

HIGH FIVE CLUB

CHANGING LIVES, £5 AT A TIME

Our second project of 2009 is in **The Gambia**, West Africa and is in partnership with PING (People in need Gambia) a registered charity set up three years ago. The country is very poor and there is a high infant mortality rate (17%)



When Fen and her family visited the Gambia shortly before Christmas, PING put them in touch with Momadou Joof, a retired Gambian headmaster. Momadou has taught in 7 different schools all over the Gambia and on retirement wanted to work in rural development helping the people in his village and elsewhere. He set up his own organisation (Future Farmers of the Gambia).

Fen and her family, accompanied by Momadou, visited a water project and market gardens in Bufaluto (a village of 650 people) where they saw at first hand the enormous benefits that clean drinking water and working vegetable plots have made to members of the community there. The tourist industry, which has grown considerably in the Gambia in recent years, had passed these people by. Before the support of PING, the villagers worked the fields around the river in the wet season and grew some vegetables but for most of the year nothing grows in the dry season due to lack of irrigation. The village chiefs in Bufaluto conducted a “swot analysis” and several members of the village voiced their opinions.

It was clear that clean drinking water was the first priority and then a market garden to provide a sustainable economic activity. Three years on, another sustainable economic activity has been chosen by the community - bee keeping.



This is where High Five come in. Beekeeping is very suitable as some of the villagers in Bufaluto and in Momodou's home village, Njogon, already have prior knowledge of beekeeping. Momodou will personally oversee this first bee-keeping project. **The High five Club are contributing £350 to purchase 7 hives, a smoke gown, hat and gloves.** Beekeeping is practiced all over the rural areas and is an important industry that can be used in developing countries as it provides a sustainable income in rural areas. The project will train youths in bee keeping and will create employment opportunities for those involved in the processing and production. The wax from the honey can be made into candles, body lotion, soap and furniture polish. Bees can provide a vital food supplement, medicine and source of income to many impoverished families.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- 1) To reduce poverty by generating sustainable, reliable income from the production of honey and wax
- 2) To Increase the nutritional status of the project beneficiaries
- 3) To protect the natural environment through retention and regeneration of the forest
- 4) To reduce the rural 'urban drift' of young people by teaching them new skills.



How it works

The National Beekeeping Association in The Gambia (NBAG) has the expertise to set up the hives and provide the necessary equipment to the villagers; this includes obtaining the bees and a queen bee for each hive from the surrounding jungle. The first stage is to get the beehives in place and to introduce the new bees. The second is to maintain the hive and the third stage is to collect the honey. The village community will sell it through the beekeepers institute and the money will then be reinvested into the community. An initial training course and follow up support has been organised by PING, which will be provided by (NBAG) in all aspects of looking after the bees, extracting the honey and maintaining the hives. **The honey when collected will be taken to the Beekeepers Association who buy it and sell it to the tourist hotels around the country as well as in local markets. Some of this money will be pooled into the village co-operative and will pay for the maintenance of the hives and also contribute to other village projects. The remainder will be paid to the villagers who actually work with the bees, to encourage responsibility for the hives and provide a source of living.** This will also ensure the maintenance of the clean water installation, the market garden fencing and irrigation wells. They hope to have 3 “harvests” a year, which will give a good return on the original investment. In the near future, we hope to be able to report on the individuals who are looking after the seven hives and give members an update upon how they are developing.

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