

## **CYNESA Hosts African Faith Leaders for an Advocacy Training**

The [Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa \(CYNESA\)](#) hosted ten multi-faith African Faith Leaders from Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, South Africa, Malawi, and Zimbabwe for an Environmental Advocacy immersion in Nakuru County, Kenya between 29<sup>th</sup> August and 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2016.

The training experience was part of the evaluation process of the impact that the Faith Leaders' Environmental Advocacy Training (FLEAT) initiated and supported by the [Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute \(SAFCEI\)](#). CYNESA has been, and remains, central to the FLEAT programme having started the training with one CYNESA participant in 2014 and growing to five participants to date.



During the training experience in Nakuru, CYNESA arranged for the faith leaders to visit the Kabarak farm on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2016 to set out the context within which the faith leaders would be engaging. While appreciating the progress made in development

of high-yield seeds, the faith leaders took note of the ongoing focus on commercialization of farming at the expense of creation. The Faith Leaders also witnessed the urge to reforest despite the clear disconnect between growing forests and tree plantations where the latter seems to have taken centre stage in Kenya and abroad. Mainly, people are keen on just planting trees of a certain kind without considering whether what they are planting is indigenous to the area in which they are planting them.

On the 31<sup>st</sup>, CYNESA arranged for an engagement with high school students of St. Xavier's High School, Nakuru. Apart from meeting with the day schooling students, Reverends Jacob

Manda (Zambia) and Nigel Chikanya (Zimbabwe) imparted knowledge on agroforestry and biodiversity loss. The students also had an opportunity to ask questions and express environmental concerns within their contexts. At the end of the engagement, CYNESA's resolve to continue working with students and other young people had been enhanced further.



On 1<sup>st</sup> September, the Faith Leaders, in communion with Pope Francis, The Orthodox Church, and the whole world, prayed for both care of creation and peace. This special day combined commemorations of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and the International



Day of Peace. Central to these two days was to pronounce the inevitable connection between care of creation and peace. Nine of the Faith Leaders took turns engaging with Pacilia of Radio Amani during the 1000 – 1300 live radio program concerning the topic of environmental care and

cultivation for peace.

Later, the Faith Leaders joined young people and some members of the Catholic clergy for ecumenical communion prayers for the care of creation at the premises of the Catholic Diocese of Nakuru offices. South Africa's and Johannesburg-based, Ndivile Mokoena offered insights concerning the sustainable use of natural resources to improve climate change resilience from a grassroots women initiative's perspective. Our Muslim brother, Samalani McCarthy shared about easy actions that have potential to mitigate climate change from an Islamic perspective. These two presentations created awareness about the most practical ways of engaging with people of faith from both gender and ecumenical perspectives through the formation of united fronts irrespective of demographics. Participants also received resource materials concerning the [Season of Creation](#), Laudato Si, and the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation.



The aim of the FLEAT is to build the capacity of faith leaders to advocate for societal change in the environmental sector.

By David Ngigi Munene  
Programs Manager, CYNESA