservator and its state much improved. Cataloguing of the most precious items continues, including the detailing of subjects referred to in the letters of Shoghi Effendi. A ring given by Shoghi Effendi to Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Charles Dunning was loaned to the Spiritual Assembly of Orkney Mainland East for the celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Orkney to the Faith. On 16 November an Open Day was held

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It is planned to loan archival items to Local Assemblies for display, so that they may be more accessible to believers around the country.

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at Rutland Gate at which a selection of archival items were on display. It is planned to loan archival items to Local Assemblies for display, so that they may be more accessible to believers around the country.

## F. LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION

Less than two years ago now the National Assembly made the decision to close the permanent premises of **Bahá'í Books UK** in Oakham and to simplify its operations to make it more nimble and flexible and thereby enable it to significantly reduce its prices, and to reduce or eliminate the subsidy it required from the National Fund. A team was put in place to take over the distribution of literature and the National Assembly is delighted at the progress this team has made to date.

They report that Bahá'í Books UK went through a period of consolidation during the past year, becoming more familiar with the stock acquisition process, encouraging the use of the website, and being primarily responsible for selling books at Convention, the Wellington summer school and the Persian Conference.



Friends!

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With increased sales, reduced sales prices, lower costs, and with no subsidy from the National Assembly, Bahá'í Books UK reported a small profit for this past year to 31 December.

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The BBUK website has received about **8,000**

**distinct visits** during the year and 639 customers have registered since Nov 2012 when the new website was introduced. In addition, they report that they have worked more closely with established agents and, indeed, have marginally increased the number of them.

With increased sales, reduced sales prices, lower costs, and with no subsidy from the National Assembly, Bahá'í Books UK reported a small profit for this past year to 31 December

2013; a wonderful achievement! It is now better positioned to respond to the **needs of growth** in which literature will play a significant part.

## G. BAHÁ'Í PROPERTIES

A significant responsibility of the National Spiritual Assembly is the **management, care and maintenance** of the many **properties, lands and burial sites** that are owned by the Assembly and Local Spiritual Assemblies across the UK. The National Assembly is ably assisted in this task by its **Bahá'í Properties Working Group** whose members have considerable experience in various aspects of property management. An overarching objective in this respect is to ensure that each of its properties are serving the needs of the Faith as best as possible and are properly cared for and maintained. The National Assembly from time to time reviews the property portfolio to ensure that these objectives are being realised. With respect to local Bahá'í Centres, the Assembly received some **valuable guidance in a letter dated 13 September 2013 from the Universal House of Justice**, which has informed its decision making:

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An overarching objective in this respect is to ensure that each of its properties are serving the needs of the Faith as best as possible and are properly cared for and maintained.

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*Indeed, a Bahá'í Centre can prove useful in a variety of ways. It gives the Faith a visible presence in a community; it can function as the seat for a Local Spiritual Assembly or a Regional Bahá'í Council or even both; it can also come to serve the other inhabitants of the general area; and it provides facilities for carrying out community-building activities in the neighbourhood in which it is situated and well beyond. However, with regard to the latter consideration, you are well aware that, over recent years, a pattern of community life has emerged in which a greater decentralization of activities in a cluster has proved highly beneficial, and this approach continues to hold immense promise for the work of expansion and consolidation.*

*Beyond those activities related to the process of growth, meetings to celebrate the Nineteen Day Feast and commemorate Bahá'í Holy Days can also be decentralized even when a Bahá'í Centre is available to use as a venue instead. Yet, as a Bahá'í community develops, its challenge is to maintain a balance between, on the one hand, those activities that can profitably and readily be decentralized, and on the other, those aspects of community life and Bahá'í administration which lend themselves to being organized in a place that is officially designated for the use of the Faith. In fact, depending on the circumstances, it can often be possible for certain activities—for instance, devotional gatherings—to take place both in neighbourhoods and at a Bahá'í Centre in a complementary way.*

## H. BAHÁ'Í POPULATION STATISTICS

Bahá'í community population at Naw-Ruz 2014, as recorded						
Region	Adults (no DOB/30+)	Youth (15-30)	Children (5-10)	Junior Youth (11-14)	Babies (1-4)	Total
ENGLAND	3,588	947	187	142	84	4,948
SCOTLAND	341	117	13	9	7	487
WALES	216	45	7	6	1	275
NORTHERN IRELAND	181	42	6	9	1	239
FAROE ISLANDS	12	1	7	1	0	21
GIBRALTAR	9	5	1	1	2	18
ISLE OF MAN	5	2	0	0	0	7
CHANNEL ISLANDS	6	1	0	0	0	7
ADDRESS NOT KNOWN	291	159	4	8	3	465
Total	4,649	1,319	225	176	98	6,467

BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY – CHANGES ADVISED										
	169				169	170				170
	EN	NI	SC	WA	Total	EN	NI	SC	WA	Total
DECEASED	33	4	5	3	45	39		3	3	45
MARRIAGE	26			8	34	33	2	1		36
NEW ADULT ENROLMENT (OVER 21)	85	5	5	3	98	52	3	3	6	64
NEW YOUTH ENROLMENT (UNDER 21)	5				5			1		1
REGISTRATION OF BABY/CHILD	20				20	28		2	8	38
TRANSFER IN	138	2	3	6	149	135	2	10	4	151
TRANSFER OUT	84	3	11	7	105	115	9	9	8	141
WITHDRAWN	20	2	1	2	25	20	2	3		25



## 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

If it had not been apparent before, then this year it became manifestly evident—a new generation of youth is arising to play their unique role in the unfoldment of the Divine Civilisation envisioned by Bahá’u’lláh, a generation that is clearly prepared and able to play its part in all aspects of the affairs of the Faith, whether as teachers, tutors, animators, teachers of children, pioneers, travelling teachers, administrators, coordinators, representatives of the Faith and so forth. With this generation now working alongside and being supported by believers of all ages, the community is now greatly strengthened in its ability to achieve the overarching objective of the current series of Plans: to advance the process of entry by troops. It should of course be remembered that this progress is only possible because of the achievements of earlier generations of teachers, pioneers and administrators—dedicated believers whose sacrificial exertions have nurtured and raised the UK Bahá’í community into the form we see today. And all of this done in the name of Bahá’u’lláh that future generations may “see God with their own eyes” and “hear His Melody with their own ears”.

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United Kingdom  
April 2014

