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## World Union for Progressive Judaism Mission, Vision and Values

### Mission:

The World Union for Progressive Judaism serves as a 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; **supports** communities, institutions and individuals in all stages of life for the continuity of Judaism and for *tikkun olam*; and provides **innovative platforms** and tools to advance Progressive/Reform Jewish values and to develop the global Progressive/Reform lay and youth leadership of the Jewish people.

### Vision:

The WUPJ endeavors to ensure the existence of Progressive/Reform Jewish communities and institutions with strong leadership in every place that Jews live that meet the educational and spiritual needs of diverse ages, beliefs and practices and that actively engage in *Tikkun Olam* to bring about justice and compassion for all creation. The WUPJ aspires to imbue a sense of belonging to a global Progressive/Reform Jewish family and to be a thought-leader in matters of international Jewish importance.

### WUPJ Values

1. The WUPJ is the central hub of a worldwide network.
2. The WUPJ advances the Progressive/Reform approach to Judaism.
3. The WUPJ as a Center for Progressive Jewish Education and Leadership
4. Tikkun Olam is our Imperative to repair the world
5. The WUPJ is a leader in Progressive Zionism
6. The WUPJ supports communities of shared value and practice
7. The WUPJ affirms our seeking of the Divine

The WUPJ seeks to promote **Glocal Judaism** - a **global** platform for connections and exchange for a Progressive/Reform agenda while embracing the diversity of **local** contexts, languages, cultures and contributions with 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 in shaping the future of the WUPJ.

## Expansion on the Mission, Vision and Values

### Mission:

**Connection** – הקשר -- 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** – הידוש -- The WUPJ brings creativity, social innovation and technology to all of the organization's endeavors.

### Vision: FORMULATE IF NEEDED

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

*All Israel is responsible for one another - כל ישראל ערבים זה לזה*

The WUPJ serves as the connector between communities, impacting the lives of some two million Progressive/Reform Jews worldwide. We endeavor to ensure that the needs of all communities are represented. We facilitate communication, ideas and resource sharing across time zones, languages and cultures.

Through virtual and in-person interactions we share best practices and promote international participation in community events, as well as encourage cooperation and network formation for mutual support and idea sharing. Through committees, working groups and personal meetings of professional staff and lay volunteers, we seek to maximize resources for initiatives and partnerships on a “Glocal” (both global and local) level.

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

*נִתְּנָה בְּפִי שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ תְּהִלָּה לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ*

*And (God) put a new song into my mouth, praise to our God*

The WUPJ operates according to the Progressive/Reform approach to Judaism which aims to make Judaism accessible to all seekers and to support them in making informed choices on Jewish practice. With Torah at the center, we preserve enduring and meaningful traditions of the past. As we experience the unfolding revelation of creation, we integrate the eternal values of Judaism with new ideas and practices which imbue our lives with intention and purpose. We look with a loving critical eye at both our beliefs and traditions as well as the blessings and the challenges of modernity. We simultaneously establish common global Progressive principles, recognize the diversity of our communities and promote Jewish pluralism.

We act through the belief in the essential and transformative power of innovation and creativity. We believe that this approach is an authentic Jewish practice in the words of the prophet, “חדש ימינו כקדם” - Renew our days as of old” and in the spirit of the Talmudic Sages who taught, “אי אפטר לבית המדרש בלא חידוש” - There cannot be a *beit midrash* without innovation.” We seek to empower leaders who can serve as the spokespeople for the Progressive/Reform approach and educate both within our communities and beyond.

### **Value 3: The WUPJ as a Center for Progressive Jewish Education and Leadership**

וְשִׁנַּנְתֶּם לְבָנֵיכֶם וְדַבַּרְתֶּם בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּכֶם בְּבֵיתְכֶם וּבְלֶכְתְּכֶם בַּדֶּרֶךְ

*You shall teach them to your children and speak of them at home and on the way*

The WUPJ believes in the centrality of lifelong learning of Torah through traditional and contemporary sources for all ages and levels and through diverse modalities for shaping Jewish identity and making decisions about personal and communal belief and practice.

The WUPJ emphasizes education for values (מוֹסֵר) and virtues (מִדּוֹת) through open discussions that embrace a diversity of perspectives to guide our interpretations of Torah and lead to activism and *tikkun olam*.

The WUPJ views as a paramount task to support the development of high quality clergy, educators and professional and lay leaders who will sustain our communities, educational institutions, regions and global infrastructure; lead toward new models of thriving Progressive Jewish life; and act as thought leaders on both global issues and issues of specific concern to the Jewish people. We uphold the importance of strategic alliances with academic organizations and NGOs within and outside the Progressive/Reform Movement.

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

הוּא הִיָּה אוֹמֵר, אִם אֵין אָנִי לִי, מִי לִי? וּכְשֶׁאֲנִי לְעַצְמִי, מָה אָנִי? וְאִם לֹא עַכְשָׁיו, אֵימָתָי?

***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 acts through the belief in human agency and the obligation of each person to act in bringing about a world of justice, peace and compassion. This process comes about in acts of *tikkun atzmi* – personal development, *tikkun kehilati* – the betterment of one’s community, *tikkun am* – the betterment of the Jewish people, and *tikkun olam* – the improvement of the entire world.

צְדָקָה צְדָקָה תִּרְדֹּף לְמַעַן תַּחֲיֶיהָ וְיִרְשַׁתְּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ

***Justice, Justice shall you pursue – so that you will live long and inherit the land***

To this end, the WUPJ initiates and supports opportunities to engage in social activism and leadership informed by Jewish sources in accord with societal and geographical circumstances. These issues include, but are not limited to, gender equality, economic justice, sustainable development, human rights, ethnic justice, LGBTQI+ rights and the eradication of antisemitism. We especially work to ensure full representation of all marginalized identities in both lay and

clergy leadership roles and to empower and support them in positions of leadership at all levels of our movement and in all parts of the world.

**כִּי בֵּיתִי בֵּית־תְּפִלָּה יִקְרָא לְכָל־הָעַמִּים**

***My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations***

The WUPJ works in partnership by building relationships across Jewish denominations and with other faith groups to form coalitions based on this vision and to create models of harmonious co-existence.

**Value 5 - Leaders in Progressive Zionism**

***Seek the peace of Jerusalem - שְׁאֵלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם***

The WUPJ is a Progressive Zionist movement, supporting the aspiration of the Jewish people to self-determination through a democratic sovereign state in the Jewish homeland rooted in the Jewish and universal values of Israel's Declaration of Independence. Israel is also a cultural and spiritual center of the Jewish people. The WUPJ's headquarters in Jerusalem is expression of its centrality to our movement.

We actively engage in education about Israel to foster a loving relationship, a sense of Jewish peoplehood, understanding its centrality in our tradition, texts, and prayers and its history, society, culture, people, achievements, challenges and politics. We develop leadership to facilitate open and respectful dialogue. We encourage our members to learn Hebrew which is both the holy language of Judaism and the official language of the State of Israel.

The WUPJ advocates for the advancement of Progressive/Reform Judaism in Israel and the integration of Progressive/Reform Jewish values in Israeli society. These values include but are not limited to religious freedom, equality, pluralism and inclusion, co-existence with other religions and peoples, social justice and peace. The WUPJ also advocates for Israel on a global stage. In both areas, the WUPJ cooperates with Progressive/Reform Zionist organizations as well as like-minded individuals and organizations.

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

**וְכָל הַמְצַעֵר עֲצָמוּ עִם הָעִבּוּר — זֹכֶה וְרוֹאֶה בְּנִחָמַת עִבּוּר.**

***All who takes on the community's distress will merit to see the community's consolation.***

**Flourishing and Inclusive communities**

***You shall love your fellow as yourself - וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ***

The WUPJ supports its regions and communities in creating and sustaining ideological homes for Reform/Progressive Jewish values, education, culture, identity, leadership and spiritual growth. We promote active and engaged volunteers and professionals as well as outreach to unaffiliated Jews whether they were born Jewish, chose Judaism, married into a Jewish family or found their way to their grandparents' heritage later in life. We empower both traditional and innovative approaches to and definitions of community. The WUPJ affirms the equality of all Jews, every one created in the image of God, recognizes the diversity of our communities

and encourages involvement of LGBTQ+ Jews, Jews of Color and families of multi-faith backgrounds who share our values of Progressive/Reform Judaism.

### **Empowering our youth**

*Your youth shall see visions* - **בְּחִירֵיכֶם תִּיגְלוֹת יֵרְאוּ**

The WUPJ supports the Netzer Olami youth movement and Tamar Olami movement for young adults and provides platforms for their education and leadership development. We also work with communities to integrate young people in leadership roles in the wider Progressive/Reform Jewish community on a local, regional and global level.

### **Value Proposition 7 – Affirmation of Our Seeking of the Divine**

*Not by might and not by power but by spirit alone.* **לֹא בְחֵיל וְלֹא בְכֹחַ כִּי אִם-בְּרוּחַי**

The WUPJ aspires in all its activities to create opportunities for transcendent and transformational spiritual connection and experience of the Divine. We represent the Progressive/Reform religious Jewish perspective that embraces diverse understandings of God, studies the breadth of Jewish theological traditions and expresses our faith journey through multiple manifestations such as:

- ✧ The words of the *siddur* and other sacred texts (קְרָבַע) in Hebrew and in local vernacular and incorporating inclusive language
- ✧ The meditations of our hearts (פְּנוּנָה)
- ✧ Music (שִׁירֵי לִיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ)
- ✧ Meaningful silence (לֶדָּךְ דְּמִיָּה תְהִלָּה אֱלֹהִים)
- ✧ Acts of social justice (עֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וְאֶהְבֵּת חֶסֶד וְהִצַּנַּע לְכַת עַם-אֱלֹהֶיךָ)

Every gathering within the framework of our organization is a sacred encounter through which we develop relationships and community and embody godliness in the world (בְּצַדִּיקִים אֱלֹהִים). We support our partner organizations in enriching their spiritual content and leadership. We pray that our thoughts and actions throughout the WUPJ reflect our seeking of God and our love of humanity, all creatures and our 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 Torah, texts and traditions and focused on the practice of values in concrete actions. Reform/Progress 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 diverse societies, offering Jews of all ages and backgrounds the opportunity to take on leadership.. The WUPJ offers a **global** environment of connections and exchange for a Progressive/Reform Jewish agenda. With their different contexts, languages, cultures and contributions, the regions offer us the **local** practices that make us, as Jews, communities of practices with contemporary Jewish meaning. **Glocal Judaism** (global and local) 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.