

A lofty aim

“The conferences will aim at carrying to the friends in every land the spiritual energy released by the gatherings in the Holy Land, as the community prepares for a dynamic thrust forward with the launch of the Nine Year Plan. These conferences, then, will give the participants an opportunity to gain greater insight into the nature of the spiritual enterprise in which they are engaged, a sense of the distance traversed thus far, and a deeper understanding of the exigencies of the current stage in the unfoldment of the Divine Plan. They will strive to enhance appreciation of the privilege of being part of a community that has set its gaze upon the spiritual and material transformation of society, and of the bounty of being connected by bonds of love and camaraderie with brothers and sisters in a global effort, each one labouring within the same framework for action, all united under the sheltering shadow of the Covenant.”

15 September 2021, Universal House of Justice

COLLATED BY THE
SOUTH ISLAND
REGIONAL BAHÁ'Í
COUNCIL FROM
FRIENDS AROUND
THE MOTU



“During this period, the Bahá'í world will be focused on a single aim: the release of the society-building power of the Faith in ever-greater measures. The pursuit of this overall aim will require a further rise in the capacity of the individual believer, the local community, and the institutions of the Faith. These three constant protagonists of the Plan each have a part to play, and each one has capacities and qualities that must be developed. However, each is incapable of manifesting its full potential on its own. It is by strengthening their dynamic relationships with one another that their powers are combined and multiplied.”

30th Dec 2021, Universal House of Justice

What we achieved

Across the motu:

- We held **10 Conferences** from Golden Bay to Invercargill
- A total of **548** adults, youth, junior youth and children attended these conferences and participated in meaningful discussion, building stronger bonds of friendship, expressing spiritual themes in creative ways, and receiving the spiritual energies released from the Holy Land
- **186** of these participants were friends of the Faith
- **94 children** enjoyed a children's programme designed to reflect their spiritual qualities
- **56 youth and junior youth** participated in exploration of spiritual themes or supporting the children in their learning

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Themes explored:

- Bahá'u'lláh's vision for humanity
- How far we've come
- Building Vibrant Communities
- Educational Endeavours
- Contributing to Social Transformation

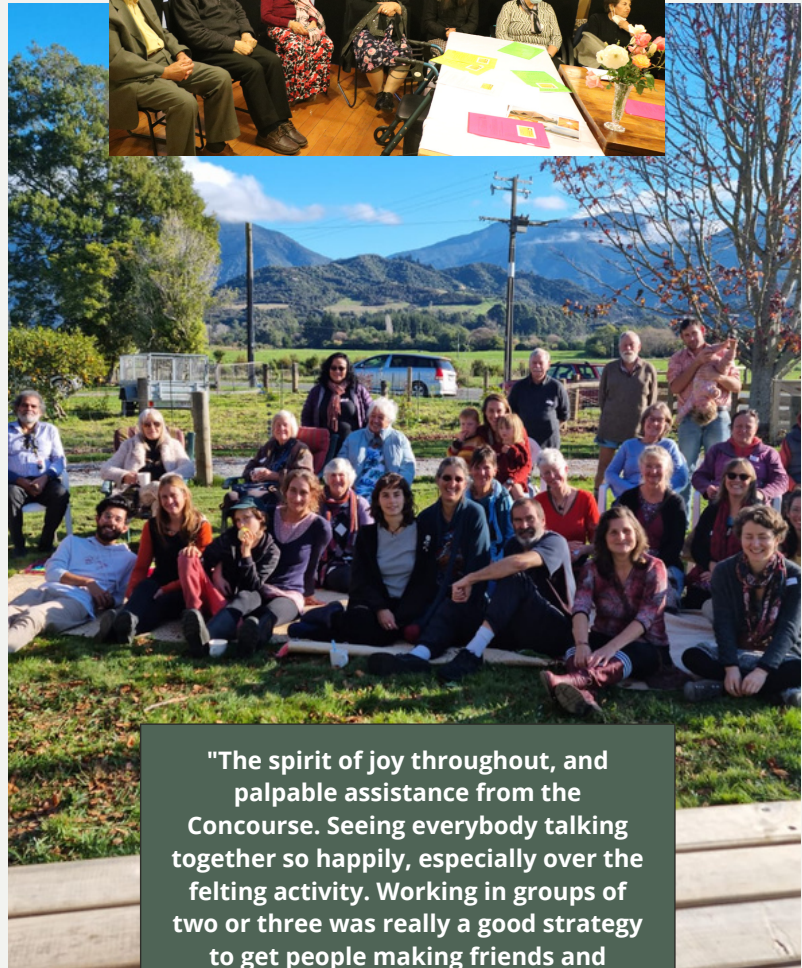
Conference resource bank:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/2/folders/0AAzL0wp2FyeLUk9PVA>

Key Learnings

WHAT CAPACITIES HAVE BEEN BUILT OR FURTHER STRENGTHENED IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY, INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUALS?

- **Strengthened mutual support and assistance between individuals, institutions and communities**
 - Regional Baha'i Council met with all Local Spiritual Assembly before the conferences
 - Collaboration of Local Spiritual Assemblies of near and far communities
 - Willingness of facilitators to travel and support other conferences especially in light of Covid
- **Facilitating and engaging with artistic endeavours at the grassroots**
 - A truly diverse range of artistic endeavours from collective collages, harakeke weaving to musical performances and dramatic presentations
- **Capacity to invite friends and have meaningful conversations and nurture outward-looking communities**
 - Almost 200 friends of the Faith participating
 - Facilitators skilfully engaging and supporting participants to explore what a vibrant community would look like



"The spirit of joy throughout, and palpable assistance from the Concourse. Seeing everybody talking together so happily, especially over the felting activity. Working in groups of two or three was really a good strategy to get people making friends and talking. Everyone I spoke to afterwards had really enjoyed the day, and felt the energy there was special, and were interested in continuing dialogue in some form, and doing more felting."

- Golden Bay Conference reflections



Moving forward

HOW MIGHT YOUR EXPERIENCE
AND NEWLY STRENGTHENED
CAPACITIES BE CARRIED
FORWARD IN AN ONGOING
PATTERN OF COMMUNITY LIFE?

- **Listening to the needs and realities of our neighbourhoods, communities and clusters**
- **Continue to build our capacity to invite friends, engage in meaningful conversations on the conference themes, and nurture outward-looking communities.**
- **Accompany each other, growing mutual support and assistance**
 - the sharing of resources, artistic ideas, skills and talents across the motu
- **Create spaces to engage with families, junior youth, children and youth such as youth gatherings and children's festivals as well as further conferences (of larger or smaller scale)**
- **Continue to strengthen the collaboration and unity of vision of the 3 protagonists and our capacity to draw upon Divine Assistance**



- **Strengthening the community building process through the Institute process.**
 - Collectively learning how to facilitate, tutor using the materials as a portal to children's classes, devotional meetings, firesides, junior youth groups and study circles
- **Learning how to delve deeper into our neighbourhoods and networks**
 - Utilising Ruhi Book 1 and 2 to build our capacity to have meaningful conversations on spiritual themes

Stories from the friends



QUEENSTOWN

The Queenstown friends creatively explored what a vibrant community looks like and enabled participants to have a vision of how to achieve this through the Institute and Community building process

From the conference, a Ruhi book one was initiated with 5 friends and growing and their children's class has grown to 17 children

INVERCARGILL

"It is clear that all of those who were invited and participated in some way, have moved closer to Baha'u'llah -thinking in terms of concentric circles. Conversations since the conference have advanced and friendships have been further strengthened. This is an ongoing process, which will stand our community in a stronger position in light of future expansion and consolidation activities."



PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE MORE LEARNINGS AND ANECDOTES WITH THE REGIONAL BAHAI COUNCIL

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