



# ENGAGING FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS IN LAND RESTORATION ACROSS AFRICA: INSIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



As a large scale, multi-country, multi-stakeholder restoration initiative, Regreening Africa offers a unique opportunity to generate actionable lessons on the cost-effectiveness and impact of local, national and global restoration efforts. As part of the Regreening Africa Insights Series, this brief shares key learnings and insights from programme activities and interventions that boosted faith inclusion in continental restoration initiatives and provided opportunities to improve current and future livelihoods.

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Pic: Regreening Africa

## KEY INSIGHTS



Faith-based institutions and communities are extremely **diverse** with respect to their disposition and capacity to engage in land restoration.



As owners of land, some faith institutions are in a position to **implement** land restoration and sustainable land management.



With their influence in society, faith-based institutions are often well-placed to **advocate** for and **inspire** individuals and communities to engage in land restoration.



While there is often volition on the part of faith institutions and communities to engage in land restoration, there is also very often an inadequate understanding of how to most effectively go about it. A key need is for **capacity building**.



With their strong networks, faith-based institutions and communities can be well-placed to **catalyse and strengthen relationships between different stakeholders** that can undergird land restoration.



While the importance of faith-based land restoration is increasingly recognized by the faith and the land restoration communities respectively, there remains an **institutional gap** with respect to agencies that can facilitate such action.

# Background

Land users across many developing contexts in Africa are invariably part of faith communities. About 45% of the population of Africa are Christian, about 40% are Muslim and most of the remaining 15% hold traditional, animist beliefs. Faith tends to play a key part in shaping the world view and major life choices of rural communities

Faith institutions in these contexts are custodians of ethical values – often including the values of safeguarding the natural environment for future generations and providing for the most vulnerable members of society. Further, these faith institutions often have considerable capacity to influence public opinion; they can have vast networks ramifying into the furthest reaches of society.

Agroforestry – the practice of integrating trees into farmland – is a proven, low-cost means of improving soil fertility, crop yields and pasture productivity, while also providing firewood and fodder, enhancing biodiversity and mitigating land degradation and climate change. Agroforestry practices – including farmer-managed natural regeneration (FMNR) and pastoralist-assisted natural regeneration – often build on indigenous, community-led practices and depend on the establishment of community agreements, for example in relation to land tenure and value chain development. Furthermore, the multiple benefits of agroforestry – across economic, social, and ecological spheres – are of considerable interest to faith groups. Evidently, engaging faith-based organisations to encourage land restoration is an avenue worth exploring.

Linkages between faith and environmental restoration have of course been actively fostered

for several decades. The world's faiths have a profound influence on values and ethics, and since the challenges of environmental destruction and poverty are, at least in part, crises of values and ethics, the world's faiths can have a role in addressing these challenges.

It is notable, for example, that the World Council of Churches instituted a panel on climate change before the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was created in 1988. The papal encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, published in 2015, highlights the urgency of today's environmental challenges, and draws a connection between poverty and ecological devastation. In a letter from the Pope to Catholic churches worldwide, subtitled 'On care for our common home,' Pope Francis challenges Catholics to reflect on the appropriate interpretation in the Book of Genesis of 'dominion' over nature, 'subduing the Earth' and 'tilling and keeping' the garden of the world – and to examine humanity's responsibility for the planet and to future generations.

Muslims too are calling on their congregations to heed the verses in Holy Quran that speak of the need for environmental stewardship. One such is *sura* (verse) 55:7: 'He raised the heaven and established the balance so that you would not transgress the balance. Give just weight – do not skimp in the balance. He laid out the earth for all living creatures'. Islamic Relief Worldwide is putting such principles into action in northern Kenya and Somalia, where it works closely with local imams to raise community awareness of the environmental degradation caused by charcoal burning and grazing mismanagement.



Women working with the Minda Trust in Kilifi County, Kenya. (Pic: Leela Channer)



**THE MOTIVATIONAL ENERGY REPRESENTED IN COUNTLESS CHURCHES, MOSQUES AND TEMPLES, ESPECIALLY ACROSS THE GLOBAL SOUTH, REMAINS RELATIVELY UNTAPPED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES. THIS GAP PRESENTS A CONSIDERABLE OPPORTUNITY.**

A mass movement to scale-up land restoration by small-scale farmers is more likely to take off if it involves an awakening of closely held values and practices, rather than if it is perceived only as the methodology of ‘outsiders’.

The fraught historical relationship between science and religion and the arms-length stance to religion adopted by many Western institutions have tended to act as a constraint on actively engaging faith communities in environmental restoration. On the other hand, the growth of inter-faith dialogue has fostered increasing collaboration between faith communities to work for the common good.

In recent years, increasing awareness of the climate crisis, environmental degradation and massive losses in biodiversity, have made faith groups more vocal and active on these issues. At the same time, major international institutions such as the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank have actively sought to empower faith organisations to engage in environmental restoration and to harness their motivational energy for environmental objectives

The Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF) is particularly well-placed to foster faith-based approaches to land restoration. Doing so is in keeping with the multi-faith social fabric of Kenya, where World Agroforestry (ICRAF) is headquartered. Further, ICRAF-CIFOR has a track-record of partnering with implementing international NGOs with a faith basis, for example World Vision and Catholic Relief Services.

Regreening Africa has mobilized and worked with diverse partners to scale-up evergreen agriculture, using locally appropriate techniques and operating as a consortium of research partners, implementing NGOs, local governments and communities. Regreening Africa has capitalised on these initial efforts and hosted several key faith-based events linked to land restoration.

## SUMMARY OF KEY FAITH-BASED EVENTS

**24 MARCH 2017**

### **Faith-based EverGreening Workshop at World Agroforestry Centre**

This workshop was attended by senior religious leaders in Kenya, including retired Anglican Archbishop Benjamin Nzimbi and senior representative of the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims, with a statement from Rev Dr Sam Kobia, former General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, as well as participation by faith-based NGOs and several ICRAF scientists. A declaration and statement of intent to work together in future was issued.

**9-16 JULY 2021**

### **Kenya national landscape restoration scaling conference: Catalysing action for landscape restoration, CIFOR-ICRAF**

This conference was co-organised by Regreening Africa in collaboration with Kenyan government stakeholders, as well as international and local civil society organisations. The programme included keynotes from, amongst others, HE Keriako Tobiko, Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Forestry.

Objectives of the conference:

- To catalyse a national restoration movement in Kenya
- To showcase different restoration practices
- To provide a platform for engaging with policy
- To highlight the role of women and youth in restoration
- To identify bottlenecks and opportunities for greater restoration entrepreneurship
- To bring together stakeholders working in the restoration space to develop a common roadmap

A key outcome of the conference was the formation of Action Groups to implement the recommendations and agreed action plans developed during the conference sessions. One of these was the Faith-based Restoration Action Group, co-led by the Kenyan NGO OikoDiplomatique and CIFOR-ICRAF.



*Pic: OikoDiplomatique*

**6-8 APRIL 2022**

### **‘Faith-based land restoration in Kenya: forging partnerships, developing a strategy’**

CIFOR-ICRAF partnered with OikoDiplomatique to organise a three-day workshop at the All Africa Conference of Churches in Nairobi.

A key outcome was a consolidated network committed to faith-based land restoration in Kenya and a Strategic Plan with four main elements – advocacy, capacity-building, partnership-building and restoration on land owned by faith institutions.

**16 JUNE 2022**

### **‘Faith-Based and Faith-Inspired Approaches to Land Restoration’**

The virtual event was hosted by Regreening Africa and SHARED (Stakeholder Approach to Risk Informed and Evidence-based Decision-making).

**28-30 JUNE 2022**

### **‘Land Restoration and Empowered World View’**

A workshop was organised by World Vision and OikoDiplomatique in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya.



## CASE-STUDIES OF FAITH-BASED LAND RESTORATION

World Vision

### World Vision Niger

Objective: To restore 40,000 hectares to productivity and improve 90,000 households' incomes through tree-based restoration, notably with the rights of women to access and control land improved



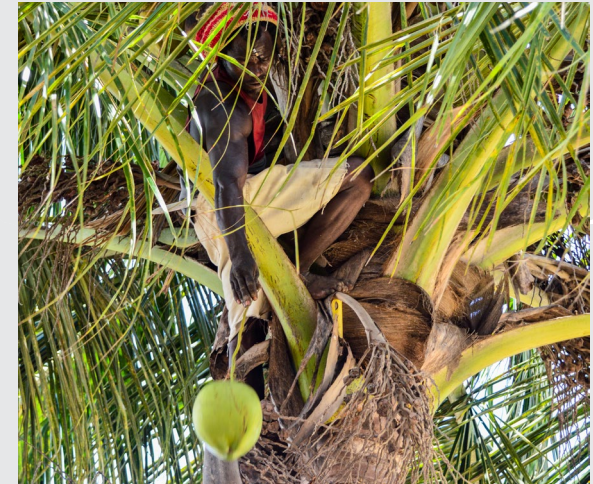
### Interfaith Mediation Centre and EverGreening Network for Landscape Restoration

Objective: To jointly restore the environment and strengthen trust and collaboration between farmer and pastoralist communities



### Catholic Relief Services Madagascar

Objective: To improve rural livelihoods and scale landscape restoration on lands owned by the Catholic church



Coconuts are promoted by the Minda Trust for their value-added activities, for communities living in coastal Kenya. (Pic: Leela Channer)

### Minda Trust/MIKA Initiative

Objective: To increase awareness of land and land-related policies among marginalized coastal communities and to promote human rights, peace and security in this context. Minda Trust has an Islamic basis and works with Muslim communities. The MIKA Initiative is an inter-faith initiative in partnership with the Christian-based Eleka Trust that promotes harmony between Muslims and Christians in coastal Kenya



### LEAD Foundation

Objective: Leadership formation, environmental conservation and action for community development for the transformation of communities and their environment in Tanzania





Pic: World Vision



### WORLD VISION NIGER

A faith-based INGO implementing a restoration programme (Regreening Africa) in partnership with CIFOR-ICRAF

**LOCATION:** Niger

**WAY OF WORKING:** Restoration implementation with training of farmers and community development interventions, including working with faith leaders at village level to mobilise the engagement of rural communities; use of community radio. Religious leaders are seen as key strategic partners, among other stakeholders.

**IMPACT:** Uptake of FMNR in three communes and strengthening of national policy framework

**NEEDS:** Capacity-building to win the support of faith leaders for restoration at all levels of Nigerien society



### INTERFAITH MEDIATION CENTRE AND EVERGREENING NETWORK FOR LANDSCAPE RESTORATION

A collaboration between national NGOs

**LOCATION:** Northern Nigeria

**WAY OF WORKING:** Green sermons and khutbas in churches and mosques respectively; pastoralist-farmer dialogue meetings; training in FMNR

**IMPACT:** Awareness-creation about the value of land restoration; pastoralist-farmer peace agreements

**NEEDS:** Capacity-building in restoration practices and opportunities; seed funding for restoration projects; improved security context in which to carry out restoration projects



### CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES MADAGASCAR

A faith-based INGO

**LOCATION:** Madagascar

**WAY OF WORKING:** Through a specific project – the Spices project – starting with participatory mapping, identifying objectives of parish and diocese, farmers and local businesses – and from there building, or rebuilding, multi-story agroforestry systems with large forest trees, medium trees/coconuts, small trees/oranges/bananas/cocoa, shrubs/coffee, vanilla/pepper and pineapples, on church-owned land. Setting up farmer cooperatives to exploit value-chains, notably of vanilla

**IMPACT:** Since the start of the Spices project:

- 451,367 trees planted
- 7413 ha of church land under restoration
- USD \$760,000 generated in sales from farmer cooperatives

**NEEDS:** Thinking through how to take aspects of the model outside the confines of land owned by the church



Pic: Minda Trust

### MINDA TRUST/MIKA INITIATIVE

Faith-based CBO

**LOCATION:** Coastal counties of Kenya

**WAY OF WORKING:** Working with religious leaders to promote environmental conservation. Grass-roots advocacy and training in livelihood skills, providing alternative sources of income from tree-based value-chains, especially for women.

**IMPACT:** Muslim and Christian communities sensitized to restoration practices; women's livelihoods enhanced; improved relations between Christian and Muslim communities in coastal Kenya

**NEEDS:** Capacity-building in restoration practices and opportunities; seed funding for restoration projects



### LEAD FOUNDATION

National NGO founded by a religious leader (Bishop Simon Chiwanga)

**LOCATION:** Dodoma, Tanzania

**WAY OF WORKING:** Training of champion farmers, use of documentary films for advocacy, school education programmes, restoration activities

**IMPACT:** Successful uptake of FMNR and other restorative practices by many rural communities around Dodoma

**NEEDS:** Sharing its model of success with other national NGOs with a faith component





Pic: Kelvin Trautman

# Key learnings from faith-based approaches

This insights brief explores recent learnings in faith-based approaches to land restoration and highlights critical areas to scale future work. The key learnings are grouped around the six key insights and are complemented by detailed case studies.



**Working with diversity**



**Building multi-stakeholder partnerships for restoration**



**A strong basis for advocacy**



**Implementing restoration and sustainable land management**



**The need for capacity-building and research**



**Plugging the institutional gap**





## WORKING WITH DIVERSITY

It is important to recognise from the outset that faith-based institutions are extremely diverse with respect to their disposition and capacity to engage in land restoration.

Rev Sam Kobia, former General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, recalls that “the elders controlled the cutting of vegetation in the swamps in my home area of Meru [Kenya] when I was young. It was out of respect for the spirits that were said to dwell there. The result was what we call sustainable land management today.”

Indigenous faith traditions across Africa have an inherent reverence for the natural environment and have played an important role in preserving it. The Kaya forests of the Mijikenda community in Kenya

are the last remnants of the country’s coastal forest; sacred groves in Ghana are one of the most valuable biodiversity hot-spots in the country, and the Orthodox church forests of the Ethiopian highlands are among the last pockets of Afromontane vegetation.

Christianity and Islam today account for more than 85% of the African population. Both religions are highly diverse, with multiple denominations, sects, persuasions, schools, leanings and interpretations. Their operational structures and resource endowments are also highly diverse.

From a restoration perspective, understanding how to engage with faith communities is not a straightforward task. It is best done with significant prior preparation and relationship-building, on a case-by-case basis.



**“THE ELDERS CONTROLLED THE CUTTING OF VEGETATION [...] IT WAS OUT OF RESPECT FOR THE SPIRITS THAT WERE SAID TO DWELL THERE.”**

Pic: Kelvin Trautman



Pic: Kelvin Trautman



## BUILDING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS FOR RESTORATION

Partnership-building is one key to the successful implementation of land restoration, especially in communal settings where agreements often need to be hammered out, for example, with regard to land and tree ownership, exclosures, value-chain development and access to markets.

Understanding the value of partnership-building is one thing; successfully implementing it in different rural contexts is another.

The Regreening Africa programme in Niger has deliberately worked with and through local religious structures to foster community-wide engagement for restoration. In Nigeria, the EverGreening Network for Landscape Restoration (ENFORLAR) is partnering with the Interfaith Mediation Centre to expand its reach and impact through an ‘Environment for Peace’ programme. ENFORLAR reports that efforts to encourage land restoration by faith communities in Nigeria are sporadic and fragmented, with many faith leaders lacking sufficient information and capacity to act. If restoration experts and faith leaders could plan and implement 5-10 year restoration programmes together, the benefits could be significant.

Partnerships that harness the social capital of faith institutions and communities for land restoration need to be consciously nurtured; they depend on goodwill and institutional memory, which can easily dwindle.





## A STRONG BASIS FOR ADVOCACY

While indigenous spiritual traditions tend to be animist - they see the spiritual realm manifesting through the natural world – and the Indic spiritual traditions tend to see the Divine, humanity and nature all as part of One Reality, the Abrahamic faiths of Christianity and Islam see nature as God's Creation.

The fundamental philosophical basis in Christianity and Islam to advocate for land restoration is that Christians and Muslims are required by God to be good stewards of Creation. Policies and practices that are harmful to the environment are therefore theoretically to be discouraged; policies and practices that are beneficial are to be encouraged.

Father Charles Odira, a Catholic priest who is co-founder of the Kenya Interfaith Network for Environmental Action and a member of the National Oversight and Coordination Committee (NOCC) of Regreening Africa, puts it like this: 'Nature is a manifestation of God's glory. If we destroy nature, what image of God will our children have? Restoring nature is restoring the face of God.'

With this as a guiding principle, faith leaders can hold politicians to account to implement restoration and sustainable land use policies; at the same time, they can inculcate behavioural change at community level, for example condemning the use of fire to burn vegetation in certain seasons.

**ALL THE GREAT FAITH TRADITIONS EMPHASISE COMPASSION FOR THE POOR AND WEAK, AND THE MORAL VALUE OF HELPING THE MOST VULNERABLE OF SOCIETY. GIVEN THEIR HIGHLY RESPECTED POSITION IN MANY AFRICAN SOCIETIES, FAITH LEADERS WHO MAKE THE LINK BETWEEN SPIRITUAL VALUES AND RESTORATION CAN BE REMARKABLY SUCCESSFUL IN GENERATING RESTORATION IMPACTS.**

A good example is Bishop Simon Chiwanga, head of the Tanzanian Regreening Network and founder of the LEAD Foundation. Bishop Chiwanga has championed the adoption of FMNR in the Dodoma area of Tanzania under the Swahili phrase *Kisiki Hai*, which, he explains, is 'inclusive of different sources of shoots growing from previously existing living tree stumps, roots and tree seeds'. He has won the interest and collaboration of international NGOs including Just DiggIt and the Tanzanian Ministry of Environment.

Faith communities can also have an impact at grass-roots level, using bottom-up approaches. For example, the Interfaith Mediation Centre of Imam Dr Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor Dr James Wuye in northern Nigeria and the Minda Trust and MIKA Initiative in coastal Kenya influence mosque and church congregations with 'green sermons', mosque and church-based tree nurseries, and rural livelihood training with mosque and church-based groups.

Grass-roots faith-based organisations are often in need of more information as to how they can scale up restoration, as well as resources to do so. These capacity-building needs are elaborated below.

Since faith institutions are highly variable in the way they are structured, different approaches need to be used to engage with respect to advocating for land restoration.

For example, the Catholic church is highly structured and hierarchical. Engaging with, for example, annual national Bishop's Conference can achieve a trickle-down throughout the dioceses and parishes. On the other hand, many African Independent Churches operate as individual entities.

Another approach is engaging with the theological implications of, for example, FMNR, which has the symbolic significance of reviving that which had seemed lost and nurturing the good which nature has provided.



Pic: Kelvin Trautman





## IMPLEMENTING RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

Faith-based organisations have been reported to own or control 8% of the habitable land surface of the Earth and 5% of commercial forests (Avis, W, 2021). The opportunity for faith-based organisations to engage directly in restoration – and to practise what they preach in terms of safeguarding the environment – is enormous. As might be expected, impact on the ground varies hugely.

There are striking successes. For example, the Catholic church in Madagascar, through the Spices project run by Catholic Relief Services, has seen 451,367 trees planted and \$760,000 generated in sales from farmer cooperatives.

Traditional Conservation practices, such as in the Orthodox church forests of Ethiopia and in sacred groves in West Africa are often carried out for spiritual reasons leaving natural areas undisturbed out of respect for the spirits of the dead. Frequently, their importance for biodiversity conservation *per se* is under-appreciated. Strengthening partnerships between faith leaders, scientists and national government agencies can consolidate the conservation of these areas and leverage their potential as nodes for land restoration.

Tree planting is increasingly valued and put into practice by faith institutions and communities. However, activities are currently fragmented and need to be

integrated and scientifically informed. For example, the Minda Trust in coastal Kenya is starting to advocate that mosques retain ablution water to help grow trees. The Muslim Council of Britain has produced a 'Guide to Eco-friendly Mosques', which includes tree-planting and refraining from wasting ablution water. The current extent of these practices amongst Muslim communities in Africa and the potential to scale-up them up is not well understood by the restoration community and requires further research.

Many churches and Christian groups are increasingly engaging in tree-planting to mark holidays and anniversaries, and as youth programmes.

**THE RESTORATIVE POTENTIAL AND LONG-TERM BENEFITS OF THESE ACTIVITIES – FOR EXAMPLE, THE CHOICE OF TREE SPECIES, PLANTING DENSITY AND INTEGRATION INTO CROPPING – COULD BE IMPROVED WITH BETTER ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND INCREASED ECOLOGICAL LITERACY BY FAITH LEADERS.**



Pic: Kelvin Trautman





## THE NEED FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING AND RESEARCH

The need for capacity-building in faith-based land restoration is striking. This needs to be a two-way process: the restoration community needs training in the nuances and specifics of how to engage faith communities, and faith communities in turn need training in a wide range of practical aspects of restoration.

### Key areas where capacity-building is needed

- Training restoration scientists and NGO managers in how to express restoration messages in the language of different faith traditions.
- Training restoration scientists and NGO managers in the nuances and complexities of working in and with different faith communities, including nurturing restoration champions among faith leaders.
- Training faith leaders in the 'trees by context' approach – the value of different tree species in different agro-ecological and socio-economic circumstances.
- Training faith leaders in all the stages of tree-growing and tree regeneration

– including propagation, nurseries, grafting, establishment, pruning, coppicing, pollarding – and in value-chain development.

- Training faith leaders in related forms of environmental stewardship – for example bee-keeping, water harvesting, conservation agriculture, holistic grazing management.
- Fostering inter-disciplinary understanding and collaboration between faith leaders, scientists and government officials to safeguard and expand existing church forests and sacred groves.

### The need for research

Many aspects of faith-based land restoration are poorly understood, for example how indigenous belief systems can link with the scaling of restoration and whether and how indigenous beliefs and the major faiths can be fostered jointly to help scale restoration. Key research questions would need to be identified and followed through an inter-disciplinary consultative process (see recommendations).



Pic: Kelvin Trautman



## PLUGGING THE INSTITUTIONAL GAP

Regreening Africa has played a key nurturing role in the advance of faith-based land restoration. While it seems essential that it continues to play that role, ultimately faith-based restoration needs to be taken up and developed by faith-based organisations. There is an urgent need for an ongoing consultative process amongst key stakeholders, and for institution-building on the part of some of those.

Institution-building can happen within different faiths, between faith-based implementing NGOs and their parent institutions. For example, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) could more consciously reflect the teachings of Laudato Si in its restoration activities and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency could incorporate the theological implications of FMNR, from a Seventh Day Adventist perspective, in its technical restoration programmes.

Ultimately, one or more agencies within a country need to make it part of their mandate to actively foster the synergies between land restoration and faith. In Kenya, the NGO OikoDiplomatique founded by Rev Dr Sam Kobia, former General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, has so far risen to this task. However, the scale of the task ahead is far beyond the capacity of OikoDiplomatique's current resources. OikoDiplomatique could potentially grow into a national and regional role for faith-based land restoration, working in partnership with CIFOR-ICRAF, Inter-Religious Council of Kenya, the Kenya Interfaith Network for Environmental Action, the Global EverGreening Alliance and others.

## Risks and caveats

Alongside the huge potential of faith-based institutions to scale up land restoration are three main risks and caveats:



Engaging faith organisations **without obtaining permission from the appropriate religious authority** can be fruitless or result in doors being closed.



Proponents of restoration who work with some faith communities but not with others can be accused of favouritism and even of **creating inter-faith tensions**.



Using faith communities to achieve a particular 'worldly' purpose can be seen as **'instrumentalising' the faith** and can also result in doors being closed.

In all cases, relationships need to be built carefully and trust between all collaborating parties established and sustained.



## Conclusions

Faith-based land restoration has huge potential. This potential remains relatively untapped for historical and ideological reasons – the relationship between religion and science has traditionally been fraught, while mixing religion with social and political activities has been seen as problematic by policymakers in the Global North in the modern era. These trends have influenced the global environmental restoration agenda framed by the Global North.

However, such reasoning does not sit easily with realities in the Global South, where religious faith often frames the world view and daily decisions of rural communities. Further, the ideological underpinnings of global environmental restoration are rapidly changing. The global consensus that we are entering an era of climate crisis and of mass extinction – that human activities are defining the Anthropocene era in profoundly negative ways – is challenging long-held assumptions, breaking down silos and bringing different sectors together in common cause.

Faith leaders increasingly want to learn from environmental scientists about how faith communities can address these crises; scientists and politicians increasingly see the motivational energy and networks of faith-based institutions and communities as vital to achieve restoration targets.

**Among different environmentally-based activities, land restoration is particularly amenable to engagement with faith-based communities as it often involves and benefits whole communities.** Land restoration can set the pace in the active engagement of faith communities in environmental restoration and conservation, harnessing faith as a key driver of movement building and mindset change.

There is an urgent need for an ongoing consultative process amongst key stakeholders, and for institution-building on the part of at least some of those, lest the agenda of faith-based land restoration continues to fall between two stools.

*Left: Coconuts are promoted by the Minda Trust amongst communities living in coastal Kenya for their value-added activities, including the production of sweets, soap, and roofing. (Pic: Leela Channer)*



Pic: Kelvin Trautman

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### ✓ Research needs

Inter-disciplinary research should be supported across the fields of agroforestry, rural sociology, social anthropology, comparative religion and theology.

### ✓ Capacity-building

There is a need to convene workshops and write-shops for faith leaders, restoration scientists and NGO workers – generating communication materials, technical manuals, policy guidance and restoration activities.

### ✓ Partnership-building

Partnerships need to be strengthened across the board, even between faith-based NGOs and their parent faith institutions (e.g. CRS and the Catholic Church and ADRA and the Seventh Day Adventist church), as well as between key stakeholders such as CIFOR-ICRAF, OikoDiplomatique, national Inter-Religious Councils and others.

### ✓ Institution-building

At present, there is no one institution with the capacity to further faith-based land restoration. OikoDiplomatique, founded by Rev Dr Sam Kobia (former General Secretary

of the World Council of Churches) has a regional reach and, having nurtured faith-based restoration in partnership with CIFOR-ICRAF since 2017, is well-positioned to play a keyrole, subject to obtaining the necessary resources.

### ✓ Ongoing consultative process

In order to advance the prospects for faith-based land restoration in Kenya and beyond, a consultative process must ensue. This should involve CIFOR-ICRAF, OikoDiplomatique, the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya, the Kenya Interfaith Network for Environmental Action, Global EverGreening Alliance and other key stakeholders.





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## ABOUT REGREENING AFRICA

**Regreening Africa is an ambitious five and a half-year programme that seeks to reverse land degradation among 500,000 households, and across 1 million hectares in eight countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. By incorporating trees into croplands, communal lands and pastoral areas, regreening efforts make it possible to reclaim Africa's degraded landscapes with complimentary soil and water conservation.**

As part of a larger global and regional effort to halt and reverse land degradation, the European Union-funded programme, Regreening Africa, aims to improve smallholder livelihoods, food security and resilience to climate change. It also seeks to catalyse an even larger scaling effort to restore tens of millions of hectares of degraded land across Africa.

With an initial phase over 2017-2023, this unique research in development is led by World Agroforestry (ICRAF) and implemented by a consortium of international NGOs. This includes World Vision, Catholic Relief Services, Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, and Oxfam, as well as national NGO Sahel Eco. The eight countries that Regreening Africa is active in are Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal, with a light touch in Burkina Faso.

Regreening Africa focuses on the incorporation of trees into many land-use types, including croplands, communal lands and pastoral areas, with complementary soil and water conservation and soil improvement practices. It leverages science and research to track the impact of implementation and enhance concurrent social inclusion and livelihood-enhancing efforts as well as creating a sustainable enabling policy environment for land restoration at national and sub-national levels.

**[regreeningafrica.org](http://regreeningafrica.org)**

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*Pic: Kelvin Trautman*

