

Escalating Inequality Video Curriculum (and how to create Opportunity for All)



Workshop facilitators: a few words to help you get started Contact for more information, encouragement and/or feedback: call Terry Lowman at 515-441-9844 or email terryleelowman@gmail.com

The videos mostly speak for themselves. It would be best to allow around an hour to preview the videos--this will allow you to be conversant and have a level of confidence going into the workshop. With UUs it would be unusual to not have a vital conversation after viewing such compelling material. Just allow time for participants to discuss their feelings and experiences.

How to obtain the videos

By clicking <https://uujec.com/EJVideos> you can go to our page and easily download all the videos onto your computer by clicking on each video and saving them all in a file for viewing later. Please do not stream video as it's very undependable and could create a hostile group if/when streaming breaks down.

Tips for leading workshops

Two suggestions for creating community in the workshops--you can ask those who'd like to share about their economic and class history. Do not structure sharing so people would be forced to share. Many of us started working or middle class and have moved up with education.

Community organizers use a tool called One on Ones to create personal relationships. Because they take time, you might choose to have sign-up sheets and have members sign up to meet at another time. UUs love to talk, so if it's possible, ask people to allow plenty of time. It's amazing what you can learn when you put two people together even when they've known each other for a long time. I suspect that spouses would learn things.

Please follow two iron rules for community organizing: 1) punctuality. It is rude to start or finish late—if you truly respect the dignity and worth of every person, then you will respect their time. 2) Never, ever do for someone else what they can do for themselves. This will be more important as we get into solutions.

Workshop One: Houston, we have a problem.

Chalice lighting: "An imbalance between rich and poor is the oldest and most fatal ailment of all republics." –Plutarch, (46 – 120 CE)

Please share the below paragraph:

*UUJEC is **Unitarian-Universalists for a Just Economic Community**, founded in 1989 to "engage, educate, and activate UU individuals and congregations, social justice groups, and community partners to fulfill our vision of positive systemic change". UUJEC led the campaign for passage of the **Congregational Study Action Issue (CSAI)** on "Escalating Inequality" at the 2014 UUA Annual General Assembly in Providence, RI. Every two years one of five proposed CSAIs is voted in for "four years of study, reflection, and action" by UU congregations throughout the United States. See the [Study Guide Summary](#) page for brief descriptions of key concepts of this study guide to the CSAI.*

Explanation of what people want for distribution of wealth, what we think we have and what we really have. 6 ½ minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPKKQnijnsM#t=11>

What and why distribution is the way it is, the fairy tale. 8 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6ZsXrzF8Cc>

Nick Hanauer's TED talk on why the consumers are the job creators. 6 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBx2Y5HhplI>

There's a lot more to modern slavery than the sex trade. For example, the Thai shrimp industry: farms, harvesting and processing, is driven by the slave trade.

Tony Talbott won Modern Day Slavery, 9 1/2 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bscKRPkR328>

Richard Wilkinson's TED talk explaining why inequality is harmful to everyone. 17 minutes http://www.ted.com/talks/richard_wilkinson?language=en

Closing

"We can either have democracy in this country or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both." – Louis Brandeis

Workshop Two: How we got this way

Chalice lighting: "The disposition to admire, and almost to worship, the rich and the powerful, and to despise, or, at least, to neglect persons of poor and mean condition is the great and most universal cause of the corruption of our moral sentiments." – Adam Smith

Today's videos speak for themselves. Just allow time for participants to discuss their feelings and experiences.

Crash course on money, origins and how it works allowing taxes and slavery. 14 minutes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94BtOtGVqLw>

Lessig on the .01% funders and Citizens. 18 minutes

http://www.ted.com/talks/lawrence_lessig_we_the_people_and_the_republic_we_must_reclaim

John Oliver on wealth inequality. 14 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LfgSEwjAeno>

Regulatory capture, 3 1/2 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqA4RGI5i8A>

Robert Reich on the race to the bottom 6 minutes

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDq_Ehwop9s

Robert Reich on Trans-Pacific Partnership, TPP, and why it's a losing proposition for citizens. 2 1/2 minutes https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3O_Sbbeqfdw

Closing

"I'll fares the land, to hastening ills a prey, where wealth accumulates, and men decay". –Oliver Goldsmith, Anglo-Irish writer (1730-1774)

Workshop Three: Is there hope?

Chalice lighting:

May the flame we kindle now

Like the gentle glow of daybreak,

shining on eyelids clenched against life's hardness

Awaken us to a world alive with possibility and hope

...from Newington Green and Islington UUs, London, England

Paul Farmer shares his experience with Partners in Health in Haiti 3½ minutes
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJpZnUjtorI>

Jim Yong Kim, head of the World Bank, talks about eliminating poverty, 10 ½ minutes
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHQes6P5XnQ>

The above videos were selected because there's no reason either Paul Farmer or Jim Yong Kim should have expected to find success. Now, 25 years after starting, they have a world-wide reputation as successful social entrepreneurs. As head of the World Bank, Jim Yong Kim noted that healthcare is very much an issue of economic justice and success—small amounts of money invested in healthcare reap big rewards in economic output. An example is deworming children in developing countries is the most cost-effective measure in educational success.

Bono talks about the end of poverty 13 minutes

http://www.ted.com/talks/bono_the_good_news_on_poverty_yes_there_s_good_news?language=en

What's happening in the rural economy to fight poverty with Lindsey Lusher Shute. 18 1/2 minutes
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2qXygFm8U>

An artist, Rich Nahmias, takes on Immigrant Economic Justice and hunger. 6 1/2 minutes
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iL47OFP8crw>

The Immokalee Farm Worker's Approach to Justice 3 1/2 minutes
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iL47OFP8crw>

Why are people happy? 19 minutes

http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_gilbert_asks_why_are_we_happy?language=en#t-756012

Discuss diminished expectations as we deplete resources. Framing this change as settling for "less" might sadden or scare people. Try the frame as "different". An example, we went from driving and cars as a high priority to smart phones being a high priority with driving diminishing in priority in just one generation. There are those who say we have to tell people that "growth" is a thing of the past. Contrast that to changing our definition of growth by using other metrics like happiness.

Closing

"The man of great wealth owes a peculiar obligation to the state because he derives special advantages from the mere existence of government." – Theodore Roosevelt

Workshop Four: Solutions?

Chalice lighting:

During our darkest moments, still, there is light.

When facing our biggest challenges, still, there is light.

When all we can do is put one foot in front of the other, still, there is light.

When we can't see the way out, still, there is light.

When all we can do to help is hold someone's hand as they cry, still, there is light.

We are the light. For ourselves and for one another.

Always, there is light. By Nadine McSpadden

Ernesto Sirolli tells how to help people. 17 minutes

http://www.ted.com/talks/ernesto_sirolli_want_to_help_someone_shut_up_and_listen

The science of applying advancements 18 minutes

http://www.ted.com/talks/sendhil_mullainathan?language=en

Science and data are our hope for a better future. The old style of justice work was taking what we like from our Western Civilization and trying to apply it to other cultures. But we can do double blind studies and actually measure the intricacies of what happens. Example: micro-loans have helped many people, but how do you get money into the hands of those it will help? How do you avoid giving it to someone who will merely buy a luxury item with no intention of repaying? And how do you keep exploiters out of the market?

Suggested book, More than Good Intentions by Dean Karlan and Jacob Appel

David Cobb for Move to Amend, corporations are not people. 2 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rr-Eax3f1rg>

How progressive taxes work. 3 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hhCs9r33tM>

Sharing economy, Shane Hughes. 12 minutes

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ya6zndBObHY>

With UU's small numbers, if we want to change the world, we have to hold hands and create coalitions. The two most successful models are UU State Actions Networks and Congregationally Based Community Organizing, CBCO, typically through organizations like PICO, Gamaliel and Industrial Areas Foundation. Success comes by identifying passion to solve a specific problem and then creating personal relationships with decision makers and gatekeepers to solve the problem. Rebuilding a more equitable society with opportunities for all is going to take

years. The plutocrats have devised a system that will not be easily taken down—they control the courts and both houses of Congress. They have written the rules for campaign financing that have little concern for anyone who is not super wealthy. The rich have re-written the tax laws so that there's a penalty for income from work—workers' pay over 3 times as much in income and social security taxes compared to someone who gets stock dividends and capital gains.

There are matching fund grants for training and first year dues for Congregationally Based Community Organizing, go to this website: <http://www.uufunding.org/congregation-based-community-organizing.html>

Dave Meslin on obstacles to community organizing, 7 minutes

http://www.ted.com/talks/dave_meslin_the_antidote_to_apathy

State Advocacy Networks, 4 ½ minutes (update, we now have 21 state networks)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_mEpK5INyo

Closing

“Superfluous wealth can buy superfluities only.” – Henry David Thoreau

Workshop Five: Race, Minorities and Economic Justice

Chalice lighting

“In a faith community that is still predominantly white, the personal stories, the songs, of Unitarian Universalists of African, Asian, Native American, and Latina/o descent can be drowned out by the dominant melody. The risk is that those stories will remain unheard and invisible, encouraging our faith to hear its song as the song of white people only.”

Reverend William Sinkford

There is enough material here that if your participants wish to talk about this, you may choose to break this session into two sessions. If that is unrealistic, the facilitator may wish to edit the video list. The videos themselves are one hour and 23 minutes...so if the group is not chatty (make sure you have UUs in the class—we're known for being chatty), you might be able to confine this session to just 90 minutes.

Although documentation of LGBT economic inequality is widely available, good video is difficult to come by. To be clear, adding LGB and particularly T to race and immigration status is likely to result in economic challenges. Also to be clear, although there is a myth that gay men are

wealthy, side by side comparison (race, gender and immigrant status) finds the LGBT community has economic challenges.

Bryan Stevenson's TED talk on justice in the US. 23 ½ minutes (you may stop at a little over 21 minutes)

http://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice

Michelle Alexander's TEDx talk on Mass Incarceration. 24 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQ6H-Mz6hgw>

Race Forward on Structural and Institutional Racism 4 ½ minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjGQaz1u3V4>

Tim Wise on white privilege, 9 ½ minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3Xe1kX7Wsc>

Phillip Agnew of the Dream Defenders. 8 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2iF1udiMN8>

Wealth comparisons black and white. 2 ½ minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpJLvueSPm>

Immigrant economic challenges. 11 minutes

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_HrPWBGGIY

Economic and social justice issues surrounding women, gut wrenching. 18 1/2 minutes https://www.ted.com/talks/sheryl_wudunn_our_century_s_greatest_injustice

Brave New Films on militarization of police. 3 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kStDAPwCBa0&list=PLQ9B-p5Q-YOOb3eYHFnySjca8RxgUQ9mH>

Move to Amend on racism and white exploitation 5 ½ minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFjKQVZLk1g>

Closing

"We tend to treat changes in the economy as if they were like the weather—natural phenomena governed by forces beyond our control. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have chosen to live in a society with high unemployment and with income distribution that is becoming medieval. A tiny percentage of Americans owns most of the wealth. Meanwhile millions of willing and able people are without work. This did not just happen. We created this situation."

—Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) President Rev. Peter Morales

Workshop Six: Class and Economic Justice

Chalice lighting

"Fleas dream of buying themselves a dog, and nobodies dream of escaping poverty: that, one magical day, good luck will suddenly rain down on them – will rain down in buckets. But good luck doesn't rain down, yesterday, today, tomorrow or ever. Good luck doesn't even fall in a fine drizzle, no matter how hard the nobodies summon it, even if their left hand is tickling, or if they begin the new day on their right foot or start the new year with a change of brooms. The nobodies: nobody's children, owners of nothing.

The nobodies: the no-ones, the nobodied, running like rabbits, dying through life, screwed every which way. Who are not but could be. Who don't speak languages, but dialects. Who don't have religions, but superstitions. Who don't create art, but handicrafts. Who don't have culture, but folklore. Who are not human beings, but human resources. Who do not have faces, but arms. Who do not have names, but numbers. Who do not appear in the history of the world, but in the crime reports of the local paper. The nobodies, who are not worth the bullet that kills them."

— Eduardo Galeano, "The Nobodies"

One of the things that is special about talking about class is that it elicits emotions—let the class share and think about those emotions. When dealing with someone from a higher class, there can be reverence or anger, resentment or merely fear and embarrassment. Someone from a low class may elicit discomfort. Of course, any and all feelings are valid.

Many UUs have moved up the ladder—starting out working class and moving up. Allow participants to share this, if they choose to (do not structure this exercise so a person would feel awkward opting out, we're not here to make people feel bad).

The importance of this segment is to help UUs empathize with other classes. What has been learned is that we should be asking visitors "what brought you here?" Or maybe "Did you come for your kids?"

*Questions we do **not** want to ask are: where do you live? What do you do? Where did you go to college? Those questions are merely asking social class by using code. Not everyone is employed and not everyone has gone to college—by asking those questions you may drive away someone who fits perfectly in our community.*

The videos themselves are just a little less than one hour...so if the group is not chatty (check to make sure you have UUs in the class—we're known for being chatty), you should be able to confine this session to just 90 minutes.

Class, America as a nation of tribes. 9 ½ minutes

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nU5MtVM_zFs&list=PLC6D871A2A8C3C8EF&index=1

Does class matter in choosing a mate? 5 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1hWLtnOZ9c>

How to marry rich from People like us 7 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvibi2Cph-E>

Friends in low places, going on a Dive Bar Crawl, from People like us 5 ½ minutes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0D8GIFG4EXo>

Trouble in Paradise, from People like us 3 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdey7Qa52nM>

All you need is cash, from People like us, 9 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tf2dScTlvOQ&index=6&list=PLC6D871A2A8C3C8EF>

Howard Zinn on class in America, 10 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TlxLa2oKaXY>

Born Rich, 8 minutes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-hIuvqfpIs>

Closing

"The poor, I am told, are kind to each other but that is because they have nothing to lose," he said. "The rich cannot afford to be."

— [M.R.C. Kasasian](#), *The Mangle Street Murders*

Workshop Seven: Economic Justice and the Environment

Chalice lighting:

"Poverty is like punishment for a crime you didn't commit." Eli Khamarov

Pachamama meditation. 3 ½ minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANp8bZLh4DI>

Van Jones, 2008 Ware Lecturer at UU General Assembly, on how the poor are subjected to environmental degradation—noting the interconnecting web of life. 13 minutes

http://www.ted.com/talks/van_jones_the_economic_injustice_of_plastic

Majora Carter on winning economic justice with environmental justice. 19 minutes.

http://www.ted.com/talks/majora_carter_s_tale_of_urban_renewal?language=en

Why GDP is a poor measure of wealth and success. 7 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IF9YsVpZnSE>

Pavan Sukhdev in pricing the environment to understand real costs. 16 ½ minutes

http://www.ted.com/talks/pavan_sukhdev_what_s_the_price_of_nature?language=en#t-81411

Closing

"Let every individual and institution now think and act as a responsible trustee of Earth, seeking choices in ecology, economics and ethics that will provide a sustainable future, eliminate pollution, poverty and violence, awaken the wonder of life and foster peaceful progress in the human adventure." — **John McConnell**, *founder of International Earth Day*

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