

## HONEY CARE AFRICA'S TRIPARTITE MODEL: AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE BEEKEEPING IN KENYA

F. JIWA, KENYA, E-mail: [fjiwa@insightkenya.com](mailto:fjiwa@insightkenya.com)

### Abstract

*Brief Background to Beekeeping in Kenya: The history of beekeeping in Kenya has been a sad tale of wasted opportunities and bad decisions.*

*Traditionally, beekeeping in Kenya was undertaken mainly in the arid and semi-arid (ASAL) regions, with only very limited beekeeping in the medium and high potential regions. This has primarily been a natural function of the choices people in these different areas have made based on their environment and other constraints. That is to say that people in areas with high rainfall, fertile soils, and cooler climates traditionally focused on the production of food crops and cash crops, while the people in the more arid and infertile areas either opted for a nomadic lifestyle and set up migratory routes with their cattle, or established a more sedentary lifestyle which included growing more drought-resistant food crops, as well as beekeeping.*

*With the increased involvement of various ministries of the government of Kenya, of international development organizations, NGOs, and other agricultural bodies since the 1960s, these trends were perpetuated and the distortions continued to grow. If a development organization was operating in a fertile area with rich soil and sufficient rainfall, it generally helped the community improve its soil-based agricultural skills and get involved in issues related to the management of this resource; beekeeping was rarely promoted in these areas. On the other hand, development organizations that found themselves in ASAL areas generally promoted livestock production and beekeeping almost by default. As a result of this phenomenon, some of the ASAL areas of Kenya like the Ukambani corridor, Kibwezi, and other neighbouring places became the largest honey producers in the country. Ironically, as a result of this tilted focus and skewed development in beekeeping, the areas with the highest potential for producing high quality honey in Kenya have not been fully explored, let alone properly tapped.*

*Apart from this misdirected focus in the development in beekeeping in Kenya, another problem has been the absence of new and modern beekeeping technology and equipment, or more precisely, use of the wrong beekeeping technology and equipment.*

*Most communities that have been engaged in beekeeping have been using traditional log hives, baskets, or clay pots. These beehives, while being very cheap to manufacture or acquire, produce only small volumes of crude honey only once or twice a year. The poor harvesting techniques used by the beekeepers generally lead to the impregnation of the honey with smoke and other suspended particles that irreversibly destroy the colour, smell, texture, and taste of the honey. The harvesting almost always results in the cutting of all the honey combs and the destruction of the entire colony. The beekeepers then have to wait until the next swarming season to catch bees and start all over again.*

*In the late 1960s, the Ministry of Agriculture, the International Bee Research Association (IBRA), and Oxfam collaborated on the development on what they considered would be an 'appropriate' hive for the Kenyan environment. The result of this joint effort is the now infamous Kenya Top Bar Hive (KTBH). Although some may argue that it is an improvement on the traditional log hive, it is difficult to satisfactorily explain its numerous functional and design flaws (far too numerous to elaborate here). From the early 1970s, the Ministry of Agriculture went about introducing the KTBH around the country with great fervor. It soon became our national beehive system, and was displayed at every government-supported agricultural college and training facility, and introduced into the national primary and secondary school curriculum. However, apart from being a poorly designed bee hive, very little work was done in providing adequate training to interested beekeepers, not enough attention was paid to establishing an effective extension service for the new beekeepers, and almost no thought was given to linking the beekeepers to the market. As a result, these hives had poor rates of colonization, those that were colonized were not easy to harvest, and the small volumes of honey that were harvested were not all that different from the honey produced by traditional log hives. Thirty years later, the impact of the KTBH on beekeeping in Kenya is clear: most hives across the country are in a state of disrepair, were it not for the two-three staff members who still work there, the National Beekeeping Station in Lenana, Nairobi would be shut down, almost all other government-funded demonstration sites across the country that promoted the KTBH are collapsing or have already collapsed, and it is difficult to find a single beekeeping project anywhere in this country that is using the KTBH successfully. Contrary to what was expected, there seems to have been very little real progress in beekeeping in Kenya since the advent of the KTBH. Beekeeping using the KTBH has not helped to improve the income levels of the rural poor in any demonstrable manner, and the KTBH has not allowed Kenya to produce large volumes of high quality honey. It would be difficult to dispute these facts; the evidence on the ground is overwhelming.*

*The late 1970s saw the advent of the 'honey refinery' craze in Kenya. With funds from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Kenyan government, the Kenya National Union of Farmers, and community groups involved in beekeeping embarked on building honey refineries in various parts of the country where beekeeping was being done or being promoted. The idea behind these refineries was that they would help 'refine' the crude honey that the traditional log hives and the KTBH were producing, so that the end product could then be taken to the market. The reasons why practically every single refinery built during this time has now shut down is not easy to encapsulate; suffice it to say that these refineries mark yet another disappointing milestone in Kenya's attempts to keep bees for honey production.*

*For the reasons explained above and many others not listed, beekeeping in Kenya never really took off. Consequently, very little effort went into conducting research on the potential of beekeeping in Kenya, the different species and sub-species of bees in this region and their production levels, developing floral calendars for different regions of this country, or any other such important information. As a result, it has been difficult to obtain good, reliable, and useful information related to apiculture in Kenya. The only institution that has taken a recent interest in research in apiculture is the International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE), whose scientific studies are yet to have an appreciable impact on the ground.*

*Previous interventions by various development sector organisations and the Government of Kenya have not been successful in developing the beekeeping sector in a sustainable and viable manner, and honey production in the country has remained poor despite the vegetation, climate patterns and land use being near perfect for the activity.*

**Keywords:** development / rural / africa

## Introduction

Honey Care Africa was established in March 2000 as an innovative and ethical private company by three progressive and socially committed Kenyan investors but with an explicit triple bottom-line agenda, with the emphasis being on trying to generate economic, social and environmental value simultaneously.

Honey Care Africa was intentionally set up as a bold and daring experiment in trying to define the role that the private sector can play in becoming a key driver for development in the South, and to radically reconfigure the dynamics between the private sector, the development sector, and rural communities. This led to the evolution of Honey Care's 'tripartite model', which seeks to develop a synergistic 'win-win-win' partnership between these three key actors while finding ways to embrace and accommodate the role of the government.

This Tripartite Model is used in Honey Care's current and on-going work with a number of major NGOs and donor agencies, including DANIDA, the European Union, and the UNDP, just to name a few. We also believe that it is this model that contributed to Honey Care winning awards from the World Bank, the Soros Foundation, and at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Honey Care has tried to develop and foster partnerships and find synergies whenever and wherever it was strategically important for the company. The network of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and Self-Help Groups that Honey Care has developed a working relationship with has significantly reduced the need for Honey Care to employ a large number of field staff and has allowed Honey Care to expand rapidly across Kenya.

## A 'Win-Win-Win' Model

Honey Care's Tripartite Model is at the core of how we believe a small business has been able to promote sustainable community development by developing this synergistic 'win-win-win' partnership between a private sector organization, development sector organizations and rural communities.

In part, the impetus for the development of this Tripartite Model arose from recognition of the need for a more pro-active engagement of the private sector in development in Kenya. It was felt that the private sector had a number of inherent skills and valuable experience that had never been properly tapped in an integrated manner to drive forward development in Kenya. While at the same time, Honey Care recognized that this set of knowledge and skills that the private sector was endowed with was nicely complemented by the skill set of the development sector organizations. Therefore, at its centre, Honey Care Africa's Tripartite Model sought to develop a synergistic partnership between the private sector, the development sector, and rural communities. By virtue of their different backgrounds, it was reasoned, each of the parties had a specific and complementary role to play:

- 1). The private sector organization injects a degree of economic reality into the project and ensures that the project operates within realistic market conditions at all times and is sensitive to supply-demand dynamics. This had been missing in numerous other development and income-generating projects where the development sector organization also tried to act as the link institution to the market or created a subsidized artificial market environment for the produce.

Therefore in this model, the private sector organization has a pivotal role to play. In this case, Honey Care guarantees to purchase every kilogram of honey a beekeeper can produce at a fair and fixed price, and pay in cash on the day of collection. Honey Care then processes and packs this honey and then sells it for a profit. Honey Care also provides the necessary and requisite training for the rural communities. Wherever economically viable, Honey Care also provides extension support for the farmers, and where it is not viable, alternative structures and models are developed and established to ensure that the farmers have the required technical advisory support that they need to take care of their hives and maximize honey production.

- 2). According to this model, the development sector organization (NGO, donor agency, or international development organization) should have the experience in working with rural communities and should have an extensive outreach into the rural areas thereby making them the ideal conduit through which individuals in community groups and the private sector organization can communicate with each other initially. The development sector organization also plays an important role in acting as the primary arbitrator and mediator in this system, and therefore in the event of any misunderstanding between the private sector organization and the rural communities or any complaint from either party, the development sector organization can step in to help resolve the matter.

This system of checks and balances (where each party is held accountable to the other two parties in the model through an enforceable contract - for example, the private sector organization is accountable to both the development sector organization and the rural communities) also allows the development sector organization to ensure that an exploitative relationship does not develop between the private sector organization and the farmers. In some instances, the development sector organization also acts as the initial financier of the project, in this particular instance providing loans to farmers to acquire beehives, buy

beekeeping equipment, and receive training. These loans are then recoverable at the time when the honey is ready for sale to Honey Care who makes agreed upon deductions from the honey as a loan repayment for the hives and makes the agreed upon remittances to the development sector organization. These point-of-payment deductions made by Honey Care, apart from being far more efficient and cost-effective than previous mechanisms of loan recovery, also set up a 'revolving fund' system where the funds injected by a development sector organization into a community-based income generation project are recoverable after a period of time, and can then be re-allocated for other projects.

3). The third partner in this symbiotic model, are the rural communities and small-scale / subsistence farmers who are the honey producers, and one of the key beneficiaries of the entire initiative. This model creates a favorable environment for them in which to start bee keeping. This is achieved through a combination of adequate training and easy access to loans to acquire beehives and other equipment, easy repayment terms, extension and advisory support, a guaranteed market for their produce at a mutually acceptable price, and cash-on-the-spot payments.

Schematically, Honey Care Africa's tripartite model can be represented as follows: In part, the impetus for the establishment of Honey Care arose from the recognition of the need for a more pro-active engagement of the private sector in agricultural development and poverty reduction in Kenya. Therefore since its inception about three years ago, Honey Care has focused on developing the beekeeping sector in Kenya, which had hitherto not been developed in a viable and sustainable manner. In contrast to other agro-based private sector organisations in Kenya, Honey Care decided to focus primarily on introducing the activity to small-scale subsistence farmers across rural Kenya, most of whom live below the poverty line, earning less than US\$ 1 a day, because of the potential of using beekeeping as a tool to help reduce rural poverty across the country.

## **Honey Sector Development**

By establishing itself as a vertically integrated operation, Honey Care's primary strategy has been to develop the 'missing market links' wherever it felt there was a need. Honey Care has therefore been thrust into a leadership role and has ended up playing much more than the role of a simple private sector organization in the honey sector, filling in whenever the other actors were unwilling or unable to do so, which has been the case until very recently.

Honey Care felt it was necessary to wear a number of different hats while the sector was still in its nascent stages as this was the only way to drive things forward quickly and demonstrate some tangible results which point to the real potential of the bee keeping sector.

Over the last three years since its establishment Honey Care has been involved in the following activities, many of which are not really those of a private sector organization.

### *Community Mobilization*

Honey Care has been conducting hundreds of demonstrations on the commercially appropriate and internationally adopted Langstroth beehives in villages in rural areas across the country to teach farmers about the use of these hives. Particular attention has been paid to encouraging women and youth to take up beekeeping as an important income source to address their economic marginalisation.

### *Production of Honey*

Through these demonstrations, Honey Care has intentionally tried to target small-scale farmers who live below the poverty line (earning less than US\$1 a day), and who, as a result of lack of access to land, labour, capital, and education have not been able to grow the traditional cash crops like tea, coffee and cotton. Because of the poor economies-of-scale of their farming activities and their inability to grow cash crops, these farmers have been largely left unassisted by the Government of Kenya and by many donor agencies. These farmers are therefore trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty, eking out a subsistence livelihood. Honey Care decided to take up this challenge, primarily driven by the strong sense of social responsibility and because Honey Care was convinced that bee keeping was the one activity that could be undertaken by farmers in such a predicament and could become a powerful tool in helping to reduce poverty.

### *Credit Facilities for Farmers*

Honey Care has worked on assisting these small-scale farmers in acquiring funds from various donor agencies and international development organizations to buy these hives, which Honey Care

manufactures to international standards using local materials. From the very beginning, and in contrast with most other donor-funded activities in Kenya, Honey Care has insisted that the farmers should pay for these hives funded by the donors. Therefore most hives have been disbursed on a soft loan basis (at no interest), with the farmer having to pay for the full cost of the hive from part of the proceeds of the sale of honey. In some areas where the poverty levels were exceedingly high, hives were disbursed on a cost-sharing basis, with the farmer paying for part of the cost of the hive and the donor agency chipping in with the rest. This has helped create a real sense of ownership of the hives and helped farmers maintain their dignity and pride, which free hand-outs often take away from them. This has been evident in all of Honey Care's joint projects across the country, with mandatory loan deductions being made by Honey Care at the point of payment and the loans promptly remitted to the NGO / development agency who provided the loans to the farmers to acquire hives.

Equally important, this has set the groundwork for a transition away from donor-subsidized loans for hives to farmers to commercially leased / purchased hives, as the next logical step in order to develop a viable beekeeping sector. Honey Care views the establishment of a functioning hive micro-leasing body as vital to ensuring that as many small-scale farmers across Kenya can take up beekeeping and this will lead to an overall increase in high quality honey which is much easier to market both locally and abroad.

### *Beekeeping Training and Production of Training Materials*

After having developed a short, simple but highly effective training programme, Honey Care has helped to set up joint beekeeping training programmes with Limuru Girls' Centre in Kiambu. Working with Africa Now, a British NGO, this has more recently also been accomplished at Bukura Agricultural College near Bungoma and RIAT near Kisumu. Talks are underway to set up joint training programmes at Baraka Agricultural College in Molo, and possibly Kwetu Training Centre near Mtwapa / Kilifi. All of these are already established vocational training colleges and institutions of agricultural education. The objective is to provide training closer to the farmers and Honey Care intends to eventually set up these facilities as stand-alone and economically viable training centres, with little or no direct involvement from Honey Care.

With respect to the production of training materials, using its own training methodology and materials, Honey Care is now working with various other stakeholders to harmonise bee keeping training material and to move towards developing a national bee keeping training curriculum. It is also hoped that this can then be used to influence the long-needed changes in the training materials for Government staff and agricultural colleges countrywide. In addition, this will also form the impetus for the requisite modules of Science and Agriculture curriculum for national primary and secondary education in the 8-4-4 system.

### *Manufacture of Beekeeping Equipment*

With regard to bee keeping equipment like bee suits and smokers, Honey Care has already trained a community-based organisation (C.B.O) in Kakamega to manufacture high quality bee suits, as well as a Jua Kali tailor in Ngong. Honey Care now buys all their bee suits from these sources. Honey Care is also working with another C.B.O near Bungoma to do the same. Likewise, Honey Care is already out-sourcing its smokers from the Metal Work department at Baraka Agricultural College. These initial steps are intended to ensure that this protective equipment is made to high standards but is cheaper and more affordable for farmers. It is hoped that this can now be replicated across the country and C.B.Os within local communities can now take this on as an income-generating activity, as the demand permits.

However, until the Langstroth hives can be made to high technical standards and of consistent quality by others, Honey Care intends to continue to manufacture the hives on their own. Honey Care strongly believes that there is an important lesson to learn from the experience following the introduction of the now infamous Kenya Top-Bar Hive (KTBH) in the late 1960s and early 1970s where village carpenters were taught to make these hives. While admirable in its intention and sentiment, it was soon found that the quality of the hives manufactured by village carpenters were poor and all the precise specifications of the hive (like the bee-space) were altered, rendering the hives useless and non-functional. The unavailability of proper kiln-dried and seasoned timber also led to the hives warping in the field, thereby allowing the bees to escape or abscond. Therefore, in light of this and the central role the hive plays in production of honey, Honey Care feels it is vital that the Langstroth hives are made to a standard international size with exact specifications, with easily changeable parts, and of the highest quality possible. That is the only way a viable and commercial beekeeping sector can be established in Kenya. However, with proper training, it is hoped that this will be possible in the medium to long-term.

### *Extension Services*

In the absence of the provision of adequate and effective extension services by the various front-line officers of the Government of Kenya who have traditionally played this role, Honey Care has been forced to pick up the slack and has employed its own Project Officers (paid for by Honey Care) to ensure that new and existing beekeepers get the extension and technical support that they require. These Project Officers located in Kakamega, Bungoma, Taita-Taveta, Thika and Kitui Districts along with additional roving Project Officers based in Nairobi and Kisumu, visit the farmers in their area on a regular basis to deal with any beekeeping-related technical problems as and when they arise and to provide additional in-situ training and advice.

Honey Care has also trained over 20 Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development front-line staff in Kwale, Kitui and Taita-Taveta Districts in bee keeping using the Langstroth hive so as to enable them to provide farmers in their area with relevant and useful information in beekeeping as well as additional technical and extension support to beekeepers in these regions. In 2002, together with Africa Now, a similar training programme was conducted in Western Kenya, with over 30 additional Government staff trained in beekeeping as well.

### *Guaranteed Honey Market*

This is the key function that Honey Care has been performing since its inception, and their guarantee to buy honey at a fixed and fair price anywhere in Kenya has provided much of the impetus for the development of the sector. Honey Care's 'Money for Honey' policy of paying farmers cash-on-the-spot at the time of collecting the honey (not a common practice in the tea, coffee, sugar-cane or pyrethrum sectors) has been important in providing the farmers with the incentive to take up and continue with beekeeping. In addition, Honey Care's commitment to offer the farmers a fixed price for their honey year-round through long-term contracts has helped to bolster the farmers' confidence and provided an important incentive for them to take up beekeeping. This price guarantee has also helped them to plan ahead and forecast their income.

### *Local Market Development*

Honey Care Africa's market development strategy has primarily focused on developing a local market for their honey first and foremost. This has been primarily driven by Honey Care's commitment to first of all to fulfill the demand in the local market for high quality before venturing into the export market. This 'Kenya First' policy was also dictated by the fact that Honey Care initially produced small volumes of honey which was not sufficient for export, as well as the Government of Kenya not having signed the Residue Plan, thereby effectively preventing the export of Kenyan honey to the EU market. As a result, Honey Care has made important strides in developing a range of high quality Kenyan honey products with strong brand name recognition and has established an effective distribution, merchandising and marketing mechanism within the region. Honey Care's brands of honey, in 4 different flavours – African Blossom, Acacia, Highland Blend and Wild Comb – have been positively received by the market and sales of this honey continues to increase steadily. Honey Care currently supplies its honey to the leading supermarket chains in the region as well as a number of other retail outlets, hotels and industries.

### **The Process of Devolution and Retreat to Core Business Function**

Over the last few months, there has been considerable discussion about the formation of a viable honey sector in Kenya. The Kenya Honey Forum, a multi-stakeholder body has recently been established to discuss the way forward on this.

There has been some important progress made and various working groups have now been formed to deal with the various aspects that emerged from the Honey Symposium organized by the AWF in November 2002, the Honey Workshop organized by Baraka Agriculture College before that, as well as the first plenary meeting of the Kenya Honey Forum in early 2003.

A lot of attention has been placed on what the private sector would like to see emerging from this process, and rightly so, as it is generally agreed that the honey sector must be private sector-driven if it is to be viable and commercially successful. The needs of the private sector has been expressed quite clearly on a number of occasions, and is indeed embodied in the tasks allocated to the four working groups.

Honey Care Africa, one of the leading private sector organizations involved in the honey sector in Kenya since its inception three years ago, would like to try and articulate what we feel we need from this process and what we view as one of the key outputs of this process. This is meant to serve as a discussion

document on what Honey Care believes we need and would like to see occurring, no matter what route the process opts to pursue.

Finally, there might be some confusion about Honey Care and the exact role it has played in the development of the beekeeping sector in Kenya so far, with Honey Care possibly being seen by some as a schizophrenic organization with no clear objective. This may be because very few people have taken the time to properly assess the amount of work that Honey Care has done, either on its own or in collaboration with other actors, in trying to put in place the mechanics required for the development of the beekeeping sector.

It is hoped that this *pièce justificative* may help present a much broader view of how Honey Care's activities fit together and explain just what we have done so far. This is not meant to be an exercise in self-aggrandisement, and apologies are made in advance if this is written in a way that may make it open to being interpreted in that way.

In the absence of appropriate structures and institutions in the beekeeping sector, Honey Care Africa has undertaken most aspects related to the up-stream development of the honey sector (and some down-stream development as well) almost single-handedly in most of the projects it has helped establish across Kenya, and has been one of the main drivers pushing for the development of a viable bee keeping sector.

### **The Need for Devolution**

It goes without saying that performing these other non-core functions - conducting demonstrations and community mobilization, managing micro-credit facilities for farmers to acquire hives, undertaking a successful pilot project to evaluate the viability of an innovative hive micro-leasing model and developing its large-scale and commercial application, developing an effective beekeeping training curriculum, providing training in beekeeping at the community level across the country through a network of training facilities, providing efficient extension services in the field and technical services to beekeepers across Kenya, setting up an innovative honey extraction and collection system at the village level using mobile extraction units, implementing a farmer-friendly 'cash-on-the-spot' honey payment system – has been an extraordinary task for Honey Care and has also required a considerable amount of its resources. In most cases Honey Care has performed these additional and onerous non-core functions without adequate financial compensation or remuneration from the market.

Honey Care believes that it has put in place the building blocks for the subsequent development of a larger commercially viable and sustainable beekeeping sub-sector in Kenya, and has tried to put in place the measures required for the entry of other actors who can now take on particular roles focusing on specific aspects within the sector. Therefore, central to the proper establishment of the beekeeping sector in the long-run is the need for other actors to step in and play their specialized roles as well as possible, while Honey Care devolves from these activities and retreats to its core business and key function.

When fully mature, Honey Care envisages that the honey sector would involve various actors specializing in the different aspects of the sector as follows:

- Activity Areas where Honey Care has been playing the role as a Key Driver until recently Key actors to be involved when sector reaches maturity;
- Community mobilization - Yes - (with Africa Now in W. Kenya) - GoK / NGOs Production of honey - Yes - Farmers at grass-root level;
- Credit Facilities for Farmers - Yes - (now with Africa Now) - Micro-finance institution(s);
- Beekeeping training and training materials - Yes - GoK, other stakeholders;
- Extension Services - Yes - GoK, NGOs;
- Manufacture of Bee keeping Equipment - Yes - Private Sector and some CBOs;
- Honey Purchase & Marketing - Yes - Private Sector;
- National Market Development - Yes - Private Sector with other support;
- International Market Development - Yes (partly) - Private Sector with other support;
- Quality Control and Management - Yes (Partly) - GoK with Private sector;
- National Policy Development - No - GoK (with input from other stakeholders);
- Linkage with international and national trade bodies - No - All stakeholders;
- Overall Co-ordination - No - All stakeholders.

### **What The Honey Forum Does For Honey Care**

With its recent establishment, the Kenya Honey Forum (bringing all the stakeholders in beekeeping and honey production together in a meaningful way) has emerged as the best opportunity for this devolution process to take place thereby permitting Honey Care to retreat to its core business of making hives and buying and selling honey.

From Honey Care's perspective, it is gratifying and very encouraging to note that four key working groups (Policy development, Training and capacity building, Institutional establishment, Documentation and sector mapping) have organically evolved to encapsulate a number of issues, which are at the crux of Honey Care's devolution process. These working groups may act as key synaptic nodes in ensuring that this transition does indeed take place.

Therefore, it follows that what Honey Care would like more than anything else is to extract itself from what it does not see as its core business, and hand this over to an institution / organization whose core function it is to perform those roles. In the table above, Honey Care has tried to list out who it thinks they ought to be.

In order for this transition to be as smooth as possible for the long-term viability of honey production in Kenya, it is vital that all the stakeholders in the honey sub-sector define what exactly it is they want to do and then play their roles as agreed. This process will take time and some mistakes will be made along the way. However, it is important that this course is followed for the long-term development of the sector.

Secondly, while the process of devolution continues, Honey Care would like the Honey Forum to assist the private sector in four key areas:

- a) National Market Development;
- b) International Market Development (incl. Fair Trade and Organic Certification);
- c) Quality Control and Management;
- d) Improve co-ordination of honey production and collection.

In a properly functioning market system this would not be a reasonable request for a private sector organization to make. However, the private sector in the honey sector has been working from a position of considerable disadvantage and against some enormous odds:

- It has had to undertake considerable up-stream development.
- Other organizations and institutions in the sector have not fulfilled their roles properly.
- Kenyan honey has a poor reputation within our own country (as a result of years of sub-standard and adulterated honey making it to the supermarket shelves in an under-regulated and poor enforcement environment).
- Kenya is inundated with cheaper honey from countries many of whom receive subsidies (directly or indirectly) and other support from their governments, thereby creating an uneven playing field.
- Considerable amounts of honey are being imported from neighbouring East African countries at cheaper prices and then are being sold as 'Kenyan honey.'
- The poor road infrastructure and communication in Kenya means that Kenyan honey is more expensive to produce.
- Honey Care has intentionally opted to work with small-scale subsistence farmers across Kenya, who have been all but ignored and relegated to the sidelines in the liberalized economy. This decision was primarily driven by a strong social obligation. Honey Care felt it had to play a positive role in using beekeeping to help to move the country towards sustainable development and work towards real and meaningful poverty reduction.

What Honey Care is looking for here is not complex: help us improve the image of Kenyan honey within Kenya and assist us in marketing, help us get the requisite certification and make in-roads into the international market, help us get honey from the field in a more coordinated manner, and enforce stricter quality control standards.

This will allow Honey Care to assert itself as a strong and reliable private sector partner for small-scale rural beekeepers across rural Kenya.

From our perspective, there should be no debate about whether this process of devolution should take place before the market development support can be offered to the private sector organizations; we view these as parallel activities and can and should be undertaken simultaneously.

## Positive Results

Honey Care Africa is now widely recognised as the central catalyst and key driver in the renaissance of the beekeeping sector in Kenya as well as emphatically demonstrating how bees can help reduce the pervasive poverty in villages across the rural areas.

There is absolutely no doubt as to the contribution Honey Care has made to the beekeeping sector in Kenya. Since its inception, Honey Care has now helped to establish over 14,000 Langstroth hives across Kenya with close to 2,500 small-scale subsistence farmers in villages across the country now involved in bee keeping, many of them earning an average of between US\$ 200 to US\$ 250 from just 4 hives – an amount that often makes the difference between living above or below the poverty line.

Honey Care has also established a strong reputation among the international donor community and NGOs operating in the region. To date, Honey Care's project partners have included the World Bank, EU, Danish International Development Agency, DFID, Belgian Technical Co-operation, UNDP, Kenyan Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development and Environment and Natural Resources, Africa Now, European

Commission, Aga Khan Foundation, Soros Foundation as well as the Embassies and High Commissions of Australia, United Kingdom, Germany, United States of America, and Finland.

Honey Care has also received a number of significant awards and international accolades in recent months for its efforts in promoting sustainable development and poverty reduction through bee keeping:

- In January 2002, Africa Now and Honey Care jointly won a prestigious award at the International Development Marketplace Innovation Competition organised by the World Bank in Washington D.C. Honey Care and Africa Now were singled out for a special award from the SME Department of the World Bank as well as Project IDEAS of the Soros Foundation.

- In May 2002, Honey Care's General Manager, Farouk Jiwa, received the Ismaili Youth Award for Excellence - Professional and Entrepreneurial category as a direct result of his work with Honey Care. This award was presented to him by His Highness Prince Ayn Aga Khan.

- In September 2002, Honey Care was invited to attend the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa where they were awarded the prestigious Equator Initiative Prize by an international panel of distinguished judges who included a number of Nobel Prize Laureates. The Equator Initiative is funded by the Government of Canada, IDRC, Television Trust for the Environment, IUCN, The Nature Conservancy, UNDP, and the United Nations Foundation, and honours community-based projects that represent outstanding efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of bio-diversity.

Honey Care Africa's work has also received considerable attention from both the national and international media, and has been featured on BBC World Television, BBC World Radio, The Chicago Tribune, The Globe and Mail, Carte Blanche (South Africa), Kenya Television Network (KTN), the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), The Daily Nation, East African Standard, Coastweek, All Africa.com and York University's 'Alumni Review' and 'Universe' Magazines.

More recently, Honey Care Africa's innovative business model, its efforts to apply triple-bottom line values (generating social, environmental and economic value simultaneously) and its experimentation with ways in which the private sector can become a driver for sustainable development has become a standard example in a number of graduate-level courses in the Master's in Business Administration (MBA) Programme at the Schulich School of Business in Canada, as well as the Sustainable Enterprise Academy, an Executive Programme in Business and Sustainability offered through York University in Canada.

Honey Care Africa set out to achieve what few others had contemplated, and fewer still had dared to undertake – reviving an entire sector of agriculture in Kenya. There can be no doubt whatsoever that Honey Care has made remarkable progress in just three years, and it is convinced that its experiences and lessons learnt over the last three years puts them in a position to effectively contribute to the current and most vital discourse surrounding the role of business in sustainable development, especially in the South as well as the increasingly central but complex issue of Corporate Social Responsibility. Honey Care's efforts may well chart out a new direction for private sector driven development, and emphatically demonstrate that people, the planet and profits do not have to be mutually exclusive.