

Faiths for Green Africa



'A new awakening that will help shape beliefs, behaviour and actions for a greener and better Africa'

– Dr Ali Mohamed, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Mineral Resources, Kenya

Ninety per cent of Africa's people describe themselves as Christian or Muslim.

The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) has been working with faith groups in sub-Saharan Africa on environmental action and sustainable land and water management for the past four years, in a project funded by the World Bank and the Norwegian Government.

Faith groups are the biggest element of civil society and also the sector with unparalleled influence on the Continent. They have the trust and outreach to respond to Africa's sustainable development challenges yet

they are often overlooked as partners.

ARC's Faiths for Green Africa programme has nurtured a new movement of faith groups engaged in environmental action, based on the principle that protecting the environment is a religious responsibility because it is about caring for God's Creation. Faith communities are increasingly involved in community awareness-raising, sustainable farming, water harvesting, tree planting and environmental education.

Faith groups have enormous power to bring about change in attitude and behaviour. ARC has been working to make this a reality in terms of environmental action. By embedding

action in faith values, the result is not only a greater acceptance among faith communities but a far more effective and long-lasting change in practice.

ARC in Africa

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Together, our African faith partners reach out to around

184 million people
in eleven countries

The Alliance of Religions and Conservation was founded in 1995 as a secular organisation to help the world's major religions develop environmental programmes based on their own teachings, beliefs and practices. In September 2012, 27 Christian, Muslim and Hindu faith groups in sub-Saharan Africa launched long-term environmental action plans at ARC's Nairobi celebration. For many, it was the first time they had been engaged on the environment in this way. Their plans were described as 'potentially transformative' by Mounkaila Goumandakoye, Director, UNEP's Regional Office for Africa.

What we do

Faiths for Green Africa focuses on three areas:

Awareness raising on the environment as a faith issue
Working at the faiths' highest leadership levels as well as through their grassroots structures such as churches, mosques, youth networks and women's groups, Faiths for Green Africa promotes care of the environment as a faith responsibility. This includes working with young people through faith schools and through Sunday schools and madrassas.

Sustainable land management and Faithful Farming

ARC helps faith communities to manage their natural resources to protect the environment, improve their lives and grow more food. We are working to build a Faithful Farming movement – faith-led sustainable farming for Christians and Muslims.

National faith networks for environmental action

ARC's Faiths for Green Africa programme is helping to set up national networks to inspire the faiths to take practical action on the environment as well as give religious groups a voice at local, regional and international levels.

What our faith partners are saying...

'We value more everything that God created, for when the work was done God found it good. Therefore we should protect the integrity of the creation and take care of it.'

– Theological Charter of the Environment, Council of Protestant Churches in Rwanda



The Ethiopian Orthodox Church wants its monasteries to become pioneers of environmental care

'It has been a wow moment for us'

ARC has been engaging faith groups in sub-Saharan Africa on sustainable land and water management for the last four years. In June 2014 we convened a core group of our key faith partners to examine our programme. We wanted to know what they thought of it, how effective it had been, where the gaps in provision are – and whether there is still a need for us.

The resounding feedback was that ARC had been very successful in awakening the faiths to environmental care as a faith responsibility and in helping them to put that into action. They liked our three-part approach of awareness raising, practical action and networking/partnership-building. And they were unanimous that we are still needed – for now, at least – as an inspirer, facilitator, enabler and networker.

'Do we need ARC? Yes, we need ARC. I would say that with ARC coming into the picture, it has been a wow moment for us where people have been discovering things. Much as we have achieved, we are really at the beginning of this process. We can't say we have caught like a bush fire – no, we are not there yet. We need quite a number of years of fanning that fire into flame.'

– Raphael Magambo, Christian conservation organisation A Rocha Kenya

'I really like ARC's approach. ARC allows each faith group to develop within its own faith. I really love that you ask the faiths, 'are you living true to your teachings?' It is inspirational.'

– Fr Charles Odira Kwanya, Catholic Church, Kenya

'The biggest change to many of the activities we are doing is hope. So many people have lost hope. We have to change this and show that tomorrow will be better than today.'

– Muguluma Hamed, chair, Uganda Faiths Network on Environment Action

'The uniqueness is the trust and the impact.'

– Bishop Nathan Kyamanywa, Church of Uganda

A new chapter ahead for Faiths for Green Africa

Given the commitment shown – and the scale of the potential identified – within the next two to five years, ARC's programme in Africa will become an independent organisation, called Faiths for Green Africa, retaining links to the Alliance of Religions and Conservation which has worked with the faiths for almost 20 years. Faiths for Green Africa's vision is: 'To help faith communities manage their natural resources more sustainably – for the benefit of people, nature and the planet.'

Key activities of the new Faiths for Green Africa programme over the next five years

Awareness raising

Support the adoption of an annual celebration (for example, Greening Friday for Muslims, St Francis' Day for Christians) as a focus for faith-based awareness raising and action on the environment.

Provide appropriate resource materials/tools to help the faiths engage their communities in awareness-raising activities. Promote faith-based environmental education in faith-managed schools.

Develop a dedicated website and document excellent examples of faith initiatives to inspire significant scaling up of faith environmental action.

Faith-based SLM

Promote Faithful Farming – practical teaching in climate-smart agriculture for Christian and Muslim farmers, particularly women and youth. Establish demonstration plots on faith-owned land, such as churches, mosques and faith schools.

Train faith communities in SLM initiatives such as tree planting, water harvesting, biogas, energy-saving stoves and environmentally friendly income-generating activities such as bee keeping and charcoal briquettes.

Develop a network of faith partners, faith-based organisations and NGOs working in climate-smart agriculture, to promote the practice of Faithful Farming.

Partnership

Promote national networks as a platform to inspire faith-based environmental action and to give the faiths a voice at local and national policy levels.

Create links at national and regional levels with secular/governmental agencies, providing expertise and best practice sharing, and helping faith-based groups engage in civil society platforms.

Work towards developing an over-arching pan-African alliance of faith groups active on the environment. After this is established, Faiths for Green Africa will no longer be needed.



Faithful Farming

This has huge potential to transform farming among Christian and Muslim farmers.

Climate-smart agriculture is recognised as vital in improving food security, reducing hunger, increasing incomes and adapting to the impact of climate change.

Around 65% of Africans are dependent on small-scale farming for their livelihood. Farmers make up a high proportion of faith communities; many preachers and imams are likely to be farmers.

ARC's Faithful Farming programme uniquely engages the faiths' influence, outreach and trust to bring climate-smart agriculture to some of Africa's poorest communities. It does so through integrating a farmer's beliefs as a Christian or Muslim with practical training in conservation agriculture. We fund demonstration farms on faith-run land to embed these methods in the heart of the community.

Conservation agriculture is promoted as a form of climate-smart agriculture by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization and has been shown to double crop yields in less than five years (FAO 2001).

Key principles include:

- Disturbing the soil as little as possible (no or minimum tillage)
- Mulching/permanent soil cover
- Crop rotation
- No burning of crop residues

'I am ready to go home and start this work!'

– Islamic Farming workshop participant, Kenya



Conservation agriculture training in Uganda for Christians and Muslims

Islamic Farming – a brand new curriculum

In response to requests, ARC developed the first conservation agriculture manual and curriculum specifically designed for Muslim farmers in Africa. *Islamic Farming: A Manual for Conservation Agriculture* was launched in March 2014 in Kenya in partnership with the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims and UK-based, Muslim-led development organisation, Global One 2015.

The manual integrates Islamic teachings on caring for the Earth with practical training in conservation agriculture. It is the first to speak to farmers in the language of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, providing a tool to bring sustainable agriculture practices to millions of Muslim farmers in Africa and beyond for the first time.

The manual has created great excitement among Muslim communities in Kenya and Uganda, with 22 demonstration sites established in the two countries and more than 200 farmers trained in *Islamic Farming*.

'We want to empower the rural Muslim farming communities to embrace and integrate Islamic ways of farming into their daily farming activities since the Muslims have bought the idea and shown great interest and enthusiasm for this new concept of Islamic Farming.'

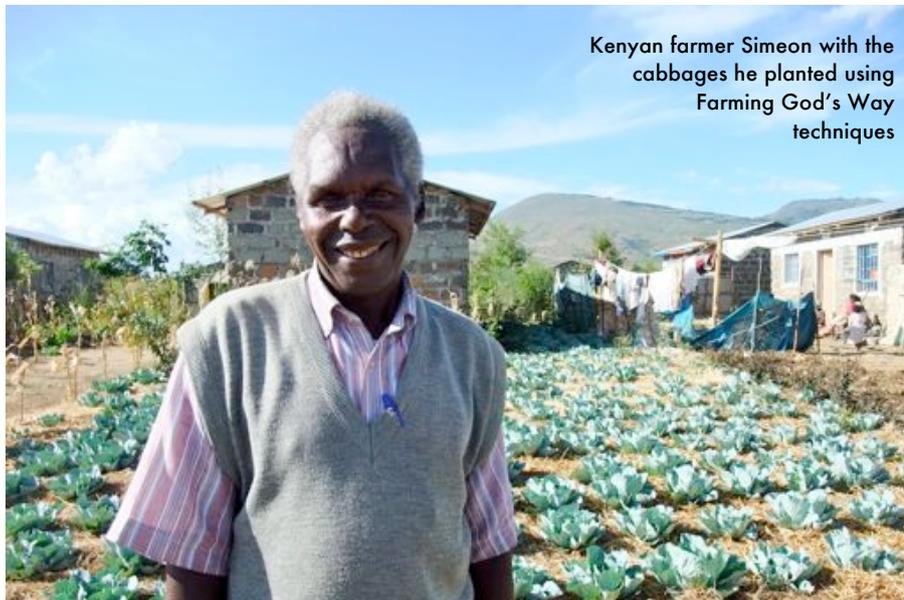
– Abdalla Mohamed Kamwana, Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims

Greening Friday

A day dedicated to honouring the environment known as Greening Friday has become firmly established in Uganda and is developing into a powerful expression of Muslim environmental care. Led by the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council, which heads Uganda's six million Muslims and 8,000 imams, Greening Friday is always held on the second Friday in Ramadan, the holy month of fasting and prayer. The sermon preached in the National Mosque that day focuses on the environment and is broadcast live across Uganda. Thousands of tree seedlings are distributed to worshippers and ceremonially planted at the National Mosque by the Chief Imam.

'This is the headquarters, best practice starts here. Whatever Muslims see here, we follow.'

– Hajjat Aphwa Kaawaase Sebyala, Greening Friday co-ordinator



Kenyan farmer Simeon with the cabbages he planted using Farming God's Way techniques

Farming God's Way

This Christian approach to farming was first developed in Zimbabwe three decades ago and has since spread to other countries. It integrates Biblical teachings about caring for the Earth with practical training in conservation agriculture techniques.

These include minimum soil disturbance, constant soil cover and crop rotation. 'Conservation agriculture is Farming God's Way without God. But it's the God part of this picture that really changes attitudes,' says Craig Sorley, of Care of Creation Kenya.

'We've trained people to understand what the Lord says about farming and because we are Christians that really resonates with us. We feel that we need to take care of Creation and of the way we are farming. What do I think? That farming will be transformed across Kenya, that many people will learn to farm in a way that glorifies the Lord and our land will be richer.'

– Augustine Muema Musyimi,
Methodist Church in Kenya

ARC has provided training in Farming God's Way to more than 100 Christian leaders in Kenya and Uganda.

We have helped the Presbyterian Church of East Africa and the Anglican, Catholic and Methodist Churches in Kenya to establish demonstration sites and train their members.

The Anglican Church is doing the same in Uganda. Faith-run schools in Kenya are also teaching Farming God's Way to their pupils. In 2014, we will provide training to churches in Tanzania.

Case study

In 2012, ARC funded 25 faith leaders from the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Kenya to be trained in Farming God's Way.

Since then, the PCEA has embraced Farming God's Way with great enthusiasm. The Church Eco-Mission department holds quarterly meetings to co-ordinate progress, mainstream it alongside other church activities and organise workshops. In 2013 it created four demonstration sites and trained more than 300 people in Farming God's Way.

'I am proud that I am a role model. People are coming to learn from me because I am practicing Farming God's Way and I have seen it work. I thank God for the training that I got.'

– John Chimani, Presbyterian
Church of East Africa

Caring for the land

ARC enables faith communities to manage their land and water sources sustainably.

Muslim women in Uganda

Women's groups linked to mosques in Uganda's Gomba district are planting trees along farm boundaries, using energy-efficient stoves, making charcoal briquettes as an alternative source of cooking fuel, harvesting water and farming chickens and goats. The project began with five mosques and will expand to 20 mosques by the end of 2015.

'This project has enabled me to pay fees for my children with the little income it has helped to generate. As women we were helpless before this project.'

– member Madina Tebasoka

Biogas in Ethiopian nunneries

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church wants to its monastic communities to become environmental pioneers. Nine nunneries now use biogas digesters for lighting and cooking for hundreds of nuns, reducing deforestation and ill health from breathing wood smoke. Bio slurry is used as compost on their fields.

Bumper harvests

In 2013 ARC partner A Rocha Kenya planted cabbages at its demonstration farm in Nairobi. A plot was planted using Farming God's Way methods and another using conventional methods. A Rocha Kenya Director Raphael Magambo said he had to water the conventional plot four times more often than the FGW plot but its crop was four times smaller.

Faith networks

ARC is developing faith networks for environmental action.

African faith groups are eager to link up to share best practice and learn from each other. ARC is helping set up national networks of faith groups engaged in environmental action. The aim is to promote awareness raising, sustainable agriculture and education on the environment, as well as strengthen the faiths as a powerful voice in civil society.

The networks are key strategic initiatives for inspiring faith-based action and changing hearts and minds. The long-term aim is to set up a pan-African network to co-ordinate the work of the national faith networks.

The Uganda Faiths Network on Environment Action (UFNEA) was launched in October 2013 as East Africa's first national network. Within six months, more than 35 groups had applied to become members. The Ministry of Agriculture has provided training to UFNEA members in sustainable agriculture and pilot projects have been launched. Other networks are being developed in Tanzania and Kenya.

Book: Many Heavens, One Earth in Action

ARC's *Many Heavens, One Earth in Action: Stories of African Faith Commitments* documents faith action on the environment.



Children at Goibei School, Kenya, with produce from their school garden

Nurturing the next generation of young eco champions

Faith groups are involved in at least half of schools in Africa and also have massive outreach through their informal structures such as youth groups, Sunday schools and madrassas. Combining teaching on faith values with practical action on the environment is a key objective for all our faith partners.

In partnership with the Kenya Organization for Environmental Education, we have developed a *Faith-based Education for Sustainable Development Teacher's Toolkit* for primary schools. Launched in Kenya in July 2013, the Toolkit looks at seven environmental themes in detail – water, health (sanitation and hygiene), agriculture, waste, energy, biodiversity and climate change. Faith teachings are highlighted within each theme as well as classroom activities. Schools are encouraged to develop practical micro projects such as water harvesting, vegetable growing and tree planting.

The Toolkit is endorsed by Kenya's major Christian, Muslim and Hindu groups as well as the Ministry of Education and National Environment Management Authority. It has also been enthusiastically received by faith groups in Tanzania and Uganda and was welcomed by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, where it was presented in October 2013.

'The role of faith in shaping our value system cannot be over-emphasised. Entrenchment of religious wisdom into ESD is therefore an innovation that we all ought to be proud of.'

– Professor Geoffrey Wahungu, Director General
National Environment Management Authority, Kenya

Case study – the ESD Toolkit in practice

Teachers and parents at Iriaini Primary School, a Christian school in Meru, Eastern Kenya, realised many children were falling ill from water-related illnesses. During the process of introducing the ESD Toolkit, the school created an eco-committee which said the major problem was that there was just one water tap among 438 pupils. The school built 10 more taps, trained the pupils in washing their hands and integrated ideas about water into lessons and prayer times.

'Due to hygiene, the health of the students has improved tremendously. We have reduced the rate of sickness by 90%.'

– Headmaster Danson Kimathi



One of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania's women-led tree nurseries in Kilimanjaro District

Changing hearts and minds

ARC's Faiths for Green Africa programme is developing a resource kit on the environment for faith groups to use in community awareness raising. This will include ideas for activities with youth groups and with congregations, as well as posters, games and Christian and Muslim sermons on the environment.

The resource kit will also include suggestions for a dedicated faith day on the environment – for example, Greening Friday for Muslims, and October 4 (St Francis' Day) for Christians.

Tanzanian tree nurseries

We have helped the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania establish 10 women-led tree nurseries in its Northern Diocese in the country's Kilimanjaro District.

The project is aimed at providing much-needed income for the women, enabling them to send their children to school and put food on the family table. The women have been trained in tree care, tree nursery establishment and management, micro finance and entrepreneurship.

'We know there is demand for tree seedlings and many people cannot obtain them because they live in rural

areas. We hope this project will prove to be a good business for these women as well as help conserve our environment,' says project's manager Elimringi Maringo.

'This is the first time we have learned about tree planting. The trees will help protect the environment, we will get firewood and timber for construction, and fodder for our animals, and we will protect the water sources. We are happy that we are part of this project.'

– Ndete Mushi

The project also supplies seedlings to the Church's children's confirmation tree-planting campaign which requires those seeking confirmation to plant and care for 10 trees for two years.



Awareness raising

When a religious group takes the environmental message to the heart of faith worship and practice, the impact is powerful.

The Catholic Church in Kenya makes up a quarter of the population of 44 million people. The Church launched its long-term plan in 2012 and then issued a pastoral letter on caring for Creation. This was read out in every Catholic church in Kenya.

ARC has also supported the development of a toolkit for catechists (responsible for passing on official Catholic teachings to members). *Stewardship of God's Creation* links Catholic social teaching with traditional African beliefs and looks at land, water, biodiversity, natural resources and energy. It has been approved for use in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. A simpler version for Sunday schools will be published in 2014.

The Catholic Youth Network for Sustainability in Africa aims to inspire young people on the Continent to become eco-champions in Africa. ARC is also supporting CYNSA and young Jesuits in Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe to produce a youth toolkit on climate change based on Catholic Social Teaching and Ignatian spirituality.

Our faith partners say..

'The richness of this world is a gift and a blessing from Allah. May we in turn be a blessing to all that Allah has made and given to our care.'

– Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims

Faiths for Green Africa

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Faiths for Green Africa's long-term objectives

To establish a global **Alliance for Faithful Farming** building on the foundation of faithful farming initiatives in Africa and extending it to other parts of the world.

To set up a **Pan-African Faith Network on Environmental Action** based in Africa and managed by the faith groups. This would be the focal point for promoting further environmental action among faith communities in sub-Saharan Africa and ensure long-term sustainability of this programme.

In five years, Faiths for Green Africa aims to:

Awareness raising

- Inspire the adoption of an annual faith day on the environment (for example, Greening Friday for Muslims, St Francis's Day for Christians) as a focus for action by faith groups in at least six countries.
- Document examples of faith-based environmentally friendly initiatives for livelihoods and poverty reduction such as women-led tree nurseries, biogas, tree planting and water harvesting.
- Develop a website highlighting the environmental action by faith groups in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Embed the Faith-based Education for Sustainable Development Teacher's Toolkit in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and take it to two more countries.

Faithful Farming Islamic Farming

- Consolidate Islamic Farming in Kenya and Uganda by:
 - Establishing demonstration plots on faith-owned land/schools.
 - Providing training for Muslim farmers, with a special focus on women's groups and youth groups.
- Introduce Islamic Farming into Ethiopia, Tanzania and one more country in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Develop partnerships in each country with the National Muslim Councils and Muslim NGOs such as

Islamic Help and Global One 2015.

- With these partners, establish one permanent Islamic Farming training and demonstration site and train 600 farmers in three countries.

Christian Farming

- Consolidate Christian Farming/ Farming God's Way in Kenya and Uganda by:
 - Establishing demonstration plots on faith-owned land/schools.
 - Providing training for Christian farmers, with a special focus on women's groups and youth groups.
- Introduce Christian Farming into two countries.
- Develop partnerships in each country with churches, National Christian Councils and Christian NGOs such as A Rocha, Care of Creation Kenya, Farming God's Way and Foundations for Farming.
- With these partners, establish one permanent Christian Farming training and demonstration site and train at least 600 farmers in three countries.

Partnership/Networking

- Establish national networks of faith groups taking environmental action in at least five countries.
- Broker partnerships with relevant civil society, NGO and government ministries
- Develop a network of faith partners and NGOs working to promote Faithful Farming in Africa.

Long-term impact of Faiths for Green Africa's programme

- Increased awareness among faith communities of climate change and care of the environment.
- Environmental action as a faith responsibility is widely accepted and promoted by the faithful.
- Faith groups are motivated and have the skills to manage their natural resources more sustainably.
- Millions of the faithful adopt more sustainable practices and lifestyles.
- Faith communities are regarded by secular and government bodies as effective partners in environmental activities.
- Faith groups become key players in working to combat climate change and promoting practical action to protect the environment.