

Subsistence beekeeping is characterised by:



- Local bees
- Local methods
- Many beekeepers
- An extensive system
- Highly sustainable
- Cost effective: *'traditional'* systems may seem unproductive and unreliable at the level of a single hive, but viewed as an extensive system, they are efficient, low risk and cost-effective



Bees as a way out of poverty



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DIRECTOR

- Most of the world's poorest people practise subsistence agriculture
- Many of these people are beekeepers or honey hunters



Global problems in 2011



Poverty and
unemployment



Climate change



Urban sprawl



Deforestation



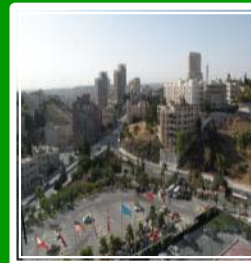
Rising fuel costs



Biodiversity loss



Loss of security



Water shortage

Aid – is a quick fix

For example:

- Giving cash
- Food in times of famine
- Replacement hives for those lost in earthquake

Development – is long term change

For example:

- Access to credit
- Ensuring food security
- Developing honey market systems

Development – is slow, long term assistance

Helping
beekeepers to
move from
subsistence
beekeeping ~
to significant
income generation



Subsistence beekeeper



- Poor and remote
- Honey provides a 'safety net' in times of need
- How to change this into beekeeping creating significant income?

What is the best way to help these beekeepers?

Top-bar hives

Refractometer

A place to store honey and beeswax

Smokers

Frame hives

Build a road

Internet access

Buckets

Bee suits

Honey jars

Training

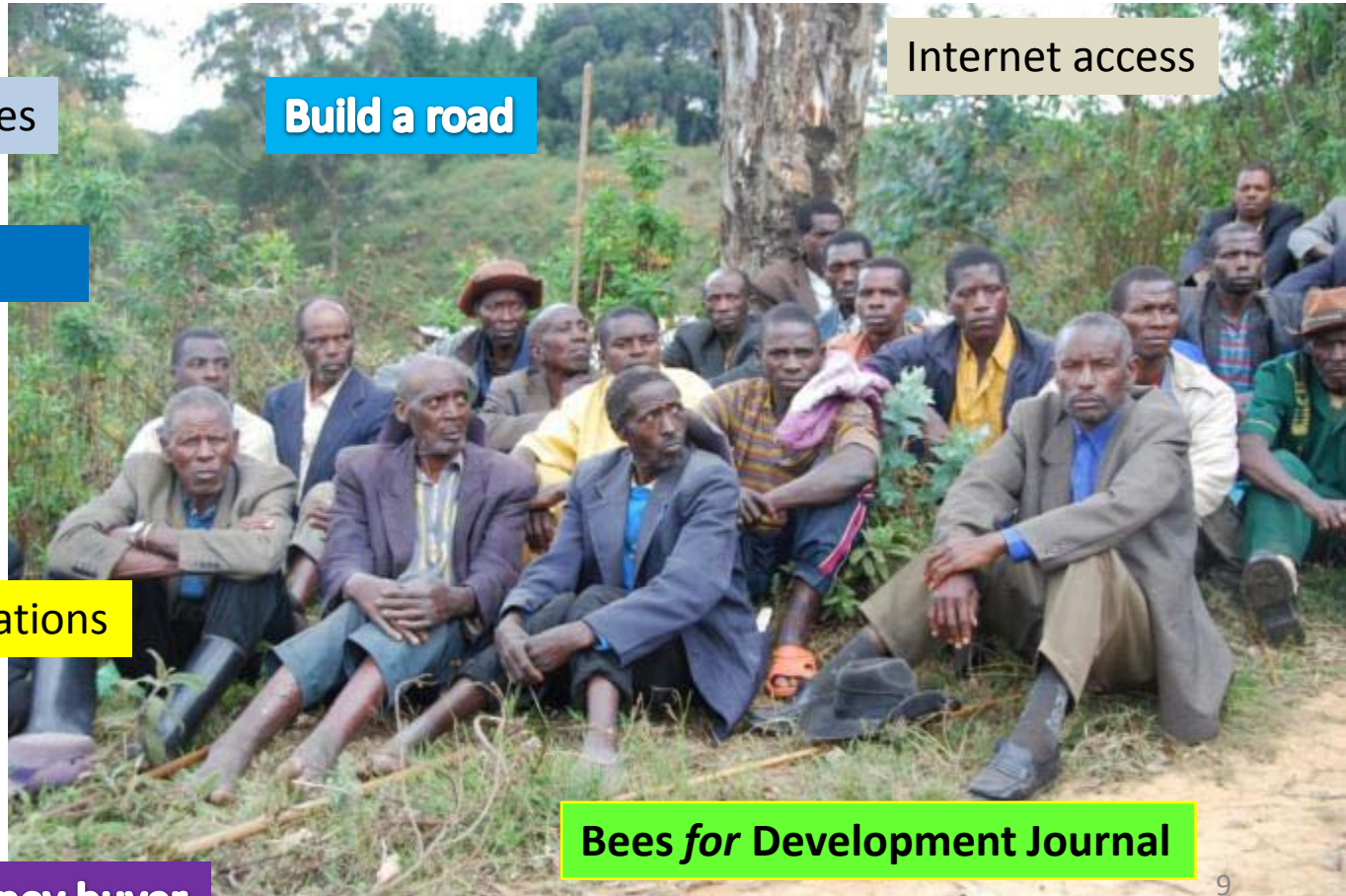
Micro-credit

HACCP regulations

A bee house

Bicycles

Access to a honey buyer



Bees for Development Journal



Bees *for* Development 's Top 10 recommendations to achieve sustainable growth by means of beekeeping

Recommendation 1

Identify the true constraints facing
beekeepers

1. Biological?
2. Technical?
3. Institutional?
4. Financial?
5. Market?

And find out what
interventions have
taken place already



Recommendation 2

**Use local bees
wherever possible
because:**

1. Local bees are adapted to their environment
2. No risk of importing pathogens





Recommendation 3

**Gain knowledge of local
bee biology and
behaviour**

Learn about local bees'
nesting, swarming, migration
and absconding behaviour

Honey bees have varying biology and behaviour according to the environment where they have evolved



Recommendation 4

Never ignore local apicultural skills

Understand and appreciate the knowledge of local beekeepers: their management of bee colonies may be excellent

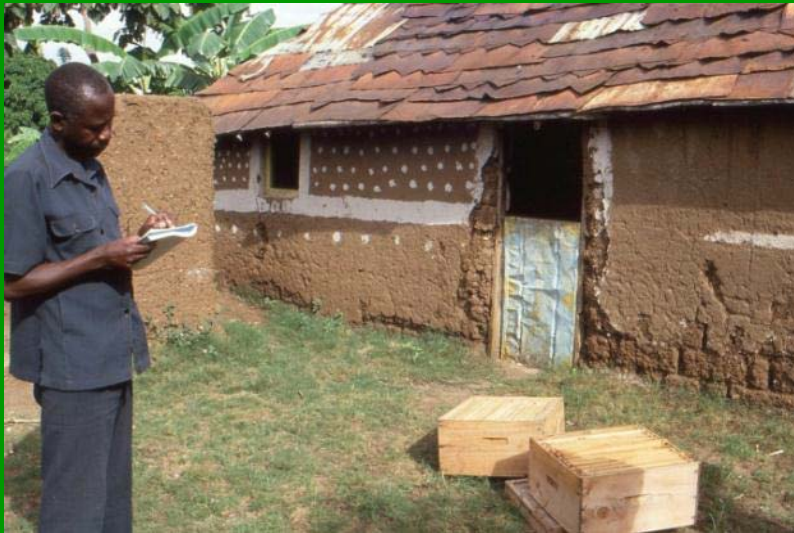


Recommendation 5

Understand the issues around technology choice

Consider:

1. The paradigm shift you may be causing
2. Poor people's need for risk minimisation





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Technology choice - the best hive is:

- appropriate for the biology and behaviour of bees being housed inside it
- appropriate for the resources available to the beekeeper
- facilitates good care of the colony
- enables efficient honey and beeswax harvest
- takes into consideration the behaviour of local pests and predators
- is suitable for the prevailing climate

There can be good business in hive and equipment provision to projects



The developing world is full of honey processing plants like this - not in use



- Emphasis on “modern” , imported technology
- Emphasis on increasing production per hive
- Packing plants remain empty - honey volumes remain low, because market systems do not work

Nobody likes a failure



- Unsuccessful projects tend not to be reported
- It is only after the project has closed that the lack of success is evident - to those who are interested
- Often the beekeepers are blamed
- Many donors have become fatigued with beekeeping projects

Many beekeeping projects have failed.
Too often – donated hives remain empty



Project planners, donors, government departments

- It is not easy to assist people who are poor and remote
- PMAs [Plans for Modernisation of Agriculture]
- Capital inputs are easy to deliver, and provide fast, tangible, visible evidence of support
- Globalised methods appear easy to provide – standard inputs (bees, equipment, know how)
- And one bee can look much like another..



Why do projects persist in focussing on equipment delivery?

This approach rarely brings significant benefits.

- Poor situation analysis – planners believe (wrongly) that provision of equipment is the key intervention point for ‘commercialising’ and ‘modernising’ apiculture

Recommendation 6

Be prepared to invest in training and follow-up support

1. It takes two years to train a beekeeper
2. Trainers must know far more than beekeeping. They must provide business skills to create and run apiculture enterprises



Recommendation 7

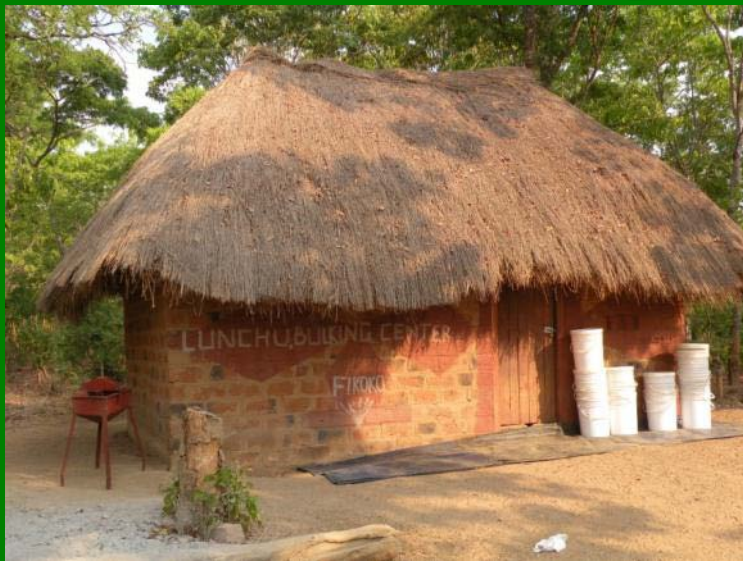
Consider issues of market access

Producer organisations are crucial for beekeepers to engage profitably in the market chain

They must be:

- Business focussed
- Main objective is collective marketing
- Producer owned and managed

BUT costs must be kept low or the organisation will fail



Market access challenges



**I can produce honey,
but there is no market**



Market access challenges



I could sell local honey, but there are no supplies



The problems are perceived to be:

- By beekeepers: no market
- By traders: no supplies –
- This is interpreted as ‘low production’

The real problem is lack of a functioning market chain.

The ideal situation

Bees produce top quality honey from a clean environment

People harvest products of top quality and sufficient volume

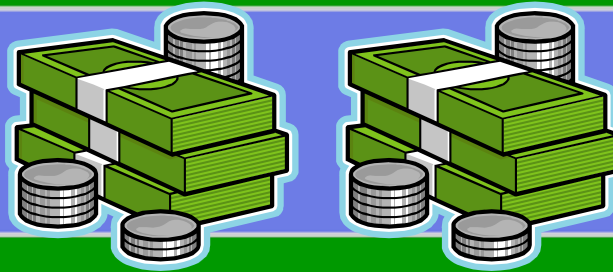
Products collected in significant volume i.e. Tonnes (not Kg)

Traders buy at fair price

Products bought by

- Domestic consumers
- AND/OR
- International buyers

Honey

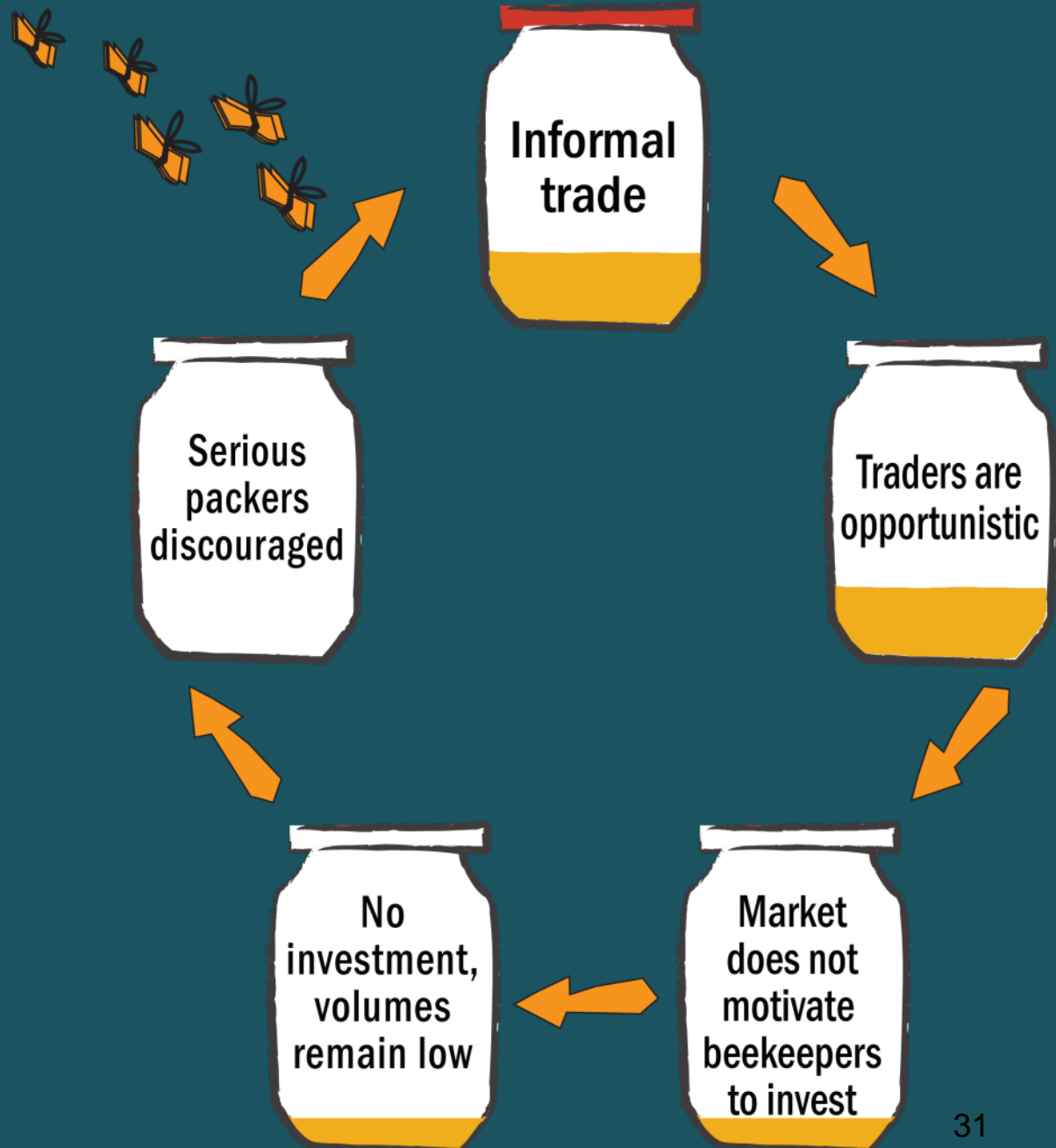


Money

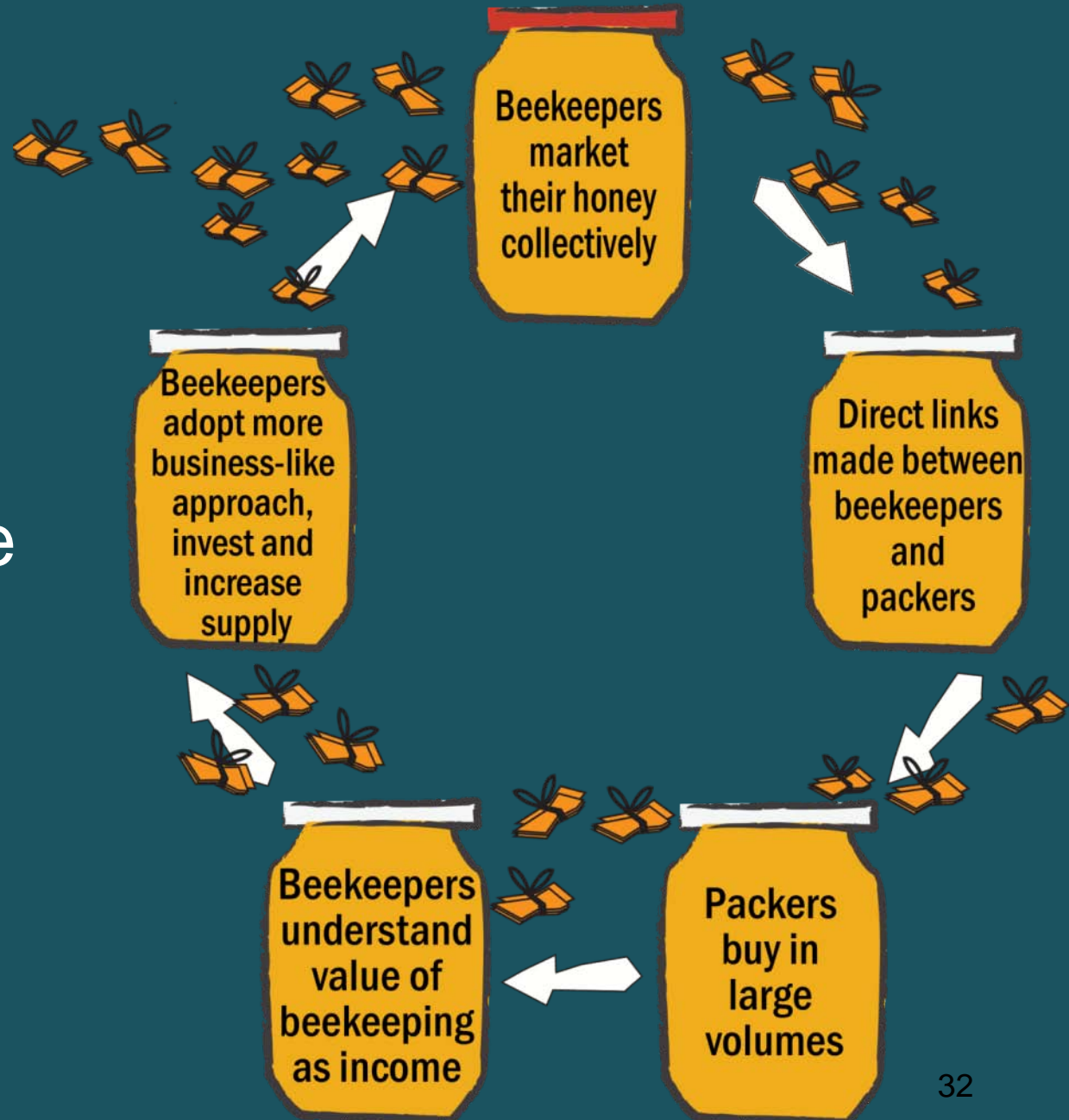
STRENGTHENING TRADE IN HONEY IN UGANDA



Negative feedback cycle



New supply chain links are needed to build a positive cycle



STRENGTHENING TRADE – THE FUTURE

- Work to develop direct to packer supply route
- Develop commercial collection centre systems
- Build the business skills of beekeepers
- Build trading groups of beekeepers
- Invest in relationship building
- Enable financial investment for packers



Sustainable supply chains, based on business principles and good relationships between producers and packers, are the key to scaling up the industry

Selling more honey means finding new markets.

This places new demands on beekeepers to organise and meet market quality expectations.



Recommendation 8

Understand the issues around honey quality

1. The best quality honey is in the bees' nest
2. Excellent handling is of utmost importance



Honey *quality* means different things:

The principle of maintaining honey just as the bees perfected it, *or*

- ‘Quality’ according to defined standards and market criteria, e.g. national or EU criteria
- ‘Quality’ according to the consumer’s personal preference: taste, colour, consistency
- ‘Quality’ of the shelf product: good packaging and labelling

Recommendation 9

Fully explore and saturate the domestic market before considering export.

Add value to products.

Create niche products by telling the story of their production, and create secondary products



Recommendation 10

Aim to build a business that is sustainable in every aspect



Beekeeping projects must not subsidise honey production or trade



BfD's ten recommendations for successful beekeeping development

1. Identify the true constraints facing beekeepers
2. Use local bees wherever possible
3. Gain knowledge of local bee biology and behaviour
4. Never ignore local apicultural skills
5. Understand the issues around technology choice
6. Be prepared to invest in training & follow-up support
7. Consider issues of market access
8. Understand the issues around honey quality
9. Add value to products. Fully explore and saturate the domestic market before considering export
10. Aim to build a business that is sustainable in every aspect

What was the best way to help these beekeepers in Rwanda?

Top-bar hives

Refractometer

A place to store honey and beeswax

Smokers

Frame hives

Build a road

Internet access

Buckets

Bee suits

Honey jars

Training

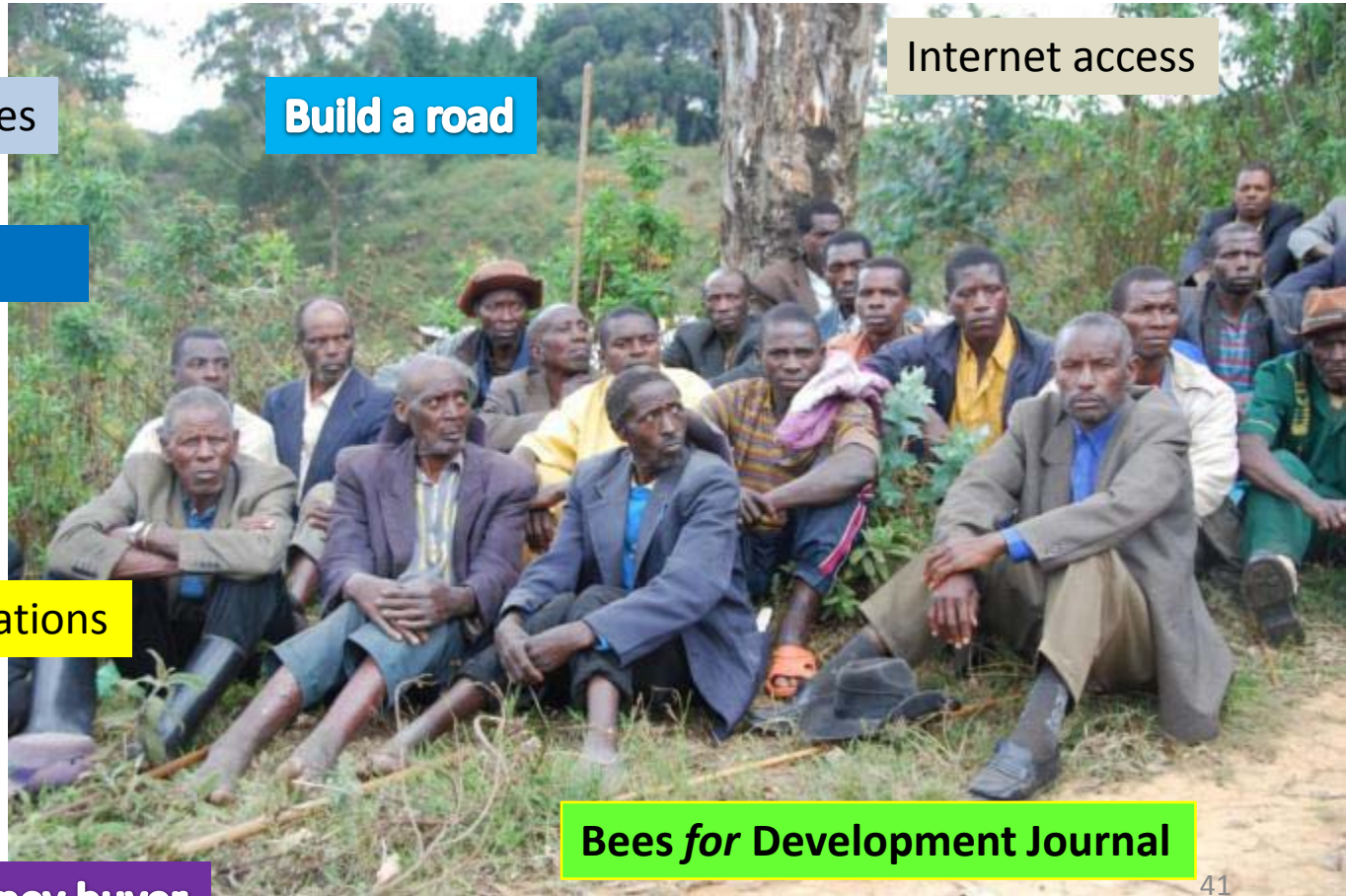
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Is beekeeping a feasible route out of poverty?

- What is the best way to help these beekeepers in Rwanda?



Buffer zone



Access rights to Nyungwe forest



Thank you!



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