

Newsletter no.01/2009

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Working together, raising the standards

One of the valid criticisms levelled against non-governmental organisations working in overseas development is the apparent duplication of initiatives. 'Poverty alleviation' and 'income generation' cover a myriad of approaches which often overlap, particularly in the agricultural sector. Whilst different approaches and techniques can generate diversity and lateral thinking, they can also involve duplication of expenditure in terms of financial and human resources.

Since inception, HSLA has focused on one area of operation, Uganda, with the goal of building the capacity of beekeepers and maximising the commercial potential of beekeeping to create a strong and viable honey industry.

HSLA was therefore delighted to be invited to partner with the Netherlands Development Organisation, SNV, to stage the first beekeeping competition to be held in Uganda, for beekeepers in the Rwenzori region. SNV also takes the approach of building the capacity of local organisations to enable them to take control of their own economic and social development. In Rwenzori, SNV has focused the development of three product value chains to achieve this: honey, oil seed (sunflower) and horticulture (pineapple).

The competition concept was seen as one step towards the goal of increasing honey production in the region from the current estimated level of 200 tonnes to 1000 tonnes in 5 years. This will only be achieved by addressing challenges posed by minimal access to modern technologies, lack of effective extension services, poor hive and apiary management, and poor organisational capacity.

The objectives of the competition were to:



Foothills of the Rwenzori Mountains

1. Stimulate adoption of best honey production practices and motivate the best performers
2. Create a competitive environment within the honey value chain
3. Promote better understanding of the honey value chain among producers and develop performance benchmarks
4. Promote hygiene and sanitation at the household level to enhance healthy living
5. Promote a spirit of entrepreneurship among beekeepers to enhance farm-based enterprise, integration and diversification.

With categories for individuals, groups and associations, entrants were judged on production (according to hive type), apiary management, record keeping and hygiene. There were over 220 entries, and an independent team of 5 judges undertook the evaluation process over a two-week period, short-listing the applicants and carrying out field visits to the finalists.

The competition received national media coverage, with sponsorship and participation from Centenary Bank, the National Agricultural Advisory Development Services, and the Ugandan National Apiculture Development Organisation. We look forward to building on this as the first of many such initiatives and increased collaborative working with both local and international agencies.



*Minister of State for Animal Industry,
Hon. Bright Rwamirama, at the
launch of the competition*

THANK YOU! To all those who continue to support us and make our work possible

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A call for your mobile phone....

We are looking for basic model mobile phones to help with our monitoring and evaluation of projects. Network coverage in Uganda is very good, and as most of our projects have no access to the internet and limited literacy skills, we are aiming to provide them with a basic mobile phone to improve delivery of monthly progress reports. These reports in turn are helping us to collect data on production levels and changes in harvesting seasons. If you have an unused (and unlocked) mobile, please send it to the above address and we will give it a new purpose in life!

Fundraising

This newsletter is distributed to keep our supporters up to date with developments and to show how their money is being spent, rather than to continually ask for further funds. In the current economic climate, fundraising is however becoming an even bigger challenge. Many of you continue to support us in various ways, from selling items on eBay, to buying online at www.buy.at/hivessavelives. The following are upcoming events which we hope will offer entertainment whilst generating funds!

1. The Spring Convention, Stoneleigh April

HSLA will be exhibiting in the Conservation Hall on Saturday, April 18th. Please come and visit – **and collect a free fridge magnet if you donate your old mobile phone!**

2. Snail Racing: Friday, May 8th, the Master Mariner, Brighton Marina

Join us for dinner and an evening of non-stop entertainment – the mollusc equivalent of Royal Ascot! Tickets a snip at £22.00. Call us to book (01273 736345) or email whitby@hivessavelives.com



3. Just Walk: Saturday May 9th, Goodwood Racecourse



If the prospect of snail racing is a little too exciting, why not take on the challenge of a 10, 20, 40 or 60 km walk across the spectacular South Downs, and raise funds for HSLA at the same time! Phone us or log on to www.just-walk.co.uk for more details.

4. THE EURO CITIES bike ride: 18-22 June 2009 London - Amsterdam – Brussels

One of our intrepid founders, Nancy Bikson, is raising funds for us by undertaking this 300 mile, 4-day ride from London, through the heart of Amsterdam and on to Brussels in June. If you would like to join her, log on to www.acrossthedivide.com/openevents or call us for more details. **For the armchair supporters, please give Nancy a boost by sponsoring her at www.justiving.com/nancybikson**



Project Update



One of HSLA's earliest projects was the **Uganda Gospel Rehabilitation Centre (UGRC)**, a primary school with an enrolment of over 300 children led by Pastor David Sseruwagi. The project was not restricted to the school alone, but designed to integrate and benefit the local farmers, who also received hives (KTB and Langstroth), training and protective clothing. These farmers have now joined forces to form the Mifunya Co-operative, with beekeeping an integral part of the activities. Just recently, we were delighted to learn that Mifunya was featured in the film shown by The Co-operative, one of the original project donors, at a series of members' meetings that were a part of the launch of their Plan Bee initiative.

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