

World Union for Progressive Judaism Vision and Value Propositions

Vision

The World Union for Progressive Judaism is the central hub that **connects** Reform, Liberal, Progressive, and Reconstructionist Judaism around the world while upholding the State of Israel as the center of the Jewish people and Jewish identity. The WUPJ provides **support** for communities, institutions and individuals for the continuity of Judaism and for *tikkun olam*. The WUPJ aims to provide **innovative** platforms and tools to advance Progressive Jewish values and to develop the global progressive lay and youth leadership of the Jewish people.

Value Propositions

This document outlines the main values that the WUPJ seeks to carry out in all our activities:

1. The WUPJ is the central hub of a worldwide network.
2. The WUPJ advances the Progressive/Reform approach to Judaism.
3. Jewish learning at the center through communities of learners and through a global Institute for Progressive Jewish Education and Leadership
4. Tikkun Olam is our Imperative to repair the world through social justice activism based on Progressive Jewish values in partnerships informed by inter-faith and intra-faith dialogues.
5. We are called to Progressive Zionist leadership to be engaged in the development of the State of Israel, embracing the blessings and responsibilities, educate about Israel and actively shape Jewish life and identity in the Jewish homeland.
6. The WUPJ supports communities of shared values and practice to encourage their flourishing and to be inclusive. We embrace communities in the widest definition including synagogues, schools, the Netzer youth movement and the Tamar movement for young adults.
7. We believe in the great importance of creating opportunities for spiritual connection and seeking the Divine.

The WUPJ seeks to promote **Glocal Judaism** - a platform for symmetrical connections and exchange between our regions for a Jewish Progressive **global** agenda while embracing their particularity, with their different contexts, languages, cultures and contributions, offer us the **local** practices that make us, as Jews, communities of practices with a contemporary Jewish meaning. Likewise, we affirm our place in the family of humanity and the importance of mutual respect.

We believe in the transformative power of ideas, and we anticipate the creativity, innovation and learning through the cooperations between our regions. We affirm the unity of the Jewish people while celebrating our differences. We invite you to read this document, and, more importantly, we invite you to take part and to join us in writing it together.

Expansion on the Vision and Value Propositions

Vision

Connection – קשר – The WUPJ worldwide network serves as an incubator for the cross-fertilization of ideas, a bridge between languages and cultures and a model of Jewish unity through diversity.

Support – תמיכה – The WUPJ provides structural, educational, programmatic and spiritual resources and training in the local, national and international spheres.

Innovation – חידוש – The WUPJ brings creativity, social innovation and technology to all of the organization's endeavors.

Value Propositions

Value Proposition 1 - The WUPJ is the central hub of a worldwide network

The WUPJ serves as the bridge between Seven Regions, impacting the lives of some two million Progressive/Reform Jews worldwide. We ensure that the needs of all communities are represented. As the world grows accustomed to virtual spaces, we are positioned to maximize our human resources by facilitating communication, idea and resource sharing and translation of ideas and actions across time zones, languages and cultures.

Through social media communications we share best practices and promote international participation in community events. Through on-line and in-person seminars we promote cooperation and network formation for mutual support and idea sharing. Through committees, working groups, and personal meetings, professional staff and lay volunteers, we maximize resources for initiatives and partnerships from the local to the international level.

Value Proposition 2 – The WUPJ advances the Progressive/Reform approach to Judaism

The WUPJ operates according to the Progressive/Reform approach to Judaism which examines our beliefs and traditions with a loving critical eye and is open to change at any given time. We carry with us the past, we live in the present and we look to the future. As we experience the unfolding revelation of creation, we harness the blessings of modernity to enrich our lives, integrate into them the eternal values of Judaism and imbue our lives with meaning and purpose.

We believe in the essential and transformative power of innovation and creativity. We need to be open to new ideas, willing to try new things and to consciously balance our needs for both tradition and authenticity.

Value Proposition 3 – *Talmud Torah k'neged Kulam* – The Centrality of Jewish Learning

Community of Learners

We believe in the centrality of communities of learners who make decisions about their Jewish practice based on the study of Torah and other texts in the vast corpus of Biblical and rabbinic literature, Jewish history, values, philosophy and theology. We strive for every decision to be informed by knowledge of Jewish sources. Education is a lifelong journey beginning at birth onward, and we assist our communities to reach all ages and types of learners.

Educating for Values

Education of values (*musar*) and virtues (*midot*) is one of our defining values as a people, and it remains our primary tool for sustaining our Progressive/Reform Jewish life and effecting transformation. All that we do and teach is guided by the highest ethical values of Judaism and interpretation of Torah throughout the ages and today. In accord with our people's declaration at Mount Sinai *Na'aseh v'nishma* – *We will do and we will listen* – we believe in the close integration of study and discussion with activism and *tikkun olam*.

Institute for Progressive Jewish Education and Leadership

We affirm the value and centrality of established WUPJ educational programs and seek to expand into a permanent education department that integrates virtual and real-world activities for all ages in all our regions. The WUPJ seeks out committed Progressive/Reform Jews who want to broaden their knowledge and take on new responsibilities. We develop educators, clergy and professional and lay leaders who will sustain our communities, educational institutions, regions and global infrastructure as well as lead toward new models of community building. The educational programs are developed in strategic alliances with other academic organizations and NGOs within and outside the Progressive/Reform Movement. We promote thought leaders on both global issues and issues of concern to the Jewish people.

Value Proposition 4 – *Tikkun Olam* – Our Imperative to Repair the World

If I not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, who am I? If not now, when?

The WUPJ leads the way on the integration of the particularity of Jewish beliefs with the universality of our values. Judaism must look both inward and outward at the same time and strive for unity through diversity.

Justice, Justice shall you pursue – so that you will live long upon this earth!

Our Progressive/Reform activism is inspired by the vision of the Biblical prophets. The WUPJ is the vehicle for Jewish social activists to engage in these issues under a Jewish banner. These issues include, but are not limited to economic justice, racial justice, ecological justice, human rights, LGBTQ rights and gender equality. We believe in human agency in *tikkun olam*, the role we play in bringing about a world of justice, peace and compassion. This process includes *tikkun atzmi* – the *mitzvot* I perform as an individual each day for my own betterment, *tikkun am* – the *mitzvot* we perform for the betterment of the Jewish people, and

tikkun olam – the *mitzvot* we perform for the preservation of the entire world.

We especially emphasize Progressive/Reform Judaism's imperative of promoting gender equality. One of the most important innovations Progressive/Reform Judaism gave the world was the inclusion of women in both lay leadership roles and as clergy. We must do more to ensure that women are represented in positions of leadership at all levels of our movement.

Leaders in Inter-Faith and Intra-Faith Dialogue

The WUPJ has a unique role to play in interfaith and intrafaith relations and dialogue. We facilitate reaching out to different faith communities to form coalitions on points of common belief and interest and to create models of celebrating differences and living in co-existence. Good relations across Jewish streams of thought and practice are essential for *k'lal Yisrael*, for the good of the Jewish people. Good relations with other faiths reduces anti-Semitism and anti-Israel sentiment.

Value Proposition 5 - Leaders in Progressive Zionism

The WUPJ affirms its conviction that to be a Progressive/Reform Jew is to be a Zionist in the sense that the State of Israel is a central entity for Jews in the Divine and corporal senses. From Herzl's dream to the present day, as reformers we embrace the pioneering spirit of the rebuilding of Jewish life and the reshaping of Jewish identity in the Jewish homeland. The inclusion of Progressive/Reform Jewish language and values is essential for Israel to achieve the vision of the founders.

The WUPJ's headquarters in Jerusalem is a statement of its centrality to our movement. We seek to connect all Progressive/Reform communities worldwide to the Progressive/Reform communities in Israel and to work together for the betterment of the State of Israel. Additionally, we affirm the importance of the Hebrew language. The more Hebrew we know, the more common language we share as Jews and the more we will feel connected to Israel.

The State of Israel is a blessing and a responsibility. Our commitment to Israel is unbreakable but honest. While we can marvel at Israel's accomplishments, we also approach her challenges with open eyes. We advocate for:

- Activism around issues of Synagogue and State and Jewish status (such as the Law of Return, equal funding and representation for Reform Jewish institutions by governments)
- Interfaith relations (co-existence work, bridges between faith communities)
- Israel engagement (helping Diaspora communities engage in Israel and Israel issues; strengthening Progressive Jewish life in Israel)

Value Proposition 6 -- Supporting Communities of Shared Values and Practice

Flourishing communities

We assist local communities and regions in creating and sustaining ideological homes for Reform/Progressive Jewish values, education, culture, identity, leadership and spiritual growth, including outreach to thousands of unaffiliated Jews. We especially see our role as supporting emerging communities, including both traditional and innovative models with varying circles of belonging.

Inclusive Communities

Progressive/Reform communities welcome diversity and encourage involvement of people identifying as LGBTQIA, Jews of Color and inter-faith families. We need to be welcoming of all Jews, regardless if they were born Jewish, chose Judaism, married into Judaism or found their way to their grandparents' heritage later in life.

Netzer Youth Movement

The WUPJ fully supports Netzer Olami for ages 5-25, and Tamar, for young adults. We seek to assist the Netzer leaders to expand and enrich their educational impact and to incorporate their aspirations into our broader educational vision. We embrace the leadership of youth and support them in providing platforms for critical and reflective thinking, creativity and innovation. We take their lead on charting the future of Progressive/Reform communities and organizations.

Value Proposition 7 – Affirmation of Our Seeking of the Divine

Not by might and not by power but by spirit alone.

The WUPJ creates opportunities and pathways for spiritual connection and for experience of the mystery of all being. Every gathering is a sacred encounter with the potential for holiness and the opportunity to experience the Divine. We place this aspiration before ourselves when planning every meeting, webinar and community gathering. We sanctify our spaces through words, music and meaningful silence. Spiritual experiences are transcendent and transformational - the Divine is manifest in endless ways and forms. We hope and pray that our thoughts and actions in our organization reflect our seeking of God and our love of humanity, of all creatures and the world.

Conclusion: “Glocal” Judaism

The WUPJ believe that “the world is our lab” in which we interdependently create new proposals for Jewish innovation. We are seekers of Jewish meaning relevant to our time rooted in our traditions and focused on the practice of values in concrete actions.



Reform is not a finished product but rather it is an attitude, a verb for the action of innovation and creation of new Jewish meanings in our lives. In the spirit of the original Reformers, we must evolve in the face of new challenges. We are Progressive because we want to progress and grow spiritually in the new paradigms of our societies, including offering Jews of diverse ages and backgrounds the opportunity to take on leadership.

Based on these values we propose the concept of **Glocal** Judaism (Global/Local Judaism). The WUPJ offers an environment of symmetrical connections and exchange between our regions for a Jewish Progressive **global** agenda. The different regions in their particularity, with their different contexts, languages, cultures and contributions, offer us the **local** practices that make us, as Jews, communities of practices with contemporary Jewish meaning. **Glocal Judaism** is the essence of the added value that the WUPJ offers to our regions and associated institutions in the spiritual development of Progressive Judaism in the world.

WUPJ Vision and Value Propositions - Closing

This document is an open, dynamic and collaborative process. It establishes that the WUPJ offers a global platform to nourish ourselves with our collective memory, engage in vigorous discussion about our present and create our vibrant future through the paradigm of Progressive Judaism. This platform empowers people to be the builders of our regions through which we serve the Jewish people and the societies in which we live and make the world a better place than the one we received. Through these networks, we support sustainable communities and regions, grow wisdom and share resources. We envision a fluid and dynamic construction of our structures to adapt and create new alternative scenarios for Jewish life.

We believe in the transformative power of ideas such as the ones put forth in this document. We anticipate the creativity, innovation and learning through cooperation between our regions. We affirm the unity of the Jewish people while celebrating our differences. Likewise, we affirm our place in the family of humanity and the importance of mutual respect.

We invite you to read this document, and, more importantly, we invite you to take part and to join us in writing it together.