

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom

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Youth intensive Training and Teaching Projects

At the time of the July National Spiritual Assembly meeting, a summer project involving the participation of over 100 youth over two weeks of intensive training, followed by the engagement of some 70 of these youth in projects back in their clusters, was commencing. Greatly uplifted by the news of this gathering, the National Spiritual Assembly wrote to the youth from its meeting as follows:

As you gather to prepare yourselves for your future services we are reminded of the message of 1 January 2010 of the Universal House of Justice addressed to the friends gathered at the youth Conference in Warwick:

We have watched with admiration the eagerness with which the youth in the United Kingdom have stepped into the vanguard of the work of the Cause, reaching out to ever greater numbers of souls and engaging them in the community-building activities that lie at the heart of the Five Year Plan. Your earnestness, your energy, your intrepid determination not to shirk the demands of this Day mark you out for this all-important undertaking. Ably trained, spiritually enkindled, and eager for experience, you have arisen to seize the initiative in your immediate surroundings and beyond.

We too now watch with admiration as you prepare yourselves during these days to return to clusters across the United Kingdom to work in the utmost unity with local communities, under the guidance and direction of their cluster agencies. Amongst your peers you shine resplendent, as you have arisen to dedicate these days and weeks of your vacation time to serve your fellow men. Throughout the history of the Cause, it has been the youth who have been in the vanguard of its irresistible advance, and now it is you who stand on their shoulders, the shoulders of the heroes and heroines of the Heroic Age and of this, the Formative Age of the Faith.

The remarkable example of these noble youth is surely an inspiration to the whole community, as it has been to the National Spiritual Assembly. The Assembly looks forward very much too hearing news of the spiritual victories won during these days by this most capable “heavenly army”!

Regional Council Elections

The National Spiritual Assembly devoted some time to consulting on how it can develop an even greater awareness amongst the members of local Spiritual Assemblies as to their spiritual duty to participate in the election of Regional Councils. It was observed that the following was the participation of members of local Assembly's in last year's election:

England	60%
Northern Ireland	78%
Scotland	61%
Wales	67%

The National Assembly was also heartened to note that National Convention this year was blessed with 100% participation.

No conclusion was reached to the consultation and the Assembly felt it wished to reflect more deeply on the subject together with the Counsellor at a later date.

Local Spiritual Assemblies and Area/Sector Teaching Committees

The National Spiritual Assembly consulted on the importance of the further development of the spirit of collaboration between local Spiritual Assemblies and Area Teaching Committees in the more advanced clusters. The Area Teaching Committees devise the plans for their clusters; thus the support of local Spiritual Assemblies and their engagement of their communities in these plans are critical for the advancement of the cluster. One means of fostering this collaboration is for local Assemblies and Area Teaching Committees to meet together at intervals to reflect on progress in the cluster and to consult on the cluster plans. For local Spiritual Assemblies, this is an important aspect of their effort to follow the injunction of the 'Abdu'l-Bahá that "discussions must all be confined to spiritual matters that pertain to the training of souls, the instruction of children, the relief of the poor, the help of the feeble throughout all classes in the world, kindness to all peoples, the diffusion of the fragrances of God and the exaltation of His Holy Word."

Prayers for those who have passed away

The National Spiritual Assembly would welcome receiving the names of members of the family of believers who have passed away so that it can remember them in its prayers. At each of its meetings the Assembly holds a special devotional remembering and reading aloud the names of individuals, communities, projects, institutions and so forth who are in particular need of prayers. It would be delighted to add the names of deceased family members to this list.

Consultations of the National Spiritual Assembly

The National Spiritual Assembly constantly strives consciously to develop its own capacity to function more effectively and to align itself to the guidance contained in the Writings and from the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice. To this end it often refers to the letters of the Universal House of Justice without which it would be impossible for it to understand its mission at this time. This is the greatest source of illumination for the Assembly's consultations.

The Assembly also gives time at the beginning of nearly every meeting to reflect on a passage on Bahá'í consultation. The experience is such that the influence of the insights, understanding and inspiration gained by just a few minutes of collective study heightens the spirituality and effectiveness of the consultation for the entire weekend by bringing the members together in ever closer bonds of love and unity. The Assembly would commend this approach to all Bahá'í institutions.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

National Spiritual Assembly