



SOUTHERN AFRICAN FAITH COMMUNITIES' ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE

# **SAFCEI**

## **Strategic Plan 2021 – 2023**

**MOVING TO 'HOW' - Strengthening and  
developing community amongst  
Earthkeepers of faith**

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# 1. Introduction

What is the right action as SAFCEI emerges out of the immediate COVID-crisis, into the COVID-era, within the larger looming context of climate crisis?

SAFCEI is committed to **inclusion**, a broad and progressive view of **spirituality and faith**; commitment to **eco-justice for all**; and commitment to integration of **care for the earth as essential to faith-based spiritual practice**.

Its strategy is determined with reference to these principles...

... requiring continuous building of internal and consultative organisational processes that enable responsive reading of constituency and context.

## 2. Reading our current context, in community

Faith leaders seek to make sense of **COVID as an environmental disaster**.

The effect of lockdown, including a **rise in corruption and poor governance**, has compromised faith leaders' grassroots reach to faith-communities.

The possible effects of this on **environmental** is a cause of concern.



## ... Reading our current context, in community

On the ground, increase in the need for greater **food security** and **increased vulnerability** and reduced status of women and girls.

A greater **role for faith leaders** in mediating public education and science messaging around COVID causes, transmission and vaccine, and in relation to death and loss in community.

**Practical initiatives** that SAFCEI might support on, like sustainable food gardening, are seen to be essential and highly valued.

# 3. SAFCEI's Identity and values - Multi-faith, Faith Leaders, Earthkeepers and Community



# ... SAFCEI's Identity and values -

## **Multi-faith, Faith Leaders, Earthkeepers and Community**

A multi-faith approach seeks to reach **all people of faith** – Earthkeepers - who share a concern for the well-being of the planet.

This approach values a **diversity of faiths and voices** from those who play leadership roles in their communities whether in formal institutions of organised religion, or less formal faith-based initiatives.

SAFCEI seeks also to **nurture leadership**, including of women, on environmental matters amongst members of faith congregations who play a leadership role in faith communities - 'community eco-champions'.

# ... SAFCEI's Identity and values – **Working in and through community**

SAFCEI builds and supports **compassionate *relationships***.

Goodwill, clarity of purpose and mutuality across the network of earth-keeping faith communities and leaders enables greater and improved relationship to the whole of the Earth community.

This will be done through

building a deeper spiritual understanding of compassionate relationship,  
inculcating responsiveness to felt and expressed needs and realities,  
enabling SAFCEI to work with the outcomes of its own previous efforts

And will include **challenging and combating** unethical and unscrupulous behaviour and actions, in community.

# 4. Our strategic commitments

The **Johannesburg Declaration**, formulated from 5-7 November 2019, gave consensus regarding SAFCEI's concerns, commitment and response to six broad environmental issues:

**Animal Justice**

**Biodiversity Loss**

**Consumerism and Waste**

**Energy and Climate Justice**

**Food and Climate Justice**

**Land and Water Justice**



# ...Our strategic commitments

SAFCEI is **realistic and strategic** about what it can achieve with limited resources and currently focuses primarily in -

**Energy and Climate Justice,  
Food and Climate Justice  
Animal Justice.**

This is especially relevant given the **enhanced emphasis on food security and energy** that has emerged out of the contextual reflection on 2020.

A growing focus on **all areas** is desirable for the long-term.



# 5. SAFCEI's approach and core process

To facilitate **capacity building, knowledge creation and formulation of plans and ethical eco-action** that ultimately will result in the formation of eco-communities.

**Enabling faith leaders** (in and of faith based eco-communities and amongst those in the formal institutional hierarchy) to articulate and advocate a view of the world that cares for Earth and the earth community.

Done in such a way that **nurtures resilience and is sustainable.**



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## ... approach and core process.

**expanding community**, community organisation and influence within community.

**navigating** from the grassroots base, reaching to and influencing institutional hierarchies, through to policy and governance/administration.

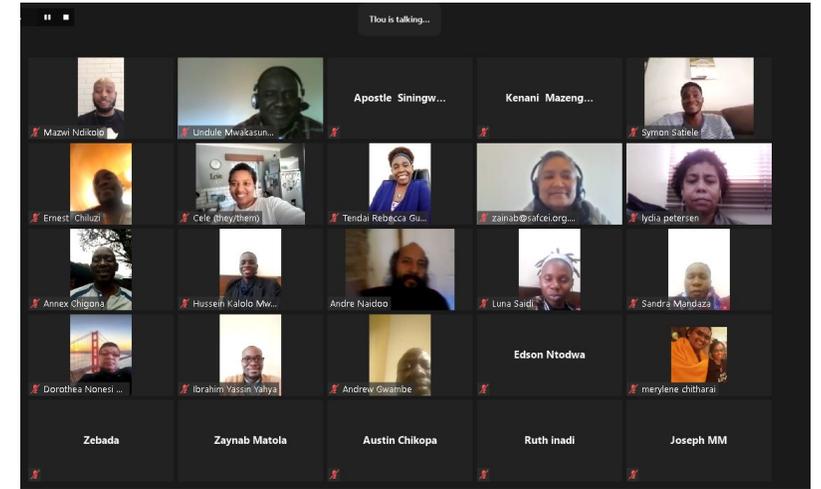
**working skilfully** with community and institutions, including working with tensions between faith communities and faith leaders; between bottom-up and top-down approaches; even between science and faith.

**acknowledging** different knowledge systems and valuing the wisdom from cultural and indigenous systems.

**working collaboratively** and across silos, as a staff-team.

# 6. Priorities 2021 – 2023:

## Developing community and cultivating our capacity to respond



... priorities 2021 – 2023 ...

## **Deepen our strategy for engaging faith communities:**

- Revisiting and extending our reflection/audit of existing communities and relationships
- Revisiting SAFCEI's strategy for youth
- Use this to revisit existing projects
- Create a systematic approach to FLEAT follow-up

... priorities 2021 – 2023 ...

## **Deepen our strategy for engaging faith communities:**

- Continue work in partnership with existing allies and congregations on an Earthkeeper agenda
- Work in partnership on food and climate justice
- Strengthen the prophetic voice on climate change
- Review strategy around accessing more senior levels of faith leadership

# ... priorities 2021 – 2023 ...

## **Developing a learning organisation:**

- Create more space for continuous contextual reading with community, members, and fellow staff members.
- Continue to seek opportunities to work collaboratively and across silos.
- Continue to support staff wellness, particularly through the COVID period.
- Documentation and deepening of a distinctively 'SAFCEI faith community engagement practice'.

## ... priorities 2021 – 2023 ...

### **Developing a learning organisation:**

- Link learning from engagements and work to adjustments in strategy and practice.
- Tracking and monitoring all of this, enabling accountability to donors, members and the broader community; providing the data-rationale for adjustments as they emerge; and undertaking adaptive management of people and project commitments.
- Undertaking all of this in a way that builds SAFCEI's resilience as a team.

... priorities 2021 – 2023 ...

**Developing our ability to gauge our impact:**

- Behaviour change of those we are working with.
- When faith leaders promote ethical actions and preach sermons and make statements that reflect on eco-justice issues.
- Organised action in and by communities.
- Participants replicating the work in their communities

... priorities 2021 – 2023 ...

**Developing our ability to gauge our impact:**

- Multi-faith network building
- Communities and faith leaders attend to high level meetings and share messages for their own work with knowledge/information from SAFCEI.
- Knowledge network - information spreading.
- When SAFCEI is no longer needed.