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National Committees and Departments

Bahá'í Office for Social and Economic Development

Guidelines for local SED projects

“Now, after all the years of constant teaching activity the community of the Greatest Name has grown to the stage at which the process of this development must be incorporated into its regular pursuit” The Universal House of Justice, October 20, 1983

BOSED would love to hear about your experiences from your local service projects. For those who are considering starting a project, we hope the following guidelines will offer some assistance. These guidelines are based on notes from Hassan Sabri, the first Director of the Office for Social and Economic Development (OSED) at the World Centre.

How to get an SED project off the ground:

STEP 1: Understanding the importance of SED

Recognition of and consultation on the importance of Social and Economic Development by Local Spiritual Assemblies and Groups in the context of guidance from the Universal House of Justice in its “decision to implement the law of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkar” and in referring to “community worship and public service”. Suggested tool:

- Study the short course “Social and Economic Development – 19 questions answered” (available from BOSED).
- Study other Writings and guidance on SED.



Scaling the heights on a service project in Honduras

STEP 2: Identification of community needs

Analysis of local community needs and identification of a suitable project. Suggested tool:

- a community brain-storming session (involving everybody, especially youth)

STEP 3: Project choice

Consultation by the LSA on the choice of an SED project, with special attention to:

- Availability of manpower (based on size of Bahá'í community)
- Financing (estimation of project costs, available finances and fund raising possibilities)
- Size of project: start small and grow gradually
- Self-sufficiency: minimising burden on existing community budget
- Consistency: act in unison with aims and objectives of local and national civil authorities
- Clarity: have well defined project aims and objectives

STEP 4: Financing of a project

The aim of each SED project should be to be able to continue and develop on the strength of local Bahá'í manpower, funds and enthusiasm. A project should become independent of

continuous outside support. However, additional financial sources might be sought from within and outside the Bahá'í community (as long as the activities are of general humanitarian, philanthropic or charitable character). Specific Bahá'í activities should only receive support from Bahá'í sources.

STEP 5: Implementation of a project

Start as soon as you are confident that the project is properly organised. This includes:

- complete understanding by participants of roles, responsibilities and lines of authority
- break-down of activities with appropriate time-scale and resources needed
- keeping community self-reliance in mind and ensuring that the project does not become self-serving
- keeping the LSA informed at all times of progress
- observe all local regulations, laws and permits
- keeping of financial records, as well as project records

STEP 6: Monitoring and evaluation of a project

This should be a continuous process, including:

- regular reviews of project progress at all levels
- regular review of financial status

You should be prepared to amend your project or alter its objectives.

<p>Bahá'í Office for Social and Economic Development</p>

<p>Secretary: Susie Howard, email: bosead@bahai.org.uk, Fax: 01235 533278</p>
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Travel Teaching and Homefront Pioneering Advisory Service

IF YOU ARE thinking of Travel Teaching or Pioneering then the new membership of TTS (see below) would love to hear from you. We are here to serve the community in this important field of service and intend update you with the latest developments regularly. If you are not able to fulfil these goals, there's always somewhere near you to visit.

At present we know that the Scilly Isles are unopened to the Faith and need pioneers. The Scottish Islands are always a priority and in need of Travel Teachers. Northern Ireland's priorities in order of importance are: Newtownards, Craigavon, Omagh, Cookstown and Antrim.

You don't need to be an expert speaker to travel teach, anyone can do it – just volunteer your services and we will help you serve the Cause. This month we have had one offer from a family to pioneer and one to travel teach as well as an offer from youth from abroad to serve for six months at the Manchester project.

Please send us any offers of travel teaching or pioneering. If you need travel teachers in your area or if you could offer hospitality or any assistance, we would also like to hear from you.

“The movement of pioneers and travelling teachers from one place to another is an indispensable feature of the Bahá'í community.”

Universal House of Justice (Letter of January 10, 2002)

Please reply to TTS@bahai.org.uk

Travel Teaching and Homefront Pioneering Advisory Service,
Rocky Grove, Iran Jolly, Shamim Razavi.

Committee for International Pioneering and Travel Teaching

WELL, JUST WHEN you think the community is going to be overwhelmed with an intense burst of introspection with all the emphasis on home-front area activities and goals, along comes the Supreme Body (letter, January 10, 2002) to broaden out our thinking in the most exciting and spinetingling way. They remind us of the global dimension of our faith and our interdependence, both as Bahá'ís and as world citizens, and the knock-on effect of the “intermingling of the peoples of the world...vital to the patterns of life that the followers of Bahá'u'lláh are striving to establish”.

It was a cliché of the last century that, largely through the force of technology, our planet had shrunk to become a neighbourhood. Now, in the space of a single year, our beloved Universal House of Justice has opened our eyes to the planet as a panorama of small geographic areas to be systematically developed ready to embrace a suffering and spiritually hungry humanity.

At a stroke, the nation states dissolve before our eyes and one intermingled world emerges before our awestruck gaze. The sense of unlimited opportunities and sheer excitement that, in another time, was the response of the Bahá'í world to the call to service by the beloved Guardian at the inception of the Ten Year Crusade, produced a step change in the history of the Faith and of humanity; that sense of destiny sitting on our shoulder is with us once again.

Is there a single Area in the country that will not want to see at least one “faithful servant” go out into the world in its name and with its support, perhaps even one for each of the remaining four years of the plan?

We can all share in fulfilling this debt of honour, even though we know practically this means that, say, one in ten of us actually goes. As the individuals arise, we could deputise funds, either individually or as a community, to support and sustain either the pioneer/travel teacher or the planned activities of the goal area in which they will reside. Surely every UK Area can find a twin Area somewhere in the world to help in its development? Even the knowledge that we care enough for each other to pray for our mutual progress in His glorious cause in a focused and sustained way will produce results.

It used to be said in this community during the Ten Year Crusade that the effect of the sacrifice of a pioneer leaving a locality was to recompense the home area threefold within a year of departure. No statistics were kept that we know of, but the old hands can all quote examples of it happening. Let us seize the chance to make it happen again! You can get in touch with the CIPTT through the secretary, Peymane Adab, email: peyman@onetel.net.uk.

The CIPTT have received the following communication from The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Czech Republic.

ESTEEMED ASSEMBLY, ALLÁH-U-ABHÁ,
As our assembly was planning the Five Year Plan and the structure of the various clusters, we noticed a great need for pioneers to several communities in Bohemia and Moravia, such as Olomouc, Znojmo, Kyjov, Plzen, and Carls Bad.

We would therefore like to kindly encourage the Bahá'í friends in the United Kingdom to consider finding suitable pioneering opportunities in the Czech Republic.

If any of the friends need more information please contact our national secretariat.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Czech Republic.
Email: nsa.cz@worldonline.cz



WHEN MY MUM started organising my two weeks work experience I did not want to go. It was on a farm. I hate mud! I hate big dogs!

“I don’t want you spending two weeks, making coffee, photocopying and popping over to Somerfield for the staff’s sandwiches.” she said, “You can combine your work experience with service to the Faith.” When the school made it difficult because the farm was outside our area and too far for them to inspect, this made my mum more determined! “When they hear about your experience they should all be queuing up to see what is going on,” she said. Then she went out to the charity shops to make sure I had strong jeans and warm jumpers which might get so disgusting they could only be thrown out after.

The farm I was going to was Felin Gelli, in Peniel, South Wales, owned by Richard and Sheila Swann. It is a training farm for young adults with learning difficulties. Clair and Hannah Pope are there helping on a year of service. Everyone welcomed me and I felt it might not be so bad.

In the mornings I helped to feed all the animals and learned all their names. In the afternoons I helped with Hannah who is being educated at home. We did lots of crafts and cooking. I made Christmas cards with the students and green tomato chutney with Sheila and Hannah. I went to town, sometimes I went to have tea with Clair and Hannah in their caravan and one evening we went to see her in her dance show. That was entertaining.

Once a week I went on the egg round with Hannah and Sheila. Beans had to be planted in the garden, and bulbs. In the orchard I raked leaves and cut down twigs. Whilst I was there a new cow and her calf came and, sadly, one cow had to be put to sleep. There was also a Holy Day to celebrate at Martin and Jane Beckett’s house, so you can see I was kept very busy.

In the end I enjoyed it so much that I surprised my mum by saying I’d like to go back again – in the summer. Thank you to everyone on the farm for taking me on my work experience. I would recommend to others who are looking for work experience to consider making it a time of service to the Faith as well.

Love, Naja Abbas



Leeks being harvested on Felin Gelli

