



What is ARC?

The Alliance of Religions and Conservation was founded by HRH Prince Philip in 1995. It is a secular body helping the world's major religions develop environmental programmes based on their own core teachings, beliefs and practices. It also helps secular environment groups work with the faiths to protect the natural world.



To learn more about the Seven Year Plans for generational change, and to download the latest Guidebook, see our website

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The paper used in this leaflet comes from FSC woodlands

Who is this for?

We are working with faith leaders, congregations, women's faith groups, retreat centres, faith schools, religious communities and faith-run environment organisations. This is for any group from any of the world's major faiths, wanting to make a workable eco action plan for the future.

How can you develop your own Plan?

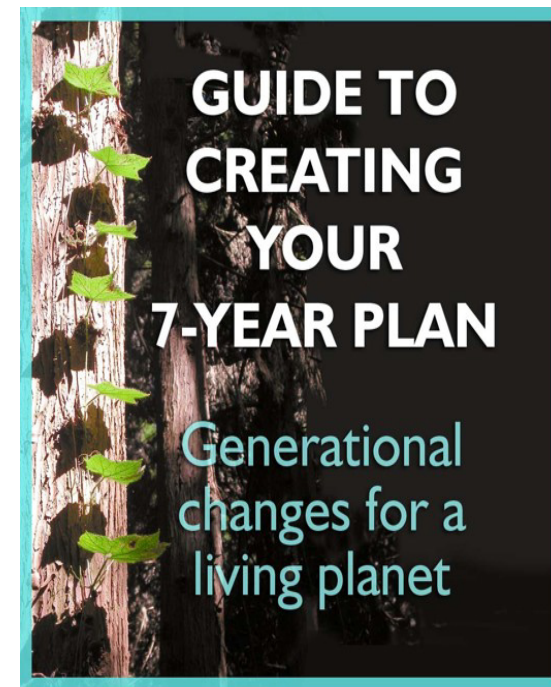
ARC has produced a guidebook, which can be downloaded from our website. This will expand as we hear more stories from the faiths. Each faith can use the Guidebook in different ways, in accordance with their diverse approaches and interests. At first, ARC will act as advisors and brokers while you, as a faith group, take the idea and run with it.

What happens next?

Many religious leaders, faith organisations and others will announce their Plans locally in early November 2009. We invite you to join them. That same month, in the UK and on the internet, we will host a Special Celebration drawing all these commitments together. From this, others will be encouraged to develop their own plans worldwide, and we will be able to make a significant contribution to the Copenhagen UN Climate Change Conference at the end of 2009. Create local, provincial, national and international celebrations to highlight your commitment. We will be linking faith communities world wide as community after community, in country after country, announces its Seven Year Plan. Let us know you are joining us, and we will add you to our website and network, so your story will inspire others to make their own plans, open new doors, and make a real difference.



“How can you stay constant, in a world that is constantly changing?”



A vision of people, through their beliefs, treading more gently upon the earth.

**THE ALLIANCE OF RELIGIONS
AND CONSERVATION (ARC)**

with support from the
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Why Seven-Year Plans?

The destruction of the natural environment - including the impact of climate change - is probably the biggest challenge to the welfare of all life on earth. It threatens the survival of communities and puts the diversity and wonder of nature at risk. For many people, this has created fear and anxiety about the future.

We believe it is therefore a time when the major religions of the world must take a lead - sharing their insights, and working with their faithful to address these issues for generations to come.

The Seven Year Plan programme is a response to requests by many faiths for advice about what to do next. The aim is to assist faith communities create long-term action plans, offering practical models of constructive engagement with these great global issues. The key contribution the religions can make to the environmental issues of today is to develop programmes that will deliver responses based not on fear, guilt, or apprehension, but because they are true to what the faith understands.

Each faith group will develop different parts of the Seven Year Plans. For example, Mongolian Buddhists are adopting Eight Year Plans, because it is a more auspicious number; faith retreat centres are looking at food sourcing; Lutherans and Shinto have explored their impacts on the forests in particular.

Why the faiths?

Faiths are uniquely positioned to develop programmes that will shape the behaviour and outlook of people for generations to come. This could be through teaching children to love nature; creating new prayers and songs; investing pension funds in alternative energy; managing farms, forests or commercial properties more ecologically; encouraging faith media to discuss these issues; encouraging simpler lifestyles; persuading governments to act on illegal logging or river pollution.

How does it work?

There are at least seven key areas in which faiths can engage in environmental action:

1.Assets. Do you own land or forests? hold financial investments? run health clinics and hospitals? buildings? run food, hotel or retail outlets? Are you managing these in the most ecological way?

2.Education. Have you embedded your religion's perspective on the natural world into the school curriculum of your faith-run schools or into informal education such as youth groups or camps? Do you own or manage school buildings? Could you encourage greater monitoring by children of the world around us, whether this is river pollution, logging in the hills, or the local populations of voles and bees and migratory birds? Are your school grounds wildlife-friendly? Do they encourage teaching of organic gardening?

3.Pastoral Care. Do you include care of nature in your theological training courses? know your faith's traditional stories about nature? need to plan how you can help people adapt in areas where climate change makes this necessary? pray for the natural environment?

4.Lifestyles. How can you encourage simple living? make pilgrimages more ecologically gentle? unite your communities to use their green purchasing power to buy organic food or greener energy?

5.Media and Advocacy. Can you ask others to take these issues as seriously as you do? Do you lobby governments and local councillors to act? Does your faith's media feature the environment as much as it could? And do you shout about what you do to help the environment, to encourage others to do the same?

6.Partnerships and eco-twinning. Can you link with others who are on similar journeys? Would you consider being part of an eco-twinning network?

7. Celebration. Can you, or have you, set aside a festival to focus on the environment? Can your place of worship be a place where thanks can be given for beautiful places and for new initiatives to protect nature? Can you help people find awe and wonder in creation once again?



TOP: GENERATIONAL CHANGE: girls in India learn how Hindu herbal knowledge is being revitalised through village and temple gardens
ABOVE: Muslim boys in Birmingham discuss cleaning up the city and making a "greener Medina"
BELOW-L: Maronites in Lebanon have worked with the government to protect their threatened holy valley of Qadisha
BELOW-R: after a Catholic primary school held a full day of eco inspired lessons, pupils asked for it to be "Earth Day every day"

