

May 2012

Hello to everyone from ARC!

Apologies for the delay in sending this newsletter. We sent out a newsletter in April but only to Kenyan partners, alerting them to a funding opportunity that was available only in Kenya. Best of luck to those who applied.

ARC Nairobi meeting September 17-20

We are very much looking forward to seeing all again at our Nairobi meeting from **Monday September 17 to Thursday 20**, when we will launch your plans. If you have not yet confirmed your attendance, please do so now. We also need the final signed off copy of your plan by **June 15**.

We also suggested that you launch your long-term plan in your own country before the meeting and that you bring a short message of support from your main religious leaders, authority or community to share with us at Nairobi. If appropriate, you could also bring a message of support from your local secular authority, government or any partner bodies.

We will have an evening of story-telling focusing on the story and theology of the stranger. We hope you will bring your own stories from your faith about how the stranger is to be treated to share with us all.

Fire destroys Green Top farms

Our condolences go to HEAR Uganda which has suffered terrible losses from fires which gutted several Green Top farms in January and February. This has cost HEAR Uganda and its partners millions of shillings lost in burnt down areas, says Muguluma Hamed of HEAR.

"Usually tree farms are found in or near cattle corridors, and during dry seasons, cattle keepers tend to start up wild fires with an aim of having fresh and better pasture when rain comes," he explains. "It is such fire that grows wild, gutting other people's farms and homes."

HEAR Uganda plans to launch a campaign called 'Stop Wild Fires, Protect the Environment' to educate communities not to start bush fires.



Supkem develops a Long-term plan

We are delighted that Supkem – the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims – is developing a long-term action plan on the environment and will attend the Nairobi meeting.

Supkem programme coordinator Abdalla Mohamed Kamwana (shown here with Supkem Secretary General Sheikh Adan Wachu) said in developing an environmental plan, "we will not only have fulfilled our religious obligations as a good Muslim but will also have played our role as a good and patriotic citizen in line with the requirements of the Kenyan Constitution".

Welcome Supkem!



Agroforestry workshop in Ghana



Members of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana and Relbonet – the Religious Bodies Network on Climate Change – attended a successful three-day workshop on agroforestry, tree management and conservation in Tamale, Ghana, in February.

It was supported by ARC and delivered by British NGO Tree Aid and was a lively and positive workshop in which people shared best practice. It included field trips to a village with a community woodlot (above left); a Forestry Department tree nursery (above centre); and an organic mango producer which uses outreach smallholder farmers (above right).

Rev SK Matti, district pastor for the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Tamale, said he would begin by planting 50 trees around his church and starting a tree nursery to supply seedlings to members of his congregation.

Muslim and Christian communities get planting

As a result of the workshop, Muslim and Christian members of Relbonet in Tamale are getting ready to plant around 20,000 tree seedlings in the coming growing season, says Relbonet regional co-ordinator Charles Agboklu.

“Relbonet is interested in planting large acres of trees and carrying out climate change education and awareness creation among citizens because it is an area most projects are not looking at,” he says.

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana is also busy planting trees, adds Charles: “In Southern Ghana, we are setting up two nurseries at Ho and Dambai before the close of the major rainy season.”

Education for Sustainable Development toolkit

An inspiring workshop was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in March this year to help develop an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) toolkit for faith primary schools. It was attended by 50 teachers and faith leaders from Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania, Cameroon, Nigeria and Uganda.



The toolkit will integrate religious wisdom into the school curriculum to promote care of the environment. It's being developed by the Kenyan Organisation for Environmental Education and will be tested first in Kenya and then made available for adaptation in other countries.

We were very happy to hear that the Kenyan Ministry of Education and the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) support this effort. Dr Ayub Macharia of NEMA, said: “The intervention of faith groups is timely and likely to have an enormous impact. NEMA is willing to partner with you as you move forward – we will support you technically and also financially.”

Mothers' Union in Uganda

Rev Kavuya Joram of the Anglican Church of Uganda's Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese is delighted with how well its pilot tree nursery project is doing.

He wrote: "I am happy to let you know that the pilot nursery bed at Kigaya Archdeaconry is doing well. In all we had 6,231 seedlings and we have so far given out about 5,000 seedlings to different beneficiaries (these include churches and individuals).

"Secondly, the members of Mothers' Union showed interest in the project. Judging from the dynamism the ladies showed and how the beneficiaries have responded in taking the seedlings, I think the project is a good role model."

Hajjat is interviewed by the BBC

Hajjat Sebyala was interviewed for BBC World Service's Heart and Soul programme broadcast from March 23 to 26 looking at how Ugandan Muslims and Christians are joining efforts to combat the country's alarming deforestation.

This photograph shows Hajjat with her Christian colleague Gertrude Sebyayi and you can but still hear the programme by visiting: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00pp56y>.



Women's Day celebrated in Uganda with trees



Makerere University Business School's women's forum celebrated international Women's Day (March 8) in Uganda by planting mango trees donated by Hajjat Sebyala.

More than 100 prominent ladies attended, alongside university students, and the plan is to celebrate Women's Day every year with environmental activities – including establishing a Women's Day Forest with trees planted on March 8 each year, says Hajjat.

Farming God's Way workshop in Kenya

Around 50 faith leaders from the Methodist Church in Kenya and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa took part in an inspiring workshop on Farming God's Way in May 2012.

Supported by ARC and led by Craig Sorley of Care of Creation Kenya, it combined the faith reasons for caring for the environment with practical training in a form of sustainable agriculture called Farming God's Way. This nurtures the soil and also increases crop yields.

"If we restore the soil we will bring more food to our families," says Craig. In this photograph, the plot of beans in the front of the path were planted in the conventional way and the beans behind the path were planted using Farming God's Way. You can see the difference - the Farming God's Way beans look much healthier.



Patrick Mureithi of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa said it was clear to see in the faces of those attending that there had been a real transformation. Augustine Muema of the Methodist Church agreed: "We trained people to understand what the Lord says about farming and because we are Christians that really resonates with us," he said. "We are called to farm in a way that glorifies the Lord."

Gomba Women's environmental activities

Gomba women have been very active in their environmental activities – more in the next newsletter.

ARC education competition

Don't forget to get your competition entries to us in time! We have eight \$50 prizes for the best poems, prayers, drawings, songs or puppets from children aged six to 14 years. **Deadline: July 7.**

What preachers should say on the environment

Here are some more preachers' points from our Nairobi meeting last year. These are the points from Rev James Kombo, Rev Simon Dossou & Sister Agatha:

- Creation is a gift. As a gift, we should cherish and take care of it.
- We should not abuse the gift of creation.
- Everybody should be responsible for passing the gift of creation to younger generations.
- We should be very careful in using God's free gift of nature to avoid abuse, which often results in pollution.
- By taking care of God's creation, we become good and responsible stewards.
- We need to enjoy creation, knowing that everything will end.

Rwanda Charter on the Environment

The Protestant Council of Rwanda has come up with an inspiring Theological Charter on the Environment. It was signed by church leaders and members of CPR decentralised committees from all 30 districts of Rwanda after a two-day conference in Kigali. The Charter has 12 commitments, including this pledge:

We commit to mobilise Christians from CPR member churches to value more the land, to protect and manage it in a proper manner because we, human beings were created out of the land, the soil; we live on it, get our livelihood from it and will return to the land as we depart from our present day existence (Gen 2.7; 3.19).

It is truly inspiring. See the attached document to read the Charter in full.

Tragedy in Nigeria and Kenya

Our thoughts are with our sisters and brothers in Nigeria and Kenya who have suffered in the bombing campaigns. Our prayers are with you all.

Do you have any news to share with us?

If so, please let us know – and don't forget to include any photographs. Email alisonh@arcworld.org or susie.weldon@arcworld.org.

With all good wishes, the team at ARC