

Bees Abroad

*Supporting beekeeping projects
in developing countries*

ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY OF PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN

APRIL 2008 – DEC 2009

Bees Abroad
PO Box 2058
Bristol
www.beesabroad.org.uk
info@beesabroad.org.uk



Introduction

The Bees Abroad (BA) ethos is to support farmers groups and NGOs with both capacity building training and identifying funding. Our main focus is on building skills that will empower communities and local organisations and BA offers extensive in-country support and free Internet based advice. Bees Abroad project managers are all volunteers and offer project design services, technical training, organisational skills and monitoring of funds to groups that we have undertaken to partner in order that they may develop self help programmes and a business based ethos that will allow long-term economic viability for the group. Using a step-by-step approach, Bees Abroad volunteers make a long-term commitment to each project of up to 5 years in order to ensure the greatest potential for a successful outcome. The demand for project funding and technical support is very high with 92 new enquiries received up Dec 2009. Bees Abroad currently are actively managing 6 projects (1 of which represents 3 smaller networked projects), with a further 3 linked projects requiring ongoing support and three projects in the process of twinning with UK associations. Three projects are in the process of planning while a further 7 projects are being investigated to determine whether Bees Abroad might support them.

In the interests of clarity, Bees Abroad has decided to produce this project summary report detailing projects from January to December of the previous year. This is to allow information to be collated in time for the AGM in April.



Projects undertaken

Malawi

Nkhata-bay Honey Packers Co-operative (200902/SBDARA/PG/02)

Bees Abroad has been supporting the Small Beekeepers Development and Research Association (SBDARA) since Sept 2002 with both fundraising and technical input designed to build local skills. SBDARA has now officially become the Nkhata-bay Honey Packers Co-operative (NHPC) in order that it might take advantage of the possibilities offered by co-operative structures, which can include Fair Trade registration.

The project represents over 100 beekeeping self-help groups (1000 households). Bees Abroad facilitated the creation of a farmer owned co-operative marketing organisation to provide an honest outlet for beekeepers to sell their honey. At the start of the project, the distance from the urban markets and lack of transport made it hard for the beekeepers to sell their honey for a good price. People were trading from a position of weakness in a buyers market. The project has been so successful that the price of honey has risen by a factor of 3 since the start of the project. 12 tonnes of honey were sold in the 2009 season with 7 tonnes of honey already purchased for sale in 2010 trading under the brand name Forest Gold. An unexpected loss of funding from the British High Commission in 2007 meant that SBDARA was given a £3000 interest free loan from Bees Abroad to help them get over the problems that this engendered. This has not yet been repaid.

The NHPC has developed a system of village based field extension services with locally based trainers. Seven trainers have passed the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) assessment designed for beekeeping trainers working in African conditions. The senior trainers received training to become BBKA assessors to allow SBDARA to carry out its own BBKA certificated assessments. This will allow the system to become self sustaining without much further input from Bees Abroad. The trainers ran 42 training courses for the Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust showing people how to keep bees. Two new female trainers were receiving training at the end of 2009.

In addition to 7 trainers, the project employs 6 people full time plus a number of casual workers when needed. The staff have grown in confidence and expertise over the last 5 years and are now able to cope with work as diverse as building their market share, honey packing, critical hazard analysis, managing the building maintenance, developing the tree nursery, organising courses, keeping the accounts, stocktaking and writing funding reports.

National Honey supplies were generous enough to donate new honey straining sieves to replace the well-worn ones that were at the end of their useful life and also a honey refractometer. This latter piece of equipment is essential for NHPC to buy honey of the correct quality. The group received £500 from Marr Manning Trust to buy honey buckets for storing the honey hygienically. They also received £1900 from



NHPC trainers, some with their newly acquired BBKA certificates in African Beekeeping

the Rufford Foundation to develop their equipment sales and small shop. Part of this money was used to employ a community mobiliser who is an experienced beekeeper and forester who sensitises and mentors village-based producers in beekeeping and forestry protection. The work of the community mobiliser was found to be very helpful and so further funding has been obtained to enable Mr Jere to be employed for up to 12 months from July 2009. Ten excellent forestry booklets in Chichewa emphasising the value of trees were donated by Paul Latham to help with the forestry training.

The shop is a small enterprise designed to make decent quality, locally made equipment available to beekeepers at the lowest possible cost. NHPC also accept honey in payment for equipment. The shop has a secondary function, which is to raise the skills and confidence of Mrs Lizzie Nyrende, by running this enterprise initially under the tutelage of the Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) and the project administrator. It is also intended to help cover the costs of her employment although it is clear that self-sufficiency is some way off the learning aspect is also an important outcome. We have calculated that to make a profit the shop needs to sell three times as much equipment, which is a modest but clearly possible target, which will take time to develop.

Pam Gregory donated personal funds to set up a vehicle-hiring scheme. A one tonne truck was purchased which will allow deliveries to be made more reliably.

NHPC received advice and training on stock recording and how to manage honey granulation that has been causing problems with the buyers. They have also gained the services of an American Peace Corps volunteer, Greg Clements, who is advising the group on sales and marketing.

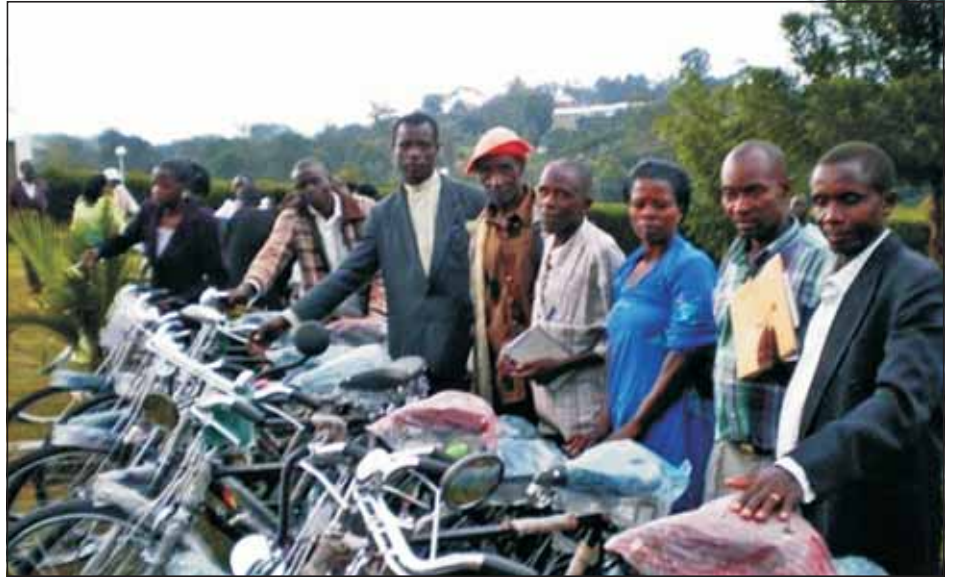
The staff are growing in confidence and expertise and are now able to cope with work as diverse as honey packing and sales, managing the building maintenance, organising courses, keeping the accounts and stocktaking and writing funding proposals. The staff have met the President, who praised the honey, and the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Trade have visited the project. The ministerial visits brought the television cameras and a programme about the project was made which has been broadcast four times on Malawi TV.

A proposal for consolidating and scaling up this project and setting up a Fair Trade scheme has been submitted to the Waterloo Foundation in 2009. There is a lot more work to do to get the village based training scheme to reach all villages; also in getting the stock management up to a high standard suitable for linking with supermarket buyers and for the management group to plan and run the project efficiently. We could do with more mobile phones for the trainers to co-ordinate their activities. There is a potential to link this project with a large scale trading for conservation project in 2010, which is currently being explored.

Uganda

EMESCO project (O41004/PG/EMES/05)

This project has introduced beekeeping as a source of income for refugees and other migrants living in the Ruteete Settlement Area and surrounding rural villages on the shores of Lake Albert in Western Uganda. Bees Abroad partners in this project are the EMESCO Development Foundation. A clear timetable for the implementation of the project was developed with detailed milestones agreed all being monitored by Mr Roy Dyche of Bees Abroad. The States of Guernsey Overseas Development Commission have funded the second year of this project and have agreed to make a third tranche of funding available for 2010.



The CRPs with their bicycles

The project was launched in March 2008 and by September 2009 was well into its second twelve-month phase. In preparation for each phase a clear and detailed timetable for its implementation was agreed, together with specific milestones, and these have been closely monitored by Bees Abroad's Roy Dyche.

During Phase One 268 villagers joined the project and a further 182 were enrolled at the start of the second phase. These have been formed into 42 groups on a geographical basis and it is very encouraging that a third of these groups are headed by women. A set of training modules was formulated by Bees Abroad and these have been delivered to both years' beneficiaries by EDF field staff, after they themselves were trained in technical matters and effective facilitation by Bees Abroad. Mr Sunday Robert was appointed field officer and his energy and enthusiasm have been central to what has been achieved so far.

Twelve community-based resource persons (CRPs) were elected from among the beneficiaries and have attended EDF's six-day course in mobilisation and leadership skills. They have each received a bicycle to help them with their work, which is crucial to the success of the project. Generally they have performed impressively and a couple of them have been outstanding, having, for example, developed their own improvements to the modern hives made from freely available local materials which we have been promoting; EDF very sensibly enlisted them to help in the Phase Two training.

The CRPs have now appointed their own office-holders and are assuming more managerial responsibilities. It is hoped that they will form the executive of a registered producer organisation to which ownership of the project may be transferred by the end of 2010.

As already mentioned, the beneficiaries have been taught how to make top-bar hives very cheaply from such materials as bamboo and sticks. This made it possible



A CRP displays a modern hive he has made entirely from sticks and mud

to limit the carpentry inputs EDF needed to provide and has helped ensure the villagers can continue to expand their beekeeping without reliance on external donations — a vital element in the sustainability of the project. Before the end of September over a thousand of these hives had been constructed and most of those made during the first phase had been colonised.

The buying and marketing aspect of the project has performed well. A two-roomed unit was provided by EDF to serve as a

honey processing and packing centre and Bees Abroad advised on its layout and checked that basic hygiene standards were being maintained. Honey filters, honey gates and a refractometer were purchased in the UK and EDF staff were trained in their use.

In August 2008 the marketing of the project's 'Family Pride' honey was launched. It is typical of the resourcefulness of the EDF Director, Mr Emely Kugonza, that he contrived to have the Ugandan Minister for Internal Affairs officiate at this important and well publicised event, which was attended by several local dignitaries, including the Prime Minister of the Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom.

By September 2009 EDF had bought approximately two tonnes of honey. Not all



The EMESCO marketing launch

of this came from the direct beneficiaries, many of whose hives were not productive at that time. It was always envisaged that the benefits of the buying operation would be extended to beekeepers already existing in the area and they have been eager to take advantage of this market access. EDF has now streamlined the operation by introducing a collection centre system, largely administered by the CRPs.



A tree nursery established as part of the EDF tree-planting project

Since then the quality and cleanliness of our product as well as its attractive labelling have meant that local retail outlets and stores in nearby towns have been keen to stock it. When the second phase ends in May 2010 we expect to have purchased a further three tonnes of honey and EDF, realizing that they will need more outlets if they are to dispose of this increased quantity, are making a serious effort to secure them further afield.

EMESCO (EDF) tree planting project

In 2008/2009 Bees Abroad won funds for EDF to establish a small-scale pilot tree planting project directed at vulnerable women (probably widows), orphaned children, elderly men and disabled people. Its purpose was to raise incomes by establishing tree nursery centres and raising tree seedlings that can be sold to other community members giving income for these disadvantaged people

EDF gave training in tree growing but the trees grown belonged to the people who grew them, who were free to sell them as they wished intended to generate a small income for each beneficiary. The trees selected were all useful multipurpose trees that also gave copious nectar for honey production.

This is the first time these groups have tried this style of tree planting project and some of its value was to better understand the details of this type of project, especially for the EDF staff and trainers. The project was very popular with the participants and 65 people (far more than the original 20 people proposed) were recruited to the project. The project was very successful in generating income for the growers who each earned £39 and also had a good number of tree seedlings to plant for their own use. Some of the tree seedlings were used to start community woodlots for building timber and firewood. This project doubled the money put into it showing that tree growing can be profitable to vulnerable people. The groups would like to continue with tree growing and EDF were trying to encourage the groups to invest some of their profits to buy more seeds. This lesson in sustainability is an essential part of Bees Abroad's philosophy. EDF are now looking into the possibilities of very large-scale tree growing to satisfy bigger purchasers such as the National Forestry Authority.

Kisoro project (0708/JW/KIS)

This project was adopted by Bees Abroad in 2008. It is under the management of Mr Julian Willford, a bee farmer of 30 years experience. The project involves a group of 500 bee farmers who live in the remote and mountainous Kisoro district of South

Western Uganda. The climate is lush and perfect for honey production. The countryside is scattered with villages each with a resident beekeeper who has passed knowledge and traditions from father to son for generations. However, the remoteness of the region makes it hard for people to sell their honey leaving them with little money to pay for education or medical supplies. Typically also, the young people lack employment opportunities.

This project is based on creating a marketing and training organisation, led by local beekeeper and trainer Dan Ngirabakunzi that will ultimately benefit hundreds of households in the region.

A training network has already been established to deliver vocational training to small numbers of students. The profits from the honey marketing scheme are to be used to educate and training the sons and daughters of the beekeepers, offering skills such as tailoring, computer work and other vocational skills to help them to earn a living. Bees Abroad are offering training and support in project design, technical beekeeping aspects, organisational skills and shared experience.

The Kisoro Beekeepers workshop to make bee veils using a simple design developed by Bees Abroad

Julian was able to help the Kisoro Honey Producers by introducing protective clothing and locally made smokers. Although the beekeepers were keen to try frame hives and some were donated by Julian's church this does not really seem the best option so locally made top-bar hives were recommended.

Other positive contributions have been support with fund raising, introducing better honey harvesting and filtering techniques, fresh ideas to improve bottling and labelling, organising new honey sales outlets, arranging meetings that helped to stabilise the price of honey and helping to make useful contacts.



The Kisoro Beekeepers workshop to make bee veils using a simple design developed by Bees Abroad

Kenya

New Nessuit (Nelbem) (O80106/PG/NNES/01)

This project is situated in an environmentally degraded area with a wide tribal mix of people being resettled on 5 acre plots in the foothills of the Mau mountains. The area was settled haphazardly and the environmental damage has led to significant problems in the water catchments in areas lower down the slopes. There was great resistance to the resettlement from the aboriginal (mainly Ogiek) people living in the area. This has led to significant cultural tension. People from the Mau foothills are now being forcibly evicted, even if they have legal title deeds. This project is not likely to be affected being to the west of the eviction areas. However, if people are forced to move they will take with them hives and skills that will help them to better survive in their new locations.

The planned monitoring visit in early 2008 was not possible due to the general political unrest in Kenya after the disputed elections and getting information is not always straightforward. Nevertheless some progress was reported. Local patrons Weldon Korir and Richard Rono continue to support the project.

To date hundreds of beehives have been made. Hive colonisation is slow because of the degraded nature of the local environment. However, sufficient honey crops have now been harvested to start marketing in a nearby town using the groups' own special label.

The tree/plant nursery is well established and progressing using funds raised from a sponsored walk in the UK.



Degraded landscape due to settler agriculture that has damaged the water catchment area



Nelbem beekeepers are justly proud of their honey production



Beekeeping groups at Nelbem discussing the way forward



130 tree saplings here are being planted in the headquarters compound

This project has been funded for this period from BA's own funding resources. The project is now back on track after the unrest and violence that followed the disputed election in 2008 and has the on site assistance of David Njunga, a Kenyan beekeeping trainer whose work is being funded by BA on an expenses only basis. His input has generated a remarkable increase in the numbers of beekeepers involved with this project with 70 families now being involved in beekeeping. This project still has a big problem with colonisation of hives of which the members have plenty.

Wings of Mercy (070107/JH/WOM/01)

The Wings of Mercy project aims to help people in one of Nairobi's 100 slums. Lack of income generating opportunities leads young people to drift from the villages to the city of Nairobi. They almost invariably finish up in the cities' slums frequently leading to health problems and a high risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. The purpose of this BA pilot project at Machacos, Nairobi working specifically in this case with rural people in Bondoni, to the south east of Nairobi is to investigate whether the intro-



A new, bee-proof, processing hut, built mainly using local materials

duction of beekeeping to people in peri-urban villages will slow down this rural to urban drift by creating employment and income. Funded by Bees Abroad, four further people (2 men and 2 women) attended a comprehensive introduction to beekeeping course at the National Beekeeping Centre in Sept 2008 with whom Bees Abroad have developed good links.

These trainers have signed a pledge to provide training for others in exchange for their training. Having met the four and realise their enthusiasm they will shortly be receiving 5 KTB's each which will be made in a Nairobi slum micro workshop. The previous two farmers have 8 out of their 10 hives colonised and John Home

helped to harvest some honey from two hives using the protective clothing purchased at a subsidised price from the National Beekeeping Station

There are now two beekeeping groups officially registered with the Kenyan Authorities, which should help them to source in country funds and benefits. The smaller group, Mutini Wings of Mercy Beekeeping Self help Group, has 24 members and with 10 hives. The larger group, Bondoni Wings of Mercy Apicultural Group, has 37 members with 20 hives. Both groups have benefited from training given on the Bees Abroad monitoring visit in Dec 2009. During the previous year 14 days of assessment and continuing training visits were made to both groups by David Njugna Both groups have been supplied with protective clothing, smokers, honey gates and beekeeping books.

At present only restricted funds are available from Bees Abroad, which will be spent on machine made top-bars and further training visits from David. Enthusiasm is high but currently severe drought is hampering honey production. There is no budget for this project, which has been funded by specific gifts from our local area - the most recent being £500 beard shaving sponsorship and £520 from Leamington local beekeepers club. With only a small balance in hand, future plans will be on hold pending further fund raising efforts.

Gucha HIV/AIDs orphanage project (250606/JH/GUC/05)

This is a 'linked' project with Bees Abroad offering a group of Australian 7th Day



Adventists technical and monitoring support for this orphanage project. The orphanage, under the direction of David Asaigo, supports 22 children whose parents had died of HIV/AIDS or those families who could no longer afford to keep their children or those of deceased relatives. The Kisii area, where the orphanage is located is very deprived and densely populated. The people are culturally and linguistically different from their neighbours leading to cultural tension. The orphanage managers were looking at beekeeping to provide income for the project and a training arena to give the children a trade when they grew up.

In 2006 Bees Abroad gave training in beekeeping to the teachers and some of the women received training in health care and cosmetic making. As with the Nessuit project, the planned monitoring visit in 2008 was postponed and only a flying visit could be managed in 2009.

Nonetheless, after coping with setbacks in early 2008 due to the general political unrest the group have made big strides forward. They have been very successful with their beekeeping and now have 20 colonies on 3 sites and have gained local helpers and supporters. The hives are generating both food and income for the children's upkeep.

Miriu School

On their 2009 visit to Gucha, John and Mary Home also visited Miriu and Innis school on a plateau above Sondu Kenya. They are partnered with Wem School in Shropshire who asked Bees Abroad for help as to the suitability of introducing beekeeping as an activity to the schools and the wider community under the direction of the Kajimbo Rescue Group (KRG); a group of respected village elders, teachers and ministers who are trying to move the whole community forward. The main contact was Charles Okuche, a senior teacher at the school. During a brief visit John and



Women in Kisii test hand cream made during a Bees Abroad training workshop

Mary Home met with the members of the KRG group, visited the school and spoke to a class of 147 older children as well as the staff regarding the benefits of beekeeping. Both the schools and the district were very suitable for beekeeping.



Bees Abroad donated two very comprehensive books on beekeeping to the school, The Beginners Guide to Beekeeping in Kenya by Tom Carroll and also a manual by Pam Gregory showing how beekeeping can be achieved by using local resources and minimal input. Charles Okuche travelled with us and benefited from the question and answer bee keeping session arranged for the Gucha orphanage.



SMART (21208/JH/GUC/05)

This project is in its early stages of planning and implementation. It is intended to introduce beekeeping to help to provide additional income for 600 women and young people who are subsistence farmers in the Charingani Hills and is run by Jack Wafula and his three Field Officers who have responsibility for the group members. A 3 day beekeeping training course was undertaken by John Home in Nov 2009 with the help of William Arusfi a young Kenyan Bee Keeping trainer from SITE. Further planning is underway to provide hives for 3 demonstration and training apiaries. Bees Abroad are looking for more funding for this project, the initial phases of which were funded by donations from a UK based queen excluder manufacturer.



Kerio Valley (120810.JH.Kerio Valley.08)

This project is in its early stages of planning and implementation. It is intended to introduce beekeeping to help to provide additional income for 600 women and young people who are subsistence farmers in the Charingani Hills and is run by Jack Wafula and his three Field Officers who have responsibility for the group members. A 3 day beekeeping training course was undertaken by John Home in Nov 2009 with the help of William Arusfi a young Kenyan Bee Keeping trainer from SITE Further planning is underway to provide hives for 3 demonstration and training apiaries. Bees Abroad are looking for more funding for this project, the initial phases of which were funded by donations from a UK based queen excluder manufacturer.

Bees Abroad have provided some smokers protective clothing and training manuals. Support from the headmaster, school governors and the chief of the area and the staff at the Africa Inland Mission. Further plans are in hand to establish a training apiary for each of the groups and Bees Abroad are helping the group to gain further funding for their project.

The Africa Inland Mission facility has a propagation tree nursery and demonstration farm and is keen to have a training apiary on their land.

This project will challenge traditional log hive beekeeping high in the trees which is practised successfully but only by the men, with the crop sold for purpose of making alcoholic brews. The traditional methods used result in poor quality honey and wastage of other hive products bringing little or no benefit to the families from this type of beekeeping

Nigeria

Nigerian Beekeepers Network (NBN)

(The major participating groups in the Nigerian Beekeeping Network (NBN) are: Justice, Peace and Development Commission, Ijebu Ode, Ijebu Ode Bee Friendly Society – Ogun State, Western Nigeria, Beekeeping Extension Society (BES) – Kaduna State, Northern Nigeria, Poverty Alleviation For The Poor Initiative (PAFPI) – Delta State, South Nigeria, Better Honey Producers BHPS - Nsukka, Enugu State, Women for Sustainable Lives Association (NGDO) – Niger Delta, Rivers State, South Nigeria, The Nigerian network groups are: Justice, Development & Peace Commission (JDPC), Ijebu-Ode, PAFPE (Poverty Alleviation for the Poor Initiative), BES (Beekeeping Extension Services).

Brian Durk and Adebisi Adekunle have been working since 2006 to set up a network of beekeeping extension workers in an area where there is no beekeeping training provision but a lot of interest in developing beekeeping as an income generating activity. A network of interested groups and NGOs has been developed throughout most areas of Nigeria, representing around 12,000 potential beneficiaries. The original six groups have started to develop training regimes under the guidance of the two Bees Abroad project managers and trainers.

In Dec 2008 Bees Abroad organised a five-day, full time, 'Train The Trainers' (TTT) programme for 6 trainers in Zaria, Northern Nigeria using funding from the Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation. This training was carried out by Idris Mohammed Barau of Beekeeping Extension Society (BES) and was designed as a result of joint consultation between stakeholders to discuss common issues. The event was very



A women's group prepares to hang a beehive in a tree

successful with participants not only enthusiastic to use the skills learnt to develop beekeeping in their own regions but to ensure that more of these events were held and that they would be rotated around the regions. The participants will now start working as regional trainers and progress assessed at the next visit.

As a result of this training a second training in more advanced techniques was carried out in 2009 at another network location (Ijebu Ode in SW Nigeria). There have been multiple spin offs from forming reliable beekeepers into a larger network. One is that the group leaders have gained prestige and authority and the confidence to initiate actions for their local beekeeping groups.

Two of the groups from the Niger Delta collaborated in designing and running a training course for a group within the Niger Delta. Each trainer is responsible for up to

2000 beekeepers and potential beekeepers in their own area. A systematic programme of training is being planned as the next step for this project in order to spread and advance the skills learned by the trainers at the two training sessions. Two of the groups from the Niger Delta collaborated in designing and running a training course for another group within the Niger Delta. Each trainer is responsible for up to 2000 beekeepers and potential beekeepers in their own area. A systematic programme of training is being planned as the next step for this project in order to spread and advance the skills learned by the trainers at the two training sessions. Due to the escalation of the violence in the Niger Delta, British Government advice is not to enter this area. Consequently current contact is solely by e-mail and it is not possible to gain an independent assessment of progress.

As an adjunct to this project Bees Abroad (BA) arranged for key members of the national trainers group to attend the slow food (Terra Madre) held in April 2009 in Turin, Italy. The purpose of this was to help the participants learn about developing organisational skills & networking capability working with beekeepers and honey importers from developed countries with the intention of understanding and making links with organic, Fair Trade and other high quality and high margin importers to gain access to export opportunities for Nigerian beekeepers.



Investigating beekeeping problems in DR Congo

Democratic Republic of Congo

In Dec 2008 Pam Gregory was invited by Paul Latham, a well known beekeeping botanist and Salvation Army major, to run a course for beekeeping trainers in Kivalu, DR Congo which is about 100 km north of the capital, Kinshasa. The purpose of the course was to give advanced training for key staff and those involved in training beekeepers to identify and help to resolve limiting factors, raise trainers' beekeeping standards and offer advanced training in order to generate new enthusiasm. Paul Latham undertook all of the organisational work of the visit and also raised the funds for running the course - over £1000 – derived from the generosity of the congregation of Dunkeld Cathedral in Scotland who donated the proceeds of their annual harvest appeal. Bees Abroad helped by meeting the not inconsiderable costs of Pam Gregory's flight.

The first week was spent investigating the problems people faced - these being the cost of timber for making hives, invasion by ants and the loss of forest trees on which the bees depend for nectar and pollen. The rich tropical rain forest in this part of DR Congo is catastrophically threatened by deforestation for charcoal making for the 5 million inhabitants of the capital, Kinshasa, who need cooking fuel and only where there was a strong beekeeping association was the forest protected.

Twenty beekeeping trainers attended the formal course. They were shown how to make beehives from local materials - bamboo and raphia palm – and how to divide colonies and make candles and cream from beeswax. Lesson plans for teaching new beekeepers were worked out so a standardised training course could be put in



Discussing problems – training for trainers course in Kivalu

place and the best trees to plant for bees were discussed. We also looked at how policy makers might be approached so that some of the more wanton tree felling might be halted. The number, perceptiveness and complexity of the questions asked, in sessions that ran late into the evening, showed the beekeepers skills in the subject and their thirst for more knowledge that isn't easily available to them in Congo. We were also able to take the first steps in setting up the BBKA African examination scheme to formally assess the trainers' capabilities and show up the areas where training might be improved.

Zimbabwe

The University of Bindura, near Harare in Zimbabwe has requested to have a technical and supportive link to Bees Abroad. This was accepted by the Bees Abroad trustees in 2009 and Pam Gregory accompanied by Roy Dyché will be giving a comprehensive, 5-day beekeeping course to 40 agricultural technicians and advisors in July 2010.

Romania

This is a 'linked' project offering technical support to a church group from Somerset who are improving beekeeping training and a market linkage scheme in the Transylvania region of Romania. Bees Abroad ran a holiday to Romania in 2009 and a visit was made to this project so people can see the difference that beekeeping can make to people's lives.

Nepal

Lamakhet project

This twinned project between Medway BKA in Kent with the New Lamakhet group near Pokhara, Nepal is a resurrection of an earlier Bees Abroad project that had to be discontinued in 2005 because of the Maoist insurgency. Mr Richard Odell reported on the remaining potential of the project. The Association (now named the 'Rhododendron Beekeepers' Association') has been re-established with the purpose of pooling ideas and resources to encourage income generation from a range of natural resources in the area. The apiary technician, Mr Lal Kumar Shrestha, had been out of work since the project ceased and so is pleased that it has restarted.

Assessment Visits

Assessment visits have been approved by the trustees for existing project managers to visit the following projects during 2010 to check if they will be potential for developing them further as Bees Abroad funded projects.

Adrucum Ghana (041004/BD/ADRU/04)

Mr Brian Durk and Ms Doris Fisher visited three beekeeping organisations in Ghana during an assessment visit in Oct / Nov 2008. Of the three organisations, Agents of Development for the Rural Community (Adrucum) was given the first priority, as it was working in the place where there appeared to be the greatest need. It was apparent that there was a real lack of knowledge about the management of African bees and the processing of the hive products. This new project proposes to establish a Beekeeping Training Centre in Northern Ghana, which will focus on training of vulnerable people, both male and female, in beekeeping. Training in sustainable methods of beekeeping will increase the quantities of honey and beeswax available to supply a readily available market thus increasing the incomes of those participating. The centre will be set up in conjunction with an existing community centre at Karimenga, West Mamprusi. The teaching apiary will be in the surrounding area, which has the advantage of an abundance of feral bees. Hives will be built of both wood and other materials to demonstrate to people the many different ways of keeping bees.

Village groups within the Upper East Region and those close to the facility in the Northern Region will be the first to benefit from the courses run from the centre. It is estimated that in that first year 80 households will benefit directly. Later there will be more trained people per year and the facility will be available to other NGO's for the training of their own staff and trainers. Funding is being sought to move this project forward.

The other two organisations visited were Resource Link Foundation in Wenchi, Brong Ahafo and Beekeeping Learning and Honey Marketing Centre in Twifo Praso, Central Region. Both were given some training and a small amount of funding from Bees Abroad to enable them to expand their honey purchasing capability.

Doris Fischler set up a web-based discussion forum with the intention of helping beekeepers and beekeeping trainers in Ghana to share information and experiences. Introductions were also made to other potential participants in other African countries in order that a



Hive inspection

Hives made of different materials



wider beekeeping information-sharing network might grow throughout Africa. This is located at <http://www.africanbees.proboards.com>

Sinyati Kenya (E10/01)

The aim of the project is to improve the economic status of the women through beekeeping. The women want to set up a model apiary and a processing unit and undertake training. This will be an income generation activity, to provide money for the group's other projects like the school while the training will benefit the participating women. The beneficiaries will be the women, their families, and the pupils in the nursery school. The group also hopes to be able to use the skills they will acquire to support other women groups in the Ilchamus community. Bees Abroad have been asked to help the group in training the members in beekeeping, honey processing and packaging, wax candle making and other products processing and some modest financial support for hives and other equipment.

John Home will visit this group on his next trip to make a two or three-day assessment and provide some training in making top-bar hives from local materials

Empowering Women through Beekeeping, Zambia (E10/08)

This proposal from Southern Zambia is to introduce beekeeping to 150 vulnerable women. Since Roy Dyche has already met, and was impressed with this group and will already be in Zambia in July he has agreed to spending two or three days with the proposers to help develop the project to be more realistic and that is more likely to attract funding.

Akwaya project, Cameroon (090406.BD.AKW.03)

The proposed project is located in Akwaya subdivision, part of South West Province, Cameroon and seeks to improve the livelihoods of the local beekeepers, honey hunters and those who would wish to take up beekeeping. This area is largely inaccessible especially in the rainy season. Consequently, honey hunters sell their honey across the border into Nigeria at a depressed price. Local staff will be trained to train and advise local farmers in improved bee farming techniques. FORUDEF will encourage the setting up of a cooperative to process and market the improved honey produced in the area using economies of scale to help overcome transport difficulties.

Lebialem Hunter's Beekeeping Initiative Project, Cameroon (260605/BD/ERUD/04)

This project run by Juliet Wright, an independent conservation worker, supported by B. Durk and Bees for Development, aims to protect the critically endangered Cross River Gorilla and rare lowland birds by conserving endemic forest and protecting the Mamfe basin watersheds which together forms one of the largest intact areas of montane, submontane and lowland forest habitats in Cameroon. The proposal is to train people as beekeeping trainers and then train people in 3 villages (total estimated population 20,000) from around the Bechati-Fossimondi-Besali Forest Site in order to offer beekeeping as an alternative income-generating source. The community is very keen to proceed with the idea if funds can be raised. Bees for Development have supplied beehives for this initiative through their Good Gifts Scheme.

Enquiries

Of the 92 enquiries have been received 19 have been referred to project managers in the area for further investigation with a view to the potential development of future projects – 5 in Cameroon, 2 in Nepal, 2 in Ghana, 3 in Nigeria, 1 in Kenya, 1 in Zambia, 4 in Uganda and 1 in Rwanda. Two new projects in Malawi are interested in making a network link with the SBDARA/NHPC project and will probably go there for training.

Other activities

Bees Abroad volunteers continued to give their time to a range of fundraising and publicity activities including giving talks to a wide range of organisations in the UK and attending beekeeping, gardening and agricultural show events. In June 2008 Bees Abroad held a continuing professional development event for project proposal writing.