



Unitarian Universalist
Church of Charlotte

Organization and Procedures Social Justice Program Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte 2007

“Becoming a beacon of progressive action and a force for change in the Charlotte community”

Mission of the Social Justice Program

To shape a more just and equitable community through advocacy, education, and service.

Summary

This document introduces a framework for an intentional Social Justice Program that will enable our congregation to work collectively toward the ambitious goal of making a difference in the community. Accountable governance and management is established in the form of a committee called the Social Justice Team. Its members are keepers of the “big picture,” but in the absence of social justice staff at our church, they will also have a management role. A priority of the Social Justice Program will be a congregational commitment to one Social Justice issue, in order to be more effective in causing change. This congregational issue will be chosen by members of the congregation in an inclusive and fair process. It is important to note that this process does not make our congregation a single-issue organization, but will allow us to have a deep and substantial impact on a complex issue over a period of several years. Effective action on the congregational issue will require broad involvement throughout the congregation, using the diverse talents, interests, and abilities of members. The Social Justice program will also encompass a limited number of existing and one-time activities.

Organization and Governance

The Social Justice Team

- A Social Justice Team (SJT), a newly created standing committee, will oversee and manage the Social Justice Program under the direction of the Coordinating Team.
- The SJT will consist of at least seven but no more than nine church members who will serve three-year, rotating terms.
 - The membership of the SJT will elect a chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer from within the SJT. The chair must be a second or third year member of the committee, after the initial year.
- Responsibilities of the Social Justice Team
 - Ensure that Social Justice projects are congruous with Unitarian Universalist philosophy, UUCC’s Ends, and the mission and goals of the Social Justice Program.



- Collaborate with other UUCC programming, such as RE and Adult Education, to strengthen the effectiveness of the Social Justice Program.
- Monitor and track progress of approved projects to assess whether the strategies, milestones, and goals of those projects are being met.
- Coordinate with the UUCC Coordinating Team on budgetary and resource needs of the Social Justice Program.
- Manage the process of choosing a congregational issue and oversee its implementation.
- Judiciously review proposals for continuation of existing projects and one-time service or advocacy projects, keeping in mind limits on church resources.
- Promote the activities and achievements of the Social Justice Program to members and the wider community.
- Ensure there is explicit religious reasoning as a foundation of the Social Justice program.

Process for Selecting and Planning Congregational Issue (Fig. 1)

Step 1: Conduct a congregational survey every 2-3 years to gather ideas for issues and gauge interests and skills of members.

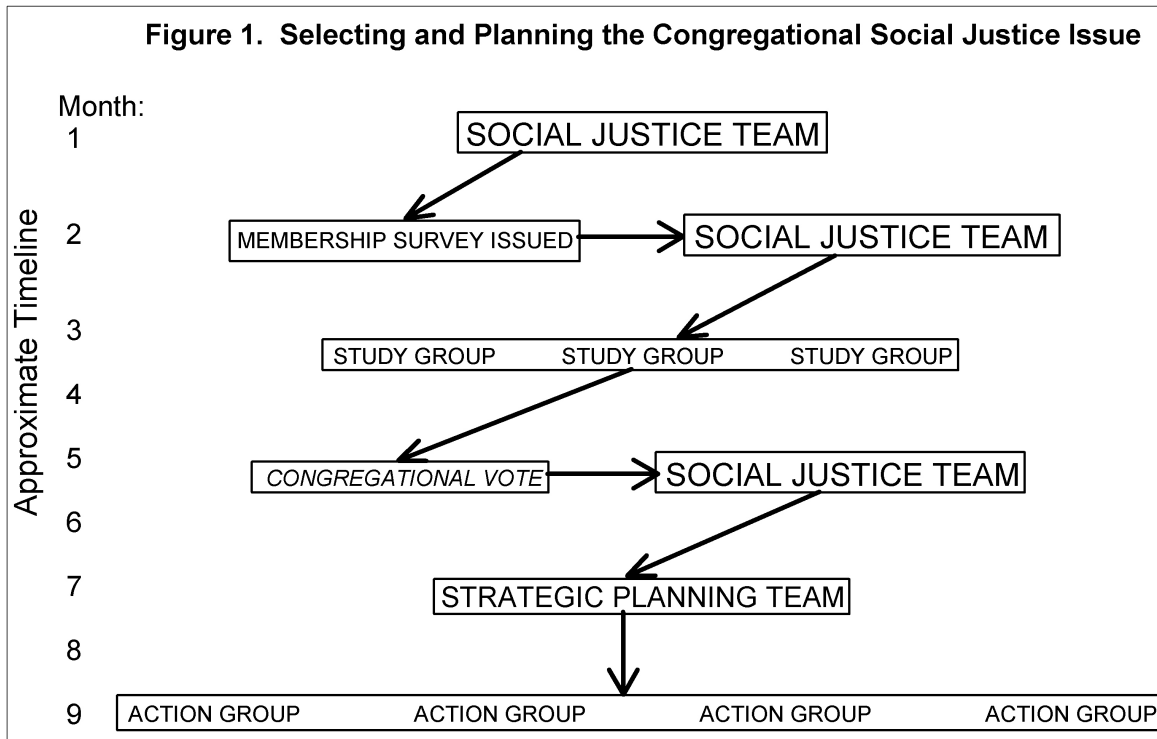
Step 2: Based on the survey results, Unitarian Universalist tradition, UUCC Mission and Ends, and political opportunity, the Social Justice Team will select three issues to be further studied and voted upon by the congregation.

Step 3: Temporary study groups will be formed to research each issue, during a process not lasting more than 6 weeks, and prepare presentations for a congregational meeting.

Step 4: Congregational vote will follow presentations and discussion to choose one of the three issues. Study groups disband.

Step 5: A Strategic Planning Team is formed to research the issue, conduct stakeholder analysis, and develop a 3-year action plan with achievable goals, during a process that will last no more than 6 months.

Step 6: Strategic Planning Team delegates implementation responsibility to Action Groups and provides coordination and oversight as needed.



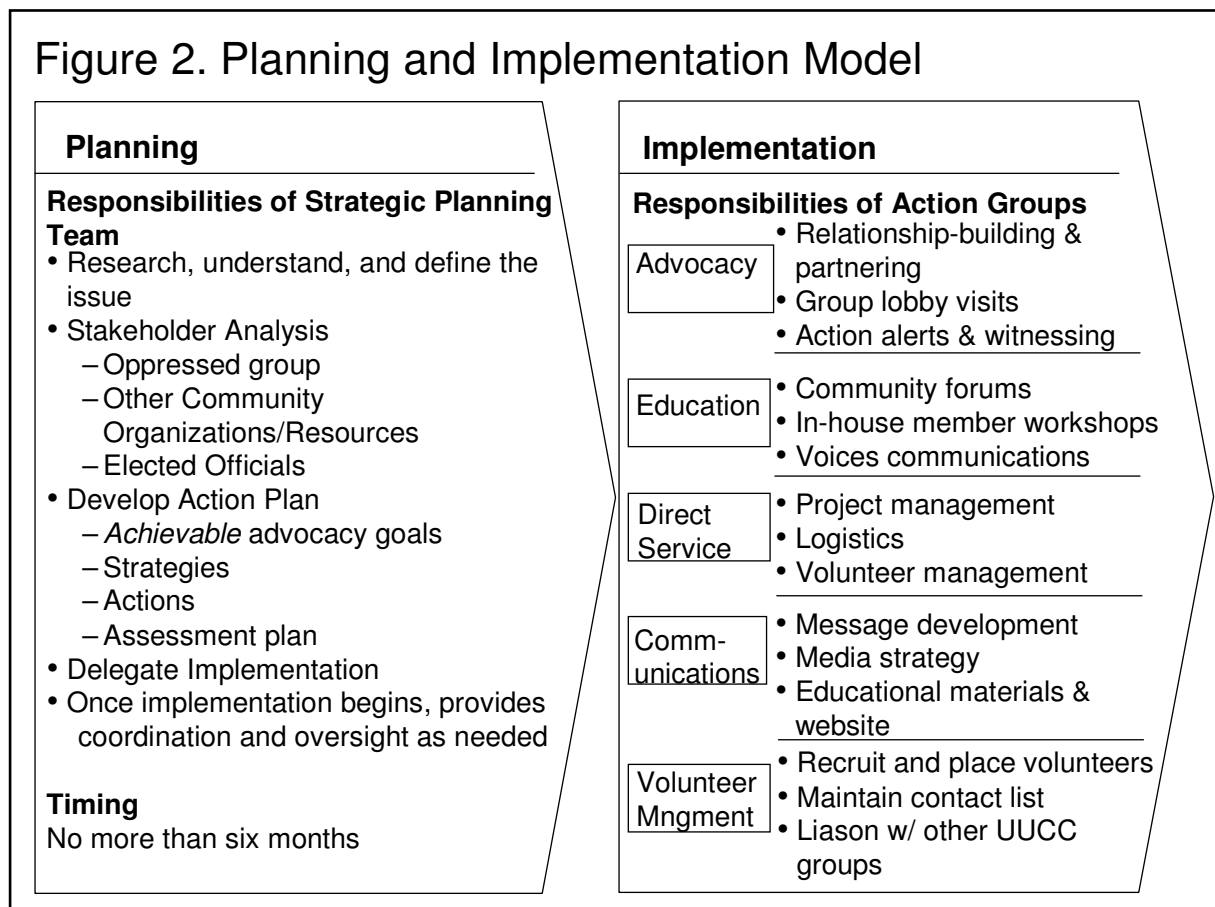
Implementation of Action Plan (Fig. 2)

- Strategic Planning Team and Action group leaders will meet regularly for coordination purposes, and report to the Social Justice Team on a regular basis.
- Responsibilities of Action Groups
 - Recruit and motivate members to be involved in a broad range of activities to carry out strategies, objectives, and tasks laid out in the action plan.
 - Partner with respected organizations outside of our church to strengthen our ability to effect change.
 - Frequently communicate activities to the congregation through *Voices* and the Social Justice link on the UCC website.
 - Track and measure activities and progress and prepare an annual report to be submitted to Social Justice Team.
 - Maintain a focus on the religious reasons behind our social justice work.
- Suggested Action Groups
 - **Advocacy:** Areas of focus include, but are not limited to, relationship building, group lobby visits, action alerts, partnering, and social witnessing.



- **Education:** Areas of focus include, but are not limited to, conducting or organizing in-house workshops for members, community forums, and *Voices* communications.
- **Direct Service:** Areas of focus include, but are not limited to, project management, logistics, and volunteer management.
- **Communication:** Areas of focus include, but are not limited to, message development, media strategy, educational material development, and website updates.
- **Volunteer Management:** Areas of focus include, but are not limited to, recruit and place volunteers, maintain contact list, and liaison with other UUCG groups and other partner organizations.

Figure 2. Planning and Implementation Model



Current Projects and One-Time Service / Advocacy Projects

The Social Justice program is intended to encompass a limited number of existing and one-time Social Justice activities, in addition to the congregation-wide issue. The Social Justice Team will establish guidelines for planning existing activities and one-time projects to better achieve desirable social changes. Criteria could include the fulfillment of Ends Statements, the number of members involved in the project, the clarity and feasibility of project goals, and the availability of church resources.