

Women's Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Initiative



2017 Interim Report
Submitted to Dining for Women



Submitted by:
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Program Overview

The Women's Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Initiative is designed to assist 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, the African People & Wildlife Fund received a generous grant in the amount of \$47,500 from Dining for Women in support of this important project which is 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 of the project well beyond the original two years stated in our proposal.

Progress Toward Objectives

Our initiative is providing support to nearly 1000 ladies in 50 groups across three communities of the Maasai Steppe in Northern Tanzania. As a result of our micro-grants, 690 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 and December 2016, we conducted our first major honey harvests with the women, collecting nearly two tons of crude honey and wax. After processing, this resulted in 1313 kg of pure, raw honey for sale. We purchased the honey from the women's groups at above market rates, resulting in \$4577 of profit to 29 women's groups or an average of \$158/group (342,860 TSH/group; new women's groups added to the program in 2016 will not expect a harvest until 2017).

The honey is currently being jarred for sale to tourism camps and local stores in Arusha. Following sale of this honey, additional profits will be returned to the women's groups 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, 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 about the necessary procedures that must be followed in order to sell commercially (the latter from agencies such as the Tanzania Bureau of Standards and Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority). Additionally, our staff held a series of trainings for the women's groups on both beekeeping techniques and entrepreneurship/project management in the month of December, reaching approximately 150 ladies.

In 2016, we also 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. This will be a priority in 2017, recognizing that in matters of land designation, working at the community pace is essential to maintain support for potentially sensitive projects.

In early 2017, 30 enhancement grants will be awarded to women's groups who are demonstrating strong motivation and capacity in managing their hives. We will also continue with our training programs in bee-keeping and entrepreneurship, particularly in terms of record-keeping and financial management.

Program Changes

No major changes have occurred since the proposal was approved aside from growing the size of our team dedicated to this initiative, particularly in terms of the addition of a new Monitoring and Evaluation unit.

Program Challenges and Revisions

Institutionally, we decided to cap the total number of women's groups supported by this program at 50 and to provide enhancement grants for those groups who were showing significant success in managing their beehives in the coming years. This will allow us to maintain the quality of our program as it grows, with significant outreach to each women's group as needed.

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.

Program Timeframe

The program is on track.

"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

"The African People & Wildlife Fund is grateful for our donors and supporters 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., Executive Director
