



ALLIANCE OF RELIGIONS AND CONSERVATION

launched in 1995 by HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh KG KT



MANY HEAVENS, ONE EARTH, OUR CONTINENT

Engaging Africa's faith communities in practical action
on sustainable land management and environmental protection

In September 2012, 27 Christian, Muslim and Hindu faith communities in sub-Saharan Africa launched long-term action plans on the environment at a celebration organised by the UK charity Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), entitled *Many Heavens, One Earth: African Faith Commitments for a Living Planet*. Between them, the 27 faith groups reach out to around **184 million people**.

The African Faith Commitments for a Living Planet – launched at the Desmond Tutu Conference Centre at the All Africa Conference of Churches in Nairobi on September 18, 2012 – outline action that faith groups commit to taking over the next seven years. They include each faith's theological mandate to take action and focus on community awareness raising, agricultural practice, sustainable use of land and water, and education on the environment in faith schools – emphasising simple, sustainable land and water management practices.

This is the first time African faith communities have come together to develop long-term plans on the environment aimed at changing the behaviour and outlook of the faithful for generations to come. It offers an unprecedented opportunity to engage with the biggest element of civil society – the faiths – and the sector which has unparalleled outreach and influence in the continent.

"You have the trust. Indeed you have the trust of more people than any other national or international organisations" – Mounkaila Goumandakoye, Regional Director, United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Africa

The African Faith Commitments for a Living Planet are the result of an initiative by ARC to engage faith communities in sustainable land and water management. The initiative is supported by the World Bank as part of its TerrAfrica partnership which aims to address land degradation in sub-Saharan Africa, with additional funding from Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and USAID (via the African Biodiversity Conservation Group). ARC is a secular body which helps the world's major religions develop environmental programmes based on their own core teachings, beliefs and practices.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERSHIP

The faith groups involved consulted extensively with their local structures, from women's groups to youth groups to their faith hierarchy, in drawing up their plans. Their plans reflect the priorities for

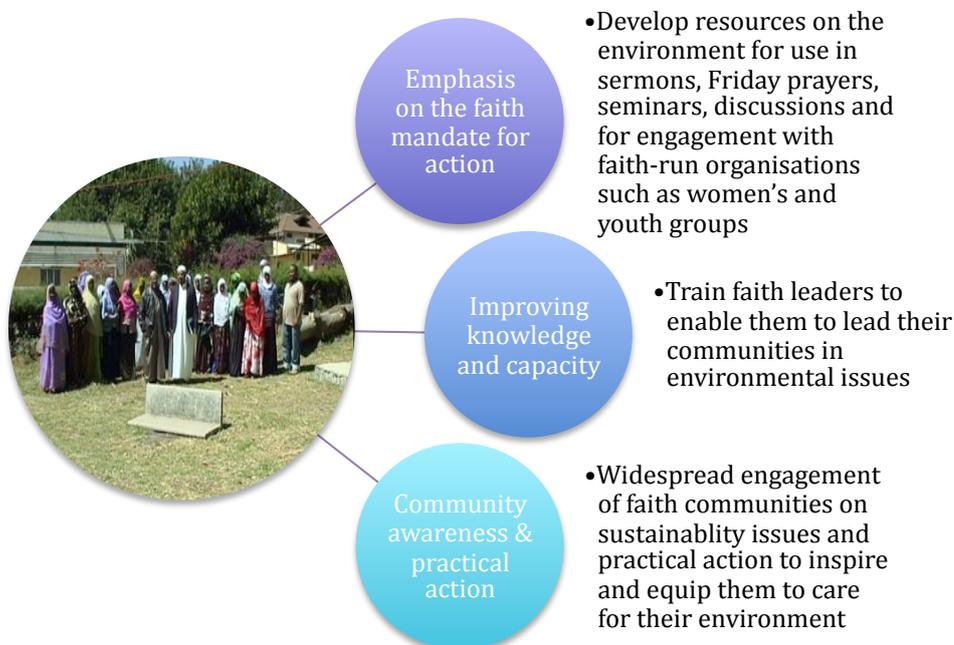
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action identified by their communities. Each one is, therefore, unique to that faith community but they are broadly clustered in five key themes, each of which offers opportunities for partnership with secular and government organisations.

1. CHANGING HEARTS AND MINDS: Behaviour change and awareness raising in faith communities

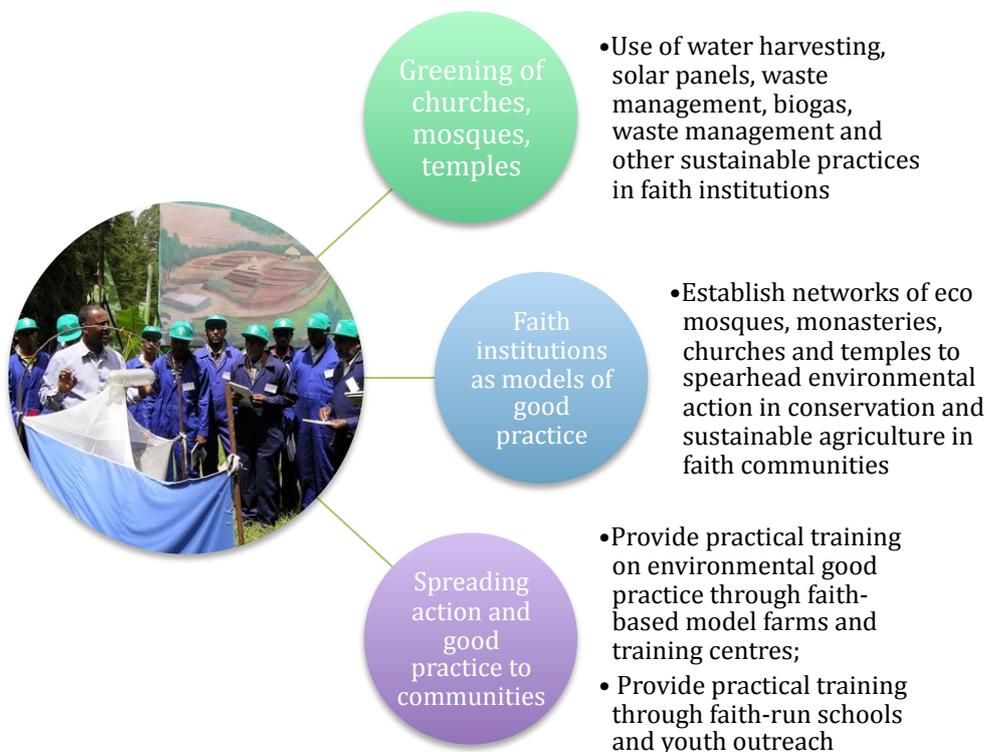


EXAMPLES OF PLANNED FAITH ACTION

- The Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council plans to organise three days of national level training in environmental protection for 100 Muslim leaders, mosque imams and mosque development committee representatives, backed up by three days of training for 25 imams in local regions. Following this training, an annual Tree Day will be introduced, along with an environmental conservation education programme, in each of the country's 40,000 mosques.
- Catholic bishops in Kenya have issued a pastoral letter to be read in all Catholic churches in Kenya supporting their long-term plan. They now plan to launch an annual Catholic Environment Day with each Catholic to plant at least one tree.
- The Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana, with the interfaith body RELBONET, plans to introduce awareness on environmental protection and conservation issues in more than 10,000 congregations through religious outreach activities, radio and media programmes, seminars, church harvests, celebrations and social mobilisation networks. In addition, it proposes creating 1,000 eco congregations and 1,000 eco clubs in schools to spearhead education on environmental issues in churches, mosques and temples.
- The Catholic University of Eastern Africa – through AMECEA, the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa which represents 48 million Catholics in nine countries – would like to organise workshops and seminars on environmental care as a Christian response for church staff, primary schools, secondary schools, youth and parish councils and small Christian communities. It will develop a model strategic plan to go green for church leaders, with workshops in each of the nine countries it represents, as well as develop a teaching module for teaching on the environment for catechists and for use in theological colleges. This module will focus on the African response to environmental care, reflecting traditional African spirituality, traditions and wisdom alongside Catholic teaching.

- The Protestant Council of Churches of Rwanda plans 15 seminars per year in order to train 10,500 pastors, youth and women in the church on climate change and environmental care. It will broadcast programmes on this on its new CPR radio station.
- The Muslim Supreme Council in Uganda will develop a dedicated day to preaching and teaching about the environment called Greening Friday. To promote Greening Friday, 210 sheikhs, imams and other religious leaders will be trained. There will also be 'training of trainers' of 100 teachers and mullahs; a simplified khutba tool on Islam and the environment will be developed in Arabic and translated and printed in five different regional languages.
- The Ethiopian Orthodox Church will introduce training on the environment into the curriculum and training manuals of the EOC's 22 clergy training centres.
- The Anglican Diocese of Bunyoro Kitara in Uganda will organise an annual Green Week through the schools of the diocese, organise eight conferences on the environment for church leaders, head teachers and hold three trainers' workshops

2. LEADING BY EXAMPLE: Developing faith institutions as centres of environmental good practice

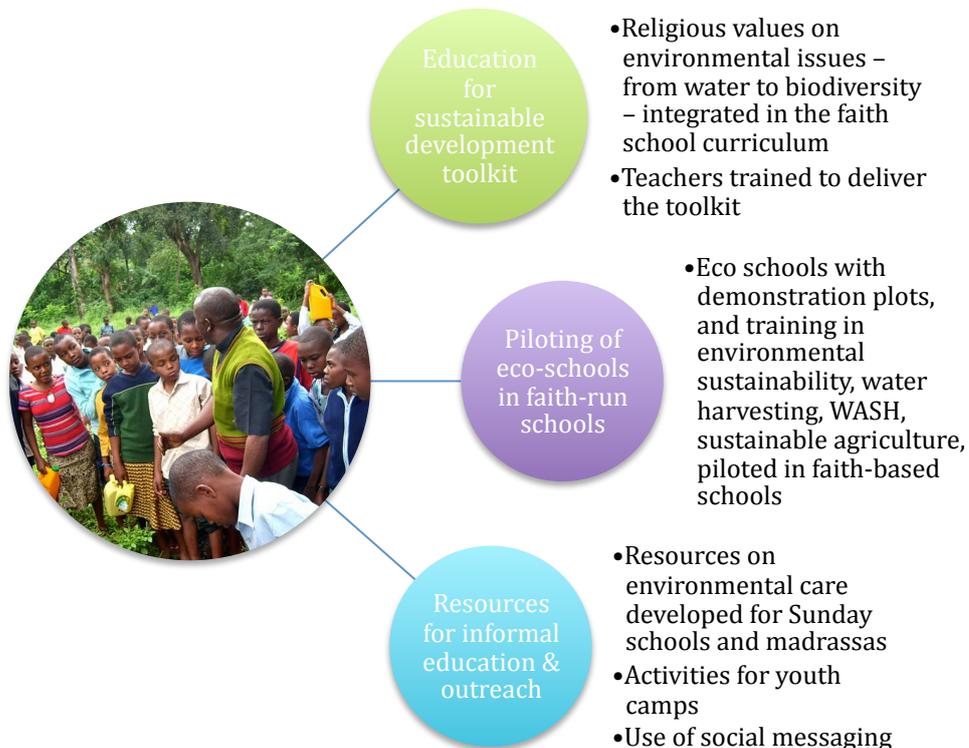


EXAMPLES OF PLANNED FAITH ACTION

- The Ethiopian Orthodox Church proposes creating a learning centre in each monastery for improved technology demonstration and dissemination of such technology to the local community. Biogas digesters would be introduced in 1,000 monasteries as alternative sources of energy; monasteries would also become centres for farmer training in sustainable agriculture. Solar energy would be introduced into 15 clergy centres.
- The Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council proposes setting up model eco mosques to demonstrate tree care and planting, agroforestry methods and conservation agriculture along with vegetable gardening for low income women. This would be piloted in 30 eco mosques in six districts of three regions of Ethiopia, with training. Woodlots would be set up at each mosque along with plant nurseries and fruit tree orchards.

- The Uganda Muslim Women Association wants to set up a model farm for demonstrating tree planting, agroforestry and sustainable agriculture.
- The Green Top Project of the Uganda Muslim Youth Assembly and Humanitarian Efforts and Relief Uganda (HEAR Uganda) with the Uganda Muslim Teachers Association plans to target 50 schools, 50 mosques and 50 households to demonstrate water conservation through rainwater harvesting and create a model farm to teach water and soil preservation techniques as well as solar and wind energy technologies and training on making energy saving stoves.
- The Qadiriyyah Movement in Nigeria will introduce a Green Cemeteries programme of tree planting at all its cemeteries. It will also introduce a Green Kano Hajj pilgrim camp – greening pilgrimage to Kano and to the Hajj. It will introduce solar power at its mosques and install a hybrid solar and wind power system in the headquarters of the Qadiriyyah movement in Africa.
- The Hindu Council of Africa will introduce green audits and environmental certification for the Hindu community in all Hindu buildings. A Hindu Environment Day will be established where Hindus – individuals, businesses and temples – will pledge to protect the environment.

3. SHAPING THE FUTURE: Engaging young people through the faiths' existing extensive role in formal education and informal outreach



EXAMPLES OF PLANNED FAITH ACTION

- ARC is working with the Kenyan Organisation for Environmental Education to develop an Education for Sustainable Development toolkit that integrates religious values into teaching on environmental issues, from water to biodiversity. This is supported by all the major faith groups in Kenya, with teachers trained in its use and eco schools piloted in faith schools to teach pupils practical skills in agriculture, water harvesting, tree planting, WASH and sanitation.
- Faith groups in Cameroon, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria and Rwanda want to adapt this toolkit and introduce it into their faith schools and through their ministries of education as well as set up eco schools to spread good practice.

- The Protestant Council of Rwanda proposes Campus Green – a project to set up youth clubs for the environment in schools with training for young people and youth associations.
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania’s Northern Diocese wants to make environmental conservation a mandatory subject in its church schools as well as in its faith classes for all children prior to confirmation. Children must plant and care for at least 10 trees before they are confirmed.
- The Presbyterian Church of Ghana plans to set up 1,000 eco clubs in its schools to teach basic environmental studies, basic agriculture skills and water harvesting techniques. It would also like to set up farming clubs in its schools.
- Through the Catholic University of Kenya, AMECEA will produce a training module on African spirituality, culture and traditional beliefs and Christian theology on the environment. This will be used to teach catechists, seminarians and used in schools and informal education such as Catholic youth associations and Sunday schools. It will be supported by a range of teaching materials from workshops and seminars for teachers and pupils in Catholic schools. This will be introduced in nine countries.
- The Qadiriyyah movement in Nigeria will expand its school tree planting programme to its 120,000 school children and extend its garden and orchard programme to teach its young people agriculture and environmental care. This will also provide fruits and vegetables to Qadiriyyah green grocery kiosks to be set up within Kano metropolis as official retail outlets for products from its orchards and gardens.

4. RESTORING THE LAND: Training in sustainable agriculture and land management, and tree planting for practical outcomes



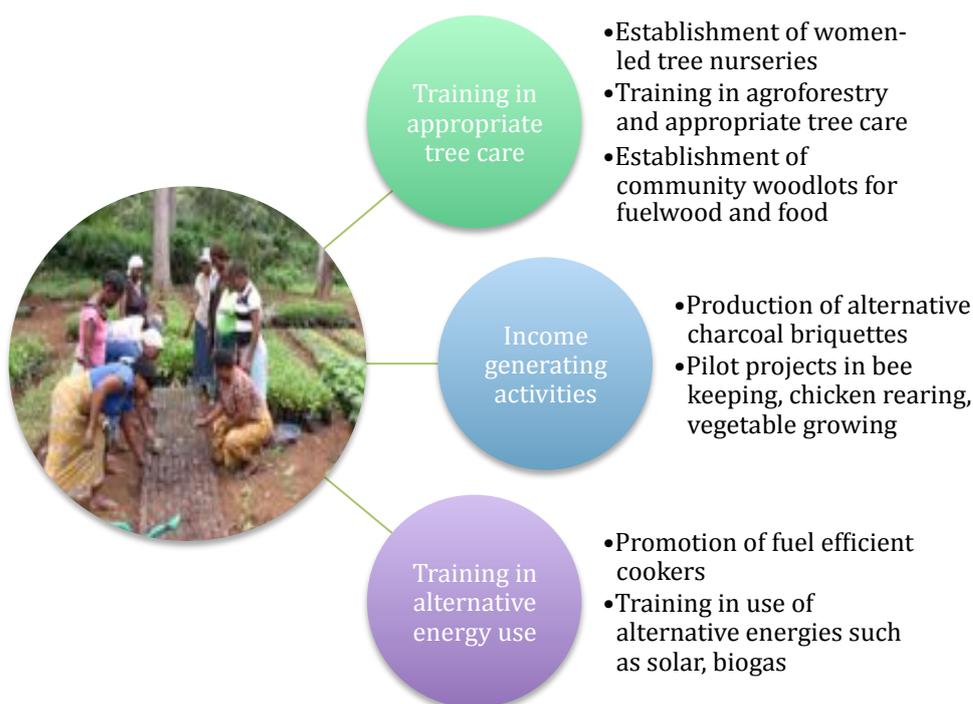
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- Training in Farming God’s Way (a form of conservation agriculture integrated with the faith reasons for action) will be conducted and replicated by the Methodist Church in Kenya, the

Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Kenya, the Catholic Church in Kenya, The Anglican Church in Kenya and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana to promote conservation agriculture

- The National Muslim of Council of Tanzania will develop Farming Allah’s way for introduction and replication among Muslim communities in Tanzania, Uganda and Ghana.
- The Evangelical Presbyterian Church proposes expanding its rural farmer training programmes.
- The Methodist Church in Kenya plans to begin farmer training and set up farm demonstrations on church land.
- The Uganda Muslim Youth Assembly and HEAR Uganda plan to set up tree nurseries in five regions of Uganda, and plant seedlings on more than 6,000 hectares of land owned by schools, mosques and local communities. These would be a mixture of fruit, fodder and indigenous trees, as well as community woodlots for fuelwood.
- The Ethiopian Evangelical Church will share its manual of best practice on low external input sustainable agriculture with its congregations to share and replicate best practice.

5. ENGAGING WOMEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE: Recognising the key role played by women in faith communities and families



EXAMPLES OF PLANNED FAITH ACTION

- The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana want to set up 10 major nurseries with women making up 50% of nursery attendants and supervisors in all nurseries. It will also provide training in tree care, agroforestry and nursery bed establishment at parish and mosque level through RELBONET.
- The Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania plans to set up women-led tree nurseries to provide seedlings for planting to women’s groups and young people in each of the 152 parishes of the diocese.

- The Bunyoro Kitara Anglican Diocese in Uganda proposes, through the Mothers' Union, to establish and manage women-led nurseries in all 24 of its parishes in the diocese.
- The National Muslim Council of Tanzania proposes setting up community owned tree nurseries to train women and young people
- The Uganda Muslim Supreme Council plans to train women in alternative charcoal briquette production and give training in alternative energy use such as biogas and solar and low energy stoves. The Muslim Women of Gomba District Environment Protection project will be expanded to other mosques in Uganda with women being trained in tree planting, agroforestry, rainwater harvesting, income generation and energy saving stoves.
- The United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe will hold three workshops for the three conferences of the Church to further train women and local leaders on care of the environment.

WHY WORK WITH THE FAITHS?

- 90% of the continent's population describe themselves as either Christian or Muslim
 - 470 million are Christian
 - 234 million are Muslims
- Faith groups are involved in more than half of all schools worldwide - and many more than this in Africa
- They also are engaged in enormous informal outreach to young people; for example, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has 6.5 million young people in Sunday schools

IN ADDITION

- Faith groups are the largest element of civil society
- Have unprecedented outreach and influence
- Are trusted more than politicians and officials
- Work in generations rather than short-term projects
- Have the structures in place, and the influence, to deliver on a large scale

THE 27 FAITH GROUPS IN THIS INITIATIVE

- Reach out to around 184 million people in sub-Saharan Africa
- Comprise Christian, Muslim and Hindu groups in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe

WHAT MAKES THIS PROJECT DISTINCTIVE?

Faith is what makes this initiative distinctive. In all cases faith has been the starting point for action in caring for the environment. By embedding action in faith, these plans will not only find a greater acceptance among their communities but will also prove far more effective and long-lasting than many other initiatives.

"Faith commitment to a living planet is a Catholic commitment to the care of God's Creation. We need to integrate the practice of our faith through Christian songs, poems, drama and homilies to promote care of the environment as a Christian obligation and priority... Through our Catholic institutions... we are committed to realise this dream of building a healthy society, healthy Earth and healthy Church."

- Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter to all Kenyans, issued in June 2012 and read in churches throughout Kenya

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