**Summer School BE180**

**Theme 4, session 2: Contributing to Social Transformation**

**The foundations of social action**

**“The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind. He perceiveth the disease, and prescribeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy. Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements.”**

Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, CVI

**“From the beginning of His stupendous Mission, Bahá’u’lláh urged upon the attention of nations the necessity of ordering human affairs in such a way as to bring into being a world unified in all the essential aspects of its life. In unnumbered verses and Tablets He repeatedly and variously declared the 'progress of the world' and the 'development of nations' as being among the ordinances of God for this day. The oneness of mankind, which is at once the operating principle and ultimate goal of His Revelation, implies the achievement of a dynamic coherence between the spiritual and practical requirements of life on earth.”**

From a letter of the Universal House of Justice
to the Bahá’ís of the World, October 20, 1983

**“A Widening Embrace”**

The video helps to illustrate the following statement of the Universal House of Justice:

**“ ... efforts to engage in social action are lent vital impetus by the training institute. This is not simply through the rise in human resources it fosters. The spiritual insights, qualities, and abilities that are cultivated by the institute process have proven to be as crucial for participation in social action as they are for contributing to the process of growth.”**

Riḍván 2013 message from the Universal House of Justice
to the Bahá’ís of the World

* From the video and our own experiences, what role does the training institute play in the development of social action initiatives or in our participation in discourses? How is it applied to these areas of activity?

**Prosperity Foundation**

This presentation helps us to see what the Universal House of Justice has outlined in the following paragraph:

**“In reflecting on such situations it becomes evident that, within clusters, expansion and consolidation, social action, and contributing to prevalent discourses are dimensions of a single, unified, outward-looking endeavour carried out at the grassroots of society. All these efforts are pursued according to a common framework for action, and this above all else brings coherence to the overall pattern of activity.”**

30 December 2021 from the Universal House of Justice

* How is this concept of coherence illustrated in the example of the Prosperity Foundation? What can we draw from this for our own community?

**Group discussion**

1. To make meaningful contributions to social transformation, we strive to attain an intimate understanding of the social conditions surrounding us, their drivers and their impact. What are the social conditions within your communities and where do we currently see the signs of social transformation?

This question ties back to the first quote read in “The foundations of social action” (above), in which Bahá’u’lláh urges us to “Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and centre your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements.”

1. At the heart of our community-building efforts is an outward orientation that consistently seeks to engage with new friends from the community, from all walks of life. Reflect on your own circumstances. Think of a few examples of how, as the process of community building advances, you may be drawn further and further into the life of society?
2. The Ruhi Institute touches on several concepts:
3. Spiritual reality and prayer
4. Meaningful conversations
5. The spiritual education of children
6. The power of junior youth

Think of a few ways these concepts can be socialised within your community. Form groups around these concepts and discuss opportunities to contribute to social transformation and how these can be approached. Think of a creative way to share the contents of your discussions back to the large group.