

THE A-Z OF THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

*Originally compiled by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom.
Adapted by the Regional Bahá'í Council of the Southwestern States
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A

A CLUSTER

The Universal House of Justice describes an A-cluster as an area where “strong communities of deepened believers will be in a position to take on the challenges of systematic and accelerated expansion and consolidation.” Such a cluster has attained conditions propitious for intensive growth. See also CLUSTER.

ACCELERATION

Training is important because it gives more and more Bahá'ís the skills, knowledge, and spiritual insights they need to carry out “accelerated expansion and consolidation.” (Universal House of Justice, 12/26/95) The process of entry by troops has got to advance, but it must also accelerate – it must advance faster and faster!

ADVANCING THE PROCESS OF ENTRY BY TROOPS.

“Advancing the process of entry by troops will continue as the aim of the Five Year Plan—indeed the aim of the series of Plans that will carry the community to the end of the first century of the Formative Age.” (Universal House of Justice, 1/9/01) See also PROCESS OF ENTRY BY TROOPS

ANIMATOR

Someone who is trained to run a set of courses for junior youth (ages 12-14). These courses are “Breezes of Confirmation,” “Walking the Straight Path,” and “Drawing on the Power of the Word.”

AREA COORDINATOR

See CLUSTER INSTITUTE COORDINATOR

AREA TEACHING COMMITTEE (ATC)

A group of individuals appointed by the Regional Council right before a cluster is declared an A and is getting ready for an intensive program of growth to help, in collaboration with the Cluster Institute Coordinator (CIC) and the Auxiliary Board member, to coordinate cluster activities, plan campaigns, and mobilize individuals who have arisen to serve.

ARTS

The arts have played, and will continue to play “a major role in extending the influence of the Cause” (Universal House of Justice, Ridván 1996). Artistic activities are an essential element of any study circle, and the Bahá'ís are encouraged to incorporate the arts into all aspects of Bahá'í life. “A graceful integration of the arts into diverse activities enhances the surge of energy that mobilizes the believers.” (Universal House of Justice, 12/27/05)

ASSISTANT

Assistants are appointed by Auxiliary Board members to help them with their various duties. They serve in a specific area (e.g., a cluster or community) or field of endeavor (e.g., youth). The “active involvement of several assistants to Auxiliary Board members in promoting community life” is one of the signs that a cluster is ready for a program of intensive growth.

AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBER

The Continental Board of Counsellors appoints two Auxiliary Board members for every part of the United States, one for Propagation and one for Protection. They offer advice to individuals and institutions and encourage the friends to act on their own disciplined initiative.

B

B CLUSTER

Clusters where “established communities will be gaining strength through a vigorous institute process” (Universal House of Justice, 1/9/01).

BRANCH COURSES

“The main sequence [of Ruhi courses], much like the trunk of a tree, supports courses branching out from it, each branch dedicated to some specific area of training.” (Universal House of Justice, 1/9/01). For example Ruhi Book 3a, Teaching Children Classes, Grade 2, joins the trunk at the Ruhi Book 3 level. In addition, in the United States, the Core Curriculum for training teachers of children’s classes has been designated as a branch joining the trunk at the Ruhi Book 3 level.

BUILDING MOMENTUM

A document produced by the International Teaching Centre in April 2003, which reviewed the learning which had been gained worldwide, two years into the Five Year Plan. A video called ‘Building Momentum’ was also produced, looking at the experience of successful clusters around the world.

C

C CLUSTER

Clusters which “contain a few isolated localities and groups” (Universal House of Justice, 1/9/01), often encompassing a broad spectrum of Bahá’í activity where the institute process has not yet been established. (Building Momentum 2.2)

C* CLUSTER

C clusters with 100 or more Bahá’í youth and adults.

CAMPAIGNS, INSTITUTE

See INSTITUTE CAMPAIGNS.

CAMPAIGNS, PRACTICE

See PRACTICE CAMPAIGNS

CATEGORIZATION OF CLUSTERS

There are four types of cluster defined by the Universal House of Justice, often referred to as A, B, C and D. This is not a statement about a cluster's status. Rather it is a way of evaluating its capacity for growth. When we know how strong a cluster is, we will know the best way to make it even stronger.

CHILDREN'S CLASSES

One of the four core activities of the Five Year Plan. "The establishment of children's classes is ... an indispensable element of any plan for the sustained, large-scale expansion of the Faith." (International Teaching Centre, July 2000)

CLUSTER

A cluster is a geographic area defined by the Regional Bahá'í Council to enable the friends to think about the growth of the Faith on a manageable scale and to design and implement plans of expansion and consolidation close to the grassroots of the greater community.

CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT FACILITATOR (CDF)

An individual appointed by the Regional Council soon after a cluster is categorized as a B level cluster to help coordinate and plan intensive practice campaigns, intensive training campaigns, and cluster reflection gatherings, in collaboration with the Cluster Institute Coordinator (CIC) and the Auxiliary Board member.

CLUSTER INSTITUTE COORDINATOR (CIC)

Formerly known as Area Coordinators, appointed by the Regional Training Institute and assigned to specific clusters. They train tutors, follow their progress, ensure they have access to the materials they need, and organize meetings for them to come together and share experiences, as well as coordinating and tracking study circles throughout their clusters.

CLUSTER COORDINATOR

An advanced cluster may get to the stage where it needs a cluster coordinator, responsible for making sure the core activities in the area steadily multiply.

COLLABORATOR

All the participants in a study circle, including the person serving as tutor, are collaborators. A study circle is not made up of a teacher and students – everyone learns.

COMMUNITY OF INTEREST

"The movement of clusters from each level of activity to a higher one is well in hand and, as it proceeds, the kernel of avowed believers is being joined by a larger circle of people, still not Bahá'ís but enthusiastically involved in core activities of the [Five Year] Plan." (Universal House of Justice, Ridván 2004) The "community of interest" is the circle of people who are involved in core activities on a regular basis while not yet being enrolled Bahá'ís. Evidence from advanced clusters suggests that the larger the community of interest over the course of a year, the faster the rate of enrolment.

CONSOLIDATION PHASE

One of the phases of an intensive program of growth. “One of the primary objectives of this...phase is to bring a percentage of the new believers into the institute process so that an adequate pool of human resources will be available in future cycles to sustain growth.” “The nature of the consolidation phase...largely involved nurturing the interest of seekers and accompanying them in their spiritual search until they are confirmed in their faith.” (Universal House of Justice, 12/27/05)

CONSULTATION, ACTION, REFLECTION

Three steps needed for increasing our effectiveness in planning and teaching. We practice the art of consultation to reach decisions on how to proceed with our teaching plans. Having reached a consensus, we then move into the field of action, without fear of failure, assured of the support of institutions and individuals, and open to learning. We come back from the field to reflect on the lessons learned in action so that they may be articulated and incorporated into plans for the next cycle of activity.

COORDINATOR, AREA

See AREA COORDINATOR

COORDINATOR, DEPUTY REGIONAL

See DEPUTY REGIONAL COORDINATOR

COORDINATOR, REGIONAL

See REGIONAL COORDINATOR

CORE ACTIVITIES

The Universal House of Justice refers to study circles, devotional gatherings, children’s classes, and junior youth groups as “core activities.” (Universal House of Justice 12/27/05) They are among the initial goals that every community should try to achieve, and they should be open to all the people living in a locality, whether Bahá’í or not.

CORE CURRICULUM

A branch course for training teachers of children’s classes.

CORE GROUP

Training institute coordinators, Auxiliary Board members/assistants, and Area Teaching Committees. “The implementation of such a program [of intensive growth] will require the close collaboration of the institute, the Auxiliary Board members and their assistants, and an Area Teaching Committee.” (Universal House of Justice 1/9/01) Sometimes referred to as a “troika” or “triad.”

COURSES

Every Training Institute Board adopts a sequence of courses, which it uses to raise up large numbers of believers who can “foster and facilitate the process of entry by troops with efficiency and love.” (Universal House of Justice, Ridván 153) The sequence of courses that has been adopted by the Training Institute Boards of the United States is the program created by the Ruhi Institute.

CO-WORKERS

See FRIENDS, FAMILY, NEIGHBORS, AND CO-WORKERS

CULTURE OF GROWTH

“Chief among the requirements for motivating believers and nurturing a culture of growth is the capacity to foster an encouraging environment where, as the Universal House of Justice wrote in its 9 January message, ‘teaching is the dominating passion of the lives of the believers’ and ‘mutual support, commitment to learning, and appreciation of diversity of action are the prevailing norms.’ In the same message, the House of Justice also stated that an upsurge in teaching activity depends on ‘sustained encouragement’” (*Building Momentum* 3.1.1)

CYCLE OF GROWTH

The process of growth within a cluster. A proportion of the Bahá'ís within a cluster move through the sequence of training institute courses to raise up resources for expansion and consolidation of the community. An outcome of this is the multiplication of the core activities within the cluster. These core activities are opened to the wider community, so that the number of non-Bahá'ís involved in core activities grows steadily, thus increasing the community of interest. Many of the new believers in the cluster come from these individuals, who are invited to join study circles, thus further building resources for multiplying the core activities and opening them to the wider community. Teaching initiatives and campaigns, both individual and collective, drawing from the people and skills raised up by the training institute, lead to further growth in the community of interest and the Bahá'í community itself. Thus we have a self-sustaining cycle of growth.

D

D CLUSTER

A cluster that is not yet open to the Faith; there are no Bahá'ís living there. The Universal House of Justice suggests that virgin territories are opened to the Faith by home front pioneers.

DECEMBER 27, 2005 MESSAGE

A message of the Universal House of Justice to the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counsellors outlining the main features of the second Five Year Plan (2006-2011).

DEPUTY REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Deputy Regional Coordinators are appointed by the Regional Training Institute and assigned to specific territories, usually matching those of each Auxiliary Board member. They oversee the Area Coordinators in helping to train and support tutors and coordinating and tracking study circles.

DEVOTIONAL GATHERINGS

One of the four core activities of the Five Year Plan. A devotional meeting is a gathering of Bahá'ís and their “not-yet Bahá'í” families, friends, neighbors, and co-workers to pray and meditate. It can be as small as one Baha'i and one seeker only. “Bahá'ís are encouraged to use the revealed prayers of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb as well as those of 'Abdul- Bahá. It is permissible to have prayers and readings from the sacred scriptures of other religions. The form of the programme would appear to depend in part on the setting, the occasion, and the purposes of the gathering.’ (Memorandum from the Research Department to the Universal House of Justice, 9/19/01)

E

ENCOURAGEMENT

“When training and encouragement are effective, a culture of growth is nourished in which the believers see their duty to teach as a natural consequence of having accepted Bahá'u'lláh.” (Universal House of Justice, 1/9/01) For growth to occur, we must encourage each other to carry out a rapidly increasing number of core activities. Auxiliary Board members and their assistants, as well as Local Spiritual Assemblies, must look to how they can foster individual initiative.

ENTERPRISE, SPIRIT OF

“The rise in activity around the world testifies to the success of these courses in evoking the spirit of enterprise required to carry out the diverse actions that growth in a cluster, at whatever stage, demands.” (Universal House of Justice, 1/17/03)

ENTRY BY TROOPS

New believers entering the Faith in large numbers.

ENTRY BY TROOPS, PROCESS OF

See PROCESS OF ENTRY BY TROOPS

EXPANSION PHASE

One of the phases of an intensive program of growth. “The expansion phase, often a period of two weeks, demands the highest level of intensity. Its objective is to widen the circle of those interested in the Faith, to find receptive souls and to teach them. Although this phase might include some element of proclamation, it should not be seen as a time to hold a few events for this purpose or to undertake a set of activities that merely convey information. Experience suggests that the more closely teaching approaches and methods are aligned with the capacity acquired from the study of the institute courses the more rewarding the results.” (Universal House of Justice, 12/27/05)

F

FAMILY

See FRIENDS, FAMILY, NEIGHBORS, AND CO-WORKERS

FEAST

See NINETEEN-DAY FEAST.

FIFTH EPOCH

“...the Faith of Baha'u'llah now enters the fifth epoch of its Formative Age.” (Universal House of Justice, 1/16/01) The Formative Age began in 1921, with the Ascension of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. It has been marked by a series of epochs – the fifth epoch opened at the beginning of 2001.

FIRESIDES

Warm, intimate, small gatherings where seekers feel comfortable to come and ask their questions and get involved in a profound spiritual encounter. One of the principal means of teaching open to every Baha'i. The Universal House of Justice notes that those seekers who attend devotional gatherings, and parents whose children attend Bahá'í children's classes, are often "eager to attend firesides and join study circles." (1/17/03)

FIVE YEAR PLAN

A series of four Five Year Plans was launched by the Universal House of Justice at Ridván 2001, and it will last until Ridván 2021. Its main aim is to advance the process of entry by troops. Its main features were outlined in the January 9, 2001 message from the Universal House of Justice.

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

"The elements required for a concerted effort to infuse the diverse regions of the world with the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation have crystallized into a framework for action that now needs only to be exploited.... Experience in advancing the movement of clusters from one stage to the next is now so widespread that the methods and instruments are well understood. The institute process must be strengthened so that a sizeable number of friends proceed through the main sequence of courses. Intensive institute campaigns that pay adequate attention to the practice component will be essential in this respect. The number of core activities should be steadily multiplied, and outreach to the wider community systematically extended. Meetings of reflection will have to be held periodically in order to monitor progress, maintain unity of thought and mobilize the energies of the friends. And schemes for administering the growth process should gradually be put in place, as circumstances demand." (Universal House of Justice, 12/27/05).

FRIENDS, FAMILY, NEIGHBORS, AND CO-WORKERS

The people with whom we come into contact most frequently, from which we cultivate a community of interested. "It is evident, then, that a systematic approach to training has created a way for Bahá'ís to reach out to the surrounding society, share Bahá'u'lláh's message with friends, family, neighbours and co-workers, and expose them to the richness of His teachings. This outward-looking orientation is one of the finest fruits of the grassroots learning taking place. The pattern of activity that is being established in clusters around the globe constitutes a proven means of accelerating expansion and consolidation." (Universal House of Justice, 1/17/03)

G

GRASS ROOTS PLANNING

In the Five Year Plan, planning is taking place at the grass roots. When the friends gather at a reflection meeting, their planning is based on the human resources that are available. For instance, a reflection meeting is unlikely to plan to hold ten study circles at once if there are only five tutors in the cluster!

GROWTH, CULTURE OF

See CULTURE OF GROWTH

GROWTH, INTENSIVE PROGRAM OF

See INTENSIVE PROGRAM OF GROWTH

H

HOME VISITS

“Conceived as a means for exposing believers to the fundamentals of the Faith, ‘home visits’ are giving rise to an array of deepening efforts, both individual and collective, in which the friends are delving into the Writings and exploring their implications for their lives.” (Universal House of Justice, 12/27/05) They may involve studying a prayer with a person or a family, sharing a deepening theme with them, or recounting stories of the Faith. Home visits are an important practice element of many of the courses of the Ruhi Institute.

I

INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE

“The role of the individual is of unique importance to the work of the Cause.” (Universal House of Justice, Ridván 1996). It is the duty of every Bahá’í to teach the Faith: “Let him not wait for any directions, or expect any special encouragement, from the elected representatives of his community, nor be deterred by any obstacles which his relatives, or fellow-citizens may be inclined to place in his path, nor mind the censure of his critics or enemies.” (Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*). The capacity of the individual is nurtured through “a sequence of courses that seeks to build capacity for service by concentrating on the application of the spiritual insights gained through profound study of the Writings.” (Universal House of Justice, 12/27/05)

INSTITUTE CAMPAIGNS

Institute campaigns help move groups of friends through the Sequence of courses quickly without reducing the number of hours spent on a course. It means completing the same course and its practices in their entirety, but in a shorter period of time, perhaps days instead of weeks or weeks instead of months. (International Teaching Center, 11/28/04)

INSTITUTE PROCESS

See TRAINING INSTITUTE PROCESS

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

The Five Year Plan is about bringing about growth; the aim is to advance the process of entry by troops. To achieve this, institutions (like Local Spiritual Assemblies) need to show new strengths and capacities. This is achieved more easily when the members of those institutions have first hand experience of nurturing growth—for instance, they have completed the sequence of courses and their practices.

INSTITUTION OF THE COUNSELLORS

This institution was brought into being by the Universal House of Justice to carry forward the work of the Hands of the Cause of God. Nine International Counsellors are appointed to the International Teaching Centre which is based at the World Centre. The House of Justice appoints a Continental Board of Counsellors on each continent (the number of Counsellors on each board varies) for five-year terms.

INTENSIVE PROGRAM OF GROWTH (IPG)

When a cluster is ready – and not before – it should establish an intensive program of growth. The Regional Council will determine when a cluster is an A-cluster ready to initiate an Intensive Program of Growth. It will have satisfied the propitious conditions (see PROPITIOUS CONDITIONS) Typically each cycle of an IPG lasts about three months. Each cycle of activity consists of three phases: 2 weeks for expansion, 10 weeks for consolidation, and 1 week for reflection and planning. The first few cycles may not produce many declarations, but should increase the number of individuals in the community of interest.

J

JANUARY 9, 2001 MESSAGE

A message of the Universal House of Justice to the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counsellors gathered in the Holy Land at that time, outlining the main features of the Five Year Plan.

JANUARY 17, 2003 MESSAGE

A letter written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the world. "...cogent analysis of the progress of the Bahá'í world in advancing the process of entry by troops since the beginning of the Five Year Plan." (ITC, *Building Momentum*, April 2003)

JUNIOR YOUTH

Young people between the ages of 12 through 14 (pre youth)

JUNIOR YOUTH COURSES

A series of courses adopted by many training institute boards for the training of junior youth, facilitated by trained youth animators. The courses are "Breezes of Confirmation," "Walking the Straight Path," and "Drawing on the Power of the Word." More books are under development.

L

LEARNING MODE

"Learning in action is becoming the outstanding feature of the emerging mode of operation." (Universal House of Justice, 1/17/03). At reflection meetings, the friends are sharing experience, learning from the results of their actions, and making new plans on the basis of what they have learned.

M

MAIN SEQUENCE

"The books of the Ruhi institute should constitute the main sequence of courses for institutes everywhere." (Universal House of Justice, 12/28/05)

MEMORIZATION

The Ruhi Institute courses emphasize the importance of memorizing the Sacred Texts and Writings so that we may freely impart them to friends and seekers.

MOVEMENTS, TWO ESSENTIAL

See TWO ESSENTIAL MOVEMENTS

MULTIPLICATION OF CORE ACTIVITIES

The movement of clusters towards the stage where they are ready for intensive growth is directly linked to the multiplication of core activities. This requires an increase in the number of trained individuals who carry out the core activities. However, “a proliferation of core activities that does not serve the purpose of involving a growing number of seekers” should be avoided. (Universal House of Justice to a National Assembly 8/18/05)

N

NEIGHBORS

See FRIENDS, FAMILY, NEIGHBORS, AND CO-WORKERS

NINETEEN-DAY FEAST

Monthly gathering of the Bahá'í community to pray, consult, and socialize—a divinely ordained cornerstone of Bahá'í community life. “As the spiritual foundations of the community are fortified in this way [i.e., through ‘the steady multiplication of core activities, propelled by the training institute’], the level of collective discourse is raised, social relations among the friends take on new meaning, and a sense of common purpose inspires their interactions. Little wonder, then, that a study carried out by the International Teaching Centre shows that, in some fifty advanced clusters surveyed, the quality of the Nineteen Day Feast has improved.” (12/27/05)

O

OPEN TO ALL

The Universal House of Justice tells us that the core activities of the Five Year Plan must be “open to all the inhabitants of the locality”, i.e. whether they are Bahá'ís or not (Universal House of Justice, 1/9/01). Experience has shown that when seekers know there is no pressure or proselytizing involved, but rather a genuine desire to share the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, they readily return to Bahá'í gatherings on their own.

OUTWARD-LOOKING ORIENTATION

Creating an “open to all” culture requires a concerted, courageous, and imaginative effort. Bahá'ís are striving to expand their social circles and friendships. Reordering our lives, including the services we render to the Faith, will allow us more time for interaction with friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers. (*Building Momentum*, 4.4) “...[A] systematic approach to training has created a way for Bahá'ís to reach out to the surrounding society, share Bahá'u'lláh's message with friends, family, neighbours and co-workers, and expose them to the richness of His teachings. This outward-looking orientation is one of the finest fruits of the grassroots learning taking place” (Universal House of Justice, 1/17/03). “From among all those they encounter – parents of neighbourhood children, peers at school, colleagues at work, casual acquaintances – they seek out souls with whom they can share a portion of that which He has so graciously bestowed on humanity. Increase experience enables them to adapt their presentation to the seeker's needs, employing direct teaching methods that draw on the Writings to offer the message in a manner both forthcoming and inviting.” (Universal House of Justice, 12/27/05)

PORTALS

“These core activities, which at the outset were devised principally to benefit the believers themselves, are naturally becoming portals for entry by troops. (Universal House of Justice, Ridván 2002)

PRACTICE CAMPAIGNS

A campaign conducted for the purpose not only of increasing core activities and community of interest, but of enhancing participants’ skills in the elements of teaching campaigns, such as working with teams and reaching out to seekers. Practice campaigns are usually conducted in a B cluster in preparation for becoming an A cluster and launching intensive programs of growth. “As would be expected, experience demonstrates that the more closely the teaching efforts and approaches have been related to the capacities acquired from the study of institute courses, the more fruitful has been the outcome. For this reason, in many instances offering refresher courses, particularly sections of Ruhi Institute Books 2 and 6, immediately prior to the start of the expansion phase, has proven highly beneficial.” (ITC 6/8/05)

PRACTICE, RUHI

See SERVICE, ACT OF

PRIORITY CLUSTER

A cluster which shows great promise or capacity for growth. “Focus in almost every country has now turned to stimulating the movement of its priority clusters from their current stage of growth to the next.” (Universal House of Justice, 1/17/03). This focus is intended not only to promote growth in these clusters, but it also to help other areas to develop more quickly as well through the lessons learned in the stronger areas.

PROCESS

“...to advance the process implies that [the] process is already in progress and that local and national communities are at different stages of it.” (Universal House of Justice, Ridván 153). The process of entry by troops is not something that will “just happen”—it is a stage of growth that the Bahá’ís can bring about through their own actions.

PROCESS OF ENTRY BY TROOPS

The process of preparing for mass enrollment and ensuring that new believers are not only enrolled but retained as active members of the community. New believers entering the Faith in large numbers should not happen in short, uncoordinated bursts, but through a sustained process. As the situation is ripe, and “the stage is set,” anytime we hit a nerve, the possibilities will overwhelm us. Therefore, in advancing the process of entry by troops, the challenge is to be selective.

It requires a means of systematically training a number of those new declarants to take on the challenges of promoting the process of entry by troops themselves—this is what the training institute process is for.

PROFITIOUS CONDITIONS

A cluster's readiness for a program of intensive growth can be assessed in relation to having attained conditions propitious for intensive growth, which includes:

- Believers being fully involved in institutes courses, with a significant number having completed the current sequence and who understand the pre-requisites for sustainable growth
- Presence of a critical mass of 40 to 50 friends who have completed the Ruhi sequence
- Increase in the number of Bahá'ís in the cluster
- Multiplication of core activities and their integration, providing "portals for entry by troops"
- Regular participation of seekers in the core activities
- Vibrant community life
- Well attended, vibrant, and lively cluster reflection meetings
- Commitment to an ongoing learning process
- A high degree of enthusiasm and a strong sense of ownership
- Ever growing number of individual and collective teaching initiatives
- Pronounced spirit of collaboration among the institutions
- Increased institutional capacity. Reasonable degree of administrative capacity

(*Building Momentum* 2.4)

R

REFLECTION MEETING

Also known as a reflection gathering; held from time to time in A, B, and some C clusters. "A natural vehicle for multiplying core activities has been reflection meetings. ... In such gatherings the institutions and the believers, many of whom are involved in the institute process, study the relevant Five Year Plan documents, share experiences, and consult on the achievements and strengths within the cluster." (*Building Momentum*, April 2003). The friends at reflection meetings also set short-term goals for themselves.

REFLECTION PHASE

One of the phases of an intensive program of growth. "Key to the progress of an intensive programme of growth is the phase dedicated to reflection, in which the lessons learned in action are articulated and incorporated into plans for the next cycle of activity. Its principal feature is the reflection meeting-as much a time of joyous celebration as it is of serious consultation. Careful analysis of experience, through participatory discussions rather than overly complex and elaborate presentations, serves to maintain unity of vision, sharpen clarity of thought and heighten enthusiasm." (Universal House of Justice 12/27/05)

REGIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL

Elected bodies that govern the teaching affairs of the Bahá'ís of a region within a nation. In the United State there are five Regional Councils, for the Central, Northeastern, Northwestern, Southern, and Southwestern regions. "The main task of a Regional Bahá'í Council is to devise and execute expansion and consolidation plans in close collaboration with the Local Spiritual Assemblies and the believers within its area of jurisdiction." (Universal House of Justice 5/30/97).

REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Individual appointed by the Regional Training Institute to oversee the services of the Deputy and Area Coordinators serving the institute process, often a member of the regional training institute.

REGIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE
See TRAINING INSTITUTE

RUHI INSTITUTE

“...in Colombia ... a systematic and sustained programme of education in the Writings was devised and soon adopted in neighbouring countries.” (Universal House of Justice, *Century of Light*). This program was the sequence of courses devised by the Ruhi Institute, and subsequently adopted by the majority of national communities around the world. The House of Justice said this was because national communities found them “most responsive to the Five Year Plan’s needs.” (Universal House of Justice, Ridván 2004).

S

SECTORS

A sub-division of a cluster, usually in large metro areas. “For the most part, large urban areas under the jurisdiction of one Local Spiritual Assembly have been designated single clusters, these in turn being divided into sectors, so as to facilitate planning and implementation.” (Universal House of Justice, 1/17/03)

SEQUENCE OF COURSES

The Universal House of Justice stresses that each training institute must choose “a sequence of courses which, building on one another, [will] gradually endow the students with the knowledge, skills and qualities needed to serve the Faith with increasing effectiveness.” (Universal House of Justice, cited in ITC, *Training Institutes and Systematic Growth*, Feb. 2000). So it is important that friends proceed through the courses systematically, one after another – the skills they acquire in one course will be built upon in future courses, and it won’t help to study them out of sequence!

SERVICE, ACTS OF

For every course in the sequence devised by the Ruhi Institute, there is a specified act of service or “practice activity.” A participant is not considered to have completed the course if the act of service has not been carried out—after all, what is the use of training that involves theory but no practice? As an example, the act of service in Ruhi Book 1 is to visit another person and study a prayer with them.

STORYTELLING

A practice activity, or act of service, for Ruhi Book 4, *The Twin Manifestations*, is to learn to tell stories about the lives of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh to share with friends and seekers.

STUDY CIRCLE

One of the four core activities of the Five Year Plans; a delivery system for the sequence of courses chosen by the training institute. In essence, it consists of a group of friends, meeting on a regular basis in a local area, with one person serving as a tutor. Everyone involved is a collaborator, and each participant is actively involved in the process of learning – they are not passive!

SYSTEMATIZATION

“Systematization ensures consistency of lines of action based on well-conceived plans ... it implies an orderliness of approach in all that pertains to Bahá’í service ... Systematization is a necessary mode of functioning animated by the urgency to act.” (Universal House of Justice, Ridván 155)

T

TEACHING TEAM

A small group of friends, preferably living near one another, who band together to teach, often as part of a teaching campaign or intensive program of growth. The team consults on approaches for teaching, acts collectively and individually, supports each other through prayer, and reflects together on lessons learned. “Plans being devised for this [expansion] phase invariably involve the implementation of carefully designed teaching projects and campaigns of home visits and firesides, often through the mobilization of teaching teams.” (Universal House of Justice, 12/27/05)

TRAINING INSTITUTE

An institution appointed by the Regional Council and the National Spiritual Assembly in consultation with the Continental Board of Counselors. It is responsible for overseeing the training institute process within a region and is under the supervision of the Regional Councils. It appoints a Regional Coordinator, Deputy Regional Coordinators, and Area Coordinators, and it selects and creates training material.

TRAINING INSTITUTE PROCESS

Training institutes “have as their goal one very practical outcome, namely, the raising up of large numbers of believers who are trained to foster and facilitate the process of entry by troops with efficiency and love.” (Universal House of Justice, Ridván 153). In order to achieve this, they adopt a sequence of courses which will endow students with the knowledge, skills and qualities they need for this purpose.

TROIKA

See CORE GROUP.

TUTOR

A person who serves as a tutor of a study circle has been trained in the methods of the Ruhi Institute, so that he or she can help every participant in the study circle to gain the maximum benefit from the course. He or she is a collaborator—the model is not that of a teacher with a classroom full of students.

TUTOR REFLECTION MEETING

A gathering organized by an Area Coordinator for the tutors of an area so they can share and analyze experiences, answer questions, and enhance skills.

TWO ESSENTIAL MOVEMENTS

“The Five Year Plan ... requires concentrated and sustained attention to two essential movements. The first is the steady flow of believers through the sequence of courses offered by training institutes, for the purpose of developing the human resources of the Cause. The second, which receives its impetus from the first, is the movement of geographic clusters from one stage of growth to the next.” (Universal House of Justice, 12/22/01)

W

WORLD ORDER LETTERS

Letters written by the Guardian that analyze the world situation, published in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*. The Universal House of Justice urged the Bahá'ís to study these letters in its Ridván message of 2003.

Y

YOUTH

Bahá'ís of ages 15 through 20. “Multiplying [the core] activities ranks high among the priorities of institutions everywhere, and you should not underestimate the importance of the part Bahá'í youth must play in this mighty endeavor. Who more than the young people of our communities can lend the collective energy needed to achieve so necessary an increase in the level of activity?” (Universal House of Justice, to the youth forums held in the Western States, 4/10/03)

Z

ZONE

The term sometimes used by regional agencies to refer to the territory covered by an Auxiliary Board member.