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FAITH ACTION ON UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

LIFE ON LAND

FAITH ACTION ON THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: LIFE ON LAND

15 LIFE ON LAND



This supplement is part of a series of periodic reports that highlight new and ongoing activities featured in the Faith Action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals database. This issue specifically showcases a sampling of inspiring efforts to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems; sustainably manage forests; combat desertification; reduce and reverse land degradation; and halt biodiversity loss.

Try to comprehend, for a moment, all the biodiversity present in the ecosystems blanketing our Earth. Sacred scriptures, spiritual teachings, and Indigenous expressions point to the intricate relationships of life's flourishing as a way to better understand ourselves, to practice awe, and to express our gratitude. Consider the trees: forests cover 30% of Earth's surface and in addition to providing food security and shelter, forests are key to combating climate change, protecting biodiversity and the homes of Indigenous populations. Nevertheless, ten million hectares of forest are destroyed every year and nearly 90% of global deforestation is due to agricultural expansion. Consider the wetlands: 40% of all plant and animal species live or breed in wetlands. They are crucial to agriculture and fisheries, and yet 90% of the world's wetlands have been degraded or lost to date, and wetlands are disappearing three times faster than forests.

Around the world, faith-based organizations and Indigenous communities offer both leadership and education on the necessity of biodiversity, provide opportunities to restore ecosystems while building community, and celebrate the beauty that is our life on land. The featured projects in this report, in addition to resources provided, have been curated to empower our readers to integrate the religious stories we tell with the life we live on land in all of its biodiverse dimensions.



LOCATIONS OF PROJECTS ADDRESSING SDG 15 INCLUDED IN DATABASE

42 projects addressing SDG 15 included in the database

88 total projects currently included in the database

Do you have a project to share with us?
Visit <https://fore.yale.edu/FaithActionSDG>

Highlighted Projects for SDG 15

XINGU SEEDS NETWORK

Instituto Socioambiental (ISA) | Brazil | Indigenous

The Xingu people implemented the muvuca farming technique. Through the Xingu Seed Network, local farmers, Indigenous peoples and community members helped gather seeds for each muvuca, yielding up to 120 different species of plants per hectare of forest. The group has already helped plant enough seeds to yield more than 1.8 million trees and has seen a range of positive impacts on the region, from improved water quality to increased agricultural production.



WEEKLY FREE FARM STAND

Urban Adamah | USA | Judaism

An educational farm and community center in Berkeley, California, Urban Adamah integrates the practices of Jewish tradition, mindfulness, sustainable agriculture, and social action to build loving, just, and sustainable communities. With more than 15,000 visitors annually, Urban Adamah harvests an abundance of produce on its two acres, and weekly donates 90% of what is grown to members of the local community.

CHURCH FORESTS

Ethiopian Orthodox Churches | Ethiopia | Christianity

Ethiopian Orthodox Churches are protected by three-foot stone walls and a small ring of forest. Now with a population of more than 1 million, Ethiopia's land has been overtaken by agriculture and cattle grazing. Forest ecologists and church priests are working together to protect the remaining forest oases by providing education on the importance of forest biodiversity alongside efforts to grow and secure food. There are more than 1000 Church Forests and as of 2020, more than 40 have relocated their stone walls to include and protect the forest encircling the church. A short documentary (9:22) on the Church Forest protection and recovery effort may be found on YouTube.



SNOW LEOPARD HABITAT PROTECTION

Tibetan Monasteries | China | Buddhism

The Sanjiangyuan region of the Tibet Autonomous Region is a suitable and favored ecosystem for the endangered snow leopard. More than 300 Tibetan Buddhist monasteries are also located in these mountains and 90% of them are located within 5 km of snow leopard habitat. Tibetan Buddhism is against killing wildlife and teaches compassion for all beings. Over 80 monasteries participate in active patrolling to protect the biodiversity of the mountains and the snow leopard species.

CLIMATE CHAMPIONS

Islamic Relief | Indonesia | Islam

Climate Champions encompasses dozens of programs across the sectors of health and nutrition, access to clean water, natural resource management, agriculture and micro-enterprise development to enhance climate resilience and adaptation. Following a devastating earthquake and tsunami in 2018, Islamic Relief taught beekeeping and honey cultivation to two women's groups in Sulawesi. In addition to protecting bees, and supporting their pollination efforts essential to every ecosystem, the women have created community together and established a local economy.



PROJECT GREENHANDS

Isha Foundation | India | Hinduism

Project GreenHands aims to increase the green cover in the once robust Tamil Nadu valley by inspiring and enabling people to plant trees. Since 2019, 4,610 farmers have been trained in tree-based agriculture, and 2,785 tree nurseries have been established in schools. More than 100,000 children have been taught the importance of tree growing.

Faith action on SDG 15 by Impact



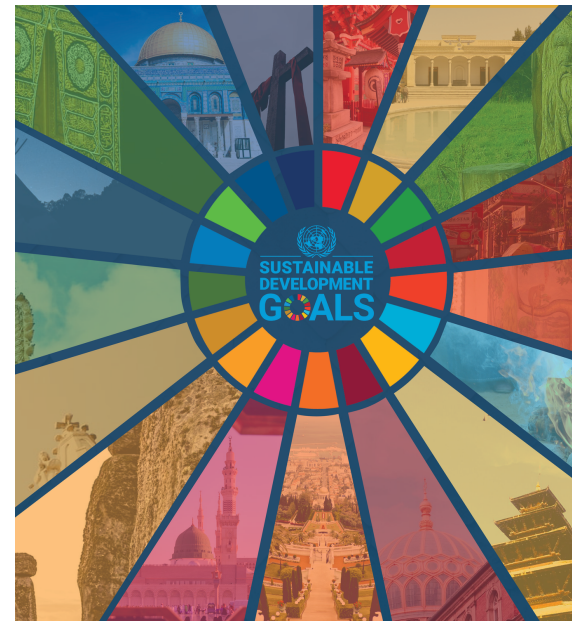
*based on projects included in the database

About this project

Faith Action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals is an interactive online database showcasing environmental efforts led by religious communities worldwide, documenting these activities in a public way that facilitates inspiration and avenues for collaboration. All projects can be explored by religious tradition, geographical region, ecosystem, areas of impact, and/or environmentally-centered SDGs. This database was launched in September 2021 and is actively curated by the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology, the United Religions Initiative, and Parliament of the World's Religions. It was built in partnership with UNEP's Faith for Earth Initiative in response to a September 2020 report celebrating the five year anniversary of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which were launched in 2015.

NEXT STEPS

- **EXPLORE** [all examples of Life on Land](#) in the Faith Action database
- **LEARN** more about the [15th Sustainable Development Goal](#)
- **STRENGTHEN** commitments to faith action on land with free online courses:
 - Forest protection and Indigenous-informed advocacy for biodiversity of land and lifeways: [Indigenous Religions and Ecology](#)
 - Buddhist Monks and Forest Protection in Southeast Asia: [South Asian Religions and Ecology](#)
 - Daoist nature sanctuaries and Confucian values that integrate humans with the earth: [East Asian Religions and Ecology](#)
 - Religious and Spiritual Perspectives on Biodiversity: [Faith and Ecosystem Restoration](#)
- **ACT** with resources and step-by-step guides designed to assist religiously-inspired efforts to protect and restore landscapes:
 - [A Strategy for Engagement: The Role of Faith Leaders and Faith-Based Organisations in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration \(2021-2030\)](#)
 - [Values, Culture, and Spirituality: Ecosystems Restoration Conversation Guide](#)
 - [Tree growing for conservation and ecosystem restoration: A guide for faith-based actors](#)



HOW TO CITE THIS REPORT:

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CITATIONS:

<https://sdg-tracker.org/biodiversity>
<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal15>

<https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/why-it%E2%80%99s-time-wetland-restoration-now-secure-sustainable-future>
<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/faith-groups-help-save-disappearing-forests>

UNEP Faith for Earth Initiative, Parliament of the World's Religions, United Religions Initiative, and Bhumi Global. "Faith Action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals: Progress and Outlook." United Nations Environment Programme, September 2020.

<https://www.ramsar.org/news/wetlands-worlds-most-valuable-ecosystem-disappearing-three-times-faster-than-forests-warns-new>
<https://emergencemagazine.org/film/the-church-forests-of-ethiopia/?fbclid=IwAR2YapKUKAlYElwB0dWv BELW6hGLqTOao0 GIUUFhabbT5ld2mj6roFTTI>