

Social Action for Health

Themes for Social and Economic Development

Issues for Social Action with Youth

Bahá'í Social – Social Action 15 Health

From a Compilation by the Research Department of Universal House of Justice - August 2020

Health of the Body

Let them also study whatever will nurture the health of the body and its physical soundness, and how to guard their children from disease.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, par. 94.3)

Preservation of Health

Make ye then a mighty effort, that the purity and sanctity which, above all else, are cherished by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, shall distinguish the people of Bahá; that in every kind of excellence the people of God shall surpass all other human beings; that both outwardly and inwardly they shall prove superior to the rest; that for purity, immaculacy, refinement, and the preservation of health, they shall be leaders in the vanguard of those who know. And that by their freedom from enslavement, their knowledge, their self-control, they shall be first among the pure, the free and the wise.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, par. 129.14)

Establish a Hospital

O handmaiden of the Most High! Thy letter was received. Thou hast written that thou seekest to establish a new hospital and art arranging and planning it together with five other Bahá'í doctors. Should such a matter be accomplished, it would be most beneficial.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, from a Tablet—translated from the Persian, Social Action §229)

Health for Serving the Kingdom

If the health and well-being of the body be expended in the path of the Kingdom, this is very acceptable and praiseworthy; and if it be expended to the benefit of the human world in general—even though it be to their material (or bodily) benefit—and be a means of doing good, that is also acceptable.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cited in *Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era*, p. 127)

Health for Serving the Kingdom

But if the health and welfare of man be spent in sensual desires, in a life on the animal plane, and in devilish pursuits—then disease were better than such health; nay, death itself were preferable to such a life.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cited in *Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era*, p. 127)

Health for Serving the Kingdom

If thou art desirous of health, wish thou health for serving the Kingdom. I hope that thou mayest attain perfect insight, inflexible resolution, complete health, and spiritual and physical strength in order that thou mayest drink from the fountain of eternal life and be assisted by the spirit of divine confirmation.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cited in Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era, p. 127)

Spiritual and Physical Healing

Healing through purely spiritual forces is undoubtedly as inadequate as that which materialist physicians and thinkers vainly seek to obtain by resorting entirely to mechanical devices and methods. The best result can be obtained by combining the two processes: spiritual and physical.

(12 March 1934 on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)

Extermination of Disease

The enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development, to the increase of the productivity of mankind, to the extermination of disease, to the extension of scientific research, to the raising of the standard of physical health, to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain, to the exploitation of the unused and unsuspected resources of the planet, to the prolongation of human life, and to the furtherance of any other agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral, and spiritual life of the entire human race.

(Shoghi Effendi, 11 March 1936, in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 204)

Health Education

You may be pleased to learn that information on AIDS is incorporated in many Bahá'í health education projects in Africa and throughout the world, emphasizing the importance of chastity, marital fidelity, the sacredness of marriage and the crucial importance of the family as the fundamental unit of society. Education about AIDS and human sexuality is likely to be most effective if it is conducted within the context of training focussed on the broader, spiritual and moral aspects of life, which would lead to the strengthening of families and communities.

(15 November 2000 on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer)

Congo in the pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Baha'is of the Democratic Republic of the Congo drew on community ties to keep tens of thousands of people updated on preventive health measures and hopeful news. The Congolese Baha'is had focused for years on building communities founded on spiritual principles of unity and interdependence. In this new health situation, the importance of the bonds of trust and friendship developed in small neighborhoods and villages became all the more essential.

Congo

On the basis of its experience with social and economic development efforts in agriculture, education, and health, the Baha'i community of the country published a series of articles on its national website to provide advice, such as what crops to plant to ensure food security. Through the networks of thousands of Congolese participating in Baha'i community-building efforts, this information was rapidly disseminated in cities and rural areas alike.



Congo

Youth involved in Baha'i educational programmes that develop capacity for service found creative ways to promote greater degrees of unity among their fellow citizens and dispelled misconceptions about the outbreak. Young people wrote a song in the Tshiluba language answering questions posed by younger youth about the disease. The lyrics taught the whole community about the crisis and inspired solidarity while changing daily patterns to save lives. A major broadcaster played the song on radio throughout the region.

Congo

Timely information was vital in assisting communities to act early and draw inspiration from other parts of the country. In the province of South Kivu, Baha'is in the village of Canjavu rallied the entire population to action while maintaining safety measures put in place by the government. A resident with a business in Canjavu distributed some of his stores of disinfectants to families in the community and provided instructions on how to sanitize surfaces in the home.



Congo

Congo

A large part of the population had access to information, but this is not the same as internalizing and accepting it. The Baha'i community, as a trusted voice, was reinforcing messages that could help people take precautions, remain hopeful, and help each other to face this challenge in a spirit of love and collaboration.

Bahá'í World News Service 2020

<https://news.bahai.org/story/1416/networks-congo-thousands-informed-inspired>

India during COVID-19

India's Baha'i community responded urgently to provide necessities for their fellow citizens during the global health crisis. Drawing on its experience with undertakings that contribute to spiritual and social progress, the Indian Baha'i community identified specific local needs—be they social, material, or spiritual—to rapidly mobilize resources. The tragic situation brought out the finest qualities in people. Local spiritual assemblies took an essential role in galvanizing the community into action.



India

India

Early in the crisis, Baha'i communities together with local organizations and institutions raised awareness about the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). In Nashik, the Baha'is assisted local police to run a public information campaign about preventive health measures, disseminating facts and combatting misinformation. They then collaborated with the authorities to create support structures for the most vulnerable people in their community, for example safely delivering medicine to those who were confined to their homes.

India

To respond to the great need for personal protective equipment, Local Spiritual Assemblies also collaborated with tailors to make and distribute face masks. Homes for the elderly were visited by cadres of people to provide such masks and share accurate information about the coronavirus.



India



India

India

All of this required the full participation of individuals, entire communities, and Baha'i institutions collaborating with authorities and coordinating the efforts of thousands of people. These key players worked together and supported one another to do what was required for the collective good.

Bahá'í World News Service 2020

<https://news.bahai.org/story/1413/local-assemblies-individuals-communities-india-respond-unison>

Brazil

The state of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil experienced its worst floods in 80 years, causing unprecedented destruction and significantly impacting the economy and public safety. Relief efforts were facilitated by ad-hoc networks comprising families, Bahá'í Local Spiritual Assemblies, and other Bahá'í agencies at the local and regional levels. These networks included a sub-network of doctors who, in collaboration with national private sector organizations, provided some 5,000 online medical consultations.

Brazil

One initiative in Rio Grande do Sul was focused on health promotion, particularly the prevention and treatment of secondary diseases caused by water contamination. A health team was assembled to train individuals to serve as key resources for disseminating crucial information on disease prevention and promoting overall well-being.

Bahá'í World News Service 2024

<https://news.bahai.org/story/1741/brazil-capacities-built-in-times-of-calm-become-vital-during-flood-crisis>

Barli Institute, India

The Barli Development Institute for Rural Women, in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India, implements its vision of a world in which every rural and tribal women attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

<https://barli.org/>

Barli Institute, India

Its mission is to train and empower young rural and tribal women through building their skills, knowledge and capacities, to make them skilled human resources and social change agents so that they would initiate the process of sustainable development by improving the lives of their families, communities and themselves. One dimension of its work is health education.



Barli Institute, India

बरली की आरोग्य संजीवनी
स्वास्थ्य प्रशिक्षण पुस्तिका



ग्रामीण एवं आदिवासी महिलाओं के लिये प्रशिक्षण पुस्तिका



बरली ग्रामीण महिला विकास संस्थान

Barli Institute Health Manuals

LEARNING TO TEACH HEALTH



A Training Manual for Rural and Tribal Women



Barli Development Institute
for Rural Women