



**21**  
YEARS

**Bees Abroad**

Relieving Poverty through Beekeeping

# **BEES ABROAD ANNUAL REPORT**

**Summary of projects  
January – December 2020**

**[beesabroad.org.uk](https://beesabroad.org.uk)**

Photo: Queen Bee, Trisha Marlow

<b>CONTENTS</b>			
<b>Country</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Page</b>	
Introduction	Welcome	2	
GHANA	Amomaso-Adom Beekeepers	4	
	Atudorobesa Women's Co-operative	5	
	Bia West Beekeeping Association	6	
	Boabeng-Fiema Ecotourism Project	8	
	Eke Beekeepers Union	10	
	Hekenofom-Beekeepers	12	
	Levite Women Beekeepers	13	
	Suhum-Amanhyia Beekeepers	15	
	A Beekeeping Centre for Northern Ghana	16	
	Bees for Livelihood	16	
	Association of Beekeepers Twifo Praso, Central Region	17	
	Kenya	Kahuho Environmental Water Cons and Beekeeping Self Help Group	18
		Kiini Sustainable Initiative	19
		Mothers Union, Nanuki, Kenya	20
Nakhuba Young Farmers Group		21	
Kisii Project		22	
Taita Hills Value Addition Training		24	
Nzeveni Beekeepers		24	
Nyakach Sustainable Beekeepers Group, Kisumu		26	
Malawi	Dowa Women Beekeepers Project	28	
Nepal	Livelihood Improvement through Beekeeping in Tanahum	30	
Nigeria	Value Seeds Project	32	
	OkunOwa Grammar School Beekeeping Project	34	
Rwanda	Umutara School for the Deaf	38	
	Kabarore Apiculture Development Co-operative	39	
Sierra Leone	Rory's Well gets buzzing	43	
Uganda	Bwindi Batwa	44	
Uganda	Kinyamaseke Youth in Development	47	
	Women's Resource Center for Community Dev	48	
	Ibanda Development Association for Persons with Disabilities	49	
	Jireh Women Beekeepers	50	
	Katabu Integrated Development Association	51	
	Africa Ray of Hope	52	
	Good Shepherd School	53	
	Banyatereza Sisters	54	
	Rwenzori Rural Talent	55	
	Bed I Gen Beekeeping Project	57	
	Young Farmers and Entrepreneurs Network	59	
Selocoffi Beekeepers	60		
Bees for Life	61		
Zambia	Monze Women's Beekeeping Project	62	

# Welcome...

*...to our 2020 report. We hope you find it engaging and informative. We always value feedback. Thank you for taking the time to read it.*

## Introduction

Thankfully honeybees don't suffer from Covid-19 so they continued to work hard collecting honey on behalf of our project participants throughout the year. We had to postpone group activities, such as training courses, during periods of lockdown, but fortunately, beekeeping is considered to be part of livestock management and as such was generally allowed during periods of lockdown.

### According to the United Nations...

An estimated 71 million people are expected to be pushed back into extreme poverty in 2020, the first rise in global poverty since 1998. Lost incomes, limited social protection and rising prices mean even those who were previously secure could find themselves at risk of poverty and hunger

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/sustainable/sustainable-development-goals-report-2020.html>

However, Covid-19 did severely affect the rural communities in the countries where we work; not by causing the death toll experienced in UK, but by forcing up food prices, increasing unemployment, disrupting health services and generating social problems.

Of course we were not able to make visits to our in-country delivery partners or our projects. As a result, both they and we have accelerated our move towards electronic communication. It is just a pity signals are not good enough to use "Zoom" everywhere.

## Impact of Covid on our Finances

Not being able to fund raise at the many events we have attended in past years was a blow. However, we rapidly turned our attention to learning how to increase our on-line fundraising.

Professor Adam Hart, one of our patrons, was quiz master at two successful fun quizzes, and sales from our on-line shop were much better than past years. This Birthday Card, designed for us by Emma Lawrence, was the best seller in our on-line shop.



We joined 'Remember a Charity' which got us national coverage during their publicity week in September. In the future we hope it increases the number of legacies in our favour. Here we see Orinoco, of the Wombles, promoting Bees Abroad.

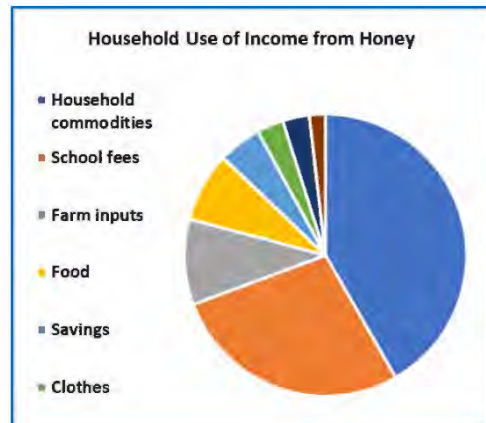
The position of our financial reserve at the start of 2020 means that with some careful management we are able to maintain our level of in-country spend on projects.

### Impact of Covid-19 on the Bees Abroad Team

As volunteers, when we were forced to stay at home, I think most of us devoted more time to Bees Abroad. I suspect that provided a welcome and therapeutic escape. As the year progressed we noticed a growing number of volunteers offering their services. We always do our best to involve everyone who wants to contribute. The combination of more time, more effort and a growing demand for new projects led us to create 'Beekeepers for Life', an initiative to empower women in Africa through beekeeping.

### Our impact

We were able to support Rebecca Newman in producing a paper published in the December edition of Development in Practice. The successful production of honey is fundamental to achieving the outcomes our project participants hope for. Her research was carried out in the Taita Hills area of Kenya. It was good to see that her results echoed what we see and hear from our projects about how money from the sale of honey is used. Empowerment, improved health and wellbeing, and money to buy medicines, pay for school fees and household essentials, all depend on successful hives.



Success in producing good honey crops depends to a large part on our new beekeepers achieving an adequate level of competence and confidence; this takes around two years. To help our local delivery partners focus their field support on individuals and apiaries where it is most needed to help participants on their journey to success, we developed and successfully trialled a simple smartphone-based hive monitoring tool. From the answers to questions about each hive, such as "how many top bars are the bees using?" we can monitor progress and provide support sooner rather than later.

### Looking Forward – Beekeepers for Life [www.beekeepersforlife.org](http://www.beekeepersforlife.org)

In February we launched 'Beekeepers for Life', an initiative to empower women through beekeeping. It will focus on educating, training and supporting groups of women to become skilled beekeepers. Beekeeping is very accessible to women, culturally acceptable and empowering. Our aim is to form clusters of women's groups which are mutually supportive and demonstrate to others that beekeeping is a really viable way forward for women to earn income to support their families.

**Richard Ridler – Chair, Bees Abroad**

We sincerely thank the many donors who continue to support our work. We cannot name everyone - just to mention a few:

Advance Science Ltd., Tula Trust, Open Gate Foundation, Perse Preparatory School, INTO Giving Ltd., Ida Davis Foundation, Solomons Trust, Wax Chandlers Trust, Franklin Trust, Surrey BKA, Gilbert Edgar Trust, Wild Things Ltd., Halleria Trust, Goosebec Trust, Claire Waring, Warwickshire & Leamington BKA and the many others who continue to support those people living in poverty

# GHANA

## Partnership Manager: Trisha Marlow

### Amomaso-Adom Beekeepers

The Amomaso-Adom Beekeepers belong to a cocoa farming community. The farmers' livelihoods are at the mercy of international cocoa prices with many of the women earning a little extra selling surplus vegetables and tubers at the roadside; an activity which is being badly affected by Covid-19. Bees Abroad was approached by a Cocoa Board extension officer for the area, Benjamin Amoah. He wished to introduce beekeeping to the Amomaso Cocoa Co-operative's farmers, as cocoa money is seasonal, and incomes are low. However, there is a risk because, although cocoa is not pollinated by honey bees, the bee colonies must be kept out of cocoa farms as the chemicals used can be a risk.

The community is better served than most Ghanaian projects in that everyone can access electricity and pumped water at home - providing they can afford the bills. The team set out to train 25 participants in this foundation phase of the project. If this succeeds, the roll-out of a full livelihood project will go ahead subject to finding a sponsor.

#### Activities in 2020

By the beginning of the training period, Benjamin had been transferred to another community. However, using WhatsApp from the UK, the Partnership Manager was able to train Thomas Manu from the Ghana Regional Trainer network (GRTN) in undertaking a full (distanced) baseline assessment for the project. This ensured that through the data set gathered, the project team know enough about the fourteen women and eleven men trained that they can measure impact of the work later in the project. Fortunately Benjamin can still access the community to spur them on and help a bit with the development of effective group working.



*Assembling hives at Amomaso*

At the very end of September, Thomas arrived in the community and taught the group beginner beekeeping theory. He supervised the arrival by truck of an initial 25 hive kits provided under tender by associate NGO Ashanti Development to get the best value for our donors.

The group assembled the beehive kits as a group-working exercise. They were instructed in how to choose and prepare apiary sites, and site and bait their hives with beeswax, ready for colonisation. They received a library-pack of beesuits, protective gauntlets and wellingtons, smokers and manuals.

## Future Plans

Goal setting for the main project will be done, as on all GRTN projects, towards the end of the foundation year once beekeeping is a reality. However, improving overall income is clearly the overarching aim.

It is hoped that 2021 will be less impacted by Covid-19 than 2020 and the group will be able to monitor their hives regularly, sending valuable information back to their trainer, Thomas.

Regular extension visits will ensure that the group works effectively towards the goal of a honey harvest. They will be shown the best ways to go about this and how to produce quality honey hygienically for marketing. Some surplus beeswax may be available for sale, although in the first year it is often best to keep it for baiting hives as the project grows.

## Atudorobesa Women's Co-operative

This project, which started in March 2019, is located in Yamfo community, in the Ahafo Region of Ghana. The applicant had visited Nyu Nunu beekeepers (part of the Cashew Farmers' project), and had wanted to replicate their knowledge and enthusiasm for beekeeping in Yamfo. The project seeks to provide healthy and quality honey for sale to supplement income for educating their children for a brighter future. This project is generously supported by North Hertfordshire Beekeepers.

The local delivery partner is the Ghana Regional Trainer Network (GRTN), and the local project co-ordinator is called Appiah. The GRTN comprises four regional trainers with close co-operative links, and there is support from an extension officer should it be needed. Where a local community organisation is in place for local logistics and administrative support, the GRTN will provide the specialist technical support required.

The local group being trained is the Atudorobesa Women's Co-operative. Thirty women were trained during 2019, and an apiary of 15 hives was established. The women are highly dependent on environmentally-damaging charcoal-making for cash income; this supplements sales from the small excess production of produce from subsistence farming. A 23 kilogram bag of charcoal is sold for around £1.25 in local currency, and beekeeping can bring in a better income and improve crop pollination at the same time.



*Atudobresa Beekeepers trainer preparing new top bars with beeswax - Photo: Thomas Manu*

## Activities in 2020



**Atudobresa Beekeepers siting an apiary -  
Photo: Thomas Manu**

Following a risk assessment, Thomas Manu from the GRTN visited the community in April. Socially distanced, he assisted a small group of members with harvesting and extracting their first harvest of fourteen kilograms of honey. When conditions allow, training will be given to the whole group on harvesting and extraction.

A surprise awaited Thomas with the discovery of 'unexpected guests' in two of the top bar hives where Tifuye stingless bees had taken up residence. Their presence in the hives is a sure sign of habitat degradation as they normally build an enclosed nest on a tree branch. A viable addition to the project has been worked out: locally made catcher boxes placed

in trees in the next phase of the project will be there for the Tifuye bees, or for honey bee swarms prior to transfer to top bar hives. These tiny bees provided one kilogram of precious Tifuye stingless bee honey. Not only are the bees still in residence and not robbed out by the nearby honey bees, the honey is valued at around £40 in UK terms if sold in tiny bottles and well presented. It is highly valued for medicinal use. Tifuye are excellent pollinators of a variety of fruit trees, and, being loyal to a plant species, can produce a variety of honeys.

The project was not visited by the Partnership Manager due to the cancellation of the late March country visit due to Covid-19. However, working closely with Thomas, a three year livelihood project was put together and submitted.

### Future plans

A further 60 beehives are planned, along with additional protective equipment and kit for extraction and storage. This will lead to an expansion of the project from foundation stage to a livelihood initiative.

The members will establish a regular hive monitoring protocol allowing Thomas to both accurately pin-point underperforming apiaries and to advise on problems in a timely manner. It will encourage members to visit and optimise colonisation and thus reduce absconding. Data will be made available on the performance of the hives as well as the quantity of honey produced.

## Bia West Beekeeping Association

In 2018, 56 participants from five community groups came together to form the Bia West Beekeeping Association. They were trained in beekeeping by Bees Abroad. The group are all subsistence farmers, some with small cocoa farms, and all who had lost access to forest resources in the 563 square kilometre forest.

The project provides part of an alternative livelihood to participants no longer able to rely on the forest for income. Participants wish to harvest meaningful quantities of honey to increase their income and ensure the education of their children.

The main issue with the project is the limited access to the communities during the rains, which have been getting heavier with climate change. Bees Abroad has identified a need to train local extension workers to teach beekeeping if sustainability is to be achieved.

### The Bia Biosphere

This UNESCO biosphere has relatively untouched forest with a full diversity of wildlife and some of the tallest trees left in West Africa. Closing off the forest as a source of livelihoods meant that the local communities have had to adapt to new ways of earning a living - and that includes support with beekeeping.

### Activities in 2020

This project was the worst affected by Covid-19 for this Partnership Manager. The country was locked down, workshops were banned and travel limited. The safety of our trainers is paramount and the rainy season followed – so there was no chance at all of a visit (although Thomas Manu their trainer managed an extension visit just into January 2021).

Throughout the year, the project did not receive visits to progress skill transfers, and it was not possible to ensure that the apiaries were being maintained, nor that the hives were checked for colonisation or for problems. The lack of face-to-face meetings resulted in low colonisation and harvest figures on the small group training apiaries. It was hard to assess from a distance if this was due to lack of engagement by the communities or other issues outside their control. An obligatory but simple hive monitoring scheme is essential for this project going forwards.



*Siting a hive... a job well done – Photo: Atta*

Despite these problems, one member of the Essam group, the only project member with a number of individually owned beehives, achieved 80% colonisation and a small harvest of 96 kilograms of honey late in the year, proving that it can be done.

### Future plans

Thomas will increase his visits to this project in 2021 to get the groups back on track and ensure they are working together effectively to address colonisation issues and achieve a harvest. Those who have no hives will be challenged to be pro-active and produce and site at least one bamboo beehive to show commitment to the project.

The project requires one further funding application to take it through to its conclusion, but the groups must meet reporting targets to enable Thomas to get a regular picture of what is happening in the apiaries between visits.

The Partnership Manager did not manage to visit the groups at Bia in 2020 as it was scheduled for the end of March by which time Ghana had closed her borders. Bees Abroad will work with the GRTN to develop an appropriate third stage, listening closely to the wishes of the participants within the strictures of what is possible financially, and their ability to progress noticeably after a rather bleak year.

## Boabeng-Fiema Ecotourism Project

The communities of Boabeng and Fiema, located in Nkoranza North District, Bono East Region, live adjacent to the internationally known Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary, home to some 700 monkeys. Yet the communities, apart from a few rangers and tour guides, see little positive impact on their livelihoods through tourism.

The National Beekeepers Association (NATBA) is an in-country NGO with good local knowledge of the region. This association, whose director is Richard Okoe, comprises around 2000 small farmers in the various regions of Ghana. Working with the Bees Abroad Partnership Manager, Richard recognised the potential for a project to build on previous beekeeping training and develop an enterprise focused on the sale of honey and value-added goods to local tourist outlets. There were already two beekeeping groups in existence, the Boabeng Beekeepers Association and the Fiema Beekeepers Association, so take-up was enthusiastic from the start. A total of 35 beekeepers were trained in October 2019 and 65 beehives were sited.

### Activities in 2020

The Ghana Regional Trainer Network (GRTN) retains overall responsibility for the practical running and oversight of this project with administrative support from NATBA. The Partnership Manager and GRTN trainer Joshua Antwi visited the groups in February, and Joshua conducted a practical training exercise with each group. These were well attended.



*Boabeng&Fiema Course participants assembling hives - Photo: Joshua Antwi*

Two serious events impacted the Fiema group. Firstly, they sadly experienced the sudden death of their Chair but, fortunately, the group has continued to progress. During a dry spell, they had a narrow escape when a bush fire reached the apiary site. Luckily the communities have look-outs in the dry season and the group had invested in metal stands, so all was well. The forest itself had been threatened by its first bushfire in more than a decade due to the extra dry season. The importance of fire breaks was made clear to the groups that day, and are being maintained.

Baseline Assessments were completed for both the groups which will provide baseline data for comparison later in the life of the project. Due to Covid-19 restrictions on workshops and travel, the GRTN trainer was only able to visit safely in October. A decision was made that it would benefit the colonies in the longer term not to take the small harvest that was available. This will allow the colonies to become stronger in their second year, and training can meantime be given in harvesting techniques.



*Boabeng&Fiema-Waxing-top-bars - Photo: JoshuaAntwi*

With training visits reduced, the vital routines of checking hives for pests and other problems, preventing swarming, and keeping apiaries clear of weeds and overgrowth did not get established as well as it needs to be. This is even more essential when livelihoods partly depend on the hive yields. Despite this, towards year end, colonisation was around 50% at both apiaries.

### **Into the future...**

Joshua plans to attend in April for full harvest and extraction training with both groups. Everyone is hoping for a reasonable first harvest and sale of this honey. The groups need to make up for lost time with learning and practising the weekly routines and other procedures necessary for success. They will need to establish the routine of collating and submitting hive colonisation and strength data and reporting any pest problems, to allow Joshua to advise remotely on strategies to improve things to optimize results and develop this enterprise further.

## Ekye Beekeepers Union

Ekye Beekeepers Union is an active registered Community-Based Organisation located in the Kwahu Afram Plains South, Eastern Region of Ghana. It includes a few beekeepers with some knowledge and experience of beekeeping in top bar hives. The group, comprising more than 40 members, requested training and some equipment so that the young people and women members in particular could benefit from beekeeping as a future income stream. Eight young men, and ten young women have an interest in improving their own education and future prospects, and older members wish to see their own young people complete their education.

Ekye has a variety of challenges: soil erosion, poor water quality, food insecurity, and climate change; these impact fish stocks and crops. In addition, some children are being removed from school, from economic necessity, to work in fishing. The group members wish their children to complete their education, or to fund their own tertiary education, and all seek the prospect of income from beekeeping in the future. They hope to produce quality honey and wax for bulk sale for income.

The community is located on the banks of the Afram River which forms part of Lake Volta. Climate change and over-fishing on the lake have had an impact on the community. The community lacks safe drinking water – there was a potable water supply, but it has been broken for a decade. They cannot benefit from the lake as a reliable irrigation source for vegetable growing as the local people cannot afford an irrigation system from the plentiful non-saline water.

The local Delivery Partner Organisation is the Ghana Regional Trainer Network (GRTN), and the group is organized by Ebenezer Agbenorhevi, and trained by GRTN trainer Michael Sakyi.

### Activities in 2020



*Preparing top bars*

The Partnership Manager visited the community for the final two days of the beginner course for the group and was impressed by the excellent organisation. The course was attended by 38 Community Beekeeping Union members and was run by Michael Sakyi. During this training, the group achieved a better understanding of beekeeping and how to look after their apiaries. They built 30 beehives from kits and sited them in the bush. The hives have been numbered to aid reporting. Baseline Assessments were undertaken for course members of the Community Beekeeping Union to provide an impartial set of data for comparison later in the life of the project.

The building in which the course was run allowed theory classes to be run in an airy environment, and members could assemble hives under cover. This undoubtedly helped with both concentration and motivation, a solid start.

Climate change is making a mark on the forage in this region. When we scoped the apiary land the group were told that water would need to be provided in the dry season. The team decided to withhold half the beehives until we got a better feel for colonisation, production, and group working in this large group; this proved a wise move.

Extension visits were radically reduced to all Ghana projects due to Covid-19 restrictions on travel and workshops, followed by a review of risk over benefit to both trainers and participants. The essential routines of checking, baiting and so on did not get as well-established as they should have and the initial swarms into the hives struggled with the dry season not being very productive in terms of nectar leading to absconding. However, the group remain motivated due to having a good leadership structure and Michael is regularly in contact by phone.

Michael, who is very familiar with this area, managed to visit the group in September as restrictions in Ghana were partially lifted. He was aware that climate extremes - drier dry season and wetter, more prolonged rainy season - were impacting the region and the bees. The colonised hives, previously reported to him during phone calls, lay empty with just a handful of abandoned small combs. Michael took the decision to re-site the 30 hives further from the community - quite an undertaking – and the hives were numbered for monitoring purposes.

This illustrates one of the many possible challenges of beekeeping. The site had been carefully scoped in 2019 and the forage seemed very promising; a much reduced nectar availability could not have been foreseen. Assessing risk for a number of potential problems forms part of the project documents for all GRTN projects, so strategies can be quickly enacted if problems arise and particular risks for a project are highlighted.

### **Future plans**

It is hoped that colonisation and colony strength will allow for a modest harvest and that the second tranche of beehives can be sited on a different area in 2021. Hive monitoring will be introduced to ensure regular attention is being paid to all the colonies and the area maintained. This will act as an early warning system so Michael can offer timely advice when not in the area. Later, the team will be able to compare the sites for productive beekeeping. Subject to funding, harvesting and extraction training and extension visits will be regular after a difficult start - in part due to Covid-19.

## Hekenofom-Beekeepers

Hekenofom ('Hope') Beekeepers are located in a remote community outside Asewewa in the Upper Manya Krobo district of Eastern Region, Ghana. The community was selected for an initial foundation project leading, hopefully, to a full three year project for what is intended to become a livelihood initiative in several Upper Manya communities in the future. Training was delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions. The Foundation is being funded by Bees Abroad.

The area has diverse forage amongst the surrounding forest areas including acacias and raffia palm, and there is potential for real benefit to be gained from increased pollination of crops of cassava, maize, beans, pepper, okra, orange, mango, banana and plantain. Bees are regularly seen in the area.

There are 35 members of the group, of whom thirteen are women. All but four of the group are subsistence farmers, and two have disabilities, including one honey hunter who wishes to be a modern beekeeper. There are just seven young people in the group, two still in school, highlighting the high migration to Accra from this community due to poor employment opportunities. Success in this initiative will give younger participants a livelihood choice. The local delivery partner is the Ghana Regional Trainer Network (GRTN) in partnership with CENCORD (Centre for Community and Rural Development).



*Honey-hunter with grandchild - photo:*

*Trisha Marlow*

CENCORD has 20 years' experience of managing key health initiatives, village banking and education projects in both Lower and Upper Manya Krobo. Based in Odumase, CENCORD has a Board of five and four staff. Executive Director Gladstone Tetteh has many years of practical management experience in industry. Their Project Leader, Baah Eric Tettey, is working alongside Samuel Angmor, who is the chairman of the Hekenofom Beekeepers.

CENCORD approached Bees Abroad with a short-list of four communities initially for a livelihood initiative. The selected community is isolated due to a challenging, stepped, rough track from town which greatly limits transport. The community struggles with retaining its young people as it is very hard to earn money. Bees abroad was impressed at their enthusiasm, by their established village banking system, and the wide diversity of forage for the bees.

Participants wish to make a significant difference to their income and living conditions through producing quality honey. Schooling opportunities have improved locally recently through an NGO initiative but earning opportunities for adults are poor.

### Activities in 2020

Due to Covid-19, many activities have been put on hold. However, baseline assessment data of beekeeping group members was collected by Bees Abroad trainer Michael Saakyi and Eric who finally managed to visit the community in September. The Baseline Assessment will enable measurable impact to be accrued throughout the project, and a fair and unbiased selection of course trainees to be made. The visit gave Michael the opportunity to assess local capacity in Asewewa for producing hive kits and stands to our specification. Further action was put on hold to ensure the

safety of local trainers and until it can be supported without extension delays going forwards. The CENCORD project officer has kept in touch with the community to maintain their confidence that the project will go ahead when it is safe to do so.

### Future plans



*Hekenofom Beekeepers – photo: Trisha Marlow*

In 2021, the 25 participants fairly selected using the Baseline Assessment data and discussion with the group executive will receive beginner training from GRTN trainer Michael Sakyi. The Association will receive 30 hive kits which they will assemble as a group-working exercise and place on suitable apiary sites.

Luckily for this community both structural bamboo and raffia palm are available locally. Course participants will be taught to produce hives made entirely from these sustainable materials so they can make individual hives either for their own use, or for the group, if they wish. The uptake and results of this will be monitored ahead of the goal planning and further investment stages of this project. Honey money from such hives is invaluable in teaching sustainable growth skills and self-determination without large further investment in areas that are less degraded.

The participants will receive a small library of bee suits made in Ghana, as well as other protective equipment, training manuals and smokers. Michael Sakyi will return quarterly to guide them through practical training, hive monitoring and reporting, capacity building and perhaps their first harvest and extraction training.

## Levite Women Beekeepers

The Levite Beekeepers Association was formed in Oboadaka, Greater Accra region, from an existing women's farming group in the community. A stakeholder from Accra who has a farm and roots in this community contacted Bees Abroad to request that the organisation could support members of the women's group in developing a livelihood stream.

Although there was no knowledge of any existing beekeeping in the locality, swarms of honey bees were regularly seen, and the community's Chief is supportive of the project. The area is a verdant, upland pineapple growing area, unlike any other Bees Abroad project areas in Ghana.

The project is aimed at producing a large quantity of quality honey and wax and a modest high-end range of skincare products. There is an area of affluent holiday homes within reach, providing good market potential.

### Ghana Regional Trainer Network

The GRTN comprises four regional trainers with close co-operative links and extension officer back-up should it be needed. Where a local Community-Based Organisation or non-specialist NGO is in place for local logistics and administrative support, then the GRTN will provide the specialist technical support required.

The Local Delivery Partner in the region is the Ghana Regional Trainer Network (GRTN). Trainer, Joshua Antwi from the GRTN, trained seventeen participants and helped the group assemble and site a test training apiary of eight beehives. This way, they could assess the forage to see whether the bees would find the location acceptable - this proved successful.

### Activities in 2020



*Group members following apiary training with Michael: photo-Trisha Marlow*

The Partnership Manager managed to visit the group in February before the borders closed. Due to the high level of commitment by the members, the decision was made to move from a Foundation project to a full project. The team conducted a detailed Baseline Assessment to provide a detailed tool to assess impact later in the project.

The group were supported by phone because of travel and workshop restrictions imposed by the government due to Covid19. It was essential to ensure the safety and well-being of the Bees Abroad local trainers, and to assess the risks of bringing the groups together. Supported by phone discussions, the women undertook their first harvest alone.

The whole team were delighted when information from the impact study caught the eye of the 'Advance Science' company in the Republic of Ireland, (manufacturer of the 'Hive Alive' product). They decided to get behind the women's dreams of becoming beekeepers and provided generous sponsorship. Hence, the baseline data was used additionally for talks given by the Partnership Manager to Advance Science, to roll-out this exciting livelihood initiative in 2021.

### Future plans

The roll-out to a full project was delayed so as to manage expectations due to inevitable delays in implementation which have been an inevitable feature during the pandemic. Harvest and extraction training was delayed and will occur when conditions permit, followed, still later, by an observed demonstration of these skills by the participants, with feedback by the trainer as part of extension work.

In May, before the main harvest in Ghana the GRTN trainer, Michael Sakyi, who now manages this project, will organise the group in building and siting a further 67 beehives in apiaries around the community. He will provide some further protective equipment and extraction kit and food-grade containers. Michael will be assisted by a carpenter so that the process is more efficient as, clearly, he cannot be organising building and apiary siting simultaneously.

Building and siting skills will be carried forward so the group can manage the third phase of the project themselves in 2022. Regular extension work and hive reporting are very important with livelihood projects, so that problems can be pin-pointed and dealt with promptly, poorer apiaries identified and perhaps resited at an appropriate time. Regular reporting is key to ensuring better colonisation as it is necessary to check every hive - and do any necessary rebaiting, clearing and sweeping the sites at regular intervals.

The group plan to begin to train other members with the aim of 30 trained members. Welcoming new members from the original community women's group will include sensitisation to include members with disabilities; advice will be given with this if needed.

## **Suhum-Amanhya Beekeepers**

Suhum-Amanhya is an agricultural area with good access to the truck stop at Suhum on the main highway north of Accra, but it is relatively degraded with very little forest and few participants have access to land they can farm. Employment prospects are low, so the focus of this project is to work as a community to produce enough quality honey and wax to provide secure income for education and health insurance, and perhaps for income for home repairs and other items.

The project started in 2019, funded by money raised from online talks by the Partnership Manager. The Ghana Regional Trainer Network is the local Delivery Partner, and the work is being coordinated by Bismark Tetteh. In 2019, eighteen participants were trained and they built and sited a modest training apiary of eight top bar hives. This gave the members time to organise both their group working and resolve for beekeeping, and they proved that the area could provide for the bees following a positive first visit by the Partnership Manager.

### **Activities in 2020**

The Partnership Manager succeeded in visiting the project in February before the borders closed. The team visited the apiary late in the evening for extension training after conducting a Baseline Assessment for the group members to provide impartial data for impact later in the project. The site was a challenging one with uneven ground and lots of climbing vegetation amongst dense small trees – which provided excellent routes for ants to invade the beehives. Michael Sakyi, the GRTN trainer, stressed how they needed to keep up with clearing the excess vegetation if they were to get a harvest and to reduce the risks of absconding. Despite these problems, the bees were clearly drawn to the site!

Shortly afterwards, in common with all the other newer Ghanaian projects, progress was limited due to Covid19 travel and workshop restrictions. Due to the continued risk of travel for the team, and the safety issues of meeting up for the participants, the trainers were advised to offer advice by phone rather than visiting in person.

After the first visit, Michael kept in contact by phone to resolve any issues and to help keep the group motivated as extension visits were not possible. Despite these challenges, the members have succeeded in maintaining very high colonisation in their apiary. They managed to harvest their first seven kilograms of honey later in the season without any support on site - sweet success in a difficult year! For new beekeepers with very limited practical experience that is a big achievement.

### **Future plans**

The regular members of the group will take part in a hive-building and apiary siting workshop with Michael if the new livelihood extension to the project is approved. A further 67 hive kits will be supplied and a further five bee suits and related equipment will be provided.

As harvests increase they will be supported with appropriate additional processing equipment for honey and wax and gallon containers to begin sales in larger quantities. The group are fortunate in having a participant called Elizabeth as a group member - she is a small-scale honey trader and her experience will undoubtedly help with gaining a good market price.

# GHANA

## Partnership Manager: Brian Durk

### A Beekeeping Training Centre for Northern Ghana

This project is being run locally by the Agents of Development for Rural Communities (ADRUCOM), and is based in the village of Karimenga, in the North East Region of Ghana. The planned goal of this project is to set up ADRUCOM so that it can continue its work without external support. ADRUCOM has taken on the responsibility of training groups in this region. It is led by Victor Ayebo, supported by three volunteers. Victor's father had obtained land from the chief at Karimenga in order to set up a base. Since his father's death, Victor has continued that work of building a centre. So far there are groups operating in Salaga, Damongo and Karimenga with other potential groups waiting; these groups have approached ADRUCOM directly to request training. The work is generously part-funded by The Gibbs Trust, The Morel Trust, Open Gate, Larson Legacy (USA), and W.A. Cadbury.

Subsistence agriculture is practised by three-quarters of all households in this region. With around 30%-40% of the population, with a high ratio of illiterates, living in poverty, beekeeping improves pollination, provides a second source of income, improves school attendance and access to medical facilities.

#### Activities in 2020

A meeting of trainers from across Ghana took place in early March at the training centre in Karimenga. Victor Ayebo attended a project management course, which was run remotely due to Covid-19. All other work became difficult due to restrictions caused by the virus, leading to most of the project activities being delayed. Despite this, harvesting took place at Karimenga, with one of the women's groups.

#### Future plans

As soon as the pandemic situation allows, ADRUCOM will be encouraged to do more group training and together with ACRUDEV, to finalise the design of a locally made stable hive stand which can be stacked for transport.

### Bees for Livelihood, Ghana

This project is located in the Oti and Volta Regions of Ghana. The project started in 2019, with a pilot study and this has developed into a full-scale project, run by the Active Centre For Rural Development (ACRUDEV). Led by Godwin Kadua, it includes beekeeping as one of its activities. The organisation knows the local area and where there is a need for training in beekeeping, particularly where they have been approached by local village groups.

This project is generously part-funded by The Gibbs and Morel Trusts, Open Gate, the Larson Legacy (USA), and W.A. Cadbury. The planned goal of this project is to give ACRUDEV the capacity to enable it to carry on the work without external support. Together with other partners in Ghana, a marketing strategy is being developed for commercial sales of both honey and beeswax. ACRUDEV is gaining more experience through the training carried out.

### Activities in 2020

As part of the pilot project, the project satisfactory completed the training of four village groups, comprising 60 people, watched over by an additional 27 interested spectators. By the end of the year, 44 of the 60 hives were occupied, and fourteen gallons of honey were harvested.

This success triggered the start of the main three-year project, and by the end of the fourth year, more village groups had been trained with three of the groups having their hives installed. They now have a motor-tricycle which has facilitated the movement of hive parts and stands around the area.

### Future plans

The main project will continue over the next 2-3 years, with a target of nine village groups per year. Proceeds from the honey harvested should enable the group to move into a self-sustainable situation.

## Association of Beekeepers , Twifo Praso, Central Region

Bees Abroad often mentions 'sustainability', and it is always good to learn that a project which is no longer current is still achieving results.



*Preventing elephants raiding farmland by installing hives on the boundary - Photo: BES Team*

This project has been completed and is no longer financially supported by Bees Abroad. However links are still maintained with Brian Durk (Partnership Manager) and they are part of the beekeeping trainer network within Ghana.

Nana Adobah has carried out some support work for 'Save the Frogs' Ghana and he continues with his very successful 'Elephant Bee Fence' work around Kakum Park stopping the Forest Elephants raiding the surrounding farm land where the fences have been installed.

# KENYA

## Partnership Managers: John & Mary Home

The Projects Manager for Kenya, Joseph Gitonga, provided the information for the Kenya reports

### Kahuho Environmental Water Conservation and Beekeeping Self Help Group

This self-help group is located in Bahati area, Nakuru County about six kilometres from Bahati town. The area is adjacent to Bahati forest, an area with adequate bee forage. The group is reported to be made up of thirty members but our interaction has been with fifteen members (eight women and seven men). The group jointly own 25 Langstroth hives, and four of its members have individual hives. Other activities of the group include table banking and general agriculture which is practiced at the individual level.



**Two members of Kahuho Group with beesuits provided by the project**

The project started in 2018, and 2020 was its final year. The main aim of this project is to improve livelihoods of members and community through conservation, beekeeping and job creation. Although the group had initiated the beekeeping project, poor know-how on hive management, resulting in low colonisation, prompting the group to contact Bees Abroad.

The group itself is community owned and is self-supporting for most of its activities. The support provided by Bees Abroad focuses on capacity building. However, the initial hives were donated to the group by the Kenya National Government Affirmative Fund.

#### Centre for Equality Rights (CERA Rights)

CERA Rights is a local NGO which has partnered with Bees Abroad since 2013. Three of the current trainers were trained during the original project, and there are two administrative staff supporting the Bees Abroad initiatives. Since then all Bees Abroad supported projects have been implemented through this local delivery partner. So far the synergies built have led to the completion of a number of projects in Kenya. The partner has been very instrumental in undertaking assessments for project enquiry, undertaking the day to day implementation of the Bees Abroad projects, monitoring of the progress made, financial and narrative reporting and providing the in-country advice to the Bees Abroad project leaders whenever necessary. The delivery partner has offices in Nanyuki Town Kenya, a town west of Mt Kenya located about 196 kilometres from the capital city Nairobi. The team comprises Joseph Gitonga administrator with Magdaline Karoki, accountant, together with three of the current trainers from the original DFID project in 2013 John Kibui, Joseph Kisi and Merioth Nhudui

As with all the current projects in Kenya, the local developer partner is CERA rights – a group well-known and well-respected by Bees Abroad. The programmes co-ordinator is Joseph Gitonga.

Having received training over the years, the Kahuho group has become a local point of reference in relation to beekeeping, and is consulted by other groups. The group has adopted various aspects of the training provided, and they produce quality honey and other value-added products. The group's honey production has increased from an average of one kilogram per hive to about seven or eight kilograms per hive. As part of environmental conservation, the group has planted 500 fruit trees.

### Activities in 2020

The project was on its final year where mentorship and follow up refresher trainings were undertaken with an aim of enhancing skill adoption among the members. During the project, members have been trained in basic beekeeping, bee husbandry, governance and group dynamics and bee suit making.



*Kahuho apiary was affected by heavy rains*

The approaches used to provide training to the group needed to be changed during the year, due to COVID-19.

Teleconferencing was used to reach out to the group members most of the time, although towards the end of the year the training team was able to go out and visit the group. Three other major challenges to this project in 2020; an invasion by desert locusts which resulted in devastation of crops and forage, heavy rains that resulted in reduced nectar for the bees, and finally, an invasion by safari ants which invaded the hives as they looked for something to eat.

### Future plans

The project has ended, but the CERA-Rights team will continue giving support to the group when it is needed.

## Kiini Sustainable Initiative

The Kiini Sustainable Initiative (KISI) is a bee-keeping initiative located in Kirinyaga County, in Kenya. The Initiative, made up from several groups, is community owned and is self-supported in most of its activities. The support provided by Bees Abroad focuses on capacity building. The project aims to assist in sensitising farmers on the importance of bees and bee products. Through capacity building, the group plans to increase their incomes from sale of honey and other hive products, and ultimately, to establish a sustainable bee enterprise. CERA-Rights is the Local Delivery Partner – they have worked very successfully with Bees Abroad for several years. (See Kahuho article for more about this organisation.)

'Yellow Ripe' is one of the groups working within the Kiini Sustainable Initiative. The group, which started in 2013, is located in Kirinyaga County, Kenya, and has a membership of eighteen persons. The group hive holding has remained constant at twelve hives, but individual members have acquired their own hives, totalling 45 hives. All members of the group have been taken through various aspects of bee husbandry; this has helped to create a very positive attitude towards beekeeping.

### Activities this year

As this is the last year of the project, which started in August 2018, mentorship and follow-up refresher training were undertaken, with an aim of enhancing skill adoption among the members. Covid-19 was a major challenge faced as it limited group meetings. Due to Covid-19, teleconferencing was used to reach out to the group members. Although, towards the end of the year, the group was visited by the training team to provide face to face refresher training.

Another challenge was that the group apiary was located within land donated by one of its members. The family of this member decided to sell off the land, forcing the members to divide the hives among themselves. The movement of the hives from the apiary to individual homes resulted in absconding of some colonies. This happened towards the end of the year 2020, affecting some of the gains achieved over the project period.

The initial plan was to provide the group with 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 giving those hives and bee suits, a table saw and sewing machine were bought for them to use to make hives and bee suits respectively. Using these, the group has been able to make hives for sale. The additional 45 hives sold to individual members at subsidised rates were made using the table saw provided. As with the previous harvest, the group saw an increase in average honey harvested per hive from two kilograms to eight kilograms... and the group membership has increased.

### Into the future...

Group membership has increased. In 2021, the plan is to try and consolidate gains disrupted by the transfer of the hives. The group will be helped to optimise utilisation the sewing machine. (NB the machine is also being used to produce washable sanitary towels for the disadvantaged groups by Kiini Sustainable Initiative. As this was not the intended purpose, there is a need to ensure that the machine is also used to produce bee suits, as initially intended).

## Mothers Union Project, Nanuki, Kenya

The Mothers' Union of the Anglican Church of Kenya (MUACK) is affiliated to St. Andrews Nanyuki Parish in Nanyuki town, in Laikipia County, Kenya. It is mainly a ladies fellowship in the church that has been actively involved in Anglican Church activities including evangelism, mentorship to motherhood and in Church development projects. Besides being actively involved in church activities, the Mothers Union has a welfare department that aims at supporting each member of the group. The welfare was started in 2009 with ten mothers; today it has grown to 24 active and committed members undertaking group activities. In order to avoid conflicts with other church activities, the welfare group has registered a group by the name 'Joy Mothers Self Help Group'. It is this group that has become involved in beekeeping.

The group is supported by CERA-Rights, which is the Local Delivery Partner for Bees Abroad in Kenya. CERA-Rights has considerable experience, and has worked with Bees Abroad since 2013, led by the Programme Co-ordinator, Joseph Gitonga. The group is self-supporting through members' contributions and profits from sale of products produced through support of Bees Abroad – in particular by John & Mary Home, and also by St Cuthbert's Church Portsmouth who donated their gift day proceeds.



**Group governance training**

An interest in beekeeping emerged from interaction with John and Mary Home (Bees Abroad Partnership Managers in the UK) during one of their visits in Kenya. The project started by promoting value-addition for hive products (such as skin cream) but it is now fully fledged as a beekeeping group, with the mothers having eleven hives located in their own apiary. Through beekeeping they hope to empower individual mothers through income generation, so that they can support their respective households, the church and community.

### **Activities in 2020**

The main activities undertaken with the group include training on various aspects of beekeeping including value-addition, apiary setting and management and governance, business planning and entrepreneurship.

Despite bee phobia, observed to be high among the members, the group was able to establish a group apiary with 11 hives. They have also been trading value added products mainly bee wax body cream and soaps. The members are being encouraged to have their own bee suit when visiting the apiary.

From support given by John and Mary home, the group was able to make masks for sale which they sold and shared the profit amongst themselves. Each members initiated a small business from the profits/benefits received and in every meeting, these mothers hold each other accountable.

### **Future plans**

The project has now ended, but it is anticipated that the group will continue as they have their own structure and organisation and are highly motivated.

## **Nakhuba Young Farmers Group**

Nakhuba Young Farmers group is located on the western part of the country about five kilometres from Webuye town, Kakamega County. The group has a current membership of 43 members. It was started six years ago, to work as a welfare group mainly doing table banking and promoting sustainable agriculture for household food security. (Table banking is where members hold monthly meetings where their contributions are put on the table. Every member is entitled to a short- or long-term loan).

Beekeeping was identified as an alternative source of income for the group members to help eradicate poverty among women and young people. The area has 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.

The group is community owned and is largely self- supporting in most of its activities. However, some support has been provided by Bees Abroad, focused on capacity building.

## Activities in 2020

The project was on its final year where both mentorship and follow-up refresher training were undertaken with an aim of enhancing skill adoption among the members.



*inspection at Nakhuba Apiary*

The team was able to support the project in addressing some key issues, despite Covid-19; the main challenge faced as it limited group meetings. There was limited access to beekeeping equipment as a result of increased membership and group members have been encouraged to invest some of their profits in purchasing their own equipment. The team has been able to resolve poor access to packaging materials by linking the group members to packaging suppliers.

Notable successes included the quality of governance within the group; it is now very inclusive. The members have been able to work as a group, producing honey for bulk sales, as well as other hive products. With the profits gained, the group has been able to share a dividend with the members, allowing each member to use this money to implement his or her own projects. During the year, the group has developed some market linkages for both processed and crude honey. They took their processed honey and beeswax body cream for standardisation with the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS). In addition the group has increased its membership and hive holding.

## Into the future....

The project has ended but the team will continue giving support to the group when needed. As an exit strategy, the group was supported to get standardisation marks for its products and certification for marketing purposes. The group is also in the process of forming an umbrella organisation with other beekeeping groups for better visibility, bulk sales, and collective marketing.

## Kisii Project

The Kisii project extends over two counties in Kenya - Kiisi and Nyamira. The main aim of the project was to support the alleviation of poverty and improve livelihoods among the project members and the local community, to improve their health and promote self-reliance. By improving the income for group members through beekeeping, the project could achieve greater food security as well as addressing other household needs. The group is community owned and is self-supported in most of its activities. The support provided by Bees Abroad focuses on capacity building, with CERA-Rights as the Local Delivery Partner, whose Programme Coordinator is Joseph Gitonga.

The project works with two groups:

- Kibuse youth beekeepers group is located in Manga sub-County of Nyamira County. It has increased its membership from fifteen members at the time of initial engagement to its current 36 members. The hive holding has increased from seven hives at the start of the project to 56 hives; more hives are owned by individual members rather than being jointly owned.
- Egesicha Ekiya Self Help Group on the other hand is based in the outskirts of Kisii town, Kisii County. The group was originally known as Busy Bees for Women's Empowerment but changed its name after merging with another group. This merger also saw the membership increase from fifteen members to 22 members.



*Baiting a hive at a member's apiary*

### **Activities in 2020**

The project is in its final year, so most of the action revolved around mentorship and follow up refresher training, in order to enhance the skill levels of the members. There have been challenges... COVID 19 was the main challenge faced as it limited group meetings. Other challenges faced included heavy rains that affected bee forage and inaccessibility to packaging materials. To address the issue on packaging materials the group was linked to a supplier.

Kibuse is one of the groups that had a slow start. Coupled with youth attrition and poor governance, attaining any notable levels of achievement was initially challenging. However after a series of training sessions and encouragement, the group adopted the skills being transferred in an encouraging manner. In Kibuse, the hive holding rose from 23 hives to 56 hives. The membership increased from an initial sixteen members to 36 members. From the last harvest, the group harvested 56 kilograms of honey from thirteen of the hives.



*Kibuse group apiary*

For Egesicha Ekiya Self Help Group a very notable success is the improvement in the group's governance. The group has established a fruit tree nursery and constructed a bee house with twenty hives. This is in addition to hives held by individual members.

### **Into the future...**

The project has ended but the team will continue giving support to the group when needed. As an exit strategy, the groups are being supported in standardisation of their products

## Taita Hills Value Addition Training

Unlike other group projects that have been community driven, the Taita project was unique in that it came about as a result of research findings. The aim was to address the need for additional income for household commodities and payment of school fees. The study on climate and land use identified beekeeping as a potential source of household income. It was taken by Rebecca Newman, from Helsinki University, in collaboration with the University of York, the Nairobi-based International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.

The Taita group is community owned and is self-supported for most of its activities. However, funding has been provided by Bees Abroad for capacity building, and ICIPE and The Nature Conservancy have supported the group with hives.

In July 2018, trainers from CERA Rights, the Local Delivery Partner for Bees Abroad in Kenya, provided value-addition training. Through discussions with beekeepers they felt that there were knowledge gaps that needed to be addressed through more technical training, and a project proposal was put together for a two-year project.

### Activities in 2020

Positive cases of Covid-19 were reportedly high in the coastal region, so the team was not able to visit this group in the year. This was exacerbated by a few bottlenecks experienced with the Research Institute. However the team continued to offer advisory support to beekeepers via phonecalls.

Despite the COVID situation in the country, the group managed to harvest 180 kilograms of semi-refined honey, and 50 kilograms of wax.

Getting a good market for the honey and wax was reported to be the main challenge faced by the group. This was attributed to Covid-19 pandemic which had restricted movement within the country for the greater part of the year.

### Future plans

Once the pandemic abates, and normal activities can resume, the plan is to increase the level of training, with special focus on governance issues and environmental conservation as well as emphasis on marketing and standardisation.

## Nzeveni Beekeepers Self Help Group

Nzeveni Beekeepers Self Help Group is a Community Based Organisation (CBO) that was established in 2016 and registered in December 2018. The organization has its office in Nzeveni shopping centre, in Muthungine sub location, Makueni County in Kenya. The group was created as an umbrella, merging all small beekeeping groups to promote the industry through supporting one another to increase the number of hives, pooling resources together as one group and to promote environmental conservation within Nzambani Location. The umbrella organisation's interventions are aimed at improving livelihoods and food security through increased income from sales of value-added honey and other hive products.

The project assists in sensitising the farmers on the importance of bees and bee products, in order to increase household food security and income for 32 beekeeping households in Nzeveni area of Makueni County, and to improve the biodiversity of the region through improved pollination.

The group is community owned and is self- supported in most of its activities; however, it is generously supported by Bees Abroad in its focus on capacity building. CERA RIGHTS is a local NGO which is the Local Delivery Partner for this project. It has been working with Bees Abroad since 2013, with Programme Co-ordinator Joseph Gitonga.



### *Inspecting hives in the apiary*

#### **Activities in 2020**

The group has made a really good start, albeit a bit over-ambitious, especially in relation to expecting immediate returns from the apiary. Another challenge was that there were too many hives installed in the apiary.

The main activity undertaken during this period is training. The training covered the following:

- Governance and leadership
- Group dynamics
- Partnership and Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)
- Introduction to beekeeping; handling bees, their role in promoting the economy,
- Making equipment from local materials
- Practical training at the group apiary involving
  - Clearing of long bushes under the hives to control pests at the apiary
  - Encouraging the group to plant hedges to inhibit bees from becoming more defensive
  - Setting the hives against the wind and spacing them correctly
  - Training on how to build strong hives stands
  - Advice on regular hive cleaning, baiting and inspection

From the training provided, the group appreciated the need to reduce the number of hives in their original apiary - which they did through purchase of another piece of land. After distributing the hives over the two sites, the group reported an increase in colonisation of their hives.

#### **Future plans**

The plan is to offer more practical training and coaching in relation to management of modern beehives. The group will also be supported to install metallic stands for some remaining hives and fencing of the apiary.

## Nyakach Sustainable Beekeepers Group - Kisumu

The Nyakach Sustainable Beekeepers Group is an umbrella group of beekeepers at Kanyamrori near Katito trading centre, Nyakach Sub-County Kisumu County. The members of the beekeepers group come from a women's group entitled the Yie Kuom Winjo Kogola Women Group. The group is community owned and is self-supported for most of its activities. The group wished to become involved in beekeeping in the community as a sustainable farming method for securing livelihoods as well as ensuring food security and promoting more tree-planting than tree-cutting. They hope to increase household food security and incomes through establishment of a bee projects enterprise for the group members and their families. This project only started in 2020, but has already made substantial progress.



*Demonstration on hive cleaning*

The area has good potential for beekeeping as it has good weather, enough forage and a nearby river that supplies water throughout of the year. The group has a membership of 52 young people and women, with a few men who have played a role of mentorship on traditional beekeeping to the other members of the group. The group has goodwill from other stakeholders including;

- The County Government extension personnel who have offered them advice on beekeeping
- VSO who supported one of the members with twenty Langstroth beehives as a social enterprise and build a resource centre for the community.
- The group has had previous support from the Safaricom Foundation who supported them with ten hives.
- The neighbourhood, who have accepted the role of bees in pollination.

CERA-Rights is the local delivery partner, with Joseph Gitonga as Programme Co-ordinator. The CERA-Rights team have worked regularly with Bees Abroad, which greatly values their skills and professionalism.



*Demonstration on hive hanging*

### **Activities in 2020**

Despite the impact of Covid-19, which interfered with some of the training programmes, the CERA-Rights staff was able to establish good interaction with the group and it helped the members appreciate the need for regular inspection of the apiary. Bee phobia was observed to be high, but this was addressed by commitment to provide the group with two pairs of bee suits. The group was trained on various aspects of beekeeping. The trained covered;

- Governance and leadership
- Group dynamics
- Partnership and Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)
- Introduction to beekeeping
  - Understanding and handling of bees
  - Understanding the role of bees in promoting the economy
  - Understanding the beekeeping equipment focusing on locally available materials
- Practical training at the group apiary involving
  - Clearing of long bushes to control pests at the apiary
  - Encouraging the group on planting of the hedgerows to control bees against becoming more defensive.
  - Setting of hives against the wind
  - Advice on strong hives stands
  - Advice on hive spacing
  - Advised on regular hives cleaning, baiting and inspection

### **Future plans**

With the return of normalcy, the plan is to upscale trainings with special focus on environmental conservation (as the area is quite degraded), apiary management, value addition as well as emphasis on marketing and standardisation.

# Malawi

Partnership Manager: Mark Newman

## Dowa Women Beekeepers Project

This project, started in March 2020 and is expected to be completed within three years. It is located in Kongwe Forest Reserve in the Dowa District in Malawi. There are ten women's groups, one from each of ten villages, with a total population of around 1850 people. Each group comprises a chairperson, secretary, treasurer and members.



The participant groups seek to boost productivity, improve quality, and diversify production of their honey and other bee products. Through this, they hope to diversify and enhance livelihoods of women and their families in a sustainable way. As a result of climate change impacts and general poverty, the forest areas in Dowa district have been degraded. The groups hope to contribute to environmental rehabilitation and stabilisation of these areas.

*Women Beekeepers in Dowa welcoming their hives and bee equipment delivery – photo: Amos Banda*

By the end of the project, they hope to have achieved the following through their beekeeping:

- Improving household nutrition and food security
- Savings to allow better and improved housing
- Payment for school fees for their children
- Improving environmental management through planting and caring for trees in the project area
- Creation of disposable incomes to spend on seeds, fertilizer and tools.

The project is implemented in collaboration with the government through the Nasaka Agricultural Extension Office, and the local delivery partner is The Initiative for Climate Action and Development (ICAD), headed by Gift Richard Maloya (Executive Director) and Amos Banda (Operations and Programmes Head). On partner capacity building: ICAD has access to expertise and a well-established programming and administrative structures. It however, continues to receive ongoing technical support from the Bees Abroad Partnership Manager. Malawi is a new country for Bees Abroad, and generous funding has been provided by the Ida Davis Foundation and Halleria Trust.

### Initiative for Climate Action and Development (ICAD)

This is a Malawian non-profit making and non-governmental organization. ICAD seeks to resolve the development challenges that confront marginalized and vulnerable, rural and peri-urban communities as a result of climate change.

## Activities in 2020

- Procurement and distribution of hives, beesuits, smokers, gloves and boots.
- Basic Beekeeping Training of trainers  
Three representatives from each group received training on basic bee keeping, honey harvesting, processing, marketing and value-addition, so they could pass this on to the ten community groups.
- Community training

Approximately 250 participants received skills training on honey harvesting, processing, marketing and value-addition training. This training was conducted at community level and it is anticipated that participants will reach out to others in future, as a means of sustaining the skills.



*Step by step honey processing training session – photo: Amos Banda*

Throughout these activities, there were monitoring and supervision visits. Due to Covid-19, the structure of training sessions was changed from indoor to outdoor community-based training sessions in the villages. Whilst working with the women's groups, ICAD intensified Covid-19 preventive measures and sensitisation to the dangers it posed.

Despite the problems associated with Covid-19, a number of very positive outcomes were achieved:

- Successfully setting-up of apiaries in all the villages
- Successfully trained the women groups
- Good working relationship with government officials and local structures such as chiefs.
- The project has helped to break the gender inequality norms associated with beekeeping

## Future plans

Plans for the future are based on the very successful first year;

- Intensification of project monitoring and supervisions visits for the first-year women's groups that are already in training.
- Recruiting and training ten new women's groups
- Sourcing village carpenters for hive making, village tailors for bee suits and tinsmiths for the smokers.
- Procurement and distribution of further apiary materials such as wire and grease to prevent ants entering the hives.
- Monitoring and supervisions visits for the new women's groups.
- Reporting and communication between ICAD and the Partnership Manager.

# NEPAL

Partnership Manager: James Taylor

## Livelihood Improvement through Beekeeping in Tanahun, Nepal

The participants in this project comprise a minimum of 25 women belonging to the Suklagandaki Women's group. They all come from low-income families in Suklagandaki Municipality Ward no. 2, Tanahun. The project area was selected by the Federation of Nepali Beekeepers (FNBK) in line with a government strategy to promote Apis Cerana in specific areas. Within identified villages, a household survey was used to select participants in line with the following specific criteria; a clear motivation to enhance their livelihood through beekeeping, unmarried women, poor economic status, belonging to the Gurung and Magar communities, and women who had not received training or other benefits from previous rural development projects.

Participants hope their income can be utilized for household expenditure including education of children. A detailed baseline study of household income in February 2020 will enable the project's economic impact to be measured when the project comes to an end. The project started in February 2020 and is expected to last for three years.

The Federation of Nepali Beekeepers is the Local Partner for this project, led by Mr. Prakash Poudel, their Programme Coordinator. The project will be funded by the Ida Davis Foundation, with local contributions from both the FNBK and the participant group.

### Federation of Nepali Beekeepers

This is a national umbrella organization, established in 1999 by 223 beekeepers from eight different districts in Nepal. The aim of FNBK is to organize scattered grassroots beekeepers, to advocate for appropriate beekeeping policies and to enhance capacity for income generation through beekeeping to reduce poverty in rural areas.

### Activities in 2020



*Group baseline discussions – photo: Gopal Gaire*

In February a baseline assessment was conducted by Mr Gopal Gaire, a rural development professional, with Mr Prakash Poudel from FNBK. The study consulted with potential participants for project training to set a baseline of their economic situation. Study methods included a transect walk, (for definition, (see <https://geoparticipation.wordpress.com/2015/05/06/participatory-methods-transect-walk/>) focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and a participant household survey. It found that local honey currently fetches NPR 900.00 (around £5.60) per kilogram and local demand is high.



*Conducting a baseline survey – photo: Gopal Gaire*

### **Future plans**

It is hoped that training can start in April 2021, however plans remain tentative due to the ongoing serious COVID-19 situation in the country.

Out of the 28 potential participants, six are single women whose husbands have died, six are from very poor households while twelve have an income source that is insufficient for a reasonable quality of life. Most of the women rely on semi-subsistence agriculture, growing maize, millet and mustard, and raising goats and chickens, while three work as labourers for other farmers.

There has been beekeeping training locally in the past. However, previous government beekeeping initiatives did not target low income families, but were for anyone interested in beekeeping. Those who have already received beekeeping training are not participating in this project. As a result of this decision, a second village has been included in the project as the baseline survey revealed that some potential participants had already participated in beekeeping training in a previous project.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions it has not been possible to conduct project training this year, with activities postponed until 2021.

# NIGERIA

Partnership Manager: Brian Durk

## Value Seeds project

In May 2019, a two-year project was started in Bagaldi, Kaduna State, Nigeria. The state produces a variety of crops – the main ones close to the project area are maize and sorghum.

Beekeeping is organised by the Beekeeping Extension Society; a small but effective organisation based in Zaria, Kaduna State. It is led by Idris Barau retired Head of Beekeeping for the Kaduna State Agriculture Development Project. Keeping bees provides an additional income stream through honey production, and by increasing crop pollination – benefitting farmer income in both ways.

Value Seeds (VSL) is a seed development company which serves around 2,000 rural famers in the area around Zaria in Kaduna State. It approached the Beekeeping Extension Society (BES) about training some Value Seeds farmers in beekeeping. VSL is helping to support its farmers by enabling them to increase their income and thus reduce the poverty amongst the farmers they are trying to serve.



*Topbar hive made from local materials – photo: BES*

BES approached Bees Abroad with an initial proposal to train twenty selected farmers from four separate groups, with the possibility of further training for a few of them to become extension workers (trainers). Selection was carried out by BES from the farmers put forward by Value Seeds. VSL part-funded the training by supplying materials and other support to the trainees. Further funding was provided by Bees Abroad. Of the twenty farmers selected, 50% are female and 50% male.

### Activities in 2020

Challenges have not come directly from the project, nor from the bees, but from the insecurity situation prevailing in Kaduna state. Though the project area has not recorded any kidnapping, the

home village of the leader of the BES has witnessed four kidnappings. To address the issue, he had to engage the services of members of a local armed vigilante group in order to move around for training sessions. As a result:

- Training was provided for all twenty farmers, both through on-site training at the apiary, and monitoring their beekeeping skills.
- From the twenty, five volunteers were selected for further training and capacity building, so that they could train others. This training is ongoing.
- Women have become involved in beekeeping
- The trained beekeepers have been linked to possible government support facilities
- Farmers in remote communities are showing interest in participating in beekeeping



*Women have become involved in beekeeping – photo: BES*

### **Future plans**

Should funds become available, Idris Barau (leader of BES) would like to go into the interior remote locations to identify potential beekeeping communities, to then select and train more farmers .

# NIGERIA

Partnership Manager: Bisi New

## OkunOwa Grammar School Beekeeping Project

This project started in September 2017, teaching pupils at the Okun Owa grammar school about keeping bees and producing and marketing hive products. The project involves ten students from OkunOwa Grammar School; four from the senior school, aged up to 18 years, and six from the junior school, aged up to fourteen years.



The school is in a rural area with a focus on training students in agricultural crop production – yams, cassava, plantain etc. The students comprise 40% boys and 60% girls. Participants belong to local farming families on low seasonal incomes. They suffer poor nutrition, high mortality and inadequate access to healthcare and education. There are approximately ten people in each household. The children all contribute to family income in some way after school - on family farms or casual work externally e.g., as labourers, tailors or carpenters. Beekeeping provides them with a new, non-seasonal and diverse income.

By the end of the project they are hoping that there will be a trained cohort of beekeepers who will form a beekeeping club. They would like to see beekeeping as an option on the school curriculum to generate a second income.

### *Making beesuits – a necessary skill*

#### **Activities in 2020**

At the start of 2020, the school in-house trainer planned to continue to embed beekeeping in the curriculum, with 40 new trainees. This group had completed a three-day “Introduction to Beekeeping” theory course just prior to this, in November 2019. The School beekeeping club is the focus for training activities, both theory and practical. It is now led by Mr Ajayi, the principal school beekeeping instructor from the Senior School, supported by Mr Esude at the Junior School, and by two community-based volunteers, who have also been trained as beekeeping instructors by the Bees Abroad Local trainer, Mr Tunde Adenola.

For 2020, the focus was to continue to grow the active beekeeping pool locally by 40 new school participants. They planned to further develop their beekeeping activity via the school beekeeping club.

### *Marketing and sales of hive products*

Following a bumper harvest at the end of 2019, it became timely to focus on commercial and income generation aspects as a route to sustainability i.e. beyond training participants to become skilled technical beekeepers engaged with managing apiaries to the highest standards. Bees Abroad would

teach the participants to produce and sell high quality honey and secondary products. The project and club needed to evidence how beekeeping can provide a rewarding and sustainable livelihood.

As a result of attending a 2-day Agricultural show at Olabisi Onabanjo University, the branding and labels for honey and body creams have been updated and improved. This was an initiative from the event attendees who saw for themselves, what others achieved at the event and how important it was. They took it upon themselves to persuade the club members of the need for more appealing and attractive branding.

At the club exhibition event in March 2020, members took it upon themselves to survey attendees for responses and comment to the updated branding. Bees Abroad responded by sending the bee club examples of a wide range of ideas and examples of bee labels from all over the world, to illustrate what can be achieved.



*Involving students in hive manufacture*

As a result of attending this agricultural exhibition:

- **New Honey labels:** The participants realised importance of packaging in marketing to achieve sales. They realised the need to upgrade the plain unappealing packaging used to present their samples for exhibition. They took it upon themselves to create new labels for the school beekeeping products.
- **New Marketing Strategy:** Following discussion of attendance at the next School club meeting, the club planned and delivered a similar exhibition to market products from the 2019 harvest to parents and the local community. The event was a roaring success.
- The focus on events builds on activity started in 2019 e.g. school club attendance and participation at World Science Day events in Nov 2019.

As soon as group activity resumes, Bees Abroad have agreed to hold a competition for club members to redesign the labels further using the examples from Bees Abroad and comments from buyers as a guide. The winning design will be selected by club members (blind selection) and a prize awarded to the winner.

### *Forage and pollination*

School club members proposed a focus on bee forage and pollination to link beekeeping as an extension activity for the key farming activities at this agricultural school. It was agreed that this focus would add value to agricultural training students, by linking bees as a 'free' scientific method to achieve better pollination of crops for farmers locally. This would, in turn, promote the conservation of local forest resources to support bee forage (pollen and nectar-bearing trees in the forest).

However, Covid-19 intervened, and in April 2020 attendance at the school ceased. Consequently, the school beekeeping club have been unable to hold group training sessions to develop the skills of their 40 new members between April and September 2020. Once again in response to adverse

events outside their control, and without prompting or direction from Bees Abroad, before leaving school, the trainers and trained beekeepers held a meeting to devise a plan and schedule to manage the school hives.

Thanks to continued support funding from INTO Giving, Bees Abroad was able to support their proposal with the provision of Covid protection packs (masks, hand sanitisers, x4 smart phones for school trainer and group leaders). This allowed the local team to organise maintenance of beekeeping activity at the school apiary and management of the 30 hives to promote hive occupancy. They drew up a rota (two beekeepers per apiary) and with support from Bees Abroad, created a WhatsApp group and have kept each other and Bees Abroad informed with updates after site visits. They were able to produce secondary products (candles, creams, polishes) branded with the school name. Looking to the future, they have established a sales list for school honey and secondary products which is currently oversubscribed – they cannot meet demand! A total of £130 was earned in 2020.

### **Into the future...**

The project end date was planned to be December 2020, but the team were delighted to hear that INTO Giving has confirmed a further grant of £2000 for 2021-2022. This means that despite the delays caused by the pandemic, all the activities can once again be scheduled and the group will end up self-sufficient in training, practice and income generation, with reduced monitoring visits and advice from Bees Abroad.

## **What else is happening in Nigeria?**

There are a number of initiatives run by the Partnership Manager which are described in the article below as they do not fit into the same pattern of work as the project just described.

Due to Covid-19, 2020 has been a difficult year for beekeeping in Nigeria, much as elsewhere. However, the team are pleased to report that determined participants have organised themselves to make, acquire and use Covid-19 protection to continue beekeeping activity and production within local restrictions.

Over 550 participants are involved in ten active multiyear projects across the country, building over 900 hives from local materials to generate an impressive £1200 of sustainable income in 2020 from 300 litres of honey harvested in very difficult circumstances.

Bees Abroad received six new enquiries in 2020, however, due to local travel restrictions, which meant our local trainers were unable to travel across their regions to conduct assessment visits, we have agreed with enquirers that we will revisit enquiries in 2021.

Beekeeping is an excellent vehicle for participant led capacity building in equitable partnerships for sustainable income generation. Where projects are well-designed, involve high quality training covering beekeeping theory, the manufacture of beekeeping inputs (hives, suits, smokers, hive tools etc), frequent and guided hands on management practice with the production of good quality honey, beeswax and value added secondary products, participants develop the capacity to direct and deliver fundamental changes in their own lives with benefits that ripple across families and into communities.

Impacts reported by project participants during the year include:

### **From the Dangora Farm Co-operative...**

“We produced 70 litres of honey and locally sold our honey for N3000 per litre. Income generated was N261,000 (~£400). Because individuals in our group do not have enough income, they were not able to fabricate their own hives, so group honey income was used in fabricating more hives and these were allocated to members as their personal hives. We constructed ten additional hives after the sales of our honey. We have managed group activities by dividing into three groups with two women leading. The Bees Abroad Training Manuals was and is still quite useful. Because it is in Hausa (our native language) we are able to understand and adopt it clearly. Photos in the manual so much helped in showing those who could not read or write what the whole concept is all about. The members also use the manuals in showing others what beekeeping entails. Apart from income generated, we have acquired so much knowledge on the beekeeping value chain. Our status in the community has been uplifted. “

### **Members of the Excel Bee Farmers reported...**

“The training has truly imparted knowledge to all participants; it has opened our minds to bee biology, lifecycle, and to the business aspects of beekeeping. The secondary products training has helped some of our women as it has enabled them to make cream for their families and to sell to others. We intend to continue with training programmes to the villages for knowledge sharing. We also propose to have group land mainly for beekeeping purpose. The long range challenge was getting land for our apiary but later we solved this through one of our members who donated land space on his farm. The members have agreed to use proceeds from the hives for land purchase in the future. “

### **From Women’s Group Agricultural development Sokoto...**

For a modest fee, Bees Abroad commissioned a local NGO supporting a group of beekeeping trainees to translate the beekeeping training manual in a locally specific Hausa dialect, to better engage new participant groups in a particular rural area.

The members told us that from participating in this project:

- “I am now happy to be recognized in the society
- My children are now back in school because i now have a source of income
- I wish we had more honey to sell !
- I can now pay rent so I now have a better home for my children
- I am now back with my ex-husband, the father to my children”

### **Project members in Gbokoto Ketu told us...**

“During the construction of the hives, Mr A from Benin Republic visited the training. He was visiting his farm on the border side of Nigeria when he saw the hives. He was happy that such a project was brought to the people of Gbokoto and he pleaded that they take the project seriously. He further told them that beekeeping can yield more income than other farm work they do. He said the type of hives they have is different from what he is seeing in Gbokoto. He will contact the coordinator for further discussion. At the village, the traditional beekeeper showed us the product he harvested this season. Having understood that the honey was not ready to harvest, the other trainees jointly told him the honey may likely be unripe honey. Participants agreed to put more effort into getting the other hives colonized and to have patience. They will check the colonies by end of this month to see if there are more capped honey than now.”

# RWANDA

**Partnership Manager: Dawn Williamson and Paul Bloch**

## **Umutara School for the Deaf**

The Umutara School for the Deaf is located in the Eastern Province of Rwanda. It is a boarding school for children who suffer from hearing loss. It teaches the National Curriculum and also trains the students in practical skills so they can earn a living when they leave school. The school want beekeeping to be one of these skills. The whole school is receiving teaching about bees, older students are learning to manage the hives. Members of the community and staff are also part of the project.

The project, led locally by Dominique Ndagijimana, started in 2018, and is expected to last for four years. There are some issues as the school is on the edge of a small town surrounded by farmland. Local people are scared of the bees and have destroyed some of the hives, and pesticides are used on some of the crops which have weakened the colonies. To overcome this Bees Abroad have funded the purchase of a small piece of land which is being developed as a secure location for the bees, and which will be suitable for teaching the project participants.

By the end of the project, it is hoped to have a curriculum in place for the students to learn about beekeeping. Interested students will be given practical training in beekeeping from the teachers who have been trained by Bees Abroad.

### **Activities in 2020**



*Looking for site for new school apiary*

There were increasing problems with the location of the hives, with local people complaining they were too close to a path. Local farmers were planting crops and spraying pesticides close by. Work was done to find land for a secure apiary, and to win back the trust of local people. There was no safe site on the school grounds so a new apiary has been established.

Teaching of the students has been limited this year as the school was closed for several months as part of the Covid 19 lockdown. The project demonstrated how to catch swarms and transfer them to top bar hives as needed. A further problem was dealing with small hive beetles. Despite this, the apiary is thriving with colonies in both traditional Rwandan and top bar hives.

#### **Future plans**

We are planning to ensure that there is suitable protective clothing for all teachers and students who are working and learning in the apiary.

We will work with the families of a few students who will be leaving the school soon and wish to become beekeepers at home.

## **Kabarore Apiculture Development Cooperative**

This project is based at the Kabarore Apiculture Development Cooperative - a community group of twenty beekeepers based in the village of Rimbogo, Kabarore, in the Eastern Province of Rwanda. The beekeepers are all subsistence farmers with small plots of land. They grow maize, cassava, fruit and vegetables.



*Training at the hive in Rimbogo village. Looking at brood, honey and pollen on a comb*

Beekeeping is well-established in the area using cylindrical hives made of wood and leaves. Until about seven years ago, honey yields were high (about twenty kilograms per colony per year) but because of the increased use of pesticides, reduced forage, and the changing seasons due to climate change, yields have reduced alarmingly, to around two or three kilograms per colony per year.

As a result of this reduction, the beekeepers want training in the use of 'modern' hives and they want to learn how best to keep bees in the changing environment around them in the hope of improving colony health and honey production. They recognise that if they can achieve this increased production, and the quality of the honey they are selling, they will be able to improve their income.

### Activities in 2020

Traditionally swarms have been caught in the trees. It is very difficult to attract swarms to the top bar hives in the apiary. Top bar hives are too big to be placed in trees so the group have tried several experiments:

- Using a smaller version of a top bar hive with just 12 bars as a catcher top bar hive, which can be lifted into and out of the trees.
- Transferring swarms from Rwandan hives in the trees to top bar hives in the apiary; this is showing promising results.
- Building top bar hives using three different types of wood to determine which is best at attracting swarms. This followed discussion amongst the wider Bees Abroad Rwanda group and consultation with the Uganda group about what wood will or will not attract bees.
- The cooperative has purchased wood and built new top bar hives, as well as making additional local Rwandan hives from materials they have collected.



*Apiary training. Learning to assess honey quantities prior to harvesting – photo: Paul Bloch*

There was an infestation of Small Hive Beetle in the Apiary which was identified as such after discussion with the wider Bees Abroad Rwanda team. Measures were agreed and carried out to deal with the infestation and actions put in place to reduce the possibility of a recurrence.

The cooperative had been renting a piece of land for their apiary that had to be returned to the farmer. Rwanda has a very high population density and land is scarce. Bees Abroad bought the cooperative a small piece of land which is not suitable for agriculture but is suitable for bee keeping. This provides a long-term secure site for their bees.

The beekeepers have worked with the Bees Abroad partnership managers to increase their knowledge of bees and beekeeping, and to develop strategies to deal with the current threats to beekeeping in Rwanda. This is increasingly important knowledge because beekeeping is becoming more difficult in Rwanda. With their new bee biology knowledge combined with their practical beekeeping expertise and developing understanding of how to manage the new threats to beekeeping in Rwanda, we were able to engage two members of the group to provide training at another less developed Bees Abroad project in Rwanda – a sustainable initiative. The team plan to do this again during 2021.

In addition to this training work by KADCO beekeepers, the Chair of KADCO, Eddy Rangira, was able to carry out an assessment visit for Bees Abroad during 2020. The assessment was carried out to an excellent standard, and is an effective way to complete this task in Rwanda.

#### **Future plans**

KADCO received money for protective clothing and honey processing equipment in December 2020. Bee suits will be made in early 2021. Honey harvested in March 2021 will be processed to a higher quality than in previous years with the new equipment. Once processed honey quality is improved Bees Abroad will work with the group to develop a marketing plan for quality honey. A plan for 2022 and 2023 will be developed

# Sierra Leone

## Partnership Manager: Neil Brent

### Rory's Well gets buzzing

This project is centred in Barri Chiefdom – Pujehun District, located about 50 miles to the South East of Bo - Sierra Leone's second largest city. It is just 30 miles from the Liberian border lying to the immediate east. There are 42 villages, varying in population from 30 to 1500 residents. The area is predominantly forest and is on the fringe of the Gola Rainforest.

Around 150 beekeepers, belong to the Barri Bee Farming Association; they have been given basic training and are in the process of receiving further training at their hives. The project is at the stage of expansion to further communities, whilst building knowledge and practice for those already beekeeping. Key issues in the area are: pest management, flooding, communications and transport infrastructure. Some of the 42 villages can only be reached after a three-hour walk.



*The 'Bee Team' from PAD-SL – photo: Steven Unisa Mansaray*

Rory's Well is an initiative which supports the provision of clean water and sustainable farming for over 47 communities through a Village Regeneration Programme. Beekeeping is a key income generating part of this programme, and we are most grateful to the Ida Davis Trust for the support they are giving to this part of the programme. The Local Delivery Partner Organisation is the People's Agenda for Development – Sierra Leone, (PAD-SL) led by Steven Unisa Mansaray, the Country Director. PAD-SL is based in Bo and Barri chiefdom. They are, at present, a team of around eight people who support both Rory's Well and Bees Abroad to improve, water, food, health and livelihoods.

Villagers in Barri Chiefdom and beyond have very little means to earn an income to supplement subsistence farming. They need money to be able to pay for medical care, school uniforms and equipment. Successful beekeeping has enabled them to produce quality honey and other products which have brought funds to participating households. The project's main goal is to create a market for quality local honey and wax products within Sierra Leone. When the beekeeping project started in Sierra Leone there was no market.

#### Activities in 2020

The year of 2020 has been a challenging one across the World. The Partnership Manager could not travel to Sierra Leone, meaning that plans to improve hive monitoring, recording data, honey and wax processing had to be overseen remotely, and the project had to find ways to provide support and equipment without travelling to Sierra Leone.

For the community, key activities had to cease at important times in the year due to lockdowns requiring that villagers had to stay at home and could not manage their farms. For example it meant the April/May honey harvest stopped half way through. Despite this, the local team have demonstrated they are capable, with remote support when needed, of managing the enterprise. Notable successes have included:



*Inspecting the colony - a frame of brood – photo: Steven Unisa Mansaray*

- Over 1,000 pounds of honey harvested in April and at least 50 pounds of beeswax
- Improvements to processing: there is a new larger processing room and honey table
- All honey sold and \$1,000 banked
- A total of 150 more hives built and sited
- A new honey packaging room has been established in Bo
- The project has spread beyond the original project scope. A further three villages in Malla section have been given initial training
- Village bee-farmers from Gbense Chiefdom in Kono District have been trained

#### **Into the future...**

Unfortunately, many of the items required to set up a honey and wax enterprise are either not available or affordable within country. With our partners, we will continue to look for locally available alternatives.

Early in 2021, we hope that initial training across the 42 villages will be completed. Following this, our local team will provide training and hives to village communities in other Chiefdoms.

- *Project completion:* The final six villages will receive initial training in February. Secondary training will be provided to all villages leading to their self-sufficiency in honey production.
- *More hives/More bees:* A further 270 hives will be distributed across 27 villages. Bee-farmers will pay for these over time with the honey produced. Income from sales of this honey will be used for more/replacement hives and equipment. A recent meeting of leading bee-farmers from 30 villages agreed to make more hives from their own resources with the project providing tin for the roofs.
- *Hive monitoring:* Key to the success of bee-farming in Barri will be regular monitoring of hives to check for bees, possible damage, pests, and for an assessment of honey weight. In addition, hive occupation will be encouraged in a range of ways taught to bee-farmers including cleaning and baiting hives and hive splitting.
- *Possibilities of further expansion:* PAD-SL are likely to receive more requests for training beyond the original 42 villages, both from the rest of Barri and beyond.



*Demonstrating honey-packaging- photo: Steven Unisa Mansaray*

# UGANDA

Partnership Manager: Venetia Rist

## Bwindi Batwa project

The Bwindi Batwa project started in 2017 with three key aims:

- by improving the health of the children
- by giving the community another means of making money
- by increasing their self-esteem

The Bwindi Batwa people (also known as the Twa people) were the original, very diminutive, inhabitants of the Bwindi forest. In 1991 they were evicted from the forest to conserve the giant gorillas who live there. The Batwa now live a very marginalised existence on the outskirts of the forest with very limited resources as they used to depend on forest hunting for their existence.

The Batwa still struggle to adapt to 'modern' life and this presents special problems in this project.



*A perfect top bar ready for harvesting - photo: Venetia Rist*

Some of these groups have lost husbands, many due to HIV. However, 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. Food is a major issue for the Batwa; they do not have enough food to be able to feed their families every day. Other issues include the usual problems of paying for medicines and schooling, but not many children, as yet, can access school.

Local support is given by CIBC (Community initiatives for Biodiversity Conservation); an organisation which is seeking to help them to find their way out of poverty. A successful vegetable growing initiative has been started, under the expert instruction and guidance of John Bosco, an agricultural graduate. While that is some way off, the communities are all getting some honey for their own nutrition at least, if not always enough to sell. The apiary sites have improved, and shade trees have grown.

Bees Abroad works with three settlements; Bikuto, Mukongoro, and Buhoma – each of which will be reported separately. The three individual settlements have been visited regularly by Obed, the trained beekeeper in residence, who works for the project initiator, John Bosco.

## Activities in 2020

The coronavirus pandemic has had a serious impact on the project communities. It has left the Batwa Climate Change and Nature Conservation Education team and over 48 reformed poachers helpless because their jobs at a recycling project were stopped. People have to stay in their homes with very little food. They are getting some relief food (sweet corn flour and beans).

Despite COVID-19, two of the Batwa communities are progressing in their efforts to sustain and support themselves. Bikuto have goats and thriving bees, Mukungoro have some rabbits, vegetables and surviving bees. The third, Buhoma, is needing substantial support.



*Putting lids on popular body cream –  
photo: Venetia Rist*

CIBC have an apiary used for training and to provide income for their beekeeper. Honey is being packed and sold locally by CIBC, plus some value added products. Candles, in the shape of gorillas, are now back in production at CIBC and are sold to visitors staying at the safari lodges, and in the hospital. Production of body cream and lip balm has become more important and is very successful.

Obed, despite being unwell during the year, has made the hives for the settlements, ten more hives in two of the settlements, Mukongoro and Bukoto, and five more in Buhoma

### ***Bikuto***

This community now has seventeen colonised thriving, strong hives and they harvested some beautiful combs of sealed honey. The summer 2020 harvest was 35kilograms. The group members are paid individually by the weight of their combs in the bucket. The combs are taken back to the processing unit - a shed on the local project leader's farm.

Another enterprise involves raising goats. This seems to be working well; they collect urine and droppings from under the goat house at night and use it as fertiliser for the crops. They have learnt how to grow onions, cabbages, peppers, carrots and potatoes. This is another illustration of how this community is gradually learning other farming methods and life is slowly improving for them.

Two problems are currently being addressed in this area – white ants which are attacking the colonies, and bees that are becoming aggressive near to where people are living and working.

### ***Mukongoro***

This community is becoming more interested in new ways to provide food – particularly vegetables growing. However, they have been reticent in adopting new ideas, to the detriment of their beekeeping. Nevertheless, at the start of the year, they had sixteen colonised hives, but seven were stolen in the lockdown period. Even so they harvested about 27kilograms of honey.

### **Buhoma**

Sadly, Buhoma has an aged population which can no longer maintain the hives and is needing a lot of support to survive. John Bosco and Obed have taken over and now look after the hives for them; all five hives are colonized and yielded fifteen kilograms of honey. The revenue from honey sales goes into a fund to support the Batwa, and to help individuals who used to be poachers in the forest but have now reformed.



*Top bar hive about to swarm – photo: Venetia Rist*

### **Future plans**

The demand for honey has continued to grow locally and it currently has to be sourced from other non-Batwa beekeepers to meet demand; honey is used in supporting patients with cough and burns at the hospital. The CIBC would like to set up 50 hives in apiaries in 2 further Batwa settlements, Kihembe, located 35 kilometres from Buhoma, and Ruarangara located 20 kilometres from Buhoma.

A boarding house for Batwa children is being built at the Buyumba school. The Batwa Development Program would like Bees Abroad to set up a teaching programme and beekeeping enterprise for the children from all the communities, where teachers could be trained in beekeeping on the site, and pass on the skills to the children who can take the knowledge back to their communities. This initiative can only go ahead if funding can be found. One of the teachers in the school is a beekeeper who uses a traditional hive; he is very excited about the possibility of having bees at the school.

# Uganda

Partnership Managers: Richard & Jane Ridler, Abdul Miah

## Kinyamaseke Youth in Development

The Kinyamaseke Youth in Development organisation (KYID) was set up to support young people from backgrounds that make their lives very difficult. They include members who have been deprived of education, many are unemployed, illiterate, and exploited, some are girls married early for bride wealth and then abandoned. This organisation seeks to improve their life situations, so that they can play a full part in the community.

KYID achieve this by providing vocational skills such as woodworking, joinery, tailoring, knitting, plant growing. The group wished to add beekeeping to the vocational skills they offer. Through it they hope that young people are able to earn money from beekeeping after leaving KYID, and that through keeping bees, KYID can improve their own finances. It is led by Nzaghale Noah.

Funded equally by the Worshipful Company of Wax Chandlers and the Goosebec Trust, the project started in mid-2018, and is expected to run for four years. Bees Abroad is working in partnership with LIDEFO (Liberty Development Foundation) – Which is led by Daniel Ngangasi. LIDEFO delivers training and field support, as well as managing all the many day to day issues that go to making our projects a success.

### Activities in 2020

During periods of lockdown KYID was closed, members were unable to participate in beekeeping but hives were maintained by management staff. As a result:

- In February, 21kilograms of honey was harvested from their first apiary of twelve hives. Yields are expected to increase as colonies grow and develop
- A second apiary, comprising twelve hives is now colonised
- Improvements to apiary security have been made with barbed wire and living fences to ensure harmony with the local community
- The team have planted trees and flowers for their bees – sunflowers and sesame



*Members planted sunflowers for their bees – photo: Nzaghale Noah*

### Notable successes

As a result of their training, ten members who have left KYID have set up their own apiaries.

With the income from honey sales, KYID has been able to make five more beehives.

To raise the profile of beekeeping even further, KYID staff have visited local schools to tell pupils about the importance of bees in the environment and for propagation.

### **Into the future...**

Many of the plans are contingent upon the control of Covid-19. However, as soon as feasible, Bees Abroad plans to focus training on increasing honey yield, and on value addition through other hive products such as skin creams etc.

There are plans to link this project to the Women Beekeepers for Life cluster of projects in Kasese.

## **Women's Resource Centre for Community Development**

Situated in Kagando Village, Kisinga sub-County, Kasese District of Uganda, the Women's Resource Centre for Community Development, led by Mumbere Kombi Blessing, comprises a group drawn from several small communities in the foothills of the Rwenzori Mountains, just a few kilometres north of the equator.

The aim of the group is to improve the quality of life for the women members; some are child mothers, others are disabled, many are deprived of education. 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.



*Giving advice and building confidence – photo: Mumberer Kombi Blessing*

Generously funded by Poole Soroptomists and the Goosebec Trust, and set against this challenging background, Bees Abroad is working in partnership with LIDEFO, with whom it has been working since 2012. The small LIDEFO team, with Daniel Ngangasi, their director, delivers training and field support, and by managing the many day to day issues, enables the projects to be a success.

Asked what they hoped to achieve, the women stated that by keeping bees they can;

- increase their families' nutrition
- through the sale of hive products (candle wax and honey) they can raise their household income
- train women, including women with disabilities and young child mothers, in bee keeping management
- raise the status of women – particularly those with disabilities, and those who are young child mothers

The project target is for each hive to produce 10kg of honey and to achieve the impacts listed above.

### Activities in 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on the project. The ability of the group leader and LIDEFO to visit participants to provide support was disrupted. Coupled with this, the local project leader had to support a family member during a period of severe illness. This meant he was unable to give the project the attention he would have liked.

To support him through the Covid crisis, the project bought a pedal bike for Blessing to help him access participants without the need to be in close contact with others using public transport.

A second and final batch of sixty hives was delivered and distributed early in the year.

When it was safe to do so, skill levels and confidence-building training was provided through individual support and guidance to all participants in their apiaries.



*Covid-secure transport provided by the project— photo: Mumberer Kombi Blessing*

### Future plans

Future plans will depend on the progress of the pandemic. The team will focus on building the skills, and particularly the confidence, of participants such that honey yields grow.

A course will be run on producing value-added products – however, the timing of this will depend on when it safe to do so, due to coronavirus.

There are plans to link this project into a planned Kasese cluster of Women Beekeepers for Life projects.

## Ibanda Development Association for Persons with Disabilities

Having a disability can lead to poverty, and the poverty, in turn, can place an even greater burden on individuals. The Ibanda Development Association for Persons with Disabilities has twenty members from fifteen families with a range of disabilities including lameness, hearing problems, restricted growth, educationally challenged and people with speech difficulties; over half the group are women. Their village is in the foothills of the Rwenzori Mountains, close to a national park, and with an equatorial climate and vegetation, it is ideal for beekeeping.

Working as a group, the Association seeks to produce an income with which to support those members whose disability prevents them from earning a living wage. At the same time, members are empowered as they contribute to the project in whatever way they are able. Although not all will be able to practise all aspects of beekeeping, we hope and expect that each will find a role within the Association.

This three-year project is located in Kibirizi Village, Bugoye, Kasese District, Uganda. Starting mid-2018, the project is generously supported financially by the Goosebec Trust, and the project is a collaboration between Bees Abroad and the LIDEFO Liberty Development Foundation, with which Bees Abroad has been working in partnership since 2012. Today LIDEFO deliver training and field

support, and manage the many day to day issues that go to making our projects a success. For this project, the Local Project Leader is Mbakania Zaverio (Zave).

During the project, the plans were to establish two apiaries each of ten hives through which training could be conducted and income generated. Within the capacity of each member, the project trains members in all appropriate aspects of beekeeping. Each member strives to contribute according to their ability. It is expected that each hive will produce an average of ten kilograms of honey, providing an income of around £20/hive when the honey is sold.

### Activities and achievements in 2020



*A small piggery was bought with the income from the honey*

A second apiary of ten hives was established in January 2020 – this was rapidly colonised. Although beekeeping was allowed during Covid lockdowns, social distancing requirements complicated hive inspections and visits by the LIDEFO field officer. Despite these constraints, to ensure the hives became fully productive, ongoing field support has taken place to build skill levels.

Based on the success of the group, and the extreme needs of the Association members shown during periods of lockdown, Bees Abroad decided to add another apiary of ten hives to provide a little more resilience for the future.

Extreme rainfall caused the banks of rivers flowing down the Rwenzoris to break their banks washing houses in the village and the local hospital away. One apiary lost a hive which the project replaced. A measure of the success of the project was that a small piggery was bought with income from honey.

### Future plans

The focus now is on building skill levels such that hives reach their maximum possible yields and the beekeeping activities are established and sustainable.

## Jireh Women Beekeepers

The group is formed of 54 women, the majority of whom had just two hives each, made to the local woven design. The group provides the opportunity for mutual support and knowledge sharing. Its main goals are empowerment, improvement of health, education and living conditions among the underprivileged women and their dependants.

Their goal is to alleviate poverty through empowering women to improve their income levels and their contribution to economic development through beekeeping. The group also supports beekeeping at the local secondary boarding school, St Gertrude's, where they aim to educate students both in beekeeping knowledge and practical skills which they can take back to their own communities on completion of their schooling.

This project is unusual in that Bees Abroad is working with a group that uses local hives - which are what the women requested. There seemed little point in re-training them to use top bar hives

because they are all practiced in using local hives. However, the project has provided much needed bee suits, gloves, boots, smokers and honey buckets. Each member will be given eight new hives of the local design over the project duration. Whilst these may have a lower yield than top bar hives, the cost of eight local hives is the same as the cost of one top bar hive. This intervention will greatly increase members' incomes from beekeeping.

This three-year project is generously funded by the Ida Davis Foundation, and has been running since July 2019. There is no partner organisation as the participants are existing beekeepers, competently led and organised by one of their members, Christine Ryumugabe. She is making contact with experts in Uganda to extend her beekeeping knowledge and share it with the group.

#### **Activities in 2020**

The roll-out of new hives had begun in 2019 with each member receiving two new local hives and necessary beekeeping equipment. During 2020, each member received a further two hives. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions, progress with training in the manufacture of value-added products was halted, and it was not possible to put the hives and equipment bought for St Gertrude's school to use.

#### **Future plans**

Subject to a reduction in Covid-19 restrictions, Bees Abroad hopes to provide two more hives to each member. It plans to introduce beekeeping to the syllabus at St Gertrude's school, and to support the group in learning about value-added products manufacture.

### **Kitabu Integrated Development Association**



*First apiary located in Eucalyptus trees, Kitabu – photo: Thembo Elijah*

This project, in the village of Mughetee, Kitabu, near Kasese, is located in the higher foothills of the Rwenzori mountains almost exactly on the equator. Illegal poaching in the adjacent QE II National Park has reduced the male population of the village. The group's main purpose is to generate sources of income which enable their community to avoid dependence on poaching. The community are subsistence farmers; the women operate a small microfinance system. The community has few financial resources, and they wish to increase their capacity to generate income to reinvest in subsistence farming activities, pay school fees, and buy medicines and household essentials.

Funded by the Goosebec Trust and working collaboratively with the Liberty Development Foundation (LIDEFO) – led by Thembo Elijah, this project started in mid-2019, and is expected to last for three years.

### **Activities in 2020**

Following the successful establishment of a first fifteen-hive communal apiary, a second communal apiary of fifteen hives was provided, and a further fifteen hives were distributed to households.

Community education about bees took place to inform about the benefits of bees and the need to avoid going close to the apiary.

During lockdown periods, beekeeping was allowed, but the need for social distancing provide some minor challenges. Despite this, field support visits were made to check on progress, solve problems, and to improve confidence and skills. The group is progressing particularly well, and a small initial honey crop of 25 kilograms was taken.

### **Into the future...**

This project is running smoothly, and we expect colonies to develop and grow. If this continues, depending on progress, the project plans to provide a further 30 hives for distribution to households. Meantime, field visits will continue in order to solve problems and develop skills; all of which will lead to increasing honey yields.

## **Africa Ray of Hope**

In May 2019, a project entitled Ray of Hope (ARHO) was started in the village of Buhesi, situated fifteen kilometres south of Fort Portal, a designated ‘Tourism city of Uganda’, located in the Western Region of the country. The project is generously funded jointly by the Goosebec Trust and through Bees Abroad unrestricted funds. Bees Abroad works in collaboration with the LIDEFO Liberty Development Foundation, led during this project by Muhumuza Stephen.

ARHO is a youth led group with adult oversight working to support its local communities. Its main goal is improvement of health, education and living conditions in underprivileged communities through increased self-reliance and responsibility, establishment of sustainable development initiatives and resource management as well as capacity development of young people.

The project started by establishing a training apiary and local capability to train and support households. Once the training apiary is successful, twenty households will each receive six hives, protective gear and essential beekeeping equipment. With each hive producing and selling a minimum of 10kg honey, the additional income will pay for school fees, medical bills and household essentials. Project training will ensure that the Ray of Hope Organisation has capability to train and support more members.

### **Activities in 2020**

Regular visits and field support by LIDEFO continued within the limits of Covid restrictions.

Following the successful training and establishment of a group apiary in 2019, the first ten households each received three hives and other essential equipment.

There have been problems; one hive was stolen from the group apiary, and exceptionally high rainfall in the area hindered progress and affected colony development and honey yield.

### Plans for the future

The focus in 2021 will be to continue developing the skills and confidence of those already trained. If the hives of the households who received the hives in 2020 perform adequately, we will add the final ten household recipients in 2021.

Additional training and support will be given to selected households to improve their hive management disciplines.

## Good Shepherd School

The Good Shepherd School is located in Kirembo Village, Kasese Region, Uganda. The school was founded by a group of parents in an area well suited to beekeeping. Recognising the potential of beekeeping to provide funding for the upkeep of the school, the school's management team contacted Bees Abroad for help.

Since 2019, through the local organisation LIDEFO (Liberty Development Foundation), Bees Abroad has supported the school's management team to improve a small poorly managed apiary which was already in existence. The goal is to maximise a high-quality honey yield from all the hives so that sales make a substantial contribution to the school budget. The target is to obtain ten kilograms of honey from each hive.

### ABOUT LIDEFO

Bees Abroad has been working in partnership with LIDEFO since 2012. Today their small team not only deliver training and field support but manage all the many day to day issues that go to making our projects a success.

The project is planned to last three years, with the work generously supported by Perse Preparatory School, Cambridge, and the Goosebec Trust.



*Classroom in Good Shepherd primary school – photo: Richard Ridler*

### **What has been achieved?**

Some of the existing hives became infested with small hive beetle. The solution was to upgrade the construction of some and abandon others. The project has added 35 more hives, distributed across two apiaries, and members of the management team have been trained in hive management.

Over the past year, the hives have been managed well. The participants have planted living fences (like hedges) around the apiaries and they have planted trees to provide forage.

Despite difficult weather conditions, colonies have developed adequately. LIDEFO staff have made regular visits to monitor progress and give advice and guidance.

A total of 72kilograms of honey was harvested from the original hives. A piglet was bought from the proceeds. Although the school was closed for many months due Covid-19 beekeeping has continued.



*Management team of Good Shepherd primary school*

### **Future plans**

Field visits which develop skills and confidence are continuing. The project is working smoothly, and the school is earmarked to be a Bees Abroad site for piloting teaching materials. This will enable us to support lessons about bees and beekeeping in local schools.

## **Banyatereza Sisters**

The Ave Maria Convent is in the village of Rwibaale, in a rural area 10km South of Kyenjojo, the administrative centre of the Kenjojo district. The area enjoys an equatorial climate and vegetation well suited to beekeeping. Participants are all subsistence farmers living close to the convent. The participants wished to be trained in beekeeping in order to increase their income to pay for school fees, medicines and household essentials.

The original project was to provide six hives to each of ten households, to increase the size of the convent apiary and to support the convent in selling and marketing honey. The original expectation was that Sister Sylvia, who is a competent beekeeper, would play a key role. The group that are being trained were selected from the local community by Sister Sylvia, from the convent. However,

Sister Sylvia was moved to another convent early in 2020. Despite some suggestions she would return by September, this did not happen.

Following the intervention of Daniel Ngangasi, the director of LIDEFO, The Liberty Development Foundation (LIDEFO) came to the rescue, and Bees Abroad is now working directly with LIDEFO to support the participant group. The successful resolution of this situation shows the value of working with a reliable and competent local partner. Bees Abroad has been working in partnership with LIDEFO since 2012. Today their small team not only deliver training and field support but manage all the many day to day issues that go to making our projects a success.

#### **Activities in 2020**

It had been anticipated that Sister Sylvia would return in September, so the project was put on hold. However, when this did not happen, a refresher training course took place to reinvigorate the project. It is now progressing to plan, but six months behind schedule.

#### **Future plans**

The plan for 2021 is to make routine visits to provide practical support and increase the confidence and capability of the group.

## **Rwenzori Rural Talent**

Rwenzori Rural Talent is a group of subsistence farmers living in the foothills of the Rwenzori mountains in an area well suited to beekeeping. The participants have four key objectives in learning to keep bees:

- To promote the economic Empowerment of rural women and children in the society.
- To empower local rural women and the youths with skills in bee keeping.
- To improve local health standards in the society.
- To establish an innovative model of micro economic enterprise in rural areas.



*Rwenzori subsistence farmers and their families – photo: John Mary Katuramu*

The project, generously supported by the Goosebec Trust, will support 30 households each with five hives and all other essential equipment, enabling them to help generate sufficient income to pay school fees, buy medicines and other household essentials. Bees Abroad is working in partnership with the Liberty Development Foundation (LIDEFO), with Katuramu John Mary as the local project leader. He is proving to be an attentive and enthusiastic group leader.

#### **Activities in 2020**

The project began in June 2020, and is expected last for three years. Each of the first fifteen households have received their first three hives. They have been trained by LIDEFO, who have provided monthly visits to give guidance, support and build confidence. One problem, incursion by ants, has been solved by restricting their ability to climb hive stands.

There is a WhatsApp group shared by Bees Abroad, LIDEFO and John Mary which is giving us all good co-operation on problem sharing and progress monitoring.

#### **Future plans**

When the hives of the first fifteen families are well colonised, Bees Abroad will provide each family with two more hives, and will give fifteen more families their initial three hives.

Monthly field visits will continue to give support and guidance building the skills and confidence of those already trained.

# UGANDA

## Partnership Managers: Dave & Cathy Bonner

### Bed I Gen beekeeping project

In March 2019, Bees Abroad started the Bed I Gen beekeeping project in Eastern Uganda. This four-year project is located in Anok village, one of the thirteen villages in Atur Parish, Dokolo District. The location is about 35 kilometres north of the city of Soroti on the Lira road. There are 113 households in this village, and the entire parish has 1008 households. The group have already acquired 30 top bar hives, valued at about £430. They are registered with the Dokolo Town Council as Bed I Gen Farmers Group.



*Bed-I-Gen members with Partnership Manager, Cathy*

Poverty is rife, and the initiative is aimed at reducing poverty through the introduction of beekeeping into twenty households in this village. Each household will aim to have five hives, making 100 hives in total. The twenty households have been selected because of their vulnerability, and because of their commitment to beekeeping and this project. These households are a mix of women led households, young people, and people living with HIV/AIDS.

The project is funded by funds brought into Bees Abroad by money raised by the partnership managers, with some ad hoc support from the Ugandan Department of Agriculture.

#### **Activities in 2020**

The Bees Abroad partnership manager visited in February 2020. Plans were discussed and an agreement was reached to run two training courses and provide resources to increase the number of top bar hives. The visiting team went to see the existing apiary sites to observe how the top bar hives had been distributed and located. To provide a little encouragement, a donation of 200,000/- (Ugandan shillings ~£40) and some honey buckets were donated to the group.



### ***Apiary location***

Due to the lockdown associated with Covid-19, none of the planned training courses have taken place and it seems likely that the project will be delayed by around one year.

### **Future plans**

Plans for 2021 have yet to be discussed with the group. Communication is still difficult, and the uncertainty surrounding the general election in January 2021 is causing concern. Fortunately, the group is already structured, with a steering committee comprising Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. The group has a constitution which is both in English and in the local language, Luo.

## **The Young Farmers and Entrepreneurs Network**

The Young Farmers and Entrepreneurs' Network (YOFENET) is a youth-founded and managed Community Based Organization supporting the most vulnerable youth and women in rural communities to improve their livelihoods through small-scale beekeeping, mushroom production and vegetable growing. The four-year beekeeping project started in March 2017, funded by income brought into Bees Abroad by money raised by the partnership managers, with some ad hoc support from the Ugandan Department of Agriculture.

The project focused on poverty-alleviation through the introduction of beekeeping into the Mayuge, Iganga and Jinja districts of the Busoga region. The target is to have ten groups benefitting 100 people, of whom around one third are female.

### **Activities in 2020**

The project manager visited YOFENET in February 2020 and was able to see apiary sites at the Bukaleba village.

A successful two day 'value-added product' training course was given to the YOFENET group, which included members from Bukaleba village. The training covered the production of lip balm, skin cream, wax polish and luxury shampoo. Product costing was carried out to ensure that profit could be made from the items.



*Waiting for beeswax polish to set during a training session*

In 2019, YOFENET and one of their subsidiary groups, Bukaleba, won first and second prizes, respectively, in the UK National Honey show, Class 12. The certificates and prize money were presented to both groups during this visit.

Beekeeping equipment from the UK was donated to YOFENET, along with the training equipment used during the value-added product training.

Since March 2020, Covid-19 has caused considerable disruption in Uganda, and no further beekeeping training has been carried out. However, the local YOFENET committee decided to focus resources to help families which were now starving as they were unable to work. A project called 'Backyard Gardening' was established. This trained families how to grow vegetables and food in small patches of ground and in any containers. The Bees Abroad partnership manager supported this initiative and provided some resources, outside the beekeeping project, to get the project started – an important initiative, albeit not directly related to beekeeping.



*Antics at the end of the day - Photo: Dave Bonner*

#### **Into the future...**

Plans for 2021 have yet to be discussed with the group. Covid-19 is still causing disruption to daily life, communication is still difficult and the uncertainty surrounding the general election in January 2021 is causing concern.

## **SELOCOFFI Beekeepers**

SELOCOFFI (Serere Local Fish Farming Initiative) is an established group that has been supported by a Dutch charity in the creation of a Fish Farm. They wished to encourage beekeeping, and asked Bees Abroad for support.

This four-year project started in March 2017 in Kyere, Eastern Uganda. The project aimed to benefit 1,500 individuals by training around 100 beekeeping members so that they could increase their income and alleviate poverty. The project was funded by e-bay sales, some support from Bees Abroad, and some ad hoc resources provided by the Department of Agriculture.

#### **Activities in 2020**

At a visit in February 2020, it became clear that the group had changed direction from Beekeeping into Plant nursery and plant husbandry.

In 2019 SELOCOFFI had won third prize in the UK national Honey Show Class 12. The certificate and prize money (50,000/= ~£10) were presented to Frederick Okello, the chairman of the group during this visit.

However, on realising that the group direction had changed, the beekeeping project was stopped and the requirement for involvement from Bees Abroad ceased.

## Bees-4-Life

The Bees-4-Life group is based in the town of Bukedea which is mid-way between Soroti and Mbale on the main road. The aim of the project is train members from 40 households and for each household to have five beehives. The households are mainly rural farmers many with HIV/AIDS.

One person in the group, Omiding Moses, is a well 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 the training and implementation. Moses will provide a site that can be used for demonstration and training purposes.



*Bees-4-Life group (including the Partnership Managers! Photo: Kalungi Charles)*

The project is supported funds raised by the by Bees Abroad Partnership Manager, with some ad hoc support from the Ugandan Department of Agriculture.

### Activities in 2020

The Bees Abroad Partnership Manager visited in February 2020 when plans were discussed and agreement reached to run at least one training course, and to provide resources to increase the number of top bar hives.

To provide a little encouragement a donation of 200,000 Ugandan Shillings (~£40) and some honey buckets were donated to the group. This was the entire spend on the project this year as, due to the lockdown associated with Covid-19, none of the planned activities have taken place. This has introduced a delay of around one year in the project activities.

### Future plans

As with other projects in this region, plans for 2021 have yet to be discussed with the group. Communication is still difficult and the uncertainty surrounding the general election in January 2021 is causing concern.

# ZAMBIA

Partnership Manager: Dr Stuart Andrews

## Monze Women's Beekeeping Project

The project has been implemented in three yearly phases with two groups being recruited each year:

- Phase 1: Kabwenbala and Chobaana East
- Phase 2: Haamupande and Muloube
- Phase 3: Lusumpuko and Nakambala

All groups are located in Monze District and their members are mainly subsistence farmers, many of them unmarried or widowed, who have sole responsibility for the wellbeing of their households, which on average contain eight members. Comprising between 13 and 25 members, each group was carefully selected following an interview process by our local partner together with a representative from either local government, or from the local forestry department.

Each group has a core of trainee beekeepers, and hopes that the income raised through beekeeping will help improve their livelihoods and resilience. They hope that increasing honey production and access to good markets will improve their nutrition and health. This is especially important in times of drought, when reduced rainfall has a significant effect on subsistence farming. The area has a high level of poverty made worse in recent years as a result of reduced rainfall which has caused crop failure and created an environment in which there are fewer bees.



*Road to one of the group apiaries – easy to get lost! - photo: Stuart J. Andrews*

The Local Delivery Partner is the Sustainable Rural Development Agency (SRDA) led by its director, Mr Phillip Nsakilwa. SRDA is a small rural-based NGO registered in 2006. The Director has a Diploma in Forestry and significant beekeeping experience. He is supported by two field officers with beekeeping and social work experience. For each phase of the project, SRDA contributes 25% of its profit from its own honey-buying and honey-selling operation.

Sustainability is firmly built into this project. They plan to have a core of members able to open and harvest hives without any reliance on SRDA, and thus be able to earn useful income from its honey sales to develop their enterprises or begin new ones.

Much of this work could not have happened without the generous support of the Ida Davis Foundation, Zoetis UK, Kent Beekeeping Associations, and Bees Abroad, for which the team is extremely grateful. The continued support of the local community in Blean, near Canterbury, is also much appreciated.

### Activities in 2020

Two new groups – Lusumpuka and Nakambala – were enrolled onto the project. The SRDA increased their visits to all six groups to help maintain the motivation of group members during these difficult times and to ensure that each group maintains their apiaries and each of their eight top-bar hives (for which they paid a small financial contribution) in top condition.

By January 2021, only the Kabwenbala and Chobaana East groups had managed to harvest any honey from which they gained some income; honey was harvested from two hives in Kabwenbala, and from four hives in Chobaana East. Most of the other hives have remained empty for much of the year; Haamupande currently have no hives colonised with bees, Muloube only have three hives colonised, Lusumpuka only has one hive colonised, while women from the Nakambala group still watch over eight empty hives.

The reasons why so few hives have been colonised this year are complex and as yet not fully understood. The women themselves are convinced it is linked to the climate crisis. There were signs of bees returning to the area early in the year following the seasonal rains during 2019/2020, which led to the decision to proceed with Phase 3, but their return appears to have been short-lived. The impact of the drought last year is still being felt, and has created an environment in which there are fewer bees to colonise the hives. Many of the colonies kept by some of the women in local (traditional) hives have also absconded this year.

A significant number of interventions have been tried to address these challenges including:

- (i) increasing the number of advisory visits by SRDA to the groups
- (ii) maintaining apiaries and hives in good condition
- (iii) providing additional water and supplementary food
- (iv) using swarm-catcher boxes
- (v) using small log hives to help attract swarming or absconding bees.

None have been particularly successful.

In terms of capacity building of SRDA, a number of options have been discussed during regular WhatsApp video calls and email exchanges; these include more interaction with the Cooperative Department (Ministry of Agriculture), and the Forestry department, as well as with other beekeeping associations and NGOs in the district.

Just four weeks before a planned visit to Zambia, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advised against all but essential international travel, due to Covid-19. The onus fell on SRDA to continue reviewing Phase 2 and launching Phase 3. With typical efficiency and commitment SRDA took over the enrolment of the two new groups onto the project and their training.

The major success achieved this year is the strong and developing working relationship with SRDA. Despite all the setbacks, it is heartening to hear from SRDA that the women continue to show a real commitment to the project.



*Priming some top-bars – a nice team activity - photo: Stuart J. Andrews*

#### **Into the future...**

The project comes to an end in April 2021. Any future plans regarding beekeeping activities will largely depend on whether the seasonal rains fall the year 2020-21, and if this leads to an improvement in the local habitat and environment that will attract bees back to the area. The first expected swarming period of the year between March and May 2021 will be carefully monitored.

SRDA have proved to be a most worthy local partner and discussions will continue as to how best Bees Abroad can assist with their ongoing sustainability and capacity building into the future.



# 21 Bees Abroad

Relieving Poverty through Beekeeping



## Patrons

Preparing a bag of comb for wax extraction.  
Photo: Steven Unisa Mansaray, Sierra Leone

Most Reverend Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury

Martha Kearney, Broadcaster and Journalist

Adam Hart, Professor of Science Communication, University of Gloucestershire

Michael Badger, MBE, Past President, British Beekeepers' Association

Brian Sherrif, B J Sherrif International

Eric Hiam, Maisemore Apiaries

## Follow us on:



## Get in touch

T: 0117 2300231

E: [info@beesabroad.org.uk](mailto:info@beesabroad.org.uk)

A: Bees Abroad

The Keepers, Symn Lane

Wotton-Under-Edge

Gloucestershire GL12 7BD