

The story of faith-based ESD



The role of faith values in shaping the next generation of eco champions

The world's faiths are a rich source of values that guide human beings in their relationship with the Creator – and with the environment He created.

The Faith-based Education for Sustainable Development Teacher's Toolkit brings together these two relationships in a unique model. It was developed by the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) and the Kenya Organization of Environmental Education (KOE) in partnership with Christian, Muslim and Hindu faith groups and government departments.

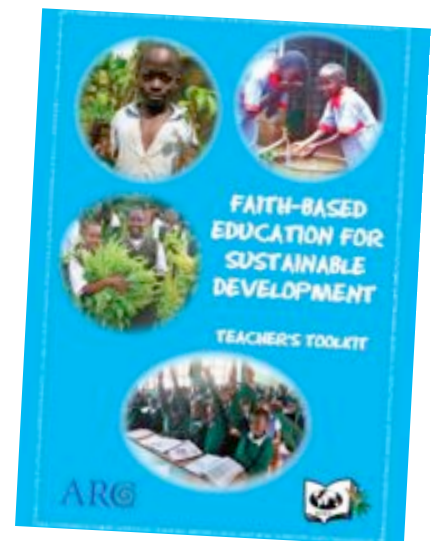
Our aim was to create a toolkit to inspire faith-motivated environmental

education in faith-run schools, starting with Kenya and using eco-schools as a strategy for implementing practical micro projects for active learning.

The religions play a major role in education. More than half of the world's schools are connected to the faiths and in Africa, faith groups have played an indispensable role in setting up schools. In Kenya, for example, around as many as 80% of schools are associated with the faiths as founders, coordinators, funders or managers.

Equally significant is the outreach of the faiths through informal education, via Sunday schools, youth groups and madrassas. For example, there are six million young people in Ethiopian Orthodox Church Sunday schools. Here is an unprecedented opportunity to influence the next

generation of farmers, political leaders, mothers, business people and role models – as well as their parents, families and the wider community.



90%

of people in sub-Saharan Africa say they are Christian or Muslim

'The faith-based approach to Education for Sustainable Development is of critical importance in promoting responsible behaviour to live sustainably for human progress.'

– Mounkaila Goumandakoye, Director, United Nations Environment Programme's Regional Office for Africa

Toolkit objectives

The Faith-based ESD Teacher's Toolkit has several key aims.

1. Inspire faith-motivated environmental action in schools, with environmental care seen as a faith responsibility because it is about caring for God's creation.
2. Enhance faith-based value systems and positive behaviour in the school and community to promote sustainable development.
3. Enable teachers, pupils and the wider community to acquire greater awareness of, and sensitivity to, environmental problems.
4. Build the capacity of both teachers and pupils to identify and solve sustainable development challenges through multiple teaching and learning approaches.



About KOEE

The Kenya Organization of Environmental Education is a non-governmental organisation in Kenya, registered in 1997 as a venture of Agenda 21, a global partnership to protect the dignity of the environment.



Goibei Girls School with the harvest from their kitchen garden

The background to the faith-based ESD initiative

In 2012 ARC organised a gathering in Nairobi, Kenya, of 50 faith leaders across sub-Saharan Africa. The *Many Heavens, One Earth, Our Continent* celebration launched 27 long-term environmental plans drawn up by Christian, Muslim and Hindu groups.

Together these groups represent 184 million followers from Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. All the plans made reaching out to young people to care for God's creation a high priority.

ARC, in partnership with KOEE, saw an opportunity to create a unique model to inspire faith-motivated environmental education in schools – a faith-based toolkit that could be replicable in other sub-Saharan countries and make a valuable contribution to international initiatives.

The Faith-based Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) initiative in Kenya was launched in 2012 with KOEE spearheading the programme. KOEE has considerable expertise in developing resources on environmental education and also administers the Eco-Schools Programme in Kenya.

An initial pilot with a small number of faith schools was launched. Each school's local needs was identified through an environmental audit to decide which micro-project, from the thematic areas of water, energy, waste, agriculture, biodiversity, health, sanitation and climate change, would be implemented. The pilot was a great success and so ARC and KOEE brought together key stakeholders to develop the Faith-based ESD Teacher's Toolkit for primary schools.

As well as involving curriculum and environmental experts, teachers and policy makers, it was very important that the faiths help develop the crucial religious values element of the toolkit. ARC's faith partners in Kenya – including the Catholic Church in Kenya, Anglican Church of Kenya, Methodist Church in Kenya, Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Seventh Day Adventists and Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims – were invited to join the project and nominate participating schools. In total, 35 schools covering all six regions of Kenya joined the project.

'We believe that well-formed learners are better equipped to face everyday challenges and the values they have learned will make them develop into better citizens.'

– Rev. Fr. Vincent Wambugu, General Secretary,
Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops



Toolkit launch, July 2013

Widespread consultation

The development process involved widespread consultation with teachers, faith representatives and Kenya's Ministry of Education, Institute of Education and National Environmental Management Authority.

It soon became clear that the overwhelming consensus was for a combined toolkit for Christian, Muslim and Hindu schools, rather than separate versions. This was because most schools have pupils of different faiths and participants also wanted to increase interfaith understanding.

How does the Faith-based ESD Toolkit work?

The Toolkit is for primary school teachers to use as an aid in teaching about the environment. It integrates faith values as a key aspect of that teaching – emphasising the faith basis for caring for the environment.

The Toolkit is designed so that all teaching and learning is done through the traditional subjects of the curriculum. Faith values are mainstreamed into those subjects so teachers can integrate them in both classroom and outdoor activities.

The values include:

- Respect and care for God's creation
- Living in peace
- Stewardship of the environment
- Living in harmony with nature

- Responsibility/accountability for preserving the Earth
- Wise use of resources
- Caring for the needy
- Honesty and integrity

Key environmental themes

The Toolkit focuses on seven environmental themes – water, health (sanitation and hygiene), agriculture, waste, energy, biodiversity and climate change. Each theme highlights specific faith values and teachings on that topic, as well as background information and class activities linked to the curriculum.

The Toolkit includes sections on good teaching practice, such as drama, games or role play, to encourage pupils to engage imaginatively with the issues.

Other sections look at how to become an eco-school or set up micro projects, while school case studies show examples of good practice.

'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

Beyond Kenya...

The Toolkit was launched in Nairobi, Kenya, in July 2013.

It was endorsed by leaders of the faiths involved (Christianity, Islam and Hinduism) and is in the process of being accepted as an official resource.

In September 2013 it was taken to Tanzania in a two-day workshop held in Dar es Salaam, organised by ARC, KOEE and the Jane Goodall Institute for faith leaders, policy makers and development partners (below).



In October 2013 the Toolkit was presented to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment meeting in Botswana

It was taken to Uganda in March 2014 in a two-day workshop organised by ARC, KOEE and Jane Goodall Institute.

About ARC

The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) is a secular organisation founded in 1995 by HRH Prince Philip to help the world's major faiths develop environmental projects based on their own beliefs. It also links secular groups to the faiths to create powerful partnerships.



Agroforestry

Planting fruit trees for food and extra income



The Young Muslim Academy (pictured above) is located in Garissa, a hot, semi-arid region of Kenya with less than 500mm rainfall a year. The school of 800 pupils decided to set up a micro farm to grow trees.

The farm would reduce the cost of importing fruit from Thika, 300km away, and generate income by selling fruit to the community. The trees would provide cool shade and beautify the environment.

The school planted 10 mango, 40 pawpaw and 100 neem seedlings. Local people shared indigenous knowledge on trees and site selection. A drip irrigation system was created to water the young seedlings and mulching with grass reduced water evaporation.

'My school is a faith-based school. The sponsors are the Young Muslim Association and for them, their happiness is when they see that learning is incorporated into religious values. This is something that they have advocated for and been looking to achieve.'

– Deputy Head Teacher, Mohammed Youssef Dahir

Kirukuma Academy's new latrines



A community comes together to improve sanitation

Kirukuma Methodist Academy urgently needed better sanitary facilities. It had just three toilets – one for boys, one for girls and one for teachers – and no hand-washing facilities at all.

The project set out to provide more toilets and hand-washing facilities, as well as incorporate faith-based ESD values into teaching of WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) and provide a demonstration resource for the community.

Three improved, ventilated pit latrines (one for boys and two for girls) and two hand-washing facilities were built. The school administration, teachers and parents worked with faith leaders to train pupils in good WASH practice and promote religious values about water and hygiene.

The Methodist church provided soap, the eco-school committee provided sanitary towels for the girls and parents supplied toilet paper. Head teacher Katherine Nganga said when the school realised they needed more money for the project, they reached out to the community.

'The effect of this project is that we introduced the parents into the ownership of this school.'

– Head teacher Katherine Nganga

Turning unsightly garbage into useful compost

Kariobangi South Primary School is located close to a major rubbish dump and a slum in an area suffering from high levels of poverty, poor sanitation and ill health.

This meant the school of 1,500 pupils was at increased risk of diseases such as cholera, dysentery and malaria due to open sewers and poor drainage, and the many garbage heaps in the area created an unsightly environment and contaminated the soil with polythene bags.

For its faith-based ESD project, the school decided to turn some of the rubbish into something useful. Compost made from biodegradable materials such as kitchen refuse, green vegetable scraps, ashes and animal manure is used to improve the soil's fertility. The vegetables produced are sold to generate extra income.

Polythene bags are being recycled. Some are washed so they can be re-used for shopping; others are made into tablemats, baskets and handbags, and sold.



Planting for wood fuel

Like many schools, Nambale AC Primary School used firewood as its main source of energy but the area was suffering extensive deforestation. The school community formulated a school energy policy to reduce deforestation, promote energy-saving devices and instill a culture of tree planting.

Solar energy was introduced and a tree nursery established to supply seedlings to the school and the local community. The local community provided cheap labour to help establish the programme and faith values such as collective responsibility for forest conservation and taking care of God's creation were promoted.

The school forest supplements the wood fuel used, thus reducing costs. The trees provide shade during hot afternoons and the forest serves as a natural classroom for teaching science as well as a demonstration site for the community.

Nambale has also established a poultry farm as an income-generating activity, with 10 local breed chickens as initial stock. Sales of eggs and chickens supports needy pupils.

Recycling and agriculture

SCLP Samaj School environmental club wanted to reduce the pollution caused by burning old tyres as well as recycle plastic bottles used by pupils.

The club used old tyres (cut in half) to grow flowers, tree seedlings and vegetables. Faith values of respecting nature and conserving resources have been enhanced.

Tree seedlings are donated to other schools, the Karua Forest department, Ndakaini dam and the Green Belt Movement, and the flowers brighten the school grounds.

Water and sanitation

With just one hand-washing facility for hundreds of pupils, sanitation at Iriani Primary School, a Christian school in Eastern Kenya, was poor, leading to high levels of illness and absenteeism among pupils.

The school built a 2,000-litre water tank to harvest rainwater and constructed five hand-washing

facilities. The number of taps was increased from one to 11 and pupils were trained in washing hands after using the toilets.

The teachers and eco-committee worked hard on integrating ideas about the appreciation of water and care for school facilities into the lessons and prayer times.

Parents and the wider community provided soap for the pupils and faith values around responsibility and stewardship were promoted.

And the resulting improved hygiene has led to a 90% reduction in cases of stomach upset among pupils.

Rainwater harvesting

Kambala Primary School does not have its own source of water. Instead it pays for piped water from a community borehole. However, this does not provide enough for the needs of its 1,600 pupils, leading to sanitation problems and increased rates of water-borne diseases among the children.

As part of its faith-based ESD project and with financial support, the school purchased a 5,000-litre plastic tank and fixed roof gutters to harvest rainwater.

Three hand-washing facilities were provided and faith-based values such as respect and care for resources, stewardship of creation and responsibility for the environment were taught to pupils. Improved hygiene has led to less illness among pupils.

Showcasing best practice

Goibei Girls' School is an inspiring eco-school with many environmental projects. These include rainwater harvesting, crop and livestock production, waste management and energy-saving initiatives.

One of the most popular projects for adapting to climate change and improving livelihoods is beekeeping for honey production. The enterprise has been a major income-generating activity for the school, boosting local entrepreneurship and creating another way of earning money.

The school acts as a demonstration and training centre showcasing best practice in agribusiness and environmental sustainability.



A new hand-washing facility at Kambala Primary School (above) and recycling plastic bottles at SCLP Samaj School (below)



A position of gratitude

'When I am asked what marks out a faith-based educational approach to environmental issues, I make one observation. The usual environmental approach is to tell everyone how bad things are in the hope they will be shocked into action.

'The faith-based approach is to start by giving thanks for such a wonderfully beautiful world that the Creator has given us, and then from a position of gratitude we turn to confront the crises we have created within this God-given world.'

– Martin Palmer,
Secretary General, ARC



Kakamega PCEA group's church garden



The Shinyalu Mosque community's cow

Benefit of all humanity

'This is a comprehensive and broad-based piece of work that will ensure pupils are nurtured with a heart for the environment in their formative years, for the benefit of all humanity, both present and future.'

– Abdalla Mohamad Kamwana,
Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims

The Toolkit will not only contribute to the enhancement of the spiritual and cultural heritage of the people of Kenya, but will also promote the spirit of friendship and solidarity among different races and faiths.'

– S.B. Varma, National Chairman,
Hindu Council of Kenya

Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Kakamega

The PCEA church in Kakamega has set up a poultry project in which around 150 chicks have been raised and sold. The group is practising Farming God's Way on its farm, including mulching. It is making compost using poultry manure and has sold its first harvest of indigenous vegetables.

The group has also set up a tree nursery with both indigenous and exotic trees.

Namarambi Mosque

The group responded very well to training in Islamic Farming. It has set up a farm to grow indigenous and traditional crops and bought a dairy cow which is in calf. Mosque member Mr Abdi has intercropped trees in his maize field and also keeps bees in a small forest on the edge of his farm.

CEC Foundation Life Church in Kakamega

The group purchased 250 chickens (200 layers and 50 broilers) and has since sold the broilers for about Ksh 23,000 (approximately \$258). The layers are about to start laying eggs.

The group has established a composting site and the chicken manure is used on the farm to grow indigenous vegetables. The group has begun selling manure from the chicken houses at Ksh 300 (\$3.4) per sack. This money is used by the group to undertake other activities.

Seventh Day Adventist Church in Vihiga

The SDA Church in Vihiga has purchased two dairy goats for its micro-project. One of the goats has given birth to twin kids. The group has established a nursery for indigenous and fruit trees and has a demonstration farm growing indigenous vegetables and traditional foods.

Key Farming God's Way practices such as mulching and composting (using manure from the goats and

other organic matter) are used. The church undertakes climate-change education and food-security training during church service crusades.

Majengo Mosque

This group bought 100 chicks to grow on and sell for profit. The group has established a farm at the mosque where community members have planted sugarcane, vegetables, maize and beans. They also keep dairy cattle on the mosque farm.

The Anglican Church of Kenya in Lubinu

This group bought 50 chickens which were ready for sale in six weeks. These were sold and the proceeds used to buy a bee hive. They have since invested in another 50 birds and expect to sell them for Ksh 23,000 (\$258).

Chicken manure is used as compost on the church farm, which is planted with traditional foods such as cassava, sweet potatoes yams and bananas. Crop yields have increased and so has the group's income.

Church member Miss Calasina, who underwent the KOEE training, has graduated as a trainer of trainers and has carried out great work both at home and at the church.

She has trained a church women's group on Farming God's Way and they have acquired a piece of land where they have established two greenhouses. They sell the vegetables they grow there to church members.

At home she practices Farming God's Way on her own plot, growing kale, millet, yams and sweet potatoes, and earning around Ksh 2,800 (\$31.50) a week selling vegetables.

Shinyalu Mosque

Having first bought a dairy cow in July 2014, this group has also started a tree nursery. It has a big plot which it is using as a demonstration site for Islamic Farming for other members of the Muslim community.

The group grows indigenous and traditional crops, and uses the cow manure for compost.



Using faith-based ESD to engage the wider community

The active involvement of the wider community in the formal faith-based ESD programme in schools has led to the expansion of the initiative to enable similar micro-projects to be launched for these communities through their faith groups.

KOEE, in collaboration with ARC and Kenyan NGO ACT! (Act Change Transform), launched two non-formal faith-based ESD projects in Western Kenya. The projects, which focused on combating climate change and enhancing food security in four counties, were built on the Faith-based ESD Teacher's Toolkit as well as on ARC's four-year programme to engage faith groups in responding to climate change and environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and sustainability issues.

The faith groups engaged in these micro-projects included the Seventh Day Adventist, Kenya Holy Christ Mission, Shirley Ministry, Presbyterian of East Africa (PCEA), Anglican Church of Kenya, CEC Foundation Life Church, the Catholic Church in Kenya, Faith Church International and several Muslim communities.

Faith as the motivation

The project has engaged 50 faith leaders and 50 community group leaders on sustainable land management practices, with faith as the motivation. More than 200 teachers and 3,000 Christians and Muslims have been reached with faith-based ESD training to enhance understanding of the ecosystems approach to conservation.

The project also included a public awareness campaign in which faith leaders joined schools, government officers and general in planting more than 5,000 trees to sensitise communities on faith-based ESD for climate change and food security.

Faith-based agriculture methods, such as Farming in God's Way and Islamic Farming, have been implemented alongside agroforestry, goat and cattle rearing, poultry farming and growing indigenous vegetables and crops.

'It is not too late. God's world has incredible healing powers. Within a single generation we could steer the Earth toward our children's future. Let that generation start now.'

– Pope John Paul II, 2002

Key objectives

The non-formal ESD initiative has six aims

1. Build the capacity of faith leaders and schools as trainers of trainers in sustainable land management, with faith as the motivation.
2. Empower faith communities to engage with local and county environment and education agencies to ensure sustainable use of natural resources.
3. Enhance understanding of the ecosystems-based approach to conservation in climate change adaptation and mitigation.
4. Deliver practical guidelines and enhance establishment and management of micro-projects, including field audits of project sites in the region.
5. Develop resource materials for faith leaders in increasing awareness on climate change and food security in the region.
6. Initiate projects that help to improve food security and livelihoods among faith communities in the region.

Long-lasting change

'As educators, and having worked and interacted with young people for a long time in environmental education, we have come to understand, by experience, that giving information about faith and education for sustainable development may not be effective in producing the lasting behaviour change which is the surest way of achieving the goals for education for sustainable development. Mainstreaming faith values in education for sustainable development is the surest way to achieve this.'

– Dr Dorcas Otieno,
Executive Director, KOEE

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Developing new partnerships and directions for the Faith-based ESD Toolkit initiative

The Faith-based ESD Teacher's Toolkit has proved an enormous success since it was launched in July 2013 by the Alliance of Religions and Conservation and the Kenya Organization of Environmental Education.

It has been eagerly welcomed by faith groups in Africa and applauded by secular organisations, including education, curriculum and environment authorities. It has been piloted in formal and non-formal initiatives in Kenya, and introduced to faith groups and teachers in Tanzania and Uganda. It has even attracted interest from groups in other parts of the world such as Indonesia and India.

The Toolkit recognises the vital role that faiths play in their schools in teaching values and attitudes that can motivate and sustain action for generations. Outlining why care of trees or the soil is important from a faith perspective is more likely to bring about a change in behaviour than a report filled with statistics.

As the stories within this document show, faith-based ESD also has a big impact on the wider community. Teachings are reinforced in the church, mosque or temple, and also through the faiths' enormous outreach through women's groups, youth groups, madrassas and Sunday schools.

Equally important, faith groups know how to celebrate the wonder of creation – creating a powerful sense of motivation for action to protect our shared planet.

The next stage in the journey

The faith-based ESD journey has only just begun. ARC and KOEE are seeking partnerships to develop it further – both within Africa and elsewhere. Although the Toolkit was developed initially for Kenya, our intention was always to adapt it for other countries.

We are keen to work with other nations to help make the Toolkit their own, using their own faith, cultural and social realities and responding to their environmental challenges. If you are interested in exploring this, please do get in touch via the contact details listed above.

'The Faith-based ESD Toolkit carries hope for Africa. This material will go a long way in improving the quality of education as well as moulding the moral and spiritual aspects of our school-going youth into responsible and God-fearing citizens.'

– Peter Nyagrowa, Secretary General,
Christian Churches' Education Association

Why work with religious groups?

The faiths are the biggest organised element of civil society in the world.

- 84% of the world's people belong to a faith.
- This includes 2.2 billion Christians, 1.6 billion Muslims and 1 billion Hindus and 0.5 billion Buddhists
- They are often the most influential and trusted institutions in a country.
- They own 7-8% of the habitable land surface of the planet.
- They are involved in more than half of schools worldwide.

On the influence of faith groups...

'You have the trust. Indeed you have the trust of more people than any other national or international organisations.'

– Mounkaila Goumandakoye,
Director, UNEP's Regional
Office for Africa

