

Caring for Creation International Workshop 2 – Kenya

Narrative report



Compiled by

Jacqueline Nampijja

March 2020

Summary

Caring for creation international workshop which took place at The Heron Portico Hotel in Nairobi Kenya was attended by 20 local participants and two international facilitators from Ecological Christian Organization Uganda. The workshop was a complementary activity that built on previous workshops that are geared towards creating awareness and empowering religious leaders about caring for creation. Objectives of the workshop were:

- To enable participants appreciate climate change and environmental degradation and how much human beings have contributed to the problem
- To train leaders in creation care so that they can train others in their local congregations, fellowships and meetings.

And the topics were:

- Context for caring for creation
- Concepts and principles of caring for creation
- Why care for creation

These were presented through the Bible studies series and two will do booklet.

The workshop was a success because by end of the workshop participants had learnt what caring for creation is, they had discovered that God loves all of his creation and cares for it deeply, they acknowledged that humans have acted very selfishly in their interaction with the environment that it is also currently acting up against us and finally after repenting, they acknowledged that its only through prayer and reliance on God can we restore and replenish the earth.



1.0 Introduction

In a bid to concretize and reinforce caring for creation concepts and principles among international participants, ECO supported by Nola Stewart organized and implemented the second international Caring for Creation workshop in Nairobi Kenya which took place on 14th February 2020 at The Heron Portico Hotel. Caring for Creation is ECO's program that engages and empowers religious leaders, communities and faith based institutions towards environmental stewardship.

We choose to use The Heron Portico Hotel because it was a more central location and easily accessible to participants in Nairobi. The hotel's ambiance was quiet and conducive for learning but also for interaction because it provided us with a spacious hall where we could do all our activities including taking pictures, drawing and discussions throughout the sessions. The hotel also offered us a complementary package of PA system and a projector which enhanced our communication throughout the day.

We worked together with the Hotel staff to provide the most comfortable and friendly sitting arrangement that would allow for easy group formation, discussion and also build cohesion between the participants. So the hall was organized in round tables that comfortably accommodated 6 to 8 participants. We also set up a table for the drawing session to help participants appreciate the exercise but also work together as each produced their work.

The workshop received the attendance of only 22 participants because

- a. 2 participants - Rev. Steven and his colleague from Gospel Outreach Church Kenya received a invitation to attend an urgent administrative meeting of the church so they cancelled on the last day.
- b. Bishop Thomas from PEFA (Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa) who had confirmed with 3 other colleagues from their denomination just did not turn up for the workshop and they also did not pick up their calls to provide reason for not attending.
- c. Parklands Baptist church members did not turn up though we had received commitment that even though the pastors would not attend, they would send 2 representatives. However the representatives that we promised did not turn up.
- d. Pr. Masha from Ridgeway Baptist church got an unfortunate incident where robbers broken into his home and vandalized his car. This incident hindered him from attending the workshop.

Participants who attended Care for Creation International workshop Kenya in 2019 that confirmed attendance and turned up for the workshop were Daniel Lagat, Hosea Mitei, Dickson Tuwei and Ezekiel Muniko. The others were contacted but they all had engagements that hindered their attendance. For example Angella Rono had a wedding, Daniel Mutunga could not get time off from his station to attend the workshop and the others had funerals to attend and officiate so they could not attend the workshop.

Of the 22 participants that attended the workshop, 10 were female and 12 were male. We were blessed to host a balanced audience that included some fresh graduates, young adults and men and women of

experience who had been in service. The audience was vibrant and enthusiastic to learn and even start small intervention projects towards caring for creation.

1.01 Program objectives

The objectives of the Caring for Creation program are

1. To inform educate and engage religious leaders with knowledge about caring for creation
2. To inspire action among religious leaders towards caring for creation

1.02 Workshop objectives

Building on towards achieving the program objectives, we set out to achieve the following this year;

- To enable participants appreciate climate change and environmental degradation and how much human beings have contributed to the problem
- To train leaders in creation care so that they can train others in their local congregations, fellowships and meetings.

1.03 Topics of discussion

The topics for the workshop were selected in relation to the objectives set. These topics were

- Context for caring for creation, through this we explored the creation story, the Rada and current environmental issues across the world such as species extinction, human population explosion, and conservation through small families.
- Concepts and principles of caring for creation. This topic explored how salvation should impact the way we relate with the environment. Example was cited on page of the Bible study series booklet. Through the two will do booklet we explored how we could learn to plan the size of our families in relation to resources available. Then we also tackled how we can work with the Holy Spirit to restore the earth.
- Why care for creation- we considered significance of the environment to our survival, health and wellbeing.

They were selected to help the participants appreciate the current state of the earth and also appreciate the fact that the extent of the damage is mainly due to human activities and over population; and to also appreciate how urgent it is for religious leaders and Christian institutions to rise in action towards caring for creation.

The theme of the workshop was Ps 65:5-13 "God Made the earth for all His creation". We used the theme to reinforce the concepts and principles of caring for creation. The psalm provides a reminder that God created everything and has power and control over all creation. The psalm also states that all of creation is alive and healthy because of God.

1:04 Materials used

We used materials created by Nola Stewart which provide a biblical exploration of how earth was created, what man's role is in creation, how far he has fallen from his call and how gracious God is to forgive us and restore the earth to its original glory if only we will work with Him and not against Him. The materials included;

- Bible study series
- Human and Nature
- Old and new covenant
- Two will do
- His epic message(Video)
- Genesis 1 flash cards

1.05 Participant's expectations

- Most of the participants expected to learn how they would integrate their faith and the environmental.
- They expected to learn how they could translate information shared into caring for creation interventions
- They expected to know how to link environmental issues within the church and the different actions they can engage in response to caring for creation.
- They expected that through the session they would be enlightened on how they can use their influence to steer action and response towards caring for creation.
- They expected that they can establish networks to enable them work together as they care for creation.

1.1 Workshop proceedings

1.11 Arrival

Participants started arriving for the workshop at 8am. On arrival, they were registered, given nametags for easy identification and copies of booklets to be used during the discussion. Majority of the participants arrived before 9am. This allowed the workshop to commence on time as we had planned.



1.12 Welcome

Isaac welcomed the participants and appreciated them for honoring the invitation to the workshop. He shared a brief overview of our work at ECO, what caring for creation is and our role as human beings in relation to environment. He went ahead to give them a simple definition of caring for creation and the environment where he stated that environment is everything and everything is the environment and therefore caring for creation means protecting, preserving and utilizing sustainably everything in our environment.

He then introduced Jacqueline Nampijja the Caring for Creation Liaison Officer to the participants. He explained that her role involves organizing, coordinating and implementing the caring for creation activities in the different countries around East Africa.

During this session Isaac also led participants through the introductions. Then they were given an opportunity to share their expectations which exhibited their anticipation to learn and share the lessons with their churches and communities.



1.13 Prayer

Pr. Daniel Lagat led the prayer session where he shared from Deut 11:8-20. He reminded us that the environment was given to us by God as a gift. He also re-echoed Isaac's words that man is part of the environment that God made and therefore we should pay close attention to God's commands to obey them because when we obey, we will be strong to occupy the land and enjoy long life on the land. He further mentioned that if we don't obey God the land will chase us out. He said that basing on the

research he has done, he found out that in 1900 Somalia was not a desert but now it's a total desert and the desert is spreading into Kenya. He encouraged us to pay attention to God and to treat God's gift to us with the respect and honor it deserves. He concluded with this "Let's take care of earth in response to God's loves for us".

We then sang the hymn "Count your blessings" and he prayed that the workshop would be enlightening and refreshing and that we would all learn together throughout the day.



1.14 Let us praise the Creator

We began the session with a brief overview of the current state of affairs of the environment globally. We had time to discuss about the endangered species and man's involvement in rendering a lot of these species endangered or extinct. Then we watched a short video called "His epic message will make you want to save the world".



Then we went through Genesis 1, we tasked the participants to organize creation story cards in order of Creation. Then we read the creation story to allow everyone to correct their arrangement. We had 4 groups and 3 out of the 4 groups got it correct. The fourth group was able to reorganize their display after the story was read. The participants were then tasked to work in their groups to analyze meaning of Gen 1:28 to Adam and then what it means to us today.



The session ended with an illustration of RADA where we emphasized man's role as the centre of strength among God's creation. We further discussed that God created us in His image and prescribed how we ought to live on earth and also how we are to relate with all his other creation. And therefore if he passionately expressed that all he created was good, then we ought to respect, relate lovingly and caringly towards all his creation.



The engaging exercise through Genesis 1 was highly appreciated by the participants who acknowledged God's orderliness in creation. They were keen to point out that God had created all things and established the earth before he created man – his last creation. They also acknowledged that the blessing to multiply and occupy was given to all God's creatures including the microbes, living things in water and on land of which man is among. Through the discussion, they agreed that the words of Genesis 1:28 were for the small population that was in existence then. He commanded them to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth because it was empty. He also asked them to replenish in that they would work hard to replace what they had utilized. And to subdue was meant for us to keep all creation in order and in line under the authority and power of God.



By end of the session, participants had clearly understood that God created everything and he created it and saw that it was good, thus everything that was created is valuable and is of great importance in ensuring a healthy and vibrant environment.

They also clearly acknowledged that we have abused God's blessing with our greed and selfishness which has rendered the earth in the dire state in which it is in where are burdened with environmental degradation and overpopulation.

Participants acknowledged that all human beings throughout the generations have continuously destroyed the environment and that man is the only one that can restore what has been destroyed as the Centre of strength among God's creatures.

1.15 Tea

We refreshed with tea and a snack in a short break of twenty minutes. Then members converged for the next session.

1.16 By power of the son

The session began with a short prayer from one of the participants. We then read through Ps 104:25-30. We also had a slide projection of different animals in their habitats.



During this session we talked about our responsibility towards creation. We referred to Genesis 2:15 which clearly states what God called us to do with the earth and the creatures He made and that was to take care and tender the earth.

Then we pause a question for the participants to discuss what they think would happen if species were taken out of their habitats and placed in other habitats. The discussion went on for 10 minutes where participants agreed that it would result into a huge disaster, a lot of imbalance in resources and possibly emergence of new diseases and invasive organisms and microorganisms.



Then we looked at Matthew 21:33-40 and Isaiah 5:8-10 all participants were in agreement that we have sinned against God who entrusted the earth into our care but instead because of our pride, greed and

selfishness we have abused and destroyed the earth to such a great that the impacts of our actions are now harmful to us too.

Session 2 was concluded with the story in the bible study booklet about the bullock driver who learnt to treat his animals better after he became a Christian. There was general conviction among all participants that we humans are responsible for the increasing loss of biodiversity and increasing loss of natural space. Many of our participants started asking questions about how and what they can do to prevent further damage to the environment.

1.17 Two will do

Participants were guided through making the two will do booklet and thereafter they were taken through the booklet.

As Isaac presented the two will do booklet we emphasized to them that this was one of the ways to prevent further damage to the environment. Isaac stressed that though the church and African tradition promotes large family sizes, the earth can no longer contain us. He emphasized that every person born into this world comes with spelt out need for resources from the environment which resources we are using beyond the earth's ability to replace. He pointed out that we need to start advocating for small size families in the church as a conservation strategy to reduce the high demand for resources human populations are exerting on the environment.



Despite the fact that large families are a treasure in all African communities, the participants were in agreement that as religious leaders and community leaders we need to stand at the forefront of reducing family sizes as a means of conserving the environment. They were also in agreement that population explosion of human beings has led to shrinkage of biodiversity including plants and animals.



1.18 Lunch

After the sessions, we were blessed to share in a delicious meal prepared by the hotel. As dined, there were conversations at the tables about the lessons we had shared. The participants were charged up and kept on discussing what they can do to put into practice what they had learnt.

1.19 Regeneration of the earth through the Holy Spirit

We began the session with a mini- evaluation which was led by Pr. Daniel Lagat. Participants submitted that they had learnt a lot especially the relationship between the word of God and the environment. They also said they had a better understanding of Gen 1:28 and 2:15. They submitted that they understood what caring for creation meant and that everything God created was of great importance.



We then asked participants to cite things they use daily that did not have their origin in nature. It amazed everyone as several items were mentioned we discovered that they all had their origin in nature including planes, factory machines and chemicals, the cellphones.

We then read from Isaiah 45:18, Psalm 32:1-5 and Psalm 51:10-15 to call participants to the realization that though we have fallen very far from the Lord, He is still gracious and looking for people who are willing to work with Him through His spirit to restore the earth.



The participants were in agreement that we should seek God to give us divine solutions to repair what we have destroyed. Also his guidance on what we can do about the endangered species, extinct species, human population and environment conservation and restoration.

1.20 Poster making

Participants were then taken through the poster making session. We presented to them the two poster sheets for study 1 and guided them on what to draw. The exercise was carried out with a lot of excitement and the participants got an opportunity to hang their drawings on the wall.



By the end of the sessions, we had a team of participants who were charged up and enthusiastic to advance the work of caring for creation further.



1.21 Discussion

The discussion session was led by Isaac. He encouraged the participants to engage in simple initiatives that can promote caring for creation. He encouraged them to start where they are and build the small initiatives and grow them slowly.



We agreed to start a Google mailing list to keep track with each other, share experiences and support one another.

We had opened a Whats App group but participants agreed that we use Google groups instead of Whats App groups. So the Whats App group was dissolved.

During the discussion we had a cup of tea and snack which were served by the hotel.

1.22 Closing

Closing remarks were given by one of the participants Yvette Ngudo who was very grateful for what she had learnt. She mentioned that she had learnt to relate with the environment from a biblical point of view knowing that God called her to steward the earth. She then said the closing prayer and workshop was closed with participants receiving their transport allowance.



2.0 Evaluation through the objectives

We achieved the objectives we set for the workshop. Our objectives were

- To enable participants appreciate climate change and environmental degradation and how much human beings have contributed to the problem
- To train leaders in creation care so that they can train others in their local congregations, fellowships and meetings.

By the end of the workshop, every participant was convinced that God created the universe for all his creation and that God made us and put us in position of a custodian/steward and not an owner of the earth. They were also aware of the critical environmental problems that are prevailing and that were mostly due to man's actions.

Also majority were eager to start small projects towards caring for creation like encouraging their congregations to have smaller families, recycling waste, renewable energy to mention but a few.

3.0 Achievements

We were blessed to share two testimonies from previous participants these were Ezekiel Muniko and Christine Sayo. They shared with the participants what they had done with the information they had received from the previous workshops they attended.

Rev. Ezekiel Muniko who attended our Kenya workshop last year, used his position in the Anglican Church secretariat to develop a core value that they intend to translate into a policy into their constitution. The core value calls people to live honestly as they care for God's creation.

Ms. Christine Sayo who attended Caring for Creation Workshop 2016 in Uganda went back after the workshop and started an organization called "Let's do it Kenya" and this organization works with churches to clean up communities around churches. Their initiatives have also been broadcasted on Christian television to encourage other churches to join the clean ups as a response and action towards caring for creation.

We received the attendance of 20 local participants who were very active throughout the workshop but also very enthusiastic to work together and support each other through various interventions to promote caring for creation in Kenya.

We started the workshop on time and closed it on time at 4:30pm. The participants were very grateful that we had kept time and closed the workshop in time to allow them to leave the hotel early.

The two days before the workshop and two days after the workshop allowed us to establish better relations with the participants.

We realized the objectives we set for the workshop. The participants were challenged to action and many left enthusiastic, ready to do more as far as caring for creation is concerned.

4.0 Challenges

We experienced a couple of setbacks during the preparations. The most outstanding setback was the low response we received for the workshop even after we received confirmation from those we invited. We invited 30 participants from churches around Nairobi but to our disappointment only 20 turned up for the workshop.

Communication across the borders was very expensive that a huge percentage of our budget was spent on phone calls.

Maintaining actual number of participants was difficult many of them we had contacted via email and phone contact but had not talked to them personally. However we overcame this challenge after our second meeting because now we have a bigger number of contacts that we can rely on to mobilize more participants for our next workshops.

5.0 Recommendation

We received several recommendations from our participants which included;

1. Engage youths and learning institutions with activities geared towards caring for creation. . They are the leaders of tomorrow and they need to hear and participate in caring for creation activities so they can run as flag bearers to influence change now and in the future.
2. Plan and engage different authority platforms to include caring for creation teachings in the school curriculum so students are trained in these principles from a tender age.
3. Make provisions for an exchange program that provide a platform for people to share their experiences and lessons. These could be done within the country or between countries.
4. Build collaborations between churches and universities to get them to implement projects and initiatives together.

6.0 Conclusions

ECO is on track in implementing Caring for Creation activities. The Care for Creation workshop International Kenya which took place on 14th February 2020 was a success. We had 22 participant, 10 female and 12male. The participants appreciated the ECO team for conducting a very interactive, precise and elaborate training that enlightened them about their responsibility and mandate towards God's creation. All activities were implemented within the scheduled time.

The logistical requirements necessary for effective implementation of the workshop were availed. Isaac and Jacqueline travelled safely and received a warm welcome and comfortable stay in Kenya.

The workshop would not have been a success without Nola Stewart who supports the program, ED ECO Isaac Kabongo and the entire ECO staff team who continually support and encourage the CCLO towards excellence. Appreciation is extended to all (Nola Stewart and ECO staff) for their unrelenting support towards Caring for Creation.

Appendix 1: Workshop Program

“CARING FOR THE CREATION” INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

Date: 14th Feb 2020

Venue: The Heron Portico Hotel Nairobi Kenya

Program:

8:30 am Arrival and registration. Nametags

8.50 am Meet and Greet. Welcome by ECO. Role of CCLO explained briefly.

9.00 am Prayer to open Workshop (*Church Leader*)

9.05 am Singing of favorite hymns (*Song leader*)

9.15 am **Study 1** “Let Us Praise the Creator” (1 hour)

10.15 am MORNING TEA (20 min)

10.35 am Prayer to commence next session (*Church Leader*)

10.40 am **Study 2** "By the power of the Son" (1 hour)

11.40 am Singing of local hymns (*Song leader*)

11.50 am Making the “Two Will Do” pocket book (40 min)

12.30 pm GRACE for Lunch (*ECO leader*)

12.35 pm LUNCH (45 min)

1.20 pm **Study 3** " Regeneration of the Earth through the Holy Spirit" (1 hour)

2.20 pm ACTIVITY - Making both Posters for Study No. 1 (1 hr 40 min)

4.00 pm Discussion & Working Afternoon Tea: Using CC Studies in the local Church

4.20 pm Close in prayer (*ECO Leader*)

Appendix II: Invitation Letter

CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION

INVITATION TO C4GC INT'L
WORKSHOP 2 KENYA

DATE: 14th Feb 2020

VENUE : The Heron Portico Hotel

THEME:

God made the Earth for all his
Creation
Ps 65:5-13

Dear Sir / Madam,

Greetings from ECO

Ecological Christian Organization (ECO) is an indigenous, Non-Governmental Organization that works towards realization of sustained livelihoods for marginalized, under-served and vulnerable groups in Uganda. Since its inception in 2005, the organization has implemented a number of projects successfully. The current initiatives are focusing on natural resource governance, climate change and livelihoods, and ecosystem management and restoration.

Caring for God's creation project is one of ECO's natural resource governance projects that attracts faith and /or religious leaders and members to learn and dialogue about faith, sustainable development and environment stewardship and thereafter enlist the participation of the Christian communities in natural resource governance through formation of representative groups that champion interventions geared towards creation care. These groups advocate and campaign for natural resource preservation and conservation by promoting the use of ecologically friendly technologies and changed lifestyles.

This program is funded by Ms. Nola Stewart a teacher and christian from Australia who is very passionate about creation care. She has been working with ECO since its inception and has supported several workshops in this regard.

The program engages, challenges and empowers individuals, communities and Faith Based institutions and/ or organisations about environmental stewardship and equips them with knowledge and skills critical for action towards addressing the imminent environmental and climate issues. As a way of concretizing the basic concepts of caring for God's creation, ECO intends to carry out a second caring for creation international workshop in Kenya on the 14th of February at The Heron Portico Hotel in Nairobi from 8am to 5pm . The workshop will build on concepts shared in previous workshops to reinforce the criticality of caring for God's creation in our day and time. With earth suffering from a lot of unhealthy impacts from human activities, we ought to rethink our interaction with the environment because a healthy environment denotes a healthy people.

The Topics of discussion will be,

1. Context of Caring for creation in the church.
2. Principles of Caring for creation.
3. Rationale for Caring for creation.

We are privileged to invite you for this Workshop .

Note 1: Please carry your Bible along

Note 2: If you have attended these Workshop before, please carry the Bible study series along too.

Yours faithfully

Nampijja Jacqueline

Caring for Creation Liaison Officer

Ecological Christian Organisation (ECO)

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Appendix III: Attendance List



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ATTENDANCE LIST FORM

ACTIVITY: CARE FOR CREATION WORKSHOP 2 - KENYA
 Venue: THE HERON PORTICO HOTEL Date: 14th FEB / 2020

No.	Name	Title	Organisation	Tel. Contact/email address	Signature
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3	Xohe Mugudo	Volunteer	World Cleanup Day Kenya	0714632830	
4	DICKSON KIPKETER	STUDENT	ICT AUTHORITY	dicksonkipketer3@gmail.com	
5	JOSEPH MWAZIKI	Community Social Worker	GREAT PLAINS FOUNDATION	Josephmwaziki@gmail.com	
6	Ezekiel Muniko	Coordinator	MARANATHA ASSEMBLY	0722248534 munikezekiel@yahoo.com	
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ACTIVITY: CARE FOR CREATION WORKSHOP 2 - KENYA
 Venue: THE HERON PORTICO HOTEL Date: 14th FEB / 2020

No.	Name	Title	Organisation	Tel. Contact/email address	Signature
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ATTENDANCE LIST FORM

ACTIVITY: CARING FOR CREATION WORKSHOP 2 - KENTA

Venue: THE HERON PORTICO HOTEL Date: 14th FEB/2020

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