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ELSiA Living Laudato Si' Survey: 2023 Summary Report



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*All views contained within this report are attributable solely to the authors
and do not necessarily reflect the views of ELSiA or the Consortium.*

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1. Executive Summary

This report provides an extended overview of Laudato Si' related work across Europe, gathered through the European Laudato Si' Alliance (ELSiA) Living Laudato Si' baseline survey. Our findings suggest that there is a wide variety of work occurring in Catholic organisations across Europe promoting or effecting simpler lifestyles and a more sustainable world. Much of this work may be replicable elsewhere and we hope bringing it to light in this report may be a step towards its replication. In addition to the practical benefit of identifying this activity, the content of this report can be used to raise awareness more generally about how Catholics care about creation, which may help to convince society and political actors to be good stewards of God's creation.

The report has been written with the principal intention of providing readers with a systematic overview of organised Laudato Si' related activity occurring in Europe. This includes the visualisation of data from all the questions that the ELSiA partner organisations requested including in the survey and a short narrative for most countries that contained respondent organisations. As a result of this comprehensiveness, the report is extensive and many readers may prefer to begin by reading the sections of the report that are most relevant or interesting to them. We present qualitative and quantitative data generated on Laudato Si' inspired projects by the survey. Qualitative information is presented in Section 3 in a narrative form, illustrating some of the most important and replicable work that is going on in the respondent countries in relative detail. Simple quantitative information is then presented from Sections 4 to 8, demonstrating the various kinds and degrees of engagement with Laudato Si' and the Laudato Si' Goals that the respondent organisations exhibited.

The report takes a broadly optimistic position on the variety of engagement in Laudato Si' exhibited across Europe, however, it concludes by drawing attention to some less optimistic data about the constraints that are experienced in organisations. The preliminary, exploratory, analysis that features in this report cannot produce definitive conclusions about the nature of the response to Laudato Si' in European Catholic organisations. However, this report does identify several avenues for more structured investigation on the basis of the survey's exploratory findings. Foremost among these are questions of how European organisations can build the resources and motivation required to respond to Laudato Si', which, as we may be able to infer from the data, may sometimes be lacking.

2. Introduction

2.1 Thanks

Sincere thanks are owed to the funders of this research. Thanks are owed to all involved in the partnership between ELSiA member organisations and the Consortium of universities who have delivered the survey and prepared this report. Please refer to the end of the report for a comprehensive list of academics who graciously supported this work. Thanks are also owed to all those who contributed to the distribution of the survey, including the Laudato Si' Action Platform (LSAP). Perhaps the deepest thanks are owed to all those who have cared for and continue to care for our common home for so many centuries, including the many organisations and individuals who participated in this research.

2.2 About ELSiA

ELSiA is a network of Catholic organisations working together to bring the encyclical letter Laudato Si' to life. Founded in 2019, it currently has seven members: Caritas Europa, Coop eration Internationale pour le D veloppement et la Solidarit  (CIDSE), Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE), Don Bosco International, Jesuit European Social Centre (JESC), Justice and Peace Europe and the Laudato Si' Movement. As a shared and coordinated commitment of Catholic alliances, ELSiA intends to promote ecological justice and the social teaching of the Church.

2.3 Development of the Survey

Through a collaborative process, the ELSiA partners developed a plan for issuing a survey to gain an understanding of Pope Francis' encyclical-inspired initiatives being implemented across Europe. ELSiA then issued a request for proposals to organisations that might be able to deliver this survey. Following the submission of a successful proposal to ELSiA, ELSiA selected a consortium of universities led by St Mary's University, Twickenham, supported by Universit  Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan), Universidade Cat lica Portuguesa, Universitat Ramon Llull, Hrvatsko Katoli ko Sveu ilište and EMD Ecole de Management Marseille to be responsible for delivery of the survey.

2.4 Methodology

2.4.1 Survey Development and Implementation

The survey questions were determined by the ELSiA partners. The Consortium agreed that the survey will be delivered using the Qualtrics platform provided by the Centro de Estudos e Sondagens de Opini o (CESOP) of the Universidade Cat lica Portuguesa (UCP). This decision was based on the institution's demonstrated experience in handling sensitive survey data. Survey questions were

uploaded to Qualtrics, with minor revisions made to some questions for clarity. To enhance user experience, unique features such as a navigable table of contents and progress bar were used. These measures proved effective with some surveys being completed in less than 8 minutes by some respondents across Europe.

To test the feasibility of the survey, a pilot version was proposed. This was delivered in Ireland due to ELSiA's existing contacts in this country. Following a review of the pilot, the bishops of COMECE were notified that the survey was ready for dissemination across Europe. The countries to receive the survey were chosen by ELSiA member organisations. These included: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, England & Wales, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Scotland, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain. Subsequently, the survey was translated into various languages (Croatian, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese and Spanish) and distributed at each country's bishops' conferences. The survey was live and accepting submissions from September 6, 2023, to January 23, 2024. The analysis in this report is based on data from the 202 survey responses available post-data cleaning on November 24, 2023.

In addition to dissemination via bishops' conferences, ELSiA member organisations also distributed the survey (Caritas Europa, CIDSE, Don Bosco International, JESC, Justice and Peace Europe and the Laudato Si' Movement). One particularly effective channel to survey recruitment was the Laudato Si' Action Platform (LSAP) contacting relevant organisations already registered on LSAP and working with the Laudato Si' Movement.

The purpose of the survey was to identify organisations responding to Laudato Si' across Europe, including those that were not previously known to ELSiA. Because the size and nature of the population of interest is unknown to ELSiA, by definition, in this kind of exploratory research, it is impossible to develop a sampling frame *ex ante*. Consequently, participant self-selection was a required feature of the research design, as the survey was actively being used to discover its respondents. Regrettably, self-selection invariably introduces bias into a sample, however, and imposes limitations on what can be concluded from the survey's responses. Specifically, the extent to which the respondents are representative of the target population remains unknown. It should be stressed that the findings of this report are neither representative of all Catholic organisations in Europe, nor necessarily representative of Catholic organisations responding to Laudato Si'. Despite the limitations of the data presented in this report, this survey has successfully generated an extensive inventory of organisations that could form the basis of more rigorous investigation, should that be desired.

Respondent organisations included commercial organisations such as consultancies. Any mention of these, and any other organisations, should not be taken as an endorsement.

2.4.2 Data analysis

Data Cleaning

Submissions were removed from the dataset for one of three reasons.

- The submission was incomplete.
- The submission was completed by an organisation that was not operating in Europe.
- A single organisation submitted multiple complete surveys describing the same organisation. Where this was the case, an attempt was made to select the most authoritative opinion for the charts in Sections 4 to 6 of this report. This was because respondents were asked to answer on behalf of the organisation rather than report their own opinion. Little variance was observed between 'duplicate' submissions.

Descriptive Statistics

The data analysed in Sections 4 to 8 is based on the data available on November 24, 2023. Responses to all the questions from the survey were aggregated at the European level, visualised in charts, and are presented in Sections 4 to 6. Section 8 presents the respondents' demographic data across all responses.

In Sections 4 to 8, the statistical findings are reported question-by-question. The proportion of respondents who selected each of the possible answers are reported as a percentage, with data visualisation used to enhance readability.

Narrative Analysis by Country

During the survey implementation, many stakeholders expressed an interest to learn more about Laudato Si' work and projects across Europe, with the intention of eventually replicating these projects. Section 3 brings some of these projects into focus. To highlight projects in as transparent a way as possible the following judgement criteria were proposed and agreed upon by representatives of ELSiA member organisations and members of the Consortium.

- Replicability and/or breath of ambition of the project.
- Existing impact and longevity.
- The depth of change promoted.
- The breadth of engagement with Laudato Si' and Laudato Si' Goals.

The content of each submission was then scored against the above criteria by a researcher at St Mary's University. Whilst having only one individual scoring the submissions may have entailed some subjectivity bias, we believe that this can be mitigated by involving one or more additional analysts to replicate the analysis.

If websites were featured in a submission, these would be reviewed and translated, if necessary, via automatic translation within the web browser or similar. Some larger organisations, such as dioceses, only provided links to their general website. In these cases, the researcher entered the word 'Laudato' into a search function in the organisations' website to search the respondent's website for appropriate

and scorable information. In addition, the website of bishops' conferences found via the [Council of European Bishops' Conferences](#) was searched for 'Laudato', and members of the Consortium were invited to suggest websites to include for ranking against the above criteria.

From this 'long list' of relatively replicable, established, deep and broad projects, a profile highlighting inspiring Laudato Si' work was compiled for each country where there was one or more submissions. These are presented in Section 3.

A set of questions provided respondents with the opportunity to identify networks and organisations that they work with related to Laudato Si'. Where responses allowed details of the organisation to be identified, such as the website of an organisation, these were added to Section 3 if the relevance to Laudato Si' work in a specific country was clear. Where that relevance was not clear the website has been noted in Section 7.

3. Some Key Laudato Si' Projects That Have Been Identified

This section provides a detailed desk-based review of ecological projects conducted by respondent Catholic organisations across Europe. The projects described are exemplary and illustrative, and there were many parish initiatives, schools and local Laudato Si' circles that responded that are not described below.

Austria

At least one Catholic action organisation associated with a diocese in Austria demonstrated good ecumenical environmental work, including [a wealth of best practice](#). This topic is a key point of discussion for the Bishops' Conference, who have called on the Government [to do more](#) and 'decided that CO2 emissions in the dioceses should be reduced by 60 percent by 2030. To achieve this goal, two percent of the diocesan budget should be used for this purpose'. Efforts include a [meeting with government ministers](#), with at least some [Dioceses](#) having [detailed guidance](#) on action, a commitment to the EU [Eco-Management and Audit Scheme \(EMAS\) and divestment](#). This is reflected in parishes [being EMAS certified](#), work by [Religious congregations](#), helping local communities with a [Climate Oasis](#) signposted by Caritas along with their involvement with wider [Laudato Si' themes](#).

Belgium

In Belgium, Bishops have exercised their influence by encouraging attendance at a [climate demonstration](#). The survey highlighted one exceptionally environmentally ambitious project in Belgium that is located in [Anderlecht](#) and closely aligned with the broader goals outlined in Laudato Si'. This project aimed to refurbish a former hospital into a 'sustainable and solidarity village'. We also found a range of [similar](#) initiatives across Belgium with parish centres, monasteries and convents among other buildings.

In addition, there is specific guidance aimed at [Church](#) buildings to encourage green tariffs, solar panels, decarbonising heating, rainwater harvesting, social housing, and agricultural land. There are other school and community [organisations](#) wrestling with the question of 'What can we do in practice?', with answers including support for [wildlife gardening](#), efforts to [influence](#) policy, engagement of [policymakers](#) with Church organisations and an active [EcoChurch](#) network signposting a range of initiatives.



Figure 1: Image of promotional material for event co-organised by [Justice and Peace Belgium](#) addressed by [policy makers](#).

Croatia

In Croatia there have been a range of meetings on the topic of Laudato Si' including those organised by the [Bishops' Conference](#). This included an [international conference](#) and an [international summer school](#) with a [Franciscan](#) focus. There are [resources](#) aimed at young people focused around 'Who is St Francis to us?'



Figure 2: Image of promotional material for an international summer school promoted by a number of educational organisations including 2 based in Croatia.

Czech Republic

Although no Czech translation of the survey was produced, the boundary-crossing nature of the Catholic Church led to one response from the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic is home to a [community](#) which sees Laudato Si' as a natural extension of their core work with the homeless and the elderly. A movement, [Living Laudato si' Czech Republic](#), brings greater ecological awareness to the Czech Church and society. It does this by providing an online platform to help individuals and local communities work collaboratively towards ecological conversion.



Figure 3: Image of the historic plan of Eco-Center supported by the Bishops Conference of the Czech Republic from the [Centre website](#).

Denmark

Although no Danish translation of the survey was produced, the boundary-crossing nature of the Catholic Church led to one response from Denmark. Here, [Caritas Denmark](#) described their work helping to deliver more [sustainable ways of life in Africa](#), such as schools with solar panels that allow the local community to move away from wood stoves that cause indoor air pollution.



Figure 4: Image of School with solar panels included in a [video](#) provided by Caritas Denmark to illustrate their work on climate and sustainable development.

England and Wales

Since the 1980s work in England and Wales has included the ecumenical organisations [Green Christian](#) and [Arocha](#). These have inspired related initiatives such as [EcoChurch](#), now being represented in many other parts of Europe. The principal and early heart of Catholic responses appears to be the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), which has [continuously incorporated](#) sustainable development themes into its work since the 1986 Brundtland Report. CAFOD's work continues with unique European initiatives, such as the [Live Simply Award](#).

More recently there has been focused work in dioceses and some parishes. In recent years the Diocese of Salford, which encompasses Greater Manchester and some of the surrounding area, has been the locus of considerable work, including:

- [The Laudato Si' Centre](#).
- Working with various stakeholders including St Mary's University, Twickenham, to deliver the [Guardians of Creation Project](#), which investigates the technical, sociological, organisational, and theological paths to sustainable and ecologically sensitive change in the Catholic Church.
- [Producing guidance intended to help a range of faith actors](#).
- [Providing guidance for parishes](#).
- [Presenting an environmental pledge to Pope Francis during an interfaith visit to Rome](#).
- An interfaith project to install solar panels on places of worship.

The [Laudato Si' Research Institute](#) based at Campion Hall in the University Oxford has delivered a plethora of research. This includes supporting the work in the Diocese of Salford and others, such as Birmingham, which has been active with [decarbonisation plans for schools](#), [Live Simply work in schools](#) and renewable energy at the seminary and solar panels on churches. Brentwood also has a comprehensive list of [resources and commitments](#).

The Bishops' Conference has given Laudato Si' [sustained focus](#) including a [range of resolutions, statements](#) and supporting initiatives such as [Global Healing](#), the [Guardians of Creation Project](#) and [Journey to 2030](#) in its [parish](#) and [school](#) work.

Successful divestment initiatives have emerged in different parts of Europe. One noteworthy example is [Operation Noah](#), headquartered in London, which works ecumenically to advocate for divestment of carbon-intensive stocks from Catholic portfolios.

France

The French Bishops' Conference has been engaged with ecological questions for [many years and has a specific department](#). Official support for [Eglise Verte by the French Bishops' Conference](#) appears to have translated into extensive grassroots activity across France, offering tools for parishes, congregations, monasteries, schools and

families. Here, the [evidence also suggests](#) that Religious orders and [communities](#) have been key in facilitating the take up of Laudato Si' at a grassroots level. There are a number of [dioceses that have specific](#) environmental initiatives [and numerous parishes that are engaged in](#) these projects alongside places of [learning](#). The latter is well-represented by the prestigious [College des Bernardins](#) in Paris, which instated a Laudato Si' research chair with the objective of using an interdisciplinary approach to tackle 'ecological insensitivity' and help us to 'love the earth and live in it better.' At least two [seminaries](#) are taking [practical action](#) in relation to this topic alongside [organisations dedicated](#) to deepening [understanding](#) in the [field](#). Caritas France is working with the French Government to facilitate a [just ecological transition](#). To achieve this systematic change, international environmental and social issues around the world are addressed. There are groups combining [prayer and protest](#) along with negotiation, and groups focusing on [animals](#). Event spaces with a religious connection and associated with Eglise Verte have taken a [wealth](#) of action. One striking example of Eglise Verte-related activity was the [Assises Chrétiennes de l'Écologie](#), a large-scale event in the run-up to COP21, with thousands of representatives from different faiths brought together to identify ways of tackling climate change. Concrete initiatives were born from the conference, such as the creation of the [Christians United for the Earth movement](#). Relatedly, [ecumenical](#) initiatives have been part of the environmental landscape in France for several years.



Figure 5: An artist's impression of what the replacement a non-native hedge with an edible hedge will look like when the newly planted hedge has grown, from a [parish in France](#).

Germany

Participants in Germany reported substantial and high-quality long-term efforts to tackle the ecological crisis. There is an [organisation](#) that shares good practice across dioceses. Leading dioceses appear to include Koeln, with:

- [Interfaith work](#).
- [Comprehensive programmes](#).
- [Certified Environmental Systems](#).
- [Work with schools](#) and [work in schools](#).

Another leading diocese appears to be [Aachen](#) with:

- Detailed guidance for buildings.
- Material for the Season of Creation.
- Focus on biodiversity.
- And a range of advice.

The Bishops' Conference have provided [mandate and advice](#) related to:

- Creation Spirituality and Liturgy.
- Education throughout the church.
- Rediscovering traditions.
- Management structures.
- Building management.
- Procurement.
- Land management.
- Travel.
- International social-political responsibility.

Caritas Germany have [applied this learning](#) by creating an office. The Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt have long given [research in this field focus](#). There is a Jesuit led [Centre for Social-Ecological Transformation](#). Some dioceses have web pages e.g., [the diocese of Paderborn](#), that provide advice to parishioners on taking practical actions in their homes.



Figure 6: The website of the Association of Environmental Representatives of the German Dioceses includes an [interactive map](#) with contact details.

Hungary

Although no Hungarian translation of the survey was produced, the boundary-crossing nature of the Catholic Church led to one response from Hungary. This featured a [project](#) that has been in operation since 2011, providing several resources that cover fasting, practical actions and sermon sketches. The Bishops' Conference have promoted [Laudato Si'](#) and church leaders have participated in at least one [academic event](#).

Ireland

Ireland has perhaps one of the most ambitious Laudato Si' projects in Europe which intends to return [30% of church grounds to nature](#). There are comprehensive national [Season of Creation resources](#) from the Bishop's Conference promoted alongside [Trocaire](#). Trocaire also promotes a [Laudato Si' book club](#) and provides comprehensive tailored [resources](#) to accompany the film, *The Letter*. The latter includes a range of practical advice. There is also evidence of activity at the local level by [Jesuit institutions](#) in specific locations and activities such as a 'pocket forest'. Irish dioceses have also been important actors in the Catholic [divestment movement](#).

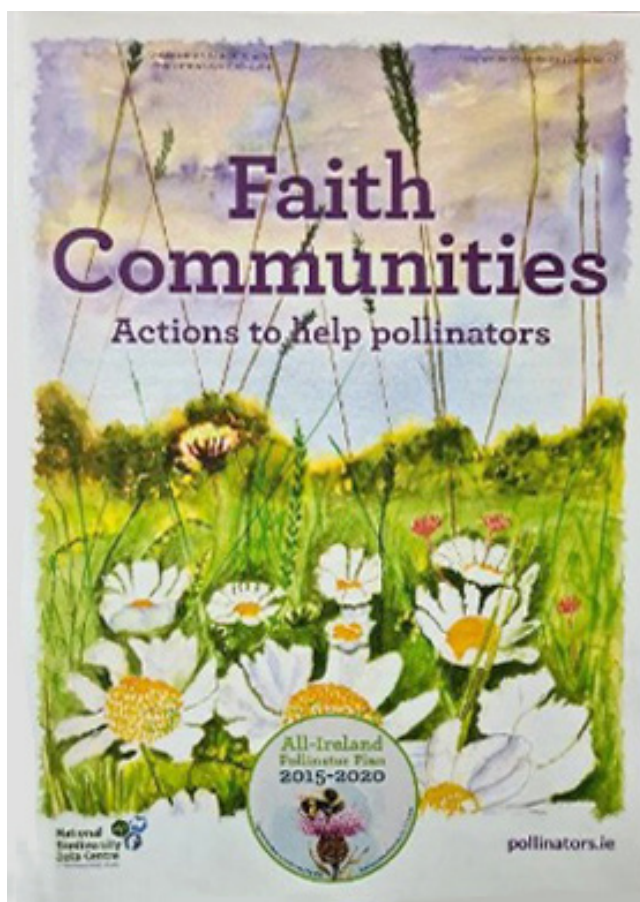


Figure 7: Image of brochure which indicates that the [Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference](#) is cooperating with other actors in society to return 30% of church grounds to nature.

Italy

Italy reports a plethora of activities related to Laudato Si', such as events, courses, pilgrimages, communities, organisations and practical measures. Notably, practical measures include installing solar panels and caring for the landscape, often with a focus on our relationship with food. Much of this work appears to be at a relatively small or community scale. One larger scale example is a 'higher education course that aims to deepen the theme of integral ecology and trigger processes of care in the [Mediterranean](#)'. There is a network of [Laudato Si' Communities](#), which is expected given Assisi are known to [think big](#) in operating sustainably. In [1988](#) the Bishop of Padua was the patron of a foundation considering applied ethics and policy questions which extended its work to integral ecology in the [1990s](#). [A number of dioceses](#) are active, including the [Archdiocese of Catania](#), and at a national level, the Bishops' Conference has worked with voluntary bodies in the production of an [overarching guide](#). Partner organisations in that activity have produced a [guide for schools](#) supported by an [organisation of teachers](#).

Another exceptional example of Laudato Si' related activity in Italy was the [Season of Creation 2023](#). This month-long initiative brought together 3400 Laudato Si' animators, 170 circles and hundreds of events. Activities included the Assisi-Gubbio march and the 'mighty river'. The latter was introduced by the Sacred Convent and served as a gathering place for hundreds of pilgrims of all ages to engage in contemplation and advocacy for a world of justice and peace. Organisers hope that the success of this initiative encourages further community commitment towards ecological conversion.



Figure 8: [Front Cover of a guide with 20 case studies](#) produced by Federation of Voluntary bodies International of Christian Inspiration (FOCSIV) with the collaboration of the Italian Episcopal Conference.

Luxembourg

The Bishops' Conference in Luxembourg have engaged with [care for creation](#) questions since at least 2015 and have not been afraid to [criticise the lack of political interest](#), domestically. Laudato Si' activities are reported in the annual reports of the Archdiocese, examples from [2020 \(pp. 16-18\)](#) and [2021 \(pp 12-13\)](#) give an indication. At least one [church](#) has a large solar installation. Indeed, the Church in Luxembourg may have one of the highest proportions of electricity generated on its own building in Europe outside the Vatican.



Figure 9: Church with '92 high-performance solar modules that has an annual energy yield of approx. 28,000 KWh' in Luxembourg as [reported by the Archdiocese](#).

Malta

Despite its size, [Malta](#) exhibits a very impressive [project](#) in breadth, depth and engagement with wider society beyond the church.



Figure 10: [Front cover of report of a project](#) involving a range of stakeholders in Malta including Justice and Peace, Environment and Resources Authority and the University of Malta. This focuses on economics based Catholic social teaching and Common Good ideas rather than individual good which is typical of more conventional economics. To illustrate this, a 'Wellbeing Index' was launched during the project.

Netherlands

The Bishops' Conference has engaged [substantially with Laudato Si'](#) and facilitated the creation of [Laudato Si' Alliantie Nederland](#). Among many other projects in the Netherlands, perhaps the most unusual is a [Klimaatmadonna](#) and [Black FRIarDAY](#), which focuses on the Dominican Order. The Dominicans are also exchanging information about more sustainable agricultural practices with [Brothers working in Africa](#). There is evidence of Laudato Si' related work among other [religious orders](#). There are comprehensive [Laudato Si' resources](#), including focus on [climate depression and sustainable hope](#), a number of communities giving Laudato Si' focus and a range of events by various organisations. A [Laudato Si' Institute for Integral Ecology](#) has been established at Radboud University. In 2019 10% of Catholic parishes (and 28% of Protestant parishes) had [solar panels among other ecological activities](#) and there is evidence of [ecumenical cooperation in the field](#).



Figure 11: Image of modern church during installation of solar panels in the Netherlands as reported by [De Roerom to illustrate a 2021 report by Radboud University](#).

Poland

The Polish Bishops' Conference has a [Laudato Si' Team](#) and has [engaged](#) with the encyclical since its publication. There is a [cooperative organisation](#) between the Church and State. Caritas Poland have a substantial amount of [material](#), including [detailed catechesis material](#). There is notable amount of activity by the [Laudato Si' Movement](#) (Światowy Ruch Katolików na rzecz Środowiska) and the associated 'The Green Parish' initiative, and Warm House – Warm Church Programme. These encompass [academic events](#), efforts on [clean air](#), providing [practical advice](#), and connecting work on energy efficiency in [parishes and homes](#). The [Jesuit Refugee Centre](#) engages with Laudato Si' as it relates to their focus.

Portugal

With the recent World Youth Day in Portugal, practical efforts were made to reconcile this with [Laudato Si'](#). The Bishops' Conference regularly [promotes](#) Laudato Si' activities. There is sharing of [good practice](#), work [focusing on schools](#), a wealth and depth of engagement with Laudato Si' by [Jesuit organisations](#), alongside their [practical work](#), and [other Religious orders](#). There are several organisations working in this [field](#) plus centres specialising in both [spiritual and practical](#) activities. There are parishes involved in [practical activities](#) on renewable energy and living simply. These include the promotion of the [reuse of clothing](#) and the installation of [solar panels](#).



Figure 12: Solar panels installed on top of the Basilica of the Holy Trinity, overlooking the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima [used as an illustration in a report of Laudato Si' research in Portugal](#).

Scotland

The Bishops' Conference of Scotland had a depth of involvement in COP26 in Glasgow and has an [Office for Care of Creation](#), which supports and promotes work by the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF). [SCIAF](#) has provided [guidance](#) to parishes for many years, addressing important and difficult [moral questions](#) and won a Caritas [award](#) related to influence that they had in turning that moral imperative into policy. The Bishops' Conference also works with [Justice and Peace Scotland](#) to support parishes working towards ecological conversion. Recently the Scottish [Laudato Si' Schools](#) programme has been a great success with about 2/3 of Catholic high schools involved.



Figure 13: Image from video by the [Scottish Catholic Education Service](#) highlighting their Laudato Si' Schools programme.

Serbia

Although no Serbian translation of the survey was produced, the boundary-crossing nature of the Catholic Church led to one response from Serbia. This response involved Caritas delivering [events](#) organised around Laudato Si' themes, with some focusing on [reducing natural disasters](#).

Slovakia

Although no Slovak translation of the survey was produced, the boundary-crossing nature of the Catholic Church led to one response from Slovakia. This described a [range of resources](#) for children.



Figure 14: Image from [Laudato Si' resources for Children](#) produced by a [Slovakian](#) organisation with a range of partners including CIDSE.

Spain

The Spanish Bishops' Conference documents a [wealth of Laudato Si' activities](#). One unusual Laudato Si' initiative in Spain is by an organisation of [Christian Professionals](#) that features an associated [publication](#) and another [related publication](#). One organisation with a focus on the young and poor has engaged with integral ecology in a range of ways, such as highlighting opportunities for [renewable energy](#) and [listening to nature](#). A [range of organisations](#) that [work together](#) towards [climate justice](#) are also [providing guidance](#). There are parishes highlighting their [practical work](#) and the Spanish Conference of Religious [are equally involved](#).

Switzerland

Church communities, parishes and institutions in Switzerland have demonstrated long-term commitment to sustainability and environmentally conscious action. A substantial amount of this work is conducted by [oeku churches for the environment](#), which tackle a range of issues related to Laudato Si' themes. These include [biodiversity](#), environmental [practice](#) and [policy](#), and [climate protection](#). Another Laudato Si' inspired movement in Switzerland is the [Ecumenical Network in French-speaking Switzerland for care of creation](#) (EcoEglise). EcoEglise includes Christian communities, parishes and church places that work together to care for creation. This collaboration is facilitated by [two tools](#) designed by EcoEglise that promote real-world ecological action. A large number of [relevant resources](#) are also provided.

4. Engagement on Ecology Issues Before the Publication of Laudato Si'

This section describes engagement with integral ecology and care for creation before the publication of Laudato Si'. Figure 15 suggests that around half of the organisations that responded were not engaged in integral ecology prior to the publication of Laudato Si'. This invites further investigation into the question of how influential Laudato Si' was in increasing concern about issues related to integral ecology.



Figure 15: Responses to the question 'Was your organisation engaged in integral ecology related activities before the publication of the Laudato Si' Encyclical in 2015?'

5. Engagement on Ecology Issues After the Publication of Laudato Si'

This section explores how participants have described their organisation's engagement with ecological issues since the publication of Laudato Si'. As demonstrated in Figure 16, most respondents acknowledge that there has been 'change in some areas' of their organisation or community, with about a third of respondents experiencing 'substantial' change or greater.

This is a positive result but needs to be considered in the context of the self-reporting and selection biases that the survey process exhibited. The reader should not interpret these findings as necessarily representative of a wider population of Catholic organisations. In the entire population of European Catholic organisations, one would expect to see less impact being reported, on the assumption that more ecologically engaged organisations were more likely to respond to the survey, an effect commonly understood in surveys of ecological action.

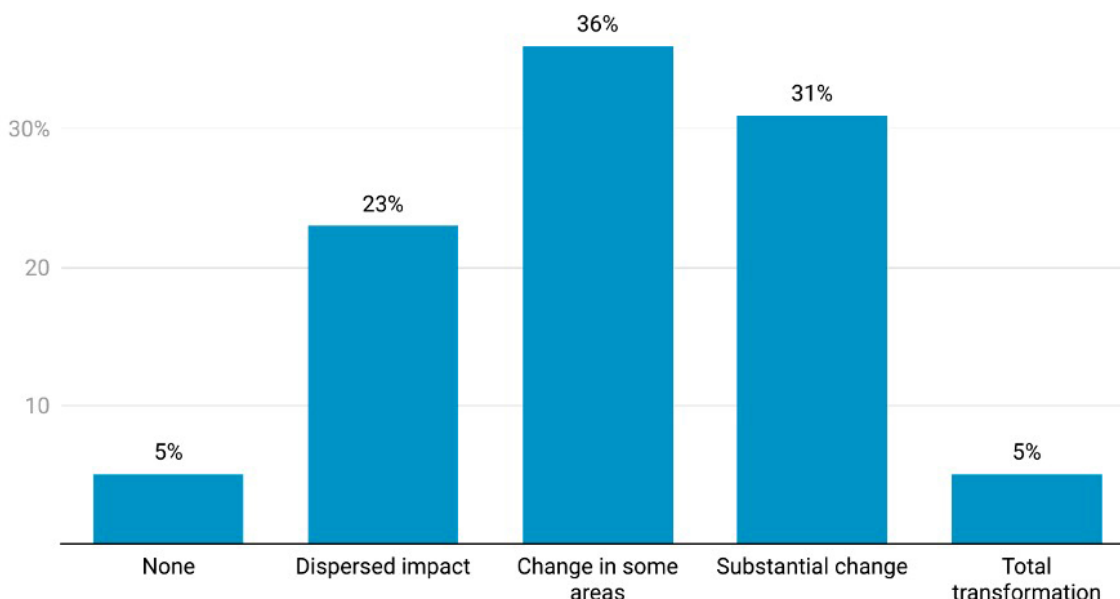


Figure 16. Responses to the question 'In a scale from none to total transformation, how much impact has the Laudato Si' Encyclical had in your organisation / religious community?'

Figure 17 provides greater insight into the adoption of the Laudato Si' Goals. Interestingly, there is a noticeable difference between the number of organisations reporting undertaking activities associated with the 'top' three goals, as compared to the 'bottom' four. Participatory action, ecological education, and ecological spirituality are all more frequently reported than response to the cry of the earth, response to the cry of the poor, adoption of simple lifestyles, and the especially under-represented ecological economics. Readers who work with the Laudato Si' goals may find that this information particularly useful in thinking about which of the goals might need more proactive fostering.

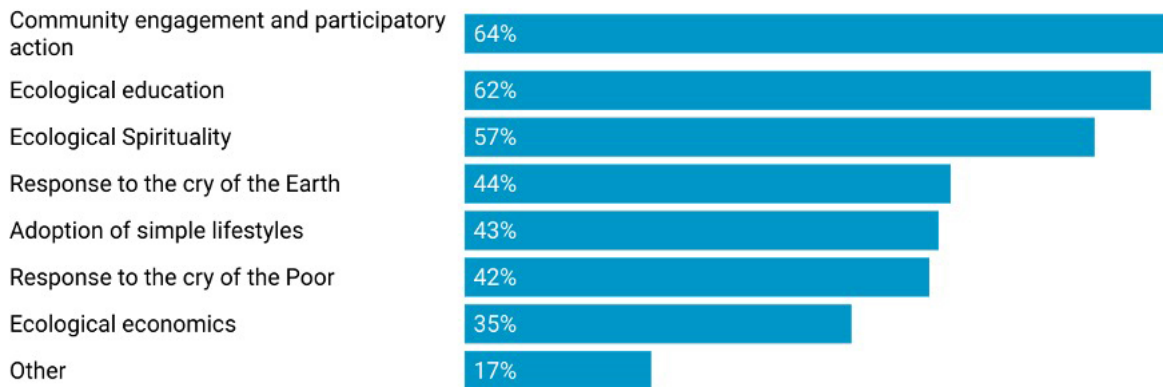


Figure 17. Responses to the question 'What form of engagement has your organisation chosen to address the ecological and social problems framed by Pope Francis' 2015 Laudato Si' Encyclical?'

Figures 18 and 19 describe the type and prevalence of initiatives that respondent organisations have recently engaged in. Figure 18 focuses on anticipated outcomes, e.g., whether the initiative intended to catalyse policy change, individual behaviour, collective behaviour and so on. Figure 19 describes the outcomes of these initiatives i.e., what change the respondents perceived the initiative to have actually had, in reality. We see that the percentages in Figure 19 are generally lower than those in Figure 18, reflecting the understanding that not all projects succeed. In the current format, the reader should exercise caution in interpreting these findings, as asking participants to report on intentions after the fact can be vulnerable to several different kinds of memory and motivation biases. Notwithstanding the possible mitigating effect of cognitive bias, there is still a perception among respondents that some of their projects fail. This is especially pronounced in those targeting the more sophisticated outcomes of policy and behaviour change. How to improve the success of projects against the desired outcomes might be a suitable subject for more detailed longitudinal investigation.

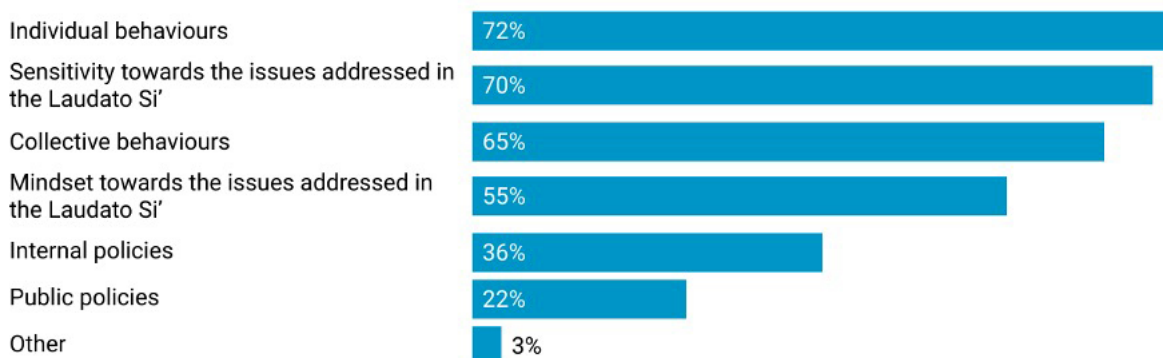


Figure 18: Responses to the question 'The expected outcome/s of the previous initiative/s was/were a change in:'

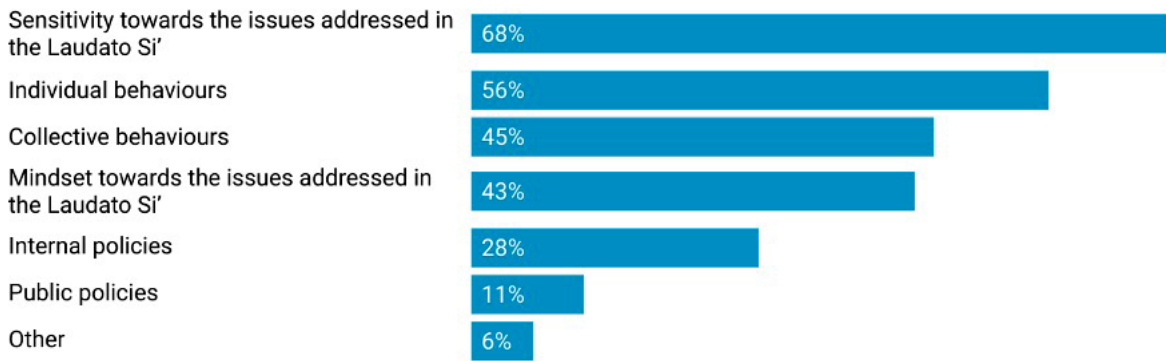


Figure 19: Responses to the question 'The main achievement/s of the previous initiative/s was/were a change in:'

Figures 20 to 22 all describe whether respondents' organisations have participated in one of three related movements, programmes or events. The figures show that two thirds have participated in Season of Creation, one fifth have participated in the Economy of Francesco, and one tenth the Global Compact for Education.

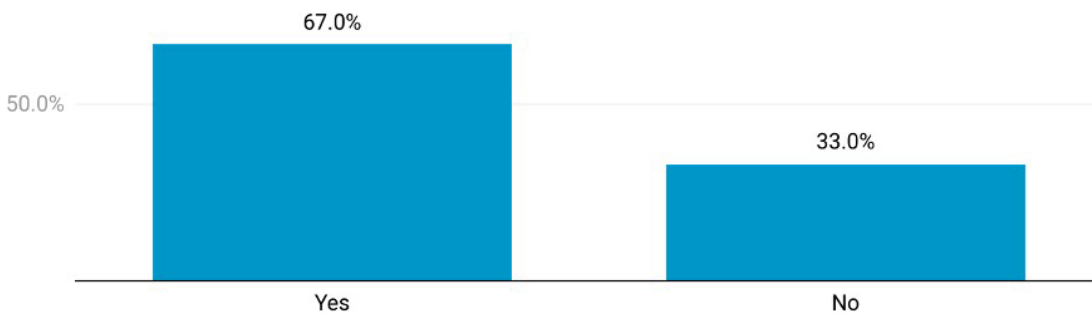


Figure 20: Responses to the question 'Has your organisation participated in events organised to celebrate the Season of Creation?'

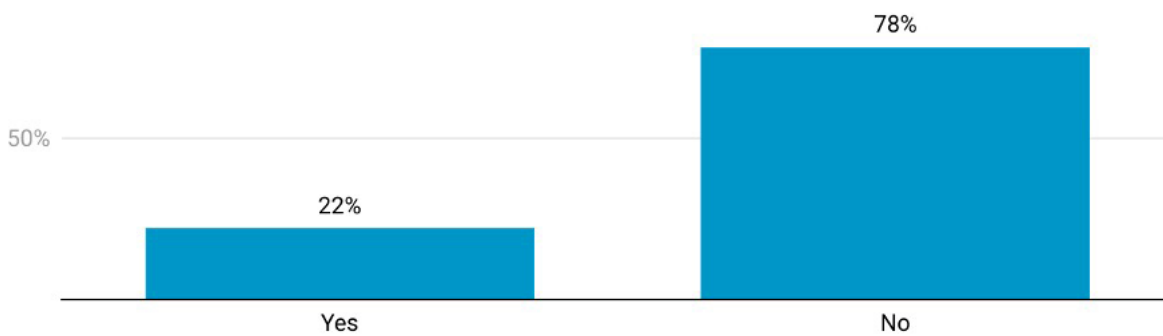


Figure 21: Responses to the question 'Has your organisation participated in the Economy of Francesco?'

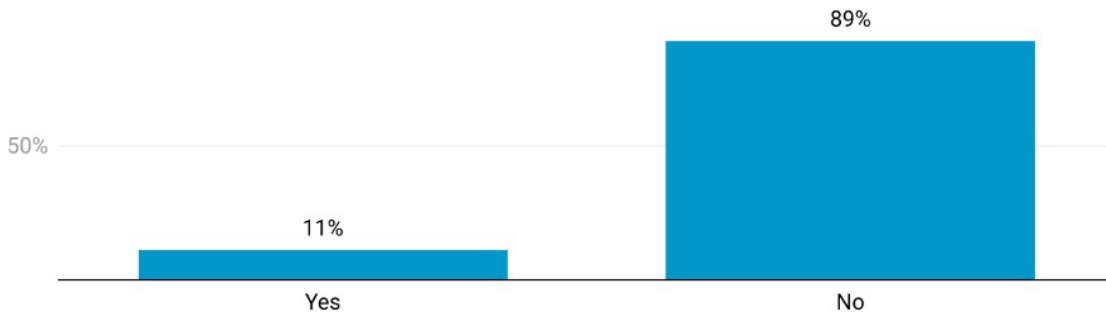


Figure 22: Responses to the question 'Has your organisation participated in the Global Compact for Education?'

Figures 23 and 24 are concerned with the time and money that an organisation invests in issues of ecology. In both cases, there is a concentration of responses close to the lowest possible response, i.e., that Catholic organisations are typically spending very small percentages of their time and money on ecology. This becomes particularly concerning when we consider the self-selecting, and consequently necessarily more ecologically motivated nature of the organisations that responded to this survey. Typically, respondent organisations are spending less than 10% of their time and money budgets on ecological issues, let alone those Catholic organisations that did not participate in the survey. In the case of organisations' time, shown in Figure 23, this skew towards smaller commitments is apparent but somewhat less pronounced. In the case of money, in Figure 24, the skew of the distribution is rather more acute. These figures become especially interesting when viewed alongside Figure 25, which asks respondents to rank the barriers that they perceive are impeding their participation in more ecological action. At 60% and 57% respectively, the two most reported barriers to ecological action are the perceived absence of person-time and money. Taken together with Figures 23 and 24, the findings displayed in Figure 25 can present a potentially troubling impression. It seems to suggest that the respondent organisations are investing relatively little of their organisation's time and money in integral ecology, whilst simultaneously reporting that these are precisely the 'limited' things that they need more of to act ecologically. There are several ways that this conjunction could be interpreted, and it might be inappropriate to speculate on this dynamic without conducting further investigation. However, such an investigation might be particularly instructive for organisations and individuals looking to inspire ecological action in Catholic organisations.

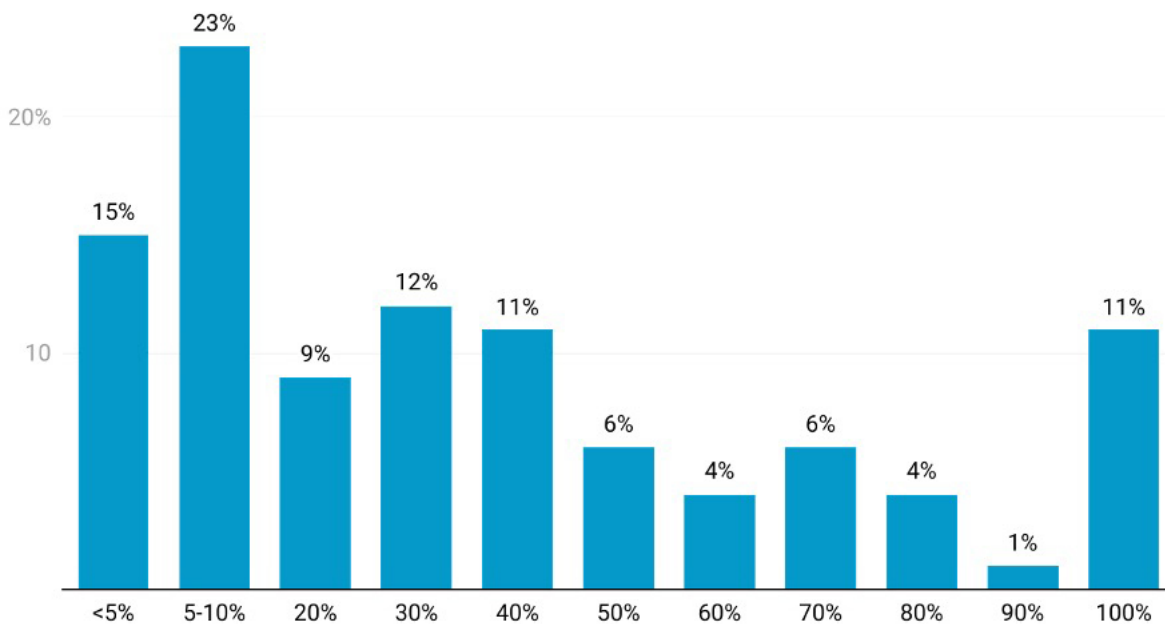


Figure 23: Responses to the question 'What proportion of the time does your organisation commit to integral ecology-related activities?'

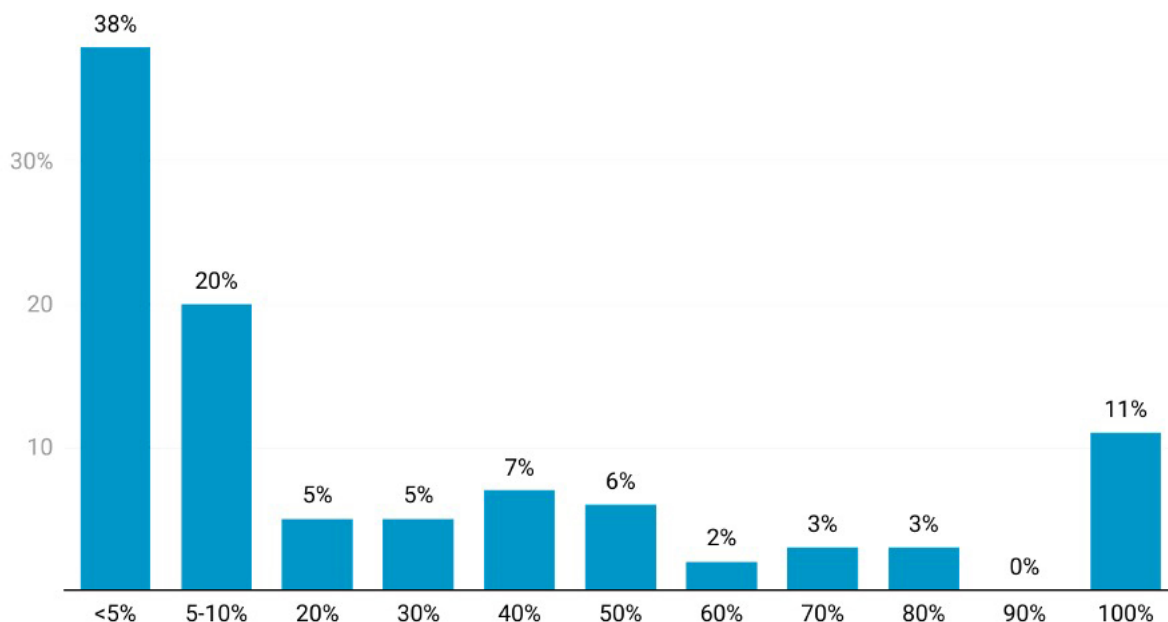


Figure 24: Responses to the question 'What share of the available financial resources does your organisation commit to integral ecology related activities?'

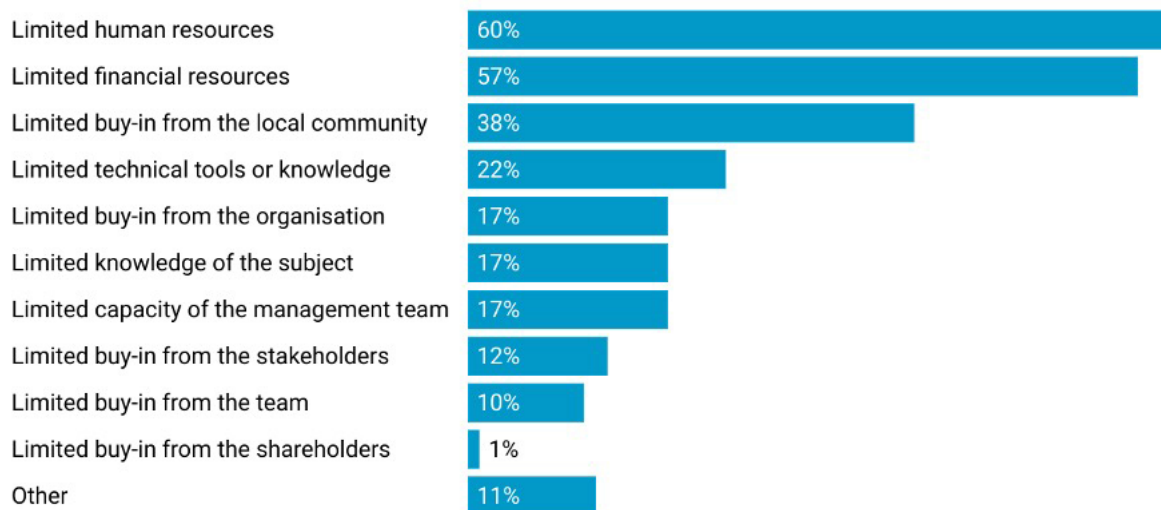


Figure 25: Responses to the question 'What challenges has your organisation faced when engaging in integral ecology-related activities?'

Figures 26 to 28 explore issues related to partnership and participation. Figure 26 shows that nearly half of the respondents' organisations are entirely reliant on volunteers to implement ecological activities, with around a third being reliant on a blend of paid and voluntary work. Figures 27 and 28 ask how much ecological action at the respondents' organisations takes place in partnership, with other faith-based organisations, or non-faith-based organisations respectively. The most common answer to these questions is 'some of it', and with only about one fifth reporting working without partnership in response to both questions. These figures may reflect the collaborative nature of Church organisation, the collaborative nature of ecological action, or both. Without comparative data about other forms of action, it is not possible to know whether ecological work is being conducted in a more collaborative way than non-ecological work in these organisations.

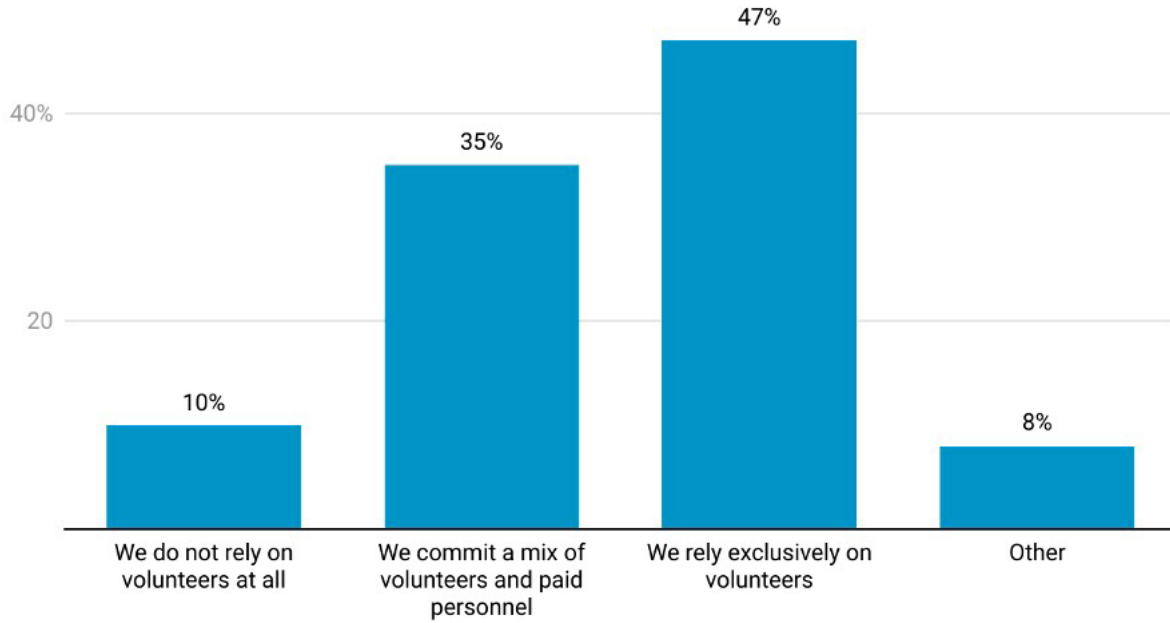


Figure 26: Responses to the question 'How much does your organisation rely on volunteers to implement integral ecology related activities?'

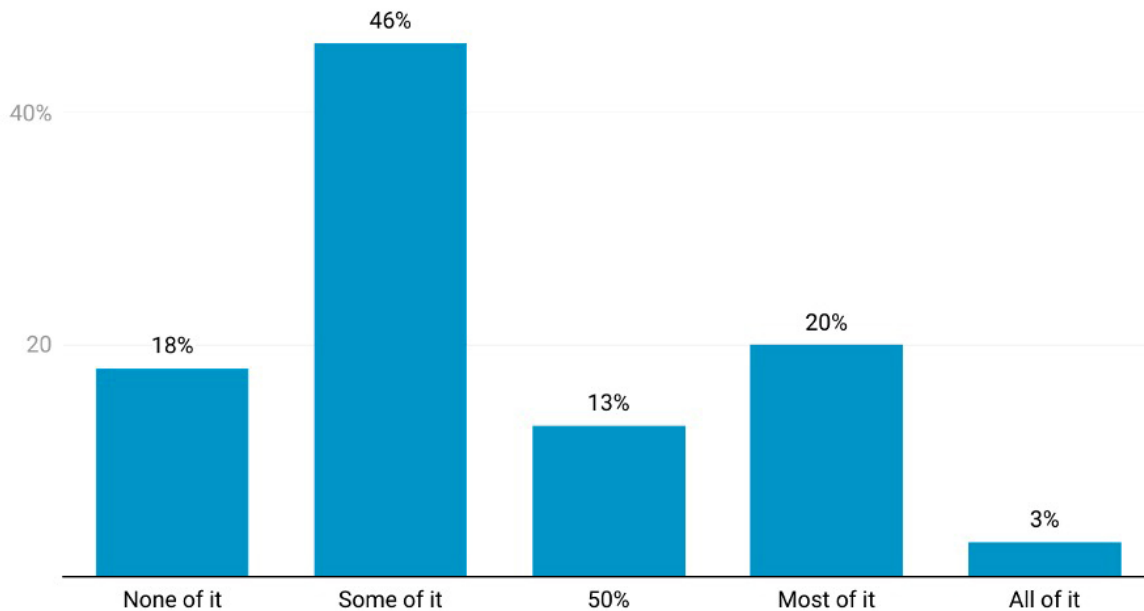


Figure 27: Responses to the question 'How much of that engagement takes place in collaboration or alliance with other faith-based organisations?'

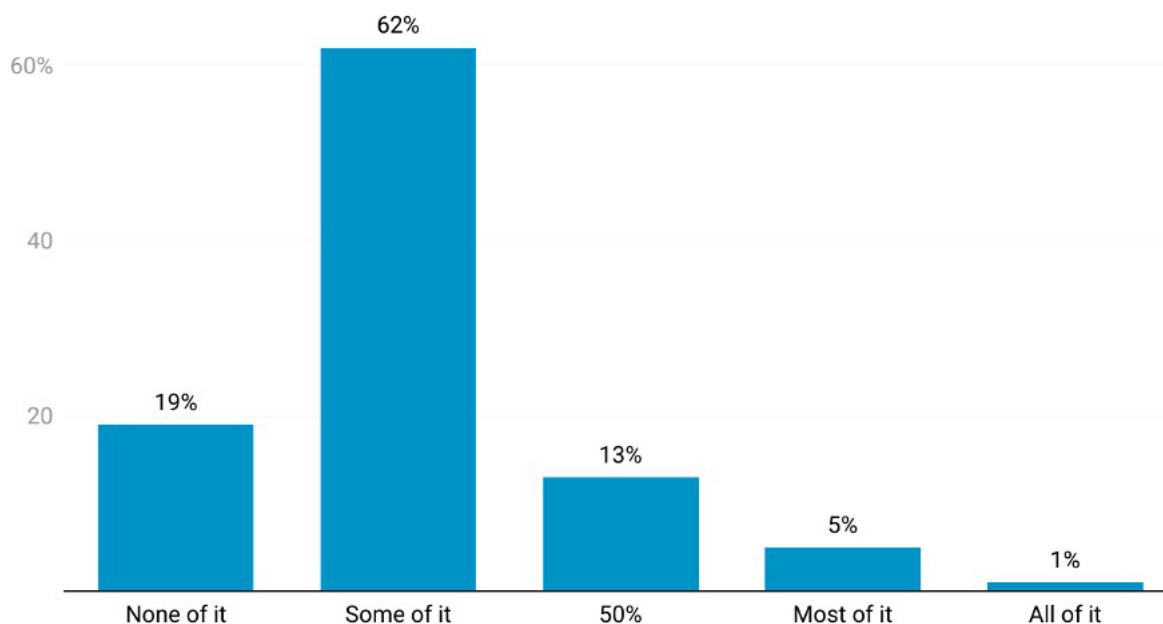


Figure 28: Responses to the question 'How much of that engagement takes place in collaboration or alliance with other non-faith-based organisations?'

6. Self-Assessment of the Uptake of the Laudato Si' Encyclical to Date

This section examines respondents' perceptions of Laudato Si', including their perception of how impactful it has been to their organisation or their wider context. Figures 29 to 31 explain how impactful individuals feel Laudato Si' has been in general and extra-organisational contexts, whilst Figure 32 onwards shifts the focus back into the respondent's organisation.

Figure 29 clearly shows that 'more needs to be done' to adopt Laudato Si' across the respondents' various areas of operation, whilst Figure 30 shows a similar consensus for the respondents' geographical regions. Notably, in Figure 29 about one fifth of respondents feel that 'good progress' has been made in their area of operation, meaning that a respondent is about twice as likely to perceive good progress in their area of operation as compared to their region. This might imply that there are a few kinds of Catholic activity in Europe, rather than geographical places, where there is some consensus that Laudato Si' has already been well engaged with. With further investigation, it would be possible to identify what these communities of practice are, and why their members feel as though there has already been good progress in responding to Laudato Si' in that domain. This kind of inquiry could be constructive in the search for role models and case studies. Figure 31 shows that most participants think that the encyclical has been constructive in promoting dialogue and fostering cooperation between organisations.

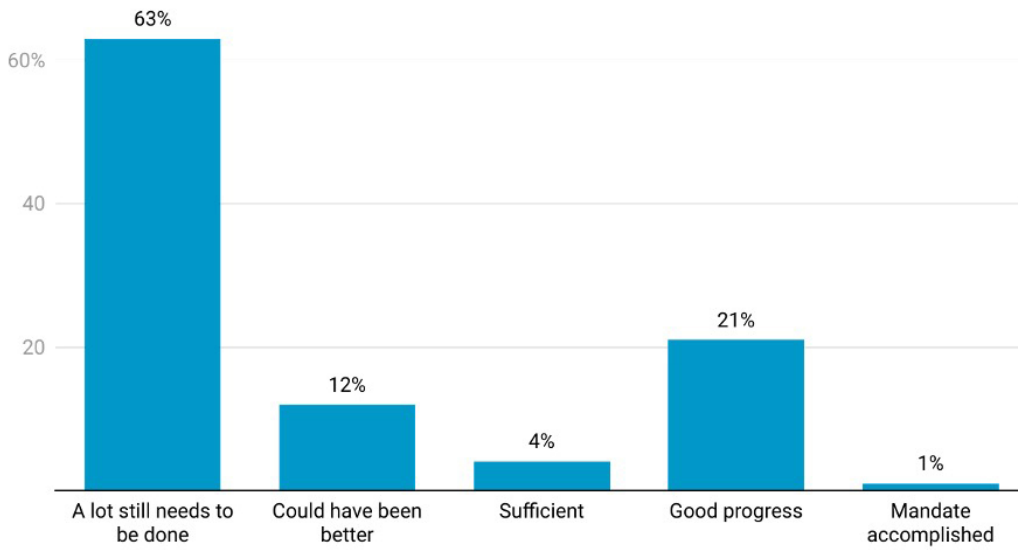


Figure 29: Responses to the question 'Overall, how would you evaluate the adoption of the frame and content of the 2015 Laudato Si' Encyclical within the Catholic context in your area of operation?'

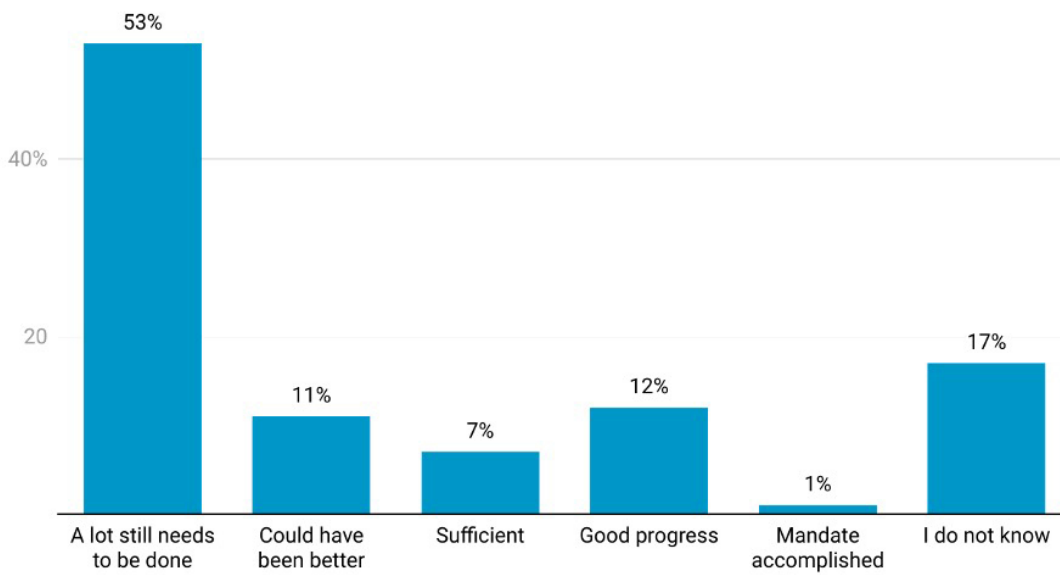


Figure 30: Responses to the question 'Overall, how would you evaluate the adoption of the frame and content of the 2015 Laudato Si' Encyclical beyond the Catholic context in your region?'

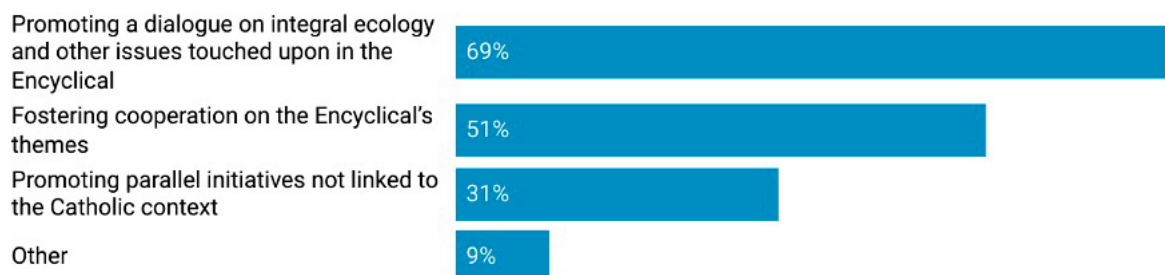


Figure 31: Responses to the question 'What type of influence would you say the Encyclical has had?'

Figures 32 to 34 address how respondents felt about their organisation's responses to integral ecology. Figure 32 shows how respondents felt about their organisation's historic engagement in integral ecology, with most respondents reporting that it is improving. Figure 33 reports respondents' understanding of whether their organisation is expected to increase its level of engagement in integral ecology in the future. About nine tenths of respondents felt that their organisations' involvement in integral ecology would increase. Figure 34 reports respondents' perceptions of what their organisation might need to deepen its involvement in integral ecology. Mirroring the findings of Figure 25, which reported perceived barriers to ecological action, human and financial resources ranks at the top of the responses reported in Figure 34, along with local community support, which one can also associate with person-hours. These three answers were each selected at least twice as often as the answers ranking in fourth position or lower. Again, in some tension with Figures 23 and 24, this suggests that a lack of money and people are perceived by respondents to be the greatest barriers to participation in integral ecology.

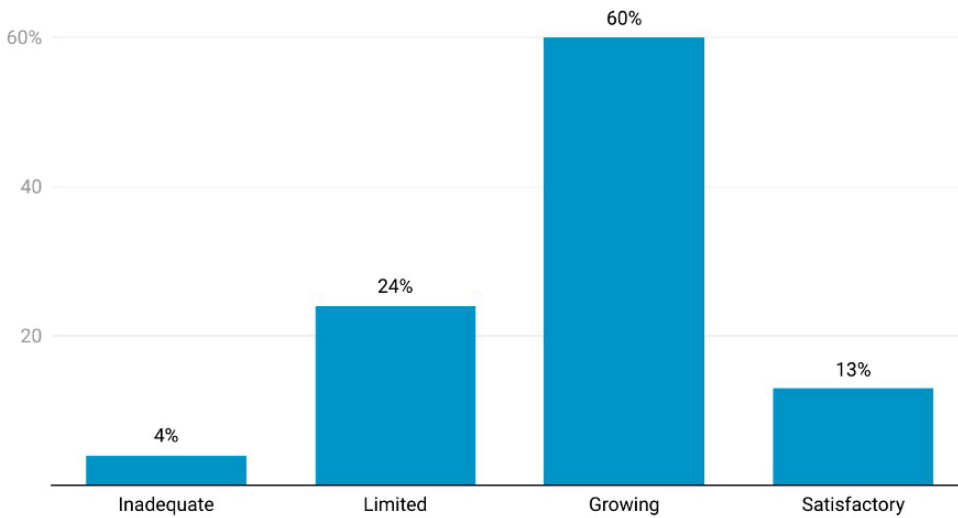


Figure 32: Responses to the question 'How would you rate your organisation's level of engagement in the field of integral ecology to date?'

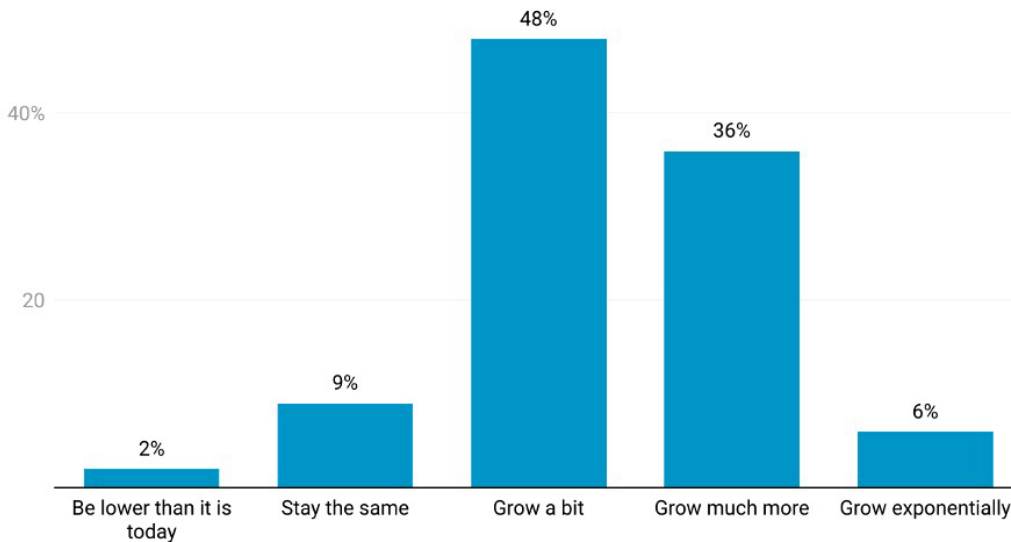


Figure 33: Responses to the question 'In the future, your organisation's level of engagement in the field of integral ecology is expected to?'

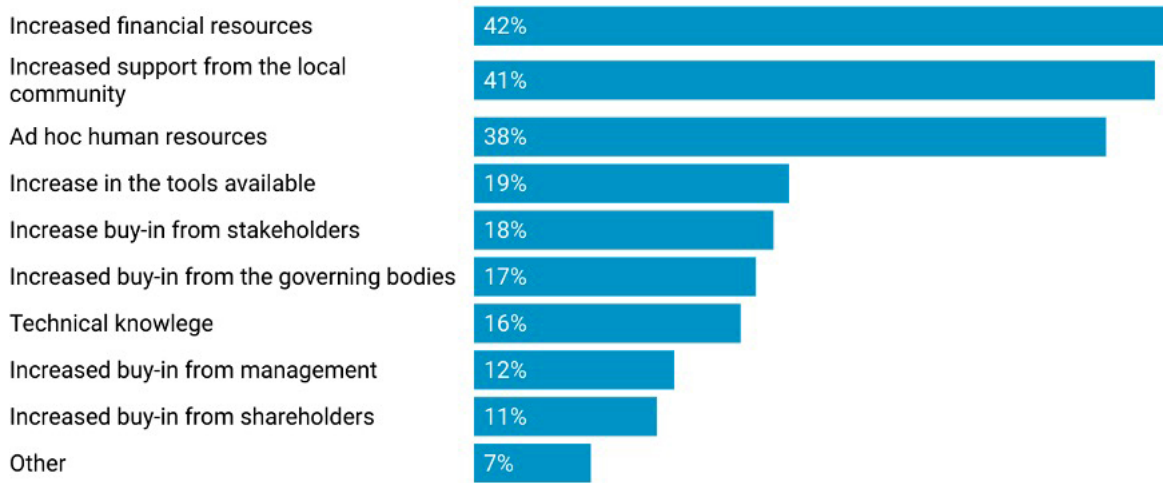


Figure 34: Responses to the question 'What would your organisation need the most for enhancing or deepening the scope of integral ecology-related activities? (Max. 3)'

Figures 35 to 39 describe respondents' beliefs about their organisations' stance on integral ecology. Figure 35 asks about how important the 'Common Good' is to their organisation's understanding of integral ecology, Figure 36 'Society as a whole', Figure 37 'Individuals', Figure 38 'the Catholic Church', Figure 39 'Ecumenical dialogue' and Figure 40 'Interreligious dialogue'. These figures are displayed in roughly decreasing order of perceived importance, where the common good is perceived by 89% of respondents to be 'very important' to integral ecology, whereas interreligious dialogue is perceived by only 47% to be 'very important' to integral ecology.

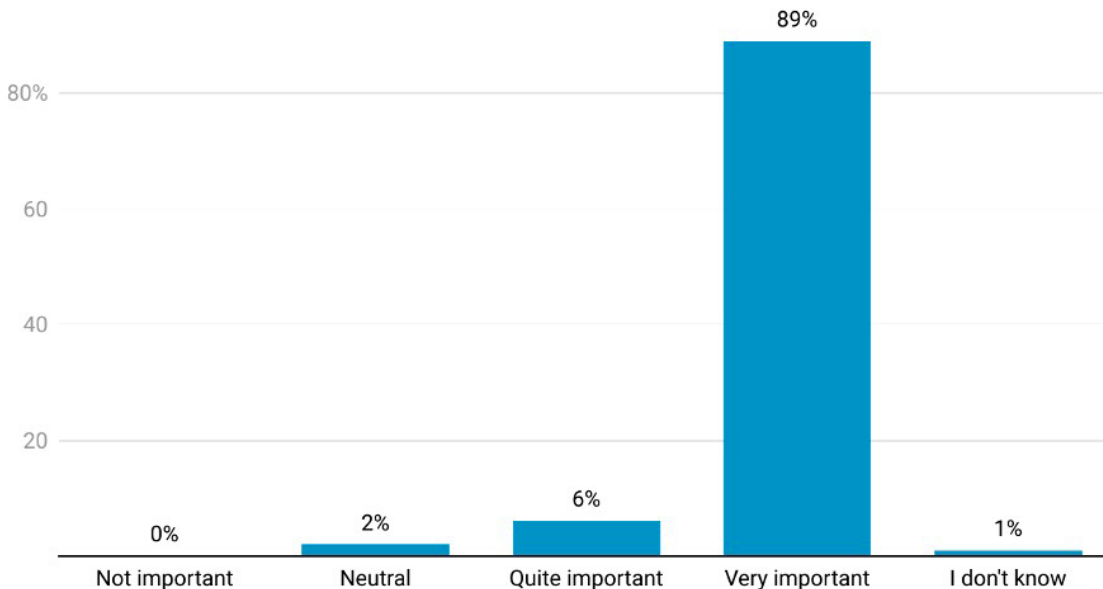


Figure 35: Responses to the question 'From the point of view of your organisation, please rate in a scale from "not at all important" to "very important" how integral ecology relates to the following: Common Good'

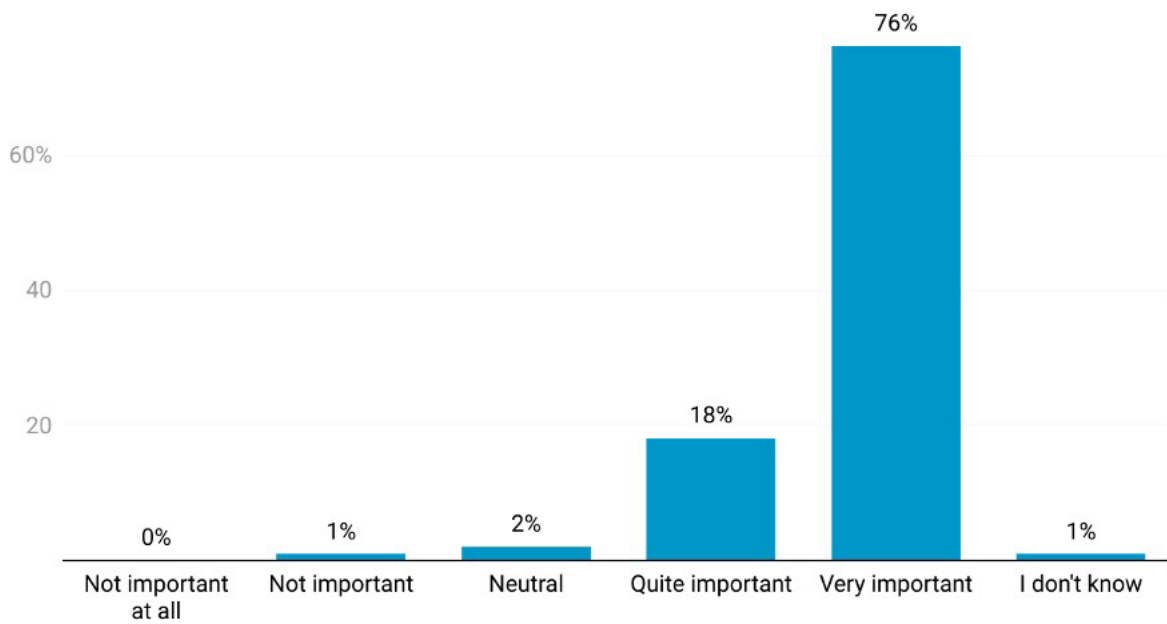


Figure 36: Responses to the question 'From the point of view of your organisation, please rate in a scale from "not at all important" to "very important" how integral ecology relates to the following: Society as a whole'

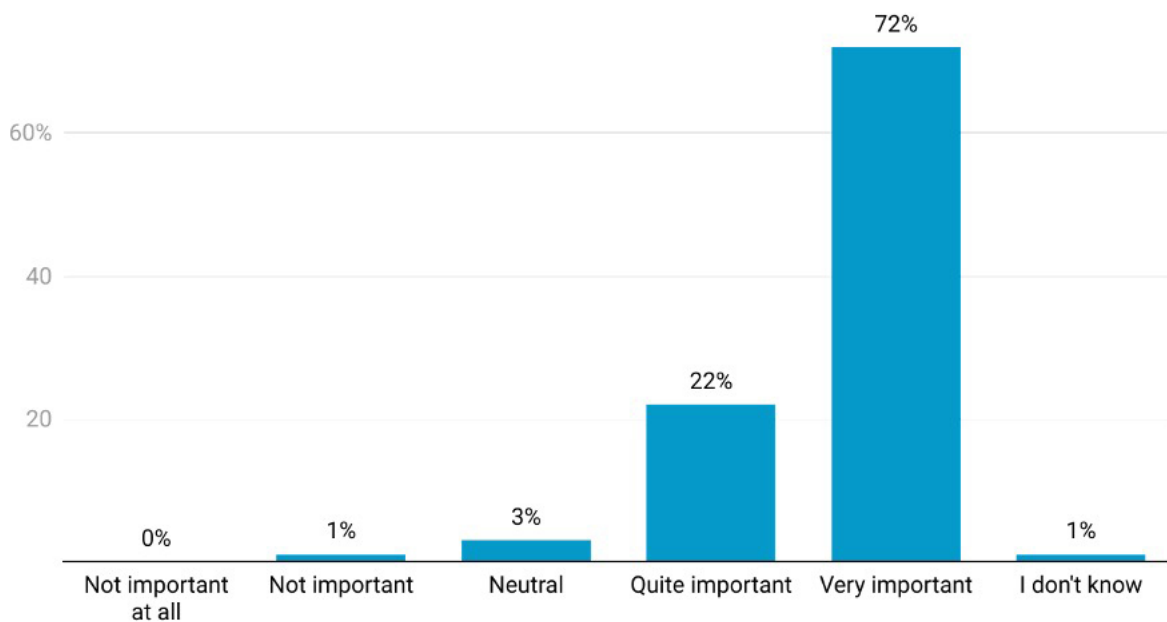


Figure 37: Responses to the question 'From the point of view of your organisation, please rate in a scale from "not at all important" to "very important" how integral ecology relates to the following: Individuals'

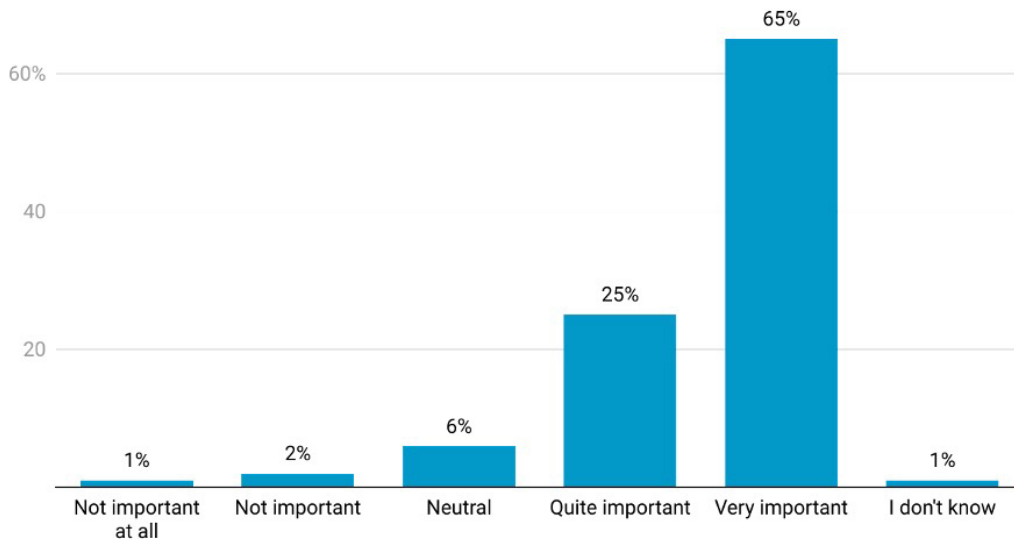


Figure 38: Responses to the question 'From the point of view of your organisation, please rate in a scale from “not at all important” to “very important” how integral ecology relates to the following: Catholic Church'

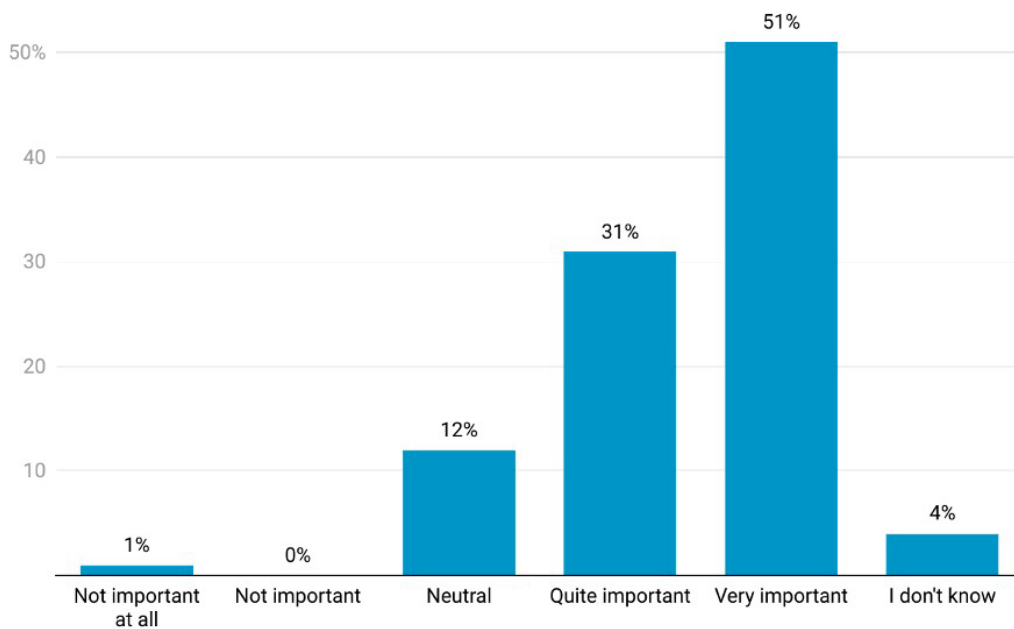


Figure 39: Responses to the question 'From the point of view of your organisation, please rate in a scale from “not at all important” to “very important” how integral ecology relates to the following: Ecumenical dialogue'

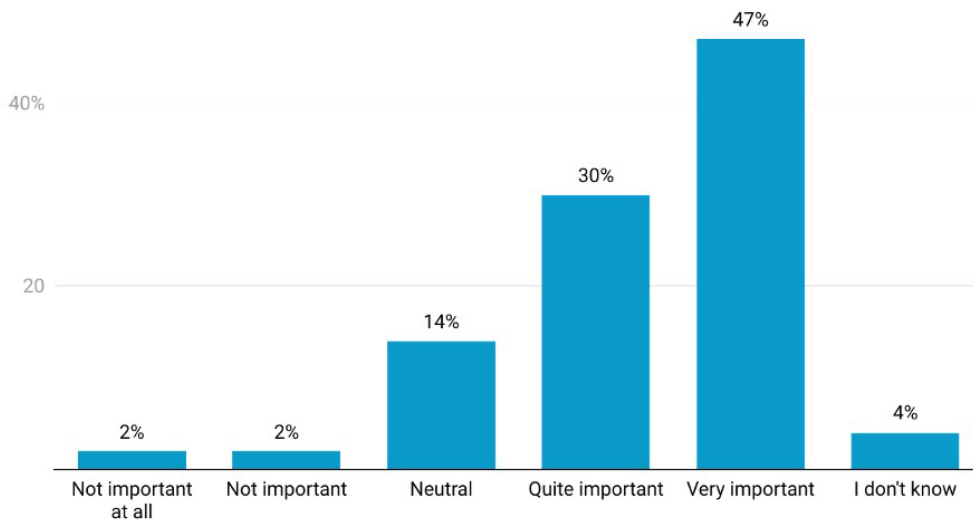


Figure 40: Responses to the question 'From the point of view of your organisation, please rate in a scale from "not at all important" to "very important" how integral ecology relates to the following: Interreligious dialogue'

7. Engagement on Ecology With Other Organisations/ Networks

In addition to those organisations noted in Section 3, a few more border-spanning organisations were mentioned by survey respondents that were not strictly associated with a single geography. Where these allowed websites to be discovered, these are:

- <http://www.ecocongregation.org/>
- <https://www.asvess.it/chi-siamo/>
- <https://www.ctm-grenoble.org/>
- <https://www.chalais.fr/>
- <https://www.legambiente.it/suggerimenti>
- <https://www.manosunidas.org/>
- <https://asvis.it/>
- <https://coordinadoraongd.org/nuestro-trabajo/cambio-climatico/>
- <https://www.fratiminori.it/giustizia-pace-integrita-del-creato/>

8. Demographic Data of the Respondents

This section reports the demographic data of the respondents to the survey. Because this survey was exploratory and did not use a sampling frame by design, conclusions should not be drawn about countries from the number of responses that came from them. Further investigation of national differences is both possible and recommended, but falls outside of the scope of this report. These numbers describe the responses as of November 22, 2023. These numbers do not describe the responses at the close of the survey on January 23, 2024. Participants were asked to state which country their organisation is located in. The responses to this question are visualised in descending order in Figure 41, with the largest group reporting that their organisations are active in more than one country.

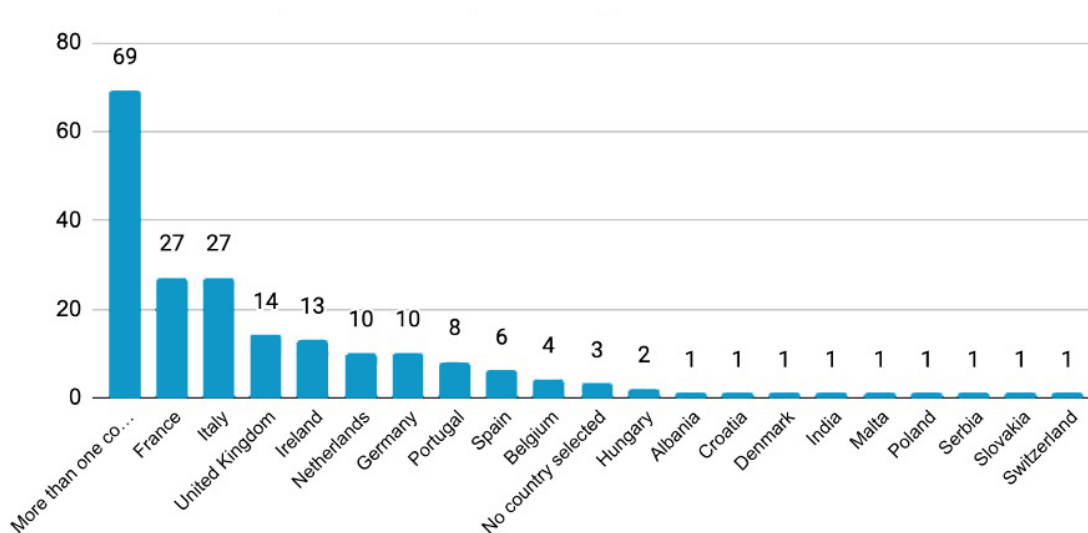


Figure 41: Number of respondents by country

Figure 42 shows that the survey was completed by a roughly even split of men and women. Figure 43 shows that most respondents were in their mid-forties to mid-sixties.

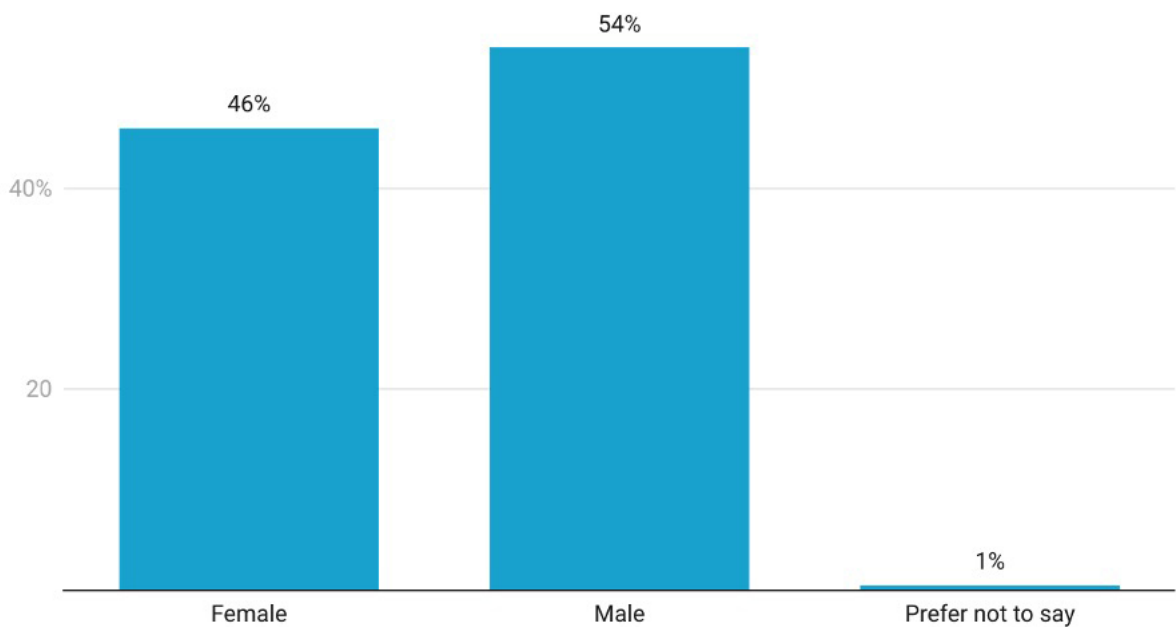


Figure 42: Respondent gender

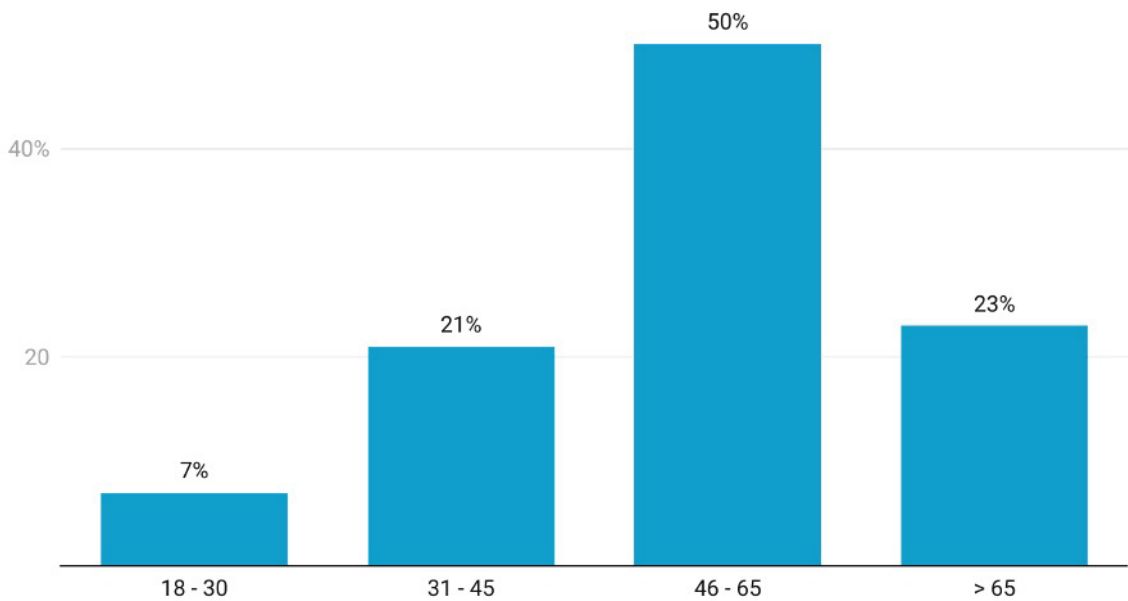


Figure 43: Respondent age

9. Conclusions

This report has given an extended overview of organised Catholic activities in Europe that promote ecological justice and social teachings of the Church on ecology. Although the outstanding work of border spanning organisations like the Laudato Si' Action Platform and the global community of Laudato Si' Animators may often be more visible, through the distribution of the Living Laudato Si' baseline survey we have been able to identify and foreground substantial and replicable engagement in Laudato Si' related activities at the national level throughout Europe. In addition to the illustrative projects that we identified in Section 3, the survey generated many interesting statistical findings that we reported in the subsequent sections. Below, we summarise some of the most important findings into three main categories.

Laudato Si' has had, and may continue to have, a material effect on some Catholic organisations in Europe

- The data shows that half of the respondents' organisations were not engaged in integral ecology before the publication of Laudato Si'. However, almost all respondents reported that Laudato Si' had an effect on their organisations. These findings suggest that Laudato Si' may have had a remarkable conscientising effect on many respondents' organisations.
- More than a third of respondents described the impact of Laudato Si' on their organisation as 'substantial' or greater, suggesting there are many cases in which the conscientising effect of Laudato Si' was powerful, perhaps to a level that one might associate with ecological conversion.
- The responses can be interpreted as expressing ecological hope, with the vast majority of respondents believing that their organisations will engage at least 'a bit,' if not 'much,' more with integral ecology in the future.

Much of the ecological action in Europe inspired by Laudato Si' has been collaborative

- The data suggests that the European response to Laudato Si' has been highly connected and border spanning. Most respondents report that their organisation is part of a larger network that works towards Laudato Si' themes and the vast majority of respondents reported their organisations collaborating with both faith-based and non-faith-based organisations on ecological issues. It is also noteworthy that respondents' organisations were frequently based in more than one country.

- The data shows that volunteers have been essential to ecological action in the Church in Europe. Almost all respondents described some level of reliance on volunteers for ecological action in their organisation, with nearly half of the respondents reporting that their organisations rely entirely on volunteers for ecological action. This finding points to a critical function that engaged members of the laity are performing in responding to Laudato Si'.
- Season of Creation has provided a noteworthy source of cohesiveness in the European response to Laudato Si'. Two-thirds of respondents described their organisation as having participated in Season of Creation.

Tensions in the reporting of barriers to ecological action warrant further investigation

- The most commonly reported barriers to ecological action in respondents' organisations were shortages of the generic categories of person-time and money.
- However, the data also shows that respondents' organisations commonly used only a fraction of their available resources on activities related to integral ecology. These were often the same organisations that identified the absence of money and time as their principal barriers to ecological action, creating a tension in the responses that warrants further investigation.

Appendix A: List of Figures

Section 3

Figure 1: Image of promotional material for event coorganised by [Justice and Peace Belgium](#) addressed by policy makers.

Figure 2: Image of [promotional material](#) for an international summer school promoted by a number of educational organisations including 2 based in Croatia.

Figure 3: Image of the historic plan of Eco-Center supported by the Bishops Conference of the Czech Republic from the [Centre website](#).

Figure 4: Image of School with solar panels included in a [video](#) provided by Caritas Denmark to illustrate their work on climate and sustainable development.

Figure 5: An artist's impression of what the replacement a non-native hedge with an edible hedge will look like when the newly planted hedge has grown, from a [parish in France](#).

Figure 6: The website of the Association of Environmental Representatives of the German Dioceses includes an [interactive map](#) with contact details.

Figure 7: Image of brochure which indicates that the [Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference](#) is cooperating with other actors in society to return 30% of church grounds to nature.

Figure 8: [Front Cover of a guide with 20 case studies](#) produced by Federation of Voluntary bodies International of Christian Inspiration (FOCSIV) with the collaboration of the Italian Episcopal Conference.

Figure 9: Church with '92 high-performance solar modules that has an annual energy yield of approx. 28,000 KWh' in Luxembourg as [reported by the Archdiocese](#).

Figure 10: [Front cover of report of a project](#) involving a range of stakeholders in Malta including Justice and Peace, Environment and Resources Authority and the University of Malta.

Figure 11: Image of modern church during installation of solar panels in the Netherlands as reported by [De Roerom to illustrate a 2021 report by Radboud University](#).

Figure 12: Solar panels installed on top of the Basilica of the Holy Trinity, overlooking the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima [used as an illustration in a report of Laudato Si' research in Portugal](#).

Figure 13: Image from video by the [Scottish Catholic Education Service](#) highlighting their Laudato Si' Schools programme.

Figure 14: Image from [Laudato Si' resources for Children produced by a Slovakian](#) organisation with a range of partners including CIDSE.

Section 4

Figure 15: Responses to the question 'Was your organisation engaged in integral ecology related activities before the publication of the Laudato Si' Encyclical in 2015?'

Section 5

Figure 16. Responses to the question 'In a scale from none to total transformation, how much impact has the Laudato Si' Encyclical had in your organisation / religious community?'

Figure 17. Responses to the question 'What form of engagement has your organisation chosen to address the ecological and social problems framed by Pope Francis' 2015 Laudato Si' Encyclical?'

Figure 18: Responses to the question 'The expected outcome/s of the previous initiative/s was/were a change in:'

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Figure 20: Responses to the question 'Has your organisation participated in events organised to celebrate the Season of Creation?'

Figure 21: Responses to the question 'Has your organisation participated in the Economy of Francesco?'

Figure 22: Responses to the question 'Has your organisation participated in the Global Compact for Education?'

Figure 23: Responses to the question 'What proportion of the time does your organisation commit to integral ecology-related activities?'

Figure 24: Responses to the question 'What share of the available financial resources does your organisation commit to integral ecology related activities?'

Figure 25: Responses to the question 'What challenges has your organisation faced when engaging in integral ecology-related activities?'

Figure 26: Responses to the question 'How much does your organisation rely on volunteers to implement integral ecology related activities?'

Figure 27: Responses to the question 'How much of that engagement takes place in collaboration or alliance with other faith-based organisations?'

Section 6

Figure 28: Responses to the question 'How much of that engagement takes place in collaboration or alliance with other non-faith-based organisations?'

Figure 29: Responses to the question 'Overall, how would you evaluate the adoption of the frame and content of the 2015 Laudato Si' Encyclical within the Catholic context in your area of operation?'

Figure 30: Responses to the question 'Overall, how would you evaluate the adoption of the frame and content of the 2015 Laudato Si' Encyclical beyond the Catholic context in your region?'

Figure 31: Responses to the question 'What type of influence would you say the Encyclical has had?'

Figure 32: Responses to the question 'How would you rate your organisation's level of engagement in the field of integral ecology to date?'

Figure 33: Responses to the question 'In the future, your organisation's level of engagement in the field of integral ecology is expected to?'

Figure 34: Responses to the question 'What would your organisation need the most for enhancing or deepening the scope of integral ecology-related activities? (Max. 3)'

Figure 35: Responses to the question 'From the point of view of your organisation, please rate in a scale from "not at all important" to "very important" how integral ecology relates to the following: - Common Good'

Figure 36: Responses to the question 'From the point of view of your organisation, please rate in a scale from "not at all important" to "very important" how integral ecology relates to the following: Society as a whole'

Figure 37: Responses to the question 'From the point of view of your organisation, please rate in a scale from "not at all important" to "very important" how integral ecology relates to the following: Individuals'

Figure 38: Responses to the question 'From the point of view of your organisation, please rate in a scale from "not at all important" to "very important" how integral ecology relates to the following: Catholic Church'

Figure 39: Responses to the question 'From the point of view of your organisation, please rate in a scale from "not at all important" to "very important" how integral ecology relates to the following: - Ecumenical dialogue'

Figure 40: Responses to the question 'From the point of view of your organisation, please rate in a scale from "not at all important" to "very important" how integral ecology relates to the following: Interreligious dialogue'

Section 8

Figure 41: Number of respondents by country

Figure 42: Respondent gender

Figure 43: Respondent age

Appendix B: Websites Used to Produce County Profiles

The following websites were submitted as part of responding to the survey or further research led to their consideration for Section 3.

Austria

www.pfarre-lainz-speising.at
www.ssm-austria.at
<https://ssmgen.org/>
https://ssmgen.org/?page_id=34
www.caritas.at
<https://www.caritas-wien.at/hilfe-angebote/zusammenleben/pfarrcaritas-und-naechstenhilfe/aktiv-in-den-pfarren/klimaoase>
<http://st-barbara.at/BARBARALADEN%202022/default.html>
<https://www.facebook.com/RepairCafeVoitsberg1/>
<https://www.caritas-vorarlberg.at/ueber-uns/news/detail/news/91318-fuerein-ander-da-sein-im-kleinwalsertal/>

Belgium

<https://www.kerknet.be/organisatie/attent>
www.caritasinternational.be
<https://www.caritasinternational.be/fr/urgence-et-developpement/coherence-renforcer-la-cohesion-sociale-et-la-resilience-des-populations-dans-un-monde-en-mutation/>
www.justicepaix.be
<https://www.justicepaix.be/event/conference-ecologique-transition-limits-and-opportunities/>
<https://diocese-tournai.be/>
<https://diocese-tournai.be/2023/05/15/admirer-notre-maison-commune-pour-mieux-la-proteger/> <https://maisoncommune.be/>
<https://bisdomhasselt.be> <https://www.kerknet.be/zoeken/microsite/artikels?text=laudatoµsite=225>
<https://ecokerk.be>
<https://netrv.be/ecokerk/duurzaam-vastgoed>

Croatia

<https://docatsplit.com/> <https://docatsplit.com/economy-of-francesco/> <https://docatsplit.com/2023/09/09/odrzana-medunarodna-ljetna-skola-franjine-ekonomije-u-splitu/>
<https://Ofs.hr>
<https://ofs.hr/podrucni-susret-za-trajnu-formaciju-posvecen-enciklici-laudato-si/>
<https://frama-portal.ofs.hr>
<https://frama-portal.ofs.hr/?s=laudato>

Czech Republic

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