

BETHANY LAND INSTITUTE

2025 Annual Report



A Letter From the President

Dear Friends and Partners of Bethany Land Institute,

As I reflect on the past year, one thing that stands out is the expansion of the message of BLI. It is a message of light showing Uganda, and one day the world, how to form leaders for rural transformation and Integral Ecology. But its message is wider than that; it is a message that expands into the giving of ourselves to restore a sense of dignity, belonging, community, and purpose to others. The message of BLI calls us to lead with compassion, resourcefulness, imagination, commitment, knowledge, rhythm, and our dedication to the land and all creation. As one of our management team members so aptly said, “I love seeing our outreach programs transform lives and landscapes—communities restoring degraded land and thriving through sustainable practices.”

A few examples of our expansion in 2025 are as follows:

- BLI hosted its first Community Ambassador Training. This training invited community members to learn practical ways to implement sustainable agriculture on their own land, echoing BLI’s deep commitment to the environment and its commitment to flourishing and hope for the rural farmer.
- BLI entered the global stage with its 2025 Laudato Si’ Africa Conference, which was a highlight of the summer. We were honored to have Cardinal Peter Turkson as our keynote speaker. In my closing remarks to the Conference, I pointed to BLI as a “parable in practice” of what a regenerated future of land, economics, and livelihoods in Africa looks like.
- And finally, BLI is in the process of launching an Integral Ecology Model Parish Farms program. The goal of this program is to promote restoration, climate resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and cultural ecological responsibility for all community members.

Expansion has come through a message of light. We are so grateful to our staff, Caretakers, and trainees; to our researchers, practitioners, visitors, and donors; and to all who pray for the work of BLI. It is because of your support that Bethany Land Institute is able to answer the call to be a light for all to see.

With gratitude,

Fr. Emmanuel

Father Emmanuel
President and Co-Founder



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A Growing Network

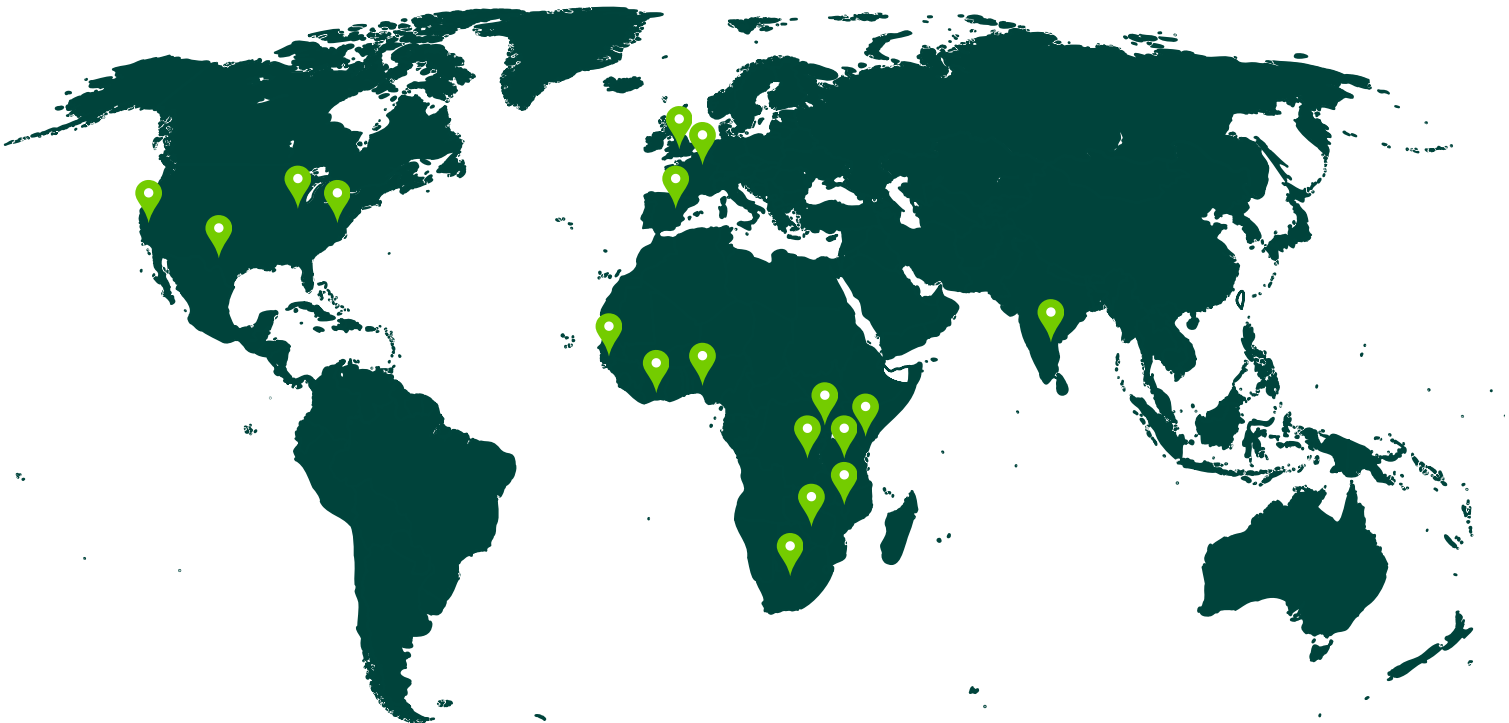
Since its founding, BLI has cultivated a **network of Caretakers** from across Uganda. After completing their two-year residential program, many Caretakers return to their home villages to create **model farms**, sharing the practice of Integral Ecology with their community members. Through its pastoral formation program, BLI also trains current seminarians, enabling them to implement Integral Ecology in their assigned parishes. Engaging with villages across Uganda is crucial to BLI's vision to **transform rural communities**.



The map to the right shows villages across Uganda that BLI Caretakers call home.

But BLI extends beyond Uganda; it is a **global movement**. During the 2025 Conference, BLI hosted visitors from over twenty countries across four continents. Visitors from other countries—including researchers, practitioners, students, and tourists—came to BLI’s Nandere campus throughout the year. BLI has also built partnerships with organizations headquartered in Africa, North America, and Europe. Each year, its global presence grows, showing the universal importance of Integral Ecology and **caring for our common home**.

The map below highlights the homes of some of our 2025 visitors.



The 2025 Laudato Si’ Africa Conference

The Laudato Si’ Africa Conference took place on BLI’s campus from July 22 to July 25. Traveling from twenty different countries, the attendees of the Conference brought varied experiences and ideas to our shared celebration and meeting in Nandere. The Conference, held on BLI’s campus in July, brought together practitioners and scholars from around the world to reflect upon ten years of Pope Francis’s Laudato Si’ and explore how to continue living out Integral Ecology in the next decade.

Cardinal Peter Turkson—a close confidante of Pope Francis throughout the drafting of Laudato Si’—served as the keynote speaker. He spoke of our responsibility in “preserving a garden” and outlined the 7 C’s of Laudato Si’: continuity, collegiality, conservation, care, conversion, citizenship, and contemplation. Conference participants engaged in roundtable discussions and panels, exploring the ways in which we can continue to pursue these 7 C’s in our work in the years to come. Participants ranged from commissioned BLI Caretakers who manage their own farms in Uganda to engineers working on sustainability solutions in the United States to Church and political leaders from around the globe. 58 individuals presented, and the associated presentations and papers will be published by Springer Nature in 2026.



The overwhelming success of the Conference has called BLI to soar to new heights, leading a revolution based in caring for our common home. As the world reckons with the demands of the call to answer to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor, BLI is prepared to serve as a champion for the education and practice of Integral Ecology. At the Conference, BLI commissioned 18 new Caretakers who will go out and start model farms in their home villages across Uganda.

These efforts build on BLI's ongoing community outreach model, which to date has already connected BLI to schools, youth networks, and sustainability organizations across Uganda and around the world. It is clear that BLI is a central hub for researchers, practitioners, community members, and young people wanting to engage in the joys of Integral Ecology.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2025 Laudato Si' Africa Conference. Thank you to our wonderful partners who made this possible. Onward.



BLI in the News



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

What does it look like to live 'Laudato si'? You can see it in rural Uganda

After visiting BLI's campus in Nandere, Notre Dame's René LaReau writes about the Institute's founding, journey, and current work. LaReau writes that BLI serves as "a sign of what's possible when love for the land, a belief in the power of community, faith, science and hope converge." Read the full story [here](#).

NATIONAL
CATHOLIC

REPORTER

THE INDEPENDENT NEWS SOURCE



The National Catholic Reporter covered the 2025 Laudato Si' Africa Conference, highlighting various presentations. Read [here](#).

Reporting from Luweero District, Ugandan news outlet, The Independent, also shared news on the Conference. Read [here](#).

THE INDEPENDENT
You Buy the Truth, We Pay the Price



LAUDATO SI'
Action Platform

DICASTERY FOR PROMOTING
INTEGRAL
HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT

The Laudato Si' Action Platform has added BLI to its network. Read the blog post [here](#).

MONITOR

Read the Daily Monitor's story about the resurrection of Lazarus' Forest [here](#).

BLI has been featured in multiple YouTube videos. Our Caretakers and trainees on the ground have also begun sharing the vision of Integral Ecology online. Watch the videos below.

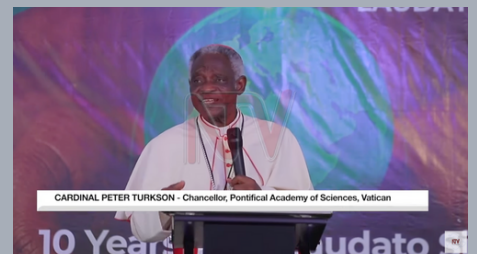
See all BLI videos [here](#).



[NTV Reforestation Video](#)



[Notre Dame Videos](#)

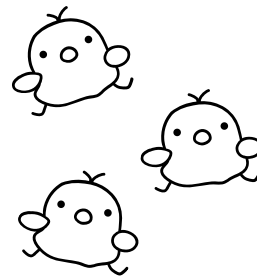


[Conference Coverage](#)

12

different districts
across Uganda
represented by
Cohort V trainees

35 Caretaker
trainees currently
enrolled in BLI's
two-year program



90

chicks born on
BLI's campus

34%

of trees planted by BLI were
planted off campus in communities
across Uganda



85,500

trees planted in 2025

318,394

trees planted to date

18 seminarians completed
an intensive, one-month
course on how to integrate
Integral Ecology into their
future parishes

9,420 miles 

the longest trip taken to attend the Laudato
Si' Africa Conference

100%

of attendees at the Laudato Si' Africa
Conference reported learning
something new about Integral Ecology
to take back to their communities

47%

of Caretakers who have been
commissioned after
completing the two-year
program are women

**2025 IN
NUMBERS**

Over **60** organizations
participated in the Laudato
Si' Africa Conference

After being officially commissioned as a Caretaker, Sandra took over as the sales manager for BLI farm products. To her, this role is not just about numbers. It is about the stories that BLI products carry: stories of **sustainability**, of **care for the soil**, of **hope for communities**. Every interaction is not just a sale but a conversation about the practice and joy of Integral Ecology.

But Sandra wanted to do more. She wanted to ensure women across Uganda had access to the Integral Ecology knowledge she learned at BLI. She therefore started the **Agroforestry Power Ladies**, a group that empowers women to use regenerative agriculture on their own family farms. Through online videos, she shares lessons about agroforestry and interviews other women in the industry. While women remain underrepresented in the agriculture industry, Sandra aims to change this, widely sharing the skills she learned at BLI so that more women **feel empowered to join the movement**. You can watch Sandra's videos [here](#).



From a young age, Ivan knew he wanted to work in agriculture. He remembers watching local agricultural officials working the land in his home district when growing up, being in awe every harvest season when they would produce vast amounts of food for the community. Now, at 27 years old, Ivan is **living his dream**.

After receiving his diploma at Bukalasa Agricultural College, Ivan discovered BLI. He started volunteering at BLI's Kiwumpa farm. While his education had provided him a foundation of traditional agricultural practices, he was quickly captivated by BLI's Integral Ecology method. Studying Laudato Si' and Stories from Bethany, he was able to **connect theory with daily farm practices**, feeling his love for agriculture transform from a passion to an entire lifestyle.

Ivan now serves as the dean of Caretaker trainees at BLI. Every day, he feels filled with joy as he helps form trainees—trainees not unlike his younger self—into **leaders in regenerative agriculture** in Uganda.

BLI Impact Stories

2025 in Quotes



“I’ll stop short of calling it magic, but it’s an experience I will recommend to everybody. BLI is an initiative the rest of Africa can and should emulate.”

- Cardinal Peter Turkson on BLI’s Laudato Si’ practices



“I will be back, but not just that, there will be another BLI in Homabay [Kenya], in fullness of time, God granting health and chance. But beyond that, I will try to live BLI wherever I go.”

- Gabriel Dinda after visiting BLI’s campus in Nandere



“My dreams are reawakened once again.”

- Jorem Malinga on joining BLI as a Caretaker trainee



“This is not just about restoring the land. It’s about restoring lives, restoring dignity, and restoring our sense of responsibility to each other—and to our common home.”

- President and Co-Founder Father Emmanuel Katongole



“At the Laudato Si’ Conference 2025, I didn’t just speak. I raised voices that are often ignored... We’re not only creating awareness; we’re raising a new generation that protects and defends our environment.”

- Panelist Regina Magoke on her Conference presentation



“What you have here is unique. Experts usually suggest two critical resources for a development organization to succeed: financial and human resources. What you have here is a third unique resource: love.”

- Professor Krister Andersson on BLI’s success

Growing Biodiversity



“What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to the children who are now growing up?”

- Laudato Si' #160

Integral Ecology: A Holistic Path Forward

At the foundation of BLI's practices and teaching is Integral Ecology. Integral Ecology recognizes that everything is interconnected—the cry of the Earth coincides with the cry of the poor. Because of this, solutions to environmental, societal, and economic problems must be integrated and holistic. As Pope Francis penned in *Laudato Si'*, there is an “urgent need for us to move forward in a bold cultural revolution.”

BLI answers this call. Through our dynamic, hands-on education model, Caretaker trainees gain the skills and vision they need to become changemakers in their communities. Classroom topics range from accounting for small businesses to natural fertilizer production to data collection techniques. Many trainees go on to start their own farms in their home villages, which requires not only technical farming skills but also knowledge of markets and connections to local networks. These farms go on to nourish people, the land, and local economies. Entering into its fifth year, BLI's two-year residential program ensures trainees leave with the holistic education they need to succeed as thoughtful stewards and entrepreneurs.

But it is not only its curriculum design that drives BLI's holistic model; it is also its integration with the local community. BLI instruction includes constant engagement with local schools as Caretaker trainees give tours, conduct experiments, and plant trees with schoolchildren who visit our campus. Trainees and staff members also participate in agricultural and sustainability fairs across Uganda, giving presentations to and learning from other organizations. Because of this, BLI is now known as a regional hub for Integral Ecology education, drawing visitors, researchers, and learners from across Uganda.

BLI dedicates this ongoing work to the late Pope Francis. May he rest in peace with the Heavenly Father as we continue to answer his call everyday here on Earth.



Our Leadership

Uganda Team

Administration

Father Emmanuel Katongole, *President*
Sylvester Kule, *Director*
Father Joseph Kakooza, *Administrator*
Susan Namujju Kintu, *Deputy Administrator & HR*
Simon Nyombi, *Head of Mary's School*
Chris Mukwaya, *Head of Lazarus' Forest*
Samson Luwagga, *Head of Martha's Market*
Ruth Nakalembe, *Head of Community Outreach*
Vincent Kyomya, *Head of Publicity*
Luke Kasozi, *Accountant*
Lydia Katusiime, *Assistant Accountant*

Board of Directors

Father Hillary Muheezangango (Chair)
Father James Kabonghe
Father Joseph Kakooza
Justice Gladys Kamasanyu
Father Emmanuel Katongole
Christine Flora Kizito
Sir Anthony Mateega
Dorothy Atuhair Ssonko
Father Cornelius Ssempala

USA Team

Bethany Land Institute is a Ugandan-run organization. A partner organization, BLI USA, is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization in the United States. BLI USA assists with fundraising and makes grants to BLI Uganda for operations, special projects, and capital improvements. The Uganda Board is tasked with detailed reporting on how all funds sent from the USA are used.

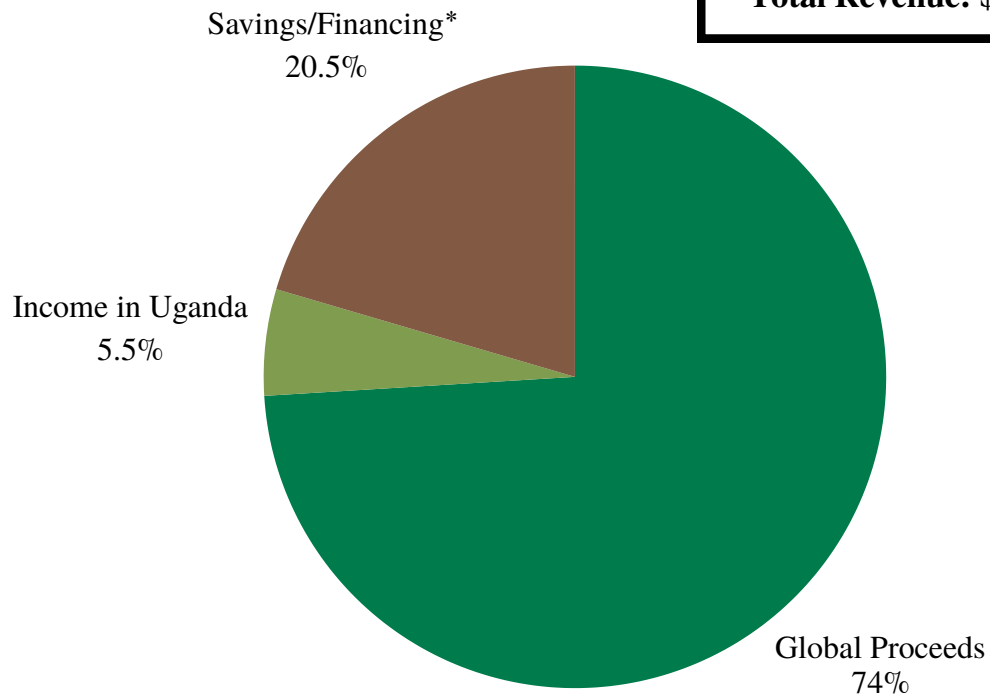
Administration

Father Emmanuel Katongole, *President*
Macky Johnson, *Assistant to the President*
Theresa Murray, *Development Director*
Maureen Newsom, *Treasurer*
Father Arthur Ssemajja, *Advisor to the President*
Emma Ziegler, *Communications Director*

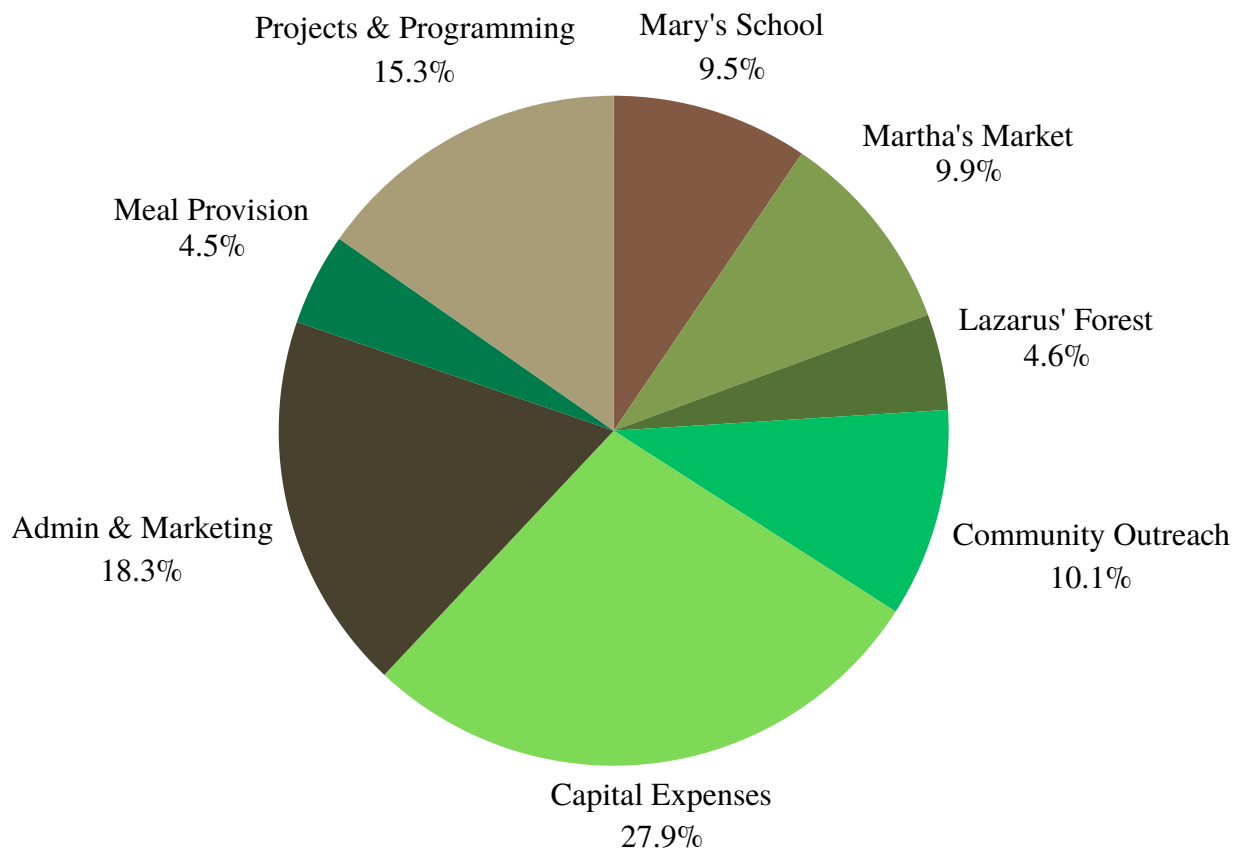
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Dave Mankowski (Chair)
Scott Appleby
Ed Collupy
Andrea Cate Crary
Stacy Dalton
Father Emmanuel Katongole
Kathleen Kennedy
Theresa Murray
Father Josef Ntuwa
Phil White

Revenue



Expenses



* Through a generous supporter, BLI received short-term financing to support the continuity of programs.

Thank You

Due to supporters like you, BLI continues to grow every year, spreading Integral Ecology across Uganda and the world. Our network is ever-expanding, and we are so grateful to have a global family dedicated to helping us carry out our mission to care for our common home together.

Thank you and webale nyo.



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