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Hope and support in Italy during a global health crisis

March 13, 2020

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MANTUA, Italy — In a time when many parts of the world are grappling with the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis, Baha'is in some of the most affected areas are finding ways to be of service to their societies. Years of experience with community-building activities have equipped them to respond with

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creativity and resourcefulness to the current circumstances.

Patterns of activity developed in Baha'i communities around the world have equipped them to respond to the crisis with hope and to be of service to their societies

In Italy, where preventive measures have now confined most people to their homes, communities continue activities that bring hope. Many such initiatives have temporarily moved online, with people holding video conference calls to provide support to one another, to pray together, and to advance the educational endeavors of the Baha'i community that build bonds of friendship and capacity for service to society.

A teacher of children's moral education classes describes how she has been working through these conditions: "I prepare some digital and audiovisual material for the class and distribute it online to families. The children do the work at home, and then discuss with their parents and siblings."

In other countries where schools are closed, Baha'is are remotely helping children with homework assignments. Children are also coming together in small online groups to help one another with their school work.

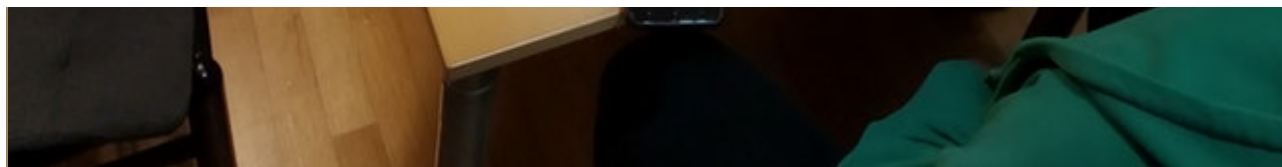
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The educational endeavors of the Baha'i community that build bonds of friendship and capacity for service to society continue to advance in the face of movement restrictions in Italy and other countries as families work together in their homes with online support.

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Baha'is in Italy are phoning family and friends, colleagues and acquaintances—simply to offer a voice of encouragement. Many of these calls have led to profound conversations and have strengthened bonds of friendship.

“This moment is making us realize that we are not invincible,” says a member of the Italian Baha'i community. “This is an opportunity for us to reflect on questions that, maybe at other times in our lives we do not spend enough time considering.”

In a letter sent to the Baha'is of Italy on Tuesday, the country's National Spiritual Assembly says: “We have seen countless examples of solidarity and loyalty among health workers, teachers, professionals of every kind, and responsible citizens, who have readily responded to this emergency, demonstrating the innate nobility of human beings. Our true nature is one of giving, serving, and contributing to progress.”

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