

Annual Report for Bees Abroad Kenya 2016

Once again it has been a busy time for Bees Abroad team in Kenya . They had the opportunity in February and November to continue to networking with our contacts there at the National Beekeeping Institute

Our UK DFID (Department for International Development) funded BPED (Bee products Enterprise Development) project was coming to a close and we were seeking further support for a proposal we had submitted the previous November. In February we visited the British High Commission with Mr Robin Mbae Kenya's Deputy Agriculture Minister and David Njuguna who is our Kenyan project leader. This was quite an experience particularly going through security and then spending valuable time with Elizabeth who is responsible for DFID funding coming into Kenya which led later in the visit to a meeting with ACT who have the responsibility of selecting and managing the DFID funded work. They were of the opinion that our previous work was of a high quality and of benefit to the rural farming community in Kenya particularly women. We are now awaiting their decision regarding further support..

BPED Project in Laikipia

The BPED project was a livelihood improvement project implemented in ASAL (Arid and Semi Arid Lands) of Laikipia and parts of lower Samburu counties of Kenya and targeting pastoralists and agro pastoralists.

This 3 year project came to a conclusion in July 2016

The project was based on the climatic changes that resulted in destabilisation of the pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood base. This has increased vulnerability to hunger and household food insecurity among the target community. Coupled with erratic rainfall patterns, poor land use strategies, high incidences of household poverty and increased household demands, the targeted communities were observed to have lost their resilience to resist external shock aggravating the situation. By promoting beekeeping as an alternative livelihood, the project aimed at helping the target household increase their food security and incomes while at the same time promoting sustainable natural resources management. This was done through training and technology transfer as well as market linkage for hive products produced....

.During the time of the project emphasis has been made on the planting of trees and shrubs that are drought resistant such as Croton, an indigenous tree, drought-resistant and grows in semi-arid areas which also produces nectar and pollen for the bees, is a soil stabiliser and the crop has many potential benefits for the farmers. Some areas in Kenya are less affected by drought and beeswax can be purchased so the bee keepers can continue to with making value addition products such as body creams ,soaps and candles.

1067 households were increasing their incomes through sale of beehive products. 807 of these households were doing this at the production and value addition levels while the rest 260 households were doing so at exclusive value addition and marketing level.

Women constituted 50.23% of all the project beneficiaries. 27.3% of groups were women only The most vulnerable households constituted 28.12% of all the project beneficiaries. All of them reported increased household incomes of at least 25%

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

The external evaluation team noted :

BPED has demonstrated that bee-based enterprises are viable and acceptable. There was considerable stakeholder interest in the sector; beekeeping has a relatively low investment cost; and beekeepers need limited resources (like land). The project has shown that value addition (by simple processing methods) has considerable potential, and technology transfer is relatively straightforward.

BPED's implementation approach provides a good model – using staff with technical competence in the sector, training communities in their own language, using technologies that are easily understood by members and having access to a choice of technologies and products.

We acknowledge the success of the BPED project to the entire team in both the office and field staff who delivered all the training and they were led by the Executive project Manager David Njuguna

However it is admirable that although the BPED staff are no longer employed they are continuing to support the beekeeping in their communities.

African Inland Mission Cheptebo Rural Development Centre (CRDC) **Kerio Valley in central Kenya**

CRDC (<http://www.cheptebo.org>) has grown from small beginnings over the past 28 years providing much needed employment with conference facilities used by a wide range of organisations undertaking training.

The Centre's aim in recent times has been to become an Agricultural Training Centre.(CATIC) farming Gods Way. In July 2016 it was formally opened with places for 50 students planning to undertake a general one year agricultural course once accreditation has been formally approved. The centre will specialise in agricultural production particularly relevant to semi-arid areas. Training includes classroom instruction but course participants will spend most time on practical learning within the project farm including beekeeping.

Currently the centre is providing training based on 5 day residential modules. These are suitable for Kenya's small scale farmers. Beekeeping is one subject covered only by a short power point presentation.

Bees Abroad project leaders John and Mary Home have been involved with beekeeping development in Kerio Valley using the facilities for training and observing with interest the development of the farm providing food for the conference centre. The staff planted vegetables and introduced fruits such as mangoes, paw-paws, bananas and avocados. Subsequently, they added a tree nursery for various fruit varieties; this proved to be a profitable venture.

Some five years ago, Bees Abroad established a four-hive demonstration apiary at the centre, which was well-fenced with wire and a hedge. The honeybees aid the pollination of the fruit trees, and provide a visual demonstration to visitors of their importance in food production.

The next step is that the students in full time training who opt for the livestock production modules will have beekeeping included in their curriculum which Bees Abroad have been invited to undertake. This training will thus reach many subsistence farmers and focus them on the value of beekeeping as an additional source of income.

Currently Bees Abroad have plans to expand the beekeeping on the farm with the help and support of the enthusiastic farm manager and are seeking funds in the UK

Kirigani Community Development Network

This project was selected from many requests received from Kenya and an assessment visit was made in July 2014, A small start was then made by staff from the BPED project but it was in 2015 but the main project and training was undertaken during February 2016 visit found an enthusiasm within the group of some 50 members one of whom was a carpenter able to make hives When they meet all members contribute a small amount (table banking) the total sufficient to buy a hive which in turn is provided to one of their members. There is also a member who is a tailor with skills to make protective clothing from different materials giving the members the opportunity to purchase at a very affordable price. Under Edith the chair lady's leadership and her committee they have interacted with the members of the BPED team so are now making and selling value addition hive products.

The members have built a relationship with a local school Kiandangae Secondary School and have given of their transport and times to fence an apiary in the school grounds for the hives members of the Young Farmers Club. We visited the school in November and were impressed by the support given by the headmaster and the enthusiasm of Ms Lillian Owmangale who is responsible for rural training at the school. The future plans are for David Njuguna to attend and train the 40 club members in basic b/k skills and help install the hives.

PALMY

In February an assessment visit was made to this group located about 80kms North East of Nairobi. Members are young people one of whom sold a cow to pay for a 6 month course in Bee Keeping and Hives Making. and now needs mentoring to apply the knowledge and become a lead person in supporting the current leaders of the group

The area has great potential for bee keeping and there is good will from the county Government of Muranga to support registered youth and women groups to start any viable farming enterprise that does not have a negative impact on the environment such as bee keeping. Honey is in great demand since there are not many people who keep bees in the area. There is market potential in the nearby towns for honey and added value products. Currently the main cash crops include tea and coffee farming and milk production.

Members identified areas they needed specific training and support to enable them to take up bee keeping as a viable commercial enterprise. They requested help from Bees Abroad and approval was given to become a 3 year BA funded project.

Year 1

26 people attended the Basic training in bee keeping skills which included:

- Why do we keep bees.
- Bee keeping equipment and maintenance.
- Apiary location and management.
- The bee colony and management.
- Bee pests and control.
- Honey harvesting and simple processing at home.
- Proper approach to hive dressing and smoking bees.
- Hive baiting to attract new swarms in an empty hive.

Top bars for at least 30 hives have been purchased and now awaiting distribution to only those members who have made KTB box hives

The group has a few challenges Many of the members attend schools and colleges so training needs to fit in the weekend. Also as with many area in Kenya drought is a problem