



* The colored countries constitute all the locations of environmental projects in our mapping, with the higher intensity of the color indicating the bigger number of projects.

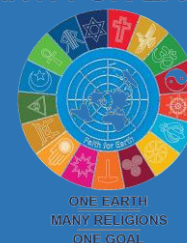
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MAPPING ABRAHAMIC FAITH-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST-NORTH AFRICA REGION

UConn
UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT
GLOBAL



FAITH FOR EARTH



UN
environment
programme

Background



❖ Faith for Earth Initiative

The mission of the Faith for Earth Initiative, launched by **UNEP** in 2017, is to strategically engage and partner with faith-based organizations to collectively achieve the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\) and fulfill the objectives of the 2030 Agenda](#). Faith for Earth has **three main goals**: to inspire and empower faith organizations and their leaders to advocate for protecting the environment, to green faith-based organizations' investments and assets to support the implementation of SDGs, and to provide access to knowledge and networks to enable faith leaders to effectively communicate with decision-makers and the public on environmental issues.

❖ The UConn Abrahamic Programs

This initiative developed by **University of Connecticut Global Affairs** aims at promoting academic collaboration within **Abrahamic community in the Middle East/North Africa region**. The three Abrahamic traditions (**Judaism, Christianity, and Islam**) include nearly half of the world's population. Knowing that they all emerged in the Middle East, believe in one same God, descend from the same prophet, Abraham, and emphasize the value of knowledge and reason, the initiative seeks to build on this common heritage. Additionally, its acknowledgment that the three monotheistic faiths strongly drive cultural traditions, individual values and social behaviors lead it to hope that intellectual cross-border relationships could contribute to peacebuilding in that conflictual region.



Background



❖ The *Abrahamic Traditions and Environmental Change* workshop

Coordinated by **UConn Abrahamica programs**, the workshop, that was attended by the **Faith for Earth Director**, was co-sponsored by **Al Alkhawayn University, Morocco**, and the **Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale University**, on June 23-26, 2019. One of the main tasks of this workshop was to explore how the Abrahamic traditions impact the ways in which humans perceive and interact with nature and the potential to translate those perceptions and interactions into positive social and ecological actions. The participants assumed that common ethical and moral values instilled by the Abrahamic faiths can help moving societies towards sustainability while contributing to peace building through multicultural dialogue and common commitment. The workshop resulted in a long-term consortium project, willing to offer network and resources to the members who wish to collaborate on the issue of Abrahamic faiths and environment. Among the workshop proceedings, participants agreed to deliver a **mapping of environmental change mitigation in MENA region**. Faith for Earth, as a member of this consortium, offered to initiate the mapping project. The collected information is intended to feed **an interactive map** (developed by Rowan University) while connecting with and mobilizing faith-based organizations.

Selection Criteria Faith-Based Organizations

- *“Legally registered international faith-based development and humanitarian NGOs, Religious leaders, religious institutions such as Mosques, Churches and their affiliated NGOs; and independent local community entities inspired by faith principles.” (UN Task Force on Religion and Development definition)*
- 3 Abrahamic traditions: Judaic, Islamic, Christian - and their religious branches.
- Organizations funding and/or implementing projects in the MENA region = local/grassroot and worldwide organizations
- **Cluster 1:** non-governmental organizations that explicitly address environmental issues through the lens of religion, find inspiration for environmental action in the reflection on sacred texts, and use their religion for community outreach.
- **Cluster 2:** non-governmental humanitarian or development organizations that explicitly mention religious values, regardless of the extent to which the faith of these values orientates/underlies the target communities or means of actions.
- **Cluster 3:** non-faith-based organizations that engage with faith-based organizations or communities in the implementation or funding of their work.

W. Suhs Cleveland, W. Bielefeld, “Defining Faith-Based Organizations and Understanding Them Through Research”, *Non-profit and voluntary sector quarterly*, vol. 42 issue: 3, page(s): 442-467 (2013)

What is a “Faith-Based” Organization? Typologies of FBOs:

“The various typologies depend mainly on three major assessment categories: organizational control, expression of religion, and program implementation.

- 1) Organizational control is examined through funding resources, power exercised within the organization, and decision-making processes.
- 2) Expression of religion is examined through the self-identity of the organization, religiosity of participants, and definition of outcome measures.
- 3) Program implementation is examined through the selection of services provided, the integration of religious elements in service delivery, and the voluntary or mandatory participation in specific religious activities.”

Selection Criteria Projects

- **Geographical range:** Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Palestine, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Yemen.
 - **Temporal range:** projects active in 2019
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- **Cluster 1:** initiatives whose main explicit objective is to combat environmental change (water scarcity, biological diversity loss, ecosystem degradation, human-induced climate change).
 - **Cluster 2:** initiatives that explicitly strive to promote resilient livelihoods in the face of climate/environmental change effects (mitigation or adaptation).
 - **Cluster 3:** development projects that explicitly entail efforts to ensure their environmental sustainability/viability in the long term

Results

- Total number of projects considered: 68 projects

Islam	Christianity	Judaism	Interfaith
28	23	10	7

- Communications with 56 of them
- 15 projects (out of 68) sum up to nearly 52 million USD
- 13 countries
- 123 funding/implementing organizations
- Including 47 FBOs and 2 interfaith organizations

Water scarcity	Sustainable agriculture	Environmental awareness	Renewable energy	Climate change	Biodiversity conservation	Carbon emissions
32	20	20	9	8	7	7

Land restoration	Pollution	Waste management	Women empowerment	Natural resources management	Peace building	Disaster Risk Reduction	Ecotourism
6	6	5	3	2	2	1	1

Lutheran World Federation

Project: WASH in Iraq

Country: Iraq

Duration: 2019-2020 (1 year)

Budget: 250.000 USD

Objective: Populations targeted include community members who remained and survived the ISIS occupation, IDPs who fled but are now returning to their homes and recently displaced IDPs from Mosul. In line with the LWF World Service overall strategy 2018 – 2022, LWF Iraq's programming is focused on building resilience of IDPs, host communities and returnees. Right now we are indeed implementing a project in an area where availability of water is limited, reason why inhabitants of the area need to travel to other places in order to work, since they cannot work on agriculture due to water scarcity.

Activities:

- Conduct assessments together with the Directorate of Underground Water for example, to choose best locations to increase the water availability for agricultural and drinking purposes.
- For the future stages, consider how to make these intervention more sustainable, for example with the creation of water committees, who receive capacity to repair possible damages, but also to include green energy mechanisms, such as solar panels to run the pumps, instead of using the generators based on fossil fuels.
- Water conservation and hygiene promotion campaigns, evaluated by KAP surveys at the beginning and end of the intervention
- Garbage collection and cleaning campaigns to ensure that water sources are not contaminated and also including messages regarding usage of plastic and basic recycling notions.



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The Coptic Orthodox Church

Project: The Ancient Monastery of Saint Pishoy – Green Pilgrim Site

Country: Egypt

Duration: ongoing

Objective:

The monastery is a model and a beacon through its programme of self-sufficiency and environmental sustainability, a living and working example for similar desert communities all over the world to follow. It is one of the principal monasteries of Wadi-El-Natroun and has five Churches within its' boundaries.

The monastery has a full working programme of sustainability, both in its' way of life and its' practices, including:

Activities:

- Solar energy produced through the use of solar panels
- Reclamation of hundreds of acres of desert wilderness over

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