



ANNUAL REPORT

Summary of Projects
January–December 2019



21
YEARS

Bees Abroad

Relieving Poverty through Beekeeping

beesabroad.org.uk

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in Bees Abroad. We hope you find this report engaging and informative; we would very much value your feedback.



We always try to use locally sourced materials

Twenty-one years ago, a group of beekeepers met and talked in a small corner of Wales. Resulting from this, on 18th April 1999, Pam Gregory, Claire Waring, Brian Durk, Geoff Bee and others founded Bees Abroad. As beekeepers, they had recognised the power of beekeeping to provide a sustainable additional income for households in the poorest of communities worldwide. They pooled their knowledge and experience and adopted the mission we continue with today; the relief of poverty through beekeeping.

Over the years, we have developed local partners to deliver projects on our behalf. Our role is now to encourage, promote and fund them, while ensuring our donors' money is used to best effect, using local skills and local materials. More recently, we have developed ways to capture and share best practice, better assess the impact of what we do and put in place the organisational infrastructure necessary to sustain and develop Bees Abroad.

Some highlights of 2019

- We gave our first-ever paper in Montreal at Apimondia, the bi-annual International Beekeeping Conference. It was about establishing participant-led outcomes for projects, something now central to our strategy.
- We won all the prizes in the National Honey Show Charities Class again. Entries were from our local partners; the show provides a way for us to showcase their skills and encourage them to improve the quality of their honey.
- We started working with the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). In both cases, our specialist expertise in beekeeping will provide a component of their much larger projects.
- We implemented Microsoft Teams to support us in working remotely together. Being spread around the country (and the world) has always been a challenge for us.
- We started 25 new projects - a record for us.

Strategy development

By the end of 2019, we had completed a two-year programme of reviewing and implementing changes to our strategy, mainly as it related to our projects. We have introduced ways of working which embed best practice, and which simplify and standardise our processes and procedures. We are building in focus on evaluation and impact measurement to enable us to assess the success and sustainability of our projects.

The trustees recognise the importance of measurement and the challenge to improve it will be a particular focus for us this year. We have renamed what was formerly our 'Project Managers', and they are now 'Partnership Managers' to reflect our increasing focus on benefiting from local delivery partners. Our strategy is scalable and gives us a platform for future development.

Our focus

We are very aware of the challenges of beekeeping projects for rural development, and this is particularly true when undertaken by generalist charities. Many groups think

that beekeeping is simple, while others believe that western beekeeping practices and framed hives will work anywhere – both ideas are unrealistic. Bees Abroad is probably the largest single team anywhere focused exclusively on beekeeping as a means of poverty reduction. We are proud to have six master beekeepers and a master bee-farmer in our group of Partnership Managers. We will increasingly offer to work in partnership with other organisations, adding our specialism to their capabilities. Often this brings the advantage local knowledge, presence and funding which benefits our work.

Value for Money

Because we are an organisation of volunteers and spend little on fundraising and operational overheads, we continue to offer particularly good value for money to our donors and supporters. If we were to include the amount of our volunteers' time in project delivery, and that of our fundraisers', our published income would be more than doubled. It is a difficult message to communicate but being an organisation of volunteers differentiates us.

The growing impact of climate change on our work

For some time, we have been getting reports from our projects in Sub-Saharan Africa of exceptional weather conditions. Weather directly affects the production of nectar and pollen. Droughts, floods, reduced and extended wet and dry seasons generally reduce honey yields. Our article on 'The impact of drought on beekeeping in Zambia', published in BeeCraft, well illustrates the experience of many.

In Sierra Leone, the exceptional rains damaged hives and caused colonies to abscond. On the positive side, we have had reports from Uganda that while beekeepers had reduced honey yields due to drought, their crop yields were higher than their neighbours due to better pollination. Beekeeping itself has no carbon footprint. Indeed, it has the positive effect of improving pollination and so increasing the numbers of trees and plants. We are conscious of our carbon footprint and are endeavouring to reduce our overseas visits by recognising and benefiting from the skills of our local partners and using the ever-improving methods of international communication.



*The effect of drought in Zambia
(photo: Dr Stuart Andrews)*



The production and sale of honey is the cornerstone of most of our projects

Looking forward

During the next 12 months, we plan to make the most of it being our 21st anniversary. We have an ambitious plan to promote what we do, recruit more supporters and raise more funds. We invite you to help us; there are many ways, here are just a few:

- **Volunteer!** – whatever your skill, we will find a way to use it.
- **Leave a legacy** – one in six people over 40 say they have written a legacy into their will.
- **Buy from our online shop** – our Beeswax Wraps made in Tanzania by women with albinism are a best seller.
- Make a monthly donation.
- Tell your friends about us.

Thank you

We are most grateful to all the individuals, groups and organisations who have supported us. As well as many generous beekeepers and beekeeping associations we would particularly like to thank:

A J Barrow	Open Gate Foundation
A Bickmore	Poole Soroptimists
Andrew Beer	P A & J G Johnson
B J Sherriff	Rev C Windley
Dr R E B Solomons Charitable Trust	R J Maurer
David Evans	Sacred Heart Church Cheshire
Elterbeck Ltd	Sam Estates Ltd
Enablon Cycling Team	Southam Rotary
Essex Beekeepers' Association	St Cuthbert's Church Portsmouth
Franklin Trust	St Mary's Charity
Goosebec Trust	Stella Charitable Trust
Ida Davis Foundation	St Stevens PCC
INTO Giving	Suttons Seeds
J D Fell	Warwick & Leamington Beekeepers' Association
J & M Home	Worshipful Company of Wax Chandlers
Kirremuir Rotary	W T Minett
A & R Mason	Zoetis UK

Richard Ridler

Richard Ridler - Chair of Trustees

*Frame of brood from the old hive being put into a new hive
(photo: Neil Brent)*



Projects Undertaken

GHANA Trisha Marlow

Atudrobesa Women Beekeepers [P19-07-TM]



Background

This project is geographically easily accessible to the Ghana Regional Trainer Network's local trainer Thomas Kwaku Manu. When the applicant visited Nyu Nunu beekeepers (part of the Cashew Farmers' project), he was so impressed with their knowledge and enthusiasm for beekeeping that the Atudrobesa Women Beekeepers group formed. The Atudrobesa beekeepers are members of the Yamfo community located near Sunyani, in the Ahafo region. They are very grateful for the great support given to them by the North Herts Beekeeping Association.

The group was put in touch with Bees Abroad's trainer Thomas, an application filed, and a needs assessment took place in the autumn of 2018 during a visit by the partnership manager, Trisha Marlow. The applicant supplied a video which provided a constructive, culturally sensitive, overview of living conditions in the community.

This group are hoping to achieve three key outcomes:

- A trained group of beekeepers can derive useful income from beekeeping through sales of quality honey and wax.
- Trainees can transfer skills to new members.
- Create a new income stream to help pay school expenses, medical insurance and house repairs.



Atudrobesa Beekeepers Trainer demonstrates the Kenyan top-bar hive (photo: Twene)



Atudrobesa beekeepers Siting an apiary (photo: Thomas Manu)

Activities in 2019

The beginners' course took place in March 2019, where some thirty enthusiastic women attended and trained by Thomas Kwaku Manu. This course included assembling fifteen Kenyan top bar hives and siting them in two areas suitably cleared and prepared. There were many honey bees lured by the aroma as the colonies were baited with beeswax - a positive start to the project!

Some personal protective equipment and a stainless steel smoker was provided, to start this group on their journey as beekeepers.

By July four hives were colonised which encouraged the women to maintain the apiaries and hives as they had been taught.

Into the future

In 2020, support will be provided to this dynamic and active group. As with other groups starting at this time, it is hoped that there will be a modest harvest of marketable honey. The encouraging start means that the group should be seeking to expand through marketing their hive products and reinvesting in additional hives. Table banking (group savings) will be encouraged to support the need for making and purchasing new equipment.

Atudrobesa Beekeepers Preparing new top bars with beeswax (photo: Thomas Manu)



Bia-Biosphere [P18-01-TM]



Background

This five-year project started in 2017. The participants in the project come from five communities adjoining the Bia Biosphere reserve in the Western North region of Ghana. The Bia Biosphere is a UNESCO site. There was tension, and some violence, between the local communities (whose livelihoods depended on the forest) and the park rangers, when the forest was closed to them. Sustainable production of the very things they relied on the forest to provide needed to be developed. Snail farming, mushroom production, more efficient palm oil extraction and beekeeping were introduced to help provide income. Before Bees Abroad involvement, beekeeping had been taught erratically in short courses. A lot of participants felt they could achieve a lot more with more structured training and cohesive support and a beekeeping association open to all.

There were four anticipated outcomes from this project, the first of which was completed this year, with positive results for achieving the others.

- The installation of five community training apiaries
- To support the development of Bia West Beekeepers as a successful entity for marketing honey – and wax - in increasing amounts.
- To give participants with very different exposure to beekeeping courses, the chance of group support and education through refresher courses.
- Some low-key development of an eco-tourism project although the forest has minimal rudimentary accommodation for visitors and lack of all-year-round access is an issue.



New-training-apiary-for-one-of-four-communities (photo: Atta)



Siting-a-new-hive-a-job-well-done (photo: Atta)

Activities in 2019

The original plan was to provide two intensive refresher courses for approximately 50 participants selected from the five communities linked to the project. However, at a review meeting, the beekeeping association executive requested that we reassign the budget destined for the second course to permit training apiaries to be sited. This was put to the trustees and agreed. The rest of the Association members would learn from those already trained.

Thomas Kwaku Manu, a trainer with the Ghana Regional Trainer Network (GRTN), engaged the communities in assembling hives and in siting five group apiaries for the five communities. He did this despite appalling weather and complicated logistics, and his efforts are to be commended.

There has been some bee colonisation at these group apiaries, and it is hoped that an initial harvest from these will occur in March 2020. However, local community practical training sessions need to be undertaken as soon as feasible.

In 2019, honey produced privately found a market. At the outset of the project, the Partnership Manager knew of purchasers willing to bulk buy the honey. As the price was reasonable, we are hopeful that this sort of agreement for honey purchase at a reasonable market price can continue in this area, with some infrastructure already in place at the outset.

Into the future

Thomas will spend a few days in the community during harvest season. During this time, he will reinforce the need for apiary and hive care, and demonstrate gentle handling of bees and hygienic harvesting techniques.

Trisha Marlow (Partnership Manager) will visit the project in April 2020 to assess progress and develop a viable way forward for this project to its independent and sustainable conclusion. This will likely include a discussion of the need for extension workers, although this might be replaced by some limited funding for local expertise due to the placement of group apiaries rather than the original plan of building on existing scattered hives among many people.

Bia-Biosphere-group-members



Boabeng and Fiema Ecotourism [P19-16-TM]



Background

This three/four-year project is located in the Boabeng and Fiema villages, Bono East region. It comprises two groups; the Boabeng Beekeepers Association, and the Fiema Beekeepers Association.

This project provides an increased challenge in the development of our relationship with the in-country organisation, the National Beekeepers Association (NATBA) while providing critical and timely development for Ghana Regional Trainer Network (GRTN) trainer Joshua Antwi Boasiako.

Geographically, the project is easily accessed for most of the year from Nkoranza where NATBA is based, forming a cluster with the two Nkabom Women's groups (described elsewhere in this document).

The communities of Boabeng and Fiema are known locally as 'the monkey villages' as the communities live alongside the two types of monkey in the forest which they protect.

*Joshua demonstrates siting a hive
(photo: Michael Sakyi)*



The communities have not been able to harvest the benefits of being alongside this well-known tourist attraction, aside from the few who work as guides. There had been a couple of beekeeping initiatives in the last decade, but the hives provided were too small, and the bees tended to swarm before providing much honey. There is potential for a sizeable project to develop both substantial honey sales and a range of quality products for the tourist shop. There were already two beekeeping groups in existence, one in each community.

Activities in 2019

GRTN trainer Joshua Antwi Boasiako, assisted by trainer Michael Sakyi, formed the team to provide a challenging beginners/refresher course. The Partnership Manager, Trisha Marlow, took up an offer from Ashanti Development to supply hive kits by road at a better price than could be obtained locally.

The goal was to site some 65 hives, assembled in the two communities, in several apiaries, and to deliver a comprehensive basic theory course to 30 selected participants, five of whom had attended a previous session. The trainers rose to the challenge and are commended on their organisational skills and dedication.



Participants assembling hives (photo: Joshua Antwi)

Despite some concern over using hives from a non-local supplier, particularly for the critically-sized top-bars, there were only minor challenges that were resolved by the team. There was a cost-saving to our donors, income for Ashanti Development, and the partnership manager felt this could be a good solution for a high-volume project in future, as quality timber is expensive in Ghana. The suppliers were also involved in development.

Into the future

A phone audit by Richard Okoe (NATBA's director) in January 2020 determined that Fiema group had constructed some 109 further hives largely by felling on owned land by group members through permission from the community Chief. Boabeng had made some 13 hives, and more than 20 of the 65 hives supplied by Bees Abroad were colonised. Colonisation is a fantastic achievement and a solid foundation for the next stage of the project.

Joshua, as a regional trainer, will visit the community in February during the Partnership Manager's visit, for initial extension work. The impact of this project and appropriate ways to measure it over the longer term will be agreed. Measurement will take account of the perceived improvement in the quality of life amongst the members of the group. The group members will develop criteria for this during the visit.

Apiary and hive maintenance will be revisited, and practical sessions held on colonised hives in the two communities will be part of the training. Harvesting techniques will be demonstrated and practised to ensure the production of clean, quality honey and beeswax.

An equipment audit will take place at this time to ensure that extraction kits and sufficient new gallon-sized containers are available for the initial harvest.

Also, accounting systems will be discussed with the executives, to ensure adequate reinvestment for growth and good income for the participants. In essence, we may ask an executive member from the Nkabom beekeepers to accompany us for this. The dynamics of the group and effectiveness of their executives will be monitored as both are key to success - and, most importantly, honey storage, safe from the large and resourceful locally-protected monkey population of some 5000 animals will be ensured!



Waxing top bars (photo: Joshua Antwi)

Cashew Farmers Phases 1 & 2 [P15-04-TM & P17-02-TM]



Background

This project is located in several places suffering from high deprivation. The majority of inhabitants in these village communities are impoverished, with many living in traditional mud houses that are often in poor repair. Some live in small cement block houses with zinc roofs. Selling small surpluses from subsistence farming is the primary source of cash for many. The town of Berekum has its challenges with high unemployment amongst youth in particular. **Through these projects, Bees Abroad hopes to achieve three key benefits;**

- To provide funding for schooling and medical insurance
- To increase crops through improved pollination
- To produce quality honey and wax and get a reasonable price for it

Six communities were selected for this project, comprising two clusters of two rural villages quite close to each other, plus another rural community, and a town community in Brong Ahafo. The names of the associations are Nyu Nunu Beekeepers, Teselima Beekeepers, Berekum Beekeepers, Nkwonakranja Beekeepers and Attakrom Beekeepers. Bees Abroad is very grateful that the Attakrom Beekeepers have had two years of sponsorship from Chichester Beekeeping Association.

Nkwonakranja participant inspects a hive (photo: Trisha Marlow)



A total of 210 participants trained during the beginners' courses and twelve attendees were selected to attend the regional intermediate training course held in November 2017. Several of these participants have proved key to the development of their local groups – and some have helped other beekeepers during their everyday lives.

The area has plenty bees and forage, and there are two further (newer) projects close by; all are under the administration of Bees Abroad's Ghana Regional Trainer Network (GRTN) trainer Thomas Kwaku Manu. Thomas is also responsible for five further communities to the west and another local project. The west forms one of the core areas in Ghana under development, and 50 attendees from 18 associations across this area attended a regional training in 2017 – a blueprint for other core areas in future. This work has led to a broader base of beekeeping education and experience across the region.

Activities in 2019

Ongoing extension work by trainer Thomas Kwaku Manu has resulted in some progress within each group. The UK Partnership Manager (Trisha Marlow) visited the groups in April with Thomas and did practical extension training in three communities. The honey at Teselima – from their first, very different, honey harvests – was of sufficient quality to travel back to the UK for the National Honey Show. A proud moment for this well-run group in what is now the Savannah region.

We gave groups a small number of modern regionally-made bee suits to supplement/replace the maize-sack suits made during initial training and which, depending on initial sack quality, have shown fantastic resilience for their low cost.

Unfortunately, due to community management differences, Bees Abroad has ceased to support the Banga Na beekeepers as the membership had dwindled to the executive itself. They had honey from eight hives to sell yet were not prepared to buy any equipment or hives with any of the income.

Into the future

The groups are producing modest crops of honey but, as yet, no group has succeeded in developing a healthy market, and all rely on casual trade. A regional collection centre is impractical as transport would eat up any profit. Still, both the trainer, Thomas and the Partnership Manager, have suggested that the women in the groups try to begin sales at the local markets.

A 'Hives-for-Honey' scheme will be introduced at a modest level in the communities that have achieved most to date and have strong leadership. It is proposed that this be self-sustaining: returning honey money at an agreed percentage to the group fund until the two hives are owned will then allow reassignment to another participant. Wood is costly in Ghana for acceptable quality which makes it harder to "front-load" projects with many hives. However, the issue of marketing will need to be addressed for this to be viable.

We hope that a financial management model can be supplied by the Nkabom Women beekeepers who do this very well to engender growth and encourage table banking (group savings) at some level in the groups.



Rare glimpse of a queen bee during a training course (photo: Trisha Morrow)



Teselima group members check out last year's Annual report (photo: Trisha Marlow)

Levite beekeepers [P18-16-TM]



Background

In March 2019, an existing women's farming group formed the Levite Beekeepers Association in Oboadaka, Greater Accra region of Ghana. Although there was no knowledge of any existing beekeeping, which is a risk, swarms of honey bees are regularly seen on farms. Some well-informed stakeholders were keen to develop a successful project and the community's Chief gave his support. The area is verdant upland, perfect for pineapple growing, and very different from other Bees Abroad project areas in Ghana. There is an accessible area used by more affluent holiday-makers, providing the market potential for hive products, so a small-scale project was proposed and approved.

There are three anticipated outcomes:

- An improvement in income for school costs and improved livelihoods.
- Quality honey for sale.
- A positive outcome overall to expand the project in the area.



*Some of the group assembling hives
(photo: Ntow)*

Activities in 2019

The project is managed by trainers from Bees Abroad's Ghana Regional Trainer Network (GRTN) – in this instance, Joshua Antwi Boasiako and Michael Sakyi. They work closely with the executive of the Association.

Seventeen participants took part in the beginners' course in March 2019, trained by GRTN trainer Joshua Antwi Boasiako. They constructed and sited a modest number of hives and ran the course at a time of year when colonisation was unlikely. Thus leaving the risk that enthusiasm will plummet and the colonies and site become neglected in favour of other farm tasks. Mindful of this, Joshua kept in regular contact by phone, ensuring regular clearing of undergrowth, checking hives for unwanted residents, and baiting with beeswax. An extension visit took place as two hives had bees by August. Since then, trainers have kept in close contact, and some practical training has taken place.

Into the future

In 2020, the dynamic and active group working needs to develop with support. The Partnership Manager, Trisha Marlow, will visit the project in February 2020.

The project has now been handed over to GRTN trainer Michael Sakyi, as agreed in the Country Plan to reduce overheads and increase efficiency. Oboadaka forms a geographically-efficient cluster with Suhum-Amanhiya, He Kenefom (2020) and Ekye (2020); all projects under Michael Sakyi, based in Accra. He will develop these four projects as a group. Two of these are pilots which, if successful, may lead to further work.

With focused extension work, a modest harvest of marketable honey should be achievable in 2020, and some wax should be extracted for baiting the hives for the coming season. The group must develop its ability to expand the number of hives within the group through reinvestment from marketing honey. It is hoped that a table banking system will be developed. The area is at a higher altitude and with different forage to other projects so the year 2020 will be vital to the decision as to whether to expand the project.



*Course members preparing top bars
(photo: Ntow)*

Nkabom and Anidaso Women Beekeepers [P18-02-TM]



Background

This project, which started in August 2018, works with two groups. The project began in August 2018, with Bees Abroad partnering the National Beekeepers Association (NATBA) of Ghana with whom we are building our relationship through this project.

- **Nkabom Women Beekeepers** is made up of two clusters in Nkoranza and Ayerede in Bono East. Nkabom has a close working relationship with the National Beekeepers Association of Ghana (NATBA), which is administrating the project. Joshua Antwi Boasiako was an intern with NATBA for nine months and knows the area well and was selected as a trainer by Trisha (Partnership Manager) following the intermediate course in the region in November 2017. He now works with this group as well as another local project (Boabeng and Fiema) reducing overheads.



Anidaso beekeepers working on the apiary (photo: Trisha Marlow)

- **Anidaso Women Beekeepers** is situated at Bono Manso, a small rural community located on the main transport road to the north of Ghana, so well placed for trade. Anidaso beekeepers have links with Manso Beekeepers, which is well established, with trading links for honey sales. They are supported by the Ghana Regional Trainer Network (GRTN) trainer Thomas Kwaku Manu with NATBA providing administrative support.

The project hopes to support fifty participants until they have sustainable small businesses in their localities. These groups are highly motivated in the development of value-added products, and NATBA is pro-active in encouraging this.

Specifically, the project hopes to:

- provide an income to educate their children
- improve overall living standards
- increase honey harvests through crop pollination
- develop small businesses selling quality honey and beeswax

Activities in 2019

Nkabom beekeepers

The Nkoranza group of Nkabom beekeepers has excellent accounting rigour, and we hope to create a model from them that can be introduced to other groups. From their modest seven hives and a table banking system, they have added another three hives and three catcher boxes and have a healthy bank account ...which is excellent news.

Thomas Kwaku Manu previously provided extension work, but he was struggling to include Nkabom in his extension schedule. The schedule will be resolved from January 2020 as the bigger Boabeng and Fiema project will need regular visits by Joshua Antwi Boasiako, who will include the Nkabom groups in his schedules as they are well placed for extension visits. Joshua will, in turn, pass on some of his responsibilities to other trainers.

Anidaso beekeepers

The hives for the Anidaso beekeepers were sited on the Chair's farm. The location was found to be too far from most members and needing transport by private vehicle

to access it. A visit was arranged, where it was found that three hives had been colonised but had all absconded. The action was taken to tidy the site, bait the hives to encourage bees to return, and put the legs of the hives into oil tins to deter ants. It has since been agreed to move the apiary closer to town.

Into the future

The two very different parts of this project will continue to receive appropriate extension work from the GRTN trainers and additional processing and other equipment budgeted and supplied where necessary.

Discussions will be held in February 2020 on providing value-added training either directly or indirectly through an experienced provider, if cost-effective. Selected Nkabom women had some unrelated product training in 2019 arranged by NATBA and are very keen to improve their families' lives with relevant additional training.



Anidaso beekeepers setting a stand in cans of oil against ants (photo: Trisha Marlow)

Suhum-Amanhiya [P18-15-TM]



Background

Suhum is an agricultural area which is relatively degraded with little forest and located 60 kilometres from the capital, Accra. This three-year project started in June 2019, has the support of the local pastor and his wife, providing cohesiveness for the new beekeeping association. The needs assessment was carried out at the end of Sunday service, so total inclusivity of community members within the Association is an important criterion.

The project will be closely monitored both for bee colonisation, and absconding levels as the terrain provides limited suitable apiary sites. Levels of forage will be monitored to ensure sufficiency for honey production.

The year one project was designed to provide a core of fifteen participants with two small training apiaries of four hives. Their remit is to train others. This approach protects precious donor funding while testing both the resolve of the group to succeed and the landscape to provide for the bees following a positive first visit by the partnership manager.

The project is funded through generous donations from Yorkshire beekeepers, fees for talks given by the Partnership Manager, and some unrestricted income.

Activities in 2019

Eighteen participants attended a comprehensive beginners' course lead by Ghana Regional Trainer Network (GRTN) trainer Joshua Antwi Boasiako and assisted by Michael Sakyi. This included theory sessions, hive assembly and apiary siting. The church pastor and his

Loading assembled hives for an apiary (photo: Joshua Antwi)



wife - who had taken an active interest at the needs assessment visit and provided the venue - joined the course. Michael provided an opportunity for some practical training later in the year.

Both Joshua, who was the lead course trainer, and Michael Sakyi, have been delighted with the level of colonisation, which was seven out of eight hives at year-end.

Basic training – both theory and (due to colonisation) some practical work took place for sixteen members of the Association; the pastor and his wife also received theory training.

Community training apiaries are established with a modest eight hives (two groups of four).

Into the future

The partnership manager, Trisha Marlow, will visit the project with Michael Sakyi in February 2020 and audit progress to see if expansion is justified for the second year of the project. It is hoped that progress with training other group members at monthly meetings and other times will have taken place, making between 40 and 50 beekeepers trained to basic level at this early stage.

The colonisation estimate, of 33% in the first year, was based on background bee population and forage availability. This would yield an estimated honey harvest of 100 kilograms within the first season. Due to the unexpectedly high colonisation rate in the first year, it is anticipated that this level will be achieved, and quality honey sold locally in 2020.

In 2020, the dynamic and effective group working needs to be developed and supported, and further members trained at meetings and the apiaries. A modest harvest of marketable honey should be achievable with experienced extension work, and some wax for baiting hives obtained too. The group must develop its ability to market honey if it is to expand the number of hives within the group through reinvestment. It may be reasonable to add a further batch of hives to the second-year budget if targets for honey production are met and thus expand the project.

It is hoped that a table banking system will be developed and the method of accounting used at Nkabom beekeepers will be discussed if the group needs support with this.



*Trying on Ghanaian-made beesuits
(photo: Joshua Antwi)*



*Joshua-demonstrates-hive-maintenance
(photo: Michael Sakyi)*

INDIA Richard Ridler

Impact of Beekeeping with Indigenous Bees (*Apis cerana* & *trigona*) on Mango and Cashew Production in India [P18-18 MK]

Background

This one-year project, supported by 50% Ida Davis Foundation (50%) and Bees Abroad (50%) investigated pollination by two types of indigenous bees (*Apis cerana* and *Apis trigona*) in Gujarat and Maharashtra States in India, by the organisation Under the Mango Tree (UTMT). The organisation promotes beekeeping with the indigenous bee *Apis cerana indica* for increasing agricultural productivity, enhancing incomes and improving livelihoods of marginal farmers in India.

Bees for Poverty Reduction (BPR) is the strategy by which the UTMT Society targets rural poverty through beekeeping, by offering training and support activities in beekeeping for farmers and setting up a beekeeping ecosystem that generates employment, centred around beekeeping in rural areas. Bees play a crucial role in increasing agricultural productivity through cross-pollination. This innovative framework supports livelihood diversification as well as increased agricultural productivity, increased employment, enhanced sustainable environment and reliable incomes for farmers as a result of direct market access.

Activities in 2019

The project studied the impact of bees on pollination in Western India of the main crops grown by the participants; mango, cashew and cluster bean flowers in two locations – Valsad (Gujarat) and Palghar (Maharashtra) States.

Information was collected on:

- Number of trees for mango and cashew

Quantity of:

- The seed sown for cluster beans
- Fertilisers and pesticides



Inspecting a frame (photo: Martin Kunz)



Honeybees are valued for crop pollination of fruit and vegetables (photo: Martin Kunz)

Total reduction :

- In kilograms

Income generated by selling:

- The crops

Improvement in the:

- Quality of the fruit
- Number of bee boxes (hives) for beekeepers

The research was completed, results analysed, and a poster presentation was given at Apimondia in Montreal in September 2019. The conclusions, based on this study of 74 beekeeping farmers compared with 62 non-beekeeping farmers (the 'control group') in different locations was as follows:

Average per tree production of mango and cashew was higher for beekeepers compared to the 'control group' of Farmers.

Beekeeping:

- Led to an increase in the average economic value of produce for farmers.
- Most of the beekeepers observed improvement in the quality of their produce in terms of colour, size and taste.

All the beekeepers from Gujarat, and three-quarters of the beekeepers from Maharashtra said beekeeping helped them to:

- Reduce the usage of pesticides on their crops.

For the limited purpose of this study* it was observed that:

- Both Cerana and Trigona pollinated Mango equally well

Cerana worked:

- Better on cashew
- Only Cerana worked for pollinating Cluster Beans

**Further research would be required to verify these findings*

KENYA

Kahuho Environmental Water Conservation and Beekeeping Self Help Group, Nakuru County, Kenya [P17-07-JH] Joseph Gitonga

Background

Kahuho Environment and Water Conservation and Beekeeping Self-help Group is located in Bahati area, Nakuru County, about six kilometres from Bahati town. The goal of the group is to improve the livelihoods of members and community through conservation, beekeeping and job creation. Other activities of the group include table banking (group savings), and general agriculture which is practised at the individual level. Members have been trained on basic beekeeping, bee husbandry, governance and group dynamics, and bee suit making

The area is adjacent to the Bahati forest, which provides adequate bee forage. The group is reported to be made up of 30 members, but our interaction has mainly been with fifteen members (eight women and seven men). Currently, the group own 25 Langstroth hives, generously given to the group through the National Government Affirmative fund. About twenty of the hives are colonised.

The local NGO in support of the project is the Centre for Research and Advocacy in Human Rights (CERA-Rights). This is a partner that Bees Abroad has been working with since 2013 when engaging in the Bee Products Enterprise Development (BPED) Project, a DFID funded project. Trainers trained under the BPED project are the ones who have continued to train beekeepers.

Activities in 2019

The main events this year have included additional training on value addition and honey and wax processing.

Value addition includes items such as body creams and lip balms, and the community has learnt to make bee suits from 'gunny bags' (grain sacks) for safely harvesting the honey. Mentorship and follow up refresher training was undertaken on hive inspection and general bee husbandry.

The group has continued to make value-added products from beeswax. Despite a lot of rain in 2019, the group reported that their harvest had improved significantly from previous years. The group was able to process 165 jars of honey (300gm) which they sold at KES 250 (£2) per bottle giving a total income of KES 41,250 (£330).

It was observed that the group members had taken on a greater 'ownership' of their project and appeared more relaxed about dealing with the bees. Four additional women from the neighbourhood had attended the last training after hearing about the activities of the group. Unfortunately, the group is mainly made up of elder persons who are reluctant

The Bees Abroad trainers with the group celebrating their produce (photo: CERA-Rights)





The group apiary (photo: CERA-Rights)

to admit young people into their membership, and this could be detrimental to the sustainability of the group unless they recognise and address the issue.

Future plans

The project is in its final year, and the plan is to upscale mentoring and coaching across the entire value chain. Further emphasis will be on institutional sustainability, and in packaging and standardisation of hive products for sale in the wider market.

Kiini Sustainable Initiative (KISI), Kirinyaga County [P18-05-JH]

Joseph Gitonga

Background

Kiini Sustainable Initiative (KISI) is a local NGO working in Nyeri and Kirinyaga Counties. This community group was established in 2003 in order to improve livelihoods through increased farm productivity. It has sought to find solutions that will transform the agricultural sector into one with a multi-sectoral approach.

The project supports a group within the overall Kiini organisation known as 'Yellow Ripe' with a membership of 18 persons. Led by Joseph Gitonga and John Kibui, the project seeks to sensitise farmers on the importance of bees and their products.

The group started in 2013, owns twelve Langstroth hives, and the members have been trained in basic beekeeping and group dynamics. Their aims are threefold:

- Increased capacity of 18 members and their families, improved through training on basic beekeeping, bee husbandry, hive making, honey harvesting, honey processing, value addition and marketing
- Better incomes from the sale of standardised honey and other value-added products through increasing honey production by 100%
- Developing a sustainable bee enterprise with good governance structures and systems

The local NGO in support of the project is the Centre for Research and Advocacy in Human Rights (CERA-Rights). This is a partner that Bees Abroad has been working with since 2013 when engaging in the Bee Products Enterprise Development (BPED) Project, a DFID funded project. Trainers trained under the BPED project are the ones who have continued to train beekeepers.

Activities in 2019

The main activities this year have included training on apiary management and honey harvesting. Additionally, training on group leadership, record keeping, team building, group dynamics, record keeping, general group management and environmental conservation was undertaken. Extension services were provided to individual farmers, and members were encouraged to buy their own hives – a change in plan. Initially, the plan was to provide the group with an additional twenty hives and ten bee suits. However, after consultation, it was found necessary to redesign the project in such a way that instead of donating those hives and bee suits to the group, a table saw, and the sewing machine was bought for them to use. Thus creating employment and sustainable access to hives and bee suits for the local community.

Nothing comes without its own problems, as reported in the last annual report, being a coffee-growing area with bananas also being a cash crop, the main challenge

has been on creating a balance between individual members' interests and group corporate interests. This has been observed to have contributed to underperformance as some members were reported to have had the feeling of not getting many benefits from the group activities as opposed to individual work. The emphasis has been on the promotion of individual hive ownership so that the members accrue benefits

Impacts

The main impact of working with the group this year has been a marked reduction in fear of bees among the group members, which was very rife when the project started. Members have reported an increase in production as a result of increased hive inspection. In addition, the group sale of hives to other farmers was reported to have contributed significantly to increased incomes.

Into the future

The plan for the coming year is mainly focused on optimising the use of the sewing machine, and offering extension services to individual bee farmers. This was trialled successfully in 2019 and will be scaled up in 2020.

Kisii Project, Kisii County, Kenya [P15-01-DE-Kisii] Joseph Gitonga

Background

The Kisii project is located in Kisii and Nyamira counties. Kisii county shares a border with Nyamira County to the North East. Kisii covers an area of 1302 square kilometres and is home to nearly 1.3 million people. Nyamira County encompasses 900 square kilometres, with a population of over half a million people. This project has been developed to improve the income for group members who can spend improving their food security and addressing other household needs.

The Kisii project is administered by our local partner, the Centre for Research and Advocacy in Human Rights (CERA-Rights). At a local level, the project targets two groups; one is an NGO known as BOSCOVET – the Bosongo Community Veterinary & Agricultural Project - who run the group under the name 'Busy Bees for Women's Empowerment', whilst the other group is a youth group known as the Kibuse Beekeepers group. Thus, one



Practical training with John Kibui (photo: CERA-Rights)

of the groups is made up of young people, while the other comprises middle-aged and elderly persons. This presents different motivations for the two groups, and so, the training offered has been tailored to be group-specific; for the Kibuse group, more emphasis has been put on increasing production, while for the Busy Bees, the focus has been more on value addition. Our Kenyan trainers combine visits to both groups to reduce costs.

There are three main impacts which the project hopes to achieve:

- Building the capacity of the beekeepers for increased honey productivity translating to better incomes
- Diversifying bee product incomes through training on value addition of bee products
- Developing a sustainable bee products business model for supplementation of other sources of household incomes

Activities in 2019

At the beginning of the project, both groups were found to have very limited information on beekeeping, so basic beekeeping training was instigated. The emphasis this year has been on mentoring the two groups, including refresher training courses on issues already covered. This is because the two groups are in their last year of operation as projects, and there is a need to have them prepared for the exit as well as ensuring that the activities are sustainable after exit.

There is a strong focus on marketing, especially on product development and packaging for the potential market. Aggregation for collective marketing is emphasized.

The Busy Bee women's group merged with another group known as Jahazi in 2018. It was observed that in the quest for expansion of their beekeeping activities, the members have been very ambitious, setting up targets that they had a challenge achieving. However, after discussion with them, it was agreed to shelve some plans and work with what is realistic and achievable. As a result, the group has now established a bee house where they have kept all the group hives with members still maintaining their hives in their respective farms.

For Kibuse youth group, the main challenge has been not understanding the importance of each of the seasons when beekeeping. Unfortunately, some of the young participants could not throw off a persistent bee phobia. During this year the trainers emphasized the need to time honey-harvesting during the two or three weeks after the end of the rains. Peer learning was emphasized, and there were some beekeepers within the area who were doing quite well. The need for regular hive inspection was encouraged, but the group members were cautioned against doing this during the day and always to wear bee suits when inspecting the hives.

Into the future

Although there remain some few challenges in respect to the performance of the two groups, it is worth noting that there have been significant improvements.

For Busy Bee, the most significant change has been the establishment of a bee house for their hives. The other significant change has been the adoption of value-addition training, especially making beeswax body creams. There has been a generally positive change in attitude among the members regarding beekeeping.

For the Kibuse Beekeeping Group, the most significant change has been an increase in the number of hives maintained by the members. There has been a general appreciation that beekeeping is an alternative source of livelihood and income-generation, including the creation of employment among the members.



*Preparing seedlings for tree planting
(photo: CERA-Rights)*

For the remaining part of the project life, the emphasis within the two groups will be on establishing sustainable beekeeping enterprises. Particular focus will be put on product standardization and packaging for the local and external markets. In addition, technical backstopping and mentoring will continue to be offered in order to ensure sustainability after the funding comes to an end.

Nakhuba Young Farmers Group - Webuye, Bungoma County, Kenya [P16-01-JH] Joseph Gitonga

Background

This three-year project started in 2017, has been established to seek to eradicate poverty among women and young people. Nakhuba Young Farmers group is located on the western part of the country about five kilometres from Webuye town, Bungoma County. The group of 30 members was started five years ago, to work as a welfare group mainly doing table banking (group saving) and promoting sustainable agriculture for household food security. Beekeeping was identified as an alternative source of income for the group members. The area has excellent potential for beekeeping, with enough forage and water for bees throughout the year. All the beekeepers have been trained on the various aspects of beekeeping.

Four key outcomes are planned for the project:

- Increased yields as a result of training in basic beekeeping, hive making and bee husbandry
- Well conserved environment with adequate bee forage
- Better incomes from the sale of standardised honey and bee products value-added products
- Well established bee product enterprise with high skills on business management including budgeting, costing and marketing

The local NGO in support of the project is the Centre for Research and Advocacy in Human Rights (CERA-Rights). This is a partner that Bees Abroad has been working



*John Kibui teaching about hives
(photo: CERA-Rights)*



Merioth training in value-addition (photo: CERA-Rights)

with since 2013 when engaged in the Bee Products Enterprise Development (BPED) Project, a DFID funded project. Trainers trained under the BPED project are the ones who have continued to train beekeepers. The project is led on the ground by Joseph Gitonga and John Kibui.

Activities in 2019

Most of the training was focused on value-addition, to enable the group to diversify on the bee products and making of bee suits using gunny bags (grain sacks) for honey harvesting. Extension services to individual beekeepers were offered for those beekeepers who wanted to pursue this activity beyond the end of the project. In the second half of the year, training was given on environmental conservation, and good governance; team building, conflict management and business planning. This was important as some of the participants felt that much of the work was done by a few members of the group, with other contributing less.

The active membership was reported to have increased from 15 to 26 members. The group was observed to be operating their beekeeping activities as a business, whereas in the past, beekeeping was just another group income-generating activity. Members were reported to have started planting fruit trees in their individual homes and the number of hives held by individual beekeepers.

A positive change this year has been an increased income from the sale of value-added products. This was a very positive outcome following training sessions in their manufacture.

Towards the end of the year, an additional three groups comprising 37 beekeepers were formed; the Nakhuba group was able to sell hives to the new groups at a fair price; evidence of the Nakhuba group's ability to support the increased numbers.

Into the future

The plan for the coming years is to focus on establishing a sustainable bee products business model. This will include focusing improvement of packaging, standardisation and marketing. Action will be taken to source packing materials more effectively, which currently have to be accessed from the capital city.

Partnership with CERA RIGHTS, Nanyuki, Laikipia County, Kenya [P18-17-JH] Joseph Gitonga

Background

This two-year project started in October 2018, is unique in that it is aimed at supporting the volunteer team in Kenya with stipends for their role in undertaking support services for projects in Kenya backed by Bees Abroad. The programme manager/administrator, accountant and three trainers are supported by the project for at least one day per week. It is aimed at enhancing the capacity of the beekeeping team in Kenya to ensure the ongoing sustainability of Bees Abroad supported beekeeping projects in Kenya.

The Partnership team

The team is made up of the core management of the local partner and trainers trained during the Bee Products Enterprise Development (BPED) project, which was supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) through Bees Abroad.

Joseph Gitonga and Magdalene work part-time for Bees Abroad, Joseph as Administrator and Magdalene as Accountant. Merioth trains in value-added products, and John and Joseph Kisio are trainers.

Activities in 2019

During this reporting period, project support had enabled the team in Kenya successfully to undertake project assessments for potential applicants, as well as the development of reports on the progress of each of the projects currently being supported. Three evaluations were undertaken.

During the same period, the team was able to develop in-county plans in partnership with the project leaders in the UK. The project support has enabled the team in Kenya to create important routes for collaboration with the county government and other partners such as the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE), Caritas Nyeri (a Catholic relief agency), and Kenya Veterinary Laboratories, Kabete.

With the regional government, the support has enabled the team to offer technical support to farmers, especially in Laikipia region. Although the county government has been very active in promoting beekeeping as an alternative livelihood, the government capacity to offer effective extension services to beekeepers is curtailed by limited budgetary allocations and the technical ability of the extension officers concerning beekeeping. Most of the extension officers in the government are trained in general agriculture, or livestock and thus have inadequate skills with beekeeping. The team in Kenya has therefore been very instrumental in offering support extension services mainly with referrals from the county government departments.

With ICIPE the collaboration had been with the Taita Taveta project (reported separately) where the team has been supporting training. ICIPE has supported the groups with hives and some other hive equipment. With Caritas Nyeri, the collaboration has been on training of farmers. With Kenya Veterinary Laboratories, Kabete, the partnership has been on research, mainly related to bee diseases and colonization. The recent finding from this work was that bee colonization has been diminishing, especially around Mt Kenya Region. The research was still ongoing on the causes of this phenomenon.



John Kibue
(photo: CERA-Rights)



Joseph Gitonga
(photo: CERA-Rights)



Magdalene Karoki
(photo: CERA-Rights)



Merioth Nduhu
(photo: CERA-Rights)



Joseph Kisio
(photo: CERA-Rights)

Into the future

- Explore the possibility of establishing a beekeeping farmers' training school
- Upscaling schools' beekeeping activities targeting nine schools in the next three years
- Explore the possibility of concentrating beekeeping in selected regions for better impact. The current projects are very widely distributed and may not create as many benefits as limiting support to fewer areas. Kenya is unique in that beekeeping is appropriate over 80% of the country.

Taita Hill Value Addition Training [P18-10-R] Joseph Gitonga

Background

The Taita project was the result of an initial short term training project that had been undertaken through the request of Rebecca Newman - a researcher with Helsinki University. The training course was the result of recommendations in her research study thesis in 2017 on the impact of climate and land use on beekeeping. The project aims to promote the improvement of livelihoods through beekeeping activities.

Rebecca Newman's study, was a collaboration between the University of York, ICIPE (African insect science for food and health) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland. In July 2018 trainers from Kenyan, Bees Abroad team provided training on value-addition. Through discussions with beekeepers, the team felt that there were knowledge gaps that needed to be addressed through more technical training.

This culminated in a proposal for a project that would run over two years, starting in April 2019.

The local NGO in support of the project is the Centre for Research and Advocacy in Human Rights (CERA-Rights). CERA-Rights is a partner that Bees Abroad has been working with since 2013 when engaging in the Bee Products Enterprise Development (BPED) Project, a DFID funded project. Trainers trained under the BPED project have continued to train beekeepers.

The Taita Hills group (photo: CERA-Rights)



Activities in 2019

This training project has provided:

- basic beekeeping and general apiary management
- refresher training on value addition and provision of extension services
- practical demonstrations on individual beekeepers' farms.

From the two training courses undertaken this year, we observed that the groups had positively changed their attitude towards beekeeping. Some members reported that they were already making beeswax value-added products. This is a significant change from their previous practice, where they used to give away the residue after processing honey to brew makers.

Due to the change in attitude, two of the three groups within this project were able to attract support from the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE), and 'Nature Kenya' (the East Africa Natural History Society), which donated Langstroth hives to them. There was an improvement in the use of catcher boxes to collect swarms and initiation of group tree nurseries with over 10000 seedlings. One of the group was also reported to have planted over 3000 trees and donated 2500 seedlings to neighbouring schools.

Into the future

In the coming year, the plan is to intensify training sessions on bee husbandry and apiary management to maximise on the production. In the longer term, this will lead to an improvement in:

- The capacity of 30 resource persons through training on basic beekeeping, bees husbandry, hive making, honey harvesting, honey processing, value addition and marketing
- Honey production for the group, with a target to increase by 50% for 150 bees farmers (50% of whom will be women) through training on hive making and baiting hives to attract bees
- General wellbeing and incomes of members through the sale of honey and other value-added products
- Group governance for sustainability through training on good management and group dynamics



Taita Hills beekeepers checking a hive (photo: Joseph Gitonga)

NIGERIA Bisi New

Okunowa Grammar School, Okunowa, Ogun State, South-West Nigeria [17-P06-BN]

Background

This project is working with students from the local Government run Agricultural school. Most students and adults involved are rural cassava farmers on low seasonal incomes made from trading crops. Their income is subject to substantial production and price risks including unpredictable weather, pests and disease, variable market prices and unscrupulous go-betweens.

Our trainees belong to local farming families on meagre incomes. The impacts of this poverty include poor nutrition, high mortality at all ages and inadequate access to healthcare and education. The trainees all contribute in some way to their family income through work outside school - on their family farm, external job, e.g. as labourers, tailors or carpenters. We are sincerely grateful for funding for this work, provided by INTO Giving <https://www.into-giving.com/>.

The goal of the project is targeted at increasing productivity; namely, better beekeeping practices resulting in increasing honey production (and income) with less investment in equipment. In 2018 we focussed on training, apiary set up and practice with the goal of self-sufficiency and productivity in 2019 and 2020.

By the end of 2019, 64 students were trained in basic beekeeping theory. Another 24 had completed their second year of practical beekeeping, including harvesting quality honey, manufacturing secondary hive products and making sales! A further 40 new trainees will be trained by on-site school trainers, bringing trainer capacity in the house!



Students ready to do a hive inspection
(photo: Tunde Adenola)

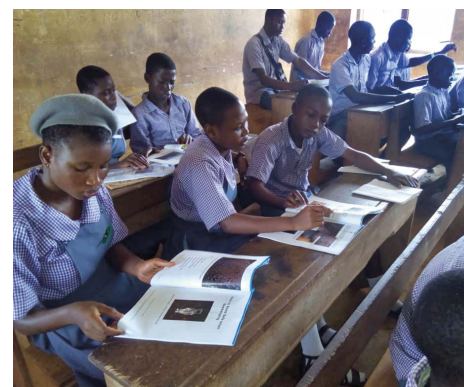
Activities in 2019

The year 2019 saw lots of activity:

- Bees Abroad UK and the local Bees Abroad trainer, Tunde Adenola, focused on work with the school authorities, school beekeeping trainers and trainees and the wider community to maintain clear objectives agreed for corrective project management actions.
- The team continued to work together throughout 2019 to maintain active beekeeping; baiting hives to encourage hive colonisation, relocation and reconfiguration of hives to secure the physical apiary, managing bee health and productivity in individual colonies as opposed to merely increasing the number of hives.
- This approach promotes better beekeeping practice with less investment in equipment required to increase honey production (and income).
- Fifteen training/support visits by the Bees Abroad trainer (versus the six planned initially) to support corrective actions to mitigate project difficulties. This was a careful and responsive approach to potentially serious setbacks experienced and reported in early 2019. These approaches restored productivity to levels anticipated before delays.
- Twenty top-bar hives, bee brushes, bee suits and smokers manufactured in 2019 by Year 2 trainees, of whom ten were new trainees. The Bees Abroad trainer supported the school trainers to deliver two training modules in secondary products (value-added products). A key aspect of the project is for trainees to be able to practice beekeeping at home for private income. The trainees formed local networks/groups to manage their private apiaries. With hindsight, we could have scheduled more regular extension by the Bees Abroad local trainer as the school trainers have

limited time available. To mitigate this, trainees bring their harvests into school for processing on different assigned harvesting/processing days.

- Harvesting quality honey and the production of secondary products at the end of Y2/2019 will support the school apiary to start honey sales and production capacity for secondary products.
- We await a final account for honey and other sales which will be re-invested in the school apiary. This is an essential milestone to self-reliance and sustainability, following on from initial honey sales. The secondary products (such as candles, creams and polish) provide a steady income stream, diversifying the income risk from agriculture alone. These secondary products spread the risk attached to reliance on only one product (honey) for beekeeping income across several durable, additional sustainable products.
- The school trainers continue to deliver structured beekeeping training as part of the school curriculum.
- Membership of the school beekeeping club is now 64 members versus the 24 originally planned at the end of Year 2. All members have access to beekeeping training manuals.



*Learning to make skin products
(photo: Mr Ajayi)*

Into the future – Year 3, 2020 and beyond!

Having completed theory sessions in 2019, we intend that in Year 3 (2020), the unplanned cohort of 40 trainees will be taught how to manufacture personal kit and hives before practising beekeeping at the school club and home. We will seek to ensure modern beekeeping practise is maintained at the on-site school apiary, developing hive occupancy in Year 3

To generate income, the project will support the school apiary to develop honey sales further and produce secondary products. Seven support visits are planned in 2020, including a review of secondary products to ensure harvesting and production quality is maintained.

As a result, trainees and their families will have incremental income from beekeeping sales of honey and secondary products, with an overall benefit to the community at large.

In terms of sustainability, by the end of the project, Bees Abroad will have supported two school beekeeping trainers to train ten new beekeepers from the school. The school trainers, (who were trainees in Y1), will act as trainers for the school apiary/beekeeping club to ensure the beekeeping is sustained on the school curriculum. They will train new member to the school beekeeping club, in all aspects of manufacture and practical beekeeping in the school apiary.

In conclusion

The project is preventative, builds capacity and as it works with school children the payback period for the investment is long - the children will benefit from training as beekeepers to enable them to generate income and be self-sufficient into adulthood and beyond.

The school now has in-house beekeeping trainers, an established beekeeping club as a base for beekeeping on the school curriculum and sales from beekeeping activity as an income generation option.

Jars and blocks of skin products



SIERRA LEONE Neil Brent

Rory's Well Gets Buzzing in Poteru and Gbensa [P17-08-NB]

Background

This four year initiative started in two locations, Poteru and Gbensa, in November 2017. The area of Poteru comprises a cluster of 42 villages mainly in three sections of Barri Chiefdom in the Pujehun District in the East of Sierra Leone. Gbensa is part of Kono district to the North. Bees Abroad is working through the organisation, Rory's Well (<http://www.roryswell.org/>) with an organisation called the Peoples' Agenda for Development – Sierra Leone (PAD-SL), more specifically, the Barri Bee Farmers' Association. The project is very grateful for the support from Eastwood Baptist Church, Ernest Brent, and from the Gola Forest Conservation Area who are funding training for a group of villages in their zone.

Sierra Leone has a very low life expectancy, people have poor health and health provision, the project communities are impoverished, and bee-farming represents for them first significant cash earning a livelihood. The project now has seven trainer/supervisors providing essential training and building their knowledge of the more advanced aspects of bee-farming in West Africa.



Honey processing (photo: Neil Brent)

There are six main objectives of the project:

- Review and consolidate progress in building a bee-farming enterprise in Barri Chiefdom
- Develop the skills of the current basic level trainers
- Build honey and wax producing capacity
- Further, develop markets for honey and value-added products
- Establish a training and processing centre
- Identify training and bee-farming opportunities beyond Barri Chiefdom

Activities in 2019

During the year, most of the objectives have been fully or partially met:

Further basic training was given to 19 of the 42 villages in bee-farming principles; hive construction, safety clothes, equipment, hygiene, honey and wax processing. In all, 68 villagers were trained, 24 of whom were trained at the hives that are now in place.

Another part of the project provided pilot basic training for six villages within the Gola Rainforest National Park (<https://golarainforest.org>) conservation programme, which is partnered with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and USAID. Also, the project has taken on four villages originally trained by another charity but no longer supported by that charity.

The number of basic level trainers has grown to seven – currently, all men. This year, further training has been given to them in; hive splitting, swarm capture, hive security, and managing pests. The bee-Farming association and PAD-SL are setting up a supportive infrastructure, and these trainers will have a supervisory role over five clusters of villages. This role will cover training, problem-solving, and harvest coordination.

A honey table has been manufactured to facilitate more rapid honey, and wax extraction involving more people and a further 92 hives have been built baited and sited. Most of these were sited recently, and by November, only nineteen had been occupied. Across the project, there are at least 404 hives in the field of which 92 have



Wax processing (photo: Neil Brent)

bees, a low occupancy of 23%. This is due to the rainy season growing longer and the rains becoming more extreme. This year, it has caused a lot of damage to sited hives and resulted in significant colony absconding. Despite this, there were two honey harvests that produced 600lbs and 200lbs of honey and 30lbs and 15lbs of beeswax. We were able to create several added-value wax-based lotions that are now proving very popular.

However, the bee-farming association has had another successful presence at the Kenema trade fair, making many contacts with Ministry representatives and supermarkets. Marketing is key to the success of this project and the strategy from now will be to focus on supermarkets, the health sector, tourist centres and hotels, local markets and street sales.

In terms of health, we have been working with the community nurse lead for the area who is piloting the use of honey on wounds and lotions for dry skin. The Pujehun District Medical Officer and his team have seen evidence of the efficacy of honey for wound treatment, and he is taking this to the national health ministry to seek approval for the use of honey in hospitals and other medical facilities.

Into the future

Since the start of the project, 119 villagers from 36 villages have been given basic training. The remaining six communities will be trained early in 2020, thus completing the first phase of the project. Currently, all the trainers are men, and we aim to encourage at least two women trainers.

In 2020 an extension to the project will provide up to 50% of the 42 villages with an additional ten hives each, as well as training on their hives and the provision of equipment with the aim that each village is self-sufficient to the point of honeycomb being harvested and collected.

Two villagers from Gbensa in Kono District, some 150km to the North attended training in November. This has resulted in a team from this project travelling North to begin training a group of villagers in early 2020. Training will be completed later in 2020 and arrangements for distant villages to be trained in Kono will be considered.

Steps have been agreed with the bee-farming association to mitigate the impact of future rainy seasons through:

- Closer supervision of village bee-farming, reporting on; hive condition, bee presence and weight every three to four weeks based on an external visual inspection
- The more robust construction of hives
- Careful siting of hives further away from watercourses
- Use of metal rods and wire to position hives

Infrastructure for honey collection, processing and sale will be put in place; the project hopes to establish a training and processing centre in conjunction with other aspects of Rory's Well's programme. Before this, a key factor is for each group to process the honey and wax their bees produce.

Within the Gola Rainforest National Park, the aim is to provide livelihood opportunities for villagers in the conservation zone and its fringe. The Gola Forest management team are supportive of expanding training across a wider area of three chiefdoms outside of this project's Barri Chiefdom. If approved, this training and equipping will be supported by funds from the Gola Forest.

This has been an important year for the project; we have more trainers and provision of training for three villages in Kono District some 150 km north of Barri Chiefdom. The initial training, funded by Bees Abroad, has proved very successful with several village chiefs and the acting paramount chief attending. There is interest in training more across more Chiefdoms. Funding will be an issue and discussions will take place with PAD-SL and the bee-farming association for training to be funded from sales.



Frame of brood from the old hive being put into a new hive (photo: Neil Brent)

UGANDA

Olochoi Village Beekeepers [P15-06] Dave & Cathy Bonner

Background

Olochoi is a small community in a remote area of Katine sub-county, about 25km north of Soroti; the main municipal, commercial, and administrative centre in the Eastern Region of Uganda. It is an agricultural region, with an emphasis on food crops (millet, cassava, cowpeas, potatoes, beans, sesame and sunflower). Cotton is grown as a cash crop, and vegetables including tomatoes, onions and cabbage are produced. Bees are plentiful as the land is lush and green and there is lots of forage. There are a few beekeepers with traditional beekeeping skills, and the project beekeeping group consists of ten members.

Activities in 2019

This project has been running for around four years and Bees Abroad now feels that the project has come to a natural close. There have been no further requests from the group, indicating that there is no additional requirement for assistance from Bees Abroad. The group have continued their beekeeping in the same manner as 2018.



*Handing Over Some Resources
(photo: Akol Lucas)*

The YOFENET project [P19-12] Dave & Cathy Bonner

The Young Farmers and Entrepreneurs' Network (YOFENET) is an established project set up to alleviate poverty in the Iganga region of Eastern Uganda. Previously, it has focused on the growing of mushrooms and passion fruit. The Mushroom Project is particularly well advanced, with processing facilities to package and market mushrooms in various ways.

YOFENET is well connected with the local government agencies, and members are well-skilled in self-promotion and obtaining resources from government projects. Bees Abroad became involved in 2017, and the project is planned to last for four years.

The group would like to establish over 500 top-bar hives cared for by 100 beekeepers in ten groups spread around the local regions of Busoga, Mayuge, Iganga and Jinja. There is a planned training apiary to benefit group members.

Activities in 2019

YOFENET, and a sub-group from Bukalebe, won 1st and 2nd prizes in Class 12 of the UK National Honey show. This is a significant achievement.

*Signpost to the training apiary
(photo: Dave Bonner)*





National Honey Show UK 2019 winning honey (photo: Dave Bonner)

Although the weather in Eastern Uganda has been unusually wet in 2019, beehives remained colonised, despite crop failures. Some pollination did take place, which helped the crops; however, both crop and honey yields were meagre.

Wax moth invaded some of the weaker colonies causing damage to the wood of the hives. The advice was given to the group on how to clean hives and manage hives to minimise the future risk.

In February 2019, the group was visited by the Commissioner from the Ministry of Agriculture, Madam Alice.

In March of 2019, the group exhibited at the second Uganda National Agricultural Extension Symposium in Kampala. The stand was visited by the Honourable Vincent B Ssempijja, the Minister from the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF).

In April YOFENET was invited to participate in Iganga Youth Accountability Day.

In July, supported by direct funding from Bees Abroad, the group exhibited in the National Agricultural Show in Jinja, Uganda. This is the biggest agricultural show in Uganda attracting over 300,000 guests yearly.

The group have shared their skills and knowledge by inviting the Mukono Youth Group to visit the YOFENET Training Group, thus expanding beekeeping knowledge to a wider group.

Future plans

Bees Abroad is encouraging and supporting YOFENET to build their own skills and resources, so they continue without the support of Bees Abroad. In the meantime, during 2020, the team hope to

- Increase the number of group trainers.
- Extend training within the local groups.
- Improve hive occupancy.
- Start training in value addition and build skill levels in this area.

The SELOCOFFI –project [P19-13] Dave & Cathy Bonner

Background

The SELOCOFFI project is located in Kyere, Eastern Uganda, and has been running since March 2017. SELOCOFFI is an established group (the Serere Local Fish Farming Initiative) which has been supported by a Dutch charity in the creation of a Fish Farm. The community has dug, by hand, three large fishponds each of about 0.75-acre surface area. The group then decided to encourage beekeeping and asked Bees Abroad for support. The beekeeping project has benefitted from some resources which were donated by the Ugandan Department of Agriculture. Most of the funds and resources are provided by Partnership Managers.

It is hoped that the project will benefit around 1500 individuals through training about 100 beekeeping members, providing a source of increased income in the community.

Activities in 2019

A new plant nursery has been created to produce bee-friendly shrubs and trees for use in the community. This comprises 150 pawpaw and 50 passion fruit seedlings, which have been planted.

Despite the poor weather, 54 litres of honey (75kg) have been harvested. This is worth about one million Uganda shillings (£200).

The quality of the honey was reflected this year when SELOCOFFI won 3rd prize in Class 12 of the UK National Honey show. This is a significant achievement.

Into the future

Progress was a bit slower in 2019 than had been hoped, but all progress was in the right direction; the timeframe to complete the project may be extended to 2022. Bees Abroad will continue to support the group: The plans for 2020 are to:

- Increase the number of group trainers
- Extend training within the local groups
- Improve hive occupancy



*Plant nursery – early days
(photo: David Omiat)*



Pollinating citrus trees (photo: Dave Bonner)



Bees-4-Life committee (photo: Akol Lucas)

Bees-4-Life [P19-29] Dave & Cathy Bonner

Bees-4-Life is a four-year project based around the town of Bukedea, located on the main road mid-way between Soroti and Mbale, in Eastern Region of Uganda. The project started in March 2019, with the aim of training members from 40 households, and for each home to have five beehives. The families are mainly rural farmers, many with HIV/AIDS, and the project expects to reduce the levels of poverty for the households involved. The UK Partnership Managers raise funding as part of their involvement with Bees Abroad.

The group is called Bees-4-Life OCONE (Our Community Needs Uganda) and one person in the group, Omiding Moses, is an experienced beekeeper with around 200 hives. He sells his honey in Bukedea Town. He is committed to this project and will take an active involvement in training and implementation. Moses will provide a site that can be used for demonstration and training purposes.

Activities in 2019

It hasn't proved very easy to arrange suitable days for training this year. Despite this, a three-day training course was carried out in July, with twenty members attending.

Future plans

In the coming year, two members will be sent to Nairobi for training, whilst Bees Abroad will provide training in apiary management, harvesting and processing to the trainee beekeepers. A further 30 top-bar hives will be installed.

To add to the sustainability of the initiative, during the project, at least four of the members will receive advanced training so that they become the trainers of the future trainers and the local beekeeping experts.

It is anticipated that 200 top-bar hives, with 70% occupancy, will produce at least 1400 kilograms of honey per year, depending on the weather. This will generate an income of about 14,000,000/= (£3200) per annum or £80 per household.

The Bed I Gen Beekeeping Project, Dokolo, Eastern Uganda

[P19-11] Dave & Cathy Bonner

Background

The Bed I Gen Beekeeping Project is in Anok village, one of the thirteen villages, in Atur Parish, Dokolo District, Uganda. The project is 35 kilometres north of the town of Soroti on the Lira road. There are 113 households in this village, and the entire parish has 1008 homes. The project will introduce beekeeping into twenty households in this village with each family having five top-bar hives, making 100 hives in total.

The project, which started in March 2019, will train these 20 members:

- In the use of top-bar hives for East African beekeeping.
- How to make top-bar hives and bee suits.
- Harvesting and processing honey
- Wax recovery
- Value-added products

At least four of the members will receive advanced training so that they become the Trainers of the future Trainers and the local Beekeeping experts.

Each of the 20 members will own five top-bar hives by the end of the project.

Activities in 2019

The twenty households have been selected because of their vulnerability and their commitment to beekeeping and this project. These households comprise women-led families, those made up solely of young people, and people living with HIV/AIDS. Much of the funding has been raised by Bees Abroad volunteers involved in the project, and also, the group themselves have already managed to acquire thirty top bar hives using their contacts – showing a real commitment to the project.

Training has been given on apiary siting and hive baiting to sixteen group members.

Into the future

Plans have been drawn up for two further training courses during 2020. Bees Abroad will send two members to the Nairobi Beekeeping station for advanced training.

It is anticipated that 100 top-bar hives with 70% occupancy will produce at least 700 kilograms of honey per year (weather dependent) which will generate the equivalent of about £1600 per annum, providing an income of around £80 per household.

Bees Abroad is planning the expansion and sustainability of beekeeping within the area by training at least four of the twenty members to become trainers/mentors themselves.



*Cutting the tape to start the project
(photo: Kalungi Charles)*



*Debating the width of the Top Bar Hive
(photo: Kalungi Charles)*

*How big is the brood nest
(photo: Kalungi Charles)*



Murambo Beekeepers Association Phase 2, Murambo Uganda [P16-03-RR] Richard & Jane Ridler, and Venetia Rist

Background

This two-year project started in 2018 as a follow-up to a short Phase 1 training project. The original small project provided training and additional support to group members of the Murambo Beekeepers Association, who were already traditional beekeepers. Since the start of Phase one, the group has continued to grow rapidly. Bees Abroad has learnt from other projects that providing traditional beekeepers with protective clothing, basic equipment, simple training and access to markets, enables them to improve their productivity substantially.

Activities in 2019

The plan was to increase the participants' income from honey to pay for household essentials (medicines, school fees, etc.) by increasing the honey yields achieved by the participants.

The project, funded by the Goosbec Trust, provided a comprehensive residential training course for two representatives from each of five subgroups at LIDEFO in Kasese. Although protective clothing and other essential equipment were provided by the project, no hives were donated as the beekeepers in this area are already competent using traditional hives. Money has not been donated for honey collection, processing, packing, and distribution as there are others in the area who offer these facilities.

A further activity comprised several field visits to supplement training by UK Partnership Manager (Venetia Rist), in February 2019. Her work included instruction in making protective clothing and added value products.

The most challenging part of the project has been providing the group leader (a man with tremendous enthusiasm and commitment) with the skills and competence needed to manage and feedback on the project.

Activities in future

The training courses are complete, and Bees Abroad do not anticipate further work with this project, or in this area. An email discussion with the Murambo team is planned to ensure that Bees Abroad money has been well-spent and to assess the impact of this project into the future.



Testing the honey harvest
(photo: Venetia Rist)



Learning to make bee suits
(photo: Venetia Rist)



Making candle wick (photo: Venetia Rist)

Kiringa Beekeepers Association, Kiringa, Uganda [P18-07-RR]

Jane & Richard Ridler

Background

This three-year project started in May 2018, located in Nsenyi Parish in the Kasese region of Uganda. Our local in-country partner is the Liberty Development Foundation (LIDEFO) who work in this area, and they are supporting the Kiringa United Beekeepers. The Goosebec Trust has kindly donated funding for the project.

There are around 250 members in the 22 sub-groups, including one primary school. They mainly practise traditional beekeeping, working with 320 hives located in a largish area centred on Nsenyi. Before the project, their productivity was low, although their knowledge and understanding of aspects of beekeeping are much higher than novice beekeepers. They were struggling to find markets for their honey and were throwing wax away. The beekeepers understand that beekeeping has the potential to increase their income, and sought help to realise it. They have high aspirations for addressing environmental concerns and innovation.

The project provides two experimental top bar apiaries with each of twelve hives, to enable the group to draw comparisons with their traditional hives. Following the evaluation, there is an option to buy up to 200 hives at a subsidised price. The project provides protective clothing and honey processing equipment to increase the productivity of their existing apiaries.

Activities in 2019

Throughout the year, Bees Abroad has continued to provide field support. The test apiaries have been fully established, and members have been able to make comparisons with their traditional hives. Some of the more mature leaders find it challenging to adopt new technologies (computers and mobile phones) to communicate their activities. Despite this, the findings have been very positive.

The community is very positive about the benefits of the change in beekeeping practices. They report that 500kg was produced in the early February and March when



*Catapult for Deterring Predators
(photo: Richard Ridler)*

they harvested the honey. This is more than double what was sold during previous harvests and may reflect the new selling arrangements where LIDEFO purchases the honey from the beekeepers for a fair price.



Weighing honey for sale
(photo: Richard Ridler)

Observations from local beekeepers and LIDEFO staff

“You are aware that most of the beekeepers were having local beehives; they have testified that modern hives [top bar hives] are far better in terms of easy management, and approach when conducting inspection, enabling selection of mature honey, and be able to harvest only the mature honey, without interfering with immature honey and brood.”

“They were able to bring most of their beehives in one place, while the old method they were scattering them, which made it difficult to effectively apiaries.”

“The modern method of establishing an apiary and keeping hives together enabled farmers to frequently attend to beehives and manage apiaries and control pests properly.”

“Working as a group at the learning site built cohesion among members and sharing of the limited tools and equipment.”

“Groups work facilitated capacity building and adaption to new skills and strengthening knowledge base, making it to spreading to a wider community such that they now appreciate beekeeping as an alternative source of income.”

“The knowledge and skills acquired helped some beneficiaries increase on honey production and income, which helped in meeting some domestic needs like tuition fees, medical bills and food.”

Other observations made by the beekeepers describe how, in the past members were visiting apiaries at night, now they have started accessing the apiaries during the day as working the hives is much easier with the availability of the protective gear. They note that smokers have assisted in preserving the bees; in the past farmers used to burn bees, but now they use smoke instead of fire.

Into the future

The project has been able to provide funding to subsidise members to buy up to 100 top-bar hives at a price close to that of local hives. To date, the farmers using the top-bar hives have been very complimentary about them. Bees Abroad will be interested to see if they purchase these hives rather than traditional ones in the future as a clear indication of whether the community finds them appropriate once the project ends.

Jireh Women, Kisoro, Kisoro District, Western Uganda [P19-18-RR] Jane & Richard Ridler

Background

Jireh Women is a voluntary, non-governmental, non-political and multi-sectoral registered organisation run by a committee of women, exclusively for 54 women. (The word Jireh translates as ‘God will provide.’) Its main goals are empowerment, improvement of health, education and living conditions among the underprivileged women and their

dependents. All members must be beekeepers already, and there is a small membership fee. The group are seeking increased honey production from women's apiaries with resulting income which will be theirs rather than their husbands'. By involving schoolchildren, and having beekeeping embedded in the curriculum of St Gertrude's school, they are seeking to make beekeeping sustainable in the area.

This project is unusual in that the project is working with local hives which are what the women requested. There was little point in re-training them to use top-bar hives because they are all practised in using local hives, the cost of which is around £3, compared to £30 for top-bar hives.

Of the 54 members, 46 have an average of two hives whilst the other eight have more significant numbers. Additionally, the organisation has involved 90 schoolgirls at the local secondary boarding school, St Gertrude's. The group hope to educate these girls both in beekeeping knowledge and practical skills which they can take back to their communities on completion of their schooling. Jireh's vision is to improve understanding of beekeeping and through this to improve living standards.

The project is generously match-funded with 50% of the budget provided by the Goosebec Trust, and the other 50% using unrestricted funding from Bees Abroad – funds generously donated by our supporters.

Activities in 2019

There has been a 4-day residential training course for group leader at the organisation LIDEFO in Kasese

Over 100 hives were distributed; they were all made by a local expert using a local design of woven hives covered in mud and dung. Costing just £3 each, they took longer than planned, but the quality is said to be good.

The group has been provided with eighteen sets of protective clothing and honey buckets.

Plans for the future

Once the first set of hives has been colonised, a further 102 hives will be provided to the group. This will allow them to follow up their aspirations to have the financial freedom to send their children to school, create food security and meet the basic needs of their children.

The women often meet, forming friendships, learning from each other, and creating a sustainable core of knowledge of beekeeping – an activity exclusively undertaken by men in the past.

The group will achieve a generation of educated women beekeepers from the beekeeping project at the school. This will result in beekeepers who will understand the relationship between beekeeping and crop farming through pollination when the children return to their families.



Distribution of local hives, buckets and suits (photo: Christine Ryumugabe)

Typical apiary belonging to the Jireh women (photo: Richard Ridler)



Bwindi Batwa Beekeepers, Buhoma, Bwindi, Kahungo Uganda [P16-02-RR] Venetia Rist

Background

The Batwa people are the original inhabitants of the Bwindi forest. In 1991, they were evicted from the forest to conserve it, and they now live a precarious existence on the forest margins. Many of the families of Batwa forest people have lost husbands, often due to HIV. The area is rural and well suited to beekeeping. They do not have much land, but they have a well-developed organisational structure and seem to work together successfully. The project is moving towards completion, and decisions will soon be reached on the appropriateness of further action in this area. In two of the three Batwa settlements where Bees Abroad are working, the Batwa are still struggling to adapt to 'modern' life. This presents particular problems in this project.

Food is a significant issue for the Batwa; they do not have enough food to be able to feed their families every day. The Batwa Development Project (BDP) have introduced successful vegetable growing, under the expert instruction and guidance of John Bosco, an agricultural graduate. One participant told us:

"After selling some honey, we were able to buy some fish for the first time; we have always dreamt of eating fish."

This three-year project started in 2017 to support new beekeepers and their families in three Batwa settlements. Through beekeeping, the money earned will help these families seek to improve the health of their children, thus supporting their self-esteem. The project was initiated by John Bosco, of the Community Initiatives for Biodiversity Conservation (CIBC) – the Bees Abroad local partner, and a trained beekeeper, Obed, who works with the communities. Both CIBC and Obed have proved invaluable in the work achieved.

We are very grateful for the support in the UK from the Midlands Inner Wheel, West Norfolk and King's Lynn beekeepers, and the Bank of Santander, all of whom made this project possible.

Activities in 2019

The three communities are in different locations, and each had a different tale to tell.

Bukoto settlement

This community have thriving, strong hives and the Partnership Manager was able to support the community to harvest some beautiful combs of sealed honey. This was their first good harvest, and they were delighted.

The group members were paid individually by the weight of their combs in the bucket, 27kg from seven hives. The cut comb sold at 10,000 ugs (Ugandan shillings) per half a kilo (around £4 per kilo).

The group learned a new skill; how to split a hive that was at the point of swarming. Rather than lose the bees, they learned how to recolonise an empty hive. This was a real test of whether the top bars were interchangeable between hives and some were and others weren't!

We gave revision sessions about making body cream and lip balm because these products have now become of more importance. A system for making packaging labels was set up.

Two problems had been resolved – termites invading the hives, and the hive stands collapsing because they were standing on a steep slope on shallow earth. Money was raised for them to buy angle iron and cement, sand and gravel to make new stands; the new set-up is excellent.

Mkongoro settlement

The Mkongoro group have proved the most resistant to outside help, and as a result, their beekeeping is progressing slowly. The safety equipment provided by Bees

Abroad has fallen into disrepair. Bees Abroad does not feel that this group is ready to interact freely due to deep-seated beliefs, at present, and other initiatives are planned.

Buhoma settlement

This group has been beset by problems as the tribal chief, the main beekeeper, had died, and his son is no longer in the area. Of the five elderly ladies left to maintain the hive, one died of pneumonia soon after. Therefore the hives are being managed by CIBC at present. Although there is a lot of honey to be had in this area, it seems unlikely that this initiative will be sustainable soon.

Into the future

CIBC has a good beekeeper, Obed, who will be able to train and support further Batwa individuals beyond the current phase. The manager has suggested that Bees Abroad supply the groups who are producing honey with a spring balance so that everyone will know the yield from each hive.

The honey produced by the Batwa will be taken to CIBC, where it is being packed and sold locally by CIBC. Some honey-based and wax-based products, lip balm, body cream and shoe polish, will be marketed in the same way.

For the two groups that are struggling at present, CIBC has suggested that one way to support the community, if they wish to keep bees, might be to educate the children in beekeeping once a school is opened in the near future.

Gorilla – shaped candles...not for sale

Unfortunately, the team was forced to change from making gorilla-shape candles (popular with tourists) at CIBC to making dipped or plain, moulded candles, due to a rumour that the Batwa were encouraging the burning of gorillas! Superstitions arise quickly, and new ideas like these can take a long time to fade.

The Ibanda Development Association beekeeping project for Persons with Disabilities [P18-14-RR] Jane & Richard Ridler

Background

This project is located in Kibirizi Village, Bugoye, Kasese District, Western Uganda, close to the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Bees Abroad is working with the Liberty Development Foundation (LIDEFO); a civil society organisation whose mission is *“To promote a realistic, innovative environment and operate a college that offers skills training and education, promoting beekeeping, micro-enterprise development for women and youth, enhancing positive transformation that increases household income, cross-cultural integrity and respect.”*

The beekeeping group has twenty members from fifteen families with various disabilities, e.g. lame, deaf, restricted growth, educationally challenged and with speech difficulties. Around 65% are women, and although not all will be able to practise all aspects of beekeeping, the team hopes and expects that each will find a role of some sort. By doing so, Bees Abroad hopes to provide an additional and sustainable source of income for the members which will improve their self-esteem and self-reliance by providing economic empowerment and give members the opportunity for recognition in the community.

The project, generously supported by the Goosebec Trust, is providing twenty hives in two phases with associated training, equipment and field support.

Activities this year

This three-year project started in July 2018, in February, a visit was made by the partnership managers. As the group leaders become more confident, we expect them to involve the disabled members more in the activities of beekeeping.

By September the first ten hives were adequately colonised, and the group were managing them competently, so a further ten hives were added. Field visits to monitor progress and provide coaching and support have continued throughout the year.

In September, the local partner, LIDEF0, reported that several of the participants had gained practical skills in beekeeping as a source of income. This has resulted in reduced stigma for those with disabilities, and there is a sense of hope for self-reliance among persons with disabilities, guardians and parents.

Into the future

This is a challenging project, and Bees Abroad will continue to provide field support. The team is hoping for a reasonable harvest from the first ten hives. The target is ten kilograms of honey per hive which, when sold, would give an income of around £20 per hive. With increasing confidence in the team managing the apiary, it is hoped that in the coming year, there will be still greater involvement of the participants living with disabilities.

Uganda Women's Resource Centre for Community Development, Kagando Village, Kasese District, Uganda

[P18-08-RR] Richard & Jane Ridler

Background

Formed in 2010 the Women's Resource Centre for Community Development (WRCC) is a non-religious, non-political, non-profit making organisation currently comprising some 100 women and a management team. Women are drawn from a largish area, so it has been necessary to form sub-groups for beekeeping purposes.

The aim of the group is to improve the quality of life of the women members, some of whom are child mothers, others are disabled, deprived of education etc. There is an acceptance by the local leaders that the place of women in society in rural Uganda should improve. The men in the leadership group are attempting to facilitate this change because Ugandan rural society does not generally recognise women as able to act on their own behalf.



One of the WRCC groups
(photo: Richard Ridler)

Generously supported by Poole Soroptomists and the Goosebec Trust, the project plan is to train and equip the group with 120 hives in eight apiaries. The hives will be delivered in two phases, the second tranche once the first group is successful. The women chose to work collaboratively and formed themselves into groups.

The project works with the Liberty Development Foundation (LIDEFO) – a local community organisation with the skills to train groups in beekeeping.

Activities this year

In September, 53 of the first 60 hives were colonised, but many colonies were still small, and there was only a small harvest of 25 kilograms of honey.

LIDEFO have continued to provide field support; solving problems, helping and encouraging. Levels of participation are increasing, and many of the women are becoming sufficiently confident to attend their hives without the support of men. With this confidence, the members' attitude towards beekeeping as a business is increasing.

There have been problems with keeping others away from one apiary, and a roll of barbed wire to make the apiary secure has been provided.

Into the future

Bees Abroad will continue to support the groups, and a further 60 hives will be provided once the colonies in the first 60 hives are better-developed.

This is early days, and it is hoped that once fully operational, the bees will produce ten kilograms of honey per hive.



I must remember that...
(photo: Richard Ridler)

Kitabu IDA Uganda [P19-05-RR] Jane & Richard Ridler

Background

In April 2019, a three-year project was started in Mughetee Village, Kitabu, Kasese Region, Uganda. Bees Abroad is supporting the Kitabu Integrated Development Association, working with the local delivery partner, the Liberty Development Foundation (LIDEFO), which operates in this area and which has identified the residents in this village as a very needy community. The project is generously supported by the Goosebec Trust (50%) and Bees Abroad unrestricted funds (50%).

LIDEFO's primary purpose is to generate sources of income which enable their community to avoid dependence on illegal poaching in the adjacent QE II National Park (buffalo, deer, etc.). Park rangers shoot and kill poachers, and many of the menfolk have died in this way.

The group was founded in 2011 but only really got going in 2015. They have received a small grant from the Melania Foundation which has enabled them to start a small business catering for weddings and funerals. The Melania Foundation also gave LIDEFO quails to breed, but without the skills training to go with this gift, unsurprisingly the quails all died. The community operate a tiny microfinance system which does such things as enabling women to buy a few tomatoes to sell. Although the region is equatorial, the vegetation is not too dense, so it is reasonably well suited to beekeeping.

The plan involves training in honey production, and any honey produced would be purchased by LIDEFO and funds would be shared by the community. Funds from the sale of honey will go into a fund which will provide microloans to community members.

Activities in 2019

This project has only recently started up, but already there has been a residential training course at LIDEFO in Kasese town, lasting for four days and involving five people.

A fifteen-hive apiary has been established in a eucalyptus wood owned by the community. The project will create a fifteen-hive community apiary on land they already own. There is one resident who is known to have some beekeeping experience, and some able and enterprising women in the group.

Future plans

When the initial fifteen-hive apiary is colonised, and the project team is satisfied that it is being managed to an adequate standard, they will provide a further 60 hives and associated equipment. Ownership and location yet to be decided.

Africa Ray of Hope project, Buhesi, Fort Portal District, Western Uganda [P19-15-RR] Jane & Richard Ridler

Background

The Africa Ray of Hope Organisation (ARHO) is a voluntary, non-governmental, non-political and multi-sectorial organisation run by adults and youths in close cooperation with local communities. Its main goal is the improvement of health, education and living conditions in underprivileged communities, through increased self-reliance and responsibility, the establishment of sustainable development initiatives and resource management, as well as youth's capacity development.

Its current initiatives include HIV/AIDS awareness, hygiene education, craftwork (making liquid soap) and the provision of scholastic materials. There is a small membership fee.

Its vision is 'a healthy dynamic community and environment in which people understand and responsibly take rightful directives of life towards their destination'. There is a Board of able people overseeing an enthusiastic committee of youth.

The beekeeping initiative started in May 2019, will be supported by Bees Abroad local partner, the Liberty Development Foundation (LIDEFO) which operates in the area; it is expected to last for three years. The project is kindly supported by matched funding from the Goosebec Trust (50%) and by generous donations to Bees Abroad from our supporters (50%),

Activities in 2019

A training apiary was established, comprising fifteen hives, with associated protective gear and essential equipment.

LIDEFO ran a four-day residential course for five people in Kasese. The students learned about honey harvesting, but not wax processing or value-addition using hive products. With time, these people will become 'community mobilisers' and pass their knowledge on through a 'Train-the-Trainer' role.



The Kitabu group - Mostly women because the men have been killed (photo: Richard Ridler)

Plans for the future

When the hives in the training apiary are colonised and the group has demonstrated its ability to manage the hives to an acceptable standard, the first ten households will be selected, equipment and training given.

In selecting the households that receive the hives, Bees Abroad will seek to determine the specific reasons why they are keen to be involved. These will be reported at a later stage.

Support will be given to households which will receive hives at later stages. It is anticipated that twenty households will each receive six hives, protective gear and essential beekeeping equipment. LIDEFO will help and support this initiative throughout.

Uganda Good Shepherd School Project [P19 22 RR]

Jane & Richard Ridler

Background

In August 2019, in Kirembo Village, Kasese Region, Western Uganda, Bees Abroad became involved in a project working with a group called the Uganda Good Shepherd Foundation, supported by the local partner, the Liberty Development Foundation (LIDEFO). The Foundation was formed in 2013 by a group of parents to generate funds to build and support a primary school and pay fees. The goal for this beekeeping project is to create a working apiary that provides honey for sale every year. With the income, the Good Shepherd Foundation will be able to make improvements to the school and ensure payment of fees for the neediest.

The Good Shepherd Foundation already has an apiary which it manages on a secluded steep hill nearby with some fifteen hives of local design and two top-bar hives. On their admission, they did not know what they were doing, and it had become something of a shambles. Most hives were in a poor state of repair and hard to access. Despite this, they had been harvesting some honey and are keen to do things properly. They have land for a second apiary. LIDEFO will help them in the future so that they can learn how to do things better.

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Although the school buildings are extremely basic (mostly lacking doors and windows), there were sufficient benches, very basic desks and blackboards, and on a project visit, we found a very positive atmosphere, good organisation and attentive children. This beekeeping project is being supported by another school – The Perse School, Cambridge parents association, who

Children of Good Shepherd School Unloading Hives (photo: Daniel Ngangasi)



have chosen Bees Abroad as their charity partner for the school year 2019/20 for charity fundraising events. An additional partner is St James Church, in Southam. We are grateful for support from these two generous donors.

Activities in 2019

Despite only starting formally in August of 2019, several actions have already been achieved:

- An on-site training course run by LIDEFO was attended by members of the group
- An apiary, comprising twenty new top-bar hives, has been established on the second site
- The existing apiary has been re-laid, hives have been repaired or replaced, and fifteen new/replacement hives have been provided
- Essential start-up beekeeping equipment has been provided, including protective clothing, smokers etc

Future plans

This project is at a very early stage, but it is hoped that by next year, the hives will be colonised with healthy developing colonies. Bees Abroad plans to ensure field support and coaching to build up the capability and confidence of the Good Shepherd Foundation team.

Uganda Abanyatereza Sisters [P19-24-RR] Jane & Richard Ridler

Background

The Ave Maria Convent is in Rwibaale in a rural area 10km South of Kyenjojo, the administrative centre of the Kenjojo district of Western Uganda. Founded by a Canadian missionary, ten Catholic Sisters employ staff and manage a primary school, a secondary school, a health clinic, a small farm and a maize processing plant. The work of the Sisters is one of providing practical support to local rural communities which practice subsistence farming.

Sister Sylvia is leading the beekeeping project. She has a degree in agriculture and manages the convent farm which includes a small new small apiary. She gained experience of beekeeping at her last convent. Although her level of competence is not yet known, Bees Abroad is working with the group, supported by our local partner, the Liberty Development Foundation (LIDEFO).

The area is equatorial with lush, varied vegetation ideally suited to beekeeping. There are traditional beekeepers in the area and adequate opportunities to sell honey. The convent farm has space for an apiary and buildings which could be used for storage, teaching, honey processing etc. The religious community is a trusted partner for local people, and the location is part of the area within which LIDEFO works.

The project team is currently exploring with the participants what they would regard as a 'successful project outcome'. We expect these to be expressed in terms of such things as sending children to school/paying school fees, acquiring household items etc.

The project is generously supported by matched funding – Goosebec Trust (50%) and unrestricted income (50%) – kindly donated by our supporters to Bees Abroad.



Sister Sylvia and Simion of LIDEFO at Ave Maria Convent (photo: Richard Ridler)

What's happened in 2019?

The project started in September 2019, and already things are happening. An on-site training course for ten families has been completed. Each of ten households has received six hives, one 'catcher box' (a short top-bar hive used for catching swarms), and essential beekeeping equipment. An additional twelve hives for the existing convent apiary have been provided. Each family now has their hives on their land, and they await colonisation. Field support is provided by both Sister Sylvia and LIDEFO.

Future plans

We anticipate that by the end of 2020, all the new hives will be colonised. During the year, apiaries will be monitored and support given to complement initial training. We will receive feedback from the training delivered by in-country project partners.

By the end of the project, it is hoped that:

- Around five committee members, and around fifteen household representatives will have been trained in practical and theoretical top-bar hive beekeeping.
- Already, ten households each have six top-bar hives, and it is anticipated that they will be colonised and fully productive.
- The existing convent apiary of five hives has been increased by a further twelve, and we are hoping they too will become colonised fully productive.

Actions to promote sustainability include:

- Local carpenter/s and tailors will be trained to make hives and protective suits.
- Bees Abroad is keen for Sister Sylvia to be a proficient beekeeper and be able to teach and train further families.
- Sister Sylvia has the ambition to form some savings scheme to fund future equipment
- Teaching materials for beekeeping will be provided in the convent school.
- The project will set up a small honey processing centre in a building within the convent grounds for processing and packing honey for supply to local retailers.

ZAMBIA

Monze Women's Beekeeping Project [P17-12-SA] Stuart Andrews

Background

The Monze Women's Beekeeping Project is located in the Monze District, Southern Province of Zambia. The project aims to introduce modern beekeeping – using top-bar hives – to approximately 120 women in six groups, each of 15-16 members, over a three-year period, as a source of much-needed income. The project is funded by the Ida Davis Family Foundation, and Zoetis, to whom we are much indebted, and has worked without overspend throughout the project. Our partners, the Sustainable Rural Development Agency (SRDA), with whom we have worked with in the past, are a small NGO based in Monze, and its Director, Phillip Nsakilwa, is responsible for managing the project locally.

Our beneficiaries are subsistence farmers – many of them unmarried or widowed – who have sole responsibility for the wellbeing of their households, which contain on average eight members. Monze District is recognised as one of the country's least developed districts in which levels of poverty are very high.

In recent years, their situation has become even more precarious as a result of the reduced rainfall, which has caused crop failure.

The project will be implemented in three yearly phases, two groups being enrolled each year, and this year we enrolled two new groups to add to the original two groups, giving a total of four groups. Each group acts as a separate cooperative and manages an apiary composed of eight hives. Two further groups will be formed in 2020.

Activities in 2019

During April and May, Stuart Andrews visited Monze District to help evaluate the first phase of the project, initiated last year, and to launch the second phase. He saw firsthand the effects of the ongoing drought in the area which has had an adverse effect on the amount of progress able to be made with the project this year.



*Crop failure, an all too common sight
(photo: Dr Stuart Andrews)*



SRDA's Director Phillip Nsakilwa demonstrating how to prime a Kenyan top-bar hive (photo: Dr Stuart Andrews)

As the year progressed, the drought was to have a more profound effect on all four of the groups' beekeeping activities. The lack of precipitation created an environment in which there appeared to be fewer bees available to colonise hives. The reduced rainfall also stressed the vegetation resulting in less food (pollen and nectar) being available for the bees. Predictably, any established colonies were to abscond – essentially a planned abandonment of the hives whereby the bees fly away in search of more favourable conditions.

Although few of the agreed targets, milestones and success indicators have been met this year, there have been some significant achievements:

- attendance of group members at regular technical meetings during the year with SRDA continue to be good (typically more than 80%) which shows a real commitment to the project
- of the two Phase 1 groups that have managed to harvest some honey, both clearly have a core of members able to open and harvest the hives without any reliance on SRDA
- one of the newer Phase 2 groups, by successfully collecting and housing two swarms of bees, has already gained significant confidence and practical experience of an important beekeeping skill.

Future Plans

If the seasonal rains arrive, and there are signs that bees have started to return to the area, the project manager will plan to visit Monze District in April 2020 to evaluate Phase 2 and to enrol two further groups to launch Phase 3 of the project. He will also visit the Phase 1 groups to reassess their progress.

However, if by the end of December conditions favourable to beekeeping have not started to re-establish themselves then plans to proceed with Phase 3 next year will likely be put on hold.

The two Phase 1 groups (Kabwenbala and Chobaana East) managed to harvest a very modest amount of honey at the beginning of the year: 10 kg from one hive, and 51 kg from four hives respectively. The honey was purchased by SRDA as part of their buying and selling operation for markets in Lusaka at a price of 19 kwacha per kilogram, paid on the purchase. Using the exchange rate at the time of 15 kwacha = 1 GB pound, this initial harvest provided the Kabwenbala group with the equivalent of about £13 and the Chobaana East group with £65. This amount of money might not seem much, but it will buy considerably more in rural Zambia than it would in the UK.

A message from KUSIIMA Kaheesi Samuel

Former Executive Director of Bisudef

Bees Abroad a typical worker bee in a hive



Samuel (centre) with field officers from the BISUDEF project

“Bees Abroad has played a commendable job in delivering a cocktail of benefits to mankind across the globe, most especially Sub Saharan Africa. A worker bee plays a litany of tasks in a beehive and is a perfect symbol to illuminate what Bees Abroad did in the Mid-Western Region of Uganda.

Bees Abroad had a mutual partnership with two local NGOs in the said area, notably; Bigasa Sustainable Development Foundation (Bisudef) and EMESCO Foundation of Greater Hoima and Greater Kibaale Districts, respectively. The beneficiaries of these NGOs continue to gratify the incredible support and benefits they received from apiary projects that were delivered by selfless, hardworking, and loving persons that were being led by Roy Dyche (RIP), Stuart Andrews, Pam Gregory (RIP), and Geoff Redwood.

The women groups of Bisudef comprised of over 150 members still count the benefits they got for instance; their confidence was enhanced, they were made entrepreneurs, they were taught and skilled to make Kenya Top Bar (KTB) hives using local and readily available materials, value addition on hive products (honey processing, lip balm and candle making), making of protective gears using local material, tree planting, and general apiary management. The community has also applauded the other indirect benefits of ecosystem services (pollination, climate change mitigation, etc.) supply from the apiary.

The Bees Abroad funded project exposed the Bisudef Executive Director then and was able to win a prestigious Tullow Group scholarship to study Ecology in one of the top UK University (Aberdeen). He returned to his home area where he is working and impacting on the community.

The model implemented in Hoima was simple yet impactful. Bees Abroad will forever be on the hearts of Bisudef women, and the trail left will never wane.

Long Live Stuart Andrews!

Continue to Rest Eternally Roy Dyche!

Long Live Bees Abroad”!



21
YEARS

Bees Abroad

Relieving Poverty through Beekeeping

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Get in Touch

T: 0117 230 0231

E: info@beesabroad.org.uk

A: Bees Abroad
The Keepers, Symn Lane,
Wotton-Under-Edge,
Gloucestershire GL12 7BD

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