

Education

Sustainable Development Goal 4

Issues for Discourse with Youth

Bahá'í Discourse - Education

Sustainable Development Goal 4

4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all

4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



Education today

Passivity is bred by the forces of society today. A desire to be entertained is nurtured from childhood, with increasing efficiency, cultivating generations willing to be led by whoever proves skilful at appealing to superficial emotions. Even in many educational systems students are treated as though they were receptacles designed to receive information.

(Universal House of Justice, Ridvan 2010, §10)

Education

Education is a vast field, and educational theories abound. Surely many have considerable merit, but it should be remembered that none is free of assumptions about the nature of the human being and society. An educational process should, for example, create in a child awareness of his or her potentialities, but the glorification of self has to be scrupulously avoided. So often in the name of building confidence the ego is bolstered. Similarly, play has its place in the education of the young.

(Universal House of Justice, message of 12 December 2011 to all National Spiritual Assemblies)

Education

Children and junior youth... have proven time and again their capacity to engage in discussions on abstract subjects, undertaken at a level appropriate to their age, and derive great joy from the serious pursuit of understanding. An educational process that dilutes content in a mesmerizing sea of entertainment does them no service.

(Universal House of Justice, message of 12 December 2011 to all National Spiritual Assemblies)

A new kind of Education

As a starting point, the program of education must be based on a clear vision of the kind of society that we wish to live in; and the kind of individuals that will bring this about. It needs to help learners reflect on the purpose of life and help them to step out of their cultural realities to develop alternative visions and approaches to the problems at hand and to understand the manifold consequences of their behaviors and to adjust these accordingly.

Transforming education

The curriculum cannot simply aim to impart relevant knowledge and skills; rather it should aim to develop the vast potential inherent in the human being. Individuals must be assisted to channel this potential towards the betterment of their communities and the advancement of society as a whole.

(Bahá'í International Community, [Rethinking Prosperity: Forging Alternatives to a Culture of Consumerism](#), 2010)

Education

Man is the supreme Talisman. Lack of a proper education hath, however, deprived him of that which he doth inherently possess. Through a word proceeding out of the mouth of God he was called into being; by one word more he was guided to recognize the Source of his education; by yet another word his station and destiny were safeguarded. The Great Being saith: Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, pp. 161–162)

Education

We prescribe unto all men that which will lead to the exaltation of the Word of God amongst His servants, and likewise, to the advancement of the world of being and the uplift of souls. To this end, the greatest means is education of the child. To this must each and all hold fast.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Research Department of the Universal House of Justice, Bahá'í Education: A Compilation (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1978), p. 4))

Universal Education

Bahá'u'lláh has announced that inasmuch as ignorance and lack of education are barriers of separation among mankind, all must receive training and instruction.

Through this provision the lack of mutual understanding will be remedied and the unity of mankind furthered and advanced.

Universal education is a universal law.

(‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 417, *Compilation on Social Action* §194)

Vanuatu



Education

The primary, the most urgent requirement is the promotion of education. It is inconceivable that any nation should achieve prosperity and success unless this paramount, this fundamental concern is carried forward.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Secret of Divine Civilization* (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1975), p. 109)

Education

The principal reason for the decline and fall of peoples is ignorance. Today the mass of the people are uninformed even as to ordinary affairs, how much less do they grasp the core of the important problems and complex needs of the time.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Secret of Divine Civilization* (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1975), p. 109)

Universal Education

All the children must be educated so that there will not remain one single individual without an education. In cases of inability on the part of the parents through sickness, death, etc., the state must educate the child.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá’í Scriptures*, Page: 281)

Education in a Profession or Trade

In addition to this widespread education, each child must be taught a profession or trade so that each individual member of the body politic will be enabled to earn his own living and at the same time serve the community. Work done in the spirit of service is worship. From this universal system of education misunderstandings will be expelled from amongst the children of men.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá’í Scriptures*, Page: 281)

Teaching Sciences and Arts

In this new and wondrous Age, the unshakeable foundation is the teaching of sciences and arts. According to explicit Holy Texts, every child must be taught crafts and arts, to the degree that is needful. Wherefore, in every city and village, schools must be established and every child in that city or village is to engage in study to the necessary degree.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (Haifa: Bahá’í World Centre, 1982), pp. 134-135)

Education

Establish schools that are well organized, and promote the fundamentals of instruction in the various branches of knowledge through teachers who are pure and sanctified, distinguished for their high standards of conduct and general excellence, and strong in faith—scholars and educators with a thorough knowledge of sciences and arts....

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Compilation on Social Action* §185)

Banani
International
School

Zambia



Education

Included must be promotion of the arts, the discovery of new wonders, the expansion of trade, and the development of industry. The methods of civilization and the beautification of the country must also be encouraged....

(‘Abdu’I-Bahá, *Compilation on Social Action* §185)

Education

Encourage the children from their earliest years to master every kind of learning, and make them eager to become skilled in every art—the aim being that through the favouring grace of God, the heart of each one may become even as a mirror disclosing the secrets of the universe, penetrating the innermost reality of all things; and that each may earn world-wide fame in all branches of knowledge, science and the arts.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [Compilation on Social Action §188](#))

Education in good character

These schools for academic studies must at the same time be training centres in behaviour and conduct, and they must favour character and conduct above the sciences and arts. Good behaviour and high moral character must come first, for unless the character be trained, acquiring knowledge will only prove injurious. Knowledge is praiseworthy when it is coupled with ethical conduct and virtuous character; otherwise it is a deadly poison, a frightful danger.

Education of girls

...most important of all is the education of girl children, for these girls will one day be mothers, and the mother is the first teacher of the child. In whatever way she reareth the child, so will the child become, and the results of that first training will remain with the individual throughout his entire life, and it would be most difficult to alter them.... It is therefore clear that the education of girls is of far greater consequence than that of boys.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Compilation on Social Action* §192)

Universal Education

...education is essential, and all standards of training and teaching throughout the world of mankind should be brought into conformity and agreement; a universal curriculum should be established, and the basis of ethics be the same.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), §63, p.182)

Human Education

Human education signifies civilization and progress—that is to say government, administration, charitable works, trades, arts and handicrafts, sciences, great inventions and discoveries and elaborate institutions, which are the activities essential to man as distinguished from the animal.

True Education

Divine education is that of the Kingdom of God: it consists in acquiring divine perfections, and this is true education; for in this state man becomes the focus of divine blessings, the manifestation of the words, “Let Us make man in Our image, and after Our likeness.” This is the goal of the world of humanity.

Acquire Knowledge

The harder they strive to widen the scope of their knowledge, the better and more gratifying will be the result. Let the loved ones of God, whether young or old, whether male or female, each according to his capabilities, bestir themselves and spare no efforts to acquire the various current branches of knowledge, both spiritual and secular, and of the arts. Whensoever they gather in their meetings let their conversation be confined to learned subjects and to information on the knowledge of the day.

Lifelong Education

Education must be lifelong. It should help people to develop the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills necessary to earn a livelihood and to contribute confidently and constructively to shaping communities that reflect principles of justice, equity and unity. It should also help the individual develop a sense of place and community, grounded in the local, but embracing the whole world.

(Bahá'í International Community. Valuing Spirituality in Development: Initial Considerations Regarding the Creation of Spiritually Based Indicators for Development. A concept paper written for the World Faiths and Development Dialogue, Lambeth Palace, London, 18-19 February 1998)

Lifelong Education

Successful education will cultivate virtue as the foundation for personal and collective well-being, and will nurture in individuals a deep sense of service and an active commitment to the welfare of their families, their communities, their countries, indeed, all mankind.

Educate first the individuals

We must therefore rise to serve the members of the human race and educate first the individuals, so that the nations, which are composed of individuals, and the governments, which belong to these nations, may both be converted and guided, and that through this agency the unity of mankind may be established and its prosperity and success realised.

(Shoghi Effendi, from a previously untranslated Tablet, January 1923, *Compilation on Social and Economic Development*)

Education

Every child, without exception, must from his earliest years make a thorough study of the art of reading and writing, and according to his own tastes and inclinations and the degree of his capacity and powers, devote extreme diligence to the acquisition of learning beneficial arts and skills, various languages, speech, and contemporary technology.

(Shoghi Effendi, letter dated 8 June 1925, *Compilation on Social Action* §195)

Diversity in Education

...as the basis for distinction is in the person's capacity and ability, and differences are related to the degree of his intelligence and mental powers, therefore, all the people will not be equal in their knowledge, learning and understanding. ...the world of creation calls for distinctions in people's stations, and degrees in the differences existing among them, so that the affairs of the world may become organized and ordered. Diversity in all created things, whether in kind, in physical appearance, or in station, is the means for their protection, their permanence, unity and harmony. Each part complements the other.

(Shoghi Effendi, letter dated 22 May 1928, [Compilation on Social Action §196](#))

Education for Civilization

... Bahá'u'lláh considered education as one of the most fundamental factors of a true civilization. This education, however, in order to be adequate and fruitful, should be comprehensive in nature and should take into consideration not only the physical and the intellectual side of man but also his spiritual and ethical aspects.

(letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi dated 9 July 1931 [Compilation on Social Action §197](#))

Universal Education

The development of a global society calls for levels of capacity far beyond anything the human race has so far known. This will require an enormous expansion in access to knowledge for both individuals and social organizations.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995, §35)

Universal Education

Universal education will be an essential contributor to this process of capacity building, but the effort will require the reorganization of human affairs so that both individuals and groups in every part of society can acquire knowledge and apply it to human affairs.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995, §35)

Devotion to Truth

People need... to learn how to separate fact from conjecture—indeed to distinguish between subjective views and objective reality; the extent to which individuals and institutions so equipped can contribute to human progress, however, will be determined by their devotion to truth and their detachment from the promptings of their own interests and passions.

(Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995)

Service to Humankind

The training that can make it possible for the earth's inhabitants to participate in the production of wealth will advance the aims of development only to the extent that this is illumined by the spiritual insight that service to humankind is the purpose of both individual life and social organization.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995)