



# Bees Abroad

*Relieving Poverty through Beekeeping*

## Annual Report Summary of Projects Undertaken

January–December 2015

### *Patrons*

*Most Reverend Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury*

*Jimmy Doherty (Jimmy's Farm)*

*Martha Kearney (Broadcaster and Journalist)*

*Adam Hart (Professor of Science Communication, University of Gloucestershire)*

*Michael Badger, MBE (Past President, British Beekeepers' Association)*

*Brian Sherriff (BJ Sherriff International)*

*Eric Hiam (Maisemore Apiaries)*



# Introduction

Bees Abroad's mission is to support farmers' groups and local non-governmental organisations with capacity-building training and help in securing funding. Our main focus is on building skills that will empower communities and local organisations in beekeeping, environmental awareness and business development. We provide in-country support, as well as free Internet-based advice. Our project managers are all volunteers. They offer project design services, technical training, organisational skills and monitoring of funds to groups that we have undertaken to partner in order that they may develop sustainable self-help programmes and a business-based ethos leading to long-term economic viability.

Using a step-by-step approach, Bees Abroad project managers make a commitment to each project we adopt for as long as is necessary in order to achieve a successful outcome. Our special focus is practical 'farmer-to-farmer' support to develop the group to a point where it is able to run its enterprise as a sustainable business. At this point a decision is taken either to leave a completed project or to scale it up into a larger project or business. Some groups only require training or project design that can be completed after one or two visits, while others may have a more comprehensive and long-term programme.

During the year, three of our projects were completed and we adopted ten additional ones, which brings the total of our registered projects to 30. They are in various stages of development and work on some of the recent registrations will not begin until 2016. Two long-established projects in Nigeria, Maigana and PFFA, are, temporarily we hope, 'on hold' due to difficult political situations in that country.

In 2014, we considered about 45 requests for our help, nearly all of them project proposals. For a variety of reasons, we could not pursue the majority of these. For example, some were merely asking us to provide funding for projects in which we ourselves would have no involvement and the rationale of others, though admirable, did not accord with our poverty-alleviation remit. However, the prime reason was that we simply did not have a project manager able to take on what often looked like a very promising proposal.

Although we were forced to reject so many requests, we were frequently able to offer the enquirer technical advice through e-mails and point them in the direction of Pam Gregory's excellent manuals, which can be downloaded from the Internet.

However, we were able to take a fair number of the project proposals further and on the basis of fuller information elicited from the enquirers, our project managers decided they should visit 13 of them to evaluate the feasibility of their proposals at first hand. Typically such evaluations involve little if any expense since they are conducted as side trips when our manager needs to be in the country anyway, visiting his or her project.

Eight of these feasibility assessments were made during 2015 and resulted in six of the proposals being registered as Bees Abroad projects. The remaining five visits will be made in 2016.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the ever-increasing number of applications we receive for technical support and funding is greater than we can satisfy. Regrettable though this is, it does show that the work Bees Abroad is undertaking is much needed. And we are accumulating a good deal of detailed evidence that the special mentoring and training approach taken by Bees Abroad is extremely effective.





## Pam Gregory

This issue of the Bees Abroad annual Summary of Projects Undertaken is dedicated to Pam Gregory, a founding trustee and dedicated supporter of the charity. Pam died in October 2015, leaving a large gap in the lives of all those who knew her.

Pam was an immensely knowledgeable and practical beekeeper. She had kept bees since 1974 and began work at the Bee Husbandry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food at Trawscoed in 1976. She was appointed seasonal bee inspector and then regional bee inspector for Wales. She obtained her National Diploma in Beekeeping in 1996. She became acutely aware of the plight of many people in the developing world and this was part of her motivation to become involved with Bees Abroad in 1999. Together with Brian Durk, she ran the charity's first project in Cameroon. As well as undertaking many advisory projects, Pam was project manager for the very successful Nkhata Bay project in Malawi and this work is being continued by her husband, John.

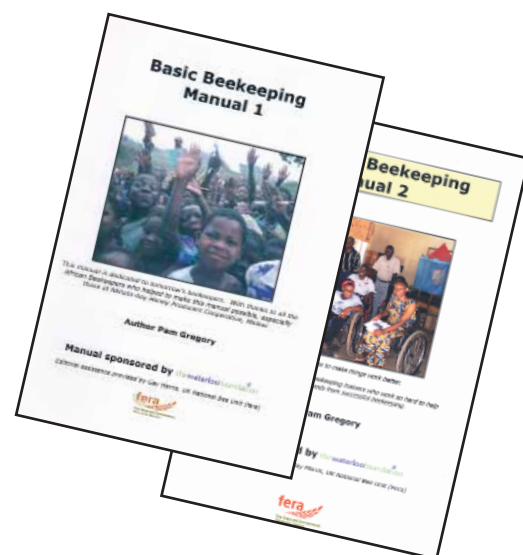
Pam was also involved in her local Lampeter Beekeepers' Association and the Welsh Beekeepers' Association. She wrote detailed and informative text for the Bees for Development website and taught on the VUR-UOS International Training Programme at Ghent University, Belgium.

Beekeeping will be much the poorer for the loss of her original ideas, cheerfulness and enthusiasm.

*Pam was instrumental in establishing the British Beekeepers' Association's Assessment in Modern African Beekeeping*



*Pam's Beekeeping Manuals are a lasting tribute to her commitment and expertise*



## Registered Long-term Projects in 2015

Country	Number of projects	Name of project	UK Project leader
Cameroon	1 established project	Akwaya	Jo Hiscox
Ghana	3 established projects networked for funding and support purposes	ADRUCOM Resource Link Foundation (RLF) Beekeeping Learning and Honey Marketing Centre (BLHMC)	Brian Durk
	5 new projects	ADRUCOM Training Centre ADRUCOM Borehole Abiriw and Beyond Turn to Bees	Brian Durk
		Beekeeping in Brong Ahafo – Phase 1	Trisha Marlow
Kenya	7 established projects	Sinyati Women's Group Kerio Valley SMART MWAITI Women's Group Save the Elephants Sustainable Bee Products Enterprise Development	John and Mary Home
		Kishermoruak Beekeepers	David Evans
	2 new projects	Kisi Beekeeping Project	David Evans
		Kirinyaga Community Development Network	John and Mary Home
	1 project completed during the year	Wings of Mercy	John and Mary Home
Liberia	1 established project	Liberia Training (in collaboration with the Universal Outreach Foundation)	Brian Durk
Malawi	1 established project	Nkhata Bay Honey Producers Co-op	John Gregory
Nigeria	2 projects on hold	Maigana PAFP	Brian Durk and Adebisi New
	3 established projects	Ijebu Ode Beekeepers Nigerian Beekeepers Network Jorafarm and Associates	Adebisi New Brian Durk and Adebisi New Adebisi New
	1 new project	MAMIE Beekeeping Project	Adebisi New
Syria	1 new advisory project	A Village in Syria	Richard Ridler
Uganda	2 established projects	BISUDEF Women's Groups	Roy Dyche
		OYAG Rural Youth Integrated Beekeeping skills	Dave Bonner
	1 new project	Ndoddo Workshop	Geoff Redwood
Yemen	1 established advisory project (terminated due to Pam's death)	Mahra Youth Unity Association	Pam Gregory
Zambia	1 project completed during the year	Monze Women's Project	Roy Dyche

# Projects Undertaken

## CAMEROON

### *Akwaya (090406.BD.AKW.03)*

The work in Cameroon has seen some good developments this past year which have helped to maintain our enthusiasm to overcome the many difficulties we are facing there.

### Honey Show

To start with the good news, Cameroon has held a major honey show. Organised by Simon Ngwaimimbi of Beruda, our first project in the country started by Brian Durk some 20 years ago, the show was held in April in Bamenda, the regional capital of the north-west region. Jo Hiscox, the project leader attended the show, accompanied by Bernard Diaper, a well-known UK honey judge.

The show was an entirely African affair. Stalls were laid out around a field with the most wonderful displays, ranging from herbs to flower arrangements to crafts, as well as honey, wax and other derivative products. The array of containers, pots and jars for the honey was incredible as people relied on the best they could find. There was a strong feeling that biggest must be best! It was only the Beruda project themselves, trained by Bees Abroad, that had commercial and uniform honey jars. But it was the enthusiasm of the occasion that was the most impressive. About 250 exhibitors piled into the ground and everyone was wearing their best national dress.

After the opening ceremony, Bernard donned his judge's hat and jacket and set off with an entourage including the local governor, the regional officer for the ministry of wildlife, farming and agriculture, the leader of the show, Simon, and a general collection of onlookers. The group systematically visited each beekeeper, meeting, shaking hands and hearing their news before looking first at the honey, then the wax and finally the propolis of each exhibitor. Such were the formalities and the difficulties of judging with such a

range of packaging and complete gaggle of onlookers, that the whole process took all afternoon. Finally six of the best and an overall winner in each class were selected. It turned out that the show winner was a local lady beekeeper trained by Simon from Beruda but second and fourth places were held by beekeepers trained by Brian, one from Tombel, home to toba honey in the south, and the other by a man from Buea, also in the south. This was very gratifying since it just shows the impact the training from Bees Abroad is having.

The first day of the show finished with the presentation of the awards. The next day we all reassembled for networking and training with about 50 attendees. Demonstrations of wax processing, honey filtering and storage were given and some hives were made. A



*Bernard Diaper judging the honey show*

*Bernard Diaper presenting the first prize and the blue ribbon for best in show*



beekeeper who had obtained a national hive from France was able to show his own made copies of the hive and it was completely astonishing how accomplished he was working with a very limited range of tools. He clearly has considerable talent and we would have been pleased to buy such a good hive in the UK. Most people are using either a local hive or a KTB (Kenya top-bar) hive but many are improvising and following the manuals produced by Pam Gregory, showing how to make a KTB-type hive from wood and daub, with a thatched roof. The favoured material was bamboo of which there is a plentiful supply in the north-west region. These are practical since everyone is able to obtain or make one, and they are giving good productivity compared with traditional hives.

We left the show, taking with us the honey of the first and second placed bee farmers. Bernard entered these in the UK National Honey Show (NHS) in October. We were delighted that the first-placed honey came second at the NHS and the second-placed came fourth.

### Visiting the Project

We then visited our main project in Akwaya. Having had such a disappointing visit the previous year when the chief and then two further elders, all in the beekeeping group, had died, we were unsure of what we would find. We made the two-day journey out to the beautiful village of Ote with Moses Tabe, the Director of Forudef, the NGO with which we are working. We were terribly disappointed to find little changed. The village have still not recovered from the loss of their leading men and no-one has yet managed to step into their shoes. We had organised a training session but were not sure who might turn up, if anyone. The village is so remote that there is no sanitation, electricity or phone signal, so we sat in the dark after our long journey having been given porcupine stew for dinner with garri. This is like a thick paste made from cassava which forms a pliable dough and is definitely an acquired taste! We waited into the evening to see if any beekeepers might turn up for the training the next day. We were assured the word had gone out well in advance.

We chatted with the two beekeepers from the village and our local trainer, James Akombo, who we have been training since 2009, and late in the evening, when we were beginning to give up hope, the beekeepers began to arrive. The first entered silently and just stood in the shadows until greeted quietly by one of the group, when he advanced to join us. Then some little while later a small group arrived and then gradually through the night pairs and individuals arrived. After some formalities, they were each given some food and stayed to talk and meet with us before all the men departed for the river to swim and wash in the cool of the night. They prefer to trek through the rainforest in the dark as they say they travel more safely.

By morning there were 17 beekeepers ready and waiting to be trained. It was a hugely successful training at one level, as our local trainers are now confident enough to lead the sessions and Bernard was able to add some elaboration of points and to extend the knowledge of the more experienced, while the local trainers took care of the beginners and basic beekeepers. The down side is that only a handful of the beekeepers are actually keeping bees. However, these are doing very well which was encouraging. We need to do more work to support the others to get them started. They are eager to earn the income but are afraid or unable to start because of limited skills, encouragement and funds. If they can start successfully we hope that they will become interested in the role of pesticides in the growing of cash crops such as cocoa that seems to be taking over some parts of the rainforest. The beekeepers seek a balance in the use of pesticides in order to ensure their honey crop and this is a more sustainable approach.

We were encouraged by our visit but realised several beekeepers had trekked the 23 direct miles from the regional capital Akwaya, which is a traditional beekeeping area. Partly out

*Beekeepers gather for the training session*





*The training session in full swing*

of curiosity to see the various types of local hives they are using, we decided to take the road around as we could not make the overland trek through the rainforest. We drove the 300 miles in three days to reach Akwaya town by road. Since there is a greater tradition of beekeeping there, it makes sense for Bees Abroad to capitalise on this, if the people are willing, to extend the tradition and bring more beekeepers into the field. It is also a small step to introduce KTB hives to existing beekeepers on the basis that they make the bees easier to manage and be more productive.

A key hook to encourage more beekeeping is honey production and we would like to increase the quantity on the market to extend the work started by Brian in getting a good price in honey trading between Cameroon and Nigeria. If we can get the honey out to the cities of the south of Cameroon there is a huge untapped market.

Our visit was challenging to say the least. With almost impassable roads, we had a broken shaft, flat tyres and came off the road at one point. The driver was trying to avoid falling into the ravine so was keeping too far to the other side of the road and went off into the ditch against a cliff! We finally arrived in the middle of the night, to be met by the beekeepers we had just trained who had trekked overland to meet us and had been waiting for us for two days.

We saw a huge variety of local hives, met a large number of beekeepers, but found that there are large numbers of other interested persons who, with support, would like to take up beekeeping. We met with the local governor, an MP and the mayor, and all were keen for us to extend our work to their area. We felt this was a very positive meeting and building relationships with the local dignitaries was a very important first step to becoming accepted in the area. We decided to take on training in this area which we are naming Northern Akwaya, as we will capture beekeepers extending towards Ote to the south and, with more beekeepers spread out around the area, it will help the Ote beekeepers to stay on track and expand their beekeeping.

### **Fund Raising for the Honey Centre**

Anne Mason and her husband Rob from Nottingham have been helping Jo with fund raising. They have had an open garden event and Anne is now running a stall at the Nottingham Beekeepers' Association (NBKA) meeting each month. Selling a range of cards,

knitted bees and the like, Anne has raised quite a bit of money. This, along with her sales of teas at the open gardens and money raised by Bernard Diaper from collecting swarms, meant that Jo was able to hand over £2500 to Forudef. This is enough to start building the honey store and filtration room in the village that we planned a few years ago. The rains make it impossible to reach the village for nine months of the year as the roads are impassable and the rivers too high and fast flowing to cross. On our visit to Akwaya, we experienced how terrible the transport and communications are via the official 'road'.



*The rains make it impossible to reach the village for nine months of the year*

So the situation remains unchanged, no honey can be transported out of north or south Akwaya except in the dry season. With the honey store/collective, Forudef would be able to buy the honey at time of production, filter it, store it and then transport it out once a year in bulk. The north Akwaya beekeepers will have no trouble carrying their produce to the honey store at the end of the harvest and all beekeepers will therefore get income at point of production. With the funds raised, this can now start. Having a honey centre in the village will also offer a focus for our work. The villagers will start a tree nursery with bee-friendly plants around the building. Health workers and visitors from the government, such as education, vaccination and agricultural advisors, will be able to stay there and the people will have more opportunities for economic activity and also to improve living standards.

Forudef will also be able to extend its nutrition programme, teaching the benefits of better foodstuffs such as nutritious ground nuts and vegetables. The people cannot understand that the small peanut is more nutritious than the massive root of a cassava plant. Their cooking methods mean that few of the nutrients are retained in their food, so the honey centre will provide a base from which such education can take place as it provides a focus for village activity. This programme of nutrition training has been funded by some Canadians, but joining under one roof brings a greater focus to both our work and can only benefit each of us and the people of the rainforest. Jo also has ambitions to build a latrine in the future which would provide an extra level of health security in this remote place.

This year saw huge moves with the honey show taking place and meeting over 200 beekeepers. It also gave us a focus, meeting so many beekeepers from the rainforest. These people are so isolated, that they do not benefit from developments elsewhere in Cameroon. By extending our work in the Akwaya region and splitting it north and south will give us two groups to train which will both come together to market their honey through Forudef which will get a better price for the farmers in the urban areas.

We feel positive that this project is progressing but acknowledge that it will require a huge investment of time and encouragement to achieve our goal. Working with an active organisation like Forudef in the Akwaya area is the only way that the project will work and we just feel that we need to keep focused and keep encouraging our Cameroonian colleagues because it is so easy to become disheartened when faced with such a difficult environment.

## GHANA

2015 will hopefully be the start of some big changes to our work in Ghana. It was in December we heard that Nana Adobah, our trainer with BLHMC, had been awarded the 'Best Beekeeper in Ghana 2015'.

*Nana Adobah – Best Beekeeper in Ghana, 2015*

Brian Durk made two visits in 2015, the first was from 13 January to 18 February when he was accompanied by three volunteers: Paul Dangel from Philadelphia and Caroline Luxford and Trisha Marlow from the UK. They visited all the project sites in Ghana with the addition of Gyetiase in Ashanti where Ashanti Development, a UK charity, is working and where Victor Ayebo, the Aducom trainer, was to train a group of potential beekeepers. A video of the course was made by Antonella Sinopoli, a member of Ashanti Development, which is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gc59IMJkT0>

The second visit took place in association with a visit to Liberia during November and December.

### *Beekeeping Learning and Honey Marketing Centre (BLHMC) (P10/BD/BLHMC)*

We are coming to the end of our financial support for this project. The biggest problem to be overcome is the lack of running water which is needed for the honey processing area and the washing and toilet facilities. Andrew Beer, who visited with Brian in 2014, promised to raise the extra funding to facilitate the construction of a borehole and the other associated equipment. His fundraising is progressing and should produce enough money for some action to take place next year.

During this year's first visit, we observed the running of a course aimed at beginner beekeepers, with the advantage of using a small but very close training apiary. The course was taught by Nana Adobah who later in the year was awarded 'Best Beekeeper Ghana, 2015' at a ceremony in Bolgatanga.

At the end of the training course, all four



of us were installed as Development Chiefs – two in Nana Adobah's village and two in a neighbouring village.

### ***Adrucum (Northern Region) (041004/BD/ADRU/04)***

Now that the work with BLHMC has virtually finished it is time to turn back to our most northerly project. Victor Ayeebo has completed his training as a Trainer and the project will now move forward, starting with some building work on the land donated by the local chief. Two pieces of land were handed over to us and these were marked out. We found that the most northerly one had a bore hole close by but the village had not been able to raise the finance to complete it.

### ***Royal Bees and Acrudev (Volta Region)***

There were two visits to these projects, the first with the new volunteers and the second by Brian and Victor Ayeebo. During the first visit, we witnessed the handing over of some hives to a women's group. Acrudev has received funding from three organisations: EUCanAID, a Brussel's based third world association, Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) and Melania. The hives and the training of the group have been funded by ACWW. We also met with people from the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI), the government Forestry Department and the Development Institute, a Ghanaian NGO.

During Brian's second visit, we discussed the way forward with a proposal to work with the other Bees Abroad partner projects in Ghana to export beeswax to the UK. The establishment of a project proposal for the Volta Region was also discussed.



*Being installed as Development Chiefs  
Brian Durk (left), Caroline Luxford (above)  
and Trisha Marlow (below)*





*Future beekeepers (and in-country colleagues, right) Sabiye, Brong Ahafo*

### ***Resource Link Foundation and Berekum Beekeeping Association (130105/BD/RLF/01)***

Trisha Marlow took over as Project Manager for the Brong Ahafo region early in 2015 and is currently focusing on developing the cashew farmer project there. Following a visit in early 2015 with Brian Durk and others, it rapidly became apparent that a simpler approach was needed. Taking advantage of routing back from beekeeping in Liberia through Ghana, the communities of Sabiye and Banda Ahenkro were visited in early December and a thorough assessment of their needs was made, including meetings with the Associations. Funding was then released for four initial beginners' courses for 15 beekeepers in and around each of these communities. All attendees are members of beekeeping associations. They farm cashew and other crops to feed their families and a sizeable proportion of members are young women.

Significant funding will be required in the latter half of 2016 and for 2017 as it is hoped that two further impoverished communities will be added to the project. A higher level beekeeping course has been provisionally arranged for November 2017. The local project manager is fully hands-on and in-country to ensure the effectiveness of the first two courses and implementation of a tight budget.

The key beekeepers we work with in Berekum, including our trainer Thomas Manu and a volunteer female trainee, have established a new Association – Berekum Beekeeping Association – so our partnership organisation has changed since the 2014 report. The main issue here, alongside continuing training and equipment requests, is bushfire, a real event as I write this in early February 2016 affecting members' apiaries in Berekum after an exceptional dry season.

## KENYA

Whilst in Kenya, networking always gives the opportunity to meet and discuss beekeeping in-country, raise awareness of the work of Bees Abroad and seek funding and support for current and future projects.

### *Contacts and Networking*

It is always a pleasure to visit and meet with the staff at the National Beekeeping Station in Nairobi who are always supportive of the Bees Abroad input in Kenya.

During our visit to Kenya, the opportunity occurred to meet with Elizabeth Mwhiki from the Climate Change department within DFID, at the British High Commission. Robin M Mbae, head of the Apiculture, Emerging Livestock and Climate Change State Department of Livestock, has always welcomed us to his office for an update and to discuss the challenges we find in Kenya.

Following a conversation at the Welsh Beekeepers' Association Convention, we visited the Shared Interest Foundation in Nairobi. This organisation helps businesses grow by providing management advice and finance to established groups. This may be of benefit to Bees Abroad projects in the future.

In Laikipia, we met with the Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation, Livestock and Fisheries, and Acting Minister for the Treasury, Mr Duncan Mwariri Wanjiru. His support of the BPED Project has been invaluable. Mr Richard Murigu is the sub-county co-operative officer for Co-operative Development Information and Training, and we had the opportunity to thank him personally for his help and support.

Caroline N Lentupuru, who is County Executive Committee Member – Environment, Natural Resources, Energy and Mining in the Baringo County Government, took time out to meet with us to talk about plans to develop the beekeeping in her region.



(left to right)  
*David Njuguna (Executive Project Manager), Joseph (CERA), John Home, Joshua Irungu (Governor, Laikipia County), Mary Home, Duncan Wanjiru (Agriculture Minister, Laikipia County), Harun (CEO, CERA)*



*John and Mary Home with Robin Mbae, Deputy Agriculture Minister*



*Members of staff at the National Beekeeping Station receiving the Bees Abroad Annual Report and copies of Bee Craft magazine*



*Chepsigot School beehive*



*Training at Chepsigot School*

Our leaders from the Rucodea project in the county of Kirinyaga arranged for us to meet with Joseph Gachingiri, Chief Officer – Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. It was good to know he appreciated the Bees Abroad projects and to get to understand his interest in developing the potential across the county.

Time was spent with both Tom Carroll and Chris Davey who have funding for a research to analyse previous donor-funded beekeeping projects and their effectiveness in delivering better livelihoods for subsistence farmers.

We renewed our contact with Mr Kithuma Nzainga, Chairman and Director of the Kenya Honey Council, who has useful beekeeping links throughout Kenya.

We have gathered some very useful information and received many suggestions that we will follow up, as well as promises of help and support.

### *Chepsigot Primary School*

The aim of this project is to provide beekeeping knowledge to the pupils in their Young Farmers' Club and to assess progress by listening to the staff and pupils and seeing the hives.

On this visit, a demonstration to the pupils of how to make protective bee suits from maize sacks was followed by a question and answer session. We then visited their apiary from which they have harvested some honey from the three top-bar hives. Unfortunately, the two new Langstroth hives that had been donated last year had not been colonised. Plans were made to hang the beehives higher up in the trees. The pupils are receiving support from

both the Chepsigot Women's Group and the Cheptebo Rural Development Centre. They will also be able to make contact with the Bees Abroad's in-country trainer, David Njuguna, if necessary.

### *Chepsigot Women's Group*

This project supports 20 members in the development of their beekeeping, harvest and marketing of honey and hive products. During our visit, we assessed progress and discussed whether further Bees Abroad input is needed. We met with the chairlady and members of the group and heard of their progress.

*The Chepsigot Women's Group*



Local County funding is available and this was discussed. Staff at Cheptebo Rural Development have offered to help write a proposal to access it. Affordable honey processing equipment has been provided to improve honey presentation and a further demonstration was given on making added value products to extend the range being produced.

There seems little more that we can offer this group as we have taken it as far as we can, although we will remain in contact and continue to take an interest in their progress. No further visits have been planned.

### *Cheptebo Rural Development Centre*

The Centre has a demonstration farm and conference centre and wish to develop beekeeping as part of this. Four members of staff have received training at the National Beekeeping Station and a four-hive demonstration apiary has been established. This has all been funded by Bees Abroad.

During our visit, we took the opportunity to continue training staff in value addition and improved honey processing to produce items from their recent harvest that can be marketed through their farm shop.

The Centre is planning a one-year general agricultural course for 50 students and this will include a beekeeping element which will be presented by Bees Abroad's in-country trainer, David Njuguna. They also are planning a commercial apiary of 10 hives that will be located on the 50-acre site.

### *Kishermoruak*

Our project here is a partnership with Ridgewood Rotary Cub, from New Jersey in the USA, which had helped build the village primary school in earlier years.

In Maasai culture, it is quite normal for young girls to be betrothed at an early age and most are married by the age of 14. The dowries received are a great source of wealth for families but the young girls have no chance of an education or careers. However, a group of 30 women in Kishermoruak is aiming to change this. And they are using the money they earn from beekeeping to do so. They are paying for their daughters to stay as boarders at the local primary school, with the aim of giving the girls the chance of attending the high school at the local town of Narok and, eventually, to have fulfilling careers.

Bees Abroad started training at the beginning of 2015 and the project has been a great success. All the honey produced in that year has been sold, enabling seven girls to live at the primary school with two attending high school – the first girls from the village ever to do so.

There are great plans for the future. The women have saved enough money to buy a small plot of land on the main tourist road to the Maasai Mara wildlife reserve and are building a shop with a honey packing room. They are also looking forward to learning how to make other products from beeswax, including face and body creams and lip balms, to sell in the shop.

The project has created a lot of interest amongst women in neighbouring villages who also see the benefits of an education for their daughters. Who knows, maybe future female teachers, business women, doctors and community leaders will be there partly as a result of training by Bees Abroad.

*A training session at the primary school*



## *Bee Products Enterprise Development Project (BPED), Laikipia*

BPED is a three-year project which aims to improve the living standard of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist households in the arid and semi-arid lands of Laikipia County and lower Samburu County.

The project began in October 2013 with funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) through Bees Abroad and it is being advocated by Centre for Research and Advocacy in Human Rights (CERA Rights) which is a non-governmental organization registered in Kenya and located in Nanyuki Town.

Bees Abroad is helping farmer groups to build a self-help, economically viable and sustainable programme in beekeeping. Many families including marginalised groups and households headed by women become empowered to reap the benefits from harvesting honey and other hive products to provide nutrition and a sustainable income with which to buy food, medicine and education for their children.

### Main Objectives

- To use beekeeping to raise the income of 900 pastoral households, including those who are marginalised, by providing improved production, value addition, trade and profit sharing.
- To alleviate poverty through advancing beekeeping skills and supporting bio-conservation and bio-enterprise in 'Arid and Semi-Arid Land' (ASAL) in Laikipia County and lower Samburu County.

This project is supervised in the UK by Bees Abroad project leaders Mary and John Home, together with David Evans, and the day-to-day operations are under the management of Kenyan staff, led by the Executive Project Manager, David Njuguna, with assistance from an office accounts administrator. The project has been divided into four regions. Each with a with a Senior Field Officer and assistant officer who are skilled in beekeeping training. In addition the project has three women trainers who specialise in value-added products. They have now been joined by two part-time marketing specialists. All the staff are respected in their local communities and are making a contribution to the lives of so many households.

*John and Mary Home with the project's field officers*



Devolution in Kenya brings government closer to the people, with county governments at the centre of disseminating political power and economic resources to Kenyans at the grassroots. The local Governor of the Laikipia region and his staff, particularly the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister for the Co-operatives and Business Development, have given the project support and encouragement and have helped with plans to establish a honey co-operative in each area. These provide facilities for joint marketing of members' honey, thereby gaining better value from the price they receive. They have also provided training to run the co-operatives.

### *Why Bee Products?*

Rural people are being taught that keeping bees with improved management can be unique and highly rewarding, as bees

contribute greatly towards pollination of crops and the environment. The BPED project focuses on adding value to products from the hive for increased household incomes and food security. This is achieved not only through the sales and use of honey, but also through beeswax once it has been separated from the honey and rendered clean. This provides a sustained income throughout the year from the production of a wide variety of products such as beeswax candles, which burn brighter, longer and cleaner than typical wax candles, lotions, lip balms, etc. Much of this production is carried out by the women in the groups who have a natural aptitude for this and for marketing, particularly now that we have been able to achieve KEBS (Kenya Bureau of Standards) status for many of their products.

The past two years have been challenged by climate variations that have led to changes in the weather pattern and periods of drought. This has affected the project and the production of honey. Nonetheless, the relevance and sustainability of the project has not been compromised. As a mitigation measure, the project has continued to encourage farmers to plant drought-resistant bee-friendly forage that the bees can depend on during dry spells, thus reducing the chance of the bees migrating. In some of the communally owned land, the community has ensured that bee reserves have been established that contain forage for the bees between the two main honey harvesting seasons in the project area.

In the event that some bees will migrate, the respective farmers have been trained to take advantage of this to harvest the empty combs and extract the beeswax which is the main ingredient in making of soaps, body creams and candles. With the onset of the rains, the farmers have further been trained to bait the same hives to attract new colonisation. This has ensured that, even though honey production decreases as a result of drought, the farmers continue to earn money from the sale of other value added hive products.

## Project Benefits/Outcomes

### At the household level:

- Diversification of household sources of income.
- Household poverty reduction.
- Increased household food security.
- Initiation of bee products and micro-enterprises.
- Increased honey production for economic, cultural and social use.

### At The Community Level

- Employment creation through bee product enterprises.
- Increased crop production as a result of pollination.
- Environmental conservation as a result of increased interest in conservation of forage for the bees.
- Reduced poverty as incomes accrued from sale of hive products is used locally.
- Decreased dependency on food aid as households have incomes to purchase food items.

## Summary of the Bee Products Enterprise Development Project

**Grant Period:** August 2013–July 2016

**Project implementer:** Bees Abroad UK

**Project partner:** Kenyan NGO, Centre for Research and Advocacy in Human Rights

**Project funder:** DFID through Bees Abroad UK

**Project location:** Laikipia County and parts of Lower Samburu County

**Grant amount:** KES 32,268,650 (£221,914)

**Project Outcome:** diversified livelihoods and increased income for 900 pastoralist and agro-pastoral households in the ASAL of Kenya, including a proportion headed by most vulnerable groups

## Key Achievements

- Recruited and actively working with 1245 beekeeping households. All are applying the skills acquired of which 49% are men and 51% women.
- 574 households now own at least five individually owned hives.
- 523 households have increased their household income by more than 15% from a baseline average of KES 13,188.92 (£90.71) per month to an average of KES 15,427.64 (£106.11) per month.
- 971 households are making hive products for sale.
- 458 households have planted at least five new bee-friendly trees/shrubs.
- 40,761.68 tonnes of honey worth KES 6,081,723 (£41,827), body creams worth KES 201,120 (£1383.21) and wax worth KES 11,950 (£82.19) have been produced and sold.
- Beekeepers in the area of operation have been organised into four co-operative societies; two are already registered and the others are in the process of being registered. An existing dormant beekeeping co-operative has also been revived through the project.
- Four business plans have been developed for the four co-operatives (proposed and registered).
- A bee products market survey has been undertaken and the findings used to establish 15 regular outlets.
- 11 beekeepers' groups have been facilitated to acquire the standardisation mark from KEBS.
- The project participants have formed a working relationship with the County government where the Minister in charge of Agriculture is the appointed arbitrator of the project. They are also working closely with the Department of Co-operatives through which one of the beekeepers' co-operatives has received a capital grant of KES 250,000 (£1720) from the East African Wildlife Society and the county has promised to support the co-operative with an additional KES 350,000 (£2407) to modernise its equipment.

## Challenges

- Climatic variation leading to frequent unpredicted droughts.
- Limited financial resources to cater for all the demands from existing and prospective beekeepers.
- Terrain and vastness of the project area sometimes limits effective follow-up.

## Lessons Learnt

- Beekeeping is a potential alternative source of livelihood for the pastoral communities in the ASALs if it is well harnessed.
- Although beekeeping is seemingly a male domain, women, if given a chance, can also actively engage and adopt the same.
- An integrated approach to beekeeping is necessary for sustainability.

## Key Gaps for Future Programming

- Expansion of the project to cater for the existing demand from the existing and potential beekeepers.
- Capacity building of the co-operatives for sustainability.
- Adoption of an integrated approach to beekeeping through tree planting and water conservation initiatives.

## LIBERIA

The planned visit in 2014 did not take place because of the outbreak of the Ebola virus. As there were no women involved in the work carried out in 2013, Brian Durk arranged for a female trainer to be involved in this year's training sessions. Idris Muhammad Barau, from the 'Beekeeping Extension Society' in Zaria, Nigeria, and Fidelia Maih, from 'Beruda' in Cameroon, were to be the paid trainers, with Brian as the coordinator. Trisha Marlow also attended as a volunteer to help with training and to undertake assessments of trainers.

We carried out three workshops covering basic beekeeping. One was for a group of relatively new beekeepers. There was an advanced session for the previously trained beekeepers and also one on beeswax processing and production of body creams for both groups.

The training took place at Ganta in Nimba County on the Liberia/Guinea border, about 260 km from Monrovia. It was held at the Pure Liberian Honey house. During our practical training sessions we came upon a hive where the bees had absconded, This was similar to problems reported with the hives during 2014. Photographs had been sent but nothing could be identified from them. On inspection, we found small hive beetle adults running round and plenty of small hive beetle larvae.

During the time we were at the training, we assessed four of the advanced trainees on their capabilities as trainers. We concluded that three of them were fully capable of being awarded Bees Abroad Trainer's certificates and the fourth was recognised as an Assistant Trainer.



*The training session with both groups*



*Wax moth and small hive beetle larvae (top)*

*Small hive beetle larvae (bottom)*



*Trisha Marlow with the four trainers*

## MALAWI

### *Nkhata Bay Honey Producers Co-op (NHPC)*

This is the second report of the beekeeper 'hot-housing' and intensive training being carried out by Nkhata Bay Honey Producers Co-op (NHPC) and Bees Abroad in Nkhata Bay, Malawi, between 2014 and 2017 with funding from the Waterloo Foundation.

Pam Gregory was the driving force behind this project but sadly she passed away in October 2015. John Gregory and James McCambridge will continue to deliver this project in her name to the very best of their abilities. Here are some wise words from Pam's original proposal considerations to the Waterloo Foundation in January 2014:

*Dear Simon*

*Thank you for your quick response in respect of the beehives and maybe a little explanation will help when the trustees meet. I certainly normally encourage people not to take loans for hives and to stick with their tried and trusted traditional methods which are too often denigrated and not valued enough, especially by the policy makers. In many ways I agree with you (and Nicola) about loans for hives too. They can sometimes be traps for the unwary and I have seen sad examples of loan defaults in many places.*

*My own approach until now has been to advocate that people make their own top-bar hives from low-cost local materials and I know this to have been successful in many places. It has been enthusiastically adopted in Uganda where Bees Abroad provided the top bars (using economies of scale to get them well cut by machine) and people made the hive body from their own resources. This worked quite well in Malawi too when we tried it on a small scale but it was not incredibly popular. I am afraid my opinion is that Malawi people seem to be rather aid-dependant and cutting through this idea is hard. We have already had a tough battle with the notion that we will not pay people to come to our courses.*

*Initially I thought that if we got the market right then people would recognise the opportunity and use their own resources to build low-cost hives after training or use traditional hives and then set up their own small businesses. However, I have found in practice that, although this works rather well for men, it doesn't seem to be the case for*

*Beehive delivery*



*women. Women very rarely have the same access to the finances and also lack the skills that men have to make the hives (even traditional ones) themselves. Since traditional beekeeping is essentially a male activity, this is not really surprising.*

*Traditional hives are not without cost, even if self-constructed, and are not particularly easy to make. In Malawi they are the bark hive types with a huge peg that I imagine would take considerable strength to construct, and women don't get to plant, select or cut trees either (highly taboo as it confers land rights and women don't seem to get those very often!). In addition, the hives are set up, often quite high, in the trees and there are cultural constraints about women climbing trees. Certainly women rarely gain access to traditional hives. That*

*is why we are targeting women and maybe older men and those who are disabled, who would find the tree climbing hard/unacceptable.*

*The top-bar hives do help to overcome the difficulties these groups have in gaining entry to beekeeping and they do have advantages, the biggest being that colonisation rates can be improved. Colonisation is best in traditional hives placed high in the trees but, to support women and vulnerable others, new ideas are needed.*

*That is really why we are proposing to work intensively with people so they are enabled to maximise their productivity and, in particular, with the groups mentioned (women, older men and the mildly disabled or HIV/AIDS affected people). In fact everyone likes the more modern hives. They are easy to work with, they have harvesting advantages and frequently get bigger yields because they are larger in volume, but the critical thing is that it removes the constraints on productivity that poor natural colonisation (ie, colonisation based solely on swarms deciding to enter your hive rather randomly) can cause. It is easy to split a colony in a top-bar hive and so control colonisation and this means that every hive can potentially be in use whereas not all traditional hives will be colonised. And since we would have to buy-in hives, we may as well have those that offer most advantages.*

*Not that top-bar hives are the be all and end all, I do agree, but they do have their uses in some circumstances such as the one we are proposing. We may have to scale back our ambitions.*

*Kind regards, Pam*

## **Waterloo/NHPC plan for 2015**

### **Mr Soko's group**

Mr Soko has 12 trainees who received 100 hives in 2014. They have had four individual visits to assess progress in setting up the hives and producing honey. In 2015, all the hives must be set up and a report made on how many are colonised. The report on the 100 hives indicates that 40 have been colonised, which is about as good as could be expected in the first year.

In 2015, Mr Soko made two more visits to each trainee (10) and delivered one training session for a whole day, which covered making top-bar hives and running a beekeeping business.

In summary:

- one training day in the village
- 20 visits (two each to the ten trainees)
- Mr Soko attended training at NHPC with all the trainers (hive making and business management)
- no more equipment was loaned out to other groups
- honey to be repaid to NHPC at 6 kg per hive (600 kg in total)
- report on colonisation indicating 40 hives have been colonised.

### **The Other Four Trainers' Groups**

In 2015, the other four trainers each selected their 10 trainees. They ran two training days. NHPC has built 200 hives in preparation of supplying five hives per person for next year's swarm season. Once the year is finished and the hives and training completed, NHPC will check what money is left and will work out how many more hives can be built.

In summary:

- selected 10 trainees for each for the four trainers (40 trainees in total)



George Kamanga and Lenson Simumba

- ran two training days per group. These two days are on loans and loan repayment to NHPC and a refresher course including dividing colonies
- each trainer made four visits per person in their group (400 visits in total)
- trainers will attend a training course at NHPC on hive making and business management. (These two courses are for 2016 except for Mr Soko)
- five hives per person (200 beehives in total) to be delivered in 2016.

### Lenson and George

This was a busy year for Lenson and George, the managers of NHPC. They trained all the trainers in making beehives (a refresher course) and on running a business (one training day at the office – no payment for the trainers or NHPC, but a sensible lunch – not meat - was provided). Pam helped to plan this very short business course by e-mail but Lenson will have covered this in his college work and can explain simple ideas like capital, investment, interest and loan repayment. Also included was how to save and information about bank accounts. The hive making took most of the day but was essentially a refresher course.

In summary:

- reported to Pam and James how much each hive cost to build
- kept separate accounts for the hive making
- sent Pam and James a list of the people in the four new groups along with the name of the trainer and the village they are from
- planned a business course with help from Pam
- ran a training day to cover hive making and business planning
- kept records on the honey coming from Mr Soko's group for hive repayment.

### Summary of Visit by John Gregory in November/December 2015

The honey season was late this year because of drought, but when it started, the honey flow came in very quickly. Farmers have a lot of expenses over Christmas, such as school fees and fertiliser for the maize crop, so, since NHPC pays cash on delivery, the farmers were coming to NHPC first because the other honey buyers don't pay cash on delivery. By Christmas, we had 12 tonnes of raw honey delivered to us and we had delivered two tonnes of bottled honey to the capital city, Lilongwe. This had to be done in two trips as the truck Pam and John donated eight years ago can only carry a maximum of one tonne at a time.

*Filtering honey farmers have brought to NHPC*



There was more honey to buy from the farmers but NHPC can only buy it when they have sold more of their stock.

When the NHPC processing premises was initially built, it was on the far side of the forest, miles from any other buildings or habitation. Recently, the forest has been levelled and a brand new hospital erected. It has come to the attention of local health and safety (H&S) department that the presence of large numbers of bees around the NHPC building is causing some anxiety to visitors and workers at the hospital. H&S has suggested that some sort of wall or barrier be erected by NHPC to keep bees and people apart. This expense cannot be justified by NHPC at the moment as they are already juggling to keep the business solvent.

## NIGERIA

Due to economic hardships and security issues, operating conditions in Nigeria continue to be difficult for both local and UK project officers.

To progress new enquiries to registered projects, Bees Abroad (BA) applies selective criteria to ensure value for money and sustainability. We accept enquiries only from formally constituted community groups and development actions include plans for new BA-trained beekeepers to market honey and secondary bee products to generate income for poverty alleviation.



*The five female beneficiaries at the beginning of the MAIME project, with their families*

BA's approach in assessing new enquiries and developing projects is in partnership, in country, with local contacts trained by BA and local NGOs. Local project managers are local beekeepers, trained and or assessed by Bees Abroad as beekeepers and beekeeping trainers, with whom we have a long standing relationship (five years or more), who also run their own enterprises or beekeeping groups. Oversight for project development, supervision, funding provision, monitoring, reporting and ongoing support continues to be provided by dedicated project managers in the UK.

There are currently two local project managers operating in-country. One – Idris Barua (Beekeeping Enterprises) – is in the north and one is in south-west Nigeria – Oreyemi Tunde Adenola. The UK-based project managers are Mrs Bisi New (Trustee), who is Nigerian by birth, and Brian Durk, who is a highly experienced beekeeping trainer who also works in Ghana and Liberia. Idris has also been assisting Brian with the training work in Liberia.

This country-specific policy means that BA is able to respond to enquiries for assistance swiftly, without the need for or expense of a UK-based project manager travelling to Nigeria to carry out assessments. This approach saves a great deal of expense and enables BA to deliver a sustained quality service in spite of the political threats in risks of travel in country.

### Country Strategy

The longer term aim (2–5 years) is to develop a national network of BA-certified local project managers operating in country. BA aims to achieve this objective by training and certifying beekeepers from among selected members of the Nigerian Bees Abroad Beekeepers' Network. Given ongoing economic and political issues in country, BA expects the volume of enquiries to continue to grow in 2016.

Project initiation is based on evidenced need, working beekeeper to beekeeper with the aim of using beekeeping for poverty alleviation.

### Summary

One project was completed and one new one initiated in 2015.

### *MAIME Honey Foundation, SW Nigeria (P15/BN/MBP)*

Margo Abayomi Evergreen Memorial Foundation (MAMIE) is a Nigerian charity registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission. MAIME generates income from trading forest



The hives are colonised

products and reinvests profits into new projects. The group is located in a riverine forest by the Osun River, 20 miles from the nearest big city, Ibadan, in 200 acres of virgin forest used to produce palm oil as the main income-producing activity for poverty alleviation in the local area.

The MAIME Foundation approached Bees Abroad with a project proposal. After some discussion and further project development, the rationale agreed for the project was to create new beekeeping capacity within MAIME as a basis for developing beekeeping for poverty alleviation with forest workers over time. The project was focused on women – four wives of forest workers already employed by MAIME. To provide support and sustainability for future training, the forest manager would be trained as a beekeeping trainer. Three out of the five trainees were illiterate which meant training was delivered orally by Oreyemi Tunde Adenola (BA's local trainer) and reinforced by regular practice. Training also has to fit into the existing programme of forest work and family care duties. This project will benefit a particularly disadvantaged group and a number of children.

### *Jorafarm and Associates Beekeepers, South-west Nigeria (P13/BN/JAB)*

Jorafarm is an existing beekeeping cooperative which contacted Bees Abroad to access modern beekeeping management training and information. Project aims were to provide train-the-trainer training for five beekeepers; BA specified two of the five trainees must be female. In addition, the trainees undertook subsequently to train 16 members of the association.

### **Project Outputs and Outcomes**

As a result, ten new beekeepers were trained (six women, four men). Six are beekeeping trainers who are currently engaged with 16 new beekeepers locally, with more to come in 2016. Forty top-bar hives, personal beekeeping kit, smokers and hive tools were manufactured. Project action reached a total of 39 beneficiaries who benefited from training and income generation as a result of completed projects. Total project cost was £2496 with a cost per beneficiary of £64. Participants who completed training received beekeeping certificates.

The projects were funded by the Rotary Club of Gloucester Severn (£1500) and Bees Abroad, which raised funds specifically to carry out the project. BA fundraising for Nigeria is carried out by project managers in the UK who give talks and presentations, deploy collecting tins and complete funding applications.

A hive-making session



For 2016, Bees Abroad continues to link actively with projects sites at MAIME and Ijebu-Ode (south-west) as well as the Bees Abroad Nigerian Beekeepers' Network (NBN). The NBN involves 17 beekeeping groups around the country, networked to develop regional project actions on an ongoing basis, as BA receives new enquiries. One specific objective for NBN in 2016 is to secure funding to deliver one or more of the development objectives specified with the group in 2014. Project actions with BES Maigana (north) and PAFPI (south-east) are currently on hold because of the prevailing conditions in country.

## Project Summary

Project Name	Project Summary	BA Reference
MAMIE Beekeeping Project	Ongoing to December 2016. A one-year training programme for four wives of forest workers and the forestry manager, in a rural isolated community. Beneficiaries: 15 adults, 8 adults, 6 children, 1 forest manager. Cost per beneficiary: £66.40.	P15/BN/MBP
Jorafarm and Associates Beekeepers	Completed December 2015. To provide train-the-trainer training for four beekeepers in Ile-Ife in this community group. They subsequently trained 16 group members as beekeepers. Beneficiaries: 20 households, 43 adults, 12 children. Cost per beneficiary: £25.	P13/BN/JAB
Ijebu Ode Beekeepers	Project to develop beekeeping training, trading and networking in a rural farming community. Group received a 'Train the Trainers' (TTT) programme. It is a founder member of Bees Abroad Beekeepers' Network Nigeria. Tunde Adenola (BA local contact and trainer) supports BA enquiries.	041107/AA/LJO/03
Nigerian Beekeepers' Network	This beekeeping network was formed in late 2008 when a small amount of funding was given by Bees Abroad for some training to be carried out by Idris (BES) to trainers from Ijebu-Ode, Ughelli and Bonny Island. New projects and project enquiries are networked with the existing group. The group has grown from 6 to 17 groups of beekeepers across Nigeria.	P10/BD&ADA/NBN
BES Maigana Beekeeping Project	Project actions are currently on hold. The project is now divided into three phases to cover the whole of Kaduna State. The first phase began in February 2008.	031203/BD/BES/01
PAFPI (was OPN)	Project actions are currently on hold. The project is situated in the Delta Region, the highest risk area. BA is investigating the possibility of working from outside the Delta hot spot.	031203/BD/OPN/02



*A villager sits by a stack of traditional log hives*

## A VILLAGE IN SYRIA

In this project Bees Abroad is supporting the charity 'A Village in Syria' (AVIS) in its endeavours to re-establish beekeeping in a village which has been severely affected by war. Syria has a long and rich tradition of beekeeping, earning the name of a 'Land of Milk and Honey' in the Bible. The objective of AVIS is to help the inhabitants avoid the need to migrate by re-establishing self-sufficiency.

We explored the possibility of introducing top-bar hives on the basis that they cost less

than those used locally, but came to the conclusion that communication about how to build and use them was impossible. We co-authored an article in Bee Craft about beekeeping in Syria and gave support to a number of A Village in Syria's events by our attendance.

We will continue our support into 2016 in the hope that the peace returns and we might be able to do more.



*The main house in the village where 62 people lived when the temperatures fell to -17 °C*

## UGANDA

### *The BISUDEF Women's Beekeeping Project, Hoima (P11/RD/BIS)*

The project was started in May 2012, its aim being to help vulnerable women in Uganda's Hoima District to provide for their large households by introducing them to modern, environmentally sustainable beekeeping as a source of much-needed income. Many of the women are widows or single mothers and nearly all are subsistence farmers growing little more than they need to feed their families. The average household has six or seven members, well over half of whom are children of school-going age or younger.

The implementation of the project is being handled by our local partners, the small Bigasa Sustainable Development Foundation (BISUDEF).

### The Third Phase

In the course of the third twelve-month phase, which was completed at the end of April 2015, four more groups were added to the 12 which already existed. This brought the total number of our direct beneficiaries to 170. When the rest of their households are included, over one thousand people now stand to benefit from the project.

The four new group leaders (GLs) had been trained as members of earlier groups. They had passed this training on to the new recruits and BISUDEF gave them bicycles to make it easier for them to reach their members at their homesteads.

Each group had been issued with gloves, protective clothing made by a Phase One member, who is a dressmaker, a smoker and food-grade buckets in which to store its members' honey. The four GLs demonstrated how to improvise modern top-bar hives from sticks and a mixture of mud and ash, and the newcomers had made about 60 of these, some of which were installed in the groups' training apiaries and the rest kept at the farms of the women who made them.

During the three years the project had been running, over 600 hives had been made but inducing bees to take up residence in a hive is not easy. Last year only 22% of them had been colonised. By the end of this year, however, this had jumped to 51%, which is a much more respectable percentage.



*A top-bar hive made from sticks and a mixture of mud and ash*



*A Group Leader shows us her group's training apiary*



*One of the four new groups*

The BISUDEF field officers and the programme coordinator had been as diligent as ever in making their regular visits to the 16 groups in order to provide advice and any further training required.

We always hoped that our activities in the district would prompt villagers not directly involved in the project to take up beekeeping and during the third phase there was pleasing evidence that this was beginning to happen. Independently of BISUDEF, women had formed two additional groups and our GLs had volunteered to provide them with training. Unfortunately our restricted budget does not allow us to furnish these groups with anything other than the occasional advisory visit by the field officers.

All 16 GLs had again shown how crucial they are to the project's success. Not only had they kept in close touch with their members during the year to offer them

guidance and 'moral support', but also, with the exception of a single occasion when one GL was seriously ill, all of them had attended every two-monthly monitoring meeting in Hoima town, despite the long and tiring journeys many needed to undertake on bush 'roads' to reach the town. They had also devised and managed a collection centre system, which makes the field officers' honey-buying trips much less taxing. When one considers how busy these women are with their farming and household chores, the amount of time and effort they devote to the project is really remarkable.

### The Fourth Phase

Phase Four started in May 2015 and will mark the end of Bees Abroad's involvement in the project. Our members will not receive any further material inputs but, because people do not acquire the knowledge and confidence to manage modern hives in just a year or two, the longer they can rely on BISUDEF's technical support, the better. For this reason, the field officers are maintaining their regular advisory visits. We are also continuing to pay the GLs' transport expenses to enable them to attend the monitoring meetings in Hoima town.

However, the main aim before the end of the phase in April 2016, is to help our women to form themselves into an officially registered women's beekeeping association, with the GLs constituting the core management. We see this as vital to sustaining the project's considerable achievements: it would ensure the GLs' esprit de corps and organisational skills were not lost and the women's beekeeping would be put on a near autonomous footing, largely independent of BISUDEF. We realise that the formation of the association will not be without its problems but our members saw the benefits and are keen to undertake the challenge. The regulations involved in registering such an association with the District Local Government are complex but by the end of the year most of these had been satisfied.

### BISUDEF's Buying and Marketing Operation

The buying operation our partners set up to assure our women and other beekeepers in the area of a reliable and fair market for their honey had a reasonably good year, despite the

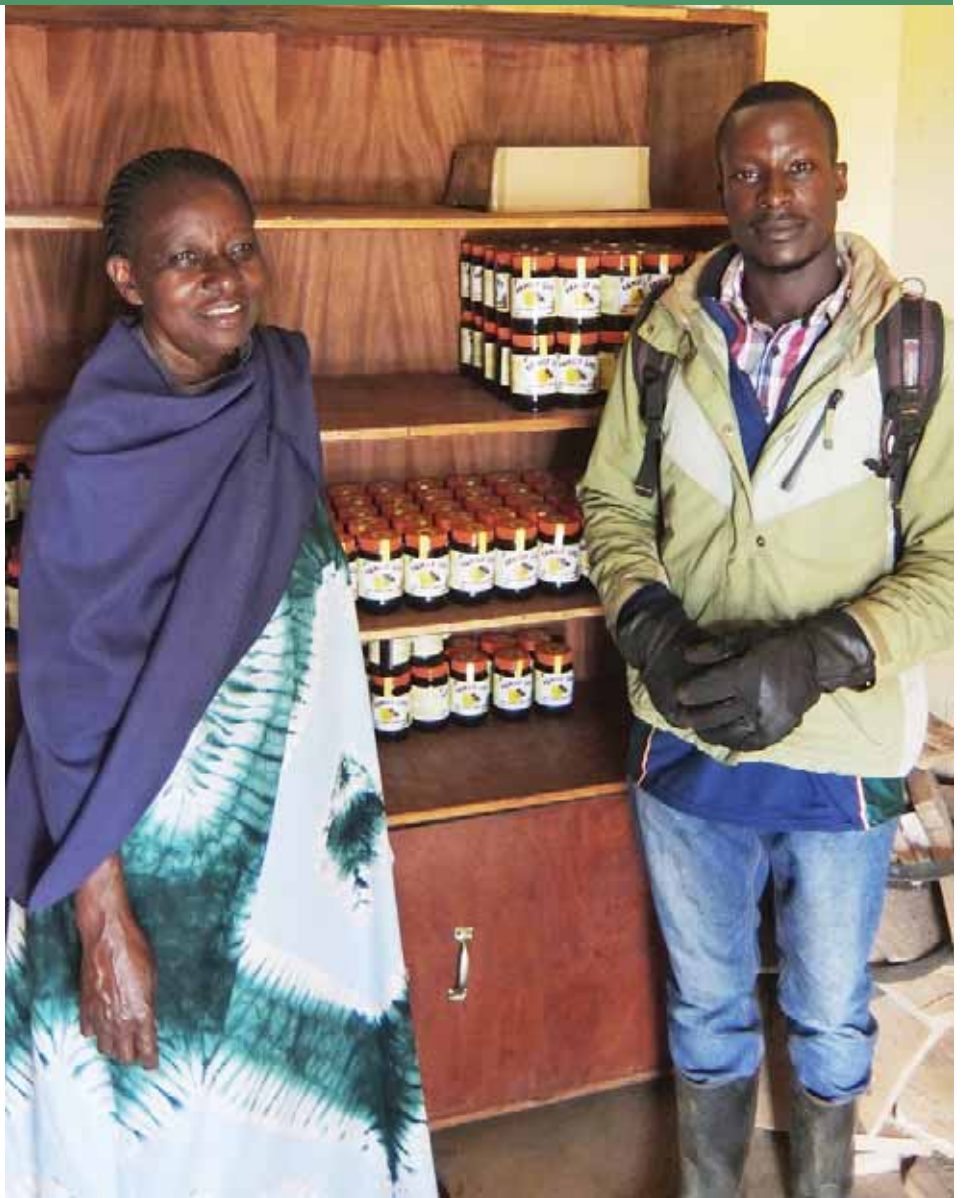
fact that the 2015 harvesting season was shorter than usual because of prolonged rains. BISUDEF bought just over 650 kg of honey from our beneficiaries and considerably more from already existing beekeepers.

Our women earned nearly 5,500,000 Ugandan shillings from their sales. If the bank exchange rate is used to convert this into pounds, it amounts to about £1100 but one needs to look at the local purchasing power of those shillings and, if this is done, then 5,500,000 Ugandan shillings is equivalent to at least £3000. This is a very significant sum, which has done a great deal to relieve the financial hardships our members were experiencing.

The marketing side of the operation also went well. BISUDEF bottled and sold just under 3300 500 g jars of their 'Family Life' honey to retailers in Hoima and surrounding towns. The profits they made from these sales will allow them to buy an increased amount of honey next year and will enable them to continue some degree of support for our women after our involvement ends.

## Conclusion

The project is clearly in robust good health and, provided we can get the women's beekeeping association up and running by the end of the current phase in April next year, we shall be able to count it a success. Certainly our women are as keen as they ever were and BISUDEF continues to be fully committed to the project.



*The programme coordinator and a field officer with jars of their 'Family Life' honey*



*Group leaders discuss the idea of a women's beekeeping association*



The 'living' hive stand

## Rural Youth Empowerment on Beekeeping on Integrated Skills Project: Oluwa Youth Activity Group (OYAG), Mbale

2015 has been another year of progress. The Project Manager visited the group in November and saw first-hand what has been achieved.

The group now has over 100 top-bar hives deployed and has continued to train its members, with the help of the local government agricultural officer and also the district entomologist. Members have been harvesting honey and selling it on the local market as well as sending some in bulk to Kenya.

OYAG has several challenges that need to be overcome.

The main challenge is that the weather pattern for the past two years is different from what would have been expected and this is impacting the timing of the honey harvest and is also causing the yield per hive to be lower than expected.

Local farmers are spraying their crops with insecticides which are killing the bees. The group is trying to educate the farmers to use products which are more bee friendly. One member of the group, Emmanuel, who is also a citrus farmer, has developed an organic insecticide which he uses and which he is trying to get other farmers to use. During the visit, we interviewed Emmanuel and he explained about the spray and a YouTube video has been created of that interview. The link is <https://youtu.be/qYtjhr8l4sk> if you want to watch it.

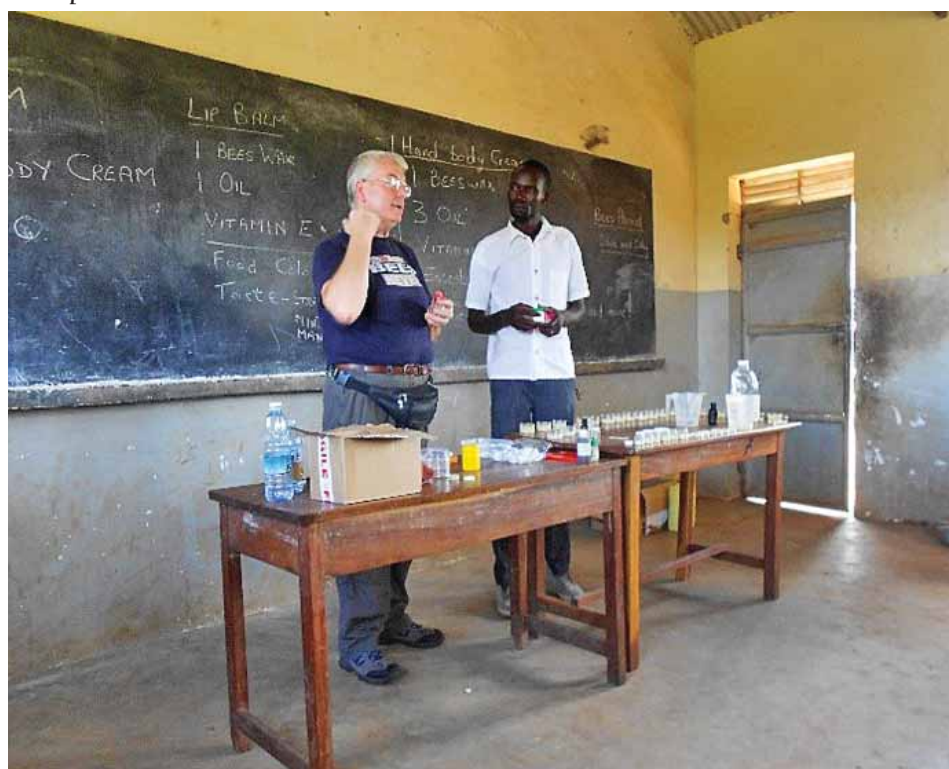
The group is finding that the hive stands are being eaten away by termites and they need to replace them every other season. This is consuming too much of their resources, so we are working to find a solution – one option is to use hive stands made of living trees. Saplings or cuttings are planted at each corner of the hive position and then a platform made using the live trees as the corner posts.

During the visit, three very successful training events were carried out, each event focusing on using beeswax and honey to make different value-added products. Lip balm, a body lotion bar and a luxury honey shampoo were some of the items made.

	MONEY	USED
WAX 1kg	20,000	3,000
BUTTER	44,000	30,000
OIL (24)	4,000	2,500
VITAMINE	15,000	300
NEEM	10,000	300
MAHOG	10,000	200
PACKAGE		
CHARCOAL	7,000	1,000
TIME	10,000	10,000

Learning how to make a profit from each product

A training session on production of value-added products



An essential part of the training was to demonstrate to the students that they could make a profit from each product. So a cost analysis was carried out to show how much profit could be made and that this profit could be then be used to buy stock to make more products.

To help OYAG ensure consistent quality of the honey, a refractometer was left with them and, after a short period of training, they were keen that all OYAG honey should pass the refractometer test.

Some discussions also focused on the product names and how OYAG should label the products to produce a 'Brand'. Since the trip, OYAG has decided on a set of labels for their products and are now working to find a place to print the labels and also to find a source for suitable containers.

The group has decided on the label design for their honey. The style will be the same for their other products.

Another visit is planned for 2016 and the focus of the training will be on honey processing and how to recover the beeswax from the comb. The group is currently struggling to get honey which is of a consistent clarity and they have, to date, been throwing away most of their beeswax.

After the training at OYAG, assessment visits were made to two communities: Olochoi Village Community and The Child Hope Foundation at Serrere. These communities had approached Bees Abroad for help and we believe that the charity can help both communities, so these are two brand new projects for us in this part of Uganda.



*The OYAG honey label*

## ZAMBIA

### *Empowering Women through Environmentally Sustainable Beekeeping, Monze (P10/RD/EWTB)*

This four-year project was completed in September 2015. Its aim had been to provide impoverished women and their families in Zambia's Monze District with a sustainable income from modern, environmentally sound beekeeping. The district regularly experiences both droughts and flooding, and the level of poverty amongst villagers is therefore high.

The beneficiaries, all of them new to beekeeping, which is traditionally a male preserve, are members of women's co-operatives. They are subsistence farmers and many head their households as single mothers or widows. Nearly all live in what the World Bank defines as 'extreme poverty'.

By the end of the fourth and final phase, the total membership of the co-ops was 64 and those who stood to gain indirectly from the project – namely other household and family members – numbered about 350.

The project was implemented by our local partners, the small NGO, Sustainable Rural Development Agency (SRDA). The three members of the NGO had not been paid a wage; instead they received a daily allowance each time they went out on work connected with the project.

### The Final Phase of the Project

By the start of the final year, SRDA had helped five women's co-ops to construct apiaries in which between ten and 15 hives had been hung. The co-op leaders had been issued with what their groups needed to undertake their beekeeping successfully: a smoker, protective clothing, gloves and food-grade honey-storage containers. The SRDA field officer,

often aided by our project manager, Roy Dyche, had conducted two or three days' training with each co-op, during which the women were taught basic apiary and hive management and shown how to harvest their honey in a hygienic way.

After the training, provided the rains had not rendered feeder roads to the co-ops impassable, the field officer had visited each of them once a month, in order to check the condition of the apiary and hives and to offer any advice that was needed.

However, towards the end of the fourth phase, SRDA made the difficult decision to withdraw one of the five co-ops from the project, since its apiary was being neglected. This was not entirely the fault of the co-op's members, who were spread over a very wide area and found it hard to meet together to take care of the hives.

This unfortunate development does highlight the potential danger of installing

Roy Dyche and the SRDA team





*A 'road' to one of the co-ops*

a project's hives in communally owned apiaries – something the co-ops themselves requested – rather than dispersing them around the beneficiaries' homesteads. The arrangement can work well and, in fact, has done so with the four other co-ops: it has the advantage that when the members are well motivated, they will operate as a team to ensure their beekeeping prospers, whereas all too often members who own their hives individually, even after training, lack the confidence to manage them effectively. Nevertheless, this advantage of joint ownership must always be weighed against the risk illustrated above.

During his farewell trip to Monze in September 2015, Roy visited the four remaining co-ops. A measure of the women's enthusiasm for the project was how well attended these meetings were, the only absentees being those who were seriously ill or who needed to be present at funerals.

When he inspected the apiaries, Roy was impressed by what he found: the fences designed to keep animals and children away from the hives were in a good state of repair, despite the unwelcome attentions of voracious termites; nearly all the hives were level and securely suspended by greased wires from trees or stout poles that had been soaked in sump oil; the ground beneath the hives was being kept clear of vegetation; and there was an ample supply of water within each apiary. He was also pleased to learn that about one-third of our members had the confidence to open and harvest their hives without the aid of the SRDA field officer – which is not to say that their more timid colleagues were taking no part in the project: nearly all of them were helping to care for the apiary, process the harvested combs and strain the honey ready for sale.



*An apiary*



*Members of one of the co-ops*

### How the Co-Ops have Benefited Financially from the Project

Since the start of the project, SRDA has been running a buying and marketing operation, which was guaranteeing our members and other beekeepers in the area a reliable outlet and a fair price for their honey; and the money the co-ops earned from their sales to SRDA had increased each year.

During the final phase they harvested 2175 kg of honey – a little over twice as much as in 2014 – and their income from the sale of this honey was 2300 kwacha,

which, in terms of what that will buy in rural Zambia, is roughly equivalent to £1140 in the UK, an average of about £280 for each co-op. In the context of the women's poverty, this is a substantial sum.

As in previous years, the money was never merely divided among members. Three of the co-ops were using it to fund a micro-finance scheme, whereby short-term loans were advanced to members to enable them to undertake their own small-business ventures, for example, buying sweet potatoes from their neighbours for sale at a profit from their roadside stalls or cooking fritters to sell at primary schools and sports events. One co-op had bought goats in order to breed offspring for sale and another planned to do the same with chickens.

### Summary of the Project's Achievements

A great deal has been achieved over the last four years:

- Four women's co-ops now have their own apiaries, which are being properly maintained.
- Each co-op has a core of members confident enough to manage and harvest the hives and practically all the membership is engaged in caring for the apiary and processing the honey ready for sale.
- SRDA's buying and marketing operation is ensuring that the co-ops can rely on selling all the honey they produce at a fair price.
- An important contribution has been made to relieving the women's poverty, which, of course, was the project's basic objective. Every co-op is now earning a very useful income from their beekeeping and they are employing this money sensibly to generate further income for the co-op and, through the loan schemes, to finance their members' own business endeavours.
- A fund of modern beekeeping knowledge now exists in the district and the co-ops report that they are often visited by local government officers impressed by what they are doing and by men as well as women eager to learn how to undertake beekeeping profitably.
- The project has been an exercise in female empowerment. Our women certainly see it that way and they are clearly proud of what they have accomplished, especially in the face of what several of them say had been their husband's scepticism at the outset.

There is no foreseeable reason why these achievements should not be sustained and therefore we feel justified in considering the project a success.