

BETHANY LAND INSTITUTE



2022 Annual Report



Dear BLI Family and Friends,

As I look back on 2022, I am grateful for so many things. I am grateful to God for all God has given us and enabled us to accomplish. I am grateful to our dedicated staff for their hard work and commitment to the vision and mission of BLI. And I am grateful to you all for your love and generous support for BLI through your prayers, encouragement, and financial contributions. Without you and your gifts, BLI would not be where we are today.

2022 will always be remembered as an extraordinary year in our organization's history. On July 29, 2022 (the Feast of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus) we celebrated the formal public launch of Bethany Land Institute. As part of the celebration, we commissioned the first group of 23 Caretakers - ambassadors of creation care in their respective communities.

This year, we also forged new partnerships, hosted various guests, held the inauguration of St. Francis House, and witnessed the successful completion of the two-year formation program by the first cohort of caretaker trainees. These eight students are now ready to start their farms and business programs, putting into practice what they have learned about creation care and integral ecology. Indeed, we have a lot to be grateful for.

As we begin 2023, it is with a spirit of gratitude and renewed commitment to BLI's vision and mission. We look forward to the expansion and deepening of the caretaker training program, an enhanced community outreach program, the strengthening of BLI's culture of excellence, and increased output in all our production units.

I am happy to share with you this 2022 annual report, which will give you a glimpse of life at Bethany Land Institute in 2022.

With gratitude,

Father Emmanuel



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“Humanity still has the ability to
work together in building our
common home.”

-Pope Francis, Laudato Si', #13

2022 in Numbers

10,200

trees planted in the surrounding
villages and school yards during
outreach events

244

acres of protected forest

124,644

trees planted in BLI's lifetime

51,020

trees planted in 2022

40 total individuals who have participated in
the Caretaker formation program to date

18 caretaker trainees currently on
BLI's campus

1,400+

visitors at BLI on July 29

1 million

trees will be planted by BLI by 2050

60%

of BLI's current caretaker trainees are
women, despite Ugandan agriculture
being heavily dominated by men

80+

animals currently living
on BLI's campus



ONE BLI FAMILY

2022: Key Moments



FEBRUARY: COHORT II ARRIVES

BLI welcomes its second cohort to campus, a group made up of 4 young men and 6 young women.

JUNE: WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

BLI joins the national celebration hosted at Kasana-Luweero. BLI also sends representatives to subparishes to spread the word.

JULY: PUBLIC LAUNCH

BLI hosts over 1,400 people on campus, including distinguished national and international guests. The first Caretakers are commissioned.

NOVEMBER: INTERSHIPS BEGIN

BLI's first cohort leaves campus to start its group internship at Uwepo. The internship program is the final step before finishing the program.

FEBRUARY: FATHER RWEZA MASS

BLI friends and family gather on the Nandere campus to celebrate the life of Co-Founder Father Anthony Rweza.

APRIL: EARTH DAY

Over 100 local school children and 50 local farmers join festivities at BLI. Over 300 trees are planted.

JULY: FAMILY DAY

BLI Caretakers invite their families to the BLI campus in Nandere.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER: SEASON OF CREATION

BLI hosts a two-day workshop with local parishes. BLI also hosts sporting events, gives BLI tours, and holds mass.



July 29: A Day to Remember

On July 29, BLI welcomed over 1,400 guests to our campus in Nandere for an official public launch. While the institute has been open for around two years, the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the official opening celebration. However, on July 29, BLI was finally able to host this gathering, and it was well worth the wait.

Guests hailed from countries around the world and included government officials, professors, religious leaders, and various other BLI supporters. The Archbishop of Kampala, Paul Ssemogerere, led the opening mass, which was celebrated with over 30 priests. A representative from the office of Robinah Nabbanja, Uganda's prime minister, participated as well as a representative from the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. Additionally, over 400 local schoolchildren participated in the ceremonies, many performing traditional dances or playing in the band. Film and media crews were also in attendance. (You can visit the BLI YouTube page at <https://www.youtube.com/@bethanylandinstitute> to find footage from the day.)



Among other things, the day included mass, various speeches, a shared meal, and the very first commissioning ceremony of BLI Caretakers. The inaugural group included 7 young men, one woman, fourteen seminarians, and Archbishop Paul Ssemogerere. They were each awarded certificates in the practice of Integral Ecology. Co-founder and President Father Emmanuel Katongole charged this group with the following: “We are sending you out to be caretakers of God’s creation, caring for the health of all God’s creation, the soil, the health of communities and your own health and wellbeing.” This first cohort was instrumental to the building of BLI in many ways. Many of them were even involved with the project before officially joining as a trainee. They have created a culture of dedication and excellence at BLI that will live on in many cohorts to follow.

BLI feels lucky that seven of the newly commissioned Caretakers have joined BLI as teaching staff. Named “incubators,” these young men each manage a section of Mary’s School – the goats section, the banana plantation, the soil management department, the tree nursery... This enables them to share their knowledge with the new BLI cohorts and continue spreading the practice of integral ecology. To the right are headshots of the seven young men. Below is a photo of them at the official commissioning.



Overall, the day was not only a joyous celebration of the successful launch of Bethany Land Instititue, but it also provided a space for supporters to re-engage with Pope Francis's call in *Laudato Si'* and connect with others, from around the world, who are also working to answer that call. At the launch, Father Emmanuel reminded us of this need to respond, to act, saying, "Mother Earth is crying. God's creation is dying. We need to do something about it." BLI is doing something and welcomes all brothers and sisters from around the world to join us in this work.

Going forward, BLI plans to hold an annual ceremony on July 29 (the Feast Day of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus) to commission the latest group of Caretakers and celebrate the joyous work of integral ecology.



The Year in Photos



Connecting with the Community: BLI Expands Local Outreach

Creation care is not the work of one or two people; it takes a village. BLI therefore puts community outreach at the forefront of its work. In 2022, these efforts reached an all-time high. BLI hosted a number of organizations and schools on its campus, offering forest tours, mini lessons in integral ecology, and sports games.

On Earth Day, BLI invited local primary students to campus. The caretaker trainees led the students in a lesson on recycling, teaching them to turn plastics collected from the surrounding area—like bottles, cans, etc.—into hanging pots for plants. They also planted trees together on BLI's campus. BLI also hosted local community members in the fall for the season of creation. Festivities included sports tournaments, tours, and workshops.

BLI also participated in Uganda's Run4Climate and World Environmental Day. The Run4Climate, hosted by Tree Adoption Uganda, helped raise money to plant 100,000 trees across Uganda, while World Environmental Day brought together bands, local leaders, and the community to celebrate Mother Earth in the heart of the Luweero District.



BLI also conducted one-on-one outreach with partner schools in the area, often planting trees on various school yards. In total, with the help of these community partners, BLI planted over 10,000 trees across the district, along with the 40,000+ trees planted on the BLI campus this year.

To continue forward with these outreach activities, BLI hired Josephine Nabakooza, a native Ugandan who has experience working with communities in Uganda. She has worked with various professors located both in the United States and Uganda, including Co-Founder Father Emmanuel, on research projects about Uganda, peace, and religion. At BLI, Josephine is continuing to design and operate outreach efforts, creating a program in which caretaker trainees engage local communities in activities that promote sustainable agriculture, economic empowerment, and human dignity. Led by Josephine's programming, BLI looks forward to continuing to share its work and integrate its caretaker trainees with the Ugandan public.



“The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion.”

-Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, #219

Notable Quotes

“I’m very impressed, even a little stunned.”

- Dean Scott Appleby of Notre Dame commenting
on BLI's progress during his first campus visit

**“This is a remarkable initiative in our
nation, and we take pride in it.”**

- Archbishop Paul Ssemogerere on BLI

**“You are at the forefronts,
you are the vanguards, of a
revolution.”**

- Co-founder Father Emmanuel to the
new Caretakers

**“Love Mother Earth,
Make Everyone Happy”**

- 2022 BLI Motto

**“Over the last year, we have been overwhelmed
by the grace of God. Things have been
happening here, one after the other.”**

- Co-founder Father Cornelius Ssempala

**“They are superbly prepared. The amount of
knowledge they have — about nature, about
production processes, about the local economy —
is truly fantastic.”**

- Director of Notre Dame's Kellogg Institute Anibal Perez Linan after meeting
the caretaker trainees

A Growing Family

In February 2022, Cohort II officially joined Cohort I on BLI's campus. This cohort is made up of ten individuals from villages across Uganda, some coming from hundreds of miles away to participate in the program.

The cohort includes 6 young women and 4 young men, each bringing unique experiences. Victor worked on a piggery farm. Sandra has always dreamed of being a farm veterinarian. Rosemary's mother practices subsistence farming in a nearby village. Together, they make a diverse group with a wealth of experiences. However, one fact unites them: they are all eager to study and share the practice of integral ecology.

This cohort has joined Cohort I on campus. Cohort III will arrive to campus in February 2023.



Our Animals In Photos



Sharing The Knowledge: BLI's First Cohort Returns to Communities

In 2022, BLI's first cohort finished their time on the Nandere campus. This cohort, made up of eight individuals, is the first group to finish the full two-year residential education program. They have spent a significant amount of time in the classrooms, in the fields, and in the community. They are ready to share their newly acquired integral ecology knowledge with the world.

The final piece of their education included internships at community organizations across Uganda. The entire cohort participated in a group internship at Uwepo, a tree and plant nursery located in Jinga. Individuals also conducted their own internships. Flavia, shown below, interned at Karugwa Mixed Farm, a comprehensive farm working with both livestock and crops.

The students have now returned to their home communities to start their farms and share their knowledge with those around them. They will return to the BLI campus in July for their official commissioning ceremony. Alice, one of the trainees set to be commissioned, is already spreading awareness in her community. "We teach them the impact to our environment," she says. "We teach them about organic vegetables and how to protect them without spraying. We brought them trees to plant." We look forward to seeing our Caretakers spread the joy of integral ecology across Uganda.





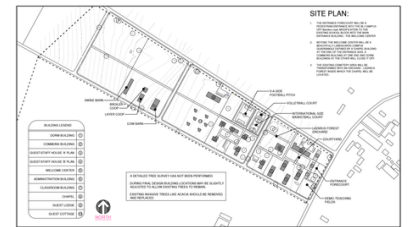
2014

Land acquisition. Clarifying conversations in Uganda and the United States.



2015

Surveying the land. Farmhouse constructed. Hired four BLI workers. Incorporated BLI in Uganda.



2016

Engineering Missions International develops master campus plan. BLI incorporated in the U.S. as a 501(c)3.



2017

Fundraising for Phase 1 of campus construction. Simon and Julius join the staff.



2018

Staff formation program launched. Multiple board meetings. David and Susan join staff. More fundraising.



2019

Formed partnership with Kasana Luwero Diocese. The Diocese leases 350 acres of land to BLI. Bishop Paul Ssemogerere joins BLI as a trustee. Fr. Joseph joins as administrator.



2020

Campus construction. First caretaker trainees recruited. Sylvester joins as BLI director and Chris as forester.



2021

Two dormitories and Mary's Hall completed. First cohort of Caretakers arrives on campus. Programming begins.



2022

Official public launch and commissioning of first Caretakers. 10 new trainees join BLI as the latest cohort.

Our Journey

Our Leadership



President
Father Emmanuel
Katongole



Director
Sylvester Kule



Administrator
Father Joseph Kakooza



**Coordinator and Head of
Mary's Farm**
Simon Nyombi



**Community Outreach
Coordinator**
Josephine Nabakooza



**Head of
Lazarus Forest**
Chris Mukwaya



**Head of
Martha's Market**
Jonathan Makubuya



**Deputy Head of
Mary's Farm**
Evelyn Nambooze

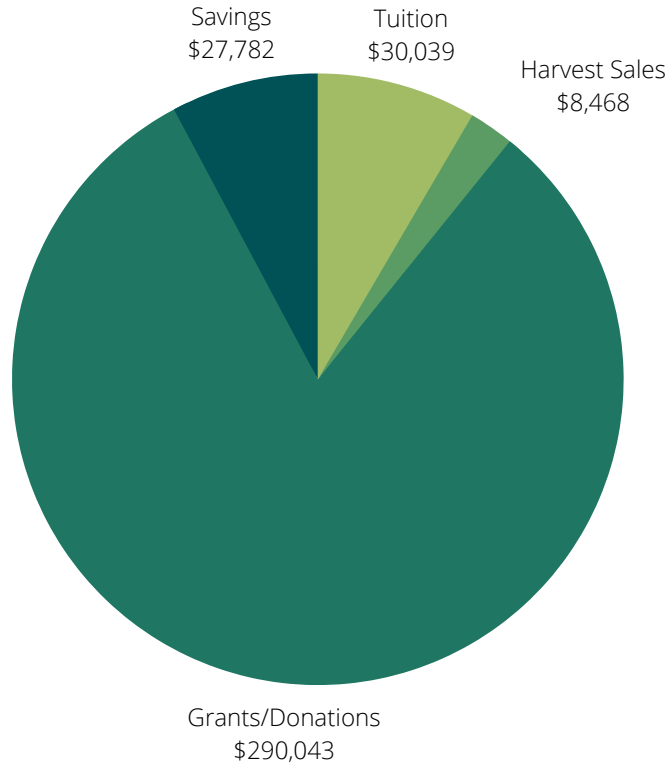
Board of Directors

- Father Hilary Muheezangango - *Chair*
- Margaret K. Sakwa - *Secretary*
- Father James Kabonghe
- Father Joseph Nnyanzi Kakooza
- Josephine Kizza
- Christine Flora Kizito
- Father Emmanuel Katongole
- Father Cornelius Ssempala

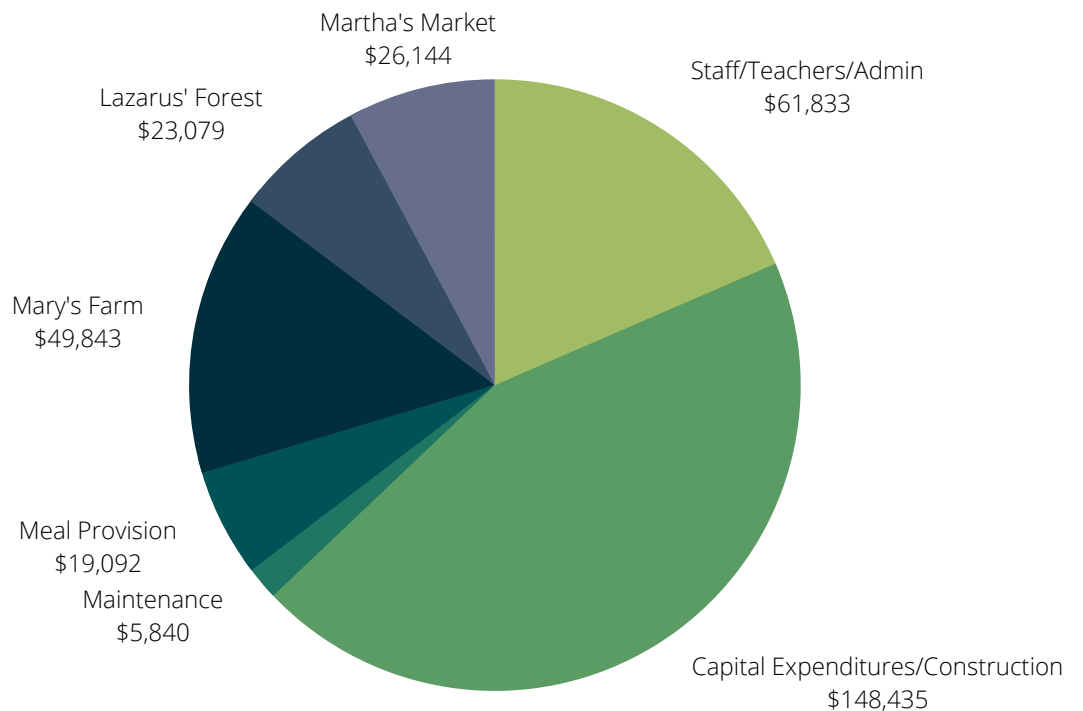
USA Partner Board of Directors

- Andrea Cate Crary - *Incoming 2023 Chair*
- Lori Giovannini
- Sara Hohnstein
- Kathleen Kennedy
- Bob Johnson
- Maureen Newsom - *Treasurer*
- Father Kevin Sandberg
- Father Emmanuel Katongole
- Father Cornelius Ssempala

Revenue



Expenses



THANK YOU

Supporters like you enabled BLI to have its most successful year to date. Whether you contributed financially, sponsored a caretaker trainee, shared our story with a friend, or kept us in your prayers, we are eternally grateful for your support. The BLI family is large - spanning multiple continents and various generations. And it is ever growing.

So, thank you. Thank you for your commitment to our family and to the restoration of our Mother Earth. Without you, BLI would not be where it is today. We look forward to journeying forward, together.





“We have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”

- Pope Francis, Laudato Si', #49

