

Advancing Human Rights



In its work throughout the world, UUSC builds eye-to-eye partnerships to protect rights in humanitarian crises, advocate for the human right to water, promote workers' rights, and defend civil liberties.

“An eye-to-eye partnership is a partnership that offers respect and mutuality,” says UUSC Atema Eclai, UUSC’s director of programs, advocacy, and action. “The commonality of our partners is that we treat them as equals. . . . We don’t subsume them, we don’t make them part of us. We join them.”

In each area of its work, UUSC analyzes the context in which rights are violated — looking at race, class, and gender — and recognizes how systemic discrimination perpetuates injustice. Using a three-pronged approach, UUSC combines on-the-ground work with grassroots partners, outreach to members and supporters, and advocacy for changes in public policy.

Mission

UUSC advances human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing to challenge oppressive policies.

Vision

UUSC envisions a world free from oppression and injustice, where all can realize their full human rights.



Rights in Humanitarian Crises

In disasters and wars, inequalities are deepened. An individual’s identity — race, gender, class, religion, etc. — influences how and whether that person will be able to access aid and rebuild her or his life. UUSC defends the rights of marginalized groups in disaster response and long-term humanitarian crises. Whether supporting people in the wake of the Haiti earthquake or helping northern Ugandans return home after brutal war, UUSC works with local grassroots organizations serving oppressed populations in inventive ways. UUSC projects are responding to the drought and famine in East Africa, the earthquake in Japan, genocide in Darfur, and more.

Economic Justice

UUSC recognizes that workers’ rights are human rights. Throughout the world, millions of people face dangerous work conditions and inadequate wages, with informal workers — especially women and children — increasingly at risk. UUSC defends workers’ right to organize, advances the right to a fair living wage, and promotes fair trade — through innovative solutions that build on local experience, apply new knowledge, and create effective alliances. UUSC partners with a wide variety of organizations, from the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United to the Kenya National Alliance of Street Vendors and Informal Traders.





Environmental Justice

Almost 1 billion people lack access to clean drinking water. In a world where the United Nations has reported that more people now die from contaminated water than from all forms of violence, the human right to water — access to safe, sufficient, and affordable water for everyone — is more important than ever. UUSC's Environmental Justice Program defends that right, working with partners to hold governments and corporations accountable and stop water privatization — from striving to pass the Human Right to Water Act in California to helping people in Guatemala organize against gold mining that is damaging water supplies.

Civil Liberties

Guaranteed to every individual, civil liberties are fundamental rights that assure equal participation in government and provide protection from arbitrary intrusions. UUSC defends civil liberties and political rights both nationally and internationally. UUSC works with its Unitarian Universalist constituents and civil-rights activists to ensure protections from racial and religious profiling, end torture, and support human-rights activists in the Middle East. Projects have included voter-education campaigns in Egypt, workshops to build coalitions between UUs and Muslim Americans, and legislative advocacy demanding U.S. accountability for torture.



What You Can Do

- Stay informed with UUSC online. Keep your finger on the pulse of what's happening at UUSC through our website, e-mails, social media, and blog. You can read on-the-ground reports, watch videos about our issues, and share your thoughts. Learn more and take action at uusc.org!
- Become a UUSC member. Your membership gift supports UUSC's work, and you join a community of more than 40,000 UUSC supporters who share your ideals. We'll keep you up-to-date through regular mailings, action alerts, and a subscription to Rights Now, our newsletter. Join now at uusc.org/membership.
- Take part in a service-learning trip with the UU College of Social Justice (UUCSJ). An innovative collaboration between UUSC and the UUA, UUCSJ offers a wide range of hands-on opportunities for transformative human-rights work. You'll examine the roots of injustice, learn from communities working on positive solutions, and be part of making a difference. Find out more at uucsj.org.

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

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