

# Alliance of Religions and Conservation

Helping 11 of the world's major faiths  
develop environmental plans  
to protect the living planet



# About ARC

- UK-based secular NGO founded in 1995 by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh
- We help faiths develop environmental programmes based on their own core beliefs, practices and teachings.
- We also help secular organisations link with religions to work together.
- We are not funded by any faith.

# Why work with religions?

A photograph showing three men seated at a table in what appears to be a formal meeting or conference. From left to right: a man with glasses and a dark suit, a man wearing an orange turban and a dark suit, and a man wearing a white turban and a white shirt. They are all looking towards the right side of the frame. In the background, there are flags, including a purple one with a yellow cross and a blue one with yellow stars. The table in front of them has several yellow water bottles and some papers.

**The faiths reach 85% of the world's people.  
For example, there are:**

- **2.1 billion Christians**
- **1.34 billion Muslims**
- **950 million Hindus**
- **50-70 million Daoists**
- **24 million Sikhs**
- **13 million Jews**

- The faiths own 7-8% of the habitable land surface of the planet
- They are one of the largest investment blocks on the global stock market






They own 5% of forests worldwide and have influence over 15% that are considered sacred.



- **They are involved in half of all schools worldwide.**
- **They produce more newspapers than all of the European Union.**
- **They are often trusted where politicians, governments and military leaders are not.**

# Launch of long-term action plans



In 2007, UNDP asked ARC to work with the faiths to develop long-term environmental action plans to protect the living planet. As a result, 31 long-term plans were launched at the Windsor Celebration in 2009.

# Long-term plans in Africa

- Supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the World Bank, 27 Christian, Muslim & Hindu faith groups met in Nairobi in March 2010 to discuss developing long-term plans.
- 90% of Africans say they are Christian or Muslim





# Christian, Muslim & Hindu groups

- **ARC is working with faith groups in Ethiopia, Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Zimbabwe**



# Long-term plans focus on seven areas of faith action

- Assets (buildings, land, schools etc)
- Education
- Wisdom
- Lifestyles
- Media & advocacy
- Partnerships
- Celebration





**The plans include a focus on sustainable land and water management; for example, in agricultural practice**

# Ethiopian Orthodox Church

- Over 43 million followers
- 500,000 clergy in 70,000 parishes and monasteries
- 6.5 million in Sunday schools
- 85 % rely on agriculture

# Biofarm Centre, Assela, Orimiya



# Biogas construction, Sebata Nunnery



# Schoolgirls help with the construction



# Abuna Gorgorious, Archbishop of Eastern Shewa diocese





# Training women in urban agriculture, small businesses, keeping poultry



The Uganda Muslim Youth Assembly promotes tree planting through Green Fridays



# 'Evergreen agriculture'

Incorporating trees into farming systems:

- Provides food, fodder and fuel wood
- Increases crop yields
- Diversifies incomes
- Supports animal life
- Controls erosion
- Protects watersheds
- Reduces vulnerability to climate extremes  
(Andrew Steer, World Bank Special Envoy for Climate Change)



# Faith groups plan to plant millions of trees



- Ethiopian Evangelical Church – 10 million trees
- Protestant Council of Churches of Rwanda – 7 million trees
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana – 7 million trees
- Kenya Episcopal Conference – 1 million trees
- Church of Uganda’s Bunyoro Kitara Diocese – 5 million trees
- Uganda Muslim Youth Assembly – 2.5 million trees

- The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania aims to plant 8.5 million trees as community forests on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro over the next seven years.



# Prince Charles plants a mango tree



# Women-led tree nurseries, Tanzania



Ugandan Muslim women are engaged in agroforestry through talks in mosques and distribution of tree seedlings through mosques





# Training in sustainable land management



# 'Farming God's Way' training in Kenya



# Education on the environment in schools





Find out more at: [www.arcworld.org](http://www.arcworld.org)

## **ABCG PPP text**

### **ARC PIC**

ARC- the Alliance of Religions and Conservation- was founded in 1995 by HRH, the Duke of Edinburgh as a secular NGO to help faiths develop environmental programmes based on their core beliefs, practices and teachings. We also help secular organizations link with religions to work together.

### **Why work with religion PIC**

The faiths reach 85 percent of the world's people.

The faiths own 7-8 % of the habitable land surface of the planet.

They own 5 % of forests worldwide and have influence over 15 percent that are considered sacred.

They are involved in more than half of all the schools worldwide.

They are among the largest investment blocks in the global stock market.

They produce more newspapers than the whole of the European Union.

They are trusted as a source of information and wisdom and often trusted where politicians, governments and military leaders are not.

They are the oldest and therefore the most sustainable human communities on the planet- working in the long term and in generations-

So the Question is- Why Not Work with the Faiths?

### **Windsor Meeting Pic**

ARC, supported by the UNDP, hosted a meeting at Windsor Castle in England in November 2009 where the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon and Prince Philip, received long term plans for action on the environment from 31 faith traditions and organizations world wide.

### **7 key areas pic**

The long term plans were the product of exploration of 7 key areas of faith action ARC had drawn up.

These 7 key areas were designed to assist faith communities to create long term action plans, offering practical models of engagement with key environmental issues. There are 7 key areas in which faiths can engage effectively in environmental action:

Assets  
Education  
Wisdom  
Lifestyles  
Media and Advocacy  
Partnerships  
Celebration

### **Nairobi pic**

ARC launched its programme to engage faith groups in Sub Saharan Africa to draw up long-term plans for action on the environment in March 2011 in Nairobi. Supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the World Bank, we brought together 30 Muslim and Christian faith leaders here at the headquarters of the All Africa Conference of Churches- which represents more than 120 million Christians in 39 African countries.

### **Faiths involved pic**

From that meeting we have the commitment of 26 faith groups to produce long term plans on the environment. The groups are Christians, Muslims and Hindus from Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Cameroon.

*(See profile of faith groups who have drawn up long-term plans and concept note for details of what they are proposing)*

We started by giving each faith group a small amount of money to consult with all groups in their faith- from women's groups to youth clubs to their schools to their hierarchy- their Bishops or Patriarchs – their imams and their Supreme Councils.

First we asked them to start with the question- why should you protect the environment? What does your faith say about caring for creation? We asked them to look at their theology and see what theological mandate they have in their holy books and traditions and ancient wisdom to care for the environment. What, for example, does your tradition say about tree planting-for example that tree planting for Muslims is part of Sadakatul Jaria and brings a reward here and in the after life or for Christians what does the Biblical call to be stewards of creation mean for tree care?

Starting with the theology has been key to this project- the key to getting the commitment and buy in from the person in the mosque on a Friday to the pew on a Sunday and from the local Bishop to the local imam. That's where this project is different. It's saying this is what we're going to do because it's the right thing to do and it's consistent with our faith- not because we've been asked to participate in a project that might get us some funding or might support our government's strategy on sustainable land management. The theology is also the key to guaranteeing commitment for generations and to bringing about real and sustainable change.

## **PIC- training**

We then asked the faiths to look at what they could do- both with their own resources and if they came into partnership with their government, with donor groups or funding partners. What action would they take to take -specifically on sustainable land management and agriculture – on issues of tree planting, care of the land, on how they would teach their children about the environment or about farming in their faith run schools. We asked them to come up with ways they could adapt to their changing environment and especially to focus on the role that women can play. Women are, of course, key to any initiative here- often as farmers, often the breadwinners and the educators and often the backbone of any faith's structure, with well organized and active women's groups in mosques and churches.

We have now received the draft plans from 22 faith groups- with detailed and costed proposals following grassroots and community consultation and with that a call for new partners to step forward to help put those plans into effect.

The faith groups involved in Ethiopia are a good example.

## **PIC Ethiopia**

### **Abuna Nathanael, Archbishop Arsi diocese**

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has drawn up its 10-year plan on the environment.

You can see the scale of numbers and the reach we're talking about: over 43 million followers, half a million clergy and about 6.5 million young people in Sunday schools. Their plan focuses on sustainable land management- not surprising given that 85 percent of Ethiopians earn their living from agriculture.

## **PIC- training**

### **The Biofarm Centre, Assela, Orimiya**

Most of the plans have built on previous work the faith group has undertaken on the environment.

For example, ARC funded a training for around 150 farmers in 2005 in Orimiya in Ethiopia on small-scale low-cost methods of sustainable organic agriculture such as drip irrigation, double digging and soil conservation and on how to build low cost biogas digesters to reduce the demand for firewood and charcoal.

## **PIC- biogas construction**

In 2006 ARC funded the installation of a biogas digester where cow and sheep dung was converted into fuel for heating and cooking and light at the Ethiopian

Orthodox Sebata nunnery just outside Addis Ababa. The nunnery supports 250 orphan girls, a clinic and a large school.

### **PIC- helping**

Schoolgirls helped with the construction of the biogas digester. This is low cost community involvement.

Its installation means that

- more girls can come to school instead of spending hours fetching firewood
- fewer have respiratory problems from the smoke from the old fires used for cooking
- and the productivity of crops from the nunnery gardens has gone up because of the enriched fertilizer from the biogas digester. The nuns have also been teaching local farmers about organic farming.

A few months ago we funded with a grant from Norway the installation of two further biogas digesters at two other nunneries in Ethiopia- Elala Betdenagel Nunnery and Dibbo nunnery. 30 women at the two nunneries will be trained in the next few weeks in organic farming techniques and in the use of the biogas digester and its byproducts to increase farming productivity. Each of the women trained will train 10 other local women.

### **PIC**

#### **Abuna Gorgorious, Archbishop of Eastern Shewa diocese**

Now the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in their long term plan are proposing:

- the installation of biogas digesters at a thousand of their monasteries
- And they want their monasteries to become education centers for teaching sustainable land management and forestry skills to local farmers

-Their development department which has 40 years experience working on forestry and agriculture projects has drawn up a large scale proposal to work with local farmers on degraded communal land reclamation and community managed irrigation schemes as well as a new proposal to protect church forests and assess their value to the carbon trade market.

Also have long term plans from the Ethiopian Evangelical Church with its 5.8 million members and from the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council with its 35 million members.

### **PIC- women coffee**

One of its proposals is to train women in urban agriculture. Norway, again through the gender team of the MFA, gave a small grant to train 50 Muslim women in urban agriculture in Addis Ababa last year.

Women are not supposed to own or control any property in Ethiopia and often find it hard to make money to sustain their families.



This grant will help women get skills in training in poultry rearing and planting garden vegetables and get some seed money to start their own small business. The Islamic Affairs Supreme Council now wants to expand that training for women throughout urban areas in Ethiopia.

### **PIC- Muslim woman planting**

Tree planting is one of the main themes of the long-term plans we have been receiving with the faiths committing to planting around 50 million trees over the next 7 years.

In Uganda, for example, the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council is promoting the idea of Green Fridays where tree planting takes place after Friday prayers once a month.

### **PIC- Evergreen Agriculture**

And planting trees- whether trees for food, fodder, wood fuel or timber can increase food security, repair ecosystems and strengthen the resilience of people and landscapes to climate change.

This is mitigation, adaptation , disaster prevention/reduction by another name. And the faiths understand its importance not only in protecting the environment but because of its theological implications- because it's what their faith calls them to do.

### **Slide with tree planting and statistics.**

This gives an idea of the scale of the commitment to plant trees.

Ethiopian Evangelical Church- one of the biggest Lutheran Church organizations in Africa and growing fast- commits to planting 10 million trees

Kenya Episcopal Conference- 1 million with each Catholic in Kenya planting at least one tree

The Bunyoro Kitara Diocese of Church of Uganda- under its reforestation programme every parish plants a woodlot of trees each year and every candidate for confirmation and baptism must plant trees

## **PIC- Nun planting**

In Tanzania, the Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church aims to plant 8.5 million trees as community forests on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro.

They want to set up a tree nursery in every one of its 152 parishes to provide seedlings. These nurseries would be run by women-providing employment and income.

## **PIC- Prince Charles**

Here, Prince Charles, the son of ARC's founder, His Royal Highness, Prince Philip, is planting a mango tree grown at the Church's women's nursery in Moshe. Prince Charles was on a visit to Tanzania last November. The nursery is one of the three nurseries funded by ARC to pilot this idea of women led tree nurseries.

## **PIC-women nurseries**

Next month 200 women will be trained in tree nursery management and tree care at the Evangelical Lutheran Church's Angaza Women Training Centre.

Other faith groups now want to take up this idea. For example, The Anglicans in Uganda want to start tree nurseries run by the Mother's Union in all 56 parishes in the Bonyoro Kitara diocese.

Likewise the Ghana Evangelical Presbyterian Church wants to set up 10 major nurseries and employ 50 percent women as tree nursery attendants and supervisors. And the National Muslim Council of Tanzania wants to train women and youth to manage the new tree nurseries they are proposing.

## **PIC- GOMBA**

ARC also launched a pilot project in Kitaka Gomba Mosque in Uganda in September last year to train 20 women leaders from key mosques in Gomba District in Central Uganda to practice agro-forestry- planting fruit trees and firewood trees around their homes and mosques. They're also being training in setting up tree nurseries and using fixed energy saving stoves in their homes. They now want to expand this pilot schemes to other mosques throughout Uganda and 50 women want to set up a model farm for tree planting and agro forestry through the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council's Women's Desk.

You can see the pioneer of this scheme, Hajjat, - the woman in white on the right -explaining to women in the women's section of the mosque in Gomba the importance in Islam of planting trees and caring for the environment. Imams preach that Tree Planting( especially fruit trees) will be rewards even after your death as long as the fruit tree is alive.

### **PIC- woman red teeshirt**

All the faiths have talked about the importance of training their members in Sustainable Land Management skills. Many have proposed training on agro-forestry.

The Catholics in Tanzania, for example, want to set up a Lake Victoria Conservation and Food Security Programme Academy offering training on the care of the environment and agro-forestry to local farmers.

Next month ARC is organizing training on agro forestry in Ghana with Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

### **PIC- Farming God's Way**

In Kenya in March, ARC is planning a training called 'Farming God's Way' - on sustainable land management for representatives of all the main Christian churches in Kenya.

Here we'll have the Methodist Church of Kenya, the Anglican Church of Kenya, The Full Gospel Churches of Kenya and The Presbyterian Church of East Africa taking part.

And we'd like to see training in agriculture being offered to each faith group.

### **PIC- schoolchildren**

And then there's education on the environment in schools

For example, in Ghana, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church proposes to set up 1,000 eco-clubs in their faith schools teaching environmental care and farming. The Protestant Council of Churches in Rwanda along with the Rwandan Ministry of Education wants to train its young people in schools clubs on environmental care, including land and water management.

And ARC has commissioned a toolkit for teaching environmental care in faith schools in Kenya which we'd like to see developed for faith schools throughout Sub Saharan Africa. This will spell out the theological basis for care of the environment and be practical too- with lesson plans and training for teachers on farming methods or growing nutritional food or how to construct a water harvesting tank or how to care for trees along with basic messages such as hand washing.

## **PIC- Schoolchildren**

The long term plans we have from faith groups are well worked out and well thought through. It's the faiths coming to the table and saying this is what we and our members can do. We need resources, we need training and we need to be included in what our governments are planning or what international agencies are proposing for our country. It's the faiths saying we have the capacity and the commitment. We may not have the skills and the knowhow- but we're ready to come to the table to work together for the sake of preserving this plant.

So our job is now to work out how, with you, we can respond to that challenge.