

## **WFCN Environmental Focal Point (EFP) Calls**

### **Summary and Synthesis**

#### **Meeting Attendance**

- EFP Call 1: 4 December 2025

Attended by: Heather Poxon (Salvation Army), Sonya Funna (ADRA), Rev. Rachel Mash (Anglican Communion Environmental Network, Green Anglicans), Cheryl Dugan (Laudato Si' Movement), Maria Crespo (United Religions Initiative), Jean Duff (WFCN), Fariah Lalaikipian (WFCN) and Azmaira Alibhai (WFCN).

- EFP Call 2: 8 December 2025

Attended by: Aneta Loj (Brahma Kumaris), Sister Maamalifar Poreku and Guilia (UISG), Meisie Lerutla (Mothers Union), Jo Chamberlain (Church of England), Debra Boudreaux (Tzu Chi Foundation USA), Jean Duff (WFCN), and Azmaira Alibhai (WFCN).

#### **Overall Purpose**

To exchange information on members' environmental programs, explore approaches to mutual support and radical collaboration, and prepare for the March WFCN meeting where a shared action plan will be developed to scale impact.

#### **Framing and Intent**

Both calls reaffirmed that:

- WFCN is a "network of networks" with a unique role in mobilising women of faith for climate and environmental action.
- There is a collective aspiration to scale impact through radical collaboration, learning from one another rather than duplicating effort.
- Environmental action is understood holistically, integrating spirituality, lifestyle, community development, advocacy, and practical action.
- Language matters: the term "*Environmental Focal Point*" was seen as functional but emotionally uninspiring ("heartless"), suggesting a future need to explore alternative naming that better reflects values, care, and action.

#### **Meeting Process and Learning Exchange**

Both meetings followed a flow:

- Introductions and framing of goals
- Summary of data already collected on EFPs
- A learning exchange, where each participant briefly described their environmental work, followed by Q&A on commonalities and differences
- Brainstorming how collaboration could help scale impact
- Preparation for the March 2026 WFCN meeting and agreement on next steps

A strong insight was that preparation and follow-up are as important as the meetings themselves, with data consolidation and reflection enabling meaningful collaboration.

## Overview of environmental work across the network

Several shared models and priorities emerged.

### a. Champion- and Leader-Based Models

Networks rely on trained local leaders who mobilise communities:

- Mothers' Union (MU):
  - Environment is a global priority, with provinces adapting focus to local realities (e.g. plastics, littering, water pollution).
  - 24 dioceses have trained Eco-Champions (all women), focused on sensitisation within churches and communities, waste reduction, tree planting and maintenance, vegetable gardens, and income generation through food preservation (e.g. jam production).
- Church of England
  - 42 dioceses supported by diocesan environment officers and a Net Zero Carbon Officer.
  - Eco-Church and Eco-Diocese award schemes (Bronze, Silver, Gold) administered by A Rocha UK, with strong participation across churches and dioceses.
  - Work includes buildings and land care, worship and teaching, procurement and policy change, and progress toward net-zero emissions.
- United Religions Initiative (URI)
  - Works through a rapidly growing network of "Cooperation Circles" (CCs).
  - CCs are community-led and self-determining, choosing environmental and social priorities based on local needs across a broad set of action areas.
  - 1259 CCs globally, 487 of them have an 'environment' focus, each formed by a minimum of seven member organisations and are interfaith.
  - This flexible, grassroots structure supports locally relevant climate and environmental initiatives while remaining connected to a global interfaith network.

### b. Faith, Spirituality, and Inner Transformation

This spiritual grounding was seen as a distinctive strength of women-of-faith networks.

- Environmental care is framed as a response to the *"cry of the earth and the cry of the poor"*, *"creation care"*, etc.
- Use of eco-spirituality, meditation, worship, and theological education to motivate sustained action.
- Brahma Kumaris (BK) Environment Initiative:
  - Operates in 120 countries with 9,000 centres.
  - "Green Angels" model encourages lifestyle change grounded in spiritual values (simplicity, compassion, non-harm, plant-based diets).
  - Open participation, youth engagement, tree-planting with lifecycle monitoring, renewable energy, advocacy, and regular coordination meetings and newsletters.
- Emphasis on inner resilience and lifestyle change as foundations for external impact.

### c. Practical Action and Livelihood Creation

Many initiatives focus on hands-on activities that communities can participate in & benefit from:

- Circular economy approaches that link environmental action with livelihoods. Creative reuse of waste materials (e.g. eco-art, handbags, boats, whales) for education and income generation. Gift shops and market spaces that combine education, spirituality, and economic opportunity
- Sustainable agriculture, vegetable gardens, and food security

- Tzu Chi Foundation:
  - An action-oriented, compassion-led movement with strong engagement of young leaders with a presence in 139 countries.
  - “Global Environmental Action Network” (GEAN) focuses on recycling, composting, and circular economy initiatives that transform waste into creative and marketable products, combining climate education with livelihood creation.
  - There are approx. 1050 in the GEAN network that commit significant time to service, translating compassion into visible environmental action and community empowerment.
- ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency):
  - Present in over 120 countries, with strong integration of climate and environmental considerations across its programmes.
  - Works closely with church outreach initiatives, particularly in climate-vulnerable regions such as the South Pacific, where it supports disaster-ready churches and community resilience.
  - With a significant footprint in hospitals, buildings, and institutions, ADRA has opportunities to reduce emissions and model sustainable practices.
  - Women’s ministries and women’s groups are seen as key partners for broadening reach, embedding climate action into health, disaster preparedness, and community development work.

There was a strong call for action-oriented collaboration and “products” or programmes that communities can adopt.

#### **d. Education, Youth, and Capacity Building**

- Training programmes such as Laudato Si’ Animators, Eco-Champions, Green Angels, and youth focal points are central to movement building.
- **Laudato Si’ Movement (LSM):**
  - A global Catholic movement inspired by *Laudato Si’*, focused on building grassroots capacity through the **Laudato Si’ Animators** programme. Volunteers are trained in multiple languages to integrate ecological awareness, spirituality, education, and action in schools, parishes, and religious communities. LSM operates through national and regional chapters, linking community-level action with advocacy and engagement with Church leadership and public policy.
- Education ranges from climate science and carbon sequestration to spirituality and ethical leadership.
- Young leaders were identified as a key area of strong engagement and future growth.

#### **e. Governance, Advocacy, and Finance**

Some members highlighted structural and policy-level engagement:

- Divestment: The Church of England has voted to divest entirely from fossil fuels, with ethical investment guidance through CCLA.
- Advocacy: Participation in national and international advocacy through faith-based coalitions (e.g. Faith for the Climate).
- Institutional policy change: Procurement, land use, HR policies, and governance aligned with environmental goals.
- Green Anglicans
  - Equips clergy and lay leaders to embed creation care into church and everyday life.
  - Green Anglicans work across multiple levels of influence—from senior decision-makers to congregations and Sunday schools—supporting the identification and development of environmental champions.

- Their approach emphasises leadership formation, worship and teaching, and integration of environmental action into the mission and structures of the Church.
- UISG
  - Focused on connecting Catholic sisters and congregations to facilitate environmental action at the grassroots level.
  - Through initiatives like Sowing Hope for the Planet and sustainable agriculture projects, they provide toolkits, systems, and recognition awards to support congregational engagement.
  - Their work emphasizes linking spirituality with environmental responsibility and promoting resource sharing and global collaboration.
  - UISG sees strong potential for WFCN to help unify and coordinate these diverse efforts, creating a global perspective beyond individual congregational activities and enabling sisters to act as trained leaders in climate and sustainability initiatives.

## **Diversity and Untapped Potential**

Members recognised the breadth of WFCN's reach:

- Global membership organisations (e.g. UISG, URI, BK, LSM)
- Strong presence in education, health, agriculture, and congregational life
- Significant but under-connected work already happening at grassroots levels

There was a shared hope that WFCN could provide a global view, helping members see beyond silos and connect efforts across regions and traditions.

## **Key Needs and Challenges Identified**

Across both calls, members consistently identified:

- 1. Mapping and Visibility**
  - Need for a clear picture of who is doing what, where, and on which themes.
  - Interest in mapping EFPs by country and region to support networking and mutual support.
- 2. Shared Resources and Best Practices**
  - Desire for a shared database of tools, curricula, theological resources, and practical examples.
  - Learning from proven models rather than reinventing approaches.
- 3. Leadership and Persuasion Skills**
  - How to identify and support champions
  - How to be persuasive, build momentum, and engage reluctant audiences
- 4. From Conversation to Collaboration**
  - Ensuring that dialogue leads to concrete, shared action and measurable impact.

## **Emerging Directions for Collaboration**

Members proposed several concrete directions:

- A survey and database of EFP activities, priorities, and capacities
- Thematic clustering (e.g. waste and plastics, sustainable agriculture, disaster resilience, advocacy, eco-spirituality)
- Learning exchanges and communities of practice
- Development of shared, adaptable programmes or campaigns
- Stronger youth leadership and “environmental ambassador” roles

## **Preparation for the March WFCN Meeting**

For the March meeting, members suggested:

- Using mapping data to identify top themes and strong regions
- Structuring discussions around areas of strength and readiness for collaboration
- Articulating clearly why women of faith matter for climate action and the scale of potential impact
- Moving toward recommendations and commitments, not only reflection

## **Agreed Next Steps**

1. Compile and consolidate information on EFPs into a shared database
2. Develop recommendations for scaling up collaboration for discussion at the March meeting
3. Share the compiled information and draft recommendations with members
4. Invite members to a follow-up discussion on the recommendations at the end of January (schedule in advance)



## WFCN Environmental Focal Point (EFP)

### Narrative Report

Summary [PowerPoint](#)

#### What is an 'Environmental Focal Person' or EFP Network?

Women-of-faith networks already have massive grassroots climate action but it is fragmented, under-mapped, and under-connected.

The Women, Faith and Climate Network (WFCN) has convened a series of dialogues to build on the June 2025 Workshop '[Mobilising the Grassroots for Environmental Action through Eco Champions: Lessons from the Anglican Communion](#)' and explore how women-of-faith networks can scale environmental and climate action through deeper collaboration.

A recurring theme across these conversations has been the importance of distributed leadership at the grassroots level. Many member networks already rely on locally rooted leaders who mobilise communities, connect faith and action, and sustain environmental initiatives.

These leaders have been referred to in WFCN conversations as Environmental Focal Persons (EFPs). While the term is still evolving, the concept represents a critical opportunity : identifying, strengthening, and connecting grassroots environmental leaders across faith traditions in order to accelerate collective impact.

This report synthesises key insights from recent consultations and workshops, including reflections inspired by the Eco Champions model shared through Anglican Communion case studies. It clarifies the meaning and role of EFPs, identifies common characteristics and functions, and outlines strategic considerations for WFCN moving forward.

In the WFCN context, an **Environmental Focal Person** can be understood as:

- A grassroots leader, volunteer, or staff member of a faith-based organisation, community, or network recognised for environmental engagement;
- A convenor who connects environmental concerns with faith, spirituality, and community life;
- A mobiliser who encourages behaviour change, local initiatives, and collective action;
- A bridge between local experience and regional or global collaboration.

Importantly, EFPs may operate under different titles across traditions, including Eco Champions, Green Ambassadors, Laudato Si' Animators, Net Zero Officers, Diocesan Environment Officers (DEOs), Green Angels, environmental coordinators, or youth climate leaders.

#### Why Working With - and Through - EFPs Can Scale Grassroots Impact

EFPs are uniquely positioned within their faith communities, institutions, and congregations, enabling them to:

- Translate global climate concerns into local relevance;
- Inspire participation through trust and shared identity; and
- Sustain long-term initiatives beyond short project cycles.

Their presence ensures that environmental action is not only programmatic but holistic, relational, and culturally embedded.

A defining strength of women-of-faith environmental work is its spiritual grounding. EFPs help interpret ecological responsibility through theological and spiritual lenses such as creation care, compassion, stewardship, and justice. This framing strengthens motivation and resilience, especially in contexts where faith plays a central role in daily life. More importantly, their ecological responsibility is met with locally sensitive projects, identifying who to work with, and what to work on.

EFPs often operate at the intersection of multiple systems. They may:

- Relay grassroots insights to national or global networks
- Adapt global tools to local realities
- Facilitate partnerships between congregations, NGOs, communities, and local authorities or governments.

This bridging function makes them essential to any network-of-networks model like WFCN.

While titles differ, several core functions consistently emerged across consultations.

a. Mobilising Communities

EFPs frequently initiate and coordinate practical environmental activities, including:

- Tree growing and ecosystem restoration
- Waste reduction and circular economy initiatives
- Community gardening and food security projects
- Water conservation, climate and community resilience practices
- Advocacy and behaviour change campaigns

Many initiatives also integrate livelihoods, demonstrating the link between environmental sustainability and economic wellbeing. The challenge remains in building a system for sustained and scaled programming.

b. Education and Awareness

EFPs serve as educators and communicators. Their work may include:

- Facilitating workshops or study groups
- Integrating environmental themes into worship or spiritual reflection
- Supporting school and youth programmes
- Sharing knowledge on climate science and ecological ethics

Through storytelling and example, EFPs often shift norms and behaviours within their communities.

c. Movement Building and Mentorship

Sustainable environmental action depends on leadership pipelines. EFPs play an important role in:

- Identifying emerging leaders, especially youth and women
- Mentoring new champions
- Creating peer learning spaces
- Celebrating success stories to inspire replication

Mentorship and storytelling were repeatedly highlighted as critical to sustaining momentum.

d. Institutional Influence

In some contexts, EFPs contribute to organisational change by:

- Supporting green policies within institutions, during the celebration of faith observances and festivals, and procurement practices
- Advocating for ethical investments or divestment
- Influencing land and building stewardship (reforestation and afforestation)
- Embedding environmental goals into governance structures, including mobilising high-level faith leadership

This demonstrates the potential for EFPs to influence both grassroots behaviour and institutional systems.

### **Common Characteristics of Effective EFPs**

Across diverse traditions and regions, effective Environmental Focal Persons share several traits:

- Strong relational trust within communities
- Deep personal motivation, often rooted in faith or values
- Practical orientation and problem-solving mindset
- Ability to communicate across generations and roles
- Openness to collaboration and learning
- Persistence and long-term commitment
- Embedding good practice within their programming, including monitoring the impact of their programmes and projects.

Notably, many EFPs operate without formal titles or compensation, highlighting the importance of recognition and support structures. Nonetheless, it is essential to adequately staff teams working on environmental programmes within their institutions and communities.

### **Models Across Faith Networks**

Although the EFP terminology is emerging, equivalent models already exist across traditions. Examples include:

- Eco Champions under the Green Anglican and Mothers' Union networks
- Laudato Si' Animators under the Laudato Si' Movement
- Green Angels in spiritually grounded lifestyle movements, like the Brahma Kumaris
- Environmental ambassadors within youth and interfaith networks, like the United Religions Initiative's Cooperation Circles

These models demonstrate that the EFP concept is about recognising and connecting existing leadership across diverse ecosystems.

### **Key Insights from WFCN Conversations**

Participants noted that the term "Environmental Focal Person" is functional but may feel technical or emotionally flat. There is openness to exploring more values-driven naming that reflects care, leadership, and movement-building while retaining clarity for coordination purposes.

A major gap identified is the lack of visibility across networks. There is strong interest in mapping:

- Who EFPs are
- Where they are located
- What themes they focus on
- What capacities and needs they have

Such mapping would enable networking, peer support, and strategic collaboration. Shared learning is highly desired so that Participants expressed strong interest in:

- Shared resource hubs
- Toolkits and curricula
- Case studies of successful models
- Peer learning exchanges

There is a clear preference for building on proven approaches rather than duplicating efforts.

While WFCN dialogues have generated rich insights, participants emphasised the need to translate learning into concrete collaboration. Suggested next steps include thematic clusters, communities of practice, and shared programmes that can be adapted locally.

## **Opportunities for WFCN**

### Recognise and Elevate Existing Leaders

WFCN is uniquely positioned to identify and validate grassroots environmental leaders across traditions. Recognition can increase visibility, legitimacy, and motivation while strengthening network cohesion.

### Build a Global EFP Ecosystem

By connecting EFPs across regions and faith traditions, WFCN can foster:

- Peer mentorship networks
- Cross-cultural learning
- Shared campaigns and initiatives
- Collective storytelling and advocacy

This networked approach can significantly amplify local efforts.

### Strengthen Capacity and Support Structures

Potential areas of support include:

- Leadership and facilitation training
- Persuasion and storytelling skills
- Theological and spiritual resources
- Small grants or seed funding
- Recognition and award systems

Such support would help sustain volunteer-driven leadership.

### Enable Radical Collaboration

As a network of networks, WFCN can help move from parallel efforts to aligned action. This includes convening thematic clusters, enabling regional hubs, and supporting co-created programmes that leverage the strengths of multiple member organisations.

## Considerations Moving Forward

Several strategic considerations emerged for shaping the future of the EFP concept within WFCN:

- Balance flexibility and clarity: Maintain a broad, inclusive definition while ensuring shared understanding.
- Honour diversity: Different traditions may use different titles and approaches.
- Prioritise relational processes: Trust-building and storytelling are as important as technical coordination.
- Integrate spirituality and action: Faith-rooted motivation is a core strength that should remain central.
- Ensure inclusivity: Pay attention to regional equity, youth participation, and grassroots voices.

## Conclusion

Environmental Focal Persons represent a powerful but often under-recognised layer of leadership within global faith-based environmental action. They embody the bridge between values and practice, local realities and global networks, inner transformation and outward impact.

Rather than creating a new movement, the opportunity before WFCN is to **recognise, connect, and strengthen the environmental leaders** who already exist across its member networks. By mapping these actors, investing in their growth, and fostering collaboration, WFCN can unlock a multiplier effect—scaling grassroots environmental action while remaining grounded in faith, relationships, and community resilience.

As WFCN moves toward future convenings and collaborative initiatives, clarifying and strengthening the role of Environmental Focal Persons can serve as a foundational step toward deeper alignment and collective impact.