

# FOUNDATIONS BUILT ON HONEY

MICHAEL AND RICHARD'S VISIT TO UGANDA - 13th to 22nd NOVEMBER 2009



*Richard, Ambrose, Patrick and Daudi with beneficiaries*

Returning from my second visit to Uganda all question marks and doubts which I had following my initial positive trip in June were entirely dispelled. I had the marvellous opportunity of visiting projects and introducing the staff to Richard who joined me for a few days at the start of my trip. Richard had an opportunity to see how far his vision has developed and the real value which beekeeping is adding to the lives and incomes of Uganda's subsistence farmers.

During the hive presentation ceremony a guest speaker from SNV, a Dutch aid agency, confidentially reported that there were 60,000 hives in the Rwenzori district and that no more than 200 metric tonnes of honey were produced last year. Last year HSLA had fewer than 1400 hives in the Rwenzori district and we know that our beekeepers produced at least 20 tonnes which gives the stunning statistic that HSLA beekeepers produced 10% of the region's honey from only 2.3% of the hives. We are streets ahead in the production of honey and positioned to take an unassailable lead.

A major reason for my visit was to show Marie-Gabrielle Cajoly, Executive Director with Addax Petroleum Foundation, our most recent partner, the inception of projects sponsored by their charitable foundation. During her visit 200 hives were distributed to new beekeepers from existing successful beekeeping communities and she was also present at the interviews for the Extension Officer which Addax are funding.



*Marie-Gabrielle at Kyempara*



*Ambrose*

The appointment of Ambrose Bugaari as Country Manager has proved a tremendous success. He has very swiftly acquired the necessary knowledge and background to fulfill our vision for HSLA in Uganda. The potentially difficult task of integrating him with an established team of staff has been problem free. He has a clear understanding of our objectives and has implemented more rigorous procedures which has enabled everybody to have a better understanding of the direction and requirements of the organisation. His willingness to roll up his sleeves in the field delivering hives and reviewing projects has earned him respect.



*Patrick*

Patrick Ayebezibwe, our Training Officer, has been a revelation. His skills in the field and with beekeeping had already been well demonstrated, but with Ambrose at the helm he appears to have been transformed into a skillful manager and public speaker.

We were delighted to be able to appoint a woman to the new Extension Officer role sponsored by Addax Petroleum, an extremely competent beekeeper called Rossettie, who impressed all of us with her authority and passion for beekeeping. She will work under Patrick's wing whilst getting to grips with her role.



*Marie-Gabrielle and Rossettie*

The visit to the Kyempara project which Marie-Gabrielle and I made was a moving occasion. Fifty or more children met our vehicle when we arrived waving garlands and singing a song written specially for the occasion. This project continues to go from strength to strength and is at the moment trying to raise the funds to purchase land on which to build a permanent school. They currently educate fifty children of beekeepers in small shacks with poor resources and teaching facilities.

Richard and I had an excellent trip and have returned to the UK filled with positivity and substantial plans for HSLA in Uganda, which will form a perfect springboard from which to launch our organisation into other African nations who are keen for our involvement.



*Michael distributing hives to a former civil servant turned beekeeper*



*Richard, Daudi and Patrick*