

The Main Report of the Unicamp Charitable Purposes Review

March 2, 2023

Dear Unicamp and UU communities,

With a spirit of gratitude, we present the results of the community feedback on the proposed updated charitable purposes for Unicamp. Many thanks to all who participated in the focus groups and on-line survey and shared their thoughts, reflections and suggestions for changes. It was essential to hear your perspectives. Thanks also to Kaitlyn McLay, Russell Scott and Ellen Forrester who assisted with leading focus groups.

This is an important and timely task for Unicamp to undertake. The Ontario government has updated the legislation governing charities and non-profits, giving organizations until Oct 2024 for its articles of incorporation (that include charitable purposes) and by-laws to be compliant. Our current charitable purposes are more than 50 years old. They do not adequately reflect what Unicamp has become and do not serve, as they should, as a clear guide for governance as a charity.

This review has provided an opportunity to reflect on who we are as a Unicamp community and what we hope to achieve. The legally charitable purposes for a religious charity are to advance religion. This calls us to reflect on how we live out the UU faith at Unicamp.

The charitable purposes that were proposed by the committee have been revised based on the community feedback. We believe they are better because of the wisdom of our communities. The updated charitable purposes can play an important role in guiding leadership for Unicamp, for deepening the spirituality expressed in Unicamp programs and activities, strengthening the UU faith and UU communities, as well as maintaining our charitable organization status.

Many thanks,

The Unicamp Charter Review Committee

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BACKGROUND

This report provides an overview of the work to update the Unicamp charitable purposes, the results of the community feedback, the revisions made to the purposes, and next steps.

A review of Unicamp’s charitable purposes was initiated by a motion passed at the 2021 Annual General Meeting of Unicamp. Five delegates representing four congregations, the President of the Board and the Executive Director of Unicamp, volunteered to serve on a Charter Review Committee. We are grateful to Vyda Ng, Executive Director of the Canadian Unitarian Council, who provided valuable assistance during several months of meetings. Two Unicamp Evaluation Advisory Group volunteers also provided expert advice and assistance.

A charter, more commonly referred to as articles of incorporation, is a key governing document that gives an organization its legal status. The Charter Review Committee focused on a key element of the articles of incorporation, the charitable purposes.

Charitable Purposes and Legal Requirements

Charities are regulated by the Charities Directorate of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and fall under both federal and provincial jurisdiction. Charitable purpose statements describe the objectives or aims the organization was created to achieve – its reasons for being.

The CRA requires that charitable purpose statements meet legal requirements and provide particular information. A charitable purpose should identify:

- the **charitable purpose category** (relief of poverty, advancement of education, **advancement of religion**, or certain other purposes beneficial to the community in a way the law regards as charitable)
- “**the means** of providing the charitable benefit—to define the scope of the activities that can be conducted to directly further the purpose and ensure the provision of a charitable benefit...”
- “the **eligible beneficiary group**—to ensure the charitable benefit is provided to the public or a sufficient section of the public...” (CRA. How to draft purposes for charitable registration)

It is important to note that for religious charities, the legally charitable purposes are the advancement of religion. We assumed Unicamp was a religious charity, but discovered it is currently designated as “other purposes beneficial to the community.” The CRA was unable to provide any clarification as to why or when this “other” designation was made. We believe the charitable purposes proposed by the committee align with a religious charity designation and we recommend seeking this designation.

Review and Update of Unicamp’s Charitable Purposes

The original and current 1969 charitable purposes of Unicamp state:

“UNICAMP OF ONTARIO INCORPORATED For the following objects, that is to say:

- a) To organize, operate and maintain camps with related services for Unitarian religious training of children and to provide, operate and maintain facilities for church and leadership conferences and seminars.”*

The committee reviewed the legal requirements for charitable purposes, and reflected upon Unicamp's core identity and the breadth of its programs and activities as they relate to the existing charitable purposes. We concluded that some aspects of the purposes are still relevant (such as operating camps for the "religious training of children"), but the language is outdated. The purpose relating to offering "church and leadership conferences and seminars" does not adequately describe nor reflect Unicamp's diverse programs and activities. Unicamp has significantly changed and evolved since its formation in 1969. Charitable purpose statements should serve as a clear guide for the scope of an organization's activities, but the existing purposes cannot adequately do so. We concluded that the 50+ year old charitable purpose statement needed to be updated. The Canadian Unitarian Council (and others) recommend that charitable purposes be reviewed and updated, if needed, every ten years.

The committee considered and reviewed the ways in which Unicamp's many programs and activities fulfill, or aspire to fulfill, the charitable purpose of advancing religion. We drafted an updated charitable purpose statement that we believe to be authentic, achievable, and legally compliant.

Engaging the Unicamp and UU Communities

The 2021 AGM resolution called for the committee to "facilitate a community engagement process" for the review of the charter. We believed it was vital to hear feedback on the committee's proposed charitable purposes from the many different groups of people involved in Unicamp activities and from the UU congregations and members. The proposed updated charitable purpose statement, presented to the community for feedback, appears on page six of this report. The next section outlines the methods for obtaining feedback from the Unicamp and UU communities.

METHODS

A community-based action research approach was chosen as the means of gaining feedback on the proposed charitable purposes from the Unicamp community and the UU congregations within the broad geographic area. Structured focus group interviews and an on-line survey were the data collection tools chosen to provide both depth and breadth of feedback. The focus group guide and survey are found in the appendices of the Full-Length Report. Unicamp Evaluation Advisory Group volunteers with expertise in community-based research and analysis, provided assistance and guidance. Several committee members also had research training and experience.

Members of the Charter Review Committee and the Unicamp Evaluation Advisory Group made agreements to uphold the confidentiality promised to focus group participants and the assurances of anonymity given to the on-line survey participants. The community engagement data contains no personally identifiable information and will be stored securely, in accordance with applicable laws and Unicamp's procedures, for three years and then deleted. Public reports will be distributed broadly and are available upon request.

On-Line Survey

An on-line survey was developed to gain broad feedback on the updated charitable purposes proposed by the committee. The survey was open to anyone, with the exception of focus group participants, who completed the same rating questions of the purposes. The survey was open from July 26 to August 31, 2022.

The survey asked some questions to learn about the characteristics of the people responding, such as age category, and ways they have participated at Unicamp, to help assess the representativeness of the survey. The key information gathered in the survey were the responses to the question of how well each purpose describes what Unicamp, as a religious charity, is about. A four-point scale (Very Poorly, Poorly, Well, Extremely Well) was utilized, based on the limitations of zoom polling used in the on-line focus groups.

Focus Group Interviews

Structured focus group interviews were conducted with a broad range of Unicamp constituencies, in order to have a range of perspectives represented. Focus groups are a research method useful for gathering opinions and feedback about a concept or plan. The focus group questions were designed to stimulate reflection on whether the proposed charitable purposes were valid or not, and the perceived barriers and facilitating factors for implementing the purposes. Focus group participants completed the same rating questions for the purposes as the on-line survey participants.

Eleven focus groups, of 1 to 1.5 hours in length, were facilitated by four different moderators with the following groups: the Unicamp Charter Review Committee; Unicamp Board of Directors; seasonal campers; three family camp week focus groups (one for each family camp week); one family camp week youth; three Unicamp staff focus groups (junior staff, middle management staff and senior staff) and young adults attending a Canadian Unitarian Council retreat.

There were 60 focus group participants and 57 completed the ratings survey. Focus groups were conducted between May and September via zoom and in-person at Unicamp.

Promotion of Focus Groups and the On-Line Survey

The focus groups and the on-line survey were promoted through various means. Announcements for newsletters were emailed to the Canadian Unitarian Council, Ontario UU congregations in the area, and the Unicamp newsletter. Notices by email were sent to delegates, the Board, the seasonal camper group email list, and parents of Kid's Campers (for the survey). Senior staff assisted with notifying Unicamp staff of the survey and focus group opportunities. The in-person focus groups for family campers, during family camp weeks, were also promoted with posters on-site.

Qualitative Data Analysis - Focus Group Interviews and Survey comments

Qualitative content analysis methods were used to analyze the focus group interviews and comments made by the on-line survey participants. Content analysis is a systematic way of organizing the information in order to discover patterns and meanings. The analyses were conducted by a committee member with professional training and experience. Verification checks were conducted by committee members and a member of the Evaluation Advisory Group.

Quantitative Data Analysis – On-Line Survey Questions and Focus Group Ratings Questions

The on-line survey was conducted using Google Forms, hosted on the Unicamp website. The survey was anonymous, with no personally identifiable information collected. Two research team members verified the accuracy of the data and analyses. The ratings of the charitable purposes were calculated as frequencies separately for each purpose and for each data set. Since the rating scale did not have equivalent intervals, ratings could not be treated as numbers nor averaged.

Committee Review of Charitable Purposes Feedback and Revisions to the Purposes

The results and findings were compiled in a report and reviewed by the Charter Review Committee. A number of revisions were made, based on the feedback received. The revised purposes appear on page 17 of this report.

RESULTS

This section presents the results of the community engagement feedback. It begins with the focus group and on-line survey ratings of the purposes followed by the responses to the survey questions asking people about themselves and their involvement with Unicamp. The last section presents findings from the focus group interviews and the on-line survey comments.

The three charitable purposes we presented for community feedback were:

Purpose 1: Provide camps, programs, services and gatherings, that advance Canadian Unitarian Universalist principles, engage in religious exploration, and build a welcoming, inclusive, multigenerational, community.

Purpose 2: Nurture leadership and life skills by offering programs and opportunities to children, youth, and adults through grounding learning in the Canadian Unitarian Universalist Principles.

Purpose 3: Engage people in practicing environmental stewardship and living out the Canadian Unitarian Universalist principle of respecting the interdependent web of all existence. This will be realized through: education, conservation, and the enhancement of Unicamp's natural habitat.

Quantitative Results – Focus Group and On-Line Survey Ratings of Purposes

Focus group and on-line survey participants were asked the following question. "Rate how well the (first, second or third) charitable purpose describes what Unicamp, as a religious charity, is about? Does this describe Unicamp's purpose... Very Poorly, Poorly, Well, Extremely Well." The table below illustrates the combined ratings of "Well" and "Extremely Well" as a measure of general support for the purposes.

As shown in **Table 1**, the purposes were rated "Well" or "Extremely Well" by a large majority of focus group and on-line survey participants, ranging from 77% - 87%.

Table 1: On-Line Survey and Focus Group Ratings of Purposes

Ratings of "Well" and "Extremely Well"	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3
On-line Survey	87 %	81 %	77 %
Focus Groups	82.5 %	84.2 %	77.2 %

Table 2 below provides the break-down for all rating choices, of “Extremely Well,” “Well,” “Poorly” and “Very Poorly,” for each purpose, for all focus groups combined. 57 participants completed ratings. Purpose 1 had the highest percentage of “Extremely Well” ratings at 47.4%. Purpose 2 had the highest “Well” ratings at 59.6%. The majority of the ratings on the poor side were “Poorly” (12.3% – 15.8%) with “Very Poorly” receiving the fewest ratings (1.8% – 7%).

Table 2: Focus Group Ratings of Purposes – Breakdown for Each Rating Option

Focus Group Ratings	Purpose 1		Purpose 2		Purpose 3	
	%	# (n)	%	# (n)	%	# (n)
Extremely Well	47.4	27	24.6	14	33.3	19
Well	35.1	20	59.6	34	43.9	25
Poorly	15.8	9	12.3	7	15.8	9
Very Poorly	1.8	1	3.5	2	7.0	4

Table 3 below provides the break-down of rating choices for the on-line survey. Since 100 people participated in the survey, the percent is the same as the number of participants. Ratings of “Well” were the most prevalent for all purposes (40% to 47%). The majority of ratings on the poor side were “Poorly” (8% to 14%) with “Very Poorly” receiving the fewest ratings (4% to 5%).

Table 3: On-Line Survey Ratings of Purposes - Breakdown for Each Rating Option

Survey Ratings	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3
Extremely Well	40 %	37 %	37 %
Well	47 %	44 %	40 %
Poorly	8 %	12 %	14 %
Very Poorly	4 %	5 %	4 %
Unrated	1 %	2 %	5 %

On-line Survey – Description of the Sample (who participated)

Several questions in the on-line survey provided information about the characteristics of those who participated in the survey. 100 people participated. A range of ages, UU affiliation and ways of participating in Unicamp were represented.

There was a range of ages represented in the survey. 5% of participants were under 18 years. 16% were 19 to 34, and the age ranges of 35 to 50 and 51 to 66 had 26% each. Participants 67 years and older were 25% of the sample and 2% preferred not to answer.

The majority of participants (71%) were involved with a congregation. 28% were not involved. 1% preferred not to answer.

Survey respondents participated in Unicap in a variety of ways in the last five years. 31% regularly participated in camps or programs. 34% participated once or a few times. 11% had participated but not in the last five years. 4% had never been to Unicap. 17% did not participate in programs but were employed by Unicap or sent their child to programs. 3% did not answer.

19% of participants volunteered at Unicap and 12% were employed by Unicap.

37% of the survey participants were parents of a child or youth camper in the last five years.

Qualitative Results - Focus Group Interviews and On-Line Survey Comments

This section presents the findings of the qualitative data - the focus group interviews and the comments made by on-line survey participants, about the charitable purposes proposed by the committee. There were variations in views expressed across the focus groups as well as across the survey comments. We are presenting the findings as a whole.

Three main, cross-cutting themes were identified from the analysis of the feedback on the three purposes from the focus group interviews and the survey comments. The three themes are defined below. We will step through each of the three charitable purposes and describe the main findings in these themes and will also present some of the diversity of views within these themes. The comments made by participants are in italics and colour according to the theme.

There were 11 focus group interviews conducted with 60 participants representing a variety of perspectives, including the Board, campers and staff. 100 participants completed the on-line survey, with 32 to 35 participants providing written comments (optional) for each purpose.

Definition of Themes

A Broad View of Unicap

This theme captures opinions about the **activities at Unicap**. In Purpose 1 this refers to “camps, programs, services and gatherings.” In Purpose 2, the activities are “leadership and life skills” “programs and opportunities.” In Purpose 3 it refers to “education, conservation and the enhancement of Unicap’s natural habitat.” This theme includes opinions about **the participants**. In Purpose 1 this refers to a “welcoming, inclusive, multigenerational, community.” In Purpose 2 it refers to “children, youth and adults.” In Purpose 3, it refers to “people.” The theme name, “A Broad View of Unicap” was selected to illustrate the finding of strong support expressed by many participants for the broad range of activities and participants described in the three purposes.

How We Do Religion at Unicap

This theme captures people’s opinions and reflections on how well the proposed purposes describe the way we practice or advance Unitarian Universalism at Unicap. In Purpose 1 it refers to “advance Canadian UU principles” and “engage in religious exploration.” In Purpose 2 it refers to “through grounding learning in UU principles.” In Purpose 3, it refers to “environmental stewardship and living out the Canadian Unitarian Universalist principle of respecting the interdependent web of all existence.”

Thoughts on Governance and Organizational Development

This theme captures reflections on how the purposes impact Unicamp's organizational development, governance or leadership. These opinions are combined for the purposes and appear after Purpose 3.

List of Suggested Wording Changes

Participants made many suggestions for changing or adding words or concepts to the three purposes and the introductory statement. These suggestions were included in the analysis of the qualitative data and some examples are provided in the presentation of the main themes. A list of suggested changes was compiled to assist the committee in giving all suggestions consideration in the revising of the purposes. The full "List of Suggested Wording Changes" is found in Appendix 2 of The Full-Length Report of the Unicamp Charitable Purposes Review.

Purpose 1

Purpose 1: Provide camps, programs, services and gatherings, that advance Canadian Unitarian Universalist principles, engage in religious exploration, and build a welcoming, inclusive, multigenerational, community.

A Broad View of Unicamp (activities, participants, community)

A majority of participants in the focus groups and some survey commenters said they liked the way Purpose 1 describes Unicamp. It provides a clear description of what we are and the breadth of all we do. Many also expressed positive views about Unicamp overall, describing it as a home, a place of connection and a place to be oneself.

Whenever someone says aren't we a children's camp? I think Yes AND. Our old charter said children and adult programs. In short. I really like it. It covers everything and the most important things Unicamp is and I have an opinion it's important for Unicamp to value all of its constituencies – children, staff, parents, people in adult programs, seasonal campers – a big boat sort of view. This statement does that. People shouldn't feel afraid their piece won't be there in the future. It's an inclusive statement (Board focus group)

I love Unicamp... every time we've gone, we've really felt nourished both spiritually and physically. The photo on our computer was taken at Unicamp so we see it every day. It will always be special to me and I've only been there less than a dozen times (on-line survey)

There were also many participants who strongly believed that Kids Camp and youth camps need to be specifically named and prioritized in the purposes. This was a prominent view in the focus groups for staff. A few participants in other focus groups and a number of survey commenters made this recommendation as well. It was also suggested to have a protected number of weeks or a separate purpose for Kids Camp and youth camps. Centring Kids Camp is viewed as important because it provides youth with meaningful experiences, it supports the original purpose, charitable status, grant funding for staff, and ensures that these vital programs are sustained. A few participants

suggested that family camp is also important and valuable for children, youth and families, and should be prioritized as well.

Coming to Kids Camp and the CIT program changed my life and contributed heavily to me becoming who I am, and I would want to see that this is preserved for future generations of kids and youth by having a clear focus on it in the mission statements... (on-line survey)

Overall, I agree with the values. I struggle with having all the camps put into one word because for me Kids Camp is what we should be centred around, so lumped in with everything else, concerns me. Better if Kids Camp were particularly mentioned (staff focus group)

Most participants in the focus groups and survey who commented on the description of “welcoming, inclusive, multigenerational, community” expressed positive views and valued it as one of Unicamp’s strengths. It is important for families, helps to sustain Unicamp and to build participation. It is also viewed as challenging due to competing needs and barriers, and it requires continuous effort from everyone. Some participants suggested changes such as “striving for” instead of “build.” Many also spoke of the importance of being welcoming to newcomers and those who do not identify as UU or as part of a “community.” Suggestions to do this included re-framing “community” as a “community experience” and more intentional planning.

I encountered and had the opportunity to engage with people from a wide variety of age, identity, life experience. There is a friendly, communal, accepting atmosphere there. If you come to camp alone, it's possible to leave having made a lot of new friends you look forward to seeing again next year (on-line survey)

...there are competing access needs, so nothing is ever completely inclusive. So, making room for people with disabilities is a negotiation and doing the best we can with what we have. Say instead something like - working towards inclusivity within scope - some wording change that's what we can do, not utopia, but working toward it (family camp focus group)

Multigenerational wording is super important for everything... the mix is so key to our community and is missing in our world... It feels like the Unicamp I've always known and what it always tries to be (seasonal camper focus group)

How We Do Religion at Unicamp

There was much support from focus group and survey commenters for using the UU Principles and religious exploration to describe how we do religion at Unicamp. There was also a range of views on how and to what extent they are expressed in various programs. A common concern was that the advancing of religion not become too formalized or restrictive and instead maintains a spirit of openness. There was a wish to be welcoming to non-UU’s in camps and in adult programs and for current programs to be eligible to continue. There were a number of suggestions for change, including the change of “religious exploration” to “spiritual exploration” to more authentically describe UU.

It's easy to advance principles. We try hard every day to live the principles and pass them on, through examples, programs (staff focus group)

As the parent of a camper and then staff member, I haven't observed much "engaging in religious exploration." I don't want Unicamp to be over the top with faith, i.e., not 'bible camp' but I would have liked to see a bit more exploration, i.e., giving thanks at a meal, at the end of the day, our commitment to the environment... (on-line survey participant)

It clearly defines how we advance religion... It can help us deepen our spirituality in all we do (Charter committee focus group)

Purpose 2

Purpose 2: Nurture leadership and life skills by offering programs and opportunities to children, youth, and adults through grounding learning in the Canadian Unitarian Universalist Principles.

A Broad View of Unicamp (activities and participants)

Many focus group and survey participants thought that leadership and life skills are important goals, it describes what we are already doing and that Unicamp does this very well. The application of this purpose to the programs for youth was clear for most participants and was viewed as providing many benefits.

I think this expresses the goals of Unicamp quite well. I would argue that the children's camps are particularly valuable for ensuring the future vibrancy of Unitarian Universalism in Ontario. We belong to (name of congregation). Our kids' commitment to UU principles and general engagement with the UU community has increased a thousandfold due to their involvement in Unicamp. If Unicamp didn't exist, I'm quite confident they would have fallen away from it by now. Please continue to acknowledge the importance of children's camps to ensure the sustainability of Unitarian Universalism for the next generation and beyond (on-line survey participant)

Many focus group participants said that it's important to nurture leadership and learning opportunities, in different ways, for all ages, and this reflects what we are already doing well. The multigenerational nature of Unicamp also supports the learning and sharing of skills.

Nice and concise. Great. I love what Unicamp does for young children and the continuum to adults – that continuum is priceless. Nurture is a good word. Learn and can live it right here.... for young people it is so life affirming (family camp focus group)

For many participants, the application of the purpose to programs for adults was less clear for a variety of reasons. For some survey participants, and many staff focus group participants, children and youth programs should be the primary focus for this purpose and it is important that Unicamp ensures the continuity and central place of programs for children and youth. Kids Camp and youth programs are important to the spirit of camp, generate significant income, sustain the staffing for the organization, and attract families to camp. Others felt this purpose doesn't allow for different needs and ways of learning for different age groups or that adults come for community rather than programs.

I really love that it shows the stress on leadership and life skills and by offering opportunities to children and youth... as a core, keeping ourselves focused on children's programming, even during family camp, is important because it does bring families up. And I think trying to focus on nurturing and catering to youth is a great purpose. For purpose two, I would just love to say -primarily focused on programs and opportunities to children and youth, while also providing something for adults (staff focus group)

To me leadership and life skills aren't the main things people get from Unicamp. These things are certainly gained by staff and CITs, LITs etc. but for the average camper (kid's camper or adult) it is more about spiritual exploration and community. I do appreciate the explicit mention of children's programming in this one though (on-line survey)

A number of focus group and survey participants wished to expand the activities of this purpose beyond leadership and life skills and offered suggestions such as adding "personal development" or "spiritual growth." A few suggested concepts such as "empowerment" would be a better fit than "leadership." It was also recommended to consider adding "seniors" and "young adults" in addition to "children, youth and adults." A few survey participants thought Purpose 2 was not needed.

How We Do Religion at Unicamp

In Purpose 2, the UU religion is expressed through "grounding learning in the UU Principles." The living out and expression of the UU Principles is widely seen as important at Unicamp. However, many felt the language of "through grounding learning" (in the UU Principles) was awkward and the meaning was unclear. Many changes were suggested such as "rooted in" or "grounded in" the Principles.

It was suggested that more intentional planning to ground programs in the Principles could be beneficial for all programs and could also be applied more consistently in adult programs. Some participants weren't clear about how adult programs were connected to UU Principles, others hoped that religious expression not become too restrictive. A few participants also recommended that adding UU "Sources" to "Principles" is important.

I appreciate how the principles are operationalized in programs, approach to leadership building, Kids Camps (on-line survey)

To nurture to me requires intention...we could be more intentional for our cross-section of individuals to develop life and leadership skills...That's a little harder - just to see what's available for programming vs clear intentions or a theme for programs and whether programming / offerings / opportunities are really grounded in Canadian UU principles or just a nice thing to do (Board focus group)

There's a big focus on Principles in number 1 and 2 and I understand that as our touch point. Just recognizing they do and can change and there are other ways we express our values. Naming our "Sources" is really important. The Principles are not the only or best method for conveying values formation with religious exploration (young adult focus group)

Purpose 3

Purpose 3: Engage people in practicing environmental stewardship and living out the Canadian Unitarian Universalist principle of respecting the interdependent web of all existence. This will be realized through: education, conservation, and the enhancement of Unicamp's natural habitat.

How we do religion at Unicamp

A large majority of focus group and survey participants felt positively overall about this purpose and felt it was important as a "guide for expressing our values." Many said the 7th Principle of the "interdependent web of all existence," is special to them and fits well with Unicamp. The 7th Principle arises often during Kid's Camp. Some described Unicamp itself as a spiritual location, like a congregation, where people experience nature, and connections are strengthened within and between congregations. A few questioned the focus on just one Principle or wondered about including a purpose for the new 8th Principle.

It's good how it refers to the land and natural habitat and beauty and opportunity of it. It fits very well. The 7th Principle is a much-loved Principle (Board focus group)

I like this one. It's good to have... It does relate to the UU Principles and advancing those through stewardship, education and the environment here (family camp youth focus group)

I really like this one. I was a camp counsellor here for two summers and this is the Principle that comes up most... a camper tries to squish a spider and we point to this one a lot and can say – we all belong and co-exist as a web, spiders eat mosquitos that you're also trying to kill (young adult focus group)

The way Unicamp serves the purpose of a UU congregation....(it) is effectively a church, a spiritual location. We're here to experience a spiritual connection to nature and it fulfills a religious purpose (family camp focus group)

Many on-line survey and focus group participants supported the concept of stewardship and viewed it as an important and worthy goal. It provides the opportunity to learn and practice environmental stewardship, could help to obtain environmental grants and will support our charitable status by legitimizing the environmental activities Unicamp engages in currently and could do in the future.

(We can be) engaging in learning how to practice environmental stewardship. It's an ongoing process of learning how we do that, how to take care of the land and live with it. Not every person here has to do all these things – it gives the scope that we can (family camp focus group)

I think this should be an important part of Unicamp's purpose. We have valuable and vulnerable land to steward. It is important that we balance protecting this land and using it. Identifying this environmental focus, we are placing ourselves in a broader geographic context. We own land that is a designated part of the biosphere (on-line survey participant)

Questions and concerns were also raised, including by those who liked the concept of stewardship. Some felt Unicamp has not been doing a good job of stewardship and needs to do better. This

requires understanding what stewardship means and more resources may be required. Some suggested we look to Indigenous teachings and reflect on land issues. Many participants agreed there is an inherent challenge in balancing our use of the land and taking care of the land. A few felt the term has negative connotations.

Just engage is not enough... Engage people in learning about and practicing stewardship. Stewardship connotes way more than recycling. Stewardship is about how we care for the land, because it's not ours...I love it if we promote it. Now I feel we are users of land... (we) need to know exactly what we're trying to do for that (family camp focus group)

You might also emphasize the importance of First Nations notions of living in nature (e.g. respect for the land, stewardship, etc.) (on-line survey participant)

An approach to consider is, it's a human habitat as well as a natural habitat. Minimize the impact of occupying, and living as symbiotically as we can with the environment (young adult focus group)

A Broad View of Unicamp (activities and participants)

There was a diversity of opinion regarding the actions of “education, conservation and enhancement of our natural habitat.” Some focus group and survey participants liked these as concrete actions and would like to see Unicamp do more. Many had questions and concerns about what these actions mean, how they would be applied, and how they would impact staff, campers and nature. A few questioned whether it was feasible or if it should be a charitable purpose.

I love that it is very place grounded. We're in a very special setting on the escarpment and there have been threats, so to codify the importance of conservation is huge. Also having this as a value and a goal is good and important as well (young adult focus group)

Every decision should have the environment as the top priority. Nurture in children to know what it means to be environmentally friendly...It's very important (staff focus group)

Occasionally there are educational things like edibles, caves etc. But not a program like learn about birds. Not quite sure what it means. Is it more about experiencing it? Does it mean education of the environment outside of Unicamp?... What does it mean? (family camp focus group)

It's seriously flawed. This is not a natural habitat. It was modified in many ways. We created the pond and lined it with clay...There are buildings all over... What's natural here and could grow naturally?... What are we conserving?... What about restoration principles?... So far, it's human-centric (family camp focus group)

A number of participants shared ideas for turning this purpose into action, such as a natural habitat team, environmental projects like a forest garden, educational campaigns, and coordinating actions related to our biosphere designation.

A few participants recommended clarifying whom we are engaging and educating. Is it Unicampers only, the congregations as well, or the broader community?

The Introductory Statement to the Charitable Purposes

Introductory statement: The statement of purpose of Unicamp of Ontario is to operate a Canadian Unitarian Universalist (UU) campground and Spiritual Retreat Centre for UU's, member congregations, and the general public of all ages to: (followed by the three proposed purposes)

Though it was not posed as a question in the focus groups or survey, some participants wished to provide feedback on the introductory statement to the three purposes. Questions and concerns about safety issues and disregarding rules were raised in several focus groups in relation to the "general public" coming to Unicamp. Some did not know that Unicamp was open to anyone. Suggestions included orientation for newcomers, vetting for rentals and changing the phrase to "the wider community." There were also a number of suggestions for change such as calling Unicamp a "Camp" or "Children's Camp."

Thoughts on Governance and Organizational Development – For the 3 Purposes

Some participants shared reflections on what the new purposes would mean for the way Unicamp organizes itself and operates. This is a summary of those comments for all three purposes.

Charitable purposes can serve as a guide for policy and decision-making. They communicate to us and the outside world what we are about.

It's important to define and operationalize the new purposes, and consider the impacts on staff, campers, nature and the land. Processes for planning, determining goals and outcomes and ensuring accountability are needed. The transfer of knowledge to the next generation through mentoring and documenting is essential. This inclusive vision of Unicamp may have implications for adequate staffing and resources. Working with congregations can provide many resources and skills to create programs.

Purpose 2 will help Unicamp be more intentional in grounding programs in the UU Principles and Sources, and fulfilling the charitable purpose of advancing religion. It will help staff and others in developing and assessing programs and goals.

There could be benefits and opportunities in adopting the third purpose, such as environmental grant funding and outreach. We need to build the infrastructure to engage people in stewardship. It could also support charitable status by legitimizing the time and effort related to caring for the land.

Decision-making could have the environment as a priority. Unicamp can make ecologically sound purchases for camp. Being sustainable will come with higher costs.

Some areas for further clarification with the Unicamp community were identified. For example, some participants were unaware that the general public could come to Unicamp and some were concerned that there be guidelines and adherence to UU Principles to ensure safety.

Other suggestions included offering school programs off-season and advertising to all faith groups.

DISCUSSION

Many insightful and valuable reflections and suggestions for changes to the charitable purposes proposed by the committee, were provided in the community feedback process. The committee sincerely thanks all participants and considered all the feedback and suggestions. All revisions were based on the feedback. The revised purposes are stronger because of your participation. This section will briefly highlight some key findings and present the revisions made to the purposes.

On-Line Survey and Focus Group Ratings of Purposes

The ratings of how well the three purposes describe Unicamp by the focus group and survey participants, provide a measure of the support for the proposed purposes. As illustrated in Table 1 of the Results section, there is a strong majority support for all three purposes from both focus groups and on-line survey participants. The purposes were rated as describing what Unicamp is about, “Well” or “Extremely Well,” by 77% to 87% of participants. Obtaining very similar results from two different data sources, increases confidence in the results.

There was a very good response for the on-line survey with 100 participants. We conclude, based on the survey responses summarized in the Results section, that this sample of participants represented a reasonable range of perspectives in terms of age, UU affiliation and a variety of ways of participating at Unicamp. It is clear that a diversity of opinion was expressed.

How the Community Feedback was Incorporated in the Revisions to the Purposes

The rating scale results indicate a strong majority support for all three proposed charitable purposes. To better understand what people supported and what they did not support or wanted to see changed, we looked to the findings from the focus group interviews and the comments made by a portion of the on-line survey participants. Considerations for some of the revisions to the purposes are noted below.

For Purpose 1, “religious” exploration was changed to “spiritual” to align with UU ways of expressing religious identity. Adding “strive to create” and “community experience” increases inclusivity and indicates the challenging and aspirational nature of community building. A statement was added to indicate that children and youth are central to Unicamp, based on the strong case made in the community feedback. The wording of the proposed purpose was framed as a broad description of all programs in order to meet charitable purpose requirements that statements not be too narrow (nor too vague).

For Purpose 2, adding “spiritual growth” and “Sources” is beneficial in greatly expanding the scope for advancing the UU religion through programs and opportunities, particularly for adult programs. The statement centring children and youth is not repeated. The Purpose 1 statement applies to all Unicamp programs and activities.

For Purpose 3, the activities of “education, conservation, and the enhancement of Unicamp’s natural habitat” have been deleted due to the diversity of opinion and lack of consensus for these actions. Replacing “practicing” stewardship with “learning about” stewardship, and adding the foundational concept of “experiencing nature,” will provide flexibility for Unicamp to explore how to express the UU Principle of the interdependent web. The scope for participants has been clarified by specifying “Unicamp participants.”

Below is the **revised** version of the charitable purpose statement, incorporating the feedback from the community, with changes made appearing in bold.

Revised Charitable Purpose Statement – Incorporating Community Feedback

The statement of purpose of Unicamp of Ontario is to operate a Canadian Unitarian Universalist (UU) **Camp** and Spiritual Retreat Centre for **UU ‘s, congregations, and the wider community** of all ages to:

- Purpose 1.** Provide camps, programs, services and gatherings, that advance Canadian Unitarian Universalist **Principles**, engage in **spiritual** exploration, and **strive to create** a welcoming, inclusive, multigenerational, **community experience**. **Children and youth are central to Unicamp, therefore activities such as Kids Camp, youth camps, and family camps, are a priority;**
- Purpose 2.** Nurture leadership, life skills **and spiritual growth** by offering programs and opportunities to children, youth and adults **of all ages, rooted in** the Canadian Unitarian Universalist Principles **and Sources;**
- Purpose 3.** Engage **Unicamp participants in learning about environmental stewardship, experiencing nature,** and living out the Canadian Unitarian Universalist **Principle** of respecting the interdependent web of all existence.

NEXT STEPS

At the 2022 Unicamp Annual General Meeting, delegates approved the Charter Review Committee’s motion to continue work on the charitable purposes in 2023. The committee will review the revised charitable purposes with Unicamp leadership to consider financial, operational, legal, and other implications of new purposes for Unicamp. The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) requires organizations changing their purposes to submit a detailed list of activities and to illustrate how they fulfill the organization’s charitable purposes. For religious charities, the legally charitable purposes are to advance religion. It is the committee’s view that all of the Unicamp sponsored activities: Kids Camp; youth camps; family camps; occasional camping; seasonal camping; adult and other programs; UU Sunday services; and gatherings such as Thanksgiving; can fulfill the charitable purpose of advancing the UU faith. We conclude that the community feedback results clearly support this broad view of Unicamp and the ways of advancing the UU faith described in the proposed purposes. We encourage Unicamp to look for ways to infuse spirituality more intentionally into our programs and activities, while maintaining a spirit of openness, flexibility and creativity. In addition to strengthening our compliance with the legal requirements for charities, we would also benefit as a community, and as a faith, from doing so.

In order to change Unicamp’s original and current 1969 charitable purposes, the revised charitable purposes will need to be approved by the members, the Canada Revenue Agency and the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (Ontario). The committee will recommend to the Board that Unicamp seek designation as a religious charity as it is currently designated in the “Other” category.

The Board is currently working on updating the by-laws and articles of incorporation to comply with the new Ontario Non-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA). Updating the charitable purposes may be integrated with this work.

All are invited to attend an on-line town hall meeting on Saturday, April 1, 2023, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. for a brief presentation of the results and time for discussion and reflection. Contact unicamprep@grandriverunitarian.ca for the zoom link.

The Charter Review Committee sincerely thanks everyone who participated in this democratic process for reviewing and updating the charitable purposes for Unicamp!

For a more detailed presentation of all sections, please see The Full-Length Report of the Unicamp Charitable Purposes Review.

For more information or questions, please contact Dianne Heise, project lead, at unicamprep@grandriverunitarian.ca