

Social and Environmental Justice Team Annual Report for 2020–2021

Introduction

At the start of this fiscal year, Church Council tasked what became known as the Social and Environmental Justice Team (hereafter, “the Team”) with developing a plan for expenditure of line-item funds in the congregational budget dedicated to Social Justice and authorized the Team to carry out that plan. The amount of funding allocated to this item varies from year to year and was substantially larger in the current year compared to previous years. The budget for FY 2020–2021 totaled \$6,255, which included \$655 carried over from FY 2019–2020. The bulk of the funds, \$6,055, were allocated for donations to nonprofit organizations, and \$200 was allotted to support UniLu’s Social and Environmental Justice-oriented events.

Participation on the team was open to all members of University Lutheran Church’s congregation. The congregational members participating on the team throughout the allocation process included Kim Acker, Trevor Bakker, Bruce Christenson, and Siri Huntoon.¹

Principles for Choosing Beneficiaries

In choosing financial beneficiaries, the decisions of the Team followed several principles.

- Our decisions should reflect UniLu’s core values². In particular, we believe that our faith calls on us as individuals and as a congregation to act compassionately and pursue justice.
- When making financial contributions to organizations, we recognize the need for “effective altruism.” This means that we make use of recognized metrics or standards for evaluating effectiveness of organizations and take into considerations how our limited funds can have the greatest impact. We also recognize that some worthwhile organizations and causes might best be supported through activism rather than financial contributions.
- To speak to our values, it is important that we act locally and globally.

Process of Choosing Beneficiaries

Although the Council had considered the possibility of focusing on a single organization or concern for the donations, discussion by members of the Team led us to opt for a more diversified approach as no consensus could be reached on one overriding concern or

¹ Joan Ferguson also provided useful input and perspective at several points in the process.

² UniLu’s “core values” are based on a congregational self-study conducted in 2019 and 2020. A summary statement of the core values is found in Appendix 1.

organization. Subsequently each member of the team was tasked with proposing an area or areas of concern and researching the organizations that addressed those concerns.

The team members brought to the table a diverse set of areas of concern that included the following:

- well-being needs of the world's poorest people
- health needs of locally underserved populations
- racial justice and support of indigenous peoples
- climate change and our impact on earth's other creatures

Each team member also recommended specific nonprofit organizations involved in addressing the particular areas of concern. In keeping with the objective of effective altruism, each organization was evaluated based on ratings of their accountability, transparency, and financial health reported in such online resources as Charity Navigator (charitynavigator.org) and GiveWell (givewell.org) that can be used to assess and compare the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations. When the organization was not found in one of these online resources, team members examined the websites of the nonprofit organization for the types of evidence used in online tools to make an evaluation. As a result of the review of evaluations and a series of discussions by team members, the Team identified 16 organizations to receive a modest financial contribution of \$300 from UniLu.

The Team also recognized that some of the Social and Environmental Justice funds in the FY 2020–2021 budget may have been expended prior to its decisions and that members of the congregation might yet request support for other nonprofit organizations during its fiscal year that the Team would need to consider. The funds previously expended included \$50 to Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival, \$50 for the annual CROP Hunger Walk, and about \$380 to Heart and Home Collaborative. Additional request from congregational members resulted in allocations of \$50 each to Bright Stars of Bethlehem in support of Dar al-Kalima University³ and to the South Bay Sanctuary Covenant (SBSC)⁴ in light of their progress in financial reporting after engaging with them.

The Team concluded that the remaining funds (approximately \$875) should be carried over for contribution to a local indigenous land trust in recognition that UniLu sits on unceded ancestral land of which indigenous people have been unjustly dispossessed. We also encourage the congregation and council to consider an ongoing annual contribution to such a land trust in recognition of our ongoing benefit from use of this land. The team is currently investigating the most appropriate land trust (possibly yet to be established) for contributions from our congregation. For the present we have recommended one such land trust as one of the 16 beneficiaries for a \$300 contribution.

³ Bright Stars of Bethlehem, an organization which UniLu members have supported for several years, is a nonprofit organization that promotes peace and justice in Palestine through Dar al-Kalima University of Arts & Culture and is dedicated to educating the next generation of creative leaders in Palestine.

⁴ SBSC is an interfaith and non-partisan coalition of churches and individuals in the Bay Area, of which UniLu is one of the founding members. It began in 1992 as an effort to support refugees from El Salvador's civil war, and continues to assist in providing a supportive community for Salvadorans living in the South Bay, to be supportive of a partner community, Comunidad Octavio Ortiz, in Bajo Lempa, El Salvador, and promoting the rights and just treatment of marginalized immigrants.

Brief Description and Websites of Beneficiary Organizations

The 16 beneficiaries within the four areas of concern identified by the Team are active nonprofit organizations.⁵ Descriptions borrow from GiveWell and nonprofits' own websites.

Well-Being of the World's Poorest People

1. **Malaria Consortium** (malariaconsortium.org): The Consortium works on preventing, controlling, treating, and eliminating malaria and other communicable diseases in Africa and Asia. Its [seasonal malaria chemoprevention \(SMC\)](#) program distributes preventive antimalarial drugs to children 3 to 59 months old in order to prevent illness and death from malaria, typically in four monthly cycles during the high transmission season.
2. **Against Malaria Foundation (AMF)** (againstmalaria.com): The Foundation provides funding for long-lasting insecticide-treated net (LLIN) distribution for protection against malaria in developing countries. There is strong evidence that distributing LLINs reduces child mortality and malaria cases. The organizations processes ensure that nets reach their intended recipients and monitoring whether they remain in homes and in good condition over the long-term.
3. **Helen Keller International's (HKI) Vitamin A Supplementation (VAS) Program** (hki.org): Helen Keller International (Helen Keller) supports programs focused on reducing malnutrition and averting blindness and poor vision; For this program in sub-Saharan Africa, Helen Keller provides technical assistance, engages in advocacy, and contributes funding needed by government-run programs to prevent vitamin A deficiency in children.
4. **New Incentives** (newincentives.org): This organization runs a conditional cash transfer (CCT) program in North West Nigeria. Caregivers who bring their infants to clinics for routine vaccines, which are provided through government clinics free of charge, can receive a total of \$11 over the course of five clinic visits. New Incentives also does outreach to caregivers about the importance of vaccinating children, and works with its government partners to improve vaccine supply by identifying and addressing bottlenecks in the vaccine supply chain.
5. **SCI** (schistosomiasiscontrolinitiative.org): SCI works with governments in sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Madagascar, Tanzania, Uganda, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Liberia, Burundi, and Mauritania) to create or scale up mass drug administration programs for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), particularly deworming for parasitic worm infections such as schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminthiasis, in school-aged children and other groups determined to be at high risk. SCI's role has primarily been to identify country recipients, provide funding to governments for government-implemented programs, provide advisory support, and conduct research on the process and outcomes of the programs.

⁵ Table 1 in Appendix 2 shows the distribution of funds to the 16 beneficiary organizations identified by the Team and four other nonprofit organizations receiving support from UniLu.

6. **Sightsavers** (sightsaversusa.org): Sightsavers is a large organization with multiple program areas that focuses on preventing avoidable blindness and supporting people with impaired vision. The organization advocates for, funds, and monitors programs that treat and prevent parasitic worm infections in African countries such as Chad, Senegal, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Cameroon, Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau.
7. **Evidence Action's Deworm the World Initiative** (evidenceaction.org/dewormtheworld/): The particular initiative of this organization that UniLu is contributing to is an initiative that advocates for, supports, and evaluates government-run, school-based deworming programs in countries around the world, such as India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Ethiopia, and Vietnam. Deworming improves the nutrition, cognition, school attendance, and long-term economic prospects of children.
8. **GiveDirectly** (givedirectly.org): In combatting extreme poverty, the organization engages in cash transfers to extremely low-income households in developing countries and people affected by humanitarian crises primarily via mobile phone-linked payment services. It has operated since 2009 and is currently active in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Liberia, Malawi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Morocco, Togo, the Bahamas, and the United States.

Health Needs of Locally Underserved Populations

9. **Indian Health Center (IHC) of Santa Clara Valley** (indianhealthcenter.org): The mission of the IHC is to help ensure the survival and healing of American Indians/Alaskan Natives (AI/ANs) and their community by providing high-quality, culturally-sensitive, comprehensive health care and wellness services. In 1977 the IHC began in San Jose with funds from Title V of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA) as a separate nonprofit to address the health care needs of the AI/AN community in Santa Clara Valley. The Medical Department was created with one doctor, a nurse practitioner, and a medical assistant. Since its founding the IHC has expanded to include multiple locations in San Jose.
10. **Ravenswood Family Health Network** (ravenswoodfhn.org): Headquartered in East Palo Alto (part of which was named Ravenswood in the 19th century), the Network's mission is to improve the health of the community by providing culturally-sensitive, integrated primary and preventative health care to all, regardless of ability to pay or immigration status and collaborating with community partners to address the social determinants of health. In 2020 the Network expanded to include the Mayview Clinics in Palo Alto, Mountain View, and Sunnyvale.

Racial Justice and Support of Indigenous Peoples

11. **Greenlining Institute** (greenlining.org): Headquartered in Oakland, the Institute envisions a nation where communities of color thrive and race is never a barrier to economic opportunity. Founded in 1993, the Institute seeks to advance economic opportunity for people of color through advocacy, community-building and coalition-building, research, and leadership development by working on a variety of major policy issues because economic opportunity does not operate in a vacuum. Rather

than seeing these issues as being in separate silos, Greenlining views them as interconnected threads in a web of opportunity. Its approach is to connect community leaders with policymakers, researchers, and private sector leaders. The Institute designs and supports policies aimed at opening doors to opportunity, recognizing that America's racial wealth gap was created by deliberate policy choices and it will take deliberate, race-conscious choices to end it without assuming that these interactions are a zero-sum game in which one side must win and the other must lose. The Institute's Leadership Academy aims to train leaders of the future to be effective advocates for justice and fairness. Its programs have trained over 1000 young leaders since 1996 with graduates who have gone on to occupy influential positions in government, business and the nonprofit sector, including multiple elected offices and a seat on the California Supreme Court.

12. **Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival** (aicls.org): Founded in 1992, AICLS is a native-directed nonprofit organization that reflects the diversity of California's indigenous languages. The mission of the organization is to assist California Indian communities and individuals in keeping their languages alive. The main goal is the development of new language speakers in the belief that native languages, when spoken (and when returned), have a profound healing effect on individuals, families, and communities.
13. **Sogorea Te' Land Trust** (sogoreate-landtrust.org) is an urban indigenous women-led land trust that facilitates revitalization of native cultures and restoration of ancestral lands to the indigenous people in the San Francisco Bay Area. University Lutheran Church sits on the unceded ancestral lands of which our indigenous neighbors have been unjustly dispossessed. Our contribution to an indigenous Bay Area land trust is offered as an acknowledgement of the legacy of discrimination and violence inflicted upon indigenous peoples in California and the Americas, including their forced removal from ancestral lands, and the deliberate and systematic destruction of their communities and culture.⁶

Climate Change and Our Impact on Earth's Other Creatures

14. **Earthjustice** (earthjustice.org): Earthjustice is a nonprofit public-interest environmental law organization that uses the power of law and the strength of partnership to protect people's health, to preserve magnificent places and wildlife, to advance clean energy, and to combat climate change. The organization is often known by the tagline: "We are here because the earth needs a good lawyer."
15. **Wild Animal Initiative** (wildanimalinitiative.org): The Initiative focuses on helping scientists, grantors, and decision-makers investigate important and understudied questions about wild animal welfare. It promotes research and applied projects that will open the door to a clearer picture of wild animals' needs and how to enhance their well-being. The organization envisions a world in which people actively choose to help wild animals and have the knowledge they need to do so responsibly.

⁶ University Lutheran Church sits on the ancestral lands of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. At present the Muwekma do not have an established land trust. However, the land at Sogorea Te' in Vallejo, California that the Sogorea Te' Land Trust is seeking to protect is part of the Ohlone ancestral land and culture that trusts, such as these, seek to protect and revitalize.

16. **Solar Cookers International (SCI)** (solarcookers.org): SCI seeks to improve human and environmental health by supporting the expansion of effective carbon-free solar cooking in world regions of greatest need through advocacy, research, and strengthening the capacity of the global solar cooking movement. The Global Warming Mitigation Project recently awarded SCI the Keeling Curve Prize given to the most impactful climate projects around the world; the prize is named after the effort to bend the curve that grabs the accumulation of carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere.

Education and Engagement of the Congregation

The congregation's financial contributions to the beneficiaries that the Team has identified are admittedly modest. However, the central goal of promoting social and environmental justice is not merely financial, but rather for the congregation itself to

- (1) gain a greater understanding of our role, individually and collectively, in the underlying justice issues that organizations such as these are addressing, and
- (2) identify actions that we can take or changes that we can make to promote justice for all people and all of creation.

To facilitate these objectives, the team is looking forward to further incorporating engagement with social and environmental justice concerns in our congregational life at UniLu. We have started with education through the "Giving for Justice" presentation at the Sunday Seminar on October 3, 2021 to help familiarize members of the congregation with the beneficiaries as well as the principles (e.g., effective altruism) and tools (e.g., givewell.org) used in the process of selecting this fiscal year's beneficiaries. The purpose of the seminars will be not only to raise the visibility of the programs of this year's beneficiaries, but to engage the congregation in developing actions that we can take on our faith-based journey in pursuit of social and environmental justice.

APPENDIX 1

10 October 2019

Core Values at University Lutheran Church

Creating Inclusive Community

As an open and welcoming congregation, we seek to create an inclusive social and spiritual community. We come together both in and out of church to recognize and celebrate each other's accomplishments and life events, while also seeking to support the needs, concerns, and challenges of members of the congregation as well as the broader communities in which we live.

Sharing in Worship

Sharing in worship on a weekly basis is at the heart of our community. Our worship is participatory. It is filled with music and liturgy that are meaningful, creative, and inspiring; sermons that are interactive, thought provoking, and action stimulating; and a Communion circle that is inclusive.

Deepening Faith

We encourage a deepening of faith through study, contemplation, questioning, and action. Together we make use of the varied talents and interests of our congregation and pastor to engage with scripture and theology, history and social issues, prayer and meditation, astronomy and ecology.

Proverbs 18:15 The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out.

Living Out Compassion

We seek to be a congregation that lives out the compassion of the Gospels in words and actions of caring and kindness, both individually and collectively.

Pursuing Justice

Pursuing justice puts into action our belief that God's reign works through us. Social justice springs from our conviction that all people are inherently valuable. Environmental justice springs from our conviction that all of creation is sacred. We are responsible to live in right relationship with all people and all of this living Earth.

APPENDIX 2

Table 1. Beneficiaries of FY20-21 Social & Environmental Justice Funds		
#	CATEGORY and Organization	Amount
	WELL-BEING OF THE WORLD'S POOREST PEOPLE	
1	Malaria Consortium	\$300.00
2	Against Malaria Foundation	\$300.00
3	Helen Keller International Vitamin A Supplementation Program	\$300.00
4	New Incentives	\$300.00
5	Schistosomiasis Control Initiative	\$300.00
6	Sightsavers	\$300.00
7	Evidence Action's Deworm the World Initiative	\$300.00
8	Give Directly	\$300.00
	HEALTH NEEDS OF LOCALLY UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS	
9	Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley	\$300.00
10	Ravenswood Family Health Network	\$300.00
	RACIAL JUSTICE & SUPPORT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES	
11	Greenlining Institute	\$300.00
12	Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival *	\$350.00
13	Sogorea Te' Land Trust *	\$300.00
	CLIMATE CHANGE & OUR IMPACT ON EARTH'S CREATURES	
14	Earthjustice	\$300.00
15	Wild Animal Initiative	\$300.00
16	Solar Cookers International	\$300.00
	OTHER BENEFICIARIES	
17	Heart & Home Collaborative	\$379.79
18	CROP Walk (2020)	\$50.00
19	Bright Stars of Bethlehem (Dar al-Kalima University) *	\$50.00
20	South Bay Sanctuary Covenant *	\$50.00
	TOTAL	\$5,379.79
	* All or portion of funds to this organization are still to be distributed.	