



Bees Abroad

Relieving Poverty through Beekeeping

Annual Report Summary of Projects Undertaken

January–December 2016

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Introduction

Welcome to the Bees Abroad Annual Report 2016. We hope you find this report interesting and stimulating, providing you with detailed information about our activities this year. Poverty prevents people from achieving their full potential, and reducing it is at the core of all our projects. We seek to improve the quality of life for low-income communities by sharing knowledge on beekeeping and hive products, and by helping people to find ways to market their merchandise. When we are approached by overseas community organisations, we are careful only to select those groups which share our vision. We hope this report illustrates the impact each project has had on the people involved, and gives you some insight into how our volunteer project managers work. We would welcome feedback on this report and are happy to respond to any questions you might have.

Here are some of the year's highlights:

- We were awarded a top grade by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) following its rigorous assessment of our flagship project in Kenya – a project which they funded. It means our performance was in the top 20% of their projects. See more details on our Kenya pages.
- We started five new projects and received 50 enquiries. We hope to have the capacity to increase the number of projects we start in 2017, subject to adequate funding.
- We were able to engage more local training staff. We firmly believe that paying suitably experienced, properly trained and trusted local beekeepers to deliver projects is preferable to flying people from the UK. It has taken time to identify suitable staff and increase their beekeeping and teaching skills. In the longer term, not only is this cost-effective, but it transfers the skills to the local communities, making our impacts sustainable.
- We trained several new project managers. We have been fortunate enough to be approached by new volunteers with the right skills and experience to expand our team for 2017.
- We linked to the Indian charity 'Under the Mango Tree', which has an enviable track record of successful poverty relief through beekeeping in India.
- We provided our project managers with a revised set of policies, procedures and tools to help their work, improve quality and consistency and share best practice.

You can learn more about us at www.beesabroad.org.uk and by following us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/beesabroad).

Please help us by making a donation, sponsoring a project, leaving a legacy or through payroll giving. Only with your help can we continue our help.

Richard Ridler

Chairman

Projects Undertaken

CAMEROON

The Akwaya Project

The Akwaya project in Cameroon is working with a local NGO, FORUDEF (Food and Rural Development Foundation), to train beekeepers and support the production of honey in the south-west region of the country. During 2016, we visited four areas in the south-west and carried out training with groups at both beginner level and intermediate, including that on honey production.

The rural villages are extremely remote and inaccessible, and lack even basic amenities such as running water and electricity. Most houses are built of mud bricks or mud and daub, the people carry out subsistence farming, and have little opportunity to produce anything excess to their own basic needs. Honey production results in a cash crop that earns families the extra income to invest in education, a better diet, improved housing and standard of living. Taking up little land, it is possible for women to become involved, and the production of honey for market creates jobs within the community for all.

Akwaya is inaccessible, the climate is difficult (being mostly rainforest), with a short dry season of three months when roads are passable, so people have limited contact even with the rest of Cameroon. Infant mortality is high, health care is virtually non-existent and, with low education levels, people have little knowledge of basic nutrition or crops beyond their narrow range of bitter leaves, yams and cassava, supplemented by the occasional catch from hunting or, for feast days, a chicken. A honey business has huge potential and local people understand the possibilities and hope that a honey business could bring them a better life.

When we first visited in 2010, the villages were drained of their workforce and much talent due to out-migration to the cities; those who remained, struggled to eke out a simple existence. While most problems still exist, things have changed. Living standards have improved, almost imperceptibly, but this has had a significant impact. Rather than an aging

Stuck on the trail again; roads are rarely passable, and always difficult



and diminishing population, the young population is growing so fast that about half the population is less than 25.

Infant mortality is clearly dropping though in appearance, the surviving children still show the clear signs of malnutrition. The larger population brings new problems of providing food, trying to get a higher yield out of the farmland, and a means of earning a living. News has reached the villages of poor prospects and appalling conditions if they move to the cities, so many of the young people are staying, but are looking for better futures. Large numbers of young underemployed men in the rural areas causes unease. Growing a honey business as an economic and community activity to provide a future for these rural people is even more important.



Excitement following the formation of the new cooperative – note the enthusiastic young people!

In previous years, people used to trek through the forest in the night to reach us. We were asked to visit the other side of Akwaya and, after two visits, inspired by our training, a cooperative was formed and made official through government registration; Bees Abroad is an official member, having paid the £10 fee. This cooperative is hugely important as it demonstrates the massive leap forward that beekeeping has made here. Beekeepers are now working together. Women who are afraid of bees are exchanging filtering and selling roles with men who tend their bees for them. Bees Abroad is now seeking to address the lack of equipment, and undertake training in better bee husbandry and hive making.

Because of the inaccessibility, the distances involved and the travelling time, we have established four training areas where we take the training to the people, to achieve greater impact. Two locations are hard to reach: Ote village in the rainforest and Akwaya in the closed savanna area on the edge of the rainforest. The other two locations are accessible all year: Mamfe, a market town along the main road to Nigeria, and a large village on the main

road to the south. A training programme will be put in place once funding has been raised. We now have sufficient trained beekeepers to act as our trainers on the ground both within FORUDEF and from Beruda, the first Bees Abroad project only about 180 km away. The expertise extends beyond mere beekeeping to hive building, veil-making using local materials, adding extensions to rubber gloves to give added protection, making hats, overalls and hive tools and smokers. Training has begun in filtering and bottling honey for sale. By sharing these skills between four centres, interested persons can attend a training session; gradually, the skills held by a few will filter down into the community. Training in the processing of honey will mean that harvested honey can be processed by other members of the group.

A new trainer giving his presentation





A pot hive (above) and a mud hive (left), Akwaya



Ote Village

Our original work started in Ote village, and the severe impact of the death of the chief and two village elders was detailed in last year's report. This impact is still being felt. The village has only managed to appoint a temporary chief, so it is still a dispirited place.

The director of FORUDEF, Moses Tabe, is working actively to assist the chief and to help guide the community. Bees Abroad supported the building of a honey store in Ote and this has now been completed. Although a makeshift building, it is bee-proof, and Moses can now buy honey from all the beekeepers in the surrounding rainforest. Being a two-day journey from a metalled road, it is only accessible during the dry season (January to March). Now the beekeepers can bring their honey for sale at any time, get their payment, and Moses can transport it out all in one go, so saving costs. We hope to do the same in each of our training locations, so that honey will be brought in and farmers incentivised by receiving payment at the point of delivery. FORUDEF is working with other partners on a nutrition programme, teaching local people better cooking methods to preserve nutrients and how to grow a wider range of foodstuffs. They will buy the honey and transport it to market. The two projects combine well to help and encourage the local people to work together to create a better quality of life for their people.

Beruda

During last year's project visit, a visit was arranged to enable the director, Moses Tabe, to meet with Simon Ngwaiminbi from the first Bees Abroad project in Beruda. Being a more established programme, Beruda has been successful in obtaining substantial grant funding. FORUDEF is focused on acquiring a vehicle for Moses to use to reach all areas of the FORUDEF work and to transport training materials and equipment so that all this work can be achieved. The bid is under consideration with the international charity responsible and FORUDEF is awaiting the board's decision. This initiative will allow Bees Abroad to focus on its specialism, leaving the local organisation with the many logistical problems.

Beruda is continuing to grow and is going from strength to strength. It now has a team of trainers who go out into the communities, training on all aspects of beekeeping. Beruda is a major purchaser of honey in its region (north-west), and is recognised by both the government and commercial organisations as a quality supplier. It is working to collect wax for sale to Germany and is getting a higher price for this than for its honey.



Fidelia, the Beruda trainer

The 2016 visit was a real success. The groups being trained have grown; more honey is being produced, and more beekeepers are waiting to be trained. What is needed is regular visits to encourage new beekeepers, and funding is being sought to establish this support. There are so many problems with storms, pests, general lack of health and early deaths, that the people are always having to overcome some major difficulties. These are disheartening, and much of the role of Bees Aboard is to keep their spirits up, assuring them that there are others who believe in them and will support them. It is the long term, ongoing support that makes the people believe in us, and to continue in what they are doing. The work begun by Brian Durk with Beruda nearly 20 years ago stands today as a beacon to encourage the new groups of Akwaya. The aim is to build on the partnership made on this year's visit between Beruda and FORUDEF, so that we can use Cameroonians to visit and train throughout the year, topped up by a visit by Bees Abroad. With this in place, the honey production will continue to increase and the impact will be felt by thousands of local people and families, despite the absence of support from any regional or government agencies.

GHANA

Beekkeeping Learning and Honey Marketing Centre (BLHMC)

Nana Adobah is one of Bees Abroad's trainers and, as a result of his 2015 award as 'Best Beekeeper in Ghana', 2016 was one of change for the BLHMC project in Ghana. BLHMC has forged links with both the 'Rural Enterprise Programme' and the Leventis Foundation Farmers' Training Programme at Ghana University, in Legon, Accra. We are hoping that these links will enable us to expand our work in Ghana. Brian Durk visited Gyetiase near Mampong, Ashanti Region, for the Ashanti Development Project, to inspect some hives and give advice and encouragement. Still without water, hopefully next year will see the completion of the BLHMC project. Nana Adobah did some further training for the Ashanti Development Project at Gyetaise in Brong Ahafo. The photo shows him with some of his honey for sale; it used to be sold in beer bottles!



Better with Bees: Cashew Farmers' Project (Phase 1)

In early 2016, Bees Abroad Project Manager, Trisha Marlow, working with Thomas, a local trainer, and Rita, a trainee, ran intensive beginner training courses in the two rural cashew-growing communities of Sabiye and Banda Ahenkro in Brong Ahafo. Logistical support came from Chris and Fred of Resource Link Foundation (RLF), a local in-country NGO.

A total of 45 attendees took part in practical sessions on making affordable beesuits, assembly of top-bar hives, simple honey processing, apiary siting, hive baiting, and handling honey bee colonies. These were augmented with theory sessions. An interpreter was needed as English is the third language in the region. The translator supported Thomas, who was teaching in his second language, and the input from the Project Manager, Trisha, was translated and accessible to all.

Nana Adobah with honey for sale



During the first course in Sabiye, participants learned to make basic beesuits from locally sourced maize sacks. These suits are accessible, affordable, safe and functional. They will last two seasons if properly cared for. Making beesuits on day one facilitates 'tuning in' on the dynamics of a new group: the extroverts, the quieter ones, the ones who are industrious ... and less so, and, to make it clear to all that 'men sew, women saw' – equality is fundamental.

The theory sessions focused on life in the hive, foraging, honey extraction and other topics directly relevant to busy subsistence farmers. The trainees were taken out to work with active hives, and their recall the next day of frame-by-frame detail would put many UK beekeepers to shame! The



Hive building workshop

group made rapid progress assembling hives, clearing and positioning the new apiary site to increase the options for the bees. They baited the hives with wax ready for habitation and, vitally, learnt the need to keep on clearing and baiting regularly.

The participants learnt how to harvest and prepare their honey hygienically for market, selecting only the brood-free sealed combs. This is an aspect most beekeepers find difficult – leaving honey for the bees and the future when there is much they need to spend the money on in the short term. In a society where the culture is giving what you have to your extended family, demonstrating the effectiveness of the cooperative rather than working alone is almost as important as learning about the bees.

The second course in Banda Ahenkro followed the same format. The dynamics of this group were very different and the presence and input from two young men – one desperate to fund his college education post-school, and the other a young journalist with a local family – proved very useful at times. The challenge to site a group apiary appropriately, away from local free-range cattle and other hazards, needed their input or they might still be debating to this day! A local wood yard provided timber for hive making once a thorough audit for sustainable local materials had proved fruitless. Thomas made further visits to both communities, providing feedback to the Project Manager and they eagerly await the next stage of the project.

Future plans: These ‘twinned’ (by geography) projects are hoping to create a ‘honey house’ by 2018. A honey house is a necessity once the beekeepers begin to harvest a reasonable amount of honey and see their group venture as truly viable. This was brought into sharp focus when the best place that could be found to demonstrate honey processing on the Sabiye course was a windowless, half-constructed, block-built building with trestles and a couple of scaffold boards procured as a table. The rest of the village is mud-block.

Bees for Fees: Bandaman Senior High School

Following this course, an initiative with local young people has been established and is producing excellent results. Bandaman Senior High School has around 300 pupils. Many families depend on a good cashew harvest to pay the fees but the dropout rate is still very high. Bees Abroad is helping to provide an income stream for the school by training beekeepers. This will allow the school to buy extra resources, and those trained will provide a second income for their families.



Making beesuits





Siting a hive – drawing a crowd

The enthusiasm of the youngsters for beekeeping is inspiring. The day after Trisha addressed the school assembly, she learnt that the girls were keen to start beekeeping. The leader of the Girls' Club at the school was invited to the course venue where she was presented with a spare hive and a Bees Abroad training manual. Soon after, up to 70 youngsters were attending weekly meetings using, presumably, the one manual. Something needed to be done – and quickly!

Funding was available to schedule a beginners' course for November 2016; part of a three-week visit by Trisha. Unfortunately, she suffered a badly broken leg less than a day before travel! Through a series of emails and phone calls, Thomas and Fred, the deputy director of RLF, ran the course, delayed by only a week.

Some 23 girls and the agriculture master learnt beekeeping theory in a classroom, and assembled five hives to join the original one (which had already been colonised). Beesuits were ordered, in-country, and the trainees are looking forward to practical sessions in their own apiary with Thomas, as soon as their beesuits arrive. Subject to funding, another course and practical sessions will be possible soon, and simple processing equipment will be provided to help the club to progress further and begin to produce their own honey.



Wax Filter Mark 1

Active Centre for Rural Development (ACRUDEV)

Bees Abroad is working with ACRUDEV to establish a five-year project to develop beekeeping in the Volta region and it is the main partner in a project that is being developed to collect, clean and sell-on beeswax to help all our project partners in Ghana in their work of poverty alleviation.

Agents of Development for Rural Communities (ADRUCOM)

The first year of this project was spent building the initial phase of a training centre on land donated by the Chief of Karimenga village in northern Ghana. There were some teething problems with the site owing to a change of ownership following the death of the original owner, Elias. However, things were resolved amicably, with ADRUCOM retaining half the original land and the Chief and Elders donating two further tracts of land. One of these new areas will be used as a mixed tree plantation, including fruit trees and training apiary. Three traditional buildings have been erected, two for accommodation, including a kitchen and a

meeting shelter. Electricity is planned for the area; distribution poles have been erected throughout the area although the number of villagers able to afford to install and use it is unknown. We are in discussions with World Vision about provision of a water supply for the site and for the use of local villagers.

A small apiary site has been set up where there was a honey bee colony in the trunk of a tree. The apiary consists of four hives, two of which have already been occupied. Close by was a tree, burnt down in a bush fire in 2015, which used to have at least 13 colonies hanging either from the trunk or from the lower branches of the tree.

ADRUCOM small apiary



KENYA

This report from project managers John and Mary Home describes how, once again, the Kenya team has had a busy time.

With funding coming to a close from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) for the Bee Products Enterprise Development project (BPED), further support was sought for a proposal submitted the previous November to expand the project and make it completely self-sustaining. In February, the management team (including David Njuguna, Kenyan project leader) visited the British High Commission with Mr Robin Mbae, Kenya's Deputy Agriculture Minister. This was a valuable meeting with Elizabeth Mwihaki (responsible for DFID funding coming into Kenya), and it led to a meeting with ACT! which has the responsibility of selecting and managing the DFID-funded work in Kenya. Our previous work was regarded as of a high quality and of benefit to the rural farming community in Kenya. We are now awaiting the decision regarding further support.

John and Mary were welcomed by Dr Grace Asiko and her staff at the National Beekeeping Institute. During their November visit they met with members of the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology organisation (ICEPE) who were working at the Institute, monitoring the levels of varroa and small hive beetle. They told the ICEPE team about the work of Bees Abroad in relieving poverty in developing countries.

BPED Project in Laikipia

The BPED project was a livelihood improvement project targeting pastoralists and agro-pastoralists, implemented in the arid/semi-arid lands of Laikipia and parts of lower Samburu counties.

The three-year project ended in July 2016 . It was premised on the thesis that, over time, climate change has resulted in destabilisation of the pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood base. This has increased nutritional vulnerability through household food insecurity among the target community. Coupled with erratic rainfall patterns, poor land-use strategies, high incidence of household poverty and increased household demands, the targeted communities were observed to have lost their resilience to resist the external climate shock aggravating their poverty. By promoting beekeeping as an alternative livelihood, the project



Beekeepers gather for a meeting about their project



Faith and Ruth at Cheptabo making skin cream

supported target households to increase their food security and incomes, while at the same time promoting sustainable natural resource management. This was done through training and technology transfer as well as the development of market linkages for hive products, particularly honey and skin creams.

Emphasis was placed on the planting of drought-resistant trees and shrubs, including Croton, an indigenous drought-resistant tree which grows in semi-arid areas. Croton produces nectar and pollen for the bees and is a soil stabiliser.

Some areas in Kenya are less affected by drought, so beeswax can be purchased, allowing beekeepers to continue making value-added products throughout the year. A total of 1067 households increased their incomes through such sales; over three-quarters of these households produced honey and wax and added value to their products, while the remainder were engaged in value addition and marketing.

Over 50% of the beneficiaries were women, with over one quarter belonging to women-only groups. The most vulnerable households accounted for nearly one-third of all the project beneficiaries, and all of them reported increasing their household incomes by more than a quarter.

Beekeeping households were organised into groups of about 20–30 members. These groups formed part of a larger cluster, with four clusters for the project area. All clusters were registered with the local government and received some extra help and further training. The clusters are in their infancy and need further support from Bees Abroad to become established and sustainable.

Mary and John would like to thank DFID for its support and acknowledge the great work done by the entire office team and the field staff who delivered the training. Thanks go to the Executive Project Manager, David Njuguna, and to David Evans (in the UK) for his help with accounts. It is admirable that although the BPED staff are no longer employed (due to funding issues) they continue to support beekeeping in their own communities.

Notes from an External Evaluation

BPED has demonstrated that bee-based enterprises are viable and acceptable. There was considerable stakeholder interest in the sector.... beekeepers need limited resources (like land). The project has shown that value addition (by simple processing methods) has considerable potential, and technology transfer is relatively straightforward. BPED's implementation approach provides a good model – using staff with technical competence in the sector, training communities in their own language, using technologies that are easily understood by members and having access to a choice of technologies and products.

Cheptebo Rural Development Centre

Cheptebo Rural Development Centre (CRDC) has grown over the past 28 years from small beginnings, where it provided much needed conference facilities used by a wide range of organisations undertaking training (see <http://www.cheptebo.org> for more information).

It has now become an Agricultural Training Centre (CATIC), formally opened in 2016 with places for 50 students who will undertake a general one-year agricultural course once accreditation has received formal approval. The centre will specialise in agricultural production particularly relevant to semi-arid areas. Currently, the centre provides five-day residential modules suitable for Kenya's small-scale farmers; and beekeeping is covered only by a short PowerPoint presentation. In future, although training will include some classroom instruction, participants will spend the majority of time on practical learning within the project farm, including beekeeping.

John and Mary Home have been involved with beekeeping development in Kerio Valley using the centre facilities for training. They noted the farm staff providing food for the conference centre; vegetables, fruits such as mangoes, paw-paws, bananas and avocados and, subsequently, a tree nursery for various fruit varieties. Some five years ago, Bees Abroad established a four-hive demonstration apiary at the centre, which was well-fenced with wire. The honey bees aid the pollination of the fruit trees and provide a visual demonstration to visitors of the importance of honey bees in food production.

The next step is that the students in full-time training who opt for the livestock production modules will have beekeeping included in their curriculum. Bees Abroad have been invited to undertake this training. Bees Abroad plans to expand the beekeeping on the farm with the help and support of the enthusiastic farm manager. This training will thus reach many subsistence farmers and focus them on the value of beekeeping as an additional source of income and improved pollination.

Kirigani Community Development Network

This project was selected from many requests received from Kenya and an assessment visit was made in July 2014. A small start was made by staff from the BPED project in 2015, with the main project and training undertaken during February 2016. The group comprises some 50 enthusiastic members, one of whom is a carpenter able to make hives. When they meet, all members contribute a small sum of money (table banking) – the total is sufficient to buy a hive, which in turn is allocated to one of the members. Another group member is a tailor with skills to make protective beesuits from different materials, giving the members the opportunity to purchase items at a very affordable price. Under the chairmanship of Edith and her committee, they have interacted with members of the BPED team, and are now making and selling value-added hive products.

The members have built a relationship with a local school, Kiandangae Secondary School. Members of the Young Farmers' Club have given of their transport and time to fence an apiary in the school grounds. Mary and John visited the school in November and were impressed by the support given by the headmaster and the

Cheptabo Beekeeping Training Programme

- Year 1 training was attended by 26 people
- Why do we keep bees?
- Beekeeping equipment and maintenance
- Apiary location and management
- The bee colony and management
- Bee pests and control
- Honey harvesting and simple processing at home
- Proper approach to hive dressing and smoking bees
- Hive baiting to attract new swarms to an empty hive

A training session at the school apiary



enthusiasm of Ms Lillian Owmangale, who is responsible for rural training at the school. The future plans are for David Njuguna to attend and train the 40 club members in basic beekeeping skills and to help install the hives.

PALMY

In February, an assessment visit was made to this group, located about 80 km north east of Nairobi. Members are young people, and the area has great potential for beekeeping. There is good will from the County Government of Muranga to support registered youth groups and women's groups which start any viable farming enterprise, such as beekeeping, that does not have a negative impact on the environment. One young member of the Palmy group sold a cow to pay for a six-month course in beekeeping and hive-making. He now needs mentoring, to apply this knowledge and become a lead person in supporting the current leaders of the group. Honey is in great demand since there are not many people who keep bees in the area. There is market potential in the nearby towns for honey and added-value products. Currently the main cash crops include tea and coffee and milk production.

Members identified areas in which they needed specific training and support to enable them to take up beekeeping as a viable commercial enterprise. They requested help from Bees Abroad and approval was given for their activities to become a three-year Bees Abroad-funded project.

This group is advancing quickly despite having a few challenges. Many of the members attend schools and colleges so training needs to fit into the weekend. As with many areas in Kenya, the risk of drought is always a problem. Despite this, top bars for at least 30 hives have been purchased and are now awaiting distribution. Accurately sized, the bars will be made available to those members who have made top-bar box hives into which the bars will be placed.

Kishermoruak

Kishermoruak is a Maasai village in south-west Kenya, not far from the Maasai Mara wildlife reserve. The year 2016 marked the second year of this project, which is generously funded



Kishermoruak women attending a beekeeping course



Discussions around a top-bar hive

by the Ridgewood Rotary Club in New Jersey, USA. Bees Abroad trains and supports a group of about 30 women. They use the money made from beekeeping to send their daughters to primary and secondary school. This prevents their daughters from being forced into marriage while still in their early teenage years.

The project has had tremendous success. All the basic training was covered in the first year, so in Year 2 we started training the group in adding value to the raw hive products by making face and body creams, soap, polish and candles. The women have established 40 hives and are producing and selling honey. They have now bought land and are building a honey-packaging store and a shop from which they are planning to sell their products to tourists.

Currently, they are supporting 12 young girls to stay in school. The income from beekeeping has led to some women starting other businesses as well. The women are very enthusiastic about beekeeping and the benefits it can bring.

Kisii

Kisii is in south-west Kenya, not far from Lake Victoria. It is a hilly area covered with vegetation. It is an ideal area for beekeeping.

This is the first year of training in Kisii. We originally had requests for training from two villages located within a few miles of each other; so we have been able to run joint training for both villages. This enables us to keep our costs as low as possible.

In this first year, all the basics have been covered, including making and locating beehives, handling bees, harvesting honey and also the importance of beekeeping to forest conservation in this part of Kenya. When villagers can earn an income from the forest through beekeeping, they are unlikely to fell trees for charcoal burning.

The training has been successful and everyone is keen to start our second season training.

MALAWI

Nkhata Bay Honey Producers Co-op (NHPC)

This is the third report of the beekeeper 'hot-housing' – intensive training being carried out by Nkhata Bay Honey Producers Co-op (NHPC) and Bees Abroad in Nkhata Bay, Malawi, between 2014 and 2017, generously funded by 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 continue to deliver this project in her name to the very best of their abilities.

A summary of the planned objectives for this project are:

- Train local people to manage their own beehives
- There are five groups each of ten trainees
- Each group is trained by its own experienced beekeeper
- Each person has a loan agreement for ten hives
- Repayment is to be made in a proportion of honey from the production each year
- When the agreed honey quantity has been paid back, the person owns the hives
- It is worth noting that all the trainees are women.

Mr Soko's Group

This is the first group to be trained and allocated hives.

Mr Soko has ten trainees who received ten hives each in 2014. However, this delivery was a little too late in the year to take advantage of the 2014 swarming season which starts in May/June. So, 2015 was really the first year of bee activity with 40% of the hives colonised from swarms, which is about as good as could be expected in the first year. Colony increase is intended to be achieved by colony splitting and, in 2016, the colonisation has risen to 60%.

The first honey production was in 2016 and this is now being used as a cash crop for the farmers and as part payment for the loan for the hives. The honey production is somewhat below the planned return, with 1 kg of honey being allocated to the loan repayment. However, it is in fact better than many expected.

Nkhata Bay



The first group has been formed from the most able and experienced women with some members having previous beekeeping experience.

Four Additional Groups

These four groups, with ten trainees per group, were formed a year after the first group and tend to have less experienced members, many of them being complete beginners. Each group has its own trainer and, initially, each trainee has been allocated five hives, giving a total of 200. The intention is to monitor their progress for the first year and gradually increase the number of hives to ten hives each. It is worth mentioning that the areas where they live are probably not as well located for honey production as the first group as the majority



Start-up hives being delivered for Mr Soko's group

of their hives are situated where there has never been any previous beekeeping activity.

In most cases, the trainees are starting from scratch and are dependent on wild swarms for colonisation. However, the first signs are that they are progressing well but have not yet reached a level of honey production to make any repayment of the loan in honey.

NHPC Business

This was another busy year for Lenson and George, the managers of NHPC. Unfortunately, Lenson contracted malaria during the year but thankfully the medication available sorted him out quickly and he was back to normal quite soon afterwards.

On the good news front, they have secured two new large outlets for their honey:

- The Peoples Trading Company (PTC) – a retail chain with over 80 retail shops spread across the country
- Showrite – a supermarket chain

The groups use their one-tonne truck to deliver honey in bottles to the distribution centres in Lilongwe, which is about a seven-hour journey each way.

Less optimistic news is that there may be a problem soon with the supply of honey bottles. The current main supplier of these bottles with tamper-proof lids has sold the manufacturing equipment for them. We do not yet know the name of the new owner, so cannot negotiate with them to supply bottles. This needs to be sorted out as a matter of urgency in order to retain the smooth running of the NHPC business.

Finally, in 2016, there was a risk that the project would need to erect a safety fence all around the NHPC premises to keep the general public away. A new hospital had been built, and the local health and safety department were concerned for the safety of visitors. Fortunately, this fence is no longer a requirement as the perceived bee problem is not as serious as first thought, and this expense has been avoided.

The honey delivery truck





Lighting a smoker

NIGERIA

Over a number of years, Bees Abroad has developed enduring relationships with local beekeepers in Nigeria who act on behalf of the organisation. In this way, where possible, Bees Abroad is able to respond to enquiries for assistance, despite conflict situations affecting both local and UK project officers.

This policy of working with local skilled beekeepers means that we are able to respond to enquiries swiftly, without the need or expense of a UK-based project manager travelling to Nigeria to carry out assessments. This approach saves a great deal of time and expense and enables us to deliver a sustained quality service.

There are currently two local project managers operating in country; one in the north and another in south-west Nigeria. The UK-based project managers are Mrs Bisi New (Trustee), Nigerian by birth and who keeps bees in both the UK and Nigeria, and Brian Durk, a highly experienced beekeeping trainer who also works in Ghana, and has worked in Cameroon and Liberia. When funding permits, the project managers for Nigeria propose development objectives, provide email and telephone support, establish standards for training trainers, arrange training services and disseminate information and support (research reports, analysis papers, etc).

Projects completed in 2016

Ijebu Ode Beekeepers

This project in south-west Nigeria developed beekeeping training, trading and networking for a rural farming community. The group, managed by Bisi New, received a 'Train the Trainers' (TTT) programme and it is a founder member of Bees Abroad Beekeepers' Network (described below). To date, with support from Bees Abroad, 100 beekeepers have been trained in modern beekeeping methods. Tunde Adenola Oyeremi manages enquiries regionally for Bees Abroad.



Filming how it's done – filling and lighting a smoker

MAIME Honey Foundation

Bees Abroad is supported in south-west Nigeria by the Margo Abayomi Evergreen Memorial Foundation (MAIME). This is a Nigerian charity registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission. MAIME generates income from trading forest products (palm oil, wood, etc) and reinvests profits into new projects. This project is creating new beekeeping capacity over time for poverty alleviation among forest workers.

The project focused on women, starting with four wives of forest workers already employed by MAIME. The training comprised a series of basic beekeeping modules, enabling the trainees to start their own apiaries for both honey production and secondary products, creating new sources of income. Tunde Adenola Oyeremi, the Bees Abroad local trainer, provided beekeeping training, regular reports and accounts over the period. To provide support and sustainability for future training, the forest manager was trained as a beekeeping trainer. Three of the trainees could not read, so Tunde delivered training orally and reinforced with regular practice. Training had to fit into the existing programme for forest work and family care duties.

Tunde's reports in 2016 showed that the apiary is well-maintained and the bees are doing well. One harvested hive gave around six to ten litres of honey when processed, providing additional income. Trainees will revisit the apiary regularly towards the end of the beekeeping season to check other hives for harvesting. They will produce secondary products, such as candles and creams, from the beeswax that is harvested. Tunde will visit in 2017 to ensure training is being put into practice.

Ongoing Projects

Bees Abroad has three ongoing registered projects in Nigeria.

BES Maigana

This beekeeping project in northern Nigeria was planned to provide beekeeping training resources for the whole of Kaduna state. Managed by Brian Durk, the first phase of this project started in February 2008. Currently, owing to civil unrest, all subsequent project actions are on hold. Meanwhile, Idris Mohammed Barau, group leader and a Bees Abroad Certified Advanced Trainer, manages regional enquiries for Bees Abroad.

MAIME trainees learn how to make their own hives from locally available materials



Important beneficiaries of beekeeping – children of forest workers

Poverty Alleviation for the Poor Initiative (PAFPI)

The project, managed by Brian Durk, is situated in the Delta region, which is a high-risk area for operations. Bees Abroad is investigating the possibility of working from outside the Delta hot-spot, but owing to civil unrest, this project is on hold.

Nigerian Beekeepers' Network

Bees Abroad set up a network of beekeeping contacts in 2008 to link beekeepers, trainers, extension workers, NGOs and supporters across Nigeria. This was in response to an evidenced need for access to local beekeeping resources, particularly important in areas where there is no beekeeping training provision but a lot of interest in developing beekeeping as an income-generating activity.

The network of the original six beekeeping groups has grown to 17 beekeeping groups, seven associate members and four network contacts, providing coverage in the north in Kaduna, Katsina and part of Kano state, in the south-west in Oyo, Ogun and Lagos states and in the south in the Delta region and Rivers state. The network represents around 12,000 potential beneficiaries. New enquiries and registered projects form the core of the network to provide a pool of beekeeping resources in Nigeria. Where appropriate, new and ongoing enquiries and projects are linked into the network for additional support. The network is managed locally and from the UK, has grown to include groups of beekeepers across Nigeria.

Future Country Strategy

Given the ongoing economic and political issues in country, the volume of enquiries is expected to grow in 2017. The longer term aim, over the next five years, is to develop a national network of Bees Abroad certified local project managers operating in-country. The organisation aims to achieve this objective by training and certifying selected members from the Bees Abroad Nigerian Beekeepers' Network, and hopes to deliver another 'Train the Trainers' module for members of the network in 2017.

SYRIA

A Village in Syria Project

Bees Abroad has continued to help the charity 'A Village In Syria' where we can. We have supported events at the University of Kent and written an article which was published in *Bee Craft* magazine to publicise their work. We understand the village now has five hives. Once the war is over, maybe we will be able to go to Syria and help re-establish beekeeping in a country that has had a long and proud tradition of beekeeping.



Traditional Syrian hives

TANZANIA

The Mwanza Project

This beekeeping project is part of a community development scheme run by two missionaries, Rachel and Tim Monger, who work alongside the Tanzania Assemblies of God Church, to support conservation agriculture, beekeeping, tree planting, rural health (nutrition, HIV/AIDS, hygiene and sanitation) and women's groups. The local churches appear to be enthusiastic about beekeeping, with the leaders firmly behind the project, and the church buildings are used as meeting places.

The project involved keeping bees in two villages: Kayenze had no beekeepers but plenty of trees and bees, and Malya had a few beekeepers and lots of trees. Many people in the community are farmers and finding sites is easy. During the first Bees Abroad (assessment) visit by project manager Julian Willford, and his wife Zoe, it was recognised that the training had to start from scratch. Rachel Monger already had four hives, of which two were colonised. Unfortunately at that time, there was no honey to harvest as the bees had been unable to forage because of poor weather.

With support from the mission in the UK, the plan was to set up each group with 12 hives. They would give 2 kg of honey for each productive hive as payment for the first two harvests and give the farmer who owns the site one kilogram per hive as rent. Any further hives that the group chose to have would be built by the beekeepers themselves. Each site would have no more than 10 hives, well spread out per site, to avoid the issue of overcrowding.

During this visit, several beekeeping goals were achieved for each group:

- Teaching fundamental Introduction to beekeeping
- Discussing types of hives – KTB and TTB
- Sourcing sites
- Baiting and placing hives
- Establishing groups
- Processing hive products.



Malya beekeeping and Mama's Group

Zoe and Rachel showed the women how to produce creams and candles, use moulds and make beesuits from maize sacks and mosquito nets. The final job was to organise a group with a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer; this was done by balloting and seemed to work well. The plan is for the groups to meet once a month when Tim and Rachel visit.

Later, in August 2016, Julian visited again to demonstrate how to harvest, process and market honey and noted the following:

- Having learnt that hundreds of acres of land had been set on fire by beekeepers, creating smoke in nearby Uganda, training on lighting a smoker started, with only doing so on cleared land.
- It was necessary to ensure that people were not working their land anywhere near the hives when they were opened up, as badly disturbed bees could get very angry. Despite this, provided the bees were handled very slowly throughout, very few beekeepers were stung – there were very few ‘stroppy bees’ if the pace was slow.
- Western type hives are not very satisfactory in East Africa. Many have just rotted as the wood is unsuitable, the weather is very harsh and the termites love them.
- Great care has to be taken in hanging the hives, as ants, honey badgers and thieves can destroy any chance of a good harvest. Thieves are rarely a problem as the communities are tightly knit. Keeping ants out takes dedication. Greasing the hanging wires with axle grease helps to deter them. Honey badgers are crafty animals. They are hunted for food – the head is a great delicacy.

Unfortunately, not much honey was collected, as some hives were invaded by ants. This was a good training opportunity as the beekeepers in the two villages were beginners and now they know the importance of keeping the hanging wires well-greased. Many hives were colonised late in the season and had not built up to full strength. However a little honey was processed and it filled a few jars.

This project has considerable potential. Rachel Monger is growing in beekeeping skills, and the Mongers plan to run a number of beekeeping projects that will make a huge difference to the lives of many Africans, with ongoing training support from Bees Abroad in the coming years.



Preparing for a wax workshop

UGANDA

Liberty Development Foundation (LIDEFO)

This project, which started in 2010, was adopted by Bees Abroad at the start of 2016. LIDEFO is based in the market town of Kasese in western Uganda, ten kilometres north of the equator, in the foothills of the Rwenzori Mountains and close to The Democratic Republic of Congo. Many beekeepers live in hard-to-access communities in the hills. Richard and Jane Ridler became involved in 2012 and their involvement continues now from within Bees Abroad. By 2015, honey production had reached around ten tonnes per annum, and it was being sold to 40 local retailers.

LIDEFO now has a level of expertise that can be used to support other projects. In 2015, the beekeepers won a contract to deliver a project for USAID (the lead US government agency that works to end extreme global poverty). During 2016, they have delivered the Noah's Widows project and contributed to the Bwindi Batwa project – both of which are discussed in this report. This model of employing local skilled staff where possible is cost effective; and it reflects both the high level of capability and the trust which has developed over time. During our 2016 visit, nine of the most competent beekeepers were tested for the BBKA Assessment in Modern African Beekeeping, which they all duly passed.

In 2016, we funded two remote collection centres. A large part of the set-up cost is working capital to enable the purchase of honey. The role of the centre managers is to give encouragement and help to surrounding beekeepers as well as provide an efficient means for beekeepers to sell their honey. The centres relieve the local beekeepers of the challenge of getting honey from outlying villages to Kasese town. This has improved motivation and has led to an immediate increase in the quantity of honey being processed by LIDEFO.

We will continue to explore opportunities to use the resources we have at LIDEFO to facilitate the establishment of other projects which are accessible from Kasese.

Bwindi Batwa

The objective of this project is to relieve extreme poverty amongst the Batwa forest people living near the entrance to the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park in south-west Uganda. Until 1991, the Batwa lived as hunter gatherers in the forest, but they were finally displaced by the government of Uganda when the forest was officially recognised as a National Park. The forest is home to half the world's population of mountain gorillas which generate a huge tourist revenue. The Batwa were evicted, without alternative land or other

compensation, to reduce the chance of human disease transmission to the gorillas.

This has left the Batwa with serious problems in adapting to their new situation. The community is very poor with hardly enough shelter, food and clothes. To survive, most of their time is spent seeking immediate solutions to their problems. The Batwa have a history of honey hunting so the plan is to develop their skills and build sufficient beehives to produce enough honey to generate surplus after enjoying some of what they harvest, which will improve their nutrition.

Inside the LIDEFO honey-processing centre



The project started in February 2016, working with a local partner, the Community Initiatives for Biodiversity (CIBC). CIBC works to bring harmony between man and nature, using a sustainable agriculture demonstration farm to train and support less privileged people and help them to embrace farming enterprises for reduction of poverty, hunger and malnutrition. Bees Abroad provided sufficient materials to make the initial hives, protective gear and other essential equipment to establish three Batwa apiaries and one for the CIBC to use as a resource.

We have provided training, and a local beekeeper has been funded to assist the group. A visit was made in December 2016 by our Ugandan partner organization, LIDEFO, to assess progress. By then, 40% of the initial hives were colonised. The review from LIDEFO noted that women were engaged in the beekeeping – a really positive move forward. However, previous generations of Batwa men have practiced honey hunting and the current community find it more difficult to adapt to using beehives than groups that have never had access to bees and honey before. In particular, skills will need to be strengthened in building hives to the right dimensions so that the bees do not abscond, and including removable top bars rather than fixed ones so that honey can be removed without destroying the eggs and larvae. The importance of the stands on which to place the hives will be further stressed, as ants have been invading the hives that had not been raised off the ground. More support will be provided by LIDEFO in developing the apiary so that bushes do not ‘invade’ the hives.

This is a young project, but one with huge potential. During 2017, we plan to expand the project once the initial hives are colonised. The Batwa people are most grateful to District 6 of the Inner Wheel which is fund-raising for this project enthusiastically.

Murambo Beekeepers' Association (MBKA)

Murambo is a community in the far south-west of Uganda, five kilometres west of Kabale. The surrounding area is almost perfect for beekeeping. Its altitude ensures it is not too hot and there is ample varied forage and plenty of water.

When we met Ezra Sigirenda, the chairman and founder of MBKA, in February 2016, he impressed us as a very competent beekeeper. He learnt beekeeping from his father and had several large apiaries of newly made traditional hives which were well maintained. His ambition was that MBKA should grow and enable the local community to access beekeeping as a means of poverty relief. Prior to the arrival of Bees Abroad, he understood that by converting to ‘modern’ hives the association could increase the honey yields of its



A Batwa leader demonstrating the use of the smoker



A training course at Murambo Beekeepers' Association

members and make beekeeping far more accessible for new members. We had to persuade him that in Uganda, using top-bar hives rather than framed hives was far more appropriate for the bees and their environment, and was the way forward for new members.

This year, we have provided training, funds for material to make hives and protective clothing, and honey processing equipment. We have funded Ezra to run a comprehensive training course and to spend time coaching members of the association. So far, the association has grown from 44 to 86 members and it is on the verge of selling honey in local retail outlets. Previously, the main market for members' honey was the production of Enturire, a local beverage made from sorghum, water and honey.

We hope Ezra himself will continue the practice of traditional beekeeping which, with the right skills, is very successful.

Noah's Widows

The aim of this project is to provide income for a group of 19 widows living together in a community in Ibanda Parish, 20 km north of Kasese in western Uganda. The widows are poverty stricken, have limited food to live on, and some are very old yet have dependents for whom they care. Reverend Noah Kato, who works to support the widows, brought them to our attention and gives his name to the project.

Most rural Ugandans depend on subsistence farming. However, the widows lack land on which to carry out any agricultural activities because the pieces of land they and their husbands owned in the past have been fragmented by their sons, leaving them landless, or with only small plots of land. Only men inherit land in Uganda.

The project started in mid-2016 and is being implemented by our partners, the Liberty Development Foundation of Kasese. So far ten hives have been provided, nine of which are colonised. Protective clothing and basic beekeeping equipment have also been provided. An initial training course took place, followed by a number of follow-up visits to improve skills and increase confidence. We expect the first honey harvests in 2017. In February 2017, training will be given in making basic cosmetics which we hope will provide the widows with another source of income.

The Noah's Widows Group recognise the wonderful support given by Melanie Maclaine and the Twickenham Beekeepers' Association for funding this project.

Jesca – One of Noah's Widows

Jesca, one of the widows from Ibanda II village, told us of their hardships; 'My husband died 20 years ago and left me with six young children that I am looking after personally. Many times I have failed to get food to feed them. They have also dropped out of school because I have no money to pay for their fees'.



Opening a top-bar hive

Oluwa Youth Activity Group

In February 2016, the project manager, Dave Bonner, visited the Rural Youth Empowerment on Beekeeping Integrated Skills Project run by the Oluwa Youth Activity Group in Mbale. As in 2015, the main challenge in 2016 has been the weather. The rainy season was much delayed and the drought that resulted caused crops to fail. This had a knock-on impact on the amount of honey produced, and the timing of the honey crop.

During the visit, advanced training on honey processing and wax recovery was carried out. Over 20 beekeepers attended and were very enthusiastic about the new skills that enabled them to improve both the quality of the honey they sell and the wax that they recover from old combs. This enables them to get a better price for their products.



Rendering beeswax

Following the visit, it was decided to send Akol, the leader of the group, to the National Bee Station in Nairobi for a one week formal training in beekeeping. This will enable Akol to become the local expert and therefore to organise and conduct training in-house. The total cost of the course, including travel, accommodation and meals was just over £220 – great value for money! This level of training introduces advanced skills into the local community, provides day-to-day support and enhances the sustainability of the project. In the future, if we identify a suitable person and have the funds available, we will certainly send them on the course.

Following discussions, Bees Abroad sponsored a Beginners' Training Course in Bukedea District in June. This was wholly arranged and conducted by Akol and the District Entomologist. A total of 43 students attended this training. The total cost of preparing and running this course was £350, including room rental, photocopying, equipment rental and student refreshments.

Olochoi Village Beekeeping Project

2016 was the first visit to the Olochoi Village Beekeeping Project in Soroti following the initial assessment in November 2015. Dave Bonner, project manager, took two beekeepers from Soroti, whom he had trained over the past five years, with him to this training. The purpose was to introduce them to the Olochoi Group and provide this new group with a source of local advice and encouragement during the coming months. The training was attended by 12 students, including one local beekeeper who keeps his bees in local hives.

After showing the group the process of making protective beesuits, members worked together to make four protective suits. This achievement gave the students a lot of confidence and enthusiasm.

There was no time on this trip for Dave to demonstrate how to make a top-bar hive, but there was time to cover the theory. Anticipating the time constraints, Dave had bought a top-bar hive with a stand in Soroti (£16) and used it to demonstrate baiting a hive, basic beekeeping, smoking and honey harvesting. The group was encouraged to use local

Making beesuits at Olochoi



materials to copy the hive design and to use the information in the *Basic Beekeeping Manual* to help them.

To assist with their honey harvesting, a 'starter kit' consisting of two 20-litre 'food-grade' buckets with air-tight lids, purchased in Kampala, together with nylon filter cloths brought from the UK, were donated to the group. It will probably take this group the next 12 months to practice what they have learnt, to get their hive(s) colonised and then to have a single, albeit small, harvest.

Hope Care Child Foundation

The first visit was made to the Hope Care Child Foundation, Atira, following the initial assessment visit in November 2015. Seven students attended the training. This group has already started making and deploying top-bar hives, some made from logs, and have a total of seven hives. However, the members have little beekeeping knowledge and, while the hives were sound, the top bars were too narrow and needed to be replaced. None of the hives had been baited. We baited the hives as part of the training and, one week after returning to the UK, a message to say the hives had been colonised by swarms.

As part of the training, the group made four protective suits. As at Olochoi, this achievement gave the students a lot of confidence and fired their enthusiasm.

This is a very small group, perhaps too small to be a viable project. When we visit in 2017, we will reassess the situation.

Baiting top bars (for top-bar hives)



