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Reigate Beekeepers have been generous supporters of Hives Save Lives and I think it is time to let you know where your money has been invested! Fortunately, it was sent directly to Uganda, not via Iceland, and was used to purchase hives, clothing and training for beekeepers in Mubende District, central Uganda.



Most of the population in this area depend on subsistence farming for survival, with an average annual income of just \$324.00. There are many traditional beekeepers in the district, but the general practice is 'honey-hunting' rather than beekeeping. The photograph shows a traditional hive being heavily smoked for harvesting, which impregnates the honey and often destroys the hive, or at best causes the bees to abscond.

By supporting the beekeepers with modern frame hives and training, production can be improved from around 8 kg (traditional hives) to over 45 kg a year, providing a viable and sustainable income for the farmers, local employment, improved health and nutrition, and insurance against crop failure.

Working with the local government district administration, we identified 25 beekeepers who were keen to make the transition to modern beekeeping, and delivered a 5-day basic beekeeping course within the community. The training was very much a two-way learning experience, as the farmers had a wealth of knowledge regarding swarming patterns and the foraging preferences of the bees in their district.



Following the training, we provided 120 hives to the farmers who agreed to form a co-operative (the Bageeza County Beekeepers Association). As a co-operative, they were able to negotiate with another NGO (non-governmental organisation) providing agricultural support services, and our beekeepers now have access to a local collection centre with an extractor to support their hives. As a group, they are

able to combine resources and obtain better prices for their honey, and provide practical assistance to other beekeepers in the district.

Each hive costs approximately £30.00 to manufacture (complete with strip foundation) and a beesuit £15.00, all made in Uganda and providing more local employment. Effectively, a very large part of this project was funded by Reigate Beekeepers, and we are extremely grateful to all the members who have made this project a reality.