

The Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development

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Proposal for Support of

Interfaith Greening of Jerusalem Religious Institutions Project

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Proposal Summary

The Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development (hereafter ICSD) aims to implement the Interfaith Greening of Jerusalem Religious Institutions Project. The Project engages three religious institutions in Jerusalem --a church, mosque, and synagogue, or a seminary, in a “greening” process of both the physical building and grounds, as well as the educational content communicated to the congregants. One Muslim, Jewish, and Christian religious institution will be involved. ICSD will bring together clergy from each of the institutions involved in the process.

The project will create models for the greening of Jerusalem religious institutions and will undertake to educate their leaders and members on practical environmental actions based on religious teachings. It seeks to empower religious leaders and faith communities in Jerusalem to promote sustainable development at the community level. It will also create common ground and lead to positive change among Muslims, Jews, and Christians, Palestinian and Israelis.

Need Statement

Jerusalem is one of the oldest cities in the world and is a holy city for all three major Abrahamic religions; Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. The city hosts myriad historical, archaeological, and religious sites. Since billions of people hold the city close to their hearts, and millions visit it each year Jerusalem should serve as a global model for faith-based initiatives promoting environmental sustainability. Yet this month, the city has been racked by acute violence, misunderstanding, and hatred.

In addition, religious institutions in Jerusalem are unintentional contributing to local and global environmental problems. For example, the wastewater of Jerusalem's holiest sites—the Al Aksa mosque, the Western Wall, and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, flows as raw sewage from the outskirts of Jerusalem to the Dead Sea. With great irony, the sewage of people who pray pollutes the pathways of the Promised Land. Most religious institutions and people of faith are unaware or unconcerned about what happens when they flush the toilet, take a shower, or wash their hands in one third of the city.

Finally, a significant need exists to break down religious, ethnic, and cultural barriers and support a shared and collective approach. Bringing the two sides to a place of respect and understanding by finding common areas for collaboration may prove effective in promoting peace. In the Holy Land, Christians, Jews, and Muslims live on the same land, breathe the same air, and drink the same water. Environmental challenges transcend borders and religious affiliations and therefore exist as an arena of joint, urgent concern among people of diverse nationalities and faiths. Yet cultural and social separation poses a challenge when tackling issues jointly. ICSD seeks to address some of the root issues underlying violence in the Holy Land, including ignorance of the other and lack of concern for one's surroundings.

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Acknowledging that much of Jerusalem's population identifies with a faith tradition, ICSD utilizes the influence of religion to promote coexistence and environmental sustainability. ICSD has identified effective approaches in bringing students and community activists together to transcend their differences in the name of environmental and social justice.

Faith communities represent a key yet under-tapped avenue for climate action globally, with great potential transform people's behavior and influence their societies and governments. Prior to Pope Francis' Encyclical and the launch of the Islamic Declaration on Climate Change, faith communities had yet to take a major role in inspiring a response to climate change. It is critical to build on these gains to promote further work in the area.

Project Goals

- Mobilize and advance collaboration amongst religious communities in Jerusalem to enable them to become leaders of a faith-based shift to sustainable living and to cultivate a sense of identification with and concern for sustainability issues.
- Work to overcome inter-religious strife by promoting interfaith cooperation, dialogue, and mutual respect through shared ownership of goals that further ecological sustainability and a climate of coexistence in Jerusalem.
- Showcase Jerusalem religious institutions as pioneers of environmental sustainability and create an international multiplier effect – utilizing online and international media.
- Leverage the moral authority of Jerusalem religious figures to promote sustainable living and co-existence.
- Transform Jerusalem from a symbol of conflict and strife into a model for co-existence and responsible, sustainable living by creating an avenue for coexistence that brings together religious leaders from three religions and multiple ethnicities to co-operate and share the process.

Greening Religious Institutions - Planned Stages

In the first year of this project, examples of the greening of religious institutions will be created in Jerusalem. Tasks for this first year:

Months 1-2

1. Hire project staff.
2. Consult with U.S.-based peer institutions that have successfully engaged houses of worship in greening processing, including the Jewish Greening Initiative (NY), Greenfaith (NJ), and Interfaith Power and Light (CA main office). Set criteria for greening religious institutions in conjunction with environmental professionals (e.g. energy and water conservation, recycling solid waste, etc).

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3. Based on the existing ICSD list compiled over the past four years, contact dozens of religious institutions in Jerusalem that may be interested in sustainability. Following responses, commit to working with three religious institutions (one Jewish, one Christian, and one Muslim institution) in Jerusalem on the project.

Months 2-3

4. Assess religious institutions' ecological footprint at the outset, including a carbon audit, and set attainable, measurable goals for the first year of the project.
5. Initiate an educational program for members of the three faiths' communities to help "green" the institution and demonstrate how individuals may lead environmentally responsible lifestyles. Both of these will draw inspiration from their religion's traditions and from recommendations of their faith leaders.
6. Establish local environmental leadership from each institution.

Months 4 -10

During this period the institutions will carry out greening activities.

7. Assist with mentoring and coordinating efforts and activities throughout the process of greening the institutions, providing professional assistance and support. Give the religious institutions guidance on best practices in renewable energy, energy efficiency, wastewater recycling, composting, on-site gardening, water conservation, recycling, and other areas.
8. Expand online interfaith social-media campaign, including blogs, Facebook, and Twitter, in conjunction with project progression and activities.

Months 11-12

9. Evaluate the project in light of the goals, i.e. quantifying recycled waste, reduced energy and water consumption, number of sermons given, etc.
10. Celebrate the year's achievement with a high profile interfaith event in Jerusalem with religious figures from the three religions. Invite senior religious figures to speak.
11. Conduct an international media campaign to our list of 600 journalists based in Israel, in order to generate extensive media coverage of the interfaith event.
12. Develop a plan to raise additional funds to expand and develop the project for the following year's project implementation.

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Other Project Details

- There will be monthly meetings of project coordinators, volunteers, and environmental professionals to discuss progress, share experiences, dialogue, and plan continued project progression.
- The project will be undertaken in collaboration with Muslim, Christian, and Jewish institutions in Jerusalem.
- ICSD has met with staff of a solar energy provider and an energy efficiency company, and both have expressed interest in providing materials on a pro bono basis for this project, without providing firm commitments.
- As Jerusalem religious institutions become greener, they themselves become attractive sites for religious pilgrims to engage in eco-pilgrimage activities. Visiting green religious institutions can therefore become an essential component of the green pilgrim experience, a project synergy with efforts to promote green pilgrimage in Jerusalem.

Evaluation

ICSD believes that a key to successful long term impact is undertaking a critical approach in regards to its activities and their outcomes. At mid-year and at the end of the year ICSD Executive Director and staff will evaluate the project's progress and expected criteria for success. Coordinators from each of the institutions will be required to complete two surveys: one conducted at the beginning of their participation in the project, and a second one conducted at the conclusion of year one of the project. The second survey will measure whether through a range of metrics what type of changes they made to their physical structures, as well as to the educational content and sermons in their institutions.

Project Duration: Two years

Project Budget: \$150,000 over two years.

Note: implementation of this project is funding dependent. The project is scalable, and can be implemented at varying levels of support. In the event that full funding is not received, certain aspects of the project, like the concluding interfaith event can be taken out.

Organizational Description:

The Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development (ICSD), based in Jerusalem, works to catalyze a transition to a sustainable human society through the active leadership of faith communities. In 2015, its work focused on three projects. First, the Interfaith Eco Seminary Engagement Project promotes courses for seminarians on faith and the environment, by

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advocating to seminary directors, publishing reports on faith-ecology courses for seminarians, promoting resource-sharing of such course syllabi, and holding virtual and live meetings of seminary deans and faculty. Second, the United Planet Faith & Science Initiative convenes virtual meetings and live events of clergy and scientists, and creates short videos from the events that are spread via social media to promote public awareness, political will, and action. Third, the Women's Faith and Ecology Project engages women of faith in Jerusalem in seminars focused on religion, coexistence, and environmental stewardship.

ICSD is a registered non-profit organization in Israel with 'nihul takin' (proper NGO management) and sif 46 (tax deductible) status. In the U.S., Jumpstart, a registered 501(c)3, serves as ICSD's fiscal sponsor.

Interfaith Advisory Group for this Project

ICSD has assembled a group of committed Christian, Jewish, and Muslim advisers who will be consulted during project implementation. They include:

Muslim:

- Dr. Mohammed Dajani, founder and director of the NGO Wassatiya, and professor emeritus at Al Quds University (member of ICSD Board of Advisers)
- Yasmin Barhum, facilitator at *Living in the Levant*

Christian:

- Rev. Russell McDougall, CSC, Rector of the Tantur Ecumenical Institute, Jerusalem
- Dr. Maria Leppakari, Director, Swedish Theological Institute, Jerusalem

Jewish:

- Rabbi David Rosen, CBE, international director of inter-religious affairs, American Jewish Committee Israel office (member of ICSD Board of Advisers)
- Rabbi Dr. Daniel Sperber, professor of Talmud at Bar-Ilan University in Israel and rabbi of Menachem Zion Synagogue in the Old City of Jerusalem

Project Budget

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The budget to implement the first year of the project is detailed in the table below. The total is \$73,500.

Expenses for Year 1 (of a two-year project)	Cost in US\$
General Coordinator of Greening Religious Institutions in Jerusalem Project, half-time salary	22,500
Faith-specific Coordinators for two other religions (\$7,500 for each coordinator, eight hours per week)	15,000
Workshop for Liaisons of Religious Institutions	4,500
Environmental Professional Consultant for Greening Institutions	5,000
Public Relations and Press Relations for Media Campaign	4,500
Online Social Media Campaign	2,500
Event space, food, and translation for concluding public event	9,500
Phone, travel, printing and miscellaneous expenses	2,500
Organizational overheads, including executive director oversight of project	7,500
Total Project Expenses	\$73,500
Pro-bono and In-kind contributions	
Gigawatt Global—donation of solar panels (to be confirmed)	\$10,000
Corporate donation of energy efficient equipment (to be confirmed)	\$10,000