

IV. Suggested Goals for Local Spiritual Assemblies

Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi

Original English



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“Any plan must have a term and specific goals, expressed preferably and if possible in numbers. For a Local Spiritual Assembly it would be better, at least in the early stages of its development, to have a term of nine months to a year. Of course it is also quite possible to have a series of plans of very short terms of say two to three months each, throughout the year.

“The examples of local goals listed below are in the form of questions which each Assembly could put to itself, or may be directed to it by the National Spiritual Assembly. The questions are meant to lead to the adoption of a specific goal. An explanatory note follows items which may need clarification or comment.

A) Teaching

1. How many new believers? (The Plan calls for a “great increase in the number of believers” and confirming individuals “from every stratum of society”. The ideal is for each local community to double itself every year, since every believer should, in accordance with the wish of the Master, guide one soul to the Cause of God every year. In some areas this may be an ambitious project at the beginning, and at the outset a more modest goal could be adopted.)

2. How many firesides? (Shoghi Effendi urged the friends to hold one fireside every nineteen days in their homes. The friends willing to respond to this wish, could give their names to the Local Assembly.)

3. Can a pledge be made to have extension teaching activities outside the local area of jurisdiction? (Obviously only strong Local Assemblies can sustain such a goal.)



ORIGINAL



AUDIO

B) Proclamation

4. Are mass media facilities such as radio, television, and the press available to the Local Assembly? Can a goal be adopted for such activities?

5. Can public meetings be anticipated? If so, how many?

6. What methods can be adopted for the dissemination of Bahá'í literature, such as distribution of books to local libraries, etc....? Can this goal be expressed in a challenging form?

7. Can the local community participate in the social and humanitarian activities of the society of which it forms a part? Could a modest step be taken along this line?

C) Consolidation

8. Can the attendance of the friends at Nineteen Day Feasts be improved upon? What about the Anniversaries? Can the increase in attendance be expressed numerically, such as in terms of the percentage of those attending?

9. Can regular meetings for the benefit of the local friends be held? If so, how often and when? (In the recent compilation on "Meetings" released to all National Spiritual Assemblies, 'Abdu'l-Bahá exhorts the friends to hold such meetings as a "constant" activity, and praises weekly meetings. He repeatedly counsels the believers to read and recite the Holy Word in such meetings and deliver speeches on the teachings, the proofs and the history of the Faith.)

10. Can daily early morning prayer sessions be held? If so, where and when? (If this is not feasible every day, an effort could be made to hold such sessions less frequently. At such devotional meetings not only prayers, but suitable selections from the Sacred Writings could be read. Bahá'u'lláh has pointed out that upon the Word of God "must depend the gathering together and spiritual resurrection of all men", that "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is endowed with such potency as can instill new life into every human frame", and that were man to "taste the sweetness of the words which the lips of the All-Merciful have willed to utter, he would, though the treasures of the earth be in his possession, renounce them one and all, that he might vindicate the truth of even one of His commandments". It is because of such considerations that the Five Year Plan calls for the friends to memorize selections from the Writings. If a believer finds it difficult to memorize, he may be encouraged to make for his own use a selection of extracts, however brief, which he could reread and enjoy at his own leisure, to satisfy his inner soul.)

11. Can youth activities be encouraged? If so, in what way?

12. Can activities and classes for children be established? If so, could a specific goal be adopted?

13. Can youth activities be maintained? Could this be expressed in the form of a goal?

14. Is the community strong enough to establish a local Ḥazíratu'l-Quds?

15. Can a local endowment be acquired and maintained, and possibly used as an investment for the community?

16. How can local contributions to the local Fund be encouraged? Can a target be adopted?

17. Can the local community serve as host to a district conference of neighbouring communities and localities?

18. Can the Local Assembly issue a regular Newsletter?

“When the goals are finally decided upon, it is important that they should be announced to the friends. It should be borne in mind that Shoghi Effendi longed to see every believer involved in Bahá'í service, so that universal participation may be achieved. It would be most effective if the Local Assembly, prior to such an announcement, would appoint local committees, to each of which a branch of activity or one or more of the local goals could be assigned. Such committees need not consist of many members. When the committee appointments are made, the Local Assembly will be fully prepared to announce its goals and its committee appointments to the community at a Nineteen Day Feast or a specially called meeting of the community.”

The Universal House of Justice, prepared for inclusion with a letter 24 December 1975 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Reunion

