



# Sustainable Livelihoods Newsletter

Empowering people to secure sustainable incomes, food security and improved quality of life in harmony with nature

A Quarterly Newsletter produced by SLINT-Uganda

July- September 2009

## EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the July-September 2009 issue of the Sustainable Livelihoods Newsletter. I would like to extend our gratitude to those who have continued to contribute, in one or the other, to the noble mission of promoting sustainable livelihoods and conserving the environment. I also thank those who have shared with us their valuable experience.

In the last three months, Sustainable Livelihoods International- Uganda (SLINT-Uganda) has undertaken a number of initiatives in pursuit of the above mission. These include: the distribution of more fruit and vegetable seeds to farmers under the Kiyuni Fruit and Vegetable Growing for Sustainable Livelihoods project and the launching of the Fruit Tree Growing and Community Forestry project in Butikiro, Kiboga district. We also continued to provide technical support and to monitor the progress of the beekeeping project in Kiyuni parish. During this quarter, SLINT-Uganda also purchased a community truck for farmers in Butikiro and opened a field office in Kiboga town.

These important achievements have been realised under very challenging circumstances occasioned by the effects of the global financial, food and climate change crises. These challenges have made it difficult for poor households to sustain themselves and for young organisations like SLINT-Uganda to mobilise the necessary resources to carry out their mandate.

SLINT-Uganda will continue to explore all options for mobilizing resources to advance the cause of empowering people to secure sustainable incomes, food security and improved quality of life in harmony with nature.

Denis Marsha Kabuuka  
Executive Director

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**Sustainable Livelihoods International Uganda**

**P.O. Box 8264, Kampala, Uganda,**

**Tel: + 256-78-217-0414**

**Email: [slint-uganda@slint.org](mailto:slint-uganda@slint.org)**

**Website: [www.slint.org](http://www.slint.org)**

## Beekeeping: A Potential Strategy for Sustainable Development in Kiboga District

In the context of Uganda's agriculture-based economy, beekeeping is an important income generating activity. It is a relatively easy, socially-acceptable, and less capital-intensive activity compared to other income-generating activities. It does not require much land and there is a limited need for raw materials as honey bees collect nectar and pollen from nature. There is a good climate, multi-seasonal plants, a ready local market and a large labour pool. All these advantages provide a unique opportunity for rural development through the promotion and extension of beekeeping.

Beekeeping as an activity fits well with the sustainable livelihoods approach. It helps people to strengthen their livelihoods and at the same time ensure biodiversity conservation by maintaining the natural interdependence between bees and plants through pollination and production of seed. Beekeeping relies on natural resource assets – bees, flowering plants and water – and does not compete with other livelihood activities for those resources. It is a perfect example of a sustainable livelihood activity. Beekeeping also has a vital role to play in fostering people's livelihoods in the face of changing climatic conditions. It is possible in dry areas where crops or agricultural activities have failed but nectar-bearing trees are surviving.

Of recent, a number of organizations in Uganda, including Sustainable Livelihoods International Uganda (SLINT-Uganda), Action Africa Hilfe (AAH) and Uganda Beekeepers Equipment Limited have championed beekeeping enterprises to generate income and create employment for rural people. It is unbelievable but true that management of five bee colonies requires only thirty five minutes per-day on average and that a beekeeper with five colonies could earn about UGX 40,000 (US\$ 17) per month on average.

SLINT-Uganda is supporting farmers in Kiyuni parish, Kiboga district to engage in beekeeping as a key rural economic activity. In June 2009, the organisation in partnership with on line volunteers on the Global Neighbour Network:

<http://www.nabuur.com/en/village/butikiro>

provided more than 30 langstroth beehives, one bee suit and a smoker pump to farmers. At least 18 out of the 30 beehives have already been colonised and placed in the two community apiaries set up in Butikiro and Kiyuni villages. Furthermore, one training workshop on beekeeping was carried out for 50 farmers with technical support from the Uganda Beekeepers Equipment Limited. The initial support provided has generated a lot of enthusiasm among farmers to engage in modern beekeeping. There is overwhelming demand for the project to expand and cover more households.



Beneficiaries pose at one of the apiaries in Butikiro village

In order to expand the project, SLINT-Uganda prepared and registered a project proposal on an online fundraising network known as Give Meaning (<http://www.givemeaning.com/proposal/slint>) in September 2009. The proposed project seeks to assist 50 farmers to acquire a total of 100 langstroth beehives and to procure honey harvesting equipment including 2 bee suits, 2 smokers and 1 honey



Some of the colonized beehives in the apiary

extractor by the end of 2010. It also aims to support 2 workshops for farmers in apiary management, honey harvesting and post-harvest handling skills. The proposal received votes from 109 persons who expressed support for it as a worthwhile project. Having secured the minimum number of votes (100), the project became eligible for activation to start receiving online donations. However for this to happen, SLINT-Uganda needs to find a partner Canadian charity through which the funding donated online would be channelled. Readers who are aware of Canadian charities that might be interested in partnering with SLINT-Uganda are invited to send us an e-mail at: [slint-uganda@slint.org](mailto:slint-uganda@slint.org) or [denimasha@yahoo.com](mailto:denimasha@yahoo.com).

It is important to note that beekeeping provides an opportunity for local people to harness nature in order to generate wealth, employment, alleviate poverty and promote sustainable livelihoods without harming the environment. It is a simple activity and requires relatively low capital input (land, labour, capital and knowledge in its simplest form). It is therefore an ideal activity for small scale, resource poor farmers and thus should be promoted and supported as a key strategic sustainable economic development activity in Uganda.

## **SLINT-Uganda Launches the Fruit Tree Growing and Community Forestry Project in Kiboga District**

**Sustainable Livelihoods International Uganda (SLINT-Uganda) has launched a "Fruit Tree Growing and Community Forestry Project" with the establishment of a community tree nursery at Butikiro village, Gayaza sub-county, Kiboga District.**

The objective of the project is to improve the livelihoods of local people and contribute to conservation of the environment by promoting fruit tree growing and community forestry. The mission is: "planting trees for healthier populations and a better environment". The project will encourage and assist local people to plant different types of fruit trees, including avocado, mango and guava as well as other tree species for forest products (firewood, timber, fodder and non-timber products) and services in the area. The primary target of

the project is to establish at least two community tree nurseries to raise and plant over 12,000 tree seedlings per year for two years.

The project will: (i) assist farmers to access improved tree seeds and other inputs, (ii) support training activities in nursery establishment and tree management, (iii) produce and disseminate awareness materials and (iv) provide technical advice and extension services to farmers.



Forest and tree cutting to give way to subsistence farming

The project responds to the national government policy goal to promote tree-growing on farms in order to increase farm incomes, improve food security, boost land productivity and alleviate pressures on natural forests.

Trees and forests are disappearing at unprecedented rates in many rural areas in Uganda resulting in shortage of tree products (e.g. firewood) and adverse environmental effects including, soil erosion, land degradation, disruption of water supplies, climate change and loss of biodiversity. Fruit-tree growing and community forestry are relatively low-cost and convenient activities that allow farmers to contribute to addressing these challenges.

The project is also being supported by the on-line volunteers on the Global Neighbour Network (Nabuur.com): <http://www.nabuur.com/en/village/butikiro> through:

- Sharing ideas, lessons and experiences gained in implementing similar projects;
- Offering advice on technical aspects of project, e.g. tree nursery management techniques; and
- Assisting with mobilization of resources (funds, information and expertise) to support the project.

The project is expected to boost and support the beekeeping project and fruit and vegetable growing for sustainable livelihoods project being implement in Butikiro and Kiyuni villages.

## SLINT-Uganda Opens field offices in Kiboga

Sustainable Livelihoods International Uganda (SLINT-Uganda) has opened a Field Office for Kiboga district, as part of its strategy to strengthen coordination of its field activities in the district and to enhance cooperation with the district authorities and other partners.



The Field Office is located at the Butikiro Investments House on Kirulumba Road in Kiboga town, opposite the district headquarters.

The office will further coordinate and promote the marketing of farmers' products to the urban markets.

## Butikiro Village Receives a Community Pickup Truck

SLINT-Uganda purchased a pickup truck for farmers in Butikiro and the surrounding villages. The purchase was made possible through the generous financial contribution by Mr. Rick Ellis, a volunteer on the Global Neighbour Network (nabuur.com) and members of the SLINT-Uganda Board of Directors.

The truck will be used primarily to transport



the farmers' agricultural products including water melon, cabbage, green pepper and other crops produced under the Fruit and Vegetable Growing for Sustainable Livelihoods project to the urban markets. It will also be used to fetch water for irrigating the farmers' crops, using methods such as "bucket-drip irrigation", during the dry season.

A lack of reliable and efficient means of transportation for agricultural produce to urban markets has been one of the major problems facing farmers in the area, especially during the rainy season when the potholed roads are very slippery and not

used by the commercial trucks. This has sometimes caused significant post-harvest losses, especially for the perishable products since there are no refrigerated storage facilities or agro processing plants in the area.

SLINT-Uganda would like to thank all volunteers and supporters, especially Rick Ellis, for their continued assistance to farmers in Butikiro. With your support, we believe the dream of securing sustainable livelihoods for people in Butikiro will be realised in the near future.



Denis Marsha poses besides the truck

## “SLINT-Uganda Distributes More Improved Seeds to Farmers in Butikiro”

In August 2009, SLINT-Uganda donated more improved seeds of water melon, cabbage and green pepper to 50 farmers in Butikiro and Kiyuni villages for the current planting season, under the Kiyuni Fruit and Vegetable Growing for Sustainable Livelihoods project.

During the last planting season, farmers participating in the project mainly grew and marketed watermelon. In the course of the project, the farmers identified the need to diversify their crop production in view of the climate change impacts and the need to

expand the marketing opportunities for their produce. This season the farmers are growing cabbage, water melon and green pepper.

The project aims at enabling the participating farmers to secure sustainable incomes, food security, improved nutrition and employment opportunities.

It is being implemented with kind financial support from SLINT-Uganda Board members and Mr. Rick Ellis, an on-line volunteer on the Nabuur network, and with technical support from experts at Makerere University and the local Agricultural Officer and other technical staff from Kiboga district.



Beneficiaries struggle to look at the seeds to be distributed to them