

BETHANY LAND INSTITUTE



2023 Annual Report



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Dear BLI Family and Friends,

“It helps now and then, to step back and take a long view. The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.” These words of Archbishop Oscar Romero come to mind as I review the past year and the work that has been accomplished at Bethany Land Institute. As I reflect, the word “together” would be a theme for 2023. It has not been the work of any one individual, group, consultant, or donor that led the progress at BLI; it was all of us, a village of people coming together. I am humbled and grateful for the contribution of each of you who contributed to bringing the vision of BLI to life.

Together, much has been accomplished. Ten second-year students and thirty first-year students are being taught and formed by our dedicated staff to embrace the value of the BLI culture, which is “love of God, people, and environment.” BLI is not just a project, it is a message.

Regenerative agriculture was introduced into the curriculum at Mary’s School; expansion of the SACCO and development of long-term strategies were the focus of Martha’s Market; 37,000 trees were planted through the work of Lazarus’ Trees; and the Community Outreach Plan has been expanded. Site mapping of the campus and a preliminary facilities plan was developed, an additional dormitory was built, and the board began the work on a five-year Strategic Framework for BLI. Our visitors included experts to teach us, journalists to share our story, researchers to evaluate the work of BLI, donors to fund our capital projects and work, birdwatchers, the curious, the encouragers, and those who support us in prayer.



I am so grateful for everyone who is part of the BLI village and vision. BLI needs each of you. Archbishop Romero reminds us: “We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It is an opportunity for the Lord’s grace to enter and to do the rest.” My heartfelt thanks to every one of you who is helping BLI take the next steps along our way. I look forward to walking with you in 2024.

Fr. Emmanuel Katongole

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**“We need to strengthen the
conviction that we are one single
human family.”**
- Laudato Si’, #52

2023 in Quotes

“Perhaps, I can even save the world from here.”

- Cohort I Caretaker Alice Nanfuka discussing her newly established farm, NAJ Integrated Organic Farm



“BLI is one of the most inspiring stories I have gotten to write about in my 17 years at Notre Dame Magazine.”

- John Nagy, managing editor at Notre Dame Magazine

“Let us come together, acknowledge our mistakes, and work towards healing and preserving our environment as a common good.”

- Caretaker Paul Muzalugamba at the 2023 Commissioning Ceremony, during which he received the award for “Greatest Leader”



“The work BLI is doing is impressive. This is important not only for Uganda. This is what the Church needs. This is what the world needs.”

- Peace Activist and Scholar Father John Dear

“No, I’m not nervous. I think its great to be unique!”

- Current Caretaker trainee Angela on being a woman in the male-dominated agricultural industry



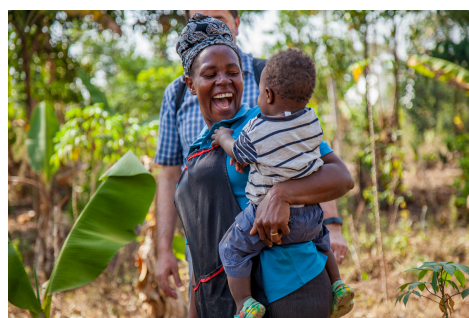
Cohort I Opens Individual Farms Across Uganda

“You are our pioneers.” The words of Co-Founder and President Father Emmanuel Katongole as he commissioned BLI’s Cohort I Caretakers in July 2023 could not be more true. Cohort I, made up of 4 women and 4 men, is the first BLI cohort to complete the full two-year residential program and go on to start their own integral ecology projects across Uganda. At the commissioning, Paul Muzalugamba received the cohort’s “Greatest Leader” award for his calm and confident demeanor and determination to share integral ecology with the world. In his speech, Paul called on fellow youth to join him and his cohort in protecting the planet, saying, “I want to leave a message primarily for my fellow youth. It is time for us to take responsibility for the care of our planet... Let us come together, acknowledge our mistakes, and work towards healing and preserving our environment as a common good.” (*story continues on next page*)



Cohort I has answered this call. All eight members of Cohort I have started their own integral ecology farms in their respective villages. As small business owners, they are each using the array of skills they learned at BLI—everything from marketing to mulching—to be successful and earn a living for their families. Many have started to build a customer base and some even use online platforms such as Google and Whatsapp to expand their reach even outside their own villages. These projects are varied and diverse: Alice has focused the majority of her farm on crops; Yunus is working to create a tree nursery for reforestation efforts; and Flavia has a lucrative poultry section. While each project is unique and tailored to each Caretaker’s individual villages, they all share the common goal of expanding the reach of integral ecology and regenerative agriculture.

These projects are stirring up excitement across Uganda. For example, Flavia Nabaggala—named “Most Academic” in the 2023 cohort—has had many neighbors, particularly women, come to her seeking guidance on how to start a successful business. Flavia is thrilled to see such interest and hope in her neighbors. She helps these women find their own paths toward further education and economic empowerment. Alice Nanfuka has experienced a similar phenomenon; someone even reached out to her via Google to ask how to start his own integral ecology farm in another area of Uganda. Such interactions serve as a strong affirmation of BLI’s theory of change, which trains Caretakers to go out into the world and promote integral ecology themselves after completing the residential program. This creates an ever-growing network of integral ecologists and enables regenerative agriculture to spread exponentially. Cohort I has already touched so many lives, and we look forward to continuing to follow them through this journey.



Our Campus in Photos

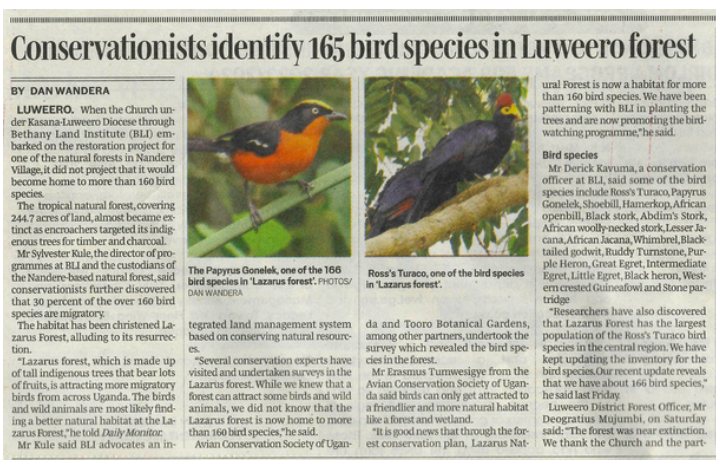


BLI in the Media

Both domestically and internationally, BLI's media presence grew significantly in 2023. In March, Notre Dame Magazine sent a team over to BLI's campus in Uganda to write a feature article on the Caretaker program. The article, titled "Start Small," came out in July, at which time over 160,000 physical copies were sent to Notre Dame alumni and friends across the United States. The article is also posted to their website [here](#). Notre Dame's Kellogg Institute for International Studies also featured BLI in a [blog](#) about important research in Africa.

BLI also received much media attention inside Uganda, particularly in local newspapers and on local broadcasts. Uganda Catholics Online featured BLI in [this article](#) on the program's goals and partnership with the Kasana-Luweero Diocese. Monitor, a popular Uganda-wide newspaper featured BLI in many articles throughout the year. Monitor has reported on the bird species and biodiversity in BLI's Lazarus Forest; discussed BLI's acquisition of a new grant to continue pursuing its programs; and shared BLI's overall mission to reforest the Luweero district. You can view all this media on BLI's Media Corner here: <https://bethanylandinstitute.org/media-corner/>.

Finally, BLI's own trainees and Caretakers are taking to the internet to share the joy of integral ecology. Current Cohort II trainee, Victor Arimpa, has started a [YouTube channel](#) that exclusively features integral ecology lessons. The videos, often in Luganda and English, receive hundreds of views from across the world. BLI knows that integral ecology is a communal practice and thus believes that this increased awareness is vital to the realization of our mission.



A Ugandan newspaper features BLI's biodiversity



BLI Caretakers hold up a copy of Notre Dame Magazine, in which they are heavily featured

46,300

trees planted in 2023

170,944

trees planted since 2020

Over **1,060** visitors came to BLI's campus in 2023, including community members, family and friends, interns, researchers, and partner organizations

8 Caretakers graduated in 2023

30 Caretakers enrolled in BLI's program at the end of 2023, set to graduate in 2024 and 2025

42 piglets were born on BLI's campus in 2023

37%

of our donors participate in our Scholarship Program, paying the tuition fees for Caretaker trainees

14+

number of Uganda-based organizations with whom BLI has established long-term partnerships

~47%

of current Caretaker trainees are women, despite Ugandan agriculture being heavily dominated by men

100% of the 2023 Caretaker class received seed funding to start their individual integral ecology projects

ONE Mother Earth

2023 IN NUMBERS

Victor Arimpa: Impassioned, Fighting for Change

In 2023, thirty Caretaker trainees called the BLI campus home. These trainees range from 18 to 30 years old, come from villages across the whole of Uganda, and each have their own passions and talents that they put to use in order to further the mission of integral ecology.

One of such trainees is Victor Arimpa, a member of Cohort II. While Victor had hoped to attend a university upon graduating high school, his family did not have the funds for him to do so. When he heard of BLI's scholarship program, he jumped at the opportunity to join the institute. While he was not convinced that agriculture was his calling, he knew it was a path to further his education and could eventually lead to more opportunities in the future. At the very least, it would buy him time as he worked to earn money for college. What came next Victor had not at all planned.

Just two weeks into his time on BLI's campus, Victor fell in love with the idea of integral ecology. "I used to wake up and have nothing to do; but now, I have so many ideas and passion in my brain. I always have energy, I'm always moving." Indeed Victor is always moving. Along with completing the normal BLI programming, he films and edits videos for his YouTube channel, VLandTV, in which he promotes integral ecology and shares various lessons with viewers. The videos get hundreds of views from individuals across Uganda and the world. When asked how he has the time and motivation to maintain this channel while also completing the rigorous BLI coursework, Victor says it's simple: "If you want something, you fight for it. And I very much want to bring awareness to people, just like BLI brought awareness to me." Victor will be officially commissioned as a Caretaker in July 2024 and already has plans to start his own integral ecology farm while ramping up his videography and online outreach.



2023 Memorable Moments



FEBRUARY: RAY ARCHULETA VISITS

World-renowned soil expert Ray Archuleta visited to give a soil health training to the community.



JUNE: BLI HOSTS NOTRE DAME CLASS

A small class of Notre Dame students spent time on BLI's campus as part of an international study course.



JULY: COHORT I COMMISSIONING

Cohort I is officially commissioned as the first cohort to fully complete the residential program. Families and the community joined for a festive day.



DECEMBER: COHORT II PRESENTS PROJECTS

Cohort II is preparing to leave BLI and has presented their individual projects to BLI Staff for review.



FEBRUARY:

COHORT III Arrives

Twenty new Caretaker trainees joined the program in February, our biggest and most diverse cohort yet.

MARCH: CARITAS UGANDA EXHIBITION

BLI participated in the Caritas Uganda Exhibition. Over 1,000 individuals visited the BLI stand at which Caretakers performed soil experiments.

JULY: NOTRE DAME STORY RELEASED

Notre Dame Magazine releases its story and sends copies to over 160,000 individuals across the U.S.

SEPTEMBER: COMMUNITY OUTREACH ABOUNDS

BLI's outreach program becomes busy with school and community partnerships. Over 12,000 trees were planted on partner sites.

Animals at BLI



Our Leadership



President
Father Emmanuel
Katongole



Director
Sylvester Kule



Administrator
Father Joseph Kakooza



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



**Head of Community
Outreach**
Josephine Nabakooza



**Head of
Lazarus Forest**
Chris Mukwaya



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

Board of Directors

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



Global Partners

Integral ecology is inherently a communal practice. BLI, therefore, has worked to forge partnerships with individuals and organizations both in Uganda and around the world. Below are some of our valued partners. We cannot list all partners, but we hope this demonstrates our dedication to working collectively to pursue our mission.

2023 USA Staff



President
Fr. Emmanuel Katongole



Development Director
Theresa Murray



Communications Coordinator
Emma Ziegler



Treasurer
Maureen Newsome



Secretary
Macky Johnson

2023 USA Board of Directors

- Andrea Cate Crary (Chair)
- Maureen Newsom (Treasurer)
- Kelly Hickey (Secretary)
- Lori Giovannini
- Sara Hohnstein
- Father Emmanuel Katongole
- Colleen Keller
- Kathleen Kennedy
- Ed Collupy
- Rev. Kevin Sandberg
- Father Josef Ntuwa

Institutional Partners



Fight4Sight
Foundation



Crary Family Legacy Fund



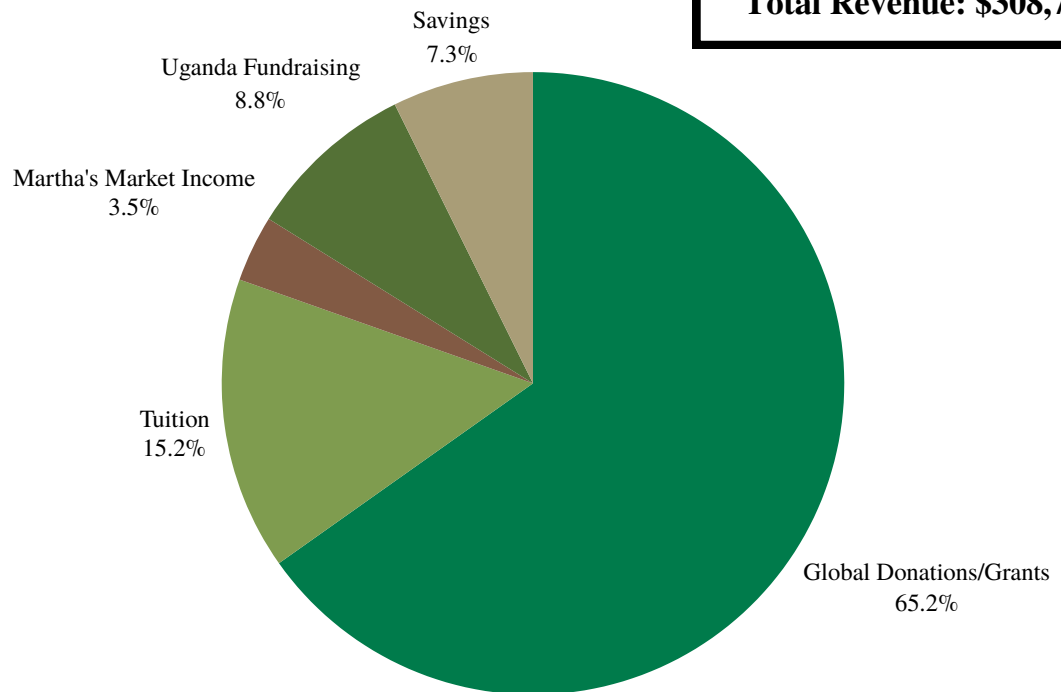
Wheaton
Franciscans



Tree
Adoption
Uganda

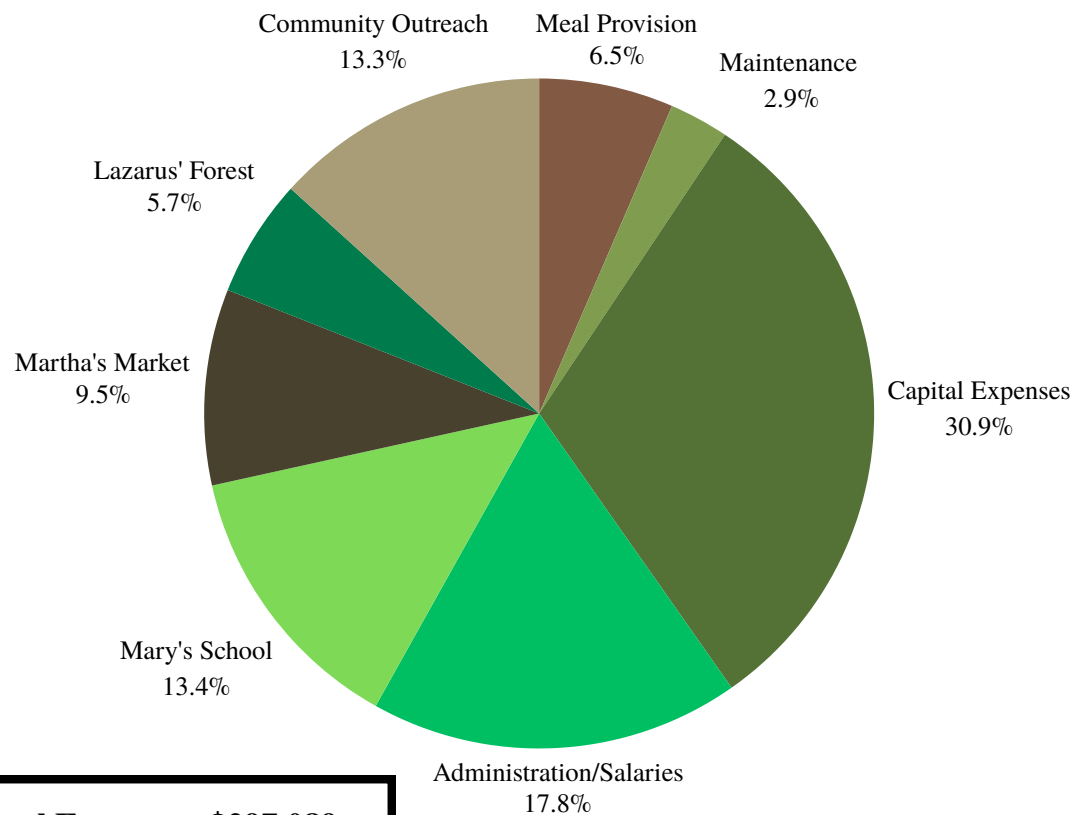
Revenue

Total Revenue: \$308,776



Expenses

Total Expenses: \$297,089



THANK YOU

As always, our work would not be possible without the generous support of individuals like you. From your donations to your expertise to your prayers, your contributions have made all the difference in our work. Thank you for your dedication to our mission and we look forward to continuing to journey with you in the coming year.



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

- *Laudato Si*, #13







**“A sense of deep communion with the rest of
nature cannot be real if our hearts lack
tenderness, compassion and concern for our
fellow human beings.”**

- *Laudato Si'*, #91



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