

Bahá'í Development Seminar Notes

December 18 – 19, 2002

The following pages contain flip chart entries captured by the session facilitators (and other information shared) during the (pre-Conference) 2002 Bahá'í Development Seminar for experienced and active SED practitioners in Orlando, Florida. These entries may be helpful in stimulating critical thinking regarding the various subjects listed.

Topics (with ideas listed below)

- Funding
- Volunteers – internal, external, recruit, train, retain
- Program – plans into action, structure and organization, measurement and evaluation, sustainability
- Marketing – perception and credibility
- Consultation and unity
- Stakeholders – collaboration and buy-in
- Governing boards
- Spiritual and material
- Economic development
- Self sustaining
- Bahá'í institution ad NGO relationship

What distinguishes a Bahá'í SED project?

- Local values
- Engages spiritual capacities
- Real prosperity, not material
- Servants for service
- Non-partisan, non-violent
- Long view, positive evolution
- Integrated approach
- 1993 publication – Bahá'í SED: Prospects for the Future
- Process vs. outcome
- Internalize message
- Culture of encouragement
- Won't be tested beyond our capacity
- Knowledge, volition, action
- Environmental stewardship
- Working for God – channels for spiritual development
- Applying the teachings to a business plan
- Strengthening and building local institutions and the community
- Putting our principles into practice – gender, racial, class
- Transformation vs. status quo

- Human capacity building
- Learning attitude and local ownership
- Moral and ethical code
- Global perspective
- Sacrifice
- Good will vs. experts
- Whole society development
- Serve humankind

How do you maintain the spiritual element when working with non-Bahá'í individuals and institutions?

- Teach consultation
- Remember the underlying purpose of project
- Model ways of working together
- Good listening
- Encourage others' spirituality
- Invite co-workers into study circles
- Move from spiritual elements to practical tools
- Sharing what you know
- Spiritual elements to practical tools
- Actions through spiritual and social teachings

Ideas around Topics

Program: Planning Structure and Evaluation and Sustainability

Establishing clear indicators that are directly linked to project goals. Implement systematic measurements (e.g. annually) and have workshops to discuss results. Then modify plan according to learnings.

Goal Setting Session

1. SWOT analysis to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats. [whole community involvement]
2. Developing prototype universal programs
3. Best programs creatively reflect the needs, goals, desires, as well as the skills of all the participants
4. Framework so the delivery of programs must be collaboratively developed from the onset of the project. (Program, like a blueprint, may change along the way, however, and guide the process of development).
5. Read To Build Anew-Creating Bahá'í Inspired Enterprises.

Governing Boards

1. This is where the direction should come from when the main players have gone. E.g., board members could be taught Bahá'í principles of consultation.
2. Involving non-Bahá'í stakeholders, experts, interest groups on the board
3. More on Bahá'í development model, also duties and responsibilities of board members.
4. Look at section on "board development" on the MAP (Management Assistance Program) for non-profit orgs at www.mapfornonprofits.org. The above website also has a free management library and resources on project management, legal services, marketing, fundraising, etc. Additional resources: www.nptimes.com – Non-profit Times, business journal for NP management, also see "economic development page – (CH Small Business Owner's Resources Toolkit).

Bahá'í' Institutions/NGOs

1. Lend our support to noble causes (e.g., social issues) Mottahedeh Development Services
2. More exchange of experiences by all, including USA and Canada on institutional level—local and national
3. Health for humanity is an NGO to close links to a Bahá'í institution
4. Duties and responsibilities of board members

Networking / Sharing SED Systematically

1. Email distribution lists
2. Create "Resource" tools accessible on the Internet
 - a. Papers
 - b. Curriculum
 - c. Ideas
 - d. Initiatives & contact database
 - e. Key learnings
 - f. www.rubiconatlas.com has a commercial service for "mapping" curriculum

3. Relate to each other through community/Bahá'í newsletters (in some) in particular non-technical countries...
4. Noble Creation SED existing list serv
5. Use of forum on www.partnersforprosperity.org
6. Geographic/language area lists
7. Create SED virtual DB w/all these "best practices" and way to add others we think about later, categorized by keywords and searchable

Stakeholders/Buy-in Collaboration

1. Engage key stakeholders in concept formalization stage so that they feel they have contribution and ownership
 - a. Without stakeholder involvement, any long-term project would fail.
2. See Wilder Foundation materials on how to build collaboration. They suggest several steps. Their text is titled collaboration, I believe.

Self-Sustaining

1. Plan for self-sustenance the same way you plan for any other part of your project. Think long term at least 5-7 years out (Amazon project)
2. Develop program to empower grassroots
 - Bahá'í Unity Center
3. Have regular "status/success-sharing" meetings to sustain/feed motivation
4. Engage business people in your SED projects
5. This relates to fundraising. Some Bahá'í-like organizations are afraid to ask for money and/or do not know how. Same for grant funds.
6. Break the work into little, localized bits for which many different people can assume responsibility.

Consultation / Unity

1. Elevation of one's self esteem to embrace a higher vision (Native Indians to help Africa.)
2. Shift overloads of one group by introducing concepts/technologies that appeal to strength of another group
3. Introduce principles of consultation in Development process (all contribute; group ownership of ideas, etc.)

4. Don't think we know what true consultation is - we should always be learning more about this process and how to apply it (Amazon project)
5. Start and end with the pertinent guiding spiritual principles in all meetings. Build into each every project the true capacity for individuals to share their wisdom, experiences, needs and goals. Develop patience and occasionally silence as tools to project development. Consultation is also listening and not just talking (partners).

Marketing

1. Use of art and music
2. Have a clear mission statement
3. Appeal to the highest moral/ethical instincts
4. Offers to needs of communities, entities
5. Know your audience and their needs
6. Market research, (even) if only a few focus groups or studies
7. Become attractive
8. Get buy-in throughout organization to create "internal buzz" for new projects
9. Create networks of support, document ideas and best practices and promote the same to the rest of the world (partners)
10. Work with business people to promote your work of SED

Funding:

- Engage business people in your SED projects.
- Change the paradigm from social services to self-sustaining social and economic enterprises
- Funding sources should not be overly prescriptive and should allow for, even encourage, locally based, grass-roots utilization and control of funds. This will allow small-scale sustainable project implementation practices to flourish, creating an environment where sustainable development is possible. Funders should also demand sustainability and consider whether the projects they fund will be sustainable or not, before they commit to funding them.
- Clearly define mission statement and project plan/structure
- Good long-term vision/strategy

- Do not look for funding first. Investigate and research the needs of your constituents, do your planning - based on those needs. It's a process that requires time, and you should think about funds only after the research and planning process is complete (usually at least a year).
- Funding is a continuous process for a project just like it is for a business, and generally money is never the problem - it can be found for good programs, and it is also never the solution, only a resource to support the solution (ex. Amazon Project).
- Mobilize resource people to give "in-kind" of their time, talents, and expertise
- Deputization of volunteers
- Strategic partnerships with groups and individuals involved in similar work, who as a group can deliver a dynamic program/project with a lower capital cost for each group but an enhanced capacity to deliver a broader based program
- In the U.S. - NPOs [non-profit organizations—501(c)(3)s] can raise up to 40% of their gross income in "for-profit" activities and still retain a tax-free status.
- Non-profit organizations/NGOs can create a Limited-Liability Partnership with an outside investor or corporation - the for-profit/investor would be a non-voting partner, but could receive the full depreciation off their taxes so that it lowers their tax bracket. The NGO/NPO can't use that depreciation anyway.
- "Cause Branding" - an NGO/NPO can link up with a for-profit corporation (that has a related focus or serves similar clientele and has a strong ethical foundation). The for-profit corporation can improve its community image and use the non-profit logo in its marketing efforts. This will also improve and increase public visibility of the non-profit's efforts. The non-profit would receive funding through the corporation's foundation or philanthropic giving program. The non-profit might have to make mention of the corporation in some of their literature. (see the company CONE for more info - www.cone.com).
- Many grants are available to fund projects by non-profit organizations - check out The Foundation Center database website at www.foundationcenter.org. Also useful is the Chronicle of philanthropy – philanthropy.com (there is a section on fundraising, a guide to grants, etc.); The journal of philanthropy -- www.philanthropy-journal.org
- Network for good enables an organization to fund-raise on line and provides other resources -- www.networkforgood.org/npo
- Innovation Network includes assistance with budgeting and grant plans -- www.innonet.org

- Ashoka (has international focus)—creative resourcing/social entrepreneurship -- www.ashoka.org/home/index.cfm
- National Center for Social Entrepreneurs: www.socialentrepreneurs.org

Economic Development:

- Very low cost computer labs for vocational training and income generation “to go.” --Maxwell School/SMottahedeh. (10 computer ++)
- (See info on Social entrepreneurship in “Fundraising” section)
- Check out the great resources on this website, which includes sample business plans, info on managing finances, writing government grants, marketing, etc.-- CCH Small Business Owner’s Resource Toolkit: www.toolkit.cch.com/
- Other great Website resources: MAP (Management Assistance Program) for non-profit services - has a great management library and additional services on-line: www.mapfornonprofits.org
- Business journal for non-profit management—Non-profit times: www.nptimes.com

Spiritual and Material:

- In working with street children in Brazil, the first thing they learn is to have devotional meetings every morning and learn to pray. Often they are abused and /or abandoned, so it is important for them to know there is a Divine power they can depend on and turn to in their lives. (From the pre-youth program in the Amazon).
- Family Unity Institute
- The best secondary students from the morning school for the primary afternoon-school for the poor (often in domesticity). (College Suisse, Haiti) This is the spirit: “I am now third in my class; I would like to teach!”
- Over and over we’ve seen seemingly insurmountable material circumstances/obstacles resolve themselves abruptly - though not immediately. Without inviting laziness, have faith that this can and will happen in unexpected ways (Voicemail Project).

Volunteers:

- Speak to local educational institutions about making volunteer work a requirement for various courses.
- External volunteers are no substitutes for local “internal” volunteer efforts.
- Motivate through the actual Writings, to arise.
- Tapping into service club (viz. Rotary, Lions)
- Youth year-of-service especially beneficial for both institutions and youth.
- Train a group of interested teachers with a sequence of four seminars over the course of a year. The fourth seminar is for those who want to become trainers of other teachers. This is working well in Central Asia with public school teachers who are interested in moral education classes.
- Learn to facilitate development through the building of collaborative teams skilled in a variety of areas and from diverse backgrounds reflective of the needs and goals one hopes to infuse in the project.
- Have no volunteers for essential services - - use paid staff.
- Business will often subsidize or pay employees to volunteer in SED.
- The following Web sites enable you to post on the Internet volunteer opportunities with your organization:
Volunteer Match: www.volunteermatch.org
www.idealists.org (has international focus)

Challenges/Schools

Literacy – different dialects

Cultural practices

Laws of country

Religious challenges

How to use funding

Governance – policy decisions – how to structure the board

Buy-in of youth and other stakeholders

Discipline in schools (beating)

Measuring impact – indicators, analyzing results and learning

Marketing/PR – how to define projects, using Bahá'í principles directly in projects (Ruhi books)

Role of Bahá'í institutions with NGO

Bringing Bahá'í principles into secular funding (govt. funding)

Identifying curriculums and materials, training trainers and retaining trainers

Successfully implementing moral education (beyond virtues) and moral leadership

How are Bahá'í schools different?

How to retain and develop kids in residential programs

Blurred lines between Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í uses of facilities, etc., especially when funded externally

Ensuring the primary goal is not to have more Bahá'ís

Environmental issues

Challenges / Funding

Limited duration and sources

Limited human resources

Non-native practices – acceptance and continuation, ownership by stakeholders

Expectation of externally driven projects – paternalism

Striking a balance between external input and grassroots approach

Challenges / Community Development

Inclusivity of greater community

Organization and governance

Power and participation

Leadership and the construction of vision

Principles of UHJ (Oct. '83)

Begin locally, grow organically

Apply spiritual principles

Achieve self-sufficiency and reliance

Rectitude of conduct

Preserve human honor

Extend the benefits to the community as a whole

Art of consultation

Unity in spirit and in action

Linking the spiritual and the material

Challenges / Arts Issues

How to overcome the novice/expert obstacle to grassroots participation

How to retain central coordinators for art focused activities (e.g., youth workshops)

In highly collaborative projects, how to keep non-Bahá'í involvement.

Challenges / Adult Univ. Ed.

Sharing resources among institutions

Access to higher education

Access to funding

Disunity / consultative skills

Academic / Administration rivalries

Lack of knowledge / sharing about creating academic international programs

Bahá'í / non- Bahá'í and other conflicts of identity / funding mix

Poor business practices

No Bahá'í virtual university

Cooperation among Bahá'í universities (Núr-Landegg)

Challenges / Health issues

Poverty

Lack of education

Need for awareness

Need of ownership

Mechanics of delivering / teaching

Addictions – substance, habits and lifestyles

Govt. commitment to promote health

Developing infrastructure – health facilities

Not aware of spiritual reality

Development Seminar Goals

Maintaining Bahá'í identity

Networking

Follow-up learning

Funding
Personal confidence
Collective learning
Incorporating Bahá'í principles
Developing world movement
Integrating Hispanics
Managing spiritual and material
Sustainability
Inspiration and insights
Idea development and application
Belonging to a community – sharing goals and values
Culture of encouragement

Faith into action – 3 word definition

Project categories

Health
Schools
Arts
Community Development
Environmental

Pluses – What worked at the Development Seminar?

Small groups of 6 - 7
Networking
Facilitation skills
Activity variety
Diversity
Short introductions to projects
Structure
Plenary and workshops together
In-depth projects
Inspiration and encouragement

Deltas – What could we improve?

Identify distinction of Bahá'í development

Identify guidance

Identify Bahá'í support for NGO's

Link projects to needs

Relationship of Bahá'í to non-Bahá'í development

Use the expertise of existing projects

Have more business people attend

Copies of overheads from seminar

Peter Senge

The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization.

Team learning is the process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the result its members truly desire.

David Bohm - the group needs to become open to the flow of the larger intelligence and go beyond any individual's understanding.

Teams can learn to develop a joint skill where the team IQ exceeds the IQ of the individual members.

For the next two days we are a learning organization

Margaret J. Wheatley

Leadership and the New Science: Learning about Organization from an Orderly Universe.

Einstein - No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it.

Love is the most potent source of power.

Organizations are collections of choices looking for problems.

Open systems can continually import free energy from the environment and export entropy.

Disequilibrium is necessary for growth.

Freedom and order generate viable well-ordered autonomous systems.

Greatest generator of information is chaos.

Chaos is order without predictability.

Chaos produces well-ordered patterns

Having lost sight of our goal, we re-doubled our effort.

Well, it works in practice, let's see if it works in theory.

Schon's Swamp

Single discipline research
Cross discipline research
Single discipline applied
Cross discipline applied

Information isn't knowledge and
Knowledge isn't wisdom

Consultation is a continual process of expansion and contraction - like giving birth, it is painful, rewarding and requires a long-term commitment.

Our left brain mode likes structure and sequence.

Our right brain mode likes random patterns,
is visual-spatial, is emotional and looks at the big picture.

33% of us learn by seeing and imagining,
24% learn by listening and verbalizing,
14% learn by doing and manipulating,
29% having more than one modality.

We need to communicate using sight, sound and action, and address both right and left brain modes to understand and be understood by everyone.

ORID

O - Observation
R - Reflection
I - Interpretation
D - Decision

Learning Styles and 4MAT

4Mat Information Processing Theories (derived from Kolb and Jung)
Imaginative - perceive concretely (think) and process reflectively
(internalize)
Analytic - perceive abstractly (feel) and process reflectively
(internalize)

Common sense - perceive abstractly (feel) and process actively (act)
Dynamic - perceive concretely (think) and process actively (act)

Four Ways of Acquiring Knowledge

Senses
Reason
Tradition
Holy Spirit

The team needs to think insightfully about complex issues and that through innovative coordinated action the learning team continually fosters other learning teams by inculcating practice and skills of team learning.

The group then participates in a pool of common meaning and becomes observers of their own thinking.