

Participant Handouts

Builders of Communities:
**The Equality of Women
and Men, Part 1: A
Shared Responsibility**

An Assembly Development Module Workshop

A Shared Responsibility

OVERVIEW FOR PARTICIPANTS

Purpose

- ★ To explore the complementary roles of women and men in establishing partnership between the sexes

This workshop is targeted to individuals, rather than Assemblies. It explores the complementary roles of women and men in establishing the partnership between the sexes described in the Bahá'í Writings. It surfaces assumptions participants have about women and men and examines the example of Bahíyyih Khánum. The workshop also contains a visioning exercise and opportunities for individual and group reflection.

What you will find inside your handouts:

- ★ Quotations and worksheets for the various segments of the workshop
- ★ An evaluation form to be filled out by you
- ★ An evaluation form to be filled out by the Assembly within two months after the workshop

If you would like to have information on additional workshops or other Assembly development resources, ask your Assembly Development representative or contact the Office of Assembly Development at (847) 733-3490, by mail at 1233 Central Street, Evanston, IL 60201, or by e-mail at OAD@usbnc.org.

Note: If time is short for any exercise, focus on the quotations in bold

The Process of Change

“The evolution of local and national Bahá’í Assemblies at this time calls for a new state of mind on the part of their members as well as on the part of those who elect them. . . .”

“The evolution of local and national Bahá’í Assemblies at this time calls for a new state of mind on the part of their members as well as on the part of those who elect them, for the Bahá’í community is engaged in an immense historical process that is entering a critical stage.”

The Universal House of Justice, Ridván Message to the Bahá’ís of the World, 1996.

“Present-day conceptions of what is natural and appropriate in relationships . . . reflect levels of understanding arrived at by the human race during earlier and less mature stages in its development. If humanity is indeed coming of age, if all the inhabitants of the planet constitute a single people, if justice is to be the ruling principle of social organization – then existing conceptions that were born out of ignorance of these emerging realities have to be recast.

“Movement in this direction has barely begun. It will lead, as it unfolds, to a new understanding of the nature of the family and of the rights and responsibilities of each of its members. It will entirely transform the role of women at every level of society.”

Bahá’í International Community’s Office of Public Information, January 23, 1995, in *Prosperity of Humankind*, Section II.

“We need a change of heart, a reframing of all our conceptions and a new orientation of our activities. The inward life of man as well as his outward environment have to be reshaped. . . .”

Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, May 27, 1932, in *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol. 1, p. 85.

“This principle [the equality of the sexes] is far more than the enunciation of admirable ideals; it has profound implications in all aspects of human relations and must be an integral element of Bahá’í domestic and community life. The application of this principle gives rise to changes in habits and practices which have prevailed for many centuries.”

Letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, dated January 24, 1993, in *“Extracts on Women.”*

The Process of Change, continued

“Change is an evolutionary process. . . .”

“Bahá’ís . . . are subject to all the pressures and standards of the prevalent culture of the society in which they live, and can only too easily be unconsciously influenced in their behavior by the accepted norms of that culture. One of our challenging tasks as Bahá’ís, however, is to establish, through our personal conduct and through the pattern of life in our communities and institutions, those cultural standards which Bahá’u’lláh wishes us to uphold.”

Letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, dated August 18, 1996.

“Change is an evolutionary process requiring patience with one’s self and others, loving education and the passage of time as the believers deepen their knowledge of the principles of the Faith, gradually discard long-held traditional attitudes and progressively conform their lives to the unifying teachings of the Cause.”

The Universal House of Justice, letter dated July 25, 1984, in *Messages from the Universal House of Justice*, p. 634.

Examining Assumptions

“O God, my God! Aid Thou Thy trusted servants to have loving and tender hearts. Help them to spread, amongst all the nations of the earth, the light of guidance that cometh from the Company on high. Verily Thou art the Strong, the Powerful, the Mighty, the All-Subduing, the Ever-Giving. Verily Thou art the Generous, the Gentle, the Tender, the Most Bountiful.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 22.

Categorizing qualities:

Place each spiritual quality or attribute mentioned in this prayer into one of the following three categories, depending on whether your family or cultural background taught you that they pertain primarily to men, primarily to women, or are equally common to both:

Primarily masculine

Equally common to both

Primarily feminine

“Know thou, O handmaid, that in the sight of Bahá, women are accounted the same as men, and God hath created all humankind in His own image, and after His own likeness. That is, men and women alike are the revealers of His names and attributes, and from the spiritual viewpoint there is no difference between them.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, pp. 79-80.

“Women and men have been and will always be equal in the sight of God. The Dawn-Place of the Light of God sheddeth its radiance upon all with the same effulgence.”

Bahá’u’lláh, in Women, p. 26, #54.

“. . . the revelation of divine bestowals is received by men and women in equal measure.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in Women, p. 48, #96.

“Human virtues belong equally to all!”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 162.

The Example of Bahíyyih Khánum

“Her blessed life was . . . an object of emulation for all mankind.”

“Her blessed life was a source of spiritual illumination for the whole world and her noble traits and heavenly attributes served as a shining example, an object of emulation for all mankind.”

Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in *Bahíyyih Khánum*, p. 84.

“Then is my tongue loosed to praise and thank thee, and thy Lord, Him Who did fashion thee and did prefer thee to all other handmaidens, . . . Who withdrew the veil of concealment from thy true being and made thee to be a true example for all thy kin to follow, and caused thee to be the fragrance of His garment for all of creation.

“And at such times I strengthen my resolve to follow in thy footsteps, and to continue onward in the pathway of thy love; to take thee as my model, and to acquire thy qualities, and to make manifest that which thou didst desire for the triumph of this exalted and exacting, this most resplendent, sacred, and wondrous Cause.”

Shoghi Effendi, in *Bahíyyih Khánum*, pp. 54-55.

“She who was a sparkling light of God, she who was so full of grace . . . was made to appear with all perfections, all goodly attributes, all blessed ways; and never had the world’s eye gazed upon such a welling spring of tender love, of pity and compassion, and never will it behold again such a gem of loving-kindness, such a fount of God’s munificence.”

Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in *Bahíyyih Khánum*, p. 82.

“To every disconsolate one she was an affectionate comforter, to every heart-broken and grief-stricken soul, a token of unfailing sympathy, of kindness, of cheer and comfort. . . . Like the showers of heavenly grace, her generosity knew no bounds, and as the breeze of celestial blessing and favour, she breathed a new life into every soul. Both friends and strangers were drawn by her sense of spirituality, her tenderness and refinement, her unfailing solicitude, and were attracted by the magic of her unbounded affection and goodwill. That heavenly being displayed throughout her life such evidence of glory and dignity, such manifestations of majesty and greatness, such a degree of patience and resignation

The Example of Bahíyyih Khánum, continued

“She always kept such a wonderful atmosphere of joy and hope around her. . . .”

as bewildered the minds and souls. In the midst of trials her radiant face bore the likeness of a sweet rose and in moments of sore tribulation she was resplendent as a brilliant candle.” –

Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in *Bahíyyih Khán*um, p. 84.

“She always kept such a wonderful atmosphere of joy and hope around her that was bound to influence those that were present and help them to go out into the world with added zeal and determination to consecrate all in the path of God.”

Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in *Bahíyyih Khán*um, p. 85.

“That sacred treasure, that jewel of Heaven, was the very sign and token of spiritual attributes and qualities and perfections, the very model of high honour and nobility and heavenly ways. . . . Fortitude was the rich dress she wore, serenity and tranquil strength were her splendid robe, virtue and detachment, purity and chastity, were all her jewels, and tenderness, care and love for humankind, her beauty’s bright adornings.”

Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in *Bahíyyih Khán*um, p. 83.

Marzieh Gail's Remembrances of Bahíyyih Khánum

“ . . . He granted her a station such as none other woman hath surpassed ”

“If you were ever in her presence you encountered the earliest hours of the Bahá’í Faith. You saw a being who, when she was two years old, had seen great Táhirih, a guest then in the princely home of Bahá’u’lláh. You saw one whose family had, because they followed the Báb, been stripped of their fortune and station in a single day; one who had cowered, with her mother the Navváb, inside their pillaged house in Tihrán, dreading from moment to moment a message that would tell them: ‘Bahá’u’lláh, Who was chained in the Black Pit, is no longer on this earth.’

“At seven, she was banished with the other exiles from her homeland. Later on – at least after her Father returned from the wastes of Kurdistán, and there were those years when our young Faith prospered in Baghdád – she must have known some happiness, because, reminiscing, she seemed to take pleasure in recalling that city. But afterward came the further banishment to Constantinople and Adrianople, and a winter in the last-named town from which she never physically recovered, a terrible winter of poor housing and want, a time when the Faith seemed to have reached its lowest ebb.

“So, almost from the beginning of consciousness, she had her share in the sorrows and burdens of Her Father, Bahá’u’lláh. When she was only a teenager, He entrusted important missions to her, missions delicate and extremely grave. As the years went by, He wrote that the remembrance of her was like the fragrance of musk, and He granted her a station ‘such as none other woman hath surpassed’, which means that she ranked with long-dead heroines like Sarah, Abraham’s wife, like Asíyih, daughter to Pharaoh, like Mary the Virgin, and Fátimih, our Lady of Light, and the freshly-martyred Táhirih, from the Dispensation of the Báb.

“‘How sweet’, Bahá’u’lláh addressed her, ‘thy presence . . . how sweet . . . to make mention of thee. . .’”

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“Then came the Great War. And all through those war years the famished, the destitute, the rejected, those held to be beneath consideration by their Ottoman Government, laid siege to the residence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and Khánum tended them. She fed them, gave them money and clothes, and doctored them with medicines invented through some process of her own.

Marzieh Gail's Remembrances of Bahíyyih Khánum, continued

“As she reached old age . . . she grew ever more loving and serving.”

“As she reached old age, instead of retiring into harshness, or apathy, or self-indulgence, she grew ever more loving and serving. But then came the last, unbearable blow: in 1921, the loss of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

“She was getting on toward eighty then, but she began what was in effect a new career, as the one powerful champion of her grandnephew, Shoghi Effendi, now Guardian of the Faith. This was a time when, unforeseen by him and the Bahá’í world, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will had set on his young shoulders nothing less than the annihilating burden of responsibility for the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh. During those early years of his illness and distress, she was, at least three times, in effect Regent of the Faith.

“After she was gone he wrote that she had been his ‘sole earthly sustainer’, the ‘joy and solace’ of his life. In a memorable tribute, he called her days to mind; wrote of the tenderness of her heart, her resignation and serenity which made him think of the Báb, her attraction to flowers and children, her ‘unaffected simplicity’, her ‘undiscriminating’ love and ‘forgiving nature. . .’ Again he recalled her ‘unfailing solicitude . . . in the most critical and agitated hours of my life . . .’ He would remember, he told her, the sweet magic of her voice, the touch of her hand, through all his darkest hours.”

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“How can one hope to describe Khánum? Only now, reading her writings, do I perceive a glimmer of what the world lost when, almost fifty years ago, she unobtrusively took her leave.

“Bahá’ís world-wide mourned her a full nine months; but probably we thought only, as most people would, that a fragile lady, advanced in years and at the last confined to her bed, had after a long life of continual service passed to glory. Yet the Guardian wrote that for humanity, the loss of her was ‘irreparable’.

“Trying to visualize her now by her opposite, I imagine the stereotype of a lady ‘chairperson’ of the Occident, complete with glasses, earrings, neck chains and lapel brooch, presiding over a club of similar ladies who have come to the meeting for the purpose of planning their next meeting – and gavelling them down.

Marzieh Gail's Remembrances of Bahíyyih Khánum, continued

“ . . . all I can find to say is that she was a quietness, a focal point of peace; that she pervaded the room like a sweet scent, or lit her corner like a sun-ray shining through a crystal vase. . . .”

“No, all I can find to say is that she was a quietness, a focal point of peace; that she pervaded the room like a sweet scent, or lit her corner like a sun-ray shining through a crystal vase; that despite her rank and great dignity, she was self-effacing, gentle-voiced; and that she spoke little, but you remembered.”

* * * * *

“On this first pilgrimage of mine, the third anniversary of the Master's passing came due. The wound was raw, and there was a great outburst of Eastern grief: tears, loud cries and sobs; and seeing the adults in disarray, the children began whimpering and running about, not knowing where to turn. The house was full of people, and the sounds of weeping were all about, when I happened to walk by the open doorway of a lighted room, and there, through the door, was the Greatest Holy Leaf. She was seated in the midst of the children, they standing close to her as if all were in her embrace; she still and quiet, sitting there detached from the storm, her face composed, a comfort and safe haven.”

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“What particularly remains in memory about Khánum is her quiet, brief sentences voiced as if in confidence and shared with you as a friend. I was a person inclined to brood and ponder . . .

“Once I said to Khánum, ‘There is no happiness in the world.’ And she softly replied: ‘Except in service to the Cause of God.’”

* * * * *

“Among the visitors was a widow from the Middle East, who had arrived on what seemed to be a permanent pilgrimage. . . . But she would take little part in the conversations, being mostly wrapped in unadulterated grief. One day, there she came, and sat, heaving her usual sighs, her face clouded with sorrow. Gently, the Greatest Holy Leaf leaned over and addressed her. ‘There are no frontiers to the world of gloom,’ she said. ‘You will never get to the end of it, no matter how far and how fast you gallop your steed.’”

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Marzieh Gail's Remembrances of Bahíyyih Khánum, continued

“The Guardian placed Khánum’s rank above his own, naming her, for his time, our Faith’s ‘most exalted member’, and the Holy Household’s ‘most precious great Adorning’.”

“At a time when no one else knew what was planned for the Faith after the Master, no one else including Shoghi Effendi himself, the Most Exalted Leaf was entrusted with the secret.”

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“The Guardian placed Khánum’s rank above his own, naming her, for his time, our Faith’s ‘most exalted member’, and the Holy Household’s ‘most precious great Adorning’. These are amazing statements to be made of a woman, in history’s light, and typical of the new age in which we live; amazing, too, when we remember the rank conferred on Shoghi Effendi himself by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will.”

From Khánum: *The Greatest Holy Leaf*, pp. 2-3, 7-8, 14-15, 20, 24, 25, 27, 37-38.

Equality and Partnership: God's Design for Women and Men

Focus questions

- ★ How are women and men intended to relate to each other?
- ★ What are the effects of not achieving this relationship?

“Women and men have been and will always be equal in the sight of God. The Dawning-Place of the Light of God sheddeth its radiance upon all with the same effulgence. Verily God created women for men, and men for women.”

Bahá'u'lláh, in Women, p. 26, #54.

“Both are human; both are endowed with potentialities of intelligence and embody the virtues of humanity. In all human powers and functions they are partners and coequals.”

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 136.

“Divine Justice demands that the rights of both sexes should be equally respected since neither is superior to the other in the eyes of Heaven.”

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 162.

“The Lord, peerless is He, hath made woman and man to abide with each other in the closest companionship, and to be even as a single soul. They are two helpmates, two intimate friends, who should be concerned about the welfare of each other.”

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 122.

“The happiness of mankind will be realized when women and men coordinate and advance equally, for each is the complement and helpmeet of the other.”

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 182.

“The world of humanity has two wings – one is women and the other men. Not until both wings are equally developed can the bird fly. Should one wing remain weak, flight is impossible.”

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 302.

“As long as women are prevented from attaining their highest possibilities, so long will men be unable to achieve the greatness which might be theirs.”

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 133.

Equality and Partnership: God's Design for Women and Men, continued

“... the achievement of full equality between the sexes, is one of the most important, though less acknowledged prerequisites of peace.”

“Until the reality of equality between man and woman is fully established and attained, the highest social development of mankind is not possible.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 76.

“The emancipation of women, the achievement of full equality between the sexes, is one of the most important, though less acknowledged prerequisites of peace. The denial of such equality perpetrates an injustice against one-half of the world’s population and promotes in men harmful attitudes and habits that are carried from the family to the workplace, to political life, and ultimately to international relations. There are no grounds, moral, practical, or biological, upon which such denial can be justified. Only as women are welcomed into full partnership in all fields of human endeavor will the moral and psychological climate be created in which international peace can emerge.”

The Universal House of Justice, The Promise of World Peace, section II.

“And let it be known once more that until woman and man recognize and realize equality, social and political progress here or anywhere will not be possible. For the world of humanity consists of two parts or members; one is woman; the other is man. Until these two members are equal in strength, the oneness of humanity cannot be established, and the happiness and felicity of mankind will not be a reality.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 77.

Establishing Partnership: A Shared Responsibility

Place the following quotations into one of these three categories by placing a mark next to it in the margin:

- ★ Actions and attitudes required of men (mark as “M”)
- ★ Actions and attitudes required women (mark as “W”)
- ★ Actions and attitudes required of both men and women (mark as “B”)

“The greater the patience, the loving understanding and the forbearance the believers show towards each other and their shortcomings, the greater will be the progress of the whole Bahá’í community at large.”

Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, February 27, 1943, in Living the Life, p. 9.

“In brief, the assumption of superiority by man will continue to be depressing to the ambition of woman, as if her attainment to equality was creationally impossible; woman’s aspiration toward advancement will be checked by it, and she will gradually become hopeless. On the contrary, we must declare that her capacity is equal, even greater than man’s. This will inspire her with hope and ambition, and her susceptibilities for advancement will continually increase. She must not be told and taught that she is weaker and inferior in capacity and qualification. If a pupil is told that his intelligence is less than his fellow pupils, it is a very great drawback and handicap to his progress. He must be encouraged to advance by the statement, ‘You are most capable, and if you endeavor, you will attain the highest degree.’”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 76-7.

“Woman must endeavour then to attain greater perfection, to be man’s equal in every respect, to make progress in all in which she has been backward, so that man will be compelled to acknowledge her equality of capacity and attainment.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 162.

“But while this principle of equality is true, it is likewise true that woman must prove her capacity and aptitude, must show forth the evidences of equality. She must become proficient in the arts and sciences and prove by her accomplishments that her abilities and powers have merely been latent. . . . Undoubtedly God will confirm her in her efforts and endeavors. . . .”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 283.

“When men own the equality of women there will be no need for them to struggle for their rights!”

Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 163.

Establishing Partnership: A Shared Responsibility, continued

“... Bahá'í community life provides you with an indispensable laboratory, where you can translate into living and constructive action the principles which you imbibe from the Teachings.”

“The Bahá'í community life provides you with an indispensable laboratory, where you can translate into living and constructive action the principles which you imbibe from the Teachings. By becoming a real part of that living organism you can catch the real spirit which runs throughout the Bahá'í Teachings. To study the principles, and to try to live according to them, are, therefore, the two essential mediums through which you can ensure the development and progress of your inner spiritual life and of your outer existence as well.”

Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in *The Importance of Deepening*, p. 219.

“The friends of God must be adorned with the ornament of justice, equity, kindness and love. As they do not allow themselves to be the object of cruelty and transgression, in like manner they should not allow such tyranny to visit the handmaidens of God. He, verily, speaketh the truth and commandeth that which benefitteth His servants and handmaidens.”

Bahá'u'lláh, in *Women*, p. 27, #54.

“Bahá'í men have the opportunity to demonstrate to the world around them a new approach to the relationship between the sexes, where aggression and the use of force are eliminated and replaced by cooperation and consultation.”

Letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual, dated January 24, 1993.

“Equality of the sexes will be established in proportion to the increased opportunities afforded woman in this age. . . .”

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 300.

“O loved handmaidens of God! Consider not your present merits and capacities, rather fix your gaze on the favours and confirmations of the Blessed Beauty, because His everlasting grace will make of the insignificant plant a blessed tree, will turn the mirage into cool water and wine; will cause the forsaken atom to become the very essence of being, the puny one erudite* in the school of knowledge.”

'Abdu'l-Bahá, in *Women*, p. 50, #99.

* **Erudite**: learned, scholarly

Establishing Partnership: A Shared Responsibility, continued

“To maintain this unity, Bahá’í men and women must work together co-operatively, in striking contrast to the adversarial and denunciatory attitudes which distinguish so much of the movement for equality of the sexes in the larger society. . . .”

“The principle of the equality between women and men, like the other teachings of the Faith, can be effectively and universally established among the friends when it is pursued in conjunction with all the other aspects of Bahá’í life.”

The Universal House of Justice, July 25, 1984, in *Messages from the Universal House of Justice*, p. 634.

“Those Bahá’ís who devote themselves to promotion of the equality of the sexes, through speeches and articles, should be aware that such a process will be facilitated if it is carried out without disruption to the unity of the believers, in order that spiritual blessings are attracted to the community and its endeavours reinforced. To maintain this unity, Bahá’í men and women must work together co-operatively, in striking contrast to the adversarial and denunciatory attitudes which distinguish so much of the movement for equality of the sexes in the larger society. . . . Bahá’ís should realize that the Bahá’í approach to truth-seeking is consultative and not adversarial, and that contention between men and women is counter-productive in the endeavour to promote equality.”

Letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, dated June 5, 1994.

Living out the Vision of Partnership

Visioning activity scenario

The year is 2080. The lesser peace has been firmly established for several decades. Women have been welcomed into full partnership with men in all areas of life.

Alexis de Tocqueville has spent nearly a year traveling throughout the United States researching a book which will stand as an updated companion piece to the famous essay on America written by her illustrious ancestor in the mid-1800's. The title of her book is *Two Wings of a Bird: The New American Reality*.

Your task

As a group compile a list of examples – behaviors, practices, situations, dynamics, and statistics – which led Alexis to believe that equality of the sexes was firmly established in the hearts and life of your local community. Include examples from all areas of life: work life, political structures, social customs, legal statutes, demographics, marriage and family life, forms of recreation and entertainment, etc. Let your minds and imaginations roam freely.

Be prepared to have a representative of your group report back.

Assessing the Challenge

Implementation of the principle of the equality of women and men necessarily challenges traditional attitudes and practices. Consider the following focus questions and reflect on areas of challenge in your personal life. Use the space below to write your thoughts on where your own challenges lie.

This assessment is for your personal use only and will not be shared with others.

To what extent

- ★ do I listen to or value the thoughts of one sex more than the other?
- ★ have I purged my speech of slighting jokes, innuendoes, and attitudes that reflect inequality?
- ★ does my sense of humor reflect the respect and admiration I feel for the opposite sex?
- ★ do I contribute to a pattern of allowing women to be the sole or primary providers of food and child care at Bahá'í functions?
- ★ do I contribute to a pattern of giving men the more prominent positions at Bahá'í functions?
- ★ do I value equally the education of my sons and daughters?
- ★ do I give tangible, visible support to the position of motherhood?
- ★ do I give tangible, visible support to the position of fatherhood?
- ★ do I encourage the professional and scholarly progress of women?
- ★ do I encourage the development of particular talents by both women and men?
- ★ do I consider the capacities of both women and men when voting for Assembly membership and for Assembly officers?
- ★ do I publicly challenge comments and behaviors that undermine equality and partnership?

Where my challenges lie

Personal Action Plan

Please write your insights and intentions in response to the statement:

“The steps I will personally take to bring my family and community closer to full equality include . . .”

Personal steps

Additional Quotations from the Facilitator's Guide

From "Surfacing Assumptions"

"The gains for women rest uneasily on unchanged, often unexamined, inherited assumptions."

Two Wings of a Bird: The Equality of Women and Men.

From "Closing"

". . . the Bahá'ís . . . should initiate and implement programs which will stimulate and promote the full and equal participation of women in all aspects of Bahá'í community life, so that through their accomplishments the friends will demonstrate the distinction of the Cause of God in this field of human endeavor."

The Universal House of Justice, May 25, 1975, in Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1963-1986, p. 309.

"As you know, the Bahá'ís are distinguished not by their perfection or their immunity from the negative influences of the wider society in which they live, but by their acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh's vision and willingness to work toward it."

Letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, March 5, 1979, in Toward Oneness, p. 65, #147.

"The world of humanity is possessed of two wings: the male and the female. So long as these two wings are not equivalent in strength, the bird will not fly. Until womankind reaches the same degree as man, until she enjoys the same arena of activity, extraordinary attainment for humanity will not be realized; humanity cannot wing its way to heights of real attainment. When the two wings . . . become equivalent in strength, enjoying the same prerogatives, the flight of man will be exceedingly lofty and extraordinary."

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 375.