

UUSC Guiding Principles – adopted 2021

UUSC acknowledges that constantly adapting to the shifting world around us takes a great deal of humility and honesty and requires a commitment to continuous learning. Over time, we welcome the opportunity to amend this text as we learn more from global justice movements; yet we expect the values embedded within these principles to remain steadfast.

We share these Guiding Principles as concrete expressions of the beliefs that animate our commitments. In each section, a principle is introduced by the beliefs that guide us and concludes with our commitment.

Partnership and solidarity.

UUSC believes that those facing injustice are best equipped to define and dismantle systems of oppression and protect their rights to self-determination, equity, and justice; they are the leaders of progressive movements for change.

Partnership is the heart of how we do our work.

We will advance our mission, using our privilege, platform, and resources, following the lead of grassroots partners as we embody solidarity through the principles of empathy, respect, transparency, deference, and honesty while acknowledging power and privilege.

Equity and justice.

We understand that UUSC is part of a global web of systems of oppression. We acknowledge that as a U.S. institution, UUSC holds unearned privilege and has profited from violence and theft inflicted on Black and Indigenous peoples. As our mission calls us to dismantle systems of oppression and advance human rights, we must face our own complicity in oppression and injustice.

Equity and justice are the values that form the foundation of our practice.

In collaboration with our partners, staff, board, and members, we will decolonize and divest from institutions/practices that harm and contribute to systemic oppression. We will dismantle white supremacy policies and structures and build a culture where everyone is able to bring all of who they are to our shared work. When harm is done, we will seek restoration and healing.

Power and dignity in people's stories.

We understand that some dominant narratives, words, and histories perpetuate systems of injustice and that oppression can be defeated by telling powerful stories, lovingly speaking to hearts while boldly transforming minds. We believe it is vitally important to amplify

narratives, words, and histories that inspire the courage and vision that makes liberation possible.

Power and dignity in stories of love and liberation are the threads that weave our vision of human rights for all.

We will affirm and amplify the dignity, power, and right to self-determination of our partners, staff, and members when sharing their stories or communicating about our work.

Changing systems.

We recognize that overlapping systems of oppression in the form of racism, patriarchy, colonialism, and extractive capitalism contribute to the human rights abuses and injustices we seek to address. While addressing immediate risk and harm are important for providing relief in moments of crisis, only systemic change will build a just world.

Systems change is the bold expectation we have for our work.

Informed by our partners and movements for justice, we will design and support strategies that dismantle these systems and build grassroots power to successfully achieve equity, justice, and accountability.

Reflection as a catalyst for transformation and change.

UUSC understands that we cannot change the world unless we change ourselves. And while we know we will regularly fall short, we also know that growing in understanding and integrity is possible.

Self-reflection and ongoing learning are required as we hold ourselves accountable to our mission.

We will continuously evaluate and reflect to ensure that we are in respectful relationship with the communities we serve, our staff, and our members; we will work so that our actions, strategies, and tactics are grounded in honesty and humility. We commit to acknowledging and learning from harms we may commit and adjusting our presence and practices in order to repair relationships.