

## **Women's Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Initiative**



**2017 Final Report**

**Submitted to Dining for Women**



**Submitted by:**

**Laly L. Lichtenfeld, Ph.D.**

**Chief Executive Officer**

**African People & Wildlife**

**P.O. Box 624, Bernardsville, NJ 07924 USA**

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#### **Program Overview**

The Women's Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Initiative assists Maasai women in Tanzania to protect their natural resources for themselves and for future generations through entrepreneurship and environmentally friendly small business development. With this program, we expect women to derive income from the environmentally friendly activity of bee keeping, and in return, to improve the protection of their local environments. In July 2016, African People & Wildlife received a generous grant of \$47,500 from Dining for Women in support of this important project, pioneering a real connection between economic development and environmental protection in Tanzania.

#### **Intended Program Outcomes**

Our initiative intends to improve the Maasai women's access to income, their environmental knowledge, and their engagement in local environmental protection. Over time, we expect each women's group participating in the program to earn a minimum of TSH 450,000 per year from their bee-keeping project. With direct benefits in hand, we expect the women to advocate for stronger environmental protection standards that support the growth of their businesses which are heavily reliant on healthy pastures where wild bees have ample access to flowering plants. We also expect them to conduct local conservation projects in repayment of their micro-grants.

#### **Programmatic Support**

We have been fortunate to secure funding for this program as outlined in the original proposal. Significantly, in addition to Dining for Women and National Geographic's support, we have also received funding from USAID for this project as part of a five-year sub-award under the Endangered Ecosystems of Northern Tanzania project (subject to annual review and pending any institutional changes). This will extend the life and breadth of the project well beyond the original two years stated in our proposal. Additionally, a recent pledge of support from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) means we will soon expand this program to new districts of Tanzania (currently finalizing grant details).

## **Accomplishments by Objectives**

Our initiative is providing support to nearly 1000 women in 50 groups across three communities of the Maasai Steppe in Northern Tanzania. As a result of our micro-grants, more than 750 hives have been hung in critical wildlife areas, extending significant habitat protection measures to these areas (i.e. no tree-cutting or cultivation is allowed in the vicinity of the hives), while improving the economic status of the women.

Between June 2016 and July 2017, we conducted our first major honey harvests with the women, collecting nearly three tons of crude honey and wax. Processing of honey harvested in 2017 is currently underway. This will add to the 1313 kg of pure, raw honey processed in 2016. We purchased the honey from the women's groups at above market rates, resulting in approximately \$6800 of profit to 31 women's groups or an average of \$219/group (489,161 TSH/group; new women's groups added to the program in late 2016 will not expect a harvest until mid to late 2017).

Honey is for sale to tourism camps and local stores in Arusha under the recently registered brand, Mama Asali ("Mama Honey"). Following sale of this honey, women's groups receive additional profits based on the amount of raw honey contributed by each group. In future years, we are expecting the honey harvest to increase significantly, as many hives were relatively new and not yet ready for harvest; it can take up to one year for bees to colonize a hive and produce sufficient honey for harvest. With additional support from the USAID-Endangered Ecosystems of Northern Tanzania project, we also purchased a vehicle for field-based honey harvesting which will further increase our ability to assist the women with efficient harvesting strategies.

In terms of training and exposure in 2016 and 2017, six women's group representatives (two women from each of the three communities involved in the project) attended an entrepreneurship exhibition in Dodoma. The women gained valuable knowledge about processing, packaging, and marketing honey. They also learned of the procedures regarding the commercial sale of honey (the latter from agencies such as the Tanzania Bureau of Standards and Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority). In August 2017, women's group representatives also attended the annual Tanzanian agricultural fair (Nane Nane). At the fair, the women had the opportunity to learn about modern beekeeping techniques and various bee products from other experts from across Tanzania. They also displayed the Mama Asali product and made some sales. Additionally, our staff held regular trainings for the women's groups on both beekeeping techniques and entrepreneurship/project management throughout the project, often in-situ when assisting in honey harvesting.

In 2016, we began working with the women's groups and their associated village governments to identify suitable locations for bee reserves with an emphasis on maintaining critical wildlife corridors for big cats and their prey species. In 2017, we made significant steps forward by officially registering women's groups with the Tanzania Forest Service, an important

requirement if the women are to receive land rights. A doctoral group at the University of California – Berkeley is currently working on mapping prime ecological sites for the bee reserves.

Finally, over the course of 2016 and 2017, we awarded 46 grants to the women’s groups who were demonstrating strong motivation and/or capacity in managing their hives. Going forward, we will continue to expand this project to new women’s groups while also continuing with our training programs in bee keeping and entrepreneurship, particularly in terms of record-keeping and financial management.

### **Program Challenges and Revisions**

Institutionally, we decided to cap the total number of women’s groups supported by this program in 2016/17 at 50 and to provide enhancement grants for those groups who were showing significant success in managing their beehives. In late 2017 and going forward, we will begin to expand this program again to new districts with a new protocol that will help our team to streamline their engagement while ensuring the women are fully empowered in the process.

Bee keeping is a challenging activity with very little regularity or consistency in terms of the timing or amount of honey production; productivity is highly dependent on extremely local conditions and weather patterns (varying from community to community in the areas in which we are working). In order to ensure maximum productivity and optimal harvesting times, we have begun collecting detailed information on individual hives in a collaboration between our bee-keeping team, the women’s groups, and our new Monitoring and Evaluation department.

We also faced logistical challenges while awaiting the arrival of a new honey-harvesting vehicle (delayed due to tax issues out of our control). We made due with existing vehicles, though they were not set up for efficient harvesting and their use placed a strain on some of our other programs. Fortunately, we finally received the vehicle in December 2016.

### **Lessons Learned, Organizational and Strategic Change, and Unexpected Events**

As we continue to develop and grow this program, we are working to change our mindset from a grant-making framework to one that is “investing in women”. Over the course of this project, we have been very impressed with some of the women’s groups and their initiative, and we have learned to give them more room to explore the opportunities available via this program and to drive its growth. For example, we shifted from purchasing hives for the women to awarding cash for hive (and other equipment) purchase, a strategy recommended for greater empowerment by the development community. This has worked well for some groups, while others appear to struggle. Therefore, we are still working out our organizational philosophy and approach, ever learning and adapting as we go. Perhaps unexpectedly, we have been very pleased to see that some of the women are using their early profits to reinvest in each other,

loaning small amounts to one another within their respective groups and helping them to start additional businesses.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Our program officers and growing Monitoring and Evaluation Team collected all data presented in this report. We record the number of women reached (936) via women's group membership lists, updated annually. We count and label all hives and record GPS locations when the hives are hung in the bush. Our team and the women's groups weigh and verify all raw honey. We also weigh and record processed honey, and track honey sales.

### **A Success Story – Originally published, April 2017 with USAID**

See: <https://www.usaid.gov/results-data/success-stories/beekeeping-empowers-maasai-women-northern-tanzania>

Salome Mpongoliana was poor, lacked education, and had little control over her family's finances. However, when she joined a women's group in Tanzania and discovered beekeeping, her fortunes began to change.

Mpongoliana is a member of Ngao, a 15-woman group in Loibor Siret village. A gracious woman with an easy smile, Mpongoliana is excited about the changes happening in her life.

"In a women's group, you learn from one another and help each other out," she explains. "You are not alone."

As members of the nomadic Maasai tribe, these women lead a lifestyle increasingly under threat. While populations rise, Maasai herders are pitted against agricultural communities as both groups rely on the land to survive. Meanwhile, the natural resources they depend on are at risk of overuse. For such communities, it is critical to adopt alternative livelihoods that protect the land.

As an ecological, easy-to-maintain enterprise, beekeeping is an ideal solution.

Ngao first became involved in honey farming in 2014 through the Women's Beekeeping Initiative, a USAID-supported effort under Tanzania People and Wildlife. A seminar for aspiring businesswomen introduced the idea to the group, so they applied for a grant. In no time, they were hanging 20 beehives, which they recently harvested for the first time. Together with other groups participating in the program, the women sell their product locally as well as under the Mama Asali, or "Mama Honey," brand.

"I see a bright future after receiving money from the first harvest," said Mpongoliana. "I will be able to better take care of my family. I can spend more on health care and save money."

Better income isn't the only advantage. As these women gain financial independence and contribute to their families' livelihoods, they gain status and decision-making power within the community, with male peers beginning to see beyond women's traditional household roles.

Beekeeping also benefits the community and surrounding environment. Instead of repaying grants with money, beneficiaries of the Women's Beekeeping Initiative organize community conservation projects. The members of Ngao, for example, planted trees to protect local water storage tanks. They have also donated money to sick community members and the local primary school.

While honey profits benefit communities, the beehives are also protecting critical wildlife habitats. Under the Tanzania Beekeeping Act, villages are able to designate bee reserves, which prohibit the clearance of surrounding woodlands for fuel, agriculture, construction and other harmful practices. This ensures a home not only for the bees, but also for any other wildlife that happen to share the same natural habitat. Just as importantly, local pastoralists can still access these lands for their cattle, goats and sheep.

As an undemanding enterprise that supports the community, protects local ecosystems, and builds gender equality, beekeeping is a perfect solution for women like Mpongoliana. Over 900 women from 50 women's groups now access financial benefits from honey, while more than 700 beehives protect critical wildlife habitats.

Ever the entrepreneur, Mpongoliana remains on the lookout for ways to use her beekeeping income to pursue other business. "I will be able to use the profits to expand my petrol business and I have dreams of opening a bakery," she explains. "We have learned to be courageous—not giving up or losing hope. This is important as an entrepreneur."

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*"I see a bright future after receiving the money we earned from the first harvest. I will be better able to take care of my family. I can spend more on healthcare and also save money for the future."*

***Salome Mpongoliana, Member of Ngao Women's Group***

*"African People & Wildlife is grateful to our supporters at Dining for Women who are helping us to find the balance between economic development and wildlife conservation, so beautifully demonstrated by our women's bee-keeping program."*

***Laly L. Lichtenfeld, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer***

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