

MAC BEE HONEY CHANGING LIVES, ONE HIVE AT A TIME

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hubs in Gulu, Isingiro, Mbale and Rubirizi districts. Each hub supports nearby districts:

Rubirizi serves Ntungamo and Kabale, while Isingiro caters to Mbarara, Kasese, Sheema and Rakai Gulu supports Amuru, Nwoya, Oyam, and Omoro. Each hub is led by an apiary master, responsible for farmer relations, hive distribution, training, and day-to-day operations. These regional centres are also collection points as well as....Hopefully that will kill the orphan.

SUSTAINABILITY, EXPANSION

In Rwampara and Ntungamo districts, Mac Bee has leased 400 acres of land for hive operations. These sites also feature tree planting initiatives. Mature trees are used to produce hives for sale to other farmers. "We plant 250 trees per acre each year," says Ampaire.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Ampaire leads a network of farmers, most of them women and youths. "We begin by training communities in beekeeping, then provide equipment – either on loan or at subsidised rates," she explains.

Aisha Namirimu, a trainer, adds: "We teach best practices in apiary management, honey production and business strategies."

Their community bee-keeping model integrates production, training, processing and market access, delivering both economic empowerment and environmental regeneration.

To further empower communities, in partnership with USAID, RTI International and Save the Children, the company has distributed over 25,800 bee-keeping tools and equipment, including protective gear, hive boxes, extractors, suits, veils, gloves, boots, and smokers.

Mac Bee also offers consultancy services to individuals and organisations interested in launching or improving bee-keeping ventures.

STRUCTURE

Mac Bee employs 615



Ampaire harvesting honey. The enterprise is valued at sh1.8b, with over 4,500 out-growers

staff including carpenters, agronomists, trainers and administrators. They also have fabric specialists who design the protective gear that protects farmers from stings.

The management team oversees the company strategy, partnerships, finance, compliance and brand development. They work hand in hand with the innovation and quality unit which ensures that all products meet food safety standards as they drive product development.

They are guided by a board of experts.

WHAT SETS MAC BEE APART?

Mac Bee is built on three pillars:

1. Sustainable farming
2. Youth empowerment
3. Environmental conservation

By training rural households in sustainable bee-keeping and providing modern hives and market access, Mac Bee has helped communities abandon harmful practices like poaching, timber-felling and charcoal burning.

In Kyambura and Karinzu forest reserves (Bushenyi district), communities now conserve nature through bee-keeping and tree planting.

"Bees depend on nature, so farmers protect it," says Marvin Trevor Mwebare, a trainer.

Mac Bee also prioritises

YOUNG CEO LEADS THE HIVE

Ampaire's appointment as CEO at just 24 may raise eyebrows – but her leadership has quickly silenced any doubts. "She was headhunted and has exceeded expectations," says Trevor Mugaiga, Chief Operations Officer. With a diploma in agricultural science from Nkumba University, Ampaire has also undergone specialised training in Germany, Japan, Senegal, Ethiopia and Rwanda. Her apiculture journey began at age 19 with her own brand, Daph Bees.

"Her brilliance under pressure and visionary leadership continue to inspire us," Mugaiga adds. Ampaire is credited with developing many of the company's core products and building strong systems for accounting, monitoring and human resource management. Under her guidance, she's fostered a dedicated team that upholds the company's values of excellence, integrity and sustainability.



Some of the products from Mac Bee

quality, treating farmers as partners, not just suppliers. Their investment in capacity

building and product innovation has led to a range of value-added products that

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Sundry Okello, bee-keeping trainer

Working with local communities is rewarding. We train them in hive inspection and apiary management. After training, farmers can identify mature honey and harvest it themselves.

Roselina Namanya, Kalinzu Community-Based Tourism Association, Bushenyi

Bee-keeping has transformed our community. Mac Bee trained us to make products like shoe polish, candles, and body jelly from wax. We now produce for both our families and for sale.

Zurufa Musimire, Kakari Karitas Group, Kitagwenda

I have reared bees for a year and my life has changed significantly. I used to depend on subsistence farming and struggled to educate my five children. Today, I pay school fees on time.

HOW TO START BEE-KEEPING

Benard Oworu, a veteran farm manager, shares essentials for aspiring bee-keepers:

■ **Training in safe practices, apiary management, and market dynamics**

■ **Hive types:**

● **Langstroth:** Ideal for commercial production

● **Kenyan top bar:** Cost-effective for small-scale farming

● **Traditional log hives:** Common but less efficient

■ **Protective gear:** Full suit, veil, gloves, boots, jacket

■ **Tools:** Smokers, bee brushes, queen excluders, extractors, uncapping knives, strainers, storage containers. Oworu advises placing hives on stands under shade and protecting them from pests like red ants and munyeera (small black insects).

include polishes, body jelly, candles and lip balm among other products.

SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY

To maintain consistent honey supply, Mac Bee and its out-growers follow two harvest seasons: January–March and June–August. The company collects 15 tonnes of honey annually, with each kilogramme of raw honey sold at around sh12,000. Currently, all the honey is sold on the local market with plans to start exporting to the regional and international market.

NAVIGATING CHALLENGES

Despite its success, Mac Bee faces several challenges. Ampaire highlights a knowledge gap in the

beekeeping industry.

"Many people do not understand how this business works. They rush to invest and end up burning their fingers."

To address this challenge, she emphasises the need for training before investing, choosing the right enterprise type (honey, venom, or colony sales) and selecting appropriate locations for hives. She also warns against using pesticides, which harm bees.

Climate change is another hurdle. "Extreme weather affects honey quality. Bees can produce both light and dark honey in one hive, which confuses clients," Ampaire explains.

Rainy seasons reduce yields as bees consume stored honey. The type of nectar – from flowers or trees – also affects honey colour and consistency.

Taxation is a further challenge. "Materials for bee suits are heavily taxed, making them expensive for some farmers," she notes.

On the other hand, out-growers have their own share of challenges. Notable is the climate shocks and unstable prices, but these are solved by Mac Bee through their tree planting project and commitment to provide market and fair prices to the farmers.

Ampaire says: "We have donated over a million coriander and moringa trees to farmers. We also buy their honey at a fair price even when the market prices drop."

PLANS

As Mac Bee approaches its 10-year milestone in 2029, Ampaire envisions a multi-million dollar enterprise with global partnerships and exports. The company plans to continue fostering innovation, sustainability, and community empowerment through modern bee-keeping.