

WOMEN AND YOUTH REAP BIG FROM HONEY

When they began their beekeeping enterprise two years ago, they had no idea that the business would turn their lives around. The 27 bee farmers from Mogotio are part of the over 1400 bee farmers who have been mobilized and trained on modern beekeeping techniques by Hand in Hand Eastern Africa and Africa Beekeeping Limited (ABL). The project is funded by Radiojalpen, the Swedish Broadcasting Cooperation towards sustainable smart Communities through creating green enterprises and climate resilience in Baringo County.

This project is solving the problem of women's and youth's poverty and disempowerment by encouraging them to start beekeeping for commercial purposes as well as for environmental protection and conservation. Mogotio is classified as one of the arid and semi-arid areas causing the communities there to cut trees for charcoal business. The project seeks to restore the forest cover by encouraging bee farmers to plant trees and flowers for pollination.

Being the fourth harvest season, over 40 beehives were harvested, the biggest number ever since inception. This activity took 3 days. The harvesting and extraction was done by the women with the help of experts from ABL and Hand in Hand. The harvesting was done at evening when the bees are less aggressive.



A bee farmer shows the fully capped frames ready for harvesting



Bees swarm as the harvesting goes on

After harvesting, the supers were transported to the extraction center by the youth using motorcycles. Another business opportunity for the youth! The extraction center is set up and owned by one of the women groups.



Youth who are motorcycle owners ready to transport the super boxes to the extraction center

Here was a business opportunity for the group to earn an income from charging other bee farmers who wanted their honey extracted. The group is the only one in the locality that has the extraction machines, which they bought after the sale of honey in the second harvest season. No mean achievement for these rural women.



Bee farmers uncapping the honey frames

Market for honey

230 kilograms of honey were realized from the activity and the bee farmers sold all of it to ABL at KES 400 per kilo. What this means is that the bee farmers will increase their household income and nutrition. They will be able to take their children to school, purchase an asset and provide healthy meals for their families.

Pascalina, one of the bee farmers says **"Beekeeping has changed our lives in a way we never thought of. We are now able to pay for our children schooling which can at times be unaffordable. I encourage other women to take up this enterprise to come out of poverty"**

To these women, beekeeping is not just any farming project but a business venture that provides livelihood for their families.

Importance of the honey cooperative

Through the Baringo Honey Value Chain marketing cooperative, thousands of such women have been able to change their lives - they have found through the cooperative enterprise a route towards self-empowerment and development that works for them.

The cooperative has contributed to improved livelihoods for women and have served as an avenue in which these rural women have exercised their right to participation as well as equal

opportunities to participate in decision making at all levels, and equal access to and control of the benefits of development.