



Empowering Beekeepers, and Protecting Community Forests in Kongola, Zambezi



The Namibian Nature Foundation's Forestry team, in collaboration with Dr. Ortwin Aschenborn, beekeeping specialist, led a 2-day intensive training in Kongola for beekeepers from the Mudumu North Complex at the end of May, supported by the **Dream Fund/COMON Foundation** and **Bengo/Kaza Arise** projects.

This hands-on training focused on the harvesting and processing of honey and by-products such as beeswax. It was followed by a 1-day refresher course for a second group of newly selected beekeepers, which offered an opportunity for two advanced trainers to step into a training role. The sessions also welcomed two beekeepers from Bwabwata National Park, supported through NNF's Climate Adaptation for Protected Areas (CAPA) project, marking a step toward deeper collaboration across conservation programs.



This training forms part of a broader initiative to promote alternative sources of livelihood for Community Forests in Namibia through non-timber forest products (NTFPs) like honey. The participants have received ongoing support, including essential protective gear and smokers, to ensure safety and effectiveness in their work.

Beekeeping plays a critical role in forest protection by providing communities with viable economic alternatives that don't rely on deforestation-based activities, preserving forest ecosystems. In Kongola, NNF-supported beekeepers have access to the new Honey Hub facilities to harvest and bottle honey using the honey extractor and other equipment in the Honey Hub, as well as processing beeswax into high-value products like candles, skin lotion, and foundation strips. These efforts build on previous work. In 2024, NNF trained beginner beekeepers from Mudumu North Complex. This year, those same individuals returned for follow-up training, where they harvested honey from three hives and used Kongola Honey Hub's extractor to process their yield, demonstrating both progress and continuity. Two of the more advanced beekeepers trained through the NNF program took the lead in demonstrating harvesting and basic beekeeping techniques to these beginner beekeepers. This approach of training-the-trainers is key to expanding knowledge and building self-sufficiency within local communities.

As forest degradation threatens traditional ways of life, initiatives like this show how sustainable resource use can unlock new opportunities, strengthen resilience, and keep forests standing for good.

These activities fall under the project titled "Bees and Trees" implemented by the **Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF)** with funding from **Dream Fund/COMON Foundation** and **Bengo/Kaza Arise**.



For more information regarding this project or other projects under the NNF Sustainable Forestry Programmatic area, contact Frances Chase.





Kongola beekeepers preparing for hive inspection at the Kwandu Conservancy Office.



Hive inspection by the Kongola beekeepers, led by Dr Ortwin Aschenborn.



Beekeeping specialist and trainer, Dr Ortwin Aschenborn, sharing knowledge on harvesting of honey.



Collected hives that are being transported to the Kongola Honey Hub for honey harvesting and processing.



Beekeepers preparing the hive frames in the Kongola Honey Hub for harvesting honey using the recently acquired frame extractor.



Beekeepers in Kongola can now make use of the Honey Hub's frame extractor and other processing equipment that is part of the Honey Hub containers at the Directorate of Forestry in Kongola.