

Positive Peacebuilding

Exploring The Baha'i Perspectives And Approaches

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ABSTRACT

Positive Peacebuilding: Exploring the Baha'i Perspectives and Approaches

This research investigates the potential for a proactive and preventive model for peacebuilding, diverging from traditional post-conflict approaches. The study questions how peace can be embedded as an `infrastructure` that prevents conflict from arising in the first place. To address this question, the research employs a case study methodology focusing on `Baha'i community building` activities, analyzed through Johan Galtung's theory of positive peace. Positive peace emphasizes removing the roots of violence by realizing social justice, social harmony, and a peaceful culture rather than merely addressing symptoms of conflict.

By utilizing the concepts and foundational elements of positive peace, this study finds that Baha'i community building - including core activities, socio-economic development actions, and participation in public discourse - aligns with positive peace principles and actively implements these elements within a holistic and inclusive framework and measures.

The findings suggest that Baha'i practices not only address immediate post-conflict needs but also work towards preventing conflict through community empowerment and systemic social reform. The findings provide a pathway to developing a framework for proactive peace. This extends current scholarly literature on peacebuilding, which has largely focused on reactive solutions to date. In addition, this study articulates a model that can inform the policy-making of international organizations and government actors focused on proactive and infrastructural peace.

The study manifests the possibility of adopting religious principles and using their followers' methods and experiences in peacebuilding strategies, offering a paradigm shift from reactive to preventive approaches. Through this research, the insights derived from the Baha'i model provide a framework for developing more effective and sustainable peacebuilding methods that address underlying causes of conflict.

Key Words (Concepts): Peace – Peacebuilding – Proactive and Infrastructural Peace - Positive Peace - Baha'i Community Building – Core Activities – Social Actions

STUDENT DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis:

- 1) does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university
- 2) and the research within will not be submitted for any other future degree or diploma without the permission of Flinders University; and
- 3) to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed: Omid Nikooeighamsari

Date: October, 2024

SUPERVISOR CERTIFICATION

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- a) Satisfies the standards of an Honours or GDRM thesis as established by the College of Business, Government, and Law.
- b) I recommend that this thesis be submitted for examination.

Signature:

Date: 6 November 2024

Supervisor name: Dr. Jessica Genauer

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Unity of Humankind and Universal Peace.

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Introduction

In search of a more efficient peacebuilding method

The concept of peacebuilding in political science primarily concerns the cessation of war, including reconciliation between different parties to the conflict, and the resolution of issues, such as eliminating factors of continuation of war including disarmament (Ryan, 2013). Factors related to peacebuilding include: providing assistance to war victims, economic reconstruction, ensuring security, and creating institutions to establish and maintain peace and its services (Ryan, 2013 & Miller, 2005).

The approach indicated above, was outlined in Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 'An Agenda for Peace' (1992; and also: Boutros-Ghali, 1995), and presented during his tenure as Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1992 to 1996. This approach has guided attitudes and actions for peacebuilding efforts over the past three decades. As encapsulated in the United Nations (UN) documents, this approach emphasizes three key processes: 'Peacemaking' involves negotiating ceasefires, fostering reconciliation, and reaching agreements to end hostilities. 'Peacekeeping' focuses on establishing security and preventing the resurgence of conflict through measures such as disarmament and the deployment of peacekeeping forces. 'Peacebuilding' entails reconstructing war-affected regions' physical, social, political, and economic infrastructure. Peacebuilding is dedicated to creating peace in the context and time of war. It is usually known as the final stage of a conflict or action amid a battle (Miller, 2005, p. 58; Keating & Knight, 2004).

Importantly, however, peace is seen as an infrastructure built on intellectual and social conditions, which does not provide the basis for any war and does not allow conflict to arise with the logical resolution of disputes (UHJ, 1985).

Whilst perspectives on peacebuilding tend to outline reactive measures in response to war, the question remains: *How can peace be implemented as an 'infrastructure' in human life that prevents any kind of conflict and war and turns differences and conflicts into mutual understanding, agreement, and cooperation? How can we change the paradigm and approach of peace establishment from 'post-war' to 'pre-war'?*

Taken together, these questions raise the broader issue that is investigated in this study:

- ✦ ***How can we create a proactive and preventive peace as infrastructure in human societies?***

It is informative to consider the insights provided by world religions to address this fundamental question and shift the paradigm of making peace in international relations from reactive measures to proactive prevention and the establishment of sustainable peace.

Throughout centuries world religions have dealt with the issue of violence, war and peace and have provided frameworks and mechanisms for achieving a proactive peace (Omer, Appleby & Little, 2015; Sandal & Trauschweizer, 2022; Irvin-Erickson & Phan, 2016; see also du Toit et al., 2023; Jerryson, Juergensmeyer & Kitts, 2013).

Between 1969 and 2012, Johan Galtung developed a framework of positive peace that provides a useful reference point for investigating the components of positive and proactive peace. Johan Galtung's theory of positive peace emphasizes the culture of peace, social harmony, and removing the roots of violence by realizing social justice rather than merely addressing symptoms of conflict.

The Baha'i faith is selected as a case study for this research project, given that it engages explicitly and practically with the issue of peace and the principles and methods of establishing a proactive peace.

This research, therefore investigates the more specific question:

✦ ***How can the Baha'is paradigm and methods inform a positive peacebuilding approach as proactive and infrastructural peace?***

The Baha'i Faith was selected as a case study, given its focus on applied peacebuilding. Johan Galtung's framework for positive peace is applied to the Baha'i principles of peacebuilding to see where these principles align and differ from the Galtung framework.

The study finds that the Bahá'í approach to peacebuilding aligns with Galtung's positive peace factors: peace culture, social harmony, and social justice. This vision is pursued through individuals' and society's multifaceted growth and transcendence in intellectual, moral, and behavioral dimensions. These aims are realized through transformative activities within a holistic and inclusive framework known as Bahá'í community building

Chapter 1, the literature review, provides the necessary informational and cognitive foundations for this study by presenting concepts of peace and peacebuilding and explaining the evolutionary process of approaches and the building blocks of peace. In particular this chapter explicates the distinction between reactive and proactive peace, and the gap of scholarly understanding of the latter.

Chapter 2 is devoted to describing the methodology. This chapter introduces and explains the reasons for choosing the case study method, the reasons for selecting the Baha'i religion and

activities of Baha'is for research, and Johann Galtung's theory of positive peace and its elements as an analysis instrument in this research.

Chapter 3 briefly explains the Baha'i ethical and social teachings, clarifies the background of this faith's approach to peace, and introduces Baha'i community-building activities.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to analyzing Bahá'í community-building activities through the lens of Galtung's positive peace theory. This analysis demonstrates how Bahá'í activities are intertwined with the elements of positive peace—namely, peace culture, social harmony, and social justice—and how they pursue the intellectual, moral, and behavioral transformation of individuals and society through education, development, and discursive change.

This study clarifies a way for proactive-positive peacebuilding inspired by Bahá'í community-building principles, extending existing scholarship and offering insights for policy-making. By analyzing Bahá'í peacebuilding activities and demonstrating their alignment with the concept and elements of positive peace, this research shows the potential for adopting the Bahá'ís approach as a theoretical and practical model. Introducing Bahá'í perspectives on peace and peacebuilding strategies, this study opens an entry for further academic exploration. It highlights the capacity of Bahá'í teachings and practices for proactive peacebuilding, adopting meaningful strategies for policymakers and peace advocates in international relations. Addressing a gap in the study of religious contributions to peacebuilding, this work offers a fresh lens on the Bahá'í Faith's approach to positive peace.

Chapter 1

Peace and Peacebuilding

A review of concepts and approaches

A fundamental understanding of peace's meaning and conceptual and objective aspects is necessary to comprehend the theoretical and practical approaches to peacebuilding. This intensive literature review helps to delineate the main lines upon which peacebuilding, its arenas, dimensions, and approaches are founded. Conceptual examination and current ways of peacebuilding facilitate the cognition and understanding of the meaning and approach of peacebuilding by the Baha'i Faith.

Negative and Positive Peace

Scholars admit and unanimously agree that the definition of peace is complicated, ambiguous and elusive (Richmond, 2023; Page, 2023; Diehl, 2023; Anderson, 2004). The diversity of existing definitions often leads to uncertainty and lack of semantic agreement, hindering the formation of a standard and agreed-upon understanding. Consequently, this can pose challenges in formulating approaches, discourses, and actions.

In words, the term 'peace' signifies the absence of violence, war and hostilities, freedom from any unrest or disorder in Individual and social relationships of humans, and coexistence with agreement and satisfaction and without disagreement, opposition and conflict between people¹ (Cambridge University Press & Assessment, n.d.; Oxford University Press, n.d.).

Peace can be defined in two ways: conflict negation, which involves stopping wars and violence; and actions which aim to establish peace. These approaches are interpreted as `negative and positive peace` and are based on factors such as relations, security, economy, development, culture, etc., which affect tendencies defining peace (see appendix 1). Johan Galtung introduced this dichotomy in the 1970s, and it remains significant in political and peace literature.

In standard dictionary definitions and shared understanding, peace usually lacks overt violence or direct conflict between parties (Richmond, 2023; Jackson, 2022). By addressing

1. People can include individuals and groups within local and national communities or be considered more broadly and globally in the frame of nations and their states.

the roots and types of violence, Galtung (1969) argues that peace is both `nonviolence` (negative peace) and goes beyond the absence of violence, which is `social justice` (positive peace). After stopping war, the remaining factors, like the Inequalities and dissatisfactions in economic, social, political, legal and judicial, in the inner layers without adequate treatment, are the factors of violence, tension and conflict, and social justice is the cure for these diseases and traumas. He believes that positive peace eliminates the root causes of tension and conflict and creates conditions that promote harmonious relationships, respect for human rights, and the fulfilment of basic human needs (Galtung, 1969a; 1969b; 1996; 1971; 2013). In addition, in the evolutionary path of his view, he advocates a broader understanding of peace that includes inner peace, social harmony, empathy and justice to achieve lasting peace and a more peaceful world (Galtung, 2010).

Approaches to Peace

The meaning and perception of peace in philosophical, religious, ideological, and historical contexts present different approaches.

In `Western philosophies`, peace is often combined with stability, order and governance, and the role of institutions and norms in reducing conflict and promoting cooperation is emphasized (Mara, 2019). On the contrary, `Eastern philosophies`, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism and Taoism, emphasize inner harmony, compassion and spiritual enlightenment. By teaching non-violence, mindfulness, and selfless ethics, they establish inner peace in people through the growth and development journey of the mind and soul. It is a soul-enhancing journey that, by creating calm people as building blocks of society, lays the foundation for realizing peace in human societies as an ideal, goal and social desire (Leaman, 2000; Billington, 1997; Littleton, 1996; Dalai Lama, 1999 and Los Altos Study Group, 2004; see also Galtung, 1981).

Moreover, the conceptual aspects, knowing the different `dimensions` of peace and their `elements` in person and social life, can be another step in defining and understanding peace².

2. For example, Eastern philosophical perspectives and world religions strongly emphasize `inner peace` in individual dimensions and consider it the foundation of social peace and have foundational teachings and guidance to realise it. In the personal dimension, `inner peace` is a state of peace, harmony, and satisfaction within oneself despite external conditions (Nelson, 2014; Delle Fave, 2014; Misra, 2014). It involves freedom from worry, anxiety, stress, clarity of mind, and mastery over personal thoughts, feelings, and actions (Kabat-Zinn, 2013; Baer et al., 2006; Brown & Ryan, 2003). Achieving inner peace requires self-awareness, acceptance of oneself and others, letting go of negative emotions and emotional stability. It also requires a conscious approach to life's ups and downs (Germer, 2009; Fatemi, 2021; Siegel, 2010).

Also, these can be considered as the land(s) and materials of different peacebuilding methods to build the temple of peace.

In the communal dimensions, `social peace` refers to creating a harmonious society where diversity is respected, human rights are upheld, and dialogue and tolerance are promoted (Moshe, 2001; Galtung, 1990). `Cultural peace` is a component of social peace that emphasizes the importance of cultural diversity, intercultural exchanges, and countering intolerance. Achieving cultural peace involves empathy, flexibility, peace education, and interconnectedness (Galtung, 1996a and some e.g. see EL Zein & Al Jarwan, 2021; Ferrari & Petito, 2013; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018; Nussbaum, 2011).

`Political peace` denotes the absence of political conflict or violence within societies and between nations. It entails resolving disputes through peaceful methods like negotiation and diplomacy, fostering democratic institutions, protecting human rights, and ensuring inclusive governance (Boutros-Ghali, 1992; Shukla, 2023).

`Economic peace` aims to mitigate the root causes of conflicts by addressing inequalities, poverty, and inequity in resource access and distribution. Sustainable development, equitable resource allocation, and economic empowerment initiatives contribute to this peace (e.g. see Standish et al., 2022; Gangopadhyay & Chatterji, 2009; Kadam, 2020).

`Environmental (ecological) peace` encompasses human interaction with the environment, emphasizing its importance for human life and ecosystems. It advocates for balanced conservation measures, sustainable resource use, and climate change mitigation efforts to maintain environmental harmony and reduce degradation (Simangan et al., 2022; Matthew & Gaulin, 2002; Dalmer, 2023; Matthew et al., 2022).

In short, peace is a multidimensional concept that, in addition to negation and stopping war, embodies tranquillity and respect for human rights and welfare. Defining peace requires entering the `prescriptive definitions` field ³, which involves determining how to change the scene by promoting justice and equality and establishing welfare by eradicating conflict elements and violence. Based on this recognition, `peacebuilding` emerges as an action-based approach to eliminating war with the help of achieving harmony, justice, prosperity, and development in the described fields of peace - personal (inner), social, political, economic and ecological - and using their elements.

3. For `prescriptive definitions`, refer to Appendix 1: Pieper, C. (2008).

International Governance and Peace

Since the establishment of the UN collective security system post-World War II, inter-state wars have relatively decreased, while intra-state conflicts, especially after the Cold War, have increased. These conflicts often arise between social groups and governments or among social groups seeking security, recognition, fair access to political institutions, and economic resources (Gawerc, 2006; Yilmaz, 2007). Some conflicts are rooted in racist, ethnic, religious, or extreme political ideologies seeking dominance.

The evolution of approaches stabilising peace in international governance over recent decades has aimed at addressing and resolving these conflicts. While powerful states historically used military, economic, and political power to control conflicts, the UN has increasingly played a central role through peace operations. Initially, UN actions focused on preventing conflict and escalation through armed peacekeeping forces, such as the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) during the Suez Crisis in 1956. Similar peacekeeping operations were conducted in Cyprus (1964), Lebanon (1978), and in Jammu and Kashmir (1949, 1971) to monitor ceasefires and prevent conflict (Bligh, 2014; Yilmaz, 2005; James, 1989; Makdisi, 2014; Indurthy & Haque, 2010; UN Peacekeeping, 2024).

During the Cold War, due to the influence of the Soviet Union and the United States in some countries, the UN played a neutral stance, and its role was limited to ceasefire maintenance and preventing renewed conflict. After the Cold War, the global approach tended towards managing regional and local conflicts (Paris, 2004). This transformation led to a shift in the role of the UN from non-interference in the affairs of countries towards organising elections, training, and monitoring human rights, as seen in Namibia, Angola, and El Salvador between 1989 and 1991, as well as peace operations in Cambodia, Bosnia, and Somalia (UN Peacekeeping, 2024).

Charles Call (2015) explains the process of these peace implementation developments in the post-Cold War era in four phases. The first phase is 1989-1999, which is the maintenance of multidimensional peace by facilitating or mediating the settlement of civil wars. The second phase of 1999-2005 is characterized by the approach of state building and the importance of shaping and strengthening the executive power of national governments in establishing and stabilizing peace in conflict areas, as can be seen in Kosovo, East Timor, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Call (2015) identifies the third phase as the period between 2005 and 2009, which included the formation of the peace architecture approach by the UN in response to the identified gaps in the concepts, policies, methods and capacities of building peace, which led to the initiate Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA) at the 2005 World Summit, with the establishment of an intergovernmental Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), a Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)

inside the Secretariat, and a new Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) (see also Leite et al., 2018). It was a significant turning point for peace operations globally in practical terms. Finally, the fourth phase, 2009-2014, involved theoretical and practical transformation in benefiting from national processes, emphasis on national-local ownership of peace plans and the participation of local actors, paying attention to gender approaches and especially the role of women, and using civilian capacities such as geographic, historical, and cultural ties.

A conceptual turning point occurred in 1992 when Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1992 to 1996, presented the semantic-executive formulation of peace in his report, *'An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping'*, also known as *'An Agenda for Peace'* (Moshe, 2001; David, 2002; Paris, 2004; Barnett et al. 2007; Lemay-Hebert & Toupin, 2011; Reychler & Langer, 2020; Melin, 2021). Boutros-Ghali (1992) defined and staged the actions of establishing peace in four terms (Boutros-Ghali, 1992; Moshe, 2001; Paris, 2004; Reychler & Langer, 2020):

- *Preventive diplomacy* seeks to resolve disputes before violence occurs and is intended to prevent conflicts from occurring or limit conflict after they occur.

- *Peacemaking* is measures to stop conflicts by negotiating, talking, and creating agreements to establish a ceasefire and end hostilities and conflicts.

- *Peacekeeping* is maintaining a truce, stopping disputes, and preventing tension and renewed conflicts through the presence, supervision, and care of military groups and civilian personnel of UN or intermediary countries.

- *Peacebuilding* is the creation of sustainable peace and its stabilization through economic, social, political, and judicial reconstruction and development measures⁴.

Recognising that these operational manifestations of peace intersect or overlap in their components and actions is essential. As Paris (2004) articulated, peacemaking involves addressing conflicts and employing peaceful methods like mediation and negotiation as diplomacy tools. Still, in cases where required, authorisation for international military intervention may be sought to enforce conflict resolution or diplomatic strategies. In another field, although peacebuilding is a post-conflict process, in its initiatives, preventive diplomacy measures such as negotiation, dialogue, and the presence of peacekeeping forces, integral to peacemaking and peacekeeping endeavours, can play crucial roles in achieving peace-establishing plans. However, peacebuilding remains a key concept of the international war and peace regime, and is discussed in more detail in the next section.

4. For original description see **Appendix 2**.

Peacebuilding: Concept, Blocks and Approaches

Boutros-Ghali (1992, p.11) defines peacebuilding as a *post-conflict* phase and action "to identify and support structures that tend to strengthen and consolidate peace in order to prevent a recurrence of conflict". This concept in the revision of 'An Agenda for Peace', in the document published in 1995 entitled '*Supplement to an Agenda for Peace*', interpreted by the phrase "the creation structures for the institutionalization of peace" (p.12). This approach covers different situations, such as before conflict, in the possibility of tensions and disputes or after the war, and in the stages of recovery of facilities and political-social-economic reconstruction (Boutros-Ghali, 1995). The concept developed in the 'Brahimi Report' as "activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than the absence of war" (Brahimi, 2000, p.3).

Establishing peace in a conflict site occurs in a range of sequential or sometimes combined and simultaneous actions that can be metaphorically called hardware and software actions. Hardware actions are a series of activities to establish a ceasefire, disarm the parties to the conflict, establish and maintain security, return and resettle displaced persons and refugees, and repair the damaged infrastructure of housing, energy, transportation, nutrition, healthcare, jobs and economic activities.

Depending on the simultaneous or subsequent conditions of those hardware measures, actions in the settings of executive and management affairs of society, such as the promotion of national reconciliation, reforms and readjustments of political and governmental, security and judicial institutions, and social-economic development, can be considered software measures that establish social justice and economic and respect for human rights. These proceedings help to reduce the gap and dissatisfaction between social groups and create acceptable and sustainable access to resources and facilities that create economic and social well-being (Jeong, 2002; Cutter, 2005; Barnett et al., 2007; Lidén, 2020).

With slight differences in terminology and categorizations in the fusion of attitudes of two 1992 and 1995 documents of the UN peace agenda and other subsequent UN documents and reports⁵, as well as the works of scholars (David, 2002; Jeong, 2002; Gawerc, 2006; Barnett et

5. Refer to 'UN Documents for Peacebuilding (including the PBC): Secretary-General's Reports', in Security Council Report, access on https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un_documents_type/secretary-generals-reports/?ctype=Peacebuilding%20%28including%20the%20PBC%29&cbtype=peacebuilding-including-the-pbc and 'UN Documents for Peacebuilding (including the PBC)' on <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/peacebuilding-including-the-pbc/>

al., 2007; Melin, 2021) such as a collection of perspectives and approaches listed by Reyckler (2020, pp. 280-281) the constituent blocks of peace can be classified into four categories:

- **Security and Safety:** through the establishment of ceasefire, demilitarization and self-executing and sustainable peace (non-return and recurrence of conflict).
- **Politics and governance (Institutional Transformation):** including the revival of political and executive institutions, political transfer or sharing/division of power and its responsibilities if necessary, revival and reform and implementation of essential civil and administrative duties in the fields of representation, parliament, elections and government, judiciary, security (police, army, security and intelligence forces), and development of local and civil society institutions.
- **Economic development:** reconstruction, development, and optimization of damaged infrastructure such as housing, energy, transportation, health care and treatment, education, industries and businesses, and trade; creating public welfare and fair access to material and financial resources for growth and personal and social development to reduce or eliminate economic and class gaps resulting from economic inefficiencies that cause conflict.
- **Rehabilitation and Social Development:** promoting and stabilizing reconciliation and inculcating a culture of peace; removing prejudices, antagonisms and oppositions; creating convergence, cooperation and empathy to power the role-playing of the people as the main actors in making peace; establishing democracy, justice and equality; and implementing human rights to resolve social and political gaps that cause disputes and conflicts.

In peace-establishing measures - peacemaking to peacebuilding - scholars have identified three main approaches or methods of implementation: *'Top-Down, Bottom-Up and Hybrid (Integrated)'* approaches (Lederach, 1997; Autesserre, 2010; Mac Ginty, 2010 & 2011; Campbell, 2011; Charbonneau & Parent, 2012; Lefranc, 2012; Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2016; van Iterson Scholten, 2020; Richmond, 2002 & 2023; Pereira Watts, 2023)⁶. These ways of building peace depend on the type and arrangements of action and role-playing of actors. Meanwhile, they are affected by the conflict's context, nature, scope, and conditions in forming peacebuilding blocks that play a structural and constructive role.

Top-down approaches include the intervention of external actors such as foreign or national governments, international organizations, institutes and alliances like UN, EU and AU (African Union) and peacekeeping forces are often deployed under the leadership and supervision of international organizations such as the UN and the like. These powerful actors, usually with

6. See also about mentioned terms in *'The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Peace and Conflict Studies'* by O. P. Richmond & G. Visoka (Eds.), Palgrave Macmillan, 2022.

global support, legitimacy and budget and financial facilities often play a main role in brokering peace agreements, providing security, and facilitating political transition. For example, the UN, the USA, and the African Union mediated the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan (CPA) (Natsios, 2012)⁷.

Bottom-up approaches to building peace address the limitations of top-down methods by empowering local communities and actors such as residents, conflict parties, civil society, and NGOs. This approach emphasizes community participation, popular initiatives, and community-led development projects to promote reconciliation and social cohesion. For instance Women's involvement in peacebuilding in South Sudan exemplifies effective bottom-up peace initiatives (Kezie-Nwoha & Were, 2021)⁸.

Hybrid or integrated approaches combine top-down and bottom-up strategies to address various conflict dimensions by integrating efforts from government institutions, civil society organizations, and international actors for sustainable peace. This involves using the planning and regulation of national and international bodies and their management, as well as financial and security facilities, alongside the participation of local actors, including residents in crisis and conflict areas, conflict groups, civil society, and NGOs. For e.g. Nepal's Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) combined formal negotiations between the government and Maoist rebels with grassroots consultations to ensure broad participation in the peace process (Rynhart & Peiris, 2019; Joshi & Quinn, 2015; OCHA, 2006)⁹.

7. Among the actions with a top-down approach, we can mention the following: The Good Friday Agreement, involving the British and Irish governments and supported by the USA, addressed power-sharing and human rights issues in Northern Ireland (Mitchell, 2000); The UN's mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), which helped reform the security sector (UNSC, 2006); The World Bank's Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development program (PCRD) supported reconstruction in Afghanistan, Liberia, Gaza, Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, and Nicaragua (Holtzman, Elwan & Scott, Colin, 1998).

8. Other notable examples include: In Colombia, grassroots organizations and local leaders mediate conflicts at the community level to build peace in violence-affected regions (Hunt, 2019; Naranjo, 2006; DPPA, 2020; Voyvodic, 2023). Or the Centre for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation (CPBR) in Sri Lanka engages grassroots members, including youth, in peacebuilding activities (Sandesjo, 2011).

9. Other examples of the hybrid approach can be found in The Women in Peacebuilding Network in post-war Liberia, which act to mediate conflicts and fosters reconciliation at the community level (Dzathor, 2020; IPTI, 2018; Garnett, 2021; Nilsson & Svensson, 2020; Gizelis, 2011). Sierra Leone's Security Sector Reform (SSR) restructured military and police forces while making connections between police and local communities through initiatives such as dialogue forums for better cooperation and accountability (Gbla, 2007; Ebo, 2006; Hutchful, 2020).

Peacebuilders

Peacebuilding results from different actors playing roles at various levels in the government, civil, and international society to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts, hamper the recurrence of conflicts, and, at the same time, strengthen sustainable peace. Peacebuilders play various roles that differ according to their position, approach, institutional, executive and financial capabilities and facilities, which sometimes overlap.

Governments and State Institutions - ministries and organizations - based on legitimacy, scope of influence and effectiveness, financial and executive and military facilities, by providing political leadership, creating legal frameworks and implementing policies to address the root causes of conflict, dialogue and regulation and contract Agreements and treaties, establishing a cessation of conflicts and maintaining security and order, reforms in the political and security administrative system, and socio-economic development play a pivotal role in creating peace (Richmond, 2011; Paris, 2004; Wallensteen, 2002 ; see also: Murray & Lacey, 2009).

International Organizations and Institutions such as the UN regional institutions, e.g. the EU and the African Union, and specialized agencies such as UNESCO, the World Red Cross, and the World Bank with financial and operational facilities and global support help conflict prevention, peacemaking and keeping and post-war reconstruction. They help establish peace and security through mediation and diplomatic support and sometimes deploy military forces to monitor and keep the peace. Providing institutional capacity building, including the rebuilding of the government and related institutions and their services, humanitarian aid such as food and medical aid, education, reconstruction of infrastructures, the establishment of residential facilities and businesses, and implementation and management and support of economic and social development plans are part of their abilities and actions in establishing and maintaining peace sustainably (Paris, 2004; Doyle & Sambanis, 2006; Evans, 2008; Jarstad & Sisk, 2008).

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and, in their most known form, `Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)`, often bridge the gap between communities and formal peace processes. They act as partners with governmental and intergovernmental organizations. CSOs play various roles in peacebuilding, including advocacy, service delivery, and grassroots mobilization. They promote human rights, facilitate dialogue and reconciliation, and participate in community-based development initiatives. Local and social roots and origins, public relation and communication, access to regional information, and awareness of the formation and factors behind the scenes of events increase their role of predicting and warning against the occurrence of disputes and conflicts. Their generally impartial nature

causes conflicting parties to trust them, which increases their influence and allows them to achieve better and more stable results (Barnes, 2009 & 2006; Anderson & Olson, 2003; SDDWB, 2007; Nilsson, 2012; Kew, D., & Wanis-St. John, 2008; Chigas, 2014).¹⁰

Local Communities and Grassroots Organizations should be mentioned as other actors and even main peacebuilders. They are often at the forefront of peacebuilding efforts. Their indigenous knowledge, social networks, and cultural practices, such as dialogue and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, are used to promote reconciliation and conflict transformation. Through their cooperation and partnership, they also facilitate community building and social and economic development projects as the primary beneficiaries of peacebuilding plans and actions (Van Leeuwen, 2016 ; Paffenholz, 2009; Gawerc, 2006; Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015: see also: Donais, 2021; Ejodus, 2021).

In this list, **peacekeeping forces and security forces** like **Blue Helmets** (UN military personnel) stationed in conflict-affected areas should also be included, which play an essential role in maintaining stability, protecting civilians, and supporting peace-building projects. By disarming the fighters and creating buffers between the conflicting groups, they create security guarantees to prevent the return of war and enable the rescue, relief and reconstruction needed in the region (UN Peacekeeping, 2024; de Coning, Aoi & Karlsrud, 2017; Marten, 2004).

To close the peacebuilder list, we must also mention **religious peacebuilders**. Among the influential players in creating world peace are **religious actors** and **Local faith communities (LFCs)**, in their organized form, **faith-based organizations (FBOs)**¹¹ that operate at the local, national, and international levels. Their efforts to develop and promote reconciliation, social cohesion, and conflict resolution through the influence of religious principles and values among believers and the wider communities bear fruit. Their peace-seeking services strengthen and develop through interconnected and coherent popular networks and all-around and continuous support of believers in providing economic and human resources.

10. It should be noted some NGOs have an international nature and system and play the role of relief and construction in conflict societies and regions and needy areas such as [Doctors Without Borders \(Médecins Sans Frontières\)](#) that provides emergency medical aid to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, natural disasters, and exclusion from healthcare. They are known for their impartiality, acting independently of political, religious or economic interests, and commitment to medical ethics. Another famous and noteworthy example is [Oxfam](#), a global organization working to alleviate poverty and injustice, economic inequality, gender inequality, humanitarian crises, and climate worldwide and providing humanitarian assistance in emergencies.

11. For definition and more info refer to : Maes, S. et al. (2023). Faith-Based Organizations. In: R.A. List, H.K. Anheier & S. Toepler (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society* (pp 1–8). Springer; and Miller, S.D. (2015). Faith Based Organizations and International Responses to Forced Migration. In S. Brunn (eds), *The Changing World Religion Map* (pp. 3115–3133). Springer.

As R. Scott Appleby (2000) and Coward & Smith (2004; also Little & Appleby, 2004) have shown in their notable research, religious actors and their organizations defend and promote peace. FBOs use religious teachings and moral principles to support a nonviolent approach and promote peace, dignity and human rights. Their role in establishing interfaith conversation, cultural dialogue, intellectual evolutions, cooperation between religious and ethnic factions, and creating mutual understanding, trust, acceptance, respect, and tolerance paves the way for conflict prevention (Payne, 2020), mediation to conflict resolution (Bercovitch & Kadayifci-Orellana, 2009), reconciliation and peace (see also Smock, 2001; Philpott, 2007; Banchoff, 2008; Appleby, 2008; The British Academy, 2015; Uysal, 2016). These groups, whose financial and executive resources are provided by the voluntary contributions of believers and people interested in their humanitarian goals, and in some cases receive financial support from the states and international institutions (e.g. see Tomalin, 2022) provide humanitarian aid and social services in war-torn areas including providing primary necessities of life (food, dress, remedy and medicine), creating shelters, hospitals, and schools in the context of peaceful coexistence. Beyond immediate post-conflict relief and support, FBOs provide post-conflict rehabilitation services through psychosocial support, vocational training, and livelihood programs. They help the reintegration of ex-combatants, refugees, and internally displaced persons, strengthening resilience and creating communication, coordination, connection, and social cohesion in war-damaged communities (Ferris, 2005; Barnett & Stein, 2012; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Ager, 2013; Appleby, 2015; ACT Alliance, 2015).

This literature review shows the complex nature of peace and the various approaches to peacebuilding. It emphasizes that peace is more than the absence of violence, as explained by scholars like Johan Galtung, who distinguish between negative peace (the cessation of conflict) and positive peace (the removal of underlying causes such as social injustice and inequality).

Post-World War II developments, mainly through the UN, highlight the shift from peacemaking and peacekeeping to more proactive peacebuilding measures. These actions are done by diverse actors in peacebuilding: governments, international organizations, civil society, local communities, and religious groups. Despite being overlooked, faith-based organizations are essential in promoting peace through moral guidance, reconciliation, and humanitarian aid. These measures aim to create sustainable peace by addressing structural issues such as governance reform, socio-economic development, and the protection of human rights.

However, upon reflecting on this literature review, we find a focus on, and function of, peacebuilding measures as reactive and post-conflict endeavors. In other words, there is less action and focus on peacebuilding as a proactive and preventive activity. Proactive and preventive peace prevents differences and disputes by establishing a culture of peace, harmony, and social acceptance and removing material obstacles to inequality and conflicts of interest. It can be considered a maker of infrastructure for peace. This type of peace reflects the nature and elements of positive peace explained by Johan Galtung and in this research is the theoretical basis for analyzing and finding answers to the following question:

- ✦ *How can we create a proactive and preventive peace as an infrastructure that prevents conflict and war by positive peace?*

The next chapter outlines the study's methodology and analytical framework for investigating this question.

Chapter 2

Methodology

Case Study & Theoretical Analysis

The previous chapter reviewed peacebuilding's definitions, evolution, and approaches, highlighting that current models are typically post-conflict measures. This study employs a single case study research and applies Johan Galtung's analytical framework of positive peace to investigate the case study to answer the research question:

- ✦ ***How can we create a proactive and preventive peace as infrastructure in human societies?***

More specifically Johan Galtung's framework of positive peace is applied to analyse the Baha'i approach to peacebuilding and answer the more-specific question:

- ✦ ***How can the Baha'is paradigm and methods inform a positive peacebuilding approach as proactive and infrastructural peace?***

Rationale for a Case Study

A 'case study' is a research method that serves as the basis for a comprehensive, thorough, and in-depth exploration of a specific tangible or intangible phenomenon, subject, situation, event, activity, or process. In this method, a single entity or case, which can be an individual, a group, an organization, a specific situation, or even a program, decision, idea, or theory, is selected for intensive study (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2018).

Kumar (2011) considers this method suitable for exploring topics with limited information or when a comprehensive understanding of the specific objective or subjective case under examination is desired. The characteristic of focusing on a subject for more precise identification and creating clarity about it, aligned with the research objective and questions, is an advantage of the case study; hence, Yin (2018) deems this method appropriate for examining phenomena where the boundaries and the context of the study are not clearly defined. This enlightening effort, as Woodside (2010) expresses, enables the researcher, through data collection from the case under study, to describe, explain, predict, or control in experimental studies, the research subject according to the research objectives and answer

questions about the what, how, and why of the case. Szilvia (2013) finds this method useful for examining whether a specific theory or model applies to real-world phenomena.

Given that this study is focused on theory-building, a single case-study theory-building method is applied. This method, by capacity for a comprehensive and in-depth examination of the case, enables us to focus on and delve into the topic with greater precision and detail, analyzing and identifying it from the necessary perspectives. At the same time, it can provide profound insights into the functioning of the analytical framework for positive peace and amendments to the theoretical frame. These insights are valuable for the theoretical analysis and identification of the elements and capacities of proactive and preventive peacebuilding.

Case Selection

Attention to and applying the religions` teaching and their practical principles of peace and peacebuilding, utilizing the ability to persuade and guide followers towards implementing peacebuilding factors and initiatives, and leveraging the vast communicative, organizational, leadership, executive, financial, and logistical capacities of religious communities - over 5 billion believers of various faiths - makes the establishment of peace at local to global levels feasible. While many religions provide a model for peace, the Baha`i Faith has been chosen for the following two reasons:

1. Focus on Peace and Peacebuilding

The Baha`i faith includes a significant focus in religious texts and practice on peace and peacebuilding.

However, the role of religious movements in peace and peacebuilding is sometimes overlooked. We can make a notable list of international, national and local groups and organizations as religious actors in peacebuilding provided (Appendix 3). But despite their effective and constructive roles, Payne (2020), Johnstone & Svensson (2013; see also Shannahan & Payne, 2016; Fox & Sandler, 2004) have mentioned that religious actors are less commonly considered and discussed in the academic literature on peacebuilding because of the prevailing secular thinking and approach of academics and scholars or they have predominantly focused on the role of religions` warmongering and terrorism ¹².

12. For e.g. see: *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence*, by M. Jerryson, M. Juergensmeyer, and M. Kitts (eds.), Oxford University Press 2013; *Just Wars, Holy Wars, and Jihads: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Encounters and Exchanges*, by S. H. Hashmi (eds.), Oxford University Press 2012; *Scriptures, Shrines, Scapegoats, and World*

Where the role of religions in peacebuilding is examined or mentioned, traditional religions and followers such as Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are usually mentioned. Meanwhile, in academic studies and sources related to peace and its actors, we face a considerable absentee who is one of the most active players in peacebuilding regarding its ideas, approaches, plans, and practices: the Baha'i Faith. Appendix 4 contains an exemplary list of these sources in various peace-related fields, which do not mention the Baha'i faith.

This study attempts to bridge this gap and serves as a prelude to examining the Baha'i perspective and approach to world peace and how it can be realized.

2. Focus on Proactive and Preventive Peace

The Baha'i case study was selected because the Baha'i faith is mainly focused on proactive and preventive peace. This study attempts to map and understand the key factors that inform this approach to create a proactive peace model.

At the time of their revelations, each divine religion taught and promoted the foundation of peace according to the capacity for understanding, civilizational characteristics, and the needs of humanity at that time (Appendix 5). However, in the context of the formation of the modern world, with the transformation of possibilities for human relations on a global scale and the needs and issues arising from these changes, the Baha'i Faith that emerged in the second half of the 19th century, declared the establishment of world peace as a fundamental purpose of its revelation. The Baha'i Faith considers the realization of this goal not only the mission of Baha'is but also the duty of all humanity in the new age and modern world.

From the point of view of the Baha'i Faith, peace is like a coin with two sides. One side prohibits violence of any kind, even verbal violence. The other involves the objective establishment of peace in individual, social, and global arenas, which fully encompasses various types of peace, such as inner, social, political, economic, environmental, and cultural peace. Peace in the Baha'i Faith is not a preventative matter - merely the negation, prohibition, or avoidance of conflict and war - but rather an affirmative one. Baha'is, under their religious teachings and instructions, are tasked with creating conditions in their individual and social lives that establish peace in personal, societal, and global relations.

To fulfil this duty and mission, Baha'is recognize and pursue the realization of peace in a proactive and preventive manner. Understanding how this is achieved can inspire

→ *Politics: Religious Sources of Conflict and Cooperation in the Modern Era* (Ch. 5 & 7), by Z. Maoz and E. A. Henderson, University of Michigan 2020.

peacebuilding activities in the contemporary world. This study examines how Baha'is, in accomplishing their religious mission, work towards establishing proactive and preventive peace worldwide. Using Galtung's analytical framework of positive peace, this research examines the intellectual and practical paradigm for implementing the proactive peace.

Data

Since this research aims to learn about the Baha'i community building activity and investigate its nature of peacebuilding, this research uses `desk research` to collect, categorize, analyze, and interpret existing information from secondary sources.

To achieve this, the exploration has delved into a rich pool of secondary sources, including academic literature, scholarly journals, books, dissertations, credible online resources, and websites of reputable organizations and institutions on peacebuilding theory and practice in political science. Additionally, reports and documents on peacebuilding initiatives and strategies from relevant national and international organizations have been reviewed in necessary cases to provide valid examples (Chapter 1). This research also encompasses exploring the Baha'i Faith publications, including authoritative Baha'i Writings from the Faith's Founders, official pronouncements from the Baha'i International Community and scholars introducing the Baha'i Faith, its teachings and perspectives on peace alongside Baha'is initiatives and actions (Chapter 3).

This research is a desk study that extracts data and analyzes secondary sources. Using over 300 cited sources, in addition to ensuring that they represent a variety of perspectives on peacebuilding, helps to minimize selection and interpretation bias. The aim was to provide a foundation of conceptual structure that offers the necessary cognitive materials derived from academic definitions and explanations and Baha'i sources with the least possible bias for the theoretical analysis and discovery of elements of proactive and preventive peacebuilding in the Baha'i views and activities.

Analytical framework: Concept and Building Blocks of Positive Peace

The research's analytical framework is Johan Galtung's theory of positive peace. In finding the meaning of peace, we have read that the Lexical and terminology resources define it in two states. One is the absence of violence, war, hostilities, and freedom from unrest or disorder in individual and social relationships. The other state, peace, is the coexistence with agreement and satisfaction without disagreement, opposition, and conflict between people.

Based on this definition, peace can be interpreted as the absence of any physical or non-physical violence in personal and social relationships. The physical violence appears in the form of tension, protest, conflict, battle and war. Non-physical violence applies in various forms, including verbal abuse, humiliation, rebuke, condemnation, intimidation, threats, and deprivation of biological, social, economic, judicial, and political rights.

In his studies, Johan Galtung considers this dual situation in the framework of stopping and eliminating any type of violence - physical and non-physical. From this perspective, he formulates a theory from which the concepts of **negative peace** and **positive peace** emerge. This cessation of violence within the framework of negative peace can be extended to eliminate all types of non-physical violence. For example, through international measures, a government can be forced to stop non-physical violent behaviors, such as the deprivation of social rights related to an ethnic, religious, political, or civil group of its people.

From Galtung's point of view, **negative peace** is a situation in which fundamental tensions and structural issues, such as injustice or social and economic inequalities, which are the underlying causes of conflicts, still exist or can exist. Therefore, he describes a situation where any injustice that causes dissatisfaction, tension, violent actions to assert rights, and conflict must be eradicated. He conceptualizes the result of this eradication in terms of positive peace.

Positive peace goes beyond the mere absence of conflict, encompassing the creation of a just and equitable society where social harmony prevails, and the root causes of conflict are addressed. This society addresses and transforms the underlying structural and cultural causes of violence (*structural and cultural violence*), such as social inequality, economic disparity, systemic injustice and discrimination¹³. This concept emphasizes justice, equity, peaceful and friendly coexistence, balance and harmony and sustainability as essential components of a stable society that lives in peace. Also, in expanding his theory, in addition to social justice, he emphasizes the importance of creating and establishing inner peace, a culture of peace, harmonious relations between individuals, individuals and their community, social harmony and empathy to achieve sustainable peace and a more peaceful world.

Over the years of reflection, investigation and development of his theory on positive peace, Galtung (e.g. 1990, 1996a, 2013) illuminated that the culture of peace plays a fundamental role in forming harmony and social justice. The change of intellectual approaches and perspectives within the conceptual context of the culture of peace and social harmony

13. 'Positive peace is not merely the cessation of direct violence but also structural violence (termed indirect in Galtung (1969) and incorporates "social structures that deny individuals and groups the ability to satisfy human needs such as survival, well-being, recognition and freedom" [Standish & Joyce, 2018, p. 30]' (Standish et al., 2022, p. 5).

provides the basis for realising social justice by eliminating social and economic inequalities. The building blocks of a `culture of peace` from Galtung's view include several key elements. He considers a society based on equality and justice, where all people have access to resources and opportunities, and its systems are fair and just. In his opinion, justice and fairness are the fruits of the culture of peace, which is established in thoughts and practice, and its values, principles and manners are followed. Through this cultural evolution and progress, structural and cultural violence will be eradicated. In his perspective, the most essential elements of the culture of peace are nonviolence in the form of commitment and resolving conflicts without resorting to physical or non-physical violence. Another is cooperation and dialogue. Galtung encourages collaborative problem-solving and open dialogue between groups and individuals to address disputes and misunderstandings. He considers the respect and implementation of human rights as one of the pillars of peace culture, which protects the dignity and rights of all people to be a part of the culture of peace, and he considers it necessary to respect and support it theoretically and practically. Finally, he considers the understanding and observance of cultural diversity in belief and practice as another building block of a culture of peace. This acceptance, respect, and active support of different cultures and viewpoints make possible and strengthen their positive and socially constructive communication and coexistence in a society of diverse thoughts, beliefs, and cultures. Johan Galtung believes that building a culture of peace requires systemic changes at various levels of society, including education, politics, economics, and personal thoughts and behaviour, through a comprehensive approach to creating peace based on these changes and beyond simply preventing or stopping war. Positive peace builds inherently just, equal and peaceful societies by creating a culture of justice and peace. (Galtung, 1969a; 1969b; 1971; 1996; 2001; 2010; 2013 and 2014)¹⁴.

In a concise description, the three main elements of positive peace can be explained as follows:

Culture of Peace: Establishing and fostering a culture of peace involves a commitment to nonviolence, cooperative problem-solving, and open dialogue between groups and individuals. It also includes respecting and implementing human rights and valuing cultural diversity.

The culture of peace is a set of values, attitudes, and modes of behaviour based on nonviolence, respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, tolerance, solidarity, and understanding among people. It involves creating social conditions that foster harmony,

14. For more details and better knowledge of the concept of positive peace and its elements, aspects and contexts, refer to `The Palgrave Handbook of Positive Peace`, by Katerina Standish et al., 2022.

prevent conflicts, and resolve disputes peacefully. This mental and behavioral framework promotes peaceful ways to resolve conflicts, rejecting violence in all forms and encouraging dialogue and negotiation to settle disputes. Its principles ensure that everyone's rights are protected and respected, fostering a sense of dignity and equality for all individuals. Encouraging understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of diversity and fostering a sense of solidarity and shared responsibility among all people are essential features of the intellectual and practice in this culture, and they support the participation of everyone without prejudice and discrimination in the decision-making and action processes. The culture of peace affirms and teaches harmony, convergence, and social cohesion as tools for social progress. It emphasizes social justice and the reduction of inequalities, supports everyone's access to the same opportunities for inclusive social and economic development, and provides the basis for solving the root causes of conflicts such as poverty, inequality and injustice (Boulding, 2008; Swee-Hin & Floresca-Cawagas, 2008; de Rivera (Ed.), 2009; UNESCO (Ed.), 1996).

Social Harmony: This approach is based on achieving sustainable peace, creating and establishing inner peace, promoting harmonious individual relations, and fostering empathy and social concord, cohesion and harmony. It also involves a systemic approach at various societal levels, including education, politics, economics, and personal behaviour.

These building blocks are interrelated and collectively contribute to the realization of positive peace, moving beyond the mere absence of conflict to create a just, equitable, and peaceful society. A harmonious society recognizes and appreciates the `diversity of cultures, beliefs and practices` as the reinforcing fabric's warp and woof of its community. This diversity is viewed not as a source of division and separation but as a strength that enriches the social fabric and contributes to collective growth and innovation. `Empathy cultivation` plays a crucial role in building social harmony. When individuals try to understand and appreciate different perspectives and experiences, they reduce prejudice and discrimination, fostering an environment of mutual respect and cooperation. On the one hand, emerging empathy causes the acceptance and respect of diversity in society's intellectual and cultural fabric. At the same time, it provides the context for another element of harmony in society: `fairness`. A harmonious society strives to ensure equal opportunities for all its members, addressing social and economic inequalities and providing universal access to essential services and resources. This commitment to equity fosters a sense of belonging and a shared stake in the community's success. In a society where the spirit of empathy, concord, and fairness flows, conflicts or differences are viewed as opportunities for growth rather than sources of division. Emphasis is placed on resolving disagreements through `dialogue`, negotiation, and compromise rather than violence or coercion. This approach helps maintain social stability

while allowing for the healthy expression of diverse viewpoints. Harmony thrives through `cooperation and collaboration` in society. When people work together towards common objectives, this collaboration strengthens social bonds, builds a sense of collective responsibility, and enhances the community's ability to address shared challenges effectively. The set of these elements causes the formation of `social cohesion`. A harmonious society is characterized by strong relationships and a deep solidarity among its members. This cohesion is reinforced when individuals feel connected to their community and are committed to its well-being, transcending individual differences to focus on collective prosperity (Korab-Karpowicz, 2021; Sharma, 2015; Delle Fave, 2014; Manca, 2023; see also Han, 2008)

Social Justice: Addressing and transforming the underlying structural and cultural causes of violence, such as social inequality, economic disparity, systemic injustice, and discrimination. This requires creating a just and equitable society where social harmony prevails, and the root causes of conflict are addressed.

Social justice is the realization of conditions where all individuals and groups receive fair treatment and an equitable share of society's resources and facilities regardless of gender, thoughts and beliefs, color and race, ethnicity, and language in society. Social justice addresses the systemic inequalities that disadvantage certain groups and seeks to create a fair distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges. It aims to create a society where all individuals have equal opportunities to succeed and are treated with dignity and respect. Establishing this justice requires the elimination of prejudice and discrimination that lead to separation, division, and exclusion within society. It demands behaviour based on fairness and equality, ensuring everyone has equal access to resources and opportunities and that no one is discriminated against based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics. Embracing and supporting social diversity, recognizing and valuing various identities, cultures, and perspectives, supporting the rights of all individuals, and ensuring that everyone can fully participate in social, economic, and political life are additional aspects of social justice. This involves creating conditions for public access to resources and opportunities for growth, development, and well-being (Ho, 2011; Heffernan, 2000; Bordere, 2016; see also Sandel, 2009; Rawls, 1999; Miller, 1999)

Chapter 3

The Baha'i Faith: Background and Context to the Baha'i Approach to Peace

A. The Doctrinal Foundations of Baha'i Community Building

Husayn-'Ali Nuri, known as Baha'u'llah, declared himself in 1863 as the 'Promised One of all Religions' and founded the Baha'i Faith. Over his 39-year divine mission, Baha'u'llah revealed numerous writings that elucidate the Baha'i principles of theology, morality, social teachings and rules. His teachings emphasize universal peace, unity, justice, and establishing a new world order designed to achieve humanity's spiritual, intellectual, and material prosperity¹⁵.

The central tenet and goal of the Baha'i Faith is 'unity and concord' (Buck, 2012; Langness, 2013), which is mainly presented and explained under the title of 'the oneness of humanity' or 'unity of humankind'. The concept of unity is epitomized in three fundamental Baha'i beliefs: the oneness of God, the unity of religions, and the unity of humankind (Hatcher & Martin, 2011). In essence, Baha'i teachings encompass individual and social aspects aimed at the realization, organization, and preservation of the unity of the human race from family to international relations, removing all barriers to its attainment and sustainability through the teaching of moral virtues and social principles (see Abdu'l-Baha, 2006 and Taylor & NRUC, 1986).

Striving for the advancement of spiritual and moral qualities, honesty, piety, sacrifice, forgiveness, purity, chastity, trustworthiness, patience, tolerance, trust, loyalty and forgiveness, love and respect for humans, animals, creatures, and the world of existence, and observing their rights and preserving them, respect and conservation of nature and the environment, cleanliness, health and well-being of body, mind and living environment, peace, calmness, friendship and concordance, abstaining from any form of violence and contention, serving people and society, engagement in occupation, education and acquisition of knowledge and arts, consultation, cooperation, being beneficial to oneself and society, attempt for own and others welfare and the prosperity of society, and many other moral virtues mentioned extensively in the Baha'i Writings are part of the ethical and spiritual teachings and principles of the Baha'i Faith (NSA of the British Isles, 1953 and NSA of the India, 1990; see also WIEF, 2003; Schaefer, 2015; Baha'i9, 2020).

In addition to individual and collective moral upbringing and cultivation that affect and improve human behaviours and relations, the Baha'i Faith also calls on humans to learn and

15. For more information and resources refer to **Appendix 8: The Revelation of Baha'u'llah and the Baha'i Faith**.

execute social principles to improve and enhance social ties. The principles aim to realise progress, prosperity, unity, and world peace. `Table 2` contains the most fundamental of these doctrines. Additionally, the Baha'i Writings teach other social principles that shape the lives and actions of individual Baha'is and call and encourage the global community to accept and implement them. These teachings embrace a holistic approach to fostering harmony and prosperity within communities and society (Table 3)¹⁶. They advocate for consultation, view work as worship, promote ethical business practices, encourage environmental protection, empower youth, advocate for empathy, peaceful coexistence and compassion, respect and emphasize cultural diversity, prioritize health and well-being, work to empower marginalized groups, champion human rights, prioritize family unity, and support the advancement of the arts and sciences. By embodying these principles, communities worldwide strive to cultivate harmony, justice, prosperity and peace¹⁷ (Abdu'l-Baha, 1919; Smith, 2002; Momen, 1997; see also: Gandhimohan, 2000; Hartz, 2009).

In summary, the Baha'i Faith presents a profound and comprehensive framework for achieving universal peace and harmony. Baha'i teachings emphasize the core principles of unity and concord and teach the belief that all humanity is one family destined to live in harmony.

The ethical and social teachings of the Baha'i Faith advocate for a transformative approach to personal and collective life. They encompass a broad range of virtues, including honesty, piety, forgiveness, respect for all beings, and principles aimed at fostering social justice, equality, and the elimination of prejudice. Baha'i teachings promote the integration of moral virtues with social principles to cultivate individual and communal prosperity, emphasizing the importance of consultation, environmental stewardship, and the pursuit of knowledge.

Through its teachings, the Baha'i Faith offers a comprehensive and actionable approach to achieving a harmonious and just world. It emphasizes the need for moral and social transformation. By adhering to pointed principles and actively working towards their implementation, individuals and communities can contribute to realizing the Baha'i ideal of universal peace and unity.

Now, with the knowledge of this intellectual and belief infrastructure, we proceed to identify and analyze Baha'is actions and examine the nature of these activities based on Johan Galtung's concept of positive peace and its constituent elements - the culture of peace, social

16. In addition The lists of Tables 1 & 2, other Baha'i teachings with a social function can be extracted in a review of Baha'i Writings. For more information, For more information, refer to [Baha'i Quotes](#).

17. For original texts concerning moral and social Baha'i teachings, as well as opinions and views in various contexts from Writings of Baha'u'llah, Bab, Abdu'l-Baha, Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice, refer to: [Bahá'í Quotes](#) and [Lights of Guidance: A Bahá'í Reference File`](#) by Helen B. Hornby, 1988.

harmony and social justice. This will help us understand how Baha'is put these teachings into practice to achieve their religious duty to create belief in peace, its intellectual and practical internalization, and implement and preserve peace in the human world's individual and collective life.

B. The Baha'i Faith Perspective and Approach to Peace

The Baha'i Faith's approach to peace is multifaceted, encompassing the prohibition of violence, active promotion of peace, and practical education. Baha'u'llah, in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (The Most Holy Book)¹⁸ and other tablets, forbade all forms of physical and non-physical violence, including verbal (see Appendix 6). The faith prohibits killing and even carrying weapons and has removed the concept of `Jihad` - the religious war to promote faith or against the nonbelievers or enemies of the religion - has also been removed from religious command by Baha'u'llah¹⁹.

The Baha'i perspective on peace is multi-dimensional, covering inner, social, and global realms. This multi-dimensional approach to peace forms the core of the Baha'i Faith's teachings on creating a harmonious world.

Inner Peace stems from spiritual growth, a core focus of Baha'i teachings. It's nurtured through prayer, contemplation, moral virtues, and service to others. Practices like prayer and studying Baha'i Writings offer opportunities for deep reflection and coping with life's challenges. Viewing difficulties as catalysts for progress fosters resilience (Bayat, 2008; Baha'i Publishing, 2013; The Research Department of the UHJ, 1991[Vol. 1&2] & 2020a; Sheppherd, 2020; Issakhany, 2018; Thomas, 2004; Hellaby & Hellaby, 1990).

Social Peace includes harmonious relations, justice, and unity between individuals and communities. Baha'i teachings emphasize independent search for truth, elimination of

18. "Baha'u'llah's book of laws, written in Arabic around 1873 while He was still imprisoned within the city of 'Akkā. It was supplemented by later Writings and by Baha'u'llah's replies to a series of questions posed by one of His secretaries. The first authorized English translation was published in 1992, annotated and accompanied by the supplementary Writings and the questions and answers." (Bahá'í International Community, 2024); for more info see entry *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* in Wikipedia and its references.

19. See paras 19, 73, 148, 153 in the prohibition of any conflict and battle and note 173 in *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* about the prohibition of carrying weapons (para 159). About the right to defence see also [Victimization](#) in Baha'i Quotes. Albeit it is permissible to defend oneself and others against oppressors, aggressors, murderers, and thieves who threaten or destroy people's lives and property, it is primarily the responsibility of society and the security and judicial system. Only in the absence of defence authorities do individuals or groups have the right to defend and protect themselves (Baha'u'llah, 1992). Bahau'llah's successors, like Abdu'l-Bahá, have also extensively analyzed, explained, and emphasized the prohibition of any kind of violence. For more example refer to entries victimization, war, conflict, strife, disagreement and the like in [Baha'i Quotes](#).

prejudice, understanding the unity of the human race and religions, promoting equality, and addressing social injustices. The goal is to build inclusive societies where all members can flourish (Karlberg, 2022; Baha'i International Community, 1995; Austin, 1946; see also Taylor & NRUC, 1986).

Universal Peace requires the cessation of conflicts, promotion of collective security, and creation of a world characterized by cooperation and mutual respect. Baha'i principles advocate for global governance mechanisms, including a worldwide federal government with an international legislature, judiciary, and police. This new world order is seen as inevitable due to humanity's maturation process and global management needs (Mahmoudi, 2020; Farhoumand-Sims & Lerche, 2004; see also Mooten, 2005; Hayes et al., 1986).

Based on Baha'u'llah's explicit statements and the explanations of Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi, the promised universal peace in the Baha'i Faith will be established in three stages: **`Lesser Peace, Great Peace, and Most Great Peace`** (see Appendix 7). It should be noted that, according to Baha'i Writings, these three stages will occur gradually and progressively due to humanity's experiences and intellectual and spiritual maturation of the human world.

1	Unity of Humankind	All humanity is one family and should strive for unity and harmony.
2	Universal Peace	Prohibiting and eliminating any kind of war and conflict and establishing world peace.
3	Oneness of Religion	All religions have a single divine origin and their differences are apparent and in the rulings that have been revealed by God according to the needs of the time. For this reason, the conflict between religions is meaningless and reconciliation and cooperation between religions is necessary to improve the life of the human world.
4	Elimination of Prejudice	All kinds of prejudice based on race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, religion, or any other factor should be eradicated.
5	Independent Investigation of Truth	Encouraging individuals to seek truth independently, without blindly following tradition or authority.
6	Equality of Men and Women	Men and women are equal in all aspects of life and should have equal individual and social rights and opportunities for education, employment, growth, development, prosperity and welfare.
7	Harmony of Science and Religion	Science and religion are complementary and should work together for the betterment of humanity.

8	Universal Education	Every person has the right to education, and education should be universal, mandatory, accessible, and focused on the development of the whole person.
9	Justice and Fairness	Trying to establish justice and fairness in all aspects of humanity's life, including the legal, economic, social, political, and world order.
10	Elimination of Extremes of Wealth and Poverty	Working towards a more equitable distribution of wealth and resources, and addressing the root causes of poverty.
11	International Auxiliary Language	Choosing or inventing a language as an auxiliary language alongside the native languages to strengthen the world's people's relations and global communication, remove barriers to understanding, and promote international cooperation.
12	Promoting Religious, Belief and Intellectual Tolerance	Consorting and interacting with people of diverse backgrounds of belief and thinking in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship.

Table 1 - The Key Baha'i Social Teaching and Principles

1. Consultation	Promoting dialogue, consultation, and collaboration as the basis for decision-making and problem-solving in communities and institutions.
2. Work as Worship	Encouraging individuals to view their work as a form of worship and service to humanity.
3. Respect for the Environment	Advocating for the protection and preservation of the environment, and recognizing the interconnectedness of all living things.
4. Empowerment of Youth	Recognizing the potential of young people as agents of positive change and providing them with opportunities for leadership and service.
5. Promotion of Peaceful Coexistence	Advocating for tolerance, understanding, and cooperation among diverse cultures, religions, and peoples.
6. Compassion and Service to Others	Encouraging individuals to show kindness, compassion, and selflessness in their interactions with others, and to actively engage in acts of service for the betterment of humanity.
7. Ethical Business Practices	Promoting honesty, integrity, and fairness in all business dealings, and emphasizing the importance of social responsibility and sustainability.

8. Respect for Cultural Diversity	Valuing and celebrating the richness of cultural diversity, and recognizing the contributions of different cultures to the collective human experience.
9. Promotion of Health and Well-being	Supporting initiatives that promote physical, mental, and spiritual health, and addressing the root causes of illness and suffering.
10. Empowerment of Marginalized Groups	Working towards the empowerment and inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable populations, including refugees, migrants, indigenous peoples, and those with disabilities.
11. Advocacy for Human Rights	Standing up for the rights and dignity of all individuals, and speaking out against injustice, oppression, and discrimination in all its forms.
12. Family Unity and Cohesion	Emphasizing the importance of strong, loving, and supportive family relationships as the foundation of a healthy and harmonious society.
13. Promoting the Arts and Sciences	Recognizing the role of creativity, innovation, and intellectual pursuit in the advancement of civilization, and supporting the development and expression of artistic and scientific talents.

Table 2 - Some Baha'i Social Teachings

C. Building Blocks of Baha'i Community Building

It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action ...

Baha'u'llah, 2023a, 200 - 201

During mass conversions to the Baha'i Faith in developing countries in the second half of the twentieth century, the Universal House of Justice - the highest authority of leadership and legislation of the Baha'i Faith - adopted a systematic approach to promoting and establishing the Faith globally. This program aims to enhance the spiritual, material, and social conditions in alignment with the Baha'i principle of service to humanity, realizing humankind's unity and establishing world peace regardless of individuals' beliefs.

The plan evolves from experiences in individual and collective activities and considers regional demographics, cultures, economies, and social conditions while remaining flexible to adapt to local needs and resources. It empowers structures and participants to develop capabilities internally and externally.

From the Four Year Plan (1996-2000) onward, the Baha'is strategies have focused on `community building` and `capacity building`. These strategies are implemented through `core activities` and `social action`, aiming to foster individuals` and society's spiritual and intellectual potential. Grounded in Baha'i moral and social teachings, these activities promote unity, peace, justice, and cooperation, ultimately enhancing individual and collective welfare. Currently, Baha'i community and capacity building encompass three action areas: **core activities** (nurturing intellectual and moral transformation), **social and economic development** and **participation in public discourses** to promote and support ideas for improving lives at local, regional and global levels.

To analyze how Baha'i community building creates positive peace, we need to know its building blocks. In the following, we know these activities better.

C1. Core Activities

The Baha'i Writings highlight a dual moral purpose and duty that every person has in life: `to better themselves, and to better the society around them`. Unlike many approaches, Baha'is focus on people as the main resources for social transformations. They build a global foundation of spiritual values for the world. Baha'is and their diverse friends promote unity and social transformation through grassroots efforts. Their `core activities` tailored to regional needs, foster a society that thrives both materially and spiritually. Involvement in these activities is free and open to all worldwide, for all persons and groups of every religion, culture, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and age (Baha'iTheachings.org, 2024; BIC, 2024b & 2024c & 2024d; Bahaipedia, 2022; Khadem Khodadad, 2017; see also Ruhi Institute, 2016 & 2017 & 2018)²⁰. Core activities include:

Name	Age Group	Aims	Activities
Children's Classes	Young Children (various ages) 5 to 10	Spiritual education of children; developing spiritual qualities and upright character	Memorization, storytelling, games, songs, and art; exploring virtues such as generosity, justice, kindness, courage, and service. Teachers collaborate with families to tailor programs.

20. To know about the fundamental aspects of the approach and operation of the "Training Institution" that plans and directs the implementation of the `core activity`, refer to `Training Institutes: Attaining a Higher Level of Functioning` by International Teaching Centre, 2017.

Junior Youth Empowerment Programs	Ages 12 to 15	Empowering junior youth to navigate growth and resist negative influences	Learning and practicing virtues such as independent investigation of truth, critical thinking, responsibility, and teamwork; facilitated by an 'animator.'
Study Circles	Adults and youth	Fostering well-being of humanity; democratizing spiritual education	Systematic study of Baha'u'llah's teachings; collective learning and participation; creating practical service projects; using Ruhi Institute curricula.
Devotional Gatherings	All ages	Reflection on divine verses; fostering connections and discussions	Reading prayers and meditative themes; creating respectful, inclusive social settings for worship and discussion on ethical teachings.

Table 3 - Baha'i Core Activities

C2. Social and Economic Development (SED)

Baha'is actively contribute to building a more just and peaceful world by addressing the root causes of poverty, inequality, and injustice through social and economic development projects. These initiatives, often undertaken in collaboration with others, focus on essential areas like education, healthcare, agriculture, and environmental sustainability.

Empowerment is key. Baha'i projects aim to equip individuals and communities with the tools and knowledge to overcome social and economic challenges. This focus on sustainable development and capacity-building fosters long-term solutions. Social and economic development are cornerstones of the Baha'i approach to community building and world peace. The Baha'i teachings emphasize that eliminating poverty and promoting well-being are essential for a just and equitable society. By creating a more level playing field, tensions are reduced, and cooperation flourishes. Through initiatives promoting education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, Baha'is empower individuals, strengthen communities, and cultivate a shared responsibility for a more peaceful and prosperous world²¹(BIC, 1984 & 1995 & 2023b; The Research Department of UHJ, 2020b; UHJ, 2012; see also UpliftingWords.org, 2019; Ruhi Institute, 2020a & 2020b; BIC, 2010; Shams, 2015; Taylor, 2021).

21. For better knowledge and detailed info on the activities of the Baha'is, refer to *'For the Betterment of the World'* by Baha'i International Community, 2023.

C3. Participation in Public Discourses

Participation in the discourses (PPD) of society is a core aspect of the Baha'i community's commitment to advancing civilization. Members engage in ongoing discussions on topics like human rights, social justice, women's advancement, gender equality, peace, interfaith dialogue, climate change, environment, public health, and development, drawing insights from Baha'i teachings. This participation occurs at all levels, from local communities to international platforms like the Baha'i International Community (BIC), which engages with UN bodies on diverse issues. The aim isn't to impose Baha'i views but to learn and contribute to collective understanding. Efforts include seminars for students, conferences, and dialogues bridging Baha'i principles with contemporary challenges, fostering collaboration across disciplines and backgrounds for the betterment of society²² (BIC, 2024; IEF, 2022; See also Ruhi Institute, 2020c & 2024; Cameron & Schewel, 2018; BWNS, 2016).

In continuation, the next chapter engages in a theoretical analysis of Baha'i community building using Johan Galtung's theory of positive peace and examines the integration of its building blocks - namely social justice, cultural peace, and social harmony and social justice - with these activities facilitates the understanding of how Baha'is contribute to establishing peace in the world and makes the effectiveness of their approach thought-provoking.

22. For example, see the participation of the Baha'i International Community in this event at the time of writing this section: *BIC New York: Embracing humanity's interdependence and shared identity, June 3, 2024*.

Chapter 4

Findings & Analysis

This chapter applies Galtung's theory of positive peace to the Baha'i approach and peacebuilding methods. The findings map the constituent elements of Baha'i activities that build peace culture, social harmony and social justice. This creates a typology of activities that, taken together, form a mechanism for building positive peace.

Table 4 presents a categorised summary of `positive peace elements` based on those explained in Chapter 2 (Methodology). This categorization facilitates the demonstration of fulfilling each element of positive peace through Baha'i community building activities.

Key Elements / Building Blocks of Positive Peace		
Peace Culture	Social Harmony	Social Justice
Commitment to nonviolence	Achieving sustainable peace	Addressing structural and cultural causes of violence
Cooperative problem-solving	Creating and establishing inner peace	Creating a just and equitable society
Open dialogue between groups and individuals	Promoting harmonious individual relations	Fair treatment and equitable share of resources
Respecting and implementing human rights	Fostering empathy and social concord	Elimination of prejudice and discrimination
Valuing cultural diversity	Systemic approach at various societal levels	Behavior based on fairness and equality
Tolerance, solidarity, and understanding among people	Recognizing and appreciating diversity	Equal access to resources and opportunities
Rejecting violence in all forms	Empathy cultivation	Supporting social diversity
Encouraging dialogue and negotiation	Fairness and equality	Recognizing and valuing various identities
Fostering dignity and equality for all individuals	Dialogue and negotiation	Supporting the rights of all individuals
Social cohesion and harmony	Cooperation and collaboration	Public access to resources and opportunities

Table 4 - Key Elements or Building Blocks of Positive Peace

Baha'i Community Building and Positive Peace: A Theoretical Analysis

A review of documents related to the core activities and social actions (SED & PPD), including the `Messages of the Universal House of Justice` and the `Ruhi Institute Books (Appendix 9)` as study and work resources in core activities, *guide documents, procedures and reports* for socio-economic development activities and participation in public discourses²³, also, the written and visual reports of relevant gatherings, such as devotional meetings and study circles, reveal how positive peace is formed through these activities²⁴.

The following analysis (A, B & C) of activities is based on elements of positive peace, detailed in Chapter 2 ²⁵. Over the years of reflection, investigation and development of his theory on positive peace, Galtung found that the culture of peace plays a fundamental role in forming harmony and social justice. The change of intellectual approaches and perspectives within the conceptual context of the culture of peace and social harmony provides the basis for realising social justice in the sense of eliminating social and economic inequalities. This aligns with the Baha'i view that the intellectual and cultural foundation and its transformation and improvement are the basis of social change. For this reason, in the analysis ahead, we will first address the culture of peace and then social harmony and social justice.

A. Peace Culture and Baha'i Community Building

The Baha'is fosters nonviolence, cooperation, and open dialogue through its core activities, social development projects, and public discourses. Fundamental teachings include respect for human rights, cultural diversity, and equality, focusing on fostering tolerance, solidarity, and peaceful conflict resolution. These efforts aim to build social cohesion and harmony, address structural inequalities and promote dignity and justice for all. Through dialogue, collaboration, and nonviolent approaches, the Baha'i community contributes to society's

23. Please refer to : **Framework for Action: Selected Messages of the Universal House of Justice and Supplementary Material 2006–2016** by Palabra Publications , 2017 & Universal House of Justice **5, 5, 5, 1 and 9** year plans by Palabra Publications ; **Compilations on Discourse & Social Action**, by The Research Department of the UHJ, 2022; **Social Action: Extracts from the Baha'i Writings**, by The Research Department of the UHJ, 2020; **Social Actions**, A paper prepared by the Office of Social and Economic Development at the Baha'i World Centre, 26 November 2012; **Economics & Agriculture: Extracts from the Baha'i Writings**, by The Research Department of the UHJ, 2022; see also **2023: Year in Review**, by Baha'i World News Service, December 29, 2023. For Ruhi Book refer to `**Overview: Programs and Materials`** by Ruhi Institute ,2024.

24. For e.g. documentary video "**An Expansive Prospect** looks at four places in the world [Malaysia, Brazil, United States and Kenya] capturing the efforts of individuals, communities, and institutions as they strive together to release the society-building power of the Baha'i Teachings in ever-greater measures.", See also website of **Horizons** by Australian Baha'i Community for numerous examples of these activities and their achievements in Australia.

25. **Appendix 10** and its table provide a condensed representation of these commonalities.

moral and social advancement.

Peace Culture	Core Activities (Children's Classes, Junior Youth Program, Study Circles, Devotional Gatherings)	Social and Economic Development	Participation in Public Discourses
Commitment to nonviolence	Instill values of love, respect, empathy, fostering peaceful characters.	Address inequalities and structural violence, fostering nonviolent approaches.	Promote nonviolent solutions and justice through dialogue.
Cooperative problem-solving	Teach collaboration and consultation for group problem-solving.	Require collective decision-making and shared problem-solving.	Promote cooperative approaches in public conversations.
Open dialogue between groups and individuals	Encourage self-expression, laying foundations for future dialogue.	Foster open communication in projects for social progress.	Encourage dialogue across diverse social groups.
Respecting and implementing human rights	Instill respect and equality, promoting human rights from childhood.	Address social inequities, ensuring marginalized groups' rights.	Advocate for justice and human rights in societal conversations.
Valuing cultural diversity	Teach appreciation of cultural diversity and unique individual contributions.	Bring together diverse groups for shared goals and social development.	Advocate for the inclusion of diverse perspectives in public discourses.
Tolerance, solidarity, and understanding among people	Teach kindness and understanding, promoting tolerance from a young age.	Foster solidarity through collective service and collaborative projects.	Contribute to broader social tolerance and solidarity.
Rejecting violence in all forms	Foster peaceful character traits and reject violent behaviors.	Address root causes of violence through justice-focused projects.	Promote peaceful resolutions through advocacy and public engagement.
Encouraging dialogue and negotiation	Teach respectful dialogue and encourage negotiation among peers.	Foster dialogue in social and economic development projects.	Promote dialogue and negotiation as means for societal advancement.
Fostering dignity and equality for all individuals	Teach intrinsic dignity and equality of all people.	Reduce inequalities and uplift marginalized communities.	Advocate for equality and dignity in public conversations.
Social cohesion and harmony	Promote unity and collaboration to build social cohesion.	Encourage unity and collaboration for harmonious development.	Promote social harmony through just and inclusive societal participation.

Table 5 - Culture of Peace and Baha'i Community Building

Explanation

- **Commitment to nonviolence:**

The Baha'i core activities instill values such as love, respect, and empathy, fostering individuals with peaceful characters. Social and economic development initiatives focus on

addressing inequalities and structural violence, promoting nonviolent approaches. Baha'is advocate for nonviolent solutions and justice through dialogue in public discourses, influencing broader societal attitudes toward peace.

- **Cooperative problem-solving:**

Core activities emphasize teaching collaboration and consultation for group problem-solving, encouraging teamwork. Social and economic development initiatives require collective decision-making, ensuring shared responsibility in solving community issues. Public discourses further promote cooperative approaches, advocating for peaceful and inclusive solutions to societal problems.

- **Open dialogue between groups and individuals:**

The Baha'i community encourages self-expression, laying the foundation for future open dialogue between individuals and groups. Social and economic projects foster open communication to promote social progress, ensuring all voices are heard. Public conversations emphasize dialogue across diverse social groups, creating spaces for inclusivity and shared understanding.

- **Respecting and implementing human rights:**

From childhood, core activities instill respect for equality and human rights, creating a foundation for ethical behaviour. Social and economic development addresses social inequities, ensuring that the rights of marginalized groups are respected. Baha'i participation in public discourses advocates for justice and human rights, contributing to the global movement for dignity and fairness for all.

- **Valuing cultural diversity:**

The Baha'i core activities teach an appreciation of cultural diversity and the unique contributions of each individual. Through social development initiatives, diverse groups are brought together for shared goals, enhancing cooperation and fostering mutual understanding. Baha'is advocates for including diverse perspectives in public discourse, enriching societal participation and decision-making processes.

- **Tolerance, solidarity, and understanding among people:**

Promoting kindness and understanding through core activities helps nurture tolerance from a young age. Collective service and collaborative projects foster solidarity within the community. Public discourses contribute to broader societal tolerance, promoting solidarity and understanding in diverse social settings.

- **Rejecting violence in all forms:**

The Baha'i community fosters peaceful character traits and rejects and prohibits violent behaviour, instilling this ethos in participants. Social and economic initiatives aim to address the root causes of violence by focusing on justice-driven projects. Public engagement supports promoting peaceful resolutions and advocating for nonviolent strategies in societal conversations.

- **Encouraging dialogue, negotiation and Consultation:**

Teaching respectful dialogue and consultation among peers is central to Baha'i core activities. Social and economic development projects incorporate dialogue to resolve conflicts and ensure balanced outcomes. Public discourses champion negotiation and dialogue, especially consultation, as effective means for advancing society and achieving common goals.

- **Fostering dignity and equality for all individuals:**

The principle that all people possess intrinsic dignity and equality is central to Baha'i community activities. Social development efforts focus on reducing inequalities and uplifting marginalized communities. Public participation in discourses advocates for protecting dignity and equality, influencing policies and societal norms.

- **Social cohesion and harmony:**

Core activities promote unity and collaboration, helping to build social cohesion. Social and economic development projects encourage unity, ensuring harmonious growth within communities. Public discourses emphasize the importance of inclusive participation, advocating for social harmony through just and fair societal structures.

Key Finding A

The Baha'i approach to cultivating a culture of peace demonstrates a comprehensive and systematic methodology that operates through mutually reinforcing educational, developmental, and discursive pathways. This integrated approach reveals several distinctive features:

1. Foundation Building Through Inclusive Education (Age Groups from Children to Adults)

Core activities serve as the primary platform for peace culture development by:

- Instilling fundamental values (love, respect, empathy) from early childhood
- Teaching collaborative problem-solving skills and consultation

- Fostering an appreciation for diversity and human dignity
- Developing peaceful character traits and rejection of violence
- Building capacity for meaningful dialogue from a young age

2. Practical Application Through Development:

Social and economic development initiatives translate peace principles into action by:

- Addressing structural causes of violence through justice-focused projects and implementing collective decision-making processes
- Creating opportunities for diverse groups to work together
- Reducing inequalities that can lead to social tension
- Building social cohesion through collaborative service projects

3. Societal Transformation Through Discourse:

Public discourse participation extends peacebuilding efforts to broader society through:

- Promoting nonviolent solutions to societal challenges
- Advocating for inclusive policies and human rights
- Modelling cooperative approaches to problem-solving
- Encouraging dialogue across diverse social groups
- Contributing to broader social solidarity

A distinctive characteristic of this approach is its holistic nature, where:

- Peace culture is built from the ground up, starting with children and youth
- Educational foundations are immediately linked to practical service and development
- Individual transformation supports collective advancement
- Theory and practice are consistently integrated
- Different levels of action (individual, community, society) reinforce each other

This systematic approach ensures that peace culture isn't just taught theoretically but actively practised and embedded in all aspects of community life, creating a sustainable model for societal transformation.

The most notable aspect is how each element (core activities, social/economic development, and public discourse) complements and strengthens the others, creating a coherent and effective system for building a culture of peace that addresses both immediate and long-term needs while working at personal, communal, and societal levels.

B. Social Harmony and Baha’i Community Building

The Baha’i community's holistic approach to peacebuilding emphasises inner and societal harmony through virtues like justice, empathy, and collaboration. Baha’i activities address personal, communal, and systemic challenges to create sustainable peace by promoting nonviolence, fostering empathy, and encouraging dialogue. Social and economic initiatives tackle inequality, advocating for fairness, equality, and inclusivity, while public discourses model cooperative problem-solving and promote societal peace. This comprehensive approach integrates individual spiritual growth with collective social progress, aiming for a harmonious, just, and peaceful world.

Social Harmony	Core Activities (Children's Classes, Junior Youth Program, Study Circles, Devotional Gatherings)	Social and Economic Development	Participation in Public Discourses
Achieving sustainable peace	Promote virtues like justice and unity to build lasting peace.	Address inequalities and foster social justice, contributing to peace.	Advocate for peaceful resolutions in public discussions.
Creating and establishing inner peace	Cultivate inner peace through spiritual education.	Support both inner and outer peace through holistic development.	Encourage balanced discourse to promote inner peace.
Promoting harmonious individual relations	Teach respect and empathy, fostering harmony in personal relationships.	Improve living conditions and reduce conflict to enhance relations.	Model respectful interaction in public debates.
Fostering empathy and social concord	Encourage empathy, leading to stronger community bonds.	Address social challenges to foster empathy and responsibility.	Promote understanding and social concord through dialogue.
Systemic approach at various societal levels	Address individual, family, and community levels for broad impact.	Tackle systemic issues, fostering harmony across society.	Engage at different societal levels to influence systemic change.
Recognizing and appreciating diversity	Emphasize unity in diversity, teaching appreciation for differences.	Collaborate across cultures, fostering appreciation and cooperation.	Promote inclusivity and value diversity in public discussions.
Empathy cultivation	Practice empathy through service and community building.	Support marginalized groups, fostering empathy for others.	Encourage understanding and empathy in public discourse.
Fairness and equality	Promote justice and fairness as core principles for equality.	Reduce inequalities to promote fairness in access and opportunities.	Advocate for equal rights and fairness in societal debates.
Dialogue and consultation	Use consultation, fostering dialogue and negotiation for conflict resolution.	Promote collaboration and negotiation to achieve fair outcomes.	Model dialogue and negotiation in public conversations.
Cooperation and collaboration	Encourage teamwork and collective decision-making through collaboration.	Promote cooperation in projects that unite communities.	Foster collective efforts for social harmony in public participation.

Table 6 - Social Harmony and Baha’i Community Building

Explanation

- **Achieving sustainable peace:**

The Baha'i core activities promote virtues such as justice and unity, which are essential for building lasting peace. Social and economic development initiatives work to address inequalities and foster social justice, which are critical contributors to peace. Public discourses focus on advocating for peaceful resolutions and promoting societal peace through dialogue.

- **Creating and establishing inner peace:**

Spiritual education through these activities helps individuals cultivate inner peace, which is foundational for overall well-being. Holistic development initiatives support inner and outer peace by creating partnerships and social and economic security resulting from individual and collective help to enhance emotional and psychological stability. Balanced and thoughtful discussions promote the importance of maintaining inner peace in challenging situations in public discourse.

- **Promoting harmonious individual relations:**

Teaching respect and empathy through core activities fosters harmony in personal relationships. Social and economic initiatives work to improve living conditions, reduce conflict, and promote more harmonious interactions. In public debates, modelling respectful interaction supports and encourages a culture of civility and respect.

- **Fostering empathy and social concord:**

Baha'i community-building efforts encourage empathy and strengthen bonds within the community. Social initiatives address challenges like inequality, fostering a sense of responsibility and compassion toward others. Public discourse promotes understanding and social concord, advocating for collaborative and compassionate solutions.

- **Systemic approach at various societal levels:**

Core activities take a systemic approach by addressing individual, family, and community issues to achieve broad social impact. Social and economic development tackles systemic challenges, promoting harmony across society. Public engagement at various societal levels seeks to influence systemic changes for greater harmony.

- **Recognizing and appreciating diversity:**

Core activities emphasize the importance of unity in diversity and teach appreciation for differences. Social and economic efforts include collaborative efforts to foster appreciation and cooperation among diverse cultures and groups. Public discussions focus on promoting inclusivity and valuing diversity in societal participation.

- **Empathy cultivation:**

Service and community-building activities within the Baha'i community help cultivate empathy. Development programs specifically aim to support marginalized and deprived groups, understand their needs and empower them to play a constructive role in their social lives. In public discourse, cultivating empathy is encouraged to build a more just and compassionate society.

- **Fairness and equality:**

Justice and fairness are central principles in Baha'i community activities, helping to promote equality. Social and economic initiatives work to reduce inequalities, ensuring fairness in access to resources and opportunities. In societal debates, public advocacy for equal rights and fairness is a key focus.

- **Dialogue and consultation:**

The principle of consultation is promoted within the Baha'i community as a foundation for fostering dialogue and negotiation in resolving issues and decision-making. Through core activities, culture and its methods are learned and practised. Social development efforts promote collaboration and negotiation to ensure fair outcomes in making decisions. Public conversations model dialogue and consultation as practical means of conflict resolution.

- **Cooperation and collaboration:**

Teamwork and collective decision-making are emphasized in Baha'i core activities, encouraging community collaboration. Development projects that unite communities promote cooperation to achieve common goals. They encourage collective efforts toward social harmony and advocate for teamwork in societal initiatives in public social debates.

Key Finding B

The Baha'i approach to social harmony reveals an integrated framework that operates on internal and external dimensions, creating a comprehensive system for fostering peace and unity at multiple societal levels. The analysis shows three interconnected spheres of action

that work together to build and sustain social harmony:

1. Inner Development and Personal Transformation:

- Core activities emphasize spiritual education and virtue development. [Abandoning prejudice and alienation, empathy and kindness, respect for the qualities and rights of others, and the like are all considered moral teachings and duties in the Baha'i Faith (see Chapter 3 and related references)].
- Focus on cultivating inner peace through devotional gatherings and study circles
- Strong emphasis on empathy development and personal character building
- This creates a foundation for authentic social harmony by starting with individual transformation.

2. Community Building and Collective Action:

Social and economic development initiatives translate internal growth into external action through:

- Collaborative projects that unite diverse groups
- Programs addressing inequalities and social challenges
- Initiatives that improve living conditions
- Activities that foster cross-cultural cooperation
- Practical application of consultation and collective decision-making

3. Systemic Change and Societal Impact:

Public discourse participation extends harmony-building efforts to broader society through:

- Modeling respectful dialogue
- Promoting inclusive policies
- Encouraging balanced discourse
- Advocating for peaceful conflict resolution
- Demonstrating collaborative problem-solving approaches

A distinctive feature of this approach is its systemic nature - it operates simultaneously at individual, family, community, and societal levels, creating a mutually reinforcing cycle where:

- Personal transformation supports better community relationships
- Community collaboration creates models for broader social change
- Public discourse influences systemic structures
- These changes, in turn, support further personal and community development

This multidimensional approach ensures that social harmony is built on a solid foundation of personal transformation while extending to create lasting systemic change. Integrating moral principles with action creates a sustainable model for gaining and maintaining social harmony.

C. Social Justice and Baha’i Community Building

The Baha’is approach to peace and social justice addresses violence's structural and cultural causes through moral education, fostering fairness, empathy, and unity. Baha’is promote inclusivity and combat discrimination by tackling systemic inequalities and advocating equitable access to resources. Social and economic initiatives focus on creating just and equitable societies by ensuring equal opportunities for all, while public discourses champion human rights, fair treatment, and the value of diversity. This comprehensive framework integrates spiritual principles with practical solutions to build a peaceful, just, and inclusive society.

Social Justice	Core Activities (Children's Classes, Junior Youth Program, Study Circles, Devotional Gatherings)	Social and Economic Development	Participation in Public Discourses
Addressing structural and cultural causes of violence	Teach justice and unity to address root causes of violence.	Reduce poverty and inequality, tackling structural violence.	Advocate for justice, addressing cultural causes of violence.
Creating a just and equitable society	Promote justice and fairness, contributing to an equitable society.	Reduce social inequities, laying the foundation for a just society.	Promote justice and equity in societal reform discussions.
Fair treatment and equitable share of resources	Teach fairness and justice, encouraging equitable treatment.	Focus on fair distribution of resources and opportunities.	Advocate for fair distribution of resources in public discourse.
Elimination of prejudice and discrimination	Teach unity and oneness to eliminate prejudice.	Include projects that address discrimination and provide equal access.	Challenge prejudice and promote inclusive policies in public discourse.
Behavior based on fairness and equality	Model behavior on principles of fairness and equality.	Ensure fair treatment and equal opportunities in all initiatives.	Advocate for equitable policies reflecting fairness.
Equal access to resources and opportunities	Promote justice and encourage equal access to opportunities.	Provide equal access to resources for all through projects.	Advocate for equal access to resources in public engagement.
Supporting social diversity	Emphasize unity in diversity, encouraging appreciation of all perspectives.	Include diverse groups in development efforts to promote inclusivity.	Support policies that promote diversity and inclusion.
Recognizing and valuing various identities	Teach respect for diverse identities and foster inclusivity.	Ensure diverse identities are recognized and supported in projects.	Advocate for recognition and respect of all identities.

Supporting the rights of all individuals	Teach the importance of human rights and protection of individuals' rights.	Empower marginalized groups and ensure their rights are upheld.	Advocate for human rights protection in societal debates.
Public access to resources and opportunities	Promote justice, ensuring the importance of equal access.	Provide equitable access to resources for disadvantaged groups.	Advocate for public policies that guarantee resource access.

Table 7 - Social Justice and Baha'i Community Building

Explanation

- **Addressing structural and cultural causes of violence:**

Through moral and spiritual education, the Baha'i core activities foster a culture of peace and non-violence by addressing the root causes of conflict. This effort is mirrored in social and economic development initiatives that tackle systemic inequalities and public discourse contributions aimed at advocating for peaceful solutions to structural violence.

- **Creating a just and equitable society:**

Core activities emphasize the development of individuals committed to justice and unity, promoting solutions to social inequality through community-based programs and broader public discourse. Social development efforts focus on creating poverty alleviation programs and fostering equitable participation in social structures.

- **Fair treatment and equitable sharing of resources:**

Core activities emphasize justice by encouraging collective decision-making and fair participation for all, ensuring resources are equitably distributed. Public discourses and development projects further extend this effort, advocating for policies that promote fairness and equitable access to resources.

- **Elimination of prejudice and discrimination:**

The Baha'i community fosters an environment that combats prejudice by promoting inclusivity and understanding in educational programs. This approach extends to social and economic platforms that integrate marginalized groups and encourage broader public conversations on eradicating discrimination.

- **Behavior based on fairness and equality:**

The core activities promote behaviour rooted in fairness and service to others, developing ethical standards for community interaction. This is the basis for the inclusiveness of socio-economic plans. Public advocacy on fairness and equity reinforces these values within larger societal contexts, encouraging just and inclusive governance.

- **Equal access to resources and opportunities:**

The Baha'i community ensures that its educational and spiritual resources are accessible to everyone. Similarly, social development programs work to provide equal opportunities for all people, while public discourse advocates for fair access to resources in wider society.

- **Supporting social diversity:**

By celebrating diverse perspectives in community building activities, the Baha'i community upholds the value of cultural and social diversity. Development initiatives and public discussions advocate for inclusivity and respect for diverse identities, fostering pluralism and respect across different social contexts.

- **Recognizing and valuing various identities:**

The community building activities - education and development measures - emphasize empathy and understanding toward diverse identities, encouraging recognition of different cultural and social groups. Public discourses continue this dialogue, promoting respect and recognition in broader societal frameworks.

- **Supporting the rights of all individuals:**

Core activities highlight the importance of human rights and empower individuals to advocate for their rights and those of others. This is mirrored in development initiatives focused on protecting human rights and public discourses advocating individual freedoms and dignity.

- **Public access to resources and opportunities:**

Baha'is ensure their activities are inclusive and accessible to all persons and groups. This approach is pursued in development efforts that provide public access to essential resources such as education, healthcare, and economic plans. Public advocacy continues this work, promoting equitable access to services and opportunities in society.

Key Finding C

The Baha'i approach to social justice implementation reveals a sophisticated three-pronged strategy that weaves core educational activities, socioeconomic development, and public discourse participation together. This integrated approach demonstrates how social justice principles are systematically embedded across all levels of community action:

1. Educational Foundation:

- The core activities (children's classes, junior youth program, study circles, and

devotional gatherings) serve as the foundational platform for social justice education, focusing on teaching fundamental principles of unity, justice, and fairness

- These activities create a grassroots understanding of social justice by modelling equitable behaviour and fostering an appreciation for diversity from an early age

2. Practical Implementation:

Social and economic development initiatives translate these principles into tangible action, addressing structural inequalities through:

- Poverty reduction programs
- Fair resource distribution
- Projects supporting marginalized groups
- Initiatives ensuring equal access to opportunities

3. Broader Social Impact:

Participation in public discourse extends these efforts to the societal level through:

- Advocacy for equitable policies
- Promotion of inclusive legislation
- Challenging systemic prejudices
- Supporting human rights protection

These features reveal how these three dimensions work together synergistically - educational activities build understanding and capacity, development projects provide practical experience in applying justice principles, and public discourse engagement allows for scaling these insights to influence broader societal structures. This comprehensive approach ensures that social justice isn't just taught theoretically but is actively practised and promoted at multiple levels of society.

Concluding Key Findings

These analyses show how these factors of Baha'i community building activities connect with Johan Galtung's peace theories and ideas and his positive peace elements or blocks. By synthesizing analyses in *key findings A, B, and C*, within the boundaries of this research, we can attain a picture of how the Baha'i community building activities align significantly with Galtung's peace theories, particularly his concept of positive peace. The positive peace that its main elements build the infrastructure for peace with proactive and preventive natures. The following list is the result of this synthesis:

1. Addressing Structural Violence:

- **Educational Foundation:**

- Core activities directly tackle what Galtung identifies as structural violence by teaching justice, unity, and equality from early childhood.
- The systematic education of children and youth helps prevent the internalization of structural violence.
- Study circles build capacity for recognizing and addressing the structural factors of systemic inequality by creating a context for dialogue and reflection and changing perspectives on factors such as discrimination, prejudice, xenophobia, division and separation, violation of the rights of others. These reflections cause replacing those negative attitudes with positive approaches such as empathy, harmony, unity, acceptance, tolerance, and diversity.

- **Development Initiatives:**

- Social and economic development projects actively work to eliminate structural barriers identified by Galtung.
- Focus on fair resource distribution addresses economic inequalities.
- Projects supporting marginalized groups tackle institutional discrimination.

2. Cultural Peace Building (Addressing Cultural Violence):

- **Value Transformation:**

- Core activities promote values that counter what Galtung terms 'cultural violence'.
- Teaching appreciation of diversity and prejudice elimination challenges cultural supremacy
- Emphasis on unity in diversity aligns with Galtung's vision of cultural peace

- **Social Harmony Development:**

- Focus on inner peace and outer peace reflects Galtung's holistic approach.
- Promotion of empathy and understanding builds cultural bridges.
- Emphasis on consultation and collective decision-making creates new cultural patterns for peaceful coexistence and social cooperation.

3. Direct Peace Building:

- **Conflict Transformation:**

- Teaching dialogue, negotiation and deliberative decision-making skills are aligned with Galtung's conflict transformation approach.
- Emphasis on nonviolent problem-solving provides dialogue and consultation alternatives to direct violence to resolve conflicts of interest and disputes.

- Focus on consultative and cooperative problem-solving builds capacity for peaceful conflict resolution.

4. Building Positive Peace Elements (Peace Blocks):

The Baha'i activities directly contribute to what Galtung identifies as essential elements or blocks of positive peace:

a) Structural Elements:

- Equity and fairness in resource distribution
- Equal opportunity access
- Social justice implementation
- Inclusive decision-making processes

b) Cultural Elements:

- Respect for human rights
- Appreciation of diversity
- Solidarity and understanding
- Dignity for all individuals

c) Direct Interaction Elements:

- Dialogue between groups
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Peaceful conflict resolution
- Cooperative relationships

5. Systemic Integration:

The systematic Baha'i approach and practice particularly align with Galtung's structured framework of peace by:

- Operating simultaneously at multiple levels (individual, community, society).
- Addressing immediate and root causes of conflict.
- Creating mutually reinforcing positive peace structures.
- Building sustainable peace through integrated action.

6. Transformation Process:

The Baha'i community-building activities contribute to the positive concept of peace as a transformative process through:

- Long-term educational programs that change mindsets.
- Development projects that alter structural conditions.
- Public discourse that influences societal narratives.
- Building capacity for ongoing peaceful change.

7. Peace Infrastructure:

The three-pronged approach of Baha'i community building (education, development, discourse) creates what Galtung would recognise as peace infrastructure through:

- Sustainable educational systems to create a peace culture.
- Ongoing development initiatives to establish social justice, progress and welfare and remove social and economic inequalities.
- Established regular spaces for dialogue and consultation to create social harmony and collective action.

This analysis shows how Baha'i community building activities create a comprehensive and harmonic system that addresses all significant elements of Galtung's positive peace theories requiring structural and cultural transformation. This alignment does not remain within the theory framework. These activities and initiatives apply practical mechanisms for implementing his ideas about building positive peace as intellectual and social infrastructure through simultaneous attention to direct, structural, and cultural dimensions of peace.

Conclusion

Toward Adopting a Holistic Model for Positive Peacebuilding:

The Case of Bahá'í Community Building

At the end of this exploratory journey, we can ponder what insight this cognitive and analytical search adds to realizing Johan Galtung's idea of positive peace and the achievements of the scholarly field in this context.

Based on the analysis of the Baha'i community building activities and their relationship to positive peace, we can mention these key takeaways that contribute distinctively to peace scholarship and building peace as a proactive infrastructure for war prevention through the Baha'is paradigm and method:

◆ **Integrated Three-Dimensional Implementation Model**

The analysis reveals a holistic implementation model for positive peace that integrates three critical dimensions - educational processes, practical development, and public discourse - operating simultaneously rather than sequentially. This challenges the traditional linear approaches to peace-building by demonstrating that:

- Peace education is not just preparatory but must occur alongside practical implementation.
- Development initiatives serve as learning and exercise arenas and change mechanisms. They are changes that are grassroots-designed and implemented by communities rather than imposed from above.
- Participation in public discourse and its evolution is not just an outcome but an active component of transforming social insights into the essential elements for constructing peace and process as infrastructure.

This integrated approach suggests that establishing positive peace requires synchronous action across all three aspects of education, development, and discursive transformation rather than treating them as separate or sequential phases. This finding encourages peace scholars and actors to change their approaches to positive peace implementation by:

- Moving beyond the traditional `education first, action later` model.
- Recognizing the interdependence of personal transformation and structural and societal change.
- Understanding peacebuilding as a simultaneous rather than sequential process.

◆ **Systemic Sustainability through Multi-Level Coherence**

The analysis demonstrates that constructing positive peace as a social basement requires coherent action at multiple societal levels, each reinforcing the others. The holistic paradigm of Baha'i community building challenges conventional approaches that often focus on either top-down or bottom-up strategies by showing that:

- Individual transformation (through education and cultivating moral and social human virtues) is the foundation of structural and social change.
- Community-level actions serve as bridges between personal and societal transformation.
- Systemic change requires simultaneous movement at all levels of society.

◆ **Theoretical and Practical Contribution to Peace Establishment**

Understanding the Baha'is' method of establishing universal peace as their Faith duty and responsibility can contribute to peace scholarship and peacebuilding practices.

Theoretically, it expands the understanding of how positive peace can be systematically built and sustained. Actualizing Johan Galtung's structural and cultural peace theories in Baha'i actions provides a model for viewing peacebuilding as a cohesive system rather than compensatory activities, beyond assistance to rebuilding and repairing the physical damage and human traumas of war. This approach fosters a more integrated perspective on peace, revealing the interconnected nature of peacebuilding elements within a unified and proactive framework.

Practically, the Baha'is' model offers a replicable model that can be applied in diverse contexts, regions, and communities to implement positive peace effectively. It illustrates how various peacebuilding elements can be seamlessly and inclusively integrated and utilized, providing concrete examples of operationalising theoretical peace concepts. This model thus serves as a practical guide, bridging the gap between theory and practice in peacebuilding initiatives across different environments.

Chapter 3 described that the Baha'i Faith emphasizes humanity's oneness, eliminating prejudices and prohibiting violence, forbidding conflict and war, promoting justice, the unity of humankind, and global peace. This approach aligns with Johan Galtung's concept of positive peace, which includes the absence of violence and the presence of social justice and harmonious relationships. Baha'i teachings are founded on the unity of humanity regardless of gender, cultural, ethnic, religious, and class differences, and they support the elimination

of all forms of prejudice and the promotion of intellectual and religious tolerance. This inclusiveness creates social harmony, cohesion, and mutual respect, which are essential to a peaceful society by prohibiting and eliminating othering, xenophobia, and division. These teachings and principles are not merely theoretical and idealistic but are actively practiced by Baha'is through various community-building activities as part of their moral and conscientious duty.

Ultimately, as an entry, this study can open a contemplation context to politicians and peacebuilding actors on the `Baha'i community building` model. The model, intrinsically based on positive peace and applying a bottom-up approach, local ownership, and inclusive and non-discriminatory, can be adopted and utilized in infrastructural peacebuilding in the pre-conflict and post-conflict spheres. Baha'is` method can play a constructive role in post-conflict peacebuilding processes, given its theoretical and practical capacity and ability to create social harmony, cohesion, and reconstruction in cultural, social, and economic dimensions. At the same time, due to features such as the simultaneous and coordinated education of generations (children, adolescents, and adults) and the creation of a culture of acceptance, tolerance, cooperation, and constructive social relationships, and addressing the roots of tension and conflict such as prejudices, segregation, inequality, and poverty, it has extensive peacebuilding functions within the pre-conflict paradigm. This action model establishes positive peace - justice and a culture of peace - within the social fabric with all its social, economic, and cultural diversity. It actively, sustainably, and long-term eradicates the ominous and destructive roots of various forms of violence and war.

Building positive peace as infrastructure and the fundamental need of our world highlight the necessary change for current peacebuilding methods and paradigmatic change, as well as theoretical and practical revision and reconstruction of these approaches. This evolution will be fruitful by creating facilities for intellectual, moral, behavioural, cultural, social, economic, and discourse capacity building in the current methods. With a paradigm shift from the current tactical and remedial approach to a genuinely transformative and practically preventive model with a profound impact, peacebuilding methods can construct positive peace as an infrastructure in the global arena. To this transformation, the experiences of three decades of systematic growth and development of `Baha'i Community Building` are available for inspiration and adoption without any limitation. A model for adopting that transforms peace into a deep-rooted and durable matter in beliefs and individual and social treatments. A strong and resistant infrastructure against the destructive and war-inducing factors of prejudice, discrimination, profiteering, separatism, and alienation; a foundation based on the belief in the unity of humankind and universal peace.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Some Definitions for Peace

Scholars have made various efforts to achieve a definition of peace and its elements and aspects. They have endeavoured to overcome the lack, ambiguity and inadequacy of the definitions of peace and clearly describe its meaning. These defining attempts are aimed at creating foundations for the production of peace discourses that lead to structured actions based on theories that are formed on the basis of those discourses.

Dictionary definitions are usually divided into two types: descriptive definitions that use synonyms, antonyms, and examples, lack depth and complicate the understanding of the subject's nature. They define the subject with what it is not, such as peace, expressed as the absence of war. Another type is "prescriptive definitions" which aim to guide correct usage and establish its meaning. For example, in fields such as international law, prescriptive definitions of peace shape theories and influence political discourse. They are central to shaping our responses to social, political and moral challenges (Perrier, 2008).

Based on the nature of conceptual symmetry (or, in other words, binary or dichotomous), where the negative and positive poles of a concept (for example, peace and war) are mirror images (Goertz, 2022), Paul Diehl (2023) argues that conceptual symmetry with its impact on theorizing and causal inference may lead to incorrect theoretical and empirical assumptions about peace concepts. This incorrect identification and formulation result in ignoring common and non-common factors and elements that link peace and war. Hence, he suggests considering a **peace continuum** with a "grey area" that merits attention, and that is not a one-dimensional and fixed state but can be dynamic, with many and various factors and elements.

As Diehl listed in his remarkable research entitled 'Peace: A Conceptual Survey' (2023), we are faced with efforts that have conceptualized peace from different aspects and tried to provide a better intellectual and practical understanding of this subject, and in a sense, it can be said that each one can be seen as the manifestation of that grey area or belonging to it.

Instead of relying on top-down government interventions to shape peace, the **Everyday Peace Project** conductors take a bottom-up approach. By defining peace through more than 16 operational indicators in different areas of local life, they emphasize that peace is a concept shaped by the experiences and perceptions of community members and can vary between communities (Everyday Peace Indicators, n.d.; see also: Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2016; Mac Ginty, 2012; Firchow, 2018; Mac Ginty, 2021).

Throughout his peace research, Peter Wallensteen (2015), in the field of mainly post-war - especially civil war - puts forward the concept of **quality peace**, which emphasizes the conditions of stability beyond the absence of pure violence for sustainable peace. In his conceptualization, he specified three dimensions: predictability, dignity, and security, including stability, equal rights, and the rule of law, among others. In subsequent studies, he

refined this definition by emphasizing demilitarization and addressing the motivations for violence (Wallensteen and Joshi, 2021).

Davenport (2018) evolves the concept of quality peace while determining the **‘peace scale’**. He emphasizes a comprehensive understanding of relationships and classification based on behaviour, organization, language and values. According to him, quality peace requires preventive measures to address grievances, promote democratic institutions, protect human rights, and strengthen cooperation and mutual respect. His vision is consistent with the concept of **‘dynamic peace’** and requires continuous efforts to maintain and nurture inclusive and just societies.

According to Soderstrom et al. (2021), **‘relational peace’** differs from traditional peace concepts, which often focus on non-violence or formal agreements. It prioritizes the dynamics of relationships and emphasizes communication, understanding and cooperation for peaceful coexistence. It considers peace as a continuous process involving dialogue, empathy and solidarity between individuals and groups, as well as social justice and equality considerations. From this point of view, sustainable peace requires fairness and respect for human dignity, which extends beyond individual relationships and includes broader social structures and institutions.

The **‘peace triangle’** concept (Hoagland and Kovacs, 2010) emphasizes the link between security, development and governance in strengthening sustainable peace. Each of the three aspects plays a vital role in preventing the recurrence of conflict and ensuring lasting peace. Security aims to prevent violence and build trust; development focuses on social and economic progress and promotes democratic governance and accountable institutions for conflict resolution. From this perspective, effective coordination among actors and stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, civil society, and local communities, is essential to synergizing interventions in these areas and achieving lasting peace in conflict-affected societies.

Scholars like Stombom (2022) and Shinko (2022) have recently introduced the **‘agonistic peace’** concept, challenging traditional views of peace as merely the absence of conflict. Derived from the Greek word "agon"²⁶, meaning competition or struggle, agonistic peace acknowledges conflict between contradictions and differences as integral to social interaction. Instead of eliminating them, this approach advocates for managing differences constructively through dialogue, negotiation, and recognition of multiple perspectives. It emphasizes comprehensive conflict resolution and peace-building processes, promoting peaceful coexistence and cooperation amid disagreement and tension.

Different conceptualizations approach peace, especially from practical perspectives, and indirectly imply unique concepts. For example, the **‘liberal peacebuilding’** model (MacGinty & Richmond, 2007 & 2013; Richmond, 2022a) equates peace with the absence of war (negative peace) and includes democratic elections, Western-style institutions, human rights,

26. The term "agonist" comes from the Greek word "agon", which refers to contest or struggle, often used in sports or debate, and in any literary work (especially in Greek plays) is the dramatic contrast between the main characters (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)

and free market mechanisms (see also: Richmond, 2006; van Iterson Scholten, 2020). In contrast, **post-liberal** and **illiberal models** of peacemaking serve as a critique. Post-liberal peacebuilding (Richmond, 2011 and 2022; see also Selby, 2013; Cooper, 2007) prioritizes justice, equity and local perspectives and emphasizes positive peace and critical freedom theory. Accepts illiberal norms and may use authoritarian methods for stability.

In the conceptualization of peace, the role of different **theories of international relations** should not be ignored. A review of relevant sources shows how different theoretical frameworks, such as realism, liberalism, constructivism, Marxism, and critical theory, approach the concept of peace, focusing primarily on negative peace while offering varying degrees of attention to positive peace. Characterized by its pessimistic view of human nature and international chaos, **Realism** mainly emphasizes negative peace, understanding peace as the absence of war and stability achieved through power dynamics and self-interest. **Liberalism**, in contrast, provides more space for cooperation and the potential for positive peace, primarily through the theory of democratic peace and economic integration. However, the focus is mainly on negative peace and positive peace outcomes as facilitating conditions rather than intrinsic goals. **Constructivist Theories**, although emphasizing international norms, tend to focus on negative peace, with a cultural typology that presents various forms of peace mainly at the system level while lacking comprehensive attention to the components of positive peace. While incorporating concerns about economic justice, **Marxist Theory** still incorporates negative peace into its formulations, highlighting the equitable sharing of resources as the hallmark of a peaceful, socialist state. **Critical Theory** and other approaches, such as **Postcolonialism** and **Feminist Theory**, raise concerns for positive peace, like social justice and egalitarianism. However, these concerns often critique existing theories or international orders rather than comprehensive frameworks for achieving positive peace (Diehl, 2023; Richmond, 2022b & 2016; see also: Shukla, 2023).

Appendix 2: Peace Establishment Actions

II. Definitions

20. The terms preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping are integrally related and as used in this report are defined as follows:

- **Preventive diplomacy** is action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur.
- **Peacemaking** is action to bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.
- **Peace-keeping** is the deployment of a United Nations presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all the parties concerned, normally involving United Nations military

and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well. Peace-keeping is a technique that expands the possibilities for both the prevention of conflict and the making of peace.

21. The present report in addition will address the critically related concept of **post- conflict peace-building** - action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict. Preventive diplomacy seeks to resolve disputes before violence breaks out; peacemaking and peace-keeping are required to halt conflicts and preserve peace once it is attained. If successful, they strengthen the opportunity for post-conflict peace-building, which can prevent the recurrence of violence among nations and peoples.

(*An Agenda for Peace*, Boutros-Ghali, 1992, pp.11-12)

Appendix 3: Active Faith-based Organizations (FBOs) and Groups for Peace

We can make a notable list of international, national, and regional groups and organizations that are religious actors in peacebuilding. The list below is a short sample. Each of these groups, based on its own intellectual and ideological foundations or with an inter-religious approach, provides services in various fields of emergency aid, humanitarian assistance, social and economic development activities, education, establishing and promoting peace, human rights and justice. They provide opportunities and facilities for dialogue and mutual understanding between religious followers and intellectual and religious groups, as well as the elimination of religious prejudices, de-violence, coordination, and cooperation between people and communities without considering their beliefs. In better words, their services involve removing the damage caused by conflicts and wars and solving the causes of war-making issues. They are directly or indirectly active in establishing peace in the human world²⁷.

World Religious Organizations:

- 1 **Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BPF)** – Buddhist - The mission of this organization is to promote peace, social justice and environmental sustainability through Buddhist principles, and the priority of their services is focused on colored groups, natives and racial justice. <https://www.bpf.org/>
- 2 **Comunità di Sant'Egidio** - Christian (Catholic) - The Community of Sant'Egidio is a worldwide movement of lay people based on prayer, solidarity, ecumenism, and dialogue. Its members strive to keep peace and fight poverty. <https://www.santegidio.org/>
- 3 **Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR)** - Interfaith - An international, interfaith organization committed to nonviolence, peace, and justice. <https://forusa.org/>

27. Sections 'about us', 'our history', and other introductory pages on each organization's respective website were used to write this appendix.

- 4 **Interfaith Peacebuilding Institute (IPI)** - Interfaith - Focuses on promoting peace through interfaith dialogue, understanding, and cooperation. <https://www.cfcod.org/>
- 5 **Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW)** – Muslim - An international humanitarian organization that provides aid and development assistance in Muslim-majority countries and beyond. Its resources include guidance for faith-based organizations on delivering effective relief and development programs in post-conflict settings. <https://islamic-relief.org/>
- 6 **Pax Christi International** - Christian (Catholic) - A Catholic peace movement with a global reach, promoting peace, respect of human rights, justice, reconciliation, and nonviolence throughout the world. <https://paxchristi.net/>
- 7 **Religions for Peace (RfP)** - Interfaith - An international organization uniting religious communities to promote peace through dialogue and action. <https://www.rfp.org/>
- 8 **Soka Gakkai International (SGI)** - Buddhist - A Buddhist organization advocating for peace, culture, and education based on the teachings of Buddhism. <https://www.sokaglobal.org/>
- 9 **Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding** - Interfaith - Works to combat religious prejudice and create respect among people of all religious beliefs. <https://tanenbaum.org/>
- 10 **United Religions Initiative (URI)** - Interfaith - A grassroots organization promoting enduring interfaith cooperation for peace, justice, end religiously motivated violence, and healing for the Earth and all living beings. <https://www.uri.org/>
- 11 **World Council of Churches (WCC)** - Christian - A global fellowship of churches seeking unity, common witness, and Christian service to human needs, breaking down barriers between people, seeking justice and peace, and upholding the integrity of creation. <https://www.oikoumene.org/>

National / Regional Religious Organizations:

1. **American Jewish World Service (AJWS)** - Jewish - AJWS is a fully inclusive, anti-racist, multicultural organization based on Jewish teachings and human rights principles. It supports human rights and participates in social movements like the labour movement, the civil rights movement, the women’s movement, and the LGBTQI+ rights movement. AJWS aims and actions to end global poverty based on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion principles (DEI). <https://ajws.org/>
2. **Canadian Council of Churches (CCC)** - Christian - The Canadian Council of Churches identifies itself as a non-profit organization of Christian ‘unity in diversity.’ Their mission and witness are primarily carried out in the work of the Justice and Peace Commission, the Faith and Witness Commission, and their subcommittees. Some

current issues include anti-racism, human trafficking, nuclear weapons, Afghanistan, poverty, emergency planning, Interfaith relationships, the Millennium Development Goals, and the lack of progress towards their fulfilment. <https://councilofchurches.ca/>

3. **Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT)** - Christian - An American organization of Christians committed to nonviolent action and peacemaking in conflict zones around the world. Their mission is building partnerships to transform violence and oppression. <https://cpt.org/>
4. **Interfaith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA)** - Interfaith - Interfaith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA) - South Africa (headquarters) - was established in 2002 during Africa's first continent-wide interfaith summit, bringing together leaders from seven major faiths. IFAPA envisions a conflict-free Africa, fostering peace and harmony among people of all faiths. Its mission is to engage stakeholders, including governments and civil society, to establish peace in Africa, drawing on core religious values such as integrity, dignity, and justice. IFAPA focuses on priority areas such as women and youth, collaborating with interfaith organizations, civil society, governments, and the private sector. <https://www.devex.com/organizations/inter-faith-action-for-peace-in-africa-ifapa-99066>
5. **Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul** – Christian - Interfaith Action is an American organization that mobilizes volunteers from diverse faith and spiritual communities to support families and individuals striving to achieve stability and economic mobility, relieve the effects of poverty, and address its root causes. Interfaith Action provides critically needed shelter for families, free legal assistance, and emergency services related to food and clothing. <https://interfaithaction.org/>
6. **Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice (ICPJ)** - The mission of the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice – an American group - focuses on racial and economic justice. They address the root causes of violence resulting from oppression, poverty, environmental destruction, patriarchy, and war. Through education, community organizing, advocacy, and direct action, this council implements the love of nonviolence in all its forms. It is committed to working as a diverse society by dismantling systems of violence and building our collective capacity to live with Our shared values of peace, justice and environmental sustainability. <https://www.icpj.org/>
7. **Interfaith Peace-building Initiative (IPI)** – Interfaith - The Interfaith Peace-building Initiative (IPI) is a peace organization which has been working actively since 2003 to promote interfaith cooperation, a culture of peace, harmony, constructive dialogue and the Golden Rule. It is a nongovernmental peace organization legally registered with the Ministry of Justice in Ethiopia. IPI was established by concerned citizens from different religions in Ethiopia who strongly believe that religions should play an important role in building trust and promoting a culture of peace, healing and reconciliation. <https://www.uri.org/who-we-are/cooperation-circle/interfaith-peace-building-initiative>

8. **Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)** - Muslim - Serves as an umbrella organization for Muslims in North America, promoting peace and understanding through interfaith dialogue and collaboration, defence and promote of social justice, and socialization and civic engagement. <https://isna.net/>
9. **Jewish Peace Fellowship (JPF)** – Jewish - The Jewish Peace Fellowship (JPF) is an American organization that promotes peace and social justice from a Jewish perspective. Its activities and initiatives are geared towards advocating for nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution, supporting marginalized communities, and fostering dialogue and understanding among diverse groups. They are pursuing these goals by promoting nonviolence, supporting peace initiatives, advocating for human rights and interfaith dialogue. <https://www.jewishpeacefellowship.org/index.php>
10. **KAICIID, The International Dialogue Centre** - Interfaith - KAICIID is a Nigerian organization that fosters dialogue between people and communities that would otherwise not come into contact but whose collaboration is essential to creating effective and long-term solutions to global challenges. They work towards dialogue to promote religious pluralism, support human rights, provide a voice for vulnerable groups, counter hate speech, protect sacred sites, promote interfaith education and exchange, and build cohesive and inclusive societies. <https://www.kaiciid.org/>
11. **Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)** - Muslim - Advocates for the civil rights of American Muslims and promotes a positive image of Islam in society. They promote the Islamic and American values of mercy, justice, peace, human dignity, freedom, and equality for all. <https://www.mpac.org/about/>
12. **National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC)** - Christian - Represents Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, historic African American, and Living Peace churches in the U.S. Among their goals and activities are striving for peace and justice in the social, political, and economic order, serving people in need, cultivating relationships and dialogue with people of other faiths and ideologies, and commitment to racial, gender, and economic justice. <https://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/>
13. **Religions for Peace Australia Organisation** – Interfaith - The Objectives of Religions for Peace Australia encompass a range of initiatives to foster interreligious understanding, promote peace, justice, and human dignity, and advocate for religious freedom. These objectives include working with faith traditions and organizations to promote harmony in the Asia-Pacific region and globally, combating negative perceptions of religion, advocating for the recognition of indigenous spiritualities, and collaborating with various stakeholders, including governmental and intergovernmental agencies, to achieve social stability and cohesion. Religions for Peace Australia also seeks to promote peace education, facilitate dialogue between religious and political leaders, support vulnerable groups, and promote environmental stewardship. <https://religionsforpeaceaustralia.org.au/>

14. **Union for Reform Judaism (URJ)** - Jewish - The largest Jewish movement in North America, advocating for peace and social justice and promoting human and racial diversity and human equality and confronting racism, ableism, homophobia and other forms of oppression that cause people to be socially excluded. <https://urj.org/>

Appendix 4: Absence of Baha'i Faith in Academic Resources

The list below is a small part of the research sources reviewed about peace and peacebuilding for writing this treatise (more than 350 books and academic articles), in which the approaches, strategies, and actions of the Baha'i Faith and Baha'is are absent. The literature review and analysis chapter resources available on the previous pages can also be added to this collection.

The selection of these titles from the sources as a sample is based on the fact that the Baha'i religion in all fields of these sources, such as peace and peacebuilding, dialogue and conflict resolution, elimination of prejudices and hatred, dialogue between religions, unity of the nations world and human oneness, prevention and elimination of violence, education and training, justice, economy, development, human rights, women, children and youth and in moral, psychological, cultural, artistic fields, etc., has theoretical views and teachings and practical approaches but we cannot find any point or discussion about the views of the Baha'i faith in these references or the like.

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Acland, A. F. (2024). *Religious Hatred and Human Conflict: Psychodynamic Approaches to Insight and Intervention*. Routledge.

Allen, S. H. (2022). *Interactive Peacemaking: A People-Centered Approach*. Routledge.

Alger, C. F. (2002). Religion As A Peace Tool. *Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, 1(4), 94–109.

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Aravena, F. R. (Ed.) (2020). *The Difficult Task of Peace: Crisis, Fragility and Conflict in an Uncertain World*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Baillie Abidi, C. (2018). *Pedagogies for Building Cultures of Peace : Challenging Constructions*. Brill Sense.

Balvin, N. & Christie, D. J. (Eds.) (2020). *Children and Peace: From Research to Action*. Springer.

Barash, D. P. (2018). *Approaches to Peace : A Reader in Peace studies*. Oxford University Press.

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- Joshi, M. & Wallensteen, P. (Eds.) (2018). *Understanding Quality Peace : Peacebuilding After Civil War*. Routledge.
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- Kulnazarova, A. & Popovski, V. (Eds.) (2019). *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Approaches to Peace*. Palgrave Macmillan.

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Webel, C. & Galtung, J. (Eds.) (2007). *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies*. Routledge.

Appendix 5: Religions, Peace and Peacebuilding Approaches

1. Hinduism:

Hinduism (circa 1500-500 BCE) views peace as an individual and collective responsibility. The concept of `ahimsa` (`non-injury` and `non-killing`, the total avoidance of harming any living creature by deeds, words, and thoughts) and the idea of `dharma` (righteous living) are essential concepts in Hinduism (Kashikar, 2011; Phillips, 2008).

Religious source: The Bhagavad Gita, particularly chapters 2 and 16.

Active method: The **Art of Living Foundation** is an international organization founded by `Sri Sri Ravi Shankar`, dedicated to promoting mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being through meditation, yoga, and breathing techniques. While rooted in the spiritual traditions of Hinduism, particularly the Vedic philosophy, the teachings of the Art of Living are presented in a universal and non-religious way, appealing to people from diverse cultures and backgrounds. At the core of its teachings are principles like Ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truthfulness), and Atma (self-realization or knowledge of the soul), emphasizing inner peace, unity, and love for all. The foundation's holistic approach focuses on personal transformation as a means to foster harmony and well-being in society. In addition to individual well-being, the Art of Living is actively engaged in global humanitarian work, promoting peace, stress relief, and social service projects worldwide. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's vision for the foundation includes creating a space for dialogue between different religions and cultures to encourage global harmony.

2. Judaism:

Judaism (circa 1200-165 BCE) emphasizes pursuing shalom (peace) as a religious duty. Shalom (peace) is integral, signifying wholeness, harmony, justice, and a divine blessing and goal for humanity. Peacebuilding is pursued through justice (tzedek), reconciliation, and social responsibility through ethical laws and the promotion of social justice. The concept of `tikkun olam` (repairing the world) is often associated with peacebuilding efforts. (Gopin, 2002; Schwartz, 2017).

Religious source: The Torah, particularly Psalms and prophetic books like Isaiah.

Active method: **Rabbis for Human Rights** is an Israeli organization dedicated to upholding and promoting the Jewish tradition of human rights. The organization plays a crucial role in addressing human rights issues within Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. Since its founding, Rabbis for Human Rights has worked to defend the rights of marginalized groups, including minorities in Israel, Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, and foreign workers. It advocates for access to essential services like healthcare, shelter, education, and basic living standards and promotes justice in Israeli society.

3. Buddhism:

Buddhism (circa 563-483 BCE) emphasizes inner peace as a prerequisite for outer peace. Buddhist teachings on peace and peacebuilding are deeply rooted in the principles of nonviolence (Ahimsa), compassion (Karuna), and loving-kindness (Metta). At the heart of Buddhism is the understanding that inner peace leads to outer peace and that the transformation of the mind is essential for creating a peaceful society. Buddhism also emphasizes interdependence and the knowledge that the well-being of individuals and communities is interconnected. Peacebuilding in Buddhism often involves promoting dialogue, reconciliation, and non-violent conflict resolution, focusing on addressing the root causes of suffering, such as greed, hatred, and ignorance, to foster harmony and peace at all levels of society. (Sivaraksa, 2005; Chappell, 2000).

Religious source: The Dhammapada, a collection of sayings of the Buddha.

Active method: In 1989, the **International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB)** was established in Thailand by Sulak Sivaraksa and a group of Buddhist and non-Buddhist thinkers to practice social action for a healthy, just, and peaceful world.

4. Christianity:

Christianity (circa 30-33 CE) emphasizes peace as a central tenet based on Jesus' love, forgiveness, and reconciliation teachings. The concept of `shalom` in the Old Testament and Jesus' blessing "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9) are foundational in this religion. Central to Christianity is the call to love one's neighbor, even enemies, and to pursue peace

through non-violence and justice. Christian peacebuilding often involves efforts to resolve conflicts, promote justice, and heal divisions, both at the personal and societal levels. Many Christian traditions emphasize the importance of reconciliation through dialogue, forgiveness, and the pursuit of social justice as key elements in achieving lasting peace. Through faith, Christians are called to be agents of peace, working to transform broken relationships and unjust systems (Appleby, 2000; Farneubun, 2013; see also Compassion International, 2024).

Religious source: The Bible, particularly the New Testament teachings of Jesus.

Active method: The **World Council of Churches (WCC)** is an international ecumenical organization founded in 1948, dedicated to fostering unity and cooperation among Christian denominations worldwide. With over 350 member churches representing various traditions, including Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant, and others, the WCC promotes dialogue, shared worship, and collaboration on global issues such as peacebuilding, social justice, human rights, and environmental sustainability. Its mission is to work for Christian unity and to advocate for a more just and peaceful world through faith-based action and interfaith engagement.

5. Islam:

Islam (610 CE) views peace as an essential aspect of faith, with `salam` (peace) being one of the names of Allah. Islamic teachings on peace and peacebuilding are rooted in the concepts of justice (Adl), compassion (Rahma), and reconciliation (Sulh). In Islam, peace is achieved by establishing justice, protecting human dignity, and fostering mutual respect. The concept of "Salaam" extends to personal, social, and global dimensions of peace, encouraging Muslims to engage in dialogue, forgiveness, and conflict resolution. Additionally, Islam encourages efforts towards social justice, aiming to eliminate oppression and inequality as essential steps toward lasting peace in society. (Abu-Nimer, 2000 & 2003; Khan, 2021).

Religious source: The Qur'an, particularly verses like 8:61 and 49:9-10.

Active method: The **Muslim Peace Fellowship (MPF)** is an organization founded in 1994 dedicated to promoting non-violence, peace, and social justice from an Islamic perspective. As one of the first Muslim organizations focused on peacebuilding, MPF seeks to explore the spiritual and practical dimensions of Islamic teachings on peace, encouraging dialogue, reconciliation, and conflict resolution. It fosters understanding between different faith communities, advocates for human rights, and addresses issues such as poverty, injustice, and environmental sustainability, all in alignment with Islamic principles of justice and compassion.

These faiths share some common themes in their approaches to peace:

1. Individual responsibility for peace
2. The importance of justice and forgiveness
3. Non-violence as a principle

4. The interconnectedness of all beings

However, they also have unique perspectives and practices that reflect their specific theological and cultural contexts. Meanwhile, we should note that major world faiths have active methods, plans, or programs for peacebuilding in the current world. What is listed for each religion in this appendix is only a sample of those actions. For some other actions and activities, also refer to Appendix 3.

Appendix 6: Some of the Baha'i texts on the negation and elimination of violence and any kind of war and conflict

These texts are only examples of the numerous statements of the Baha'i Faith on condemning, denying, and prohibiting all disputes and conflicts.

Baha'u'llah:

Ye have been forbidden to commit murder or adultery, or to engage in backbiting or calumny; shun ye, then, what hath been prohibited in the holy Books and Tablets. (Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Para 19)

Adorn yourselves with the raiment of goodly deeds. He whose deeds attain unto God's good pleasure is assuredly of the people of Bahá and is remembered before His throne. Assist ye the Lord of all creation with works of righteousness, and also through wisdom and utterance. Thus, indeed, have ye been commanded in most of the Tablets by Him Who is the All-Merciful. He, truly, is cognizant of what I say. Let none contend with another, and let no soul slay another; this, verily, is that which was forbidden you in a Book that hath lain concealed within the Tabernacle of glory. What! Would ye kill him whom God hath quickened, whom He hath endowed with spirit through a breath from Him? Grievous then would be your trespass before His throne! Fear God, and lift not the hand of injustice and oppression to destroy what He hath Himself raised up; nay, walk ye in the way of God, the True One. No sooner did the hosts of true knowledge appear, bearing the standards of Divine utterance, than the tribes of the religions were put to flight, save only those who willed to drink from the stream of everlasting life in a Paradise created by the breath of the All-Glorious. (Kitáb-i-Aqdas, para 73)

Ye have been forbidden in the Book of God to engage in contention and conflict, to strike another, or to commit similar acts whereby hearts and souls may be saddened. A fine of nineteen mithqáls of gold had formerly been prescribed by Him Who is the Lord of all mankind for anyone who was the cause of sadness to another; in this Dispensation, however, He hath absolved you thereof and exhorteth you to show forth righteousness and piety. Such is the commandment which He hath enjoined upon you in this resplendent Tablet. Wish not for others what ye wish not for yourselves; fear God, and be not of the prideful. Ye are all created

out of water, and unto dust shall ye return. Reflect upon the end that awaiteth you, and walk not in the ways of the oppressor... . (Kitáb-i-Aqdas, para 148)

Beware lest ye shed the blood of anyone. Unsheathe the sword of your tongue from the scabbard of utterance, for therewith ye can conquer the citadels of men's hearts. We have abolished the law to wage holy war against each other. God's mercy, hath, verily, encompassed all created things, if ye do but understand. Aid ye your Lord, the God of Mercy, with the sword of understanding. Keener indeed is it, and more finely tempered, than the sword of utterance, were ye but to reflect upon the words of your Lord. Thus have the hosts of Divine Revelation been sent down by God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, and thus have the armies of divine inspiration been made manifest from the Source of command, as bidden by God, the All-Glorious, the Best-Beloved. (Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 25)

Strife and conflict befit the beasts of the wild ... Incline your hearts to the counsels given by the Most Exalted Pen and beware lest your hands or tongues cause harm unto anyone among mankind ... This Wronged One hath forbidden the people of God to engage in contention or conflict and hath exhorted them to righteous deeds and praiseworthy character (Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Tablet of the World [Lawḥ-i-Dunyá] p. 76 & 80).

Gird up the loins of your endeavor, O people of Bahá, that haply the tumult of religious dissension and strife that agitateth the peoples of the earth may be stilled, that every trace of it may be completely obliterated. (Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 13)

Verily I say, strife and dissension, and whatsoever the mind of man abhorreth are entirely unworthy of his station. (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 196)

Dispute not with any one concerning the things of this world and its affairs, for God hath abandoned them to such as have set their affection upon them. Out of the whole world He hath chosen for Himself the hearts of men - hearts which the hosts of revelation and of utterance can subdue. Thus hath it been ordained by the Fingers of Bahá, upon the Tablet of God's irrevocable decree, by the behest of Him Who is the Supreme Ordainer, the All-Knowing. (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, no. CXXVIII)

Abdu'l-Baha

Bahá'u'lláh has proclaimed and promulgated the foundation of international peace. For thousands of years men and nations have gone forth to the battlefield to settle their differences. The cause of this has been ignorance and degeneracy. Consider human ignorance and inconsistency. A man who kills another man is punished by execution, but a military genius who kills one hundred thousand of his fellow creatures is immortalized as a hero. One man steals a small sum of money and is imprisoned as a thief. Another pillages a whole country and is honored as a patriot and conqueror. A single falsehood brings reproach and censure, but the wiles of politicians and diplomats excite the admiration and praise of a nation. Consider the ignorance and inconsistency of mankind. How darkened and savage are the instincts of humanity! (The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 351)

O ye lovers of God! In this, the cycle of Almighty God, violence and force, constraint and oppression, are one and all condemned. (Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p.164)

I hope you are all happy and well. I am not happy, but very sad. The news of the Battle of Benghazi grieves my heart. I wonder at the human savagery that still exists in the world! How is it possible for men to fight from morning until evening, killing each other, shedding the blood of their fellowmen: And for what object? To gain possession of a part of the earth! Even the animals, when they fight, have an immediate and more reasonable cause for their attacks! How terrible it is that men, who are of the higher kingdom, can descend to slaying and bringing misery to their fellow-beings, for the possession of a tract of land! ... But war is made for the satisfaction of men's ambition; for the sake of worldly gain to the few, terrible misery is brought to numberless homes, breaking the hearts of hundreds of men and women! How many widows mourn their husbands, how many stories of savage cruelty do we hear! How many little orphaned children are crying for their dead fathers, how many women are weeping for their slain sons! There is nothing so heart-breaking and terrible as an outburst of human savagery! (Paris Talks, pp. 20-21)

Consider that there are two hundred and fifty million Christians and three hundred million Muslims. How much blood has flowed in their wars; how many nations have been destroyed; how many children have been made fatherless; how many fathers and mothers have mourned the loss of children and dear ones! All this has been due to prejudice, misunderstanding and imitations of ancestral beliefs without investigation of reality. All this has been due to prejudice, misunderstanding and imitations of ancestral beliefs without investigation of reality. If the Holy Books were rightly understood, none of this discord and distress would have existed, but love and fellowship would have prevailed instead. This is true with all the other religions as well. The conditions I have named will apply equally to all. The essential purpose of the religion of God is to establish unity among mankind. The divine Manifestations were Founders of the means of fellowship and love. They did not come to create discord, strife and hatred in the world. The religion of God is the cause of love, but if it is made to be the source of enmity and bloodshed, surely its absence is preferable to its existence; for then it becomes satanic, detrimental and an obstacle to the human world. (The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 245)

The world of humanity is one, and God is equally kind to all. What, then, is the source of unkindness and hatred in the human world? This real Shepherd loves all His sheep. He leads them in green pastures. He rears and protects them. What, then, is the source of enmity and alienation among humankind? Whence this conflict and strife? The real underlying cause is lack of religious unity and association, for in each of the great religions we find superstition, blind imitation of creeds, and theological formulas adhered to instead of the divine fundamentals, causing difference and divergence among mankind instead of agreement and fellowship. Consequently, strife, hatred and warfare have arisen, based upon this divergence and separation. (The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 485)

God is at peace with all his children; why should they engage in strife and warfare among themselves? (Abdu'l-Baha in London, p. 83)

Do not allow difference of opinion, or diversity of thought to separate you from your fellow-men, or to be the cause of dispute, hatred and strife in your hearts. (Paris Talks, p. 45)

For strife and warfare are the very destroyers of human foundations, whereas peace and amity are the builders and safeguards of human welfare. As an instance, two nations which have remained at peace for centuries declare war against each other. What destruction and loss befalls both in one year of strife and conflict -- the undoing of centuries. (The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 119)

The Cause of God hath never had any place for denouncing others as infidel or profligate, nor hath it allowed anyone to humiliate or belittle another. Contend and wrangle not with any man, and seek ye not the abasement of any soul. Disparage not anyone's name, and wish no harm upon anyone. Defile not your tongues with calumny, and engage ye not in backbiting. Lift not the veil from the doings of others, and so long as a person professeth to be steadfast, remonstrate not with him, nor expose him. (Baha'i Quotes, entry [Denounce](#))

If others hurl their darts against you, offer them milk and honey in return; if they poison your lives, sweeten their souls; if they injure you, teach them how to be comforted; if they inflict a wound upon you, be a balm to their sores; if they sting you, hold to their lips a refreshing cup. (Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 32)

It is not only their fellow human beings that the beloved of God must treat with mercy and compassion, rather must they show forth the utmost loving-kindness to every living creature. For in all physical respects, and where the animal spirit is concerned, the self-same feelings are shared by animal and man . . . The feelings are one and the same, whether ye inflict pain on man or on beast. There is no difference here whatever. And indeed ye do worse to harm an animal, for man hath a language, he can lodge a complaint, he can cry out and moan; if injured he can have recourse to the authorities and these will protect him from his aggressor. But the hapless beast is mute, able neither to express its hurt nor take its case to the authorities . . . Therefore it is essential that ye show forth the utmost consideration to the animal, and that ye be even kinder to him than to your fellow man. Train your children from their earliest days to be infinitely tender and loving to animals. If an animal be sick, let them try to heal it, if it be hungry, let them feed it, if thirsty, let them quench its thirst, if weary, let them see that it rests. (Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, pp. 174-175)

Appendix 7: Lesser Peace, Great Peace, Most Great Peace

Based on the explicit statements of Baha'u'llah and the explanations of Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi, the promised universal peace in the Baha'i Faith, briefly mentioned in the previous paragraph, will be established in three stages. It should be noted that, according to Baha'i Writings, these stages will occur gradually and progressively as a result of the experiences and the intellectual and spiritual maturation of humanity in the world.

The **`Lesser Peace`** is a political matter that establishes peace among nations through diplomatic agreements, treaties, and international conventions. This involves the cessation of conflicts and the maintenance of basic international order and security. The Lesser Peace is a preliminary step towards broader societal transformation and the realization of more profound peace and unity. The world's system is a global federal state, including a world parliament and an international supreme court, which, with an international police force, is responsible for legislating, managing, implementing, and protecting universal order and security. This system provides, ensures and protects countries' national interests within the global collective interests framework. The **`Great Peace`** represents an evolutionary and intermediary stage beyond mere political cessation of hostilities and reforming the governance and world order in lesser peace. It encompasses a deeper level of harmony, justice, and unity within societies and among diverse peoples worldwide. This stage entails eradicating various forms of prejudice, establishing global justice, and promoting collective well-being. The hallmark of the Great Peace lies in understanding the oneness of humanity and recognizing the inherent dignity, value, and rights of every individual according to Bahá'í teachings. At this stage, the Baha'í administrative order and institutions, which operate based on discipline, commitment and responsibility, unity, consultation, love, service, elections, and democratic communication among members and voters, will inspire and act as a counsellor and model for the global federal state. The **`Most Great Peace`** is the last evolutionary stage of the formation of universal peace. The Most Great Peace is the stage of realizing and manifesting the ultimate goal of humanity's spiritual and material evolution and growth based on Baha'í teachings. This is the high level of complete and enduring peace, harmony, and well-being for all inhabitants of the Earth. The **`Most Greatest Peace`** is not merely the absence of conflict and war but the presence of unity, justice, and love among all people. It is the fruit of humanity's collective efforts to build a world characterized by spirituality, social progress, and global participation following the principles and teachings of the Baha'í Faith. Baha'u'llah, Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi portray and qualify the concept of the **`Most Great Peace`** as the fulfilment of divine prophecies and God's plan for the spiritual, human and material advancement of humanity and the culmination of the evolutionary process of world civilization. Based on Baha'í Writings, worldly and administrative factors merge harmoniously with spiritual and divine principles in this final stage of human civilization. Nations, races and ethnicities will unite in opinion and action under the principles and teachings of the Baha'í Faith, which manifests in all aspects of human life: individual, social, economic, political, and cultural²⁸. Complete elimination of any prejudices and differences, equality of individuals in rights and access to opportunities for progress and prosperity, reconciliation, harmony, and cooperation between science and religion, economic justice, and advancement of sciences and arts, especially in the fields of medicine and healthcare, will be among the hallmarks of that era, as described and envisioned in Baha'í Writings as the **`Golden Age`**. (Baha'u'llah 2023a & 2023b; Abdu'l-Baha, 2021; Effendi, 2021; The Research Department of UHJ, 2021a; Nakhjavani, 2008; Gil, 2022; Lee, 1989; see also Mahmoudi & Khan, 2020; Hatcher, 2018).

28. This unity of thought and action should be understood within the framework of the concept of **`Unity in Diversity`**, one of the principles of Baha'i belief. For more info see: [Unity Through Diversity: A Bahá'í Principle and selected Baha'í Writings in Oneness, Unity in Diversity, Elimination of Racial Prejudice](#).

Appendix 8: The Revelation of Baha'u'llah and the Baha'i Faith

In Shiraz, Iran, in May 1844, a young merchant named Ali Mohammad Shirazi, known as The Bab (1819—1850), proclaimed himself the Promised Mahdi or the twelfth Imam of the Shiites. According to Shiite belief, the Hidden Imam had been in occultation for a thousand years, and Bab's appearance marked the end of his major occultation. He founded the Babi Faith, declaring his mission as a new manifestation of God in the succession of divine religions. His primary goal was to evangelize and prepare people for the imminent appearance of "He whom God shall make manifest" and "Baha'u'llah" (The Glory of God), whom he introduced as the founder of a new world order. The Bab faced strong opposition from Shia clerics in Iran, leading to his arrest, imprisonment, and execution in Tabriz in 1850. His followers suffered widespread persecution, with many killed, imprisoned, or exiled outside Iran under the orders of kings Mohammad Shah and Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, incited by the Shia clerics (Hutter, 2005; Saiedi, 2008; see also Amanat, 1989; Balyuzi, 1973).

During the Babi persecution, Husayn-'Ali Nuri (1817–1892), known as Baha'u'llah, a young nobleman and son of a Qajar court minister, was among those imprisoned and exiled. He embraced the Bab's teachings early on and became a prominent leader in the Babi Faith. After enduring four months of harsh imprisonment and torture in Tehran's Sáyáh-Chál²⁹ (The Black Pit/Dungeon), Baha'u'llah and his family were expelled to Iraq under Ottoman rule. He was recognized as a threat by Iranian authorities due to his leadership among the Babis; at the request of the Iranian government, he was exiled from Iraq to Istanbul in Turkey—the capital of the Ottoman Empire—in April 1863³⁰. Before leaving Iraq, during a brief stay in Baghdad's Najbiyyih Garden, known as the Garden of Ridván³¹, Baha'u'llah publicly declared himself as the 'Promised One' foretold by the Bab and other prophets, inaugurating the Baha'i Faith as a new chapter in religious history. (Momen, 2019; Effendi, 2023; see also Balyuzi, 1980; Taherzadeh, 1988).

Throughout his 39-year divine mission from the beginning of the reveal of divine revelation upon him in Sáyáh-Chál, Tehran (1853) until his passing in Akkā (1892) by the reveal of verses

29. The significance of the Sáyáh-Chál in Baha'i history lies in the fact that it was the location where Baha'u'llah received his first divine revelations during his imprisonment there. For more info refer to 'The Dawn-Breakers, CHAPTER XXVI' by Mohammad (Nabil) Zarandi, 1970 and *Sáyáh-Chál* in Wikipedia.

30. After spending four months in Constantinople (Istanbul), he was exiled to Adrianople (Edirne) in the same year, 1863. Finally, in 1868, he was transferred to Acre (Akkā) Castle in the Holy Land [Palestine], where he remained in prison for two years. His exile was followed by house arrest until the end of his life in 1892. For more info see: 'The Life of Baha'u'llah' by Baha'i International Community (BIC, 2023c).

31. "Ridván (meaning 'paradise'), in common Baha'i speak, refers most often to the Festival of Ridván—a 12-day yearly festival held to commemorate the 12 days Baha'u'llah spent in the Garden of Ridván in Baghdad in 1863. ... Ridván, together with the Declaration of the Bab, are designated by Baha'u'llah as "the two Most Great Festivals" and are attributed according to significance in the *Baha'i Calendar* and celebrated as such in the Baha'i world. The 1st, 9th and 12th days of Ridván are considered Holy Days, on which work should be suspended." (Zayda, 2014; BIC, 2024a); see also: Merrick (2016) and 'Garden of Ridván, Baghdad' in Wikipedia. For more detailed information about Baha'i Calendar see Time and the Bahá'í Era by Gerald Keil, 2008.

in the form of over 15000 tablets and some books directed to his followers, Islamic clerics, religious leaders, scholars, countries rulers and people of the world, Baha'u'llah expounded and elucidated upon the Baha'i principles of theology and ontology, moral and social teachings, interpretations of previous divine scriptures, philosophical and mystical insights, religious laws, as well as prayers etc. This authentic collection³² educates and enlightens the principles and methods that foster humanity's spiritual, intellectual, and material growth. Baha'u'llah teaches attaining individual and social happiness through establishing global peace, unity, and justice. The prosperity that is the will of God and the wishes of humankind, and its realization, is possible in accordance with the maturity of humanity and the needs of time and possibilities in this age. Considering his individual and social teachings, he states the human world will achieve this grand aim by creating a new world order he designed (Stockman, 2010; BIC, 1992, Momen, 2008)³³.

Appendix 9: Ruhi Books (Adult Study Circle - Children's Classes - Junior Youth Program)

Main Sequence	Children's Classes	Junior Youth Program
<p>Book 1: Reflections on the Life of the Spirit</p> <p>Book 2: Arising to Serve</p> <p>Book 3: Teaching Children's Classes, Grade 1</p> <p>Book 4: The Twin Manifestations</p> <p>Book 5: Releasing the Powers of Junior Youth</p> <p>Book 6: Teaching the Cause</p> <p>Book 7: Walking Together on a Path of Service</p> <p>Book 8 Unit 1: The Center of the Covenant and His Will and Testament</p> <p>Book 8 Unit 2: The Guardian of the Faith</p>	<p>Branch courses of Book 3 (new materials organized by sets):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teaching Children's Classes: First Branch Course of Book 3 ○ Teaching Children's Classes: Second Branch Course of Book 3 ○ Songbook: A Collection of Songs <p>Branch courses of Book 3 (material organized by grades)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grade 2 Unit 1: Reflecting on Experience 	<p>Junior youth program, Distinctly Bahá'í materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Spirit of Faith ● Power of the Holy Spirit ● Rays of Light <p>Junior youth program, Bahá'í-inspired materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Breezes of Confirmation ● Wellspring of Joy ● Habits of an Orderly Mind ● Glimmerings of Hope ● Walking the Straight Path ● On Health and Well-Being ● Learning About Excellence ● Thinking About Numbers

32. The credibility of this collection archived at the Bahá'í World Centre, stems from the fact that all these written are in the handwriting of Baha'u'llah or his scribes, authenticated by his seal or signature. Compared to the sacred texts of other religions, such as the Bible or the Qur'an, which were compiled based on oral traditions years after the passing of their prophets, this collection possesses a unique and unparalleled credibility. For more info see Taherzadeh, 1988, *Ch 1: The Word of God*. We should add to this collection - as Baha'i religious writing - over 27,000 letters, books, and treatises of Abdu'l-Baha as the 'Expounder of The Word (Verses) of God' and 17,500 correspondences, messages, treatises and books of Shoghi Effendi in his role as the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith which interpret and extensively elaborate on the principles and teachings of this religion. In addition, this collection includes hundreds of thousands messages, correspondences and world statements from the Universal House of Justice, which has been the Baha'i Faith's legislative and global leadership body since 1963 (Stockman, 2010).

33. For more info refer to **Part 1 (12 Chapters): Leadership and Authoritative Texts**, in *The Word of the Baha'í Faith* by R. H. Stockman (Ed.), 2022.

<p>Book 8 Unit 3: The Universal House of Justice</p> <p>Book 9 Unit 1: The Eternal Covenant</p> <p>Book 9 Unit 2: Passage to Maturity</p> <p>Book 9 Unit 3: A Sacred Enterprise</p> <p>Book 10 Unit 1: Accompanying One Another on the Path of Service</p> <p>Book 10 Unit 2: Consultation</p> <p>Book 10 Unit 3: Dynamics of Service on an Area Teaching Committee</p> <p>Book 11 Unit 1: Giving: The Spiritual Basis of Prosperity</p> <p>Book 11 Unit 2: The Institution of the Fund</p> <p>Book 11 Unit 3: The Law of Ḥuqúqu’Iláh</p> <p>Book 12 Unit 1: The Institution of Marriage</p> <p>Book 12 Unit 2: An Expanding Conversation on the Education of Children</p> <p>Book 13 Unit 1: Stirrings at the Grassroots</p> <p>Book 13 Unit 2: Elements of a Conceptual Framework</p> <p>Book 14 Unit 1: The Nature of Our Contributions</p> <p>Book 14 Unit 2: Dynamics of Our Participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grade 2 Unit 2: Lessons for Children’s Classes Grade 2 ○ Grade 3 Unit 1: Conducting Classes for Children in the Third Grade ○ Grade 3 Unit 2: Lessons for Children’s Classes Grade 3 ○ Grade 4 Unit 2: Lessons for Children’s Classes Grade 4 <p>Branch courses of Book 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The first branch course of Book 5, Unit 1: A Moment for Reflection ▪ The first branch course of Book 5, Unit 2: Guide to Texts I ▪ The second branch course of Book 5, Unit 1: A Conversation Among Friends ▪ The second branch course of Book 5, Unit 2: Guide to Texts II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observation and Insight ● The Human Temple ● Drawing on the Power of the Word
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The Ruhi Institute (2024). *Overview: Programs and Materials*. Ruhi Foundation. Viewed July 16, 2024. <https://www.ruhi.org/en/programs-and-materials/>

Appendix 10: Baha’i Community Building in the Path of Positive Peacebuilding

Building culture, creating harmony and establishing justice in the thoughts, contexture and function of society requires intellectual, cultural, and structural changes within that society, which necessitates capacity building through education and creating opportunities for direct public participation in changing individual and collective thoughts and behaviours. Within the framework of core activities and social action, Baha’i community-building seeks to implement this transformation as a foundational approach in the conduct and methods of the community.

The **Baha’i Core Activities** aim - study circles, children’s classes, junior youth programs, and devotional gatherings - is to foster inner peace, spiritual and moral growth, and a strong social connection and purpose. These activities create spaces for exploring spiritual and ethical

teachings, dialogue, and exchanging perspectives, which empower individuals by replacing feelings of powerlessness with a sense of agency and direction. It creates a communication environment that removes intellectual and mental barriers, such as prejudice and othering, avoiding others, and prohibitions on socializing with people with different thoughts and opinions. It builds individuals' capacities to engage positively in their communities, enhancing self-awareness, responsibility, and social cohesion.

Study Circles gatherings facilitate a deep exploration of spiritual and moral teachings, fostering critical thinking, consultation, and respectful dialogue for adults who participate in these study groups with any cultural and social background. Participants develop skills to resolve conflicts and address complex issues peacefully, reinforcing a culture of mutual respect and understanding. Children's Classes and Junior Youth Programs nurture moral and intellectual growth from a young age, promoting fairness, equality, and service principles. They empower the younger generation with the tools to contribute positively to society and take action towards eliminating discrimination, deprivation, and social justice. Devotional Gatherings strengthen the sense of unity and belonging, reducing isolation and anxiety. These meetings help to remove intellectual and ideological prejudices and create convergence and cohesion between individuals and groups by creating the opportunity to socialize and talk. They promote psychological and social security, motivating individuals to collaborate for common goals and enhancing collective well-being.

These learning environments and their educational processes realize the elements of the culture of peace and social harmony in forming thoughts, character, and individual and collective behaviour in those activities. They also form the intellectual and practical foundations of social justice.

Core activities, by cultivating mutual respect, empathy, and a sense of community provide the means and opportunities to challenge underlying beliefs and attitudes perpetuating social injustice, such as prejudice, othering, and discrimination. In this way, core activities pave the intellectual and practical path for **social and economic development programs** to achieve social justice and a harmonious society. These programs aim to empower individuals intellectually and practically, employing a bottom-up approach that centres on local ownership and direct community involvement³⁴. This approach addresses local needs, improves living standards, and promotes overall growth and well-being through community member participation. With this approach, `Baha'i social and economic development activities` aim to create inclusive and equitable societies by addressing the root causes of social injustice and fostering social harmony and cohesion through cooperation and mutual assistance. These initiatives align with Johan Galtung's positive peace blocks, emphasising social and economic justice. By ensuring access to `education and vocational training`, Baha'i initiatives empower marginalized groups, reduce economic inequalities, and promote comprehensive development. Education fosters critical thinking and leadership skills, enabling individuals to contribute to societal progress actively. `Supporting small businesses and group economic activities` helps bridge economic gaps and fosters a sense of shared

34. See **Appendix 12: Embodying Bottom-Up Approaches and Local Ownership in Baha'i Community Building**.

purpose and community. This approach ensures all members have equal opportunities to thrive through direct participation in shaping economic activities. `Consultation`, a cornerstone of Baha'i practice, is an inclusive `decision-making` process for designing development plans based on community members' opinions that reflect their real needs and demands. It ensures everyone's voice is heard and promotes shared responsibility and ownership. This participatory approach resolves conflicts peacefully and aligns individual and collective interests³⁵. FUNDAEC Institute in Colombia is a clear example of the Baha'i development-oriented approach based on education. This institute uses various methods to develop individual and social capabilities in educational and executive fields. FUNDAEC is an example of an effort to realize social justice through education and empower community members to participate directly in social transformation to progress and well-being³⁶.

Participation in public discourses is another social activity of Baha'is. They actively address systemic issues leading to conflicts, such as discrimination, poverty, economic and social deprivation, and human rights violations. They are trying to promote a culture of unity, justice, and mutual understanding. The Baha'i World Community promotes this partnership in interaction and dialogue with international organizations such as the United Nations, , United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), European Union (EU) and African Union (AU), governments and universities, media and publishing activities at global, national and local levels. This engagement strengthens social cohesion and positive peace by emphasizing unity, supporting social justice, and integrating spiritual and material development. They engage in dialogue with various religious and cultural groups to build bridges of understanding and mutual respect, mitigating prejudices and misunderstandings. This interaction fosters a sense of collective purpose and enhances social harmony³⁷. Baha'is help reduce social unrest by addressing systemic inequalities and advocating for policies promoting equality and marginalized groups' rights. They confirm gender equality and other social justice principles that support inclusive and equitable development³⁸. By highlighting the necessity of consultative decision-making and promoting this method, they intend to strengthen trust and cooperation between community members. It guarantees that all voices are considered and that public and group needs and demands are raised and dealt with. This method, which leads to the opportunity to solve problems and meet needs, becomes the basis for the realization of social justice. In leadership and representation, like other aspects of personal and social

35. For more awareness see: **Consultation: Extracts from the Baha'i Writings**, by The Research Department of UHJ, 2021; **Consultation: A Universal Lamp of Guidance**, by John Kolstoe, 1988; **Book 10, Building Vibrant Communities (unit 2): Consultation**, by Ruhi Institute, 2017; see also **Consultation** by Smith and Ghaemmaghami, 2022.

36. See **Appendix 11** and for more information about resources and educational programs and activities of this institution, refer to: Fundaeec.org

37. See: **One Common Faith**, by Baha'i International Community, 2023; **Divine Educators**, by Farnaz and Bijan Ma'súmián, 2005; **Cultural Diversity**, by The Research Department of the UHJ, 2022.

38. For e.g. refer to: **Women**, by The Research Department of the UHJ, 2021; **Advancement of Women A Bahá'í Perspective**, By Janet and Peter Khan, 2003.

life, Baha'i teachings stress integrity and ethical conduct patterns³⁹. Baha'i participation in public discourse, emphasizing ethical principles such as honesty, trustworthiness, and service to others, elevates the moral tone of social conversations. `Service-oriented projects` in various social and economic fields undertaken by Baha'is focus on serving with honesty and integrity, nurturing a culture of kindness and cooperation that contributes to social peace. Encouraging individuals to work for the collective welfare helps mitigate self-centred behaviours that can lead to social conflicts. Another social teaching of the Baha'i Faith is the elimination of extremes of wealth and poverty through efforts to achieve a fairer distribution of wealth and resources and address root causes of poverty while empowering individuals and communities to work towards progress and collective prosperity actively. The Baha'i discourse simultaneously considers individuals' and communities' material and spiritual needs⁴⁰. As we see in the balanced and parallel implementation of `core activities` and `social and economic development plans`, they promote a balanced approach to development to prevent discontent and despair from neglecting any aspect. At the same time, it is emphasized on balanced use and protection of resources and environment to meet people's needs. A value-based framework for development initiatives ensures sustainable and equitable progress and contributes to long-term social stability. Emphasizing moral values such as compassion, humility, and service strengthens the community spirit, supporting peaceful coexistence.

Searching the keyword `Public Discourse` on the website of `Baha'i World News Service` reveals a long list of participation activities of the Baha'i World Community in various events, dialogues and actions at local, national and international levels⁴¹. For example The Geneva Office of the Baha'i International Community (BIC) on November 11, 2022, hosted a panel discussion at the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) headquarters to explore how the development of agricultural educational systems can address the challenges and realities of young small-scale farmers in rural areas⁴².

In summary, Baha'is are obligated and committed to implementing their religious teachings to achieve human unity and global peace. Their community building, including core activities and social actions, is rooted in Baha'i ethical and social teachings and is a movement towards realizing these principles. This multifaceted effort encompasses education, culture building, and people's inner and social transformation. Through these endeavours, peace is achieved in alignment with the essence and elements of positive peace, as defined by Johan Galtung. This comprehensive peace addresses the internal and external aspects of individual and collective life within society. It fosters justice, a culture of peace, and harmonious relationships, reflecting Galtung's concept of positive peace within the community. By

39. For more information, refer to: **Compilations on Baha'i Administration**, by Baha'i International Community, 2023.

40. For e.g. see: **The Prosperity of Humankind**, by Baha'i International Community, 1995.

41. For e.g. see: **Luxembourg: Overcoming passivity through community-building, June 27, 2024**.

42. See: **Food Security: Agricultural resilience depends on education of young farmers, says BIC, Nov 21, 2021**. See also a new statement released by the New York Office of the Baha'i International Community (BIC), July 2024 – Titled: **In the Vanguard: The Role of Youth in an Ever-Advancing Global Society** - explores the profound potential of young people in fostering societal transformation and contributing to an ever-advancing global society (BWNS, August 8, 2024 & BIC News, Aug 12, 2024).

rejecting all forms of violence and fostering individual and collective learning, the Baha’i community focuses on the education and capacity building of children, adolescents, and adults to lay the foundations for inner and social peace. Core activities, such as study circles and youth programs, promote self-awareness, unity, and social responsibility, creating an environment conducive to personal and community well-being. Social and economic development initiatives address root causes of conflict by promoting justice, equality, and community empowerment, ensuring that all individuals have the opportunity to thrive. Participation in public discourse emphasizes unity, justice, and mutual understanding, bridging diverse groups and fostering a culture of cooperation and ethical conduct. Together, these efforts address the root causes of conflict and nurture a sustainable culture of peace, aligning with Johan Galtung's concept of positive peace that encompasses harmonious relations, justice, and unity. Through these integrated strategies, the Baha’i community works towards a world where inner tranquillity and social harmony prevail, empowering individuals and communities to contribute to the common good. Thus, based on the provided analysis, it can be concluded that Baha’i community building, including its strategies and methods, acts as a positive peacebuilder in engaged communities⁴³.

	Activity	Peace Culture	Social Harmony & Social Justice
Core Activities	Children's Classes	Teaching values of tolerance and solidarity	Fostering empathy and cooperation among children, Promoting respect for diversity and human dignity
	Junior Youth Groups	Encouraging nonviolent problem-solving and mutual respect	Fostering a sense of shared responsibility and social harmony, Empowering youth to address social injustices
	Devotional Gatherings	Promoting nonviolent communication and dialogue	Fostering spiritual and social unity, Encouraging respect for all individuals
	Study Circles	Encouraging cooperative learning and mutual respect	Promoting values of social justice and equality, Fostering a culture of peace and understanding
Social and Economic Development	Education Initiatives	Ensuring equitable access to quality education	Fostering mutual respect and cooperation among students, Promoting social justice and addressing systemic inequalities
	Healthcare Services	Providing equitable access to healthcare	Fostering community health and well-being, Addressing health disparities and promoting human dignity
	Economic Empowerment Projects	Creating opportunities for economic advancement	Encouraging cooperative economic practices, Addressing economic inequalities and promoting fair resource distribution

43. To complete this analytical review, mentioning two features will further clarify and help better understand the approaches of the Baha'i community building activities. These two features are the `bottom-up approach` and `local ownership`. For more detail refer to **Appendix 12: Embodying Bottom-Up Approaches and Local Ownership in Baha’i Community Building**.

	Environmental Sustainability Programs	Promoting sustainable practices and environmental respect	Encouraging collective responsibility for conservation, Addressing environmental injustices and ensuring equitable access to resources
Participation in Public Discourses	Interfaith Dialogue	Promoting mutual respect and tolerance	Fostering empathy and cooperation among different faiths, Encouraging understanding and reducing prejudices
	Human Rights Advocacy	Promoting and protecting fundamental human rights	Fostering a sense of shared responsibility and collective well-being, Addressing systemic injustices and advocating for equitable treatment
	Gender Equality Promotion	Ensuring equal opportunities and treatment for all genders	Encouraging respect for gender diversity and nonviolent interactions, Promoting collaboration and mutual respect between genders
	Environmental Sustainability Discussions	Promoting sustainable practices and environmental respect	Fostering collective responsibility for conservation, Addressing environmental injustices and ensuring equitable access to resources
	Peacebuilding Initiatives	Encouraging nonviolent conflict resolution and dialogue	Fostering reconciliation and empathy among conflicting parties, Addressing root causes of conflict, such as inequality and injustice
	Educational Contributions	Promoting equal access to education and knowledge	Encouraging critical thinking, tolerance, and nonviolent communication, Fostering intellectual collaboration and mutual respect

Table 8 - Baha'i Community Building and Positive Peace Blocks

Appendix 11: Foundation for the Application and Teaching of Science (FUNDAEC)

The FUNDAEC Institute offers a compelling example of how Baha'i principles can be translated into concrete actions that promote social justice. This Colombian organization embodies the Baha'i approach to community development by focusing on education, health, and economic empowerment as pillars for building a more equitable society.

Education as a Catalyst for Change: FUNDAEC's educational initiatives, such as the Tutorial Learning System (SAT), exemplify the belief in education as a fundamental tool for social transformation. By providing alternative secondary education and fostering a culture of service, SAT empowers young people to become agents of change within their communities. This aligns with the Baha'i emphasis on the importance of education for individual and societal progress.

Health and Well-being as Foundations of Equity: FUNDAEC's focus on health services and community-based healthcare initiatives demonstrates the organization's commitment to improving the well-being of its constituents. By addressing health disparities, FUNDAEC contributes to creating a more equitable society where everyone has access to essential

healthcare services. This aligns with the Baha'i principle of the oneness of humankind, which emphasizes the importance of caring for the physical and spiritual well-being of all people.

Economic Empowerment as a Path to Justice: FUNDAEC's economic development programs, including support for cooperative enterprises and sustainable agriculture, exemplify the Baha'i belief in the dignity of labor and the importance of economic self-sufficiency. By providing opportunities for individuals to earn a livelihood and contribute to their communities, FUNDAEC helps to reduce poverty and inequality. This approach aligns with the Bahá'í emphasis on the importance of social and economic justice.

In conclusion, FUNDAEC serves as a powerful example of how Baha'i principles can be applied to create tangible and lasting change. By focusing on education, health, and economic empowerment, the institute contributes to the building of a just and equitable society. FUNDAEC's work demonstrates the transformative power of the Bahá'í approach to community development, inspiring others to follow a similar path.

Appendix 12: Embodying Bottom-Up Approaches and Local Ownership in Baha'i Community Building

Mentioning two features will further clarify and help better understand the approaches of the Baha'i community building activities. These two features are the `**bottom-up approach**` and `**local ownership**`.

Analysts of peacebuilding activities criticize `top-down approaches`⁴⁴ and consider them inefficient and unsuccessful due to their lack of compliance with the needs and culture of the peacebuilding project's target community. They mainly emphasize the need for a `bottom-up approach` and `local ownership` (Jeong, 2002; Gawerc, 2006; Cutter, 2005; Chetail & Jütersonke, 2015; Call, 2015; Leite et al. 2018). These two terms overlap in concept and function, and local ownership is the practical realization of the bottom-up approach. This approach states that sustainable and effective peace is achieved when people and local communities play a central and active role in creating peace. This role is fulfilled through the active participation, leadership, and decision-making of local people as stakeholders, requiring their full engagement and complete responsibility for the necessary actions to establish peace.

44. A significant part of these criticisms point to the nature of Western liberal democracy - composed of democratization and marketization based on liberal and neoliberal Western political-economic schools, which are directly and indirectly injected into conflict societies. Due to cultural inconsistencies, including conflicts with traditional, religious, gender and ethnic beliefs and values, these plans face resistance and rejection and cause challenges and failures in peacebuilding activities. For more information, e.g. see: David, 2002; Paris, 2004; Barnett et al., 2007; Murshed, 2019; Lidén, 2020; Smith, 2021).

In this approach, achieving the objectives of peacebuilding programs requires empowering individuals and communities for their active participation. Educational programs are the main tool for this capacity building, equipping people with the necessary knowledge and skills⁴⁵. Active people participation involves identifying problems and designing and implementing solutions by local individuals and groups. It is enriched by consultation between authorities and community members to gain a more accurate understanding of community needs. The collaborative and consultative effort helps in hearing the voices of individuals and groups at the core and margins of society by organizing community members and using their individual and collective cooperation. It also creates leadership, management, and collective action to carry out the necessary activities to develop and strengthen the structures, institutions, and facilities needed for sustainable peace. Another aspect of the bottom-up approach is sensitivity to cultural, social, and economic contexts, which reduces or eliminates mental and cultural resistance to solutions and plans that are considered alien to society's spirit, thoughts, and way of life and helps gain community acceptance and support. Based on the intellectual participation and support of stakeholders and their direct and clear understanding of the target community's problems and challenges, this approach leads to more realistic solutions and actions tailored to their needs and conditions. It can work towards reducing inequalities and bridging social and economic gaps through the fair distribution of resources and opportunities, promoting social justice, and fostering comprehensive cultural, economic, social, and political development. Meanwhile, the active participation of community members strengthens trust and solidarity, fostering a more significant commitment to the peacebuilding process through the perception that they are the owners and are responsible for the community's improvement and progress. This approach shapes the concept of local ownership, ensuring a sense of belonging, being heard, and addressing needs and desires. The sense of duty and responsibility to participate in achieving benefits for both individual and public good allows the peacebuilding process to sustainably flow from positive personal and collective thoughts, decisions, and feelings, resulting in deep-rooted, resistant, and enduring outcomes (UNDP & NUPI, 2017; Interpeace, 2018; Donais, 2021; Richmond, 2021; Lee, 2021; Odendaal, 2021; Saaida, 2023; see also: Shinoda, 2008; Pouligny, 2009; Paffenholz, 2009; Hellmüller & Santschi, 2014; Lee, 2019).

Based on the above description and the detailed explanation of Baha'i community building, it is clear that the positive peacebuilding established in the community fundamentally relies on a `bottom-up approach`. This approach involves `local ownership` and the `direct, active participation of community members`. Community members engage in a consultative group process throughout all stages, including identifying needs and problems, reflection and examination, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation. Initiatives and actions arising from such a process primarily align with the needs and culture of the decision-making and implementing community, thus eliminating opposition, resistance, and tensions during implementation. This alignment and harmony in decision-making and execution are achieved through education and the cultivation of the `Baha'i consultation` method. This method provides a frame for discussing issues, sharing ideas, and reaching collective consensus,

45. For more detail see: **A Culture of Learning** by Karlberg & Smith in R. H. Stockman (Ed.), *The World of the Baha'i Faith*, 2022.

supported theoretically and practically by community members, free from opposition, resistance, and sabotage, and executed based on a spirit of unity in opinion and action⁴⁶. This ensures that all voices are heard and decisions reflect collective wisdom and community needs. Simultaneously, the Baha'i management model fosters group and participatory leadership, where groups responsible for managing affairs and implementation are elected through free and democratic elections, without advertisements and the pressures and biases arising from them. This structure promotes inclusivity and shared responsibility⁴⁷.

The integrated development approach, encompassing the spiritual, intellectual, and practical capacity building of community members on the one hand and the socio-economic development of the community on the other, is carried out through education and equipping individuals with the knowledge, abilities, and intellectual and executive skills for decision-making and action. This individual and social empowerment combines personal, spiritual, moral, and intellectual development with social and economic development, addressing various aspects of human welfare, including health, literacy programs, education, environmental sustainability, the promotion of human rights, gender equality, economic self-sufficiency, and social justice⁴⁸.

Baha'i community building is inherently based on spiritual principles of unity, justice, peace, and service to humanity, working towards establishing foundational principles committed to the public good. So, its measures are not confined to local community building. Baha'i communities, in addition to promoting and strengthening constructive public discourses, often collaborate with other organizations and institutions, share their experiences and learnings, and contribute to broader social changes. This social cooperation is also based on community members' active intellectual and practical engagement and is not limited to the activities of elites or selected persons. It is a responsibility and action belonging to every community member, based on understanding and feeling of individual and collective ownership towards their roles and social duties.

In summary, the Baha'i approach to community building seeks to create cohesive, resilient, and prosperous communities without conflict, tension and conflict based on harmonious, respectful, and constructive relationships. Focusing on local ownership and active participation makes these communities better equipped to face their challenges and achieve sustainable peace and development. Emphasizing moral and spiritual growth, along with creating awareness, understanding, and conscientious, intellectual, and practical commitment, ensures that the progress achieved in establishing justice, unity, and lasting, inclusive peace is protected. These principles are the pillars of positive peace, woven into Baha'i community building through people's spiritual, intellectual, and practical empowerment in human relationships and social life.

46. For more info refer to : **Consultation: Extracts from the Baha'i Writings**, by The Research Department of UHJ, 2021 and **Book 10, Building Vibrant Communities (unit 2): Consultation**, by Ruhi Institute, 2017.

47. For more information, see: **Compilations on Baha'i Administration**, by Baha'i International Community, 2023; and **The Baha'i Administrative Order** by Todd Smith, 2022.

48. For examples refer to **'For the Betterment of the World'** by Baha'i International Community, 2023.