

FACING GLOBAL CHALLENGES ENVIRONMENTAL AND PEACE EDUCATION IN INTERRELIGIOUS COOPERATION FOR TEACHER TRAINING

Vision Statement
February 2nd, 2026



Climate Justice and Sustainability:

An Interreligious Commitment

Our Shared Vision

Preamble

This statement is a core output of the Erasmus+ project “Religions for Ecology: Facing Global Challenges. Environmental and Peace Education in Interreligious Cooperation for Teacher Training.” This collaborative endeavour unites scholars and educators from diverse backgrounds such as theology, religious studies, pedagogy, and ethics, including interdisciplinary approaches across a consortium of universities in Germany, Austria, Spain, Albania, and Malaysia.

The project partners, representing different institutions (universities, teacher training colleges) with religious backgrounds in Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam and interreligious expertise, embody an enriching diversity where contextual and methodological differences are consciously leveraged as a source of intellectual enrichment and a catalyst for innovative, transdisciplinary dialogue. This has an ethical impact on raising awareness and improving attitudes.

The aim is to develop resources and strategies for integrating ecological and peace ethics into religious and interreligious education at various levels with responsible stakeholders in the sense of lifelong learning. Through interreligious cooperation, our goal is to equip future multipliers — teachers, educators, and community leaders — on the one hand with theological, scientific, and ethical knowledge, and on the other hand develop pedagogical approaches and tools to address the global ecological crisis through an interreligious lens. By doing this, we aim to cultivate shared spaces for reflection, recognising environmental care as an ethical and educational responsibility.

Within this framework, we recognise the planetary crisis of climate change and ecological degradation as a profound ethical challenge, highlighting the spiritual dimension. This crisis, rooted in an anthropogenic rupture of humanity’s relationship with the natural world, manifests as a grave socio-environmental injustice: populations that have contributed least to the problem disproportionately suffer its most devastating consequences.

Faced with this reality, our respective religious consciousness compels us to speak up and act! We affirm that the Earth is not a mere resource to be exploited but a divine/sacred trust to be cherished and protected. Our theological convictions, though distinct, converge on fundamental principles of justice, compassion, and stewardship, defining intergenerational and international responsibility.

This statement outlines our shared commitment and the unique contributions of our respective religions to the urgent work of ecological conversion and the advancement of global climate justice.

Religious Rooting

I. The Islamic Perspective

As Muslims, we believe that Allah created the universe in perfect *Mīzān* (balance and measure) (al-Qurʿān 55:7-8). Humanity has been appointed as *Khalīfah* (vicegerent) on Earth (al-Qurʿān 2:30), a position of *Amānah* (immense responsibility/trust) and not dominion. Our role is to maintain this divine balance and to avoid all forms of *Fasād* (corruption) and *Isrāf* (waste) (al-Qurʿān 7:56, 17:27).

Al-Māʾ (water) is the source of all life (al-Qurʿān 21:30), a gift from Allah to be shared equitably and protected from waste and pollution, as instructed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The principle of *ʿAdl* (justice) demands that we address the unequal burdens of climate change and ensure the rights of the poor, the vulnerable, and future generations.

Therefore, we commit to:

- » Upholding our duty as vicegerents (*Khalāif*) by protecting ecosystems and biodiversity.
- » Promoting moderation in consumption and rejecting wastefulness (*Isrāf*) in all its forms.
- » Advocating for equitable access to water and other natural resources as a fundamental right (*Fiqh al-Māʾ*).
- » Holding ourselves and our communities accountable (*Muḥāsabah*) to these divine principles, transforming them from theological ideals into a lived reality.
- » Cooperating and coexisting together with comprehensive excellence (*al-Iḥsān*) and commitment to the common good of all.

II. The Christian (Catholic & Protestant) Perspective

From a Christian perspective our faith is rooted in the belief that the entire universe is revealing the presence of the Creator. The incarnation of God in Jesus Christ affirms the goodness of all life and the material world. So we are called to work for Shalom — a peace that encompasses justice, integrity of creation, and the well-being of all humanity in appreciation of all life. We embrace the concept of Integral Ecology, understanding that the environmental, economical and social crises are one. The cry of the Earth is inseparable from the cry of the poor.

As Christians we are inspired by the Evangelium of Jesus Christ and the wisdom of the Encyclica Laudato si and the announcements of the World Council of Churches (WCC), we commit to:

- » We are called to a deep ecological metanoia – a conversion of heart and mind – away from exploitation and towards healing and reconciliation.
- » In the training of (religious) teachers, we place a theologically based focus on education for sustainable development as a concept of peace education.
- » We understand responsibility for sustainability both in a historical critical context and in a life-affirming future perspective.
- » We want to move forward for interreligious learning as a didactic perspective for promoting the relevance of the education for sustainable development for the present state of teacher training in global responsibility.
- » We want to be engaged for supporting our churches in the effort for ecological restoration and climate justice (e.g. the Ecumenical Decade of Climate Justice of the WCC 2025-2035).

III. The Buddhist Perspective

From a Buddhist perspective, the ecological crisis is a manifestation of suffering (duḥkha), arising from a mind of greed, aversion, and delusion. The fundamental principle of interdependence teaches that all beings and phenomena are intimately connected; harm to one part of the web of life is harm to all.

Therefore, climate justice is not about retribution but about restoring balance and alleviating suffering. Our response is guided by compassion (karuṇā) for all beings suffering from ecological harm, and by mindfulness of the consequences of our actions. We recognize that true well-being is not found in endless consumption but in simplicity and non-harm (ahiṃsā).

We commit to:

- » Cultivating a deep awareness of our interdependence with nature, recognizing that the well-being of humanity depends on the health of the whole.
- » Supporting actions that prevent further harm and alleviate the suffering caused by climate change, with special attention to vulnerable communities and species.
- » Contributing to interfaith dialogue and environmental education with practices that foster mindfulness, reflection, and a genuine change in habits and attitudes.

Think global,
get connected,
and act together!

A Common Motto of our Interreligious Approach

While our approaches are diverse, our common aim is to work toward a just, peaceful, and sustainable world. We pledge to move beyond theory into concerted action. We will:

- » **Dialogue Together:** Continue to deepen our interreligious dialogue by learning and understanding each other. Reflecting on our revealed/sacred texts, improving our ritual performances in the light of sustainability, and building ethical frameworks that respond to the ecological crisis.
- » **Educate Together:** Develop interreligious environmental education that draws on the wisdom of all our traditions to inspire reverence, responsibility, and hope in future generations.
- » **Act Together:** Strengthening interreligious networks and collaborations through practical projects in our communities, such as protecting local water sources, promoting renewable energy in our places of worship, and supporting reforestation.
- » **Advocate Together:** Raise a united voice to demand urgent and just climate policies from governments and corporations, holding them accountable for the well-being of people and the planet.
- » **Coexist Together:** Live in peace and mutual respect with each member of the society, care about each other, and care for the environment, including natural resources and every creature living in it.

We affirm that care for the Earth is both an ethical obligation and a spiritual responsibility, rooted in shared values of respect for every form of life through compassion. We bear witness that peaceful coexistence based on justice is both possible and urgently needed. Therefore, by working together across religions and worldviews, we seek to strengthen global efforts for climate justice, protect the dignity of every human being, and preserve creation for future generations.

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