



**UUSC EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
OF STRATEGIC PLAN 2016–2020**

There have been many changes in the world since the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) was founded 75 years ago — and even since the creation of our last strategic plan five years ago.

## **Dramatic growth of the human rights and nonprofit sectors**

One of the most profound changes has been the growth in the number of human rights organizations around the world operating at the local, national, and global levels, with increasing numbers based in the Global South. Giving to social justice causes has become more diverse and diffuse since donors are able to give directly to causes worldwide with the click of a button. The increasingly competitive and complex nonprofit marketplace as well as low levels of public trust in institutions require of UUSC more distinctive positioning, clearer demonstration of long-term impact, and more effective, collaborative use of resources.

## **Expansion of human rights concerns and influencers**

Rising income inequality and climate change pose significant challenges to advancing rights for people who live at society's margins and are overlooked or ignored by larger, more mainstream organizations. Widening economic inequality — within the United States and throughout the world — threatens to disrupt gains in access to education, income, and health for low- and middle-income people. Climate change has implications not only for ecological sustainability but also for food sovereignty as well as access to water and arable land for low- or no-income people worldwide.

Corporations are increasingly influencing human rights. Human rights organizations can no longer afford to simply focus on governments but rather need to also influence corporations in order to advance human rights.

## **Demographic changes**

The demographic changes most relevant to UUSC include the decline in the number of Unitarian Universalists who are part of a congregation as well as the rise of the millennial generation. Many millennials are engaged in social causes but not religiously affiliated or loyal to specific organizations.

## **Advances in technology and communications**

The rise of digital and social media requires human rights organizations to be both strategic and quick to respond to breaking events. Creative and rapid responses are needed — both on the ground where human rights gains are secured and online where public perceptions are shaped and swayed. Advances in communications technologies can be used to empower low-income people on the margins of society and to secure human rights.

All these trends have implications for UUSC's aspiration to be the premier, most innovative human rights organization of its size.

# MISSION, VISION, AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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## **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 advances the vision of a world free from oppression and injustice, where all can realize their full human rights.

## **UUSC in brief**

### **What does UUSC do?**

We work in three broad areas — economic justice, environmental justice, and rights at risk.

### **What is our goal?**

To roll back structures of political and economic oppression, enforce human rights, and empower people to take control of their lives.

### **Who does UUSC serve?**

The people on the margins of society — those overlooked or forgotten by larger human rights and aid agencies.

### **How do we do that?**

By finding the most innovative ideas, often generated by members of those communities, and giving those ideas “wings.” By being responsive in real time. And by looking at all our projects through the lenses of gender, class, race, and culture.

### **What tools do we use?**

We form partnerships with grassroots groups, fund innovation, mobilize our supporters, conduct media campaigns, insist on corporate accountability, advocate for policy change, promote justice education, and more.

### **How do we know we are successful?**

Because we articulate expected outcomes from the beginning of each project, engage in rigorous impact assessment, and learn from our mistakes.

## **Strategic priorities 2016–2020**

1. Build UUSC into the premier human rights organization of its size with an emphasis on innovation on behalf of people on the margins of society.
2. Focus on environmental justice, economic justice, and rights at risk, while broadening the means by which we do the work.
3. Strengthen our branding as well as our ability to mobilize, communicate, and use technology to engage with more diverse audiences, while remaining rooted in our values.

# MISSION, VISION, AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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*Build UUSC to be the premier human rights organization of its size, with an emphasis on innovation on behalf of the people on the margins of society.*

- Articulate clearer program outcomes and align resources accordingly.
- Invest in innovative ways to advance human rights.
- Identify and engage with opinion leaders and decision makers.
- Diversify and expand funding and membership.
- Build a learning organization.

*Focus on environmental justice, economic justice, and rights at risk, while broadening the means by which we do the work.*

- Continue emphasis on the human right to water while expanding to other resource rights, including those affected by climate change.
- Concentrate on the economic needs of women and other groups on the margins — given the growing economic divide and entrenched poverty, both in the United States and around the world.
- Respond quickly and creatively to the rights of individuals facing gross human rights violations (including genocide and torture), as well as the rights of people overlooked or ignored during humanitarian disasters.
- Supplement the partnership model with other ways to influence social change, including research, corporate accountability, policy advocacy, campaigns, digital media, member mobilization, and experiential and service learning.

*Strengthen our branding as well as our ability to mobilize, communicate, and use technology to engage with more diverse audiences, while remaining rooted in our values.*

- Build the UUSC brand to reach out to UUs who are not engaged in UUSC and to non-UU audiences, including young people.
- Establish stronger relationships with foundations and other human rights organizations.
- Deepen relationships with UUs, the Unitarian Universalist Association, congregations, and justice networks to build stronger and more effective agents for change both at the individual and congregational level.
- Sustain and expand the UU College of Social Justice.
- Create alternate brands and explore crowdfunding.
- Expand investment in paid outreach, online advertising, and merchandising.
- Enhance rapid response capabilities and use communications technology to promote grassroots empowerment and activism.

UUSC is poised to enter the next stage of its organizational growth with a commitment to greater impact, wider reach and influence, and more innovative approaches in order to secure and advance human rights for people throughout the world living on society's margins.