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# FAITH ACTION ON UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## LIFE BELOW WATER

# FAITH ACTION ON THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: LIFE BELOW WATER

14 LIFE BELOW WATER



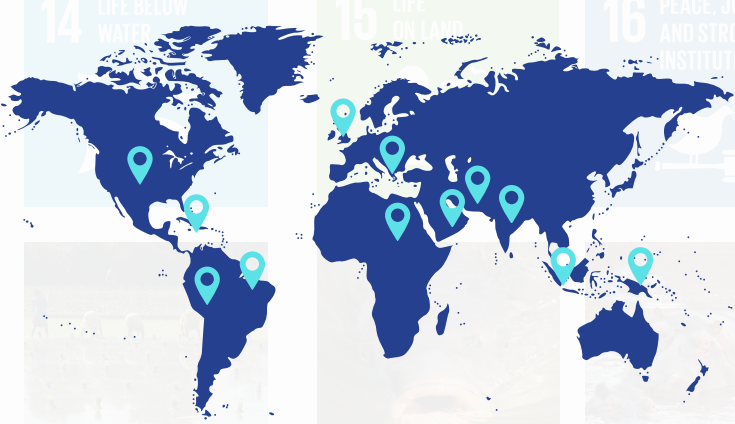
This supplement is part of a series of periodic reports that highlight new and ongoing activities featured in the [Faith Action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) database. This issue specifically showcases a sampling of inspiring efforts to protect and care for our world's largest ecosystem: the oceans.

Home to about one million known species, and covering three quarters of Earth's surface, scientists agree there is still a great deal for humans to learn about the relationship between humans and all life living below water. Amidst our efforts to better appreciate the strength,

diversity and care modeled for us in the ocean's activities, we are causing great harm to the oceans, even as we are dependent on the resources they offer. Despite overfishing (we have lost more than 1/3 of fish stocks globally), marine fisheries provide a primary source of protein to more than half of those living in the global south as well ingredients for a variety of medicines and jobs for 57 million fisherfolk. The ocean is also an incredible carbon sink, absorbing 90% of the excess heat in our climate system. Today, ocean heat is at record levels, killing coral reefs and threatening the entire ecosystem. Pollution and plastic waste are also hurting our oceans and demanding a unified response from humans worldwide.

Around the world, faith-based organizations and Indigenous communities offer both leadership and education on the necessity of caring for oceans, globally and locally. Depending on where we live, our care for the oceans includes removing debris from our waterways, protecting our watersheds from development, and deepening our relationship with all the creatures who call the oceans and water their home. Given the critical role oceans play in the health of our planet and the health of our economies, Life Below Water is a space begging for more of our attention, action and care.

The featured projects in this report, in addition to the suggested actions in the "Next Steps" section, encourage us to create stronger partnerships between our faith communities, Indigenous groups, and local government and businesses. We know that our livelihoods cannot only be about profit. We have seen what happens to local economies when global businesses act without regard for the integrity of our communities and ecosystems. Thoughtful innovation and cooperation must guide our efforts to maintain the well-being and longevity for all species. We need more examples of partnerships that show our shared commitment for ocean health, education and economic activities that honor the wealth and wisdom found in the great depths of these waters. Whether rituals and ceremonies to honor and celebrate Life Below Water, or activities such as beach clean-ups, wetlands protection, or passing conservation legislation, sacred teachings offer instruction and guidance. Let's roll up our pant legs and wade in together!



LOCATIONS OF PROJECTS ADDRESSING SDG 14 INCLUDED IN DATABASE

11 projects addressing SDG 14 included in the database

87 total projects currently included in the database

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

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



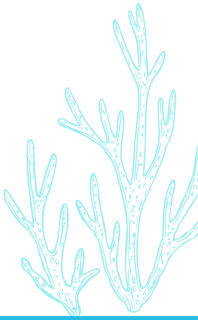
THE GLOBAL GOALS

# Highlighted Projects for SDG 14

## MANGROVE RESTORATION AND COASTAL CLEAN UP

Bohol Goodwill Volunteers | Philippines | Interreligious

This interfaith team, including Christian, Muslim, Baha'i and Hindu followers, works to create a cleaner and healthier coastline while also raising the consciousness of everyone in the community about plastic waste and pollution. Typhoons, flooding and landslides have become much more common due to climate change. Regular coastline clean-ups and annual efforts to regenerate the mangrove forest ecosystem in places where they have previously existed is part of their seasonal work.



## BIODIVERSITY OF THE OCEANS

Eastern Orthodox Church | Turkey | Christianity

For the 300 million Orthodox Christians around the world, Patriarch Bartholomew has annually called attention to preserving and conserving our oceans on World Oceans Day (June 8). On occasion, he has convened interfaith and interdisciplinary study trips to seas worldwide to encourage collaboration among scientists, religious leaders, theologians, ethicists, economists, and politicians in addressing ocean conservation.



## GOVARDHAN ECOVILLAGE SKILLS CENTRE (GSC)

International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) | India | Hinduism

Govardhan Skills Centre works closely with 100+ tribal villages in the neighborhood of Palghar District to train 8000+ farmers in sustainable agriculture, provide STEM classes for 9k+ students from rural schools, and provide livelihood training for 350+ women. With an emphasis on biodiversity and water protection, rainwater harvesting and recycled water irrigation plays a core role in their approach. Govardhan Ecovillage consists of 10 acres of protected biodiversity featuring over 100 species of birds and butterflies and protected indigenous varieties of trees, rice, and vegetables.



## ONE WATER PARTNERSHIP

Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake | USA | Interreligious

One Water Partnership includes faith communities, environmental organizations and government agencies. Their efforts include multi-faith led nature walks and prayer services, community stream clean-ups, tree plantings and rain gardens and meadow plantings to encourage pollinators. In recent years, more than 40 congregations have planted hundreds of trees and over 8000 square feet of restoration gardens. These projects prevent almost one ton of sediment pollution from reaching local waterways every year. In February, 2024, the group convened a Faith & Waters Restoration summit to share best practices and resources with others.



THERE IS SPACE HERE FOR MORE GOOD WORK ON FAITH AND WATER PROTECTION-- SHARE YOUR FAITH-BASED CLIMATE ACTION PROJECTS WITH US!



# Faith Action on SDG 14 by Impact



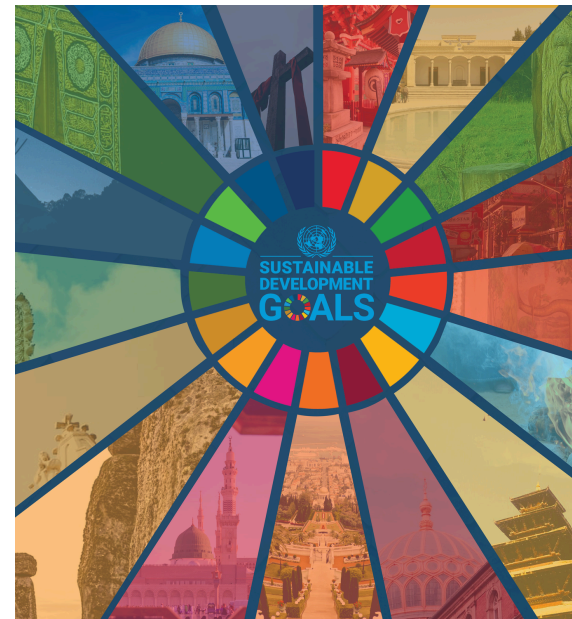
\*based on projects included in the database

## 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 Below Water](#) in the Faith Action database
- **LEARN** more about the [14th Sustainable Development Goal](#)
- **PARTICIPATE** in the April [2024 UN Decade on Oceans Conference](#) in Barcelona, Spain
- **STRENGTHEN** faith commitments to life below water with free online courses:
  - Religious relationships with water and aquatic environments: [Faith and Water](#)
  - Waterways in Māori ecological determination: [Indigenous Religions and Ecology](#)
  - Sacred Rivers in Hindu worldviews: [South Asian Religions and Ecology](#)
  - Abrahamic traditions partnering to restore the Jordan River: [Western Religions and Ecology](#)
- **ACT** with resources designed to assist religiously-inspired efforts to protect and restore life below water:
  - [Life below water - The Sustainability Book](#): A Christian faith perspective on the Sustainable Development Goals
  - [Faith Resources](#) from Interfaith Oceans
  - [Protecting Water and Your Place of Worship](#) from Faith and the Common Good
  - [Curricula and liturgical resources](#) from Watershed Discipleship
  - [Water Protectors Inquiry Blueprint](#) from Teachings of Our Elders
  - Activity Kit from [We are Water Protectors](#)



HOW TO CITE THIS REPORT:  
 UNEP Faith for Earth Initiative, Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology, United Religions Initiative, and Parliament of the World's Religions. Faith Action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals: Life Below Water. United Nations Environment Programme, April 2024."

CITATIONS:  
 1. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/oceans/>