

Promoting effective local governance, poverty reduction, sustainable livelihood development and sound environmental management.

1 National Heroes Circle
Kingston 4
E-mail: lifejamaica@cwjamaica.com
Telephone: (876) 9673655 / 9484400

What is LIFE? LIFE is a NGO with the mandate to support local efforts aimed at improving living conditions and promoting sustainable development in marginalised communities through a dynamic process of dialogue, capacity building, resource mobilisation networking and partnership.

LIFE Secretariat

The LIFE Secretariat is responsible for implementing LIFE's work plan and consists of:
Executive Director – Velva Lawrence
Programme Assistant – Sophie Davis-Francis
Community Development Coordinator – Shereica Grant
Agricultural Officer – Loren Thomas

LIFE Board of Directors

Derrick Gayle - Chairperson
Athinia Campbell - Treasurer

Directors

Carol Archer
Lynvia Smith-Geddes
Richard Grant



**LIFE STRENGTHENING OF COMMUNITIES AND GRASSROOTS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

This project is funded by the Inter American Foundation (IAF) and targets community groups that are trying or have tried to help themselves, but are struggling with challenges such as insufficient training, technical and financial resources. During the period October 2011 to January 2012 several of the LIFE member groups implemented activities associated with the development of agro-processing, community water supply systems, goat farming, egg and honey production.

■ **Hillview Community Group Water Project**

The Hillview Community Group completed installation of the infrastructure for their water supply project in February 2012. They are now awaiting the installation of the RAM pump by New Horizons Engineering. A



small group of dedicated members of the community put in significant volunteer labour to ensure that the project activities were completed. We are looking forwarding to the flow of water in their pipes after over 20 years without water.



Section of land leased for production. The surrounding forested area is good for beekeeping.

Mount Salem Task Force for Health and Environment (MSTFHE) Selects Site for Project

The MSTFHE has selected a site for the implementation of their sustainable livelihoods project and have presented an application for a sub-grant to the LIFE Secretariat. The group is proposing to undertake agricultural activities in the areas of greenhouse farming, beekeeping, livestock rearing and vegetable production by open farming. This group completed the capacity building training in 2011 but then had to locate land for their project. They have now leased 10 acres of land for agricultural production, with access to a good water supply.

■ Mile Gully Entrepreneurial Group - An example of good stewardship

The members of the Mile Gully Entrepreneurial Group has applied the training provided by LIFE in the areas of financial management, record keeping, monitoring and reporting to its operations. They have maximised the benefit from donor funding by minimizing waste, safeguarding resources and planning for expansion. They do not see grant funding as free money, but as an opportunity to grow through effective stewardship of funds. This approach by other beneficiaries would assist in optimizing the outputs of LIFE projects.



The group was featured on JIS Community Beat initially in October 2011, interviewed by HOT102 FM in December 2011, featured in the Jamaica Observer of February 6, 2012 and the Sunday Gleaner of February 26, 2012. They were also interviewed on Nationwide on February 27, 2012.

Revolving Loan Initiative with Honey Plus Enterprise Fails

LIFE has decided to remove this approach to community development from its programme of activities as the members of Honey Plus Enterprise in Eastern St. Andrew have reneged on their promise to repay funds into a revolving loan scheme which would benefit beekeepers in the communities of Dallas Castle, Cane River and Chasworth. This is a major lessons learnt from this project.



Environmental Foundation of Jamaica

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING OF LIFE TO BUILD CAPACITY OF MEMBER ORGANISATIONS



Shereica Grant conducts small business management training with Spanish Town Beekeeping group

Through this project 203 persons from 12 community groups have participated in 193 hours of capacity building training up to February 2012. During September 2011 to January 2012 all groups participating in the beekeeping training activities received training in basic small business management as each apiary is a microenterprise. Goat farmers from the Hillview Community Group has benefited from training in goat rearing to improve productivity of existing stock, learn about rearing of goats in houses and how to prepare feed. On February 9, 2012 the HCG and Good Hope Goat farmers participated in a field trip to the farm of the champion farmer 2011 Oral Robinson to participate in a training workshop and to Bodles Agricultural Research Station to learn how to produce mash.



Wesley Tingling and Garfield McNaughton admire the 2011 champion goat at the farm of Champion Farmer 2011 Mr. Oral Robinson



Tanika Dennie, Nutritionist of Bodles Agricultural Research Station shows farmers how to produce mash during training session.



REFORESTATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES IN THE GOOD HOPE REGION

The beekeeping component has been complete and LIFE is now assisting the beneficiaries with technical assistance. Hive assessments were done on February 7 and 9, 2012 to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the new beekeepers. The assessments were done in Cane River, Dallas Castle, Hall's Delight, Chasworth and Constitution Hill. We had mixed fortunes. Some beekeepers were doing very well while others were lagging behind. The champion community would be Cane River and special mention must be made of Marcia Searchwell who



Donovan Drummond and Marcia Searchwell discuss beekeeping at her apiary

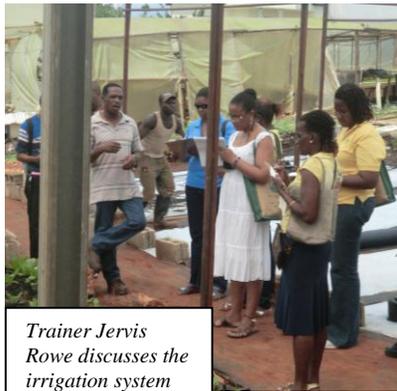


went from two boxes of bees to 10. So far 5 goat houses have been built using community labour and participants are participating in training in goat farming.



LIFE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Environmental Foundation of Jamaica



Trainer Jervis Rowe discusses the irrigation system

Greenhouse Training

LIFE staff members, along with two members each from the Mile Gully Entrepreneurial Group and Dallas Castle Producers, received training in greenhouse farming over the period July 2011 to January 2012. The training consisted of theory and practical sessions and covered a variety of topics



LIFE Greenhouse in Production

inclusive of benefits of protected farming, types of greenhouses, planting and maintenance of plants (irrigation, fertilising, pruning, trellising), harvesting and post-harvest handling, integrated pest

management and record keeping. Reaping commenced in January 2012 and we are gradually learning to implement all aspects of greenhouse farming and sale of produce.



COMMUNITY-BASED MICRO-ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT IN FIVE PARISHES IN JAMAICA

Beekeeping: This project completed training of 61 beekeepers during the period August to December 2011. Training was done in the parishes of St. Catherine and St. Thomas. Three groups were trained in collaboration with the following partners: Honeycomb Industries, St. Thomas Bee Farmers Association and the



Alric Service of Wheelerfield receives certificate and equipment from Claire Spence of the USAID



Spanish Town Beekeeping Group graduation

following partners: Honeycomb Industries, St. Thomas Bee Farmers Association and the

St. Catherine Bee Farmers Association. The trainers were Donovan Drummond and Delroy “Orunde” McNish. Participants attended 11 – 12 theory and practical sessions that covered topics such as the bee colony, hive management, reaping of honey and small business management. Closing ceremonies were held for the three groups that completed the training: Two in St. Catherine and one in St. Thomas. The newly trained beekeepers are currently in the process of establishing 10 colony apiaries and several should reap honey during this nectar flow period, January – June 2012. Training of the second batch of beekeepers in St Thomas commenced with an orientation session on January 10, 2012. This project is co-funded by the Inter American Foundation through support for the LIFE secretariat, training and administrative costs.

The Regional contracting Officer for USAID with responsibility for Jamaica, Ayana Angulo, met with



members of the Spanish Town Beekeeping Group on February 3, 2012. She visited two apiary sites and was accompanied by Allan Bernard, Kenneth Williams and Howard Clemetson of USAID. She found the visit very interesting as she learned a lot about beekeeping through on-going discussion with the beneficiaries and beekeeping trainer Donovan Drummond.



Alston Major of Crawle, St. Catherine takes box of bees to apiary site (1)



Delivery of bees Rowlandsfield and Wheelerfield, St.Thomas

Greenhouse Farming: This component of the project commenced in October 2011 with site identification and assessment with the partner in this activity, Mile Gully Entrepreneurial Group. Subsequently site preparation commenced in December 2011 under the guidance of consultant Jervis Rowe. Construction of the greenhouse structure commenced in March 2012.

Climate Change and Greenhouse Farming – Jervis Rowe

Increasing temperatures within our region place both open and protected agriculture under threat. My greenhouse is located approximately two thousand feet above sea level in the parish of Manchester, central Jamaica, where I was born and grew up. I have noticed a considerable change in at least two (2) aspects of climate, temperature and rainfall. The ideal range of temperature for our greenhouses is 72 - 76°C and a fall of 10 - 15°C during the night will not have adverse effects on production. Temperatures above 85°C are not recommended, but we have recorded 90°C. What are some of the impacts of exposing plants to too high temperatures?

- Plant functions are restrained and plant growth is reduced
- Pollination will not occur efficiently if the relative humidity is not within the vicinity of 70% and temperatures exceed the 70 - 82°F range.

- Plants are unable to efficiently use fertiliser feeds
- Physiological damage to fruit such as sunburns and sunscald on tomatoes and sweet peppers and tip burn in lettuce are quite common and increases as greenhouses warm up
- Workers are less comfortable in hot greenhouses making them less efficient in carrying out routine tasks.

Consequently greenhouse farmers have to find ways to keep greenhouses at acceptable temperatures as the earth warms. These will be discussed in the next newsletter.

LIFE Programme Development

On July 13, 2011 LIFE and its member groups met to compile information on the way forward for the LIFE programme. The draft LIFE programme has been prepared and the major components are:

- Micro-enterprise Development
- Environmental Management
- Capacity Building and Local Governance

LIFE Annual General Meeting:



The LIFE Annual General Meeting was held on November 30, 2011 at the VOUCH training room at 1 National Heroes Circle. Thirty-one members and stakeholders participated. Newly appointed board members were confirmed by the meeting and included Attorney at Law Mrs. Aluon Nombet Assamba, and Richard Grant of Churches Credit Union. Retiring Directors included Ivy Gordon of the Jeffrey Town Farmer's Association, Dave Allen of COMAND and Franklyn McDonald. We thank them for their unselfish contributions to the development of LIFE and of course they remain members of the LIFE family. The Annual report was presented to members providing

information on financial reporting, highlights of the LIFE programme, resource mobilisation and our beekeeping thrust.

LIFE New Members

LIFE welcomes the St. Thomas Bee Farmers Association, Jamaica Federation of Commercial Apiculturists and the John's Town Women Craft Collective as the newest members of LIFE. This mirrors our thrust in expansion of the beekeeping industry in Jamaica and supporting women's groups. Currently LIFE has 13 members that include community based organisations involved in community development (community water supply, education), facilitating the growth of microenterprises such as greenhouse farming, egg production, vending, beekeeping (honey, wax & Pollen), goat rearing, craft production and agro-processing.

LIFE Assists JFCA to Access Funding

The Jamaica Federation of Commercial Apiculturists has been successful in their application for funding from the GEF Small Grants Programme for application of renewable energy technology and reforestation to complement beekeeping. The project will be implemented in partnership with the Golden Grove Women Entrepreneurial Group and LIFE.



Protecting the environment is everyone's business!!!!

The printing of this newsletter is funded by the Inter American Foundation.