

Project Update: January 2009

1. Aim of the project:

The aim of this project is to promote community participation in the sustainable conservation of Palabek-Kal forest reserve and to evaluate the economic and environmental prospects for the forest reserve.

2. Activities undertaken:

Sept – Oct 2008: Community forest conservation education for people living in and around Palabek Kal forest reserve.

As part of the project, some education activities were carried out in the focal area:

- ❖ A workshop on Joint Forest Management involving all village leaders to create awareness amongst these leaders on environmental conservation and issues pertaining to the new vision for forest management contained in the Uganda Government forest policy. It is viewed that these village leaders shall venture into the villages and pass on this knowledge to other village members.
- ❖ Exchange visits for the village leaders in Palabek -Kal to other parts of Kitgum where there are working examples of these management systems.
- ❖ Training project committee on the use of aerial photographs and field surveys to enable the forest cover to be mapped in the project area to identify the remaining forest.

During the first training, the community also came out with Forest Management Rules which states the following:

- ❖ Selling of timber to outside merchants is prohibited. Sales of NTFPs, however, are permitted.
- ❖ Felling of trees for subsistence use, including house repairs, is allowed upon getting permission from the village committee.
- ❖ Poachers are not allowed in village forests.

The main challenge noted in this education programme was the positive attitude of some local people who would like to have forest areas under their own management, to better protect the forests and especially their water supplies. However, there are also power struggles within each village between elements of village government who would like to allocate forest land for farming, and the newly created forest committees who would like to establish management systems for those forests.

During this education programs, a local drama group (*Kuc Ber* dramatist) was contracted to help in dissemination of information as well as creating awareness about the significance of environment/nature, e.g. forests.

Nov-Dec 2008: Training in best beekeeping practices

In Aug 2008, I together with other project team members and including local leaders of Ayuu, Palabek, Kapeta and Ibworo villages did project site survey. The aim of the survey was to assess beekeeping activities in the forest and its impact in sustainable conservation of Palabek – kal forest. The outcome

was that less beekeeping activities were being carried out compared to charcoal production. Hence, promoting beekeeping is the best method to save the forest. People living within this forest land were therefore urged to embark on apiary.

The local beekeepers and interested individuals (75) were trained in apiculture with the aim of improving their apiculture production techniques, such as the testing of alternative hive designs, in conjunction with the exploration of indigenous knowledge and local innovations for forest conservation. For this matter, Weekly villages training activities (12) were conducted at each of the above villages.

	Education and Training:	Freq
1	<p>An introduction to establishing a beekeeping enterprise (By James Owiny and Dr Loki)</p> <p>The training was aimed at beginners and already those with experience in beekeeping. The training covered an introduction to bee biology and behaviour (African bees – <i>Apis mellifera scutellata</i>); beekeeping equipment; apiary establishment; bee and hive management; harvesting, handling and marketing of honey.</p>	3
2	<p>Processing of bee products (By James Owiny and Dr Obony)</p> <p>This training covered in detail bee products (harvest methodology, applications and quality control) and how to process and add value to bee products including honey, beeswax, propolis, bee brood and pollen. Local and international markets/marketing for these bee products was also covered. Much time was spent in practical lessons making a variety of value-added recipes which can then be marketed and sold in locally in Uganda and overseas. Recipes include a variety of candles and creams, polishes and medicinal/nutritional products from the beehive.</p>	3
3	<p>Bee breeding and multiplication (By Dr Loki and James Owiny)</p> <p>The training was designed to assist beekeepers how to occupy the many empty beehives in their areas. The training also covered details of Simple methods of bee multiplication like swarm attractants, making divisions and how to rear queens.</p>	3



Dec 2008: Established local and modern beehives for beekeepers in a selected site in Palabek-Kal forest reserve

After gaining knowledge in apiary and skills in the testing of alternative hive designs and exploration of indigenous knowledge and local innovations for forest and biodiversity conservation, Local beekeepers (75) were each given 50 local and modern beehives. Money from the sale of honey will be used to start a revolving fund, from which individual members borrow a loan to start their own business, send their children to school and so on. As an alternative socioeconomic activity, this will stop cutting of trees for charcoal production.