

# U/U Global Network

## A New Framework for Global Collaboration



This document is an overview of the background, purpose,  
and ways of working of the U/U Global Network.  
We hope this is a living document that continues to change  
as we learn and grow in community.

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[www.uuglobalnetwork.org](http://www.uuglobalnetwork.org)

## Our Vision – A U/U Global Network

The U/U Global Network is a **collaborative space** for Unitarian, Unitarian Universalist, and Free Christian congregations, organizations, national bodies, and individuals from around the globe. It is a platform for collaborative engagement: a space where individuals and communities can come together to share ideas, co-create projects, share resources, organize events, and support one another in living out their faith.

The strength of the network comes from centering relationships, grounded in shared values and mutual respect. We are committed to decolonizing our practices, affirming diverse theologies and cultural expressions, and nurturing a global ethic of accountability and generosity. **Our work is facilitating and connecting**, rather than directing; the U/U Global Network will grow and change according to the needs of the U/U communities around the world who wish to connect, learn, and share globally.

We aim to **foster deep, sustainable relationships** that can in-turn create opportunities for engagement, mentorship, and mutual support. We seek to understand the needs and opportunities that exist within our global faith community, to celebrate the diverse expressions of liberal religion worldwide, and to offer meaningful direction for building community.

The U/U Global Network will:

- ❖ Establish & maintain online platform(s) for connection and collaboration
- ❖ Host online gatherings, and support occasional in-person thematic meetings
- ❖ Manage paid support of global Leadership Development, Spiritual Deepening, and Partnership Connection
- ❖ Connect communities and leaders to share ideas, mentorship, and resources
- ❖ Interact with global U/U funding sources including the International U/U Funding Program and the Hibbert Trust
- ❖ Remain in a cycle of evaluation of its online tools, collaborative efforts, leadership, and financial structures

## **Our Core Values – Connecting Through Covenant**

We celebrate the unique contexts of the global U/U community – geographic, cultural, political, and theological differences that **add beauty and complexity**. Our values are not abstract ideas but are lived out in the ways we listen, collaborate, and build community.

Individuals and groups are invited to freely associate with the U/U Global Network.

**Anyone is invited to join us**, and is asked to see this statement of our core values as a covenant for how we come together:

We covenant to **center relationships**. We will learn and grow together in a community.

We covenant to **encourage participation**. We celebrate cultural differences, global diversity, and emerging voices.

We covenant to **find our path together**. We will decenter hierarchy and make collaborative decisions.

We covenant to **work together with intentionality**. We will be transparent and adaptable with many paths to participation.

## **Our Collaborative Work –**

### **A New Understanding of Organizational Structure**

We are committed to fostering collaboration that transcends traditional hierarchies and colonial patterns of engagement. This means actively dismantling structures and assumptions that limit full participation, and reimagining how we work together in ways that honor **equity, diversity, and shared leadership**. While we respect and acknowledge our theological and institutional heritages, we are also called to innovate. We will create new practices, relationships, and ways of organizing that are more inclusive and tuned to current global realities and tendencies. We celebrate that U/U worship, community, and practice looks, feels, and sounds very different in different locations, and our work aims to encourage the unique expressions of liberal

religion that serve the needs of local communities. There are different seasons and reasons for this work: We welcome and celebrate different skills.

The U/U Global Network doesn't have "members"; anyone who is part of the wider U/U family can connect and take part in building global U/U relationships, according to their calling and experience. Whether you are a minister, lay leader, congregation member, local trustee/elder, whether you have national-level responsibility in your part of the world, or are someone who sits quietly in a congregation, **you are welcome to connect by joining us in covenant.**

### **Our Steering Committee – The Leadership and Design Team**

The Leadership and Design Team (LDT) serves as a steering committee, helping to **guide the formation and implementation of our collective vision.** They are a dedicated group of global U/U volunteer leaders who are committed to designing inclusive and effective structures for global cooperation. Their work is not to control or direct, but to develop collaborative frameworks that reflect the feedback and wisdom of the wider community. They meet regularly to guide the work, remaining responsive to new developments and grounded in the core values. They make decisions by consensus, and provide oversight to the staff. They facilitate global gatherings to be in regular conversation with individuals and groups.

They are creative thinkers who bring various experiences to the wisdom of the group. Rather than representing the place they speak from, LDT members are expected to **take a wider perspective**; they bring their experiences to expand the understanding of the global U/U community. Each year new members are chosen by the group for a variety of reasons, such as geographic locations, personal experiences, and unique skills. LDT members are expected to be in relationship with their local community, and to serve a 3-year term. Additional information and application process will be posted on the website.

## Our Staff Support – Facilitators

Facilitators serve as connectors, helping to create community through thoughtful and **intentional relationship-building**. Supervision and hiring decisions are the responsibility of the Leadership and Design Team.

**The Network Facilitator** is responsible for the overall structure and administrative support, including facilitation of the Leadership and Design Team, and creating and maintaining accessible platforms for community engagement.

**The Spiritual Development Facilitator** makes connections in areas including Small Group Ministry, worship resources, spiritual leadership, and ministerial training collaboration.

**The Leadership Development Facilitator** makes connections in areas of congregational life resources, lay leader training, and emerging groups.

**The Partnership Facilitator** makes connections in areas of partnership both within and outside of congregations.

## Our Finances and Resources – Institutional Support

We envision that **resources can be provided by global groups** in support of the work. As the network grows there is an intention of finding additional sources of resources. While this may include financial resources, it could also include support such as providing office space, meeting rooms, equipment, or a special skill or expertise.

The current financial resources for the U/U Global Network come from the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). The **UUA also serves as the fiscal sponsor**, providing administrative support. The Director of the UUA Global Connections Office, or their designee, is a consultative member of the Leadership and Design Team.

## **Our History – Growing from the ICUU & UUPCC**

In 2020, the **International Council of Unitarian/Universalists and the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council** engaged in an 18-month long process of reflection, with the International U/U Collaboration Group. Both organizations voted to legally dissolve in the fall of 2021 and to leave their resources to the newly created Leadership and Design Team, which was tasked by these organizations to create a **new vision for global U/U collaboration**. The U/U Global Network is the product of 3 years of discernment, relationship building, dialogue, and intentional work. With gratitude for the past, we look forward to building the future together.