

Justice Ministries: Determining Grounding, Accountability, Fit, & Opportunity

When planning priorities, consider the following:

Grounding: Does the issue have authentic and deep Unitarian Universalist roots? Does it link to the current identity and theology/philosophy of Unitarian Universalists?

- Theology/philosophy – What is the spiritual, philosophical, historical, and ethical basis for our position?
- Worship and Congregational Life – What is our members' engagement and lived experience on the justice issue in the congregation?
- Social Action – Is there historic and current UU engagement on the issue in the public arena?

Accountability: Is the issue of concern to marginalized groups in the congregation and in the community? Is anti-oppression built in to the project and its way of operating?

- Is the congregation educated about how the issue is impacting people of color, low-income communities, and other oppressed groups?
- Are there relationships with groups who are working on the issue from this perspective? Can the congregation be a sensitive partner?
- Can reconciliation and right relationship be an outcome of working on this issue? Are there opportunities for dismantling institutional oppression? For reparations?

Fit: Is there a match between the congregation's resources, aspirations, and ability to make a real difference?

- Informed and Inspiring Leaders – Are there Unitarian Universalists who are or could publicly represent a UU perspective on the theme?
- Institutional Resources – Is there a task group devoted to the issue? Has the minister spoken out? Is there money available for the effort? What UUA offices, committees, affiliates, publications, curricula exist to support the congregation in taking a position?
- Partners – Are there national and/or local interfaith and allied organizations the congregation or UUA has a history of partnership with or that are actively seeking partners?

Opportunity: Is there likelihood that the congregation can be a respected participant in the public dialogue on this issue? Are there other groups the congregation can work with? Is this a "hot" issue and a good time to act? Can the congregation make a real difference? Is there a UU national campaign the congregation can join? Are there debates in the public arena, proposed legislation that Unitarian Universalists can influence?

- Relevance in News and Public Dialogue – What is the degree to which the theme is or could become a meaningful factor in news coverage or public debate?
- Other Voices – Congruent: What religious and secular organizations share our views and are vocal?
- Other Voices – Contrary: What religious and secular organizations oppose our views and are vocal?

Where there is grounding and accountability, use the chart below to plot the amount of fit and opportunity. The issues with high fit and high opportunity are ones to consider making priorities. Issues with low fit and opportunity may still be a priority but may indicate a need to develop relationships in the community and education of the congregation before action is undertaken.

Potential issues may include:

- Criminal Justice Reform
- Environment/Global Warming
- Health Care
- Affordable Housing
- Marriage Equality
- Religious Freedom
- Sexuality Education
- Voting Rights

