



## BETHANY LAND INSTITUTE SUMMER 2021 NEWSLETTER



Mike Ssegalunyo is 21 years old and a caretaker leader at BLI. Once he graduates from the program, he will become a full-time worker at BLI. Currently, he heads the goat section and is a team leader for record keeping in Mary's Farm. He is a graduate of Mbuye Agricultural College and has over ten years of agricultural experience. When asked why he joined BLI, he stated, "I like that BLI has the mission of transforming villages and improving the lives of the poor. I also grew up in an agricultural environment and enjoy it a lot."

[Meet All Caretakers](#)

[Donate to Our Caretaker Fund](#)

## UPDATES

In June, BLI had to close the classroom component of its caretaker formation program due to Uganda's COVID-19 lockdown orders. However, many of the caretakers have stayed on campus to tend to the gardens, livestock, and forest. Learning continues to happen in the field between older caretaker leaders and newer recruits. Additionally, BLI had multiple visitors this summer. When Father Emmanuel visited campus in July, he brought with him two young Notre Dame graduates, Emma and Maria. While there, Emma and Maria got in-depth tours and presentations of everything happening at BLI, assisted in creating and implementing an infrastructure for data collection, and spent a lot of time bonding and talking with the caretakers. Both will continue to be involved with BLI going forward: Emma as a communications officer and Maria as an on-the-ground worker assisting in community outreach. Click below to read their blogs from the trip. Finally, the BLI Uganda board also visited campus for their meeting and were able to see the programs operating in real life.

[Read Emma and Maria's Blogs](#)



"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

## BEMCO Launch



On July 23, the team at BLI officially launched the Bethany Environmental Management Committee (BEMCO). The committee is made up of five caretakers and the campus estate manager and is charged with creating a plan for campus and community recycling. Pollution from plastic waste continues to be a severe problem for rural Uganda as many homes, and even institutions, do not have access to or knowledge about recycling. Therefore, plastic waste is typically either burned or just thrown out on the land. The BLI team understands the damage these actions cause to our Earth and formed this committee to manage plastic waste both on BLI's campus and in the surrounding community. On July 23, the entire BLI team came together to launch this committee. At that launch, the team worked together to collect all plastic bottles found around campus and on nearby roads into storage sacks in a designated shed. The BEMCO team is now establishing a plan for how to recycle these bottles properly. At the first BEMCO meeting, the members discussed possibly selling the plastic to nearby collection agencies or repurposing the bottles for reuse on campus. The committee also discussed distributing reusable bags to cut down on plastic bag use, starting an educational campaign about recycling in the nearby villages, and even one day installing scrubbers to minimize pollutants released when cooking or burning products. BLI is excited to have this program underway. If you would like to contribute directly to BEMCO and its efforts, either monetarily or in some other form, feel free to reach out at [info@bethanylandinstitute.org](mailto:info@bethanylandinstitute.org).



## St. Francis House

### A Complex for Those Visiting and Doing Research at BLI

Construction continues on BLI's campus. We are currently raising funds to build St. Francis Guest House, which includes guest rooms, a living/dining section, a chapel, an administrator residence, and staff quarters. This complex will be surrounded by a beautiful garden and overlooks the forest, providing visitors with a retreat place for contemplation. It is a place for inner conversation, renewal, and discovery. If you would like to support this construction effort, please donate on our website or contact Theresa Murray at [tmurray@bethanylandinstitute.org](mailto:tmurray@bethanylandinstitute.org) for more information.

[Donate Now](#)

## Integral Ecology Tip

If you operate a farm that has both livestock and crops, create a system whereby one section feeds into the other. At BLI, we collect all goat and cattle urine, combine it with other products, and make natural pesticides that protect our crops. We also collect all manure and use it as fertilizer for our soil. This enhances our crop yield, a yield we then feed back to our livestock. It creates a closed zero waste cycle.

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