

# Suomen Bahá'íden Kansallinen Henkinen Neuvosto

Nationella Andliga Rådet för Finlands Bahá'íer Suoma Bahá'íd Nášuvnnalaš Vuoiŋjalaš Ráđđi

To the Bahá'ís of Finland

26 February 2024

Bahá'í year 180

Dear friends,

With reference to our letter of 18 January 2024, we are pleased to report that promising plans have been put in place to support the youth movement.

The youth movement gives shape to the sacred mission, presented to young people by the Universal House of Justice, to be at the vanguard in bringing the training institute to a higher level of functioning. Through the institute process, youth delve into the spiritual and moral themes of the Bahá'í writings and develop skills of intellect and expression which will serve them throughout their lives. Noble ideas are translated into practical action as youth get involved in grassroots efforts to build vibrant communities where friendship and trust between residents are strengthened. The energy, optimism and desire to improve the world that youth possess are guided into constructive action as they learn to examine the society around them, the forces that shape it and the interactions between people in their families, among friends, at school, at work, in their communities and in the media. Through community building activities, the youth find their own role in supporting the development of those younger than themselves. They identify opportunities to contribute to the spiritual education of children, to serve as junior youth animators and to offer, for example, tutoring for school children. As the spearhead of our shared endeavour, the youth must be able to count on the support and participation of the entire community.

The institute is charged with a sacred duty to release the capacity inherent in the youth and channel their time and energy, skills and talents, towards the provision of spiritual education to a rising generation. Yet, this capacity will only develop in an environment in which young people feel the trust and confidence of the institutions, as well as the love and encouragement of the community and their families.<sup>1</sup>

All youth, regardless of where they live, are warmly welcome to become part of the youth movement. Starting next summer, national youth gatherings and longer training sessions will be organised on a regular basis especially for youth aged 15–25<sup>2</sup>. A joint training session in Helsinki from 3 to 16 June 2024 will be offered already in early summer, followed by another meeting during the autumn holiday weekend 19–20 October 2024, the Christmas holiday 1–6 January 2025, the winter holiday weekend 22–23 February 2025 and again during the summer holiday 2–15 June 2025. This training path which is being established will allow the youth to progress through the Ruhi Institute's main sequence of courses at a rapid pace. In connection with their study, the youth immerse themselves in the writings, strengthen the bonds of camaraderie among their expanding circle of friends, support each other in service, learn about the history of the Faith, engage in profound conversations on topics significant to them, and develop their artistic creativity. The training institute will share further information about the

<sup>1</sup> On behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly dated 9 February 2017.

<sup>2</sup> This emphasis in the age range does not exclude the participation of older youth.

national gatherings and training sessions for the youth, but we ask the youth and their families to reserve these dates in their calendars now.

Youth are supported to take ownership of their mutual future by encouraging them to look at their lives through the concept of *service*. When life is not seen as a coherent whole, it can easily cause anxiety and confusion. The youth movement evokes in the youth the desire to adopt a service-oriented attitude and a holistic perspective through which the various aspects of life take on complementary roles and the spiritual and material needs of life achieve a balance. Youth learn how their common quest to serve humanity shapes lasting friendships. Instead of focusing on gloom, despair or societal divisions, the youth are inspired to work in an atmosphere of true love and hope, open to all. A deep sense of meaning is created in their lives when the youth feel that their personal growth is united with the promotion of social change. The House of Justice has repeatedly pointed out the need for a balance between spiritual growth and action:

The importance of “doing”, of arising to serve and to accompany fellow souls, must be harmonized with the notion of “being”, of increasing one’s understanding of the divine teachings and mirroring forth spiritual qualities in one’s life.<sup>3</sup>

We humbly appeal to all the friends, communities and institutions in Finland to collectively embrace the above vision and support the rising generations in every way possible. We ask that in the coming weeks and months numerous conversations will be held with young people and their families all over Finland about the purpose of the youth movement and the upcoming dates, and that efforts will be made to remove the obstacles that prevent youth from participating.

With loving greetings,

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Finland



Safa Hovinen, Secretary

cc: Counsellor Paul Verheij  
Auxiliary Board Members

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<sup>3</sup> The Universal House of Justice to the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counsellors 29 December 2015, ¶36.