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National Fund

How is the National Fund Actually Used?

To provide the administrative back-up individuals and Bahá'í communities need

YOU ARE AT THE Local Assembly meeting, consulting on the arrangements for a Bahá'í marriage. What do you do? "I'll just phone the national Bahá'í office and find out," says the secretary.

Your community has been affected by the boundary changes. You need to know exactly where the boundaries are now. "I'll just email the Records Office and find out." You want to know how to contribute to the new World Centre Endowment Fund by standing order. "I'll just write to the Finance Department and find out."

You've just moved into a new town. Is there a Bahá'í community school nearby? "I'll just ring the Children's Bahá'í Education Service and find out." You've been invited to appear on TV. What do you say? "I'll just talk to the Office of Public Information and find out." You want to leave the UK for good! Where will you go? "I'll contact the Committee for International Pioneering and Travel Teaching and find out."

Every day Bahá'ís in the United Kingdom contact one of the offices, Bahá'í Councils, agencies or committees of the National Spiritual Assembly for information like this. To provide the answers to these urgent questions – and to do a lot of other work! – the National Assembly employs about 20 people, working in the Secretariat, the Records Office, the Finance Department, the Office of External Affairs, the Office of Public Information and the Office for the Advancement of Women. We also employ a buildings manager for the National Hazíratu'l-Quds, the manager and staff at Bahá'í Publishing and the secretariat for the Bahá'í Council for England. And of course there is the Bahá'í Journal UK!

Then there are all the agencies and committees of the Faith – you probably serve on one of these yourself! They take forward, in a systematic way, the work of the Faith in this country and, where appropriate, abroad. So there are agencies dealing with the education of children, a committee working to get the Bahá'í Faith into the national curriculum, a committee for international pioneering, one for travel teaching in this country, a year of service desk to help those who wish to serve the faith as a volunteer for year, a review panel that reviews all the books published in this country pre-publication, the Association of Bahá'í Studies – English-Speaking Europe, the Associations of Bahá'í Women, a service for the visually impaired, the Office of Social and Economic Development, etc. – all devoted to particular areas of work that have been assigned to Bahá'í communities

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everywhere by the Universal House of Justice in the Five Year Plan. And of course there are the Bahá'í Councils, which the Universal House of Justice gave to this national community owing to the complexity of the administration in this country and the maturity of the Bahá'ís.

The people who serve on these are volunteers and undertake their tasks for the love of Bahá'u'lláh and out of a sense of responsibility to the Cause. But the work they undertake – the phone calls they make, their travel, the actual products they produce – this often needs to be supported financially. Everyone would love to be able to serve the Cause without reimbursement. But this is just not possible for most people. And so, the National Fund supports these enterprises. This is not new. Here's what Shoghi Effendi wrote in 1935:

“As the activities of the ... Bahá'í community expand, and its worldwide prestige correspondingly increases, the institution of the National Fund, the bedrock on which all other institutions must necessarily rest and be established, acquires added importance, and should be increasingly supported by the entire body of the believers, both in their individual capacities, and through their collective efforts, whether organized as groups or as local Assemblies. The supply of funds, in support of the National Treasury, constitutes, at the present time, the lifeblood of those nascent institutions which you are labouring to erect. Its importance cannot, surely, be overestimated. Untold blessings shall no doubt crown every effort directed to that end.”

(Shoghi Effendi: *Directives of the Guardian*, pp. 31-32)

Thus the National Fund is truly the lifeblood of the Cause. Supporting it is a spiritual act.

We hope to highlight in future Bahá'í Journals the work of several of these agencies so you can see what the National Fund actually does. But if you have specific questions, need more information, want to know how to make your contribution, please do not hesitate to contact the Treasurer on 01767 627 626 <treasurer@bahai.org.uk> or the Finance Department on 01732 373760 <treasury@bahai.org.uk>.