

**Guidelines from
the Office of Social and Economic Development:**

How to Select and Plan Projects

- Any project must rest on the basis of a sufficiently strong Bahá'í community in which there is a clear capacity to carry it out, and in which it can be seen to be of lasting benefit.
- Projects may be suggested by individual believers and Bahá'í institutions but must not be imposed on others. Before implementing a project, the Assembly responsible must be satisfied that it is welcomed by the believers of the area, who will be involved in carrying out and perpetuating its benefits.
- The project must be feasible and within the limits of available manpower and resources. It is far better to start small and gradually build up than to be too ambitious and risk discouraging the friends by failure. It must be suited to the capacities and resources of the local people and should meet the needs perceived by the community as immediate and pressing. Great care should be taken to ensure that the number of people to be served will not be too large for the resources and capacity of the Bahá'í community.
- Self-help must be a strong component of every project. A project should be seen as a means through which participants gain in experience and confidence, in self-respect and dignity, as well as achieving specific ends. The practice of the art of consultation at all levels of the project should bring forth the blessings of the consultative process and develop the essential skills of decision-making.
- It is essential to involve the women, as far as possible, in all types of projects. Indeed some projects may be devoted entirely to uplifting the status of women, and in those projects the participation and support of men must be assured.
- The role of youth in development should receive the careful attention of the Local and National Assemblies so that this valuable source of idealism and energy may be directed to the service of mankind.
- Projects should be based upon ideas and techniques suitable to, and compatible with the culture and social setting and with the capacity and experience of the people they are intended to serve. Ideas and technologies that are of no immediate relevance or help to the people should be avoided.
- Projects should be consistent with the aims of local and national civil authorities, and should be explained to non-Bahá'ís involved in order that the projects will be well received and will be given warm support by the non-Bahá'í authorities and community.

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