



Hj Amat Mohd Yusof, (4th left) Secretary of Natural Resource Department, presents a wooden beehive to Johnween Galuk, Leader of Kg Tudan Apiculture Group, witnessed by Kazunobo Suzuki (3rd left).



Amat tries a wild fruit in Kg Tudan, accompanied by Galuk and Suzuki.

Using bees' instinctive diligence to improve livelihood!

Kan Yaw Chong

BEES have a time honoured global reputation for instinctive diligence. Here's a unique rural apiculture project hatched to reap the fruits of their natural diligence and productivity to generate handsome passive incomes, to improve the livelihood of remote hill-locked village Kg Tudan tucked inside the buffer zone of the Crocker Range Park, in the hinterlands of Tuaran District.

On a good season where flowers abound in the nearby forests, one single hive can produce as much as 5 to 6 kgs of natural wild honey worth tens of ringgit per kg, according to a key member of the project.

The brain child of this interesting project traces back to the Japan International Co-operation Agency - Sustainable Development on Biodiversity & Ecosystems Conservation (JICA-SDBEC) implemented jointly in collaboration with the Sabah State Government.

Deservedly so, Hj Amat Mohd Yusof, Secretary of Natural Resources Department (Hasil Bumi) Sabah, drove all the way into Kg Tudan on 2 December to launch the bee hive presentation ceremony to officially kick off the project, while JICA, which donated the materials to make the bee hives, invited *Daily Express* to cover the event.

All about sustainable living without jeopardising future: Natural Resource Secretary

"You are lucky to have been chosen as a model to uplift the people's livelihood standard through this collaborative programme between the State Government and JICA, known as Sustainable Development on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Conservation," Amat told the 15-strong bee-keepers Group of Kg Tudan.

"This is about sustainable living by using the limited available resources without jeopardising the rights of our grand children to the use of these resources in the future," Amat said.

"The key objective of this State Government project together with JICA is to promote the use of resources without jeopardising the quality of the environment," noted Amat who cited the training in breeding honey bees provided by experts from the State Agriculture Department in Jenom.

"This is yet another effort to improve the quality of life of the people by using an environment-friendly approach," he said.

Quality of life goes beyond money: Amat

"The quality of life is not only measured in terms of money or

how high the standard of living is but it must be seen together with other aspects, such as clean air to breathe, clean water to drink every day, as they have direct bearing on people's health and happiness on the physical and spiritual dimensions of life," Amat pointed out.

"What is special about this programme is that these activities actually came up in the first instance as requests by the people," Amat said.

"This is why I believe that your commitment is high and indeed the success of this programme depends on the commitment and active participation of the people of Kg Tudan without which it is difficult and I hope the fruits of all these efforts will be sustained," he said.

Success crucial

"The success of this programme is very important because this model will be used to plan the development of other villages with similar surface topography and socio-economic conditions," Amat reminded the villagers to be mindful on the substantial investment already injected into the project thus far.

"I am aware that JICA has spent a substantial amount of money to assist in a land suitability study in addition to teaching the people on how to upgrade the quality of the lands by using char-bamboo rather than bamboo pieces, taught how to do compost fertilisers for cultivation of highland vegetables and one more activity being planned for Kg Tudan is homestay," Amat noted.

"I believe the products coming from this protected environment without taking short cuts, will be marketable not only in Sabah but possibly penetrate external markets as well, given proper storage, preparation and packaging," Amat sounded a futuristic potential.

In view of these future possibilities, Amat called on the villagers to co-operate with the JICA and the various State Government agencies to plan and implement the SDBEC programmes with earnest.

A son of Kg Tudan heading for Japan!

Amat concluded the ceremony with an announcement that Kg Tudan hailed Form Six teacher, Jenius Gadiman, currently teaching at SMK St Martin's, Tambunan, had been picked by JICA to be sent to Japan for training on 'Environmental Conservation & Education Programme', from 11-30 January 2015.

"I hope the knowledge and experience acquired by Jenius from this training will be implemented among the young people of Kg Tudan," Amat said.



Jenius Gadiman- Kg Tudan-hailed teacher has been picked by JICA for environment conservation training in Japan, next month.



JICA Chief Advisor Kazunobo Suzuki with Mt Kinabalu in a background as seen from Tudan.

"But needless to say, without a clean environment, beekeeping cannot be done. This is the strong advantage of Tudan," Suzuki was emphatic.

"What JICA-SDBEC aims to realise is a society in harmony with nature in Tudan and developing a model which can be replicated in other villages in Sabah and

beyond," Suzuki said.

"I believe that through beekeeping in Tudan, we can find good lessons and practices. For this reason, all should work together continuously," said Suzuki who thanked the State Government, the Tuaran District Office and the Tudan community.



Irresistible golden honey comb.

'More and better honey by combining modern, traditional knowledge'

Earlier on, Johnween Galuk, leader of the 15-strong Kg Tudan Apiculture Group, thanked JICA-SDBEC and the State Government for what he called "this meaningful project."

"Twenty units of honey hives are budgeted for each participant who are given the opportunity to get directly involved in the process of preparing the honey hives," Galuk said in his opening speech.

"We learnt to combine traditional technology with modern knowledge in preparing the bee hives we call 'bohungan'."

"Traditional technology is used because it's proven to have worked for centuries but modern techniques improve both the quality and quantity of the honey," Galuk pointed out.

"Our apiculture project which started in September 2014 currently has a total of 300 units of bee hives (bohungan) and about 40 units or 13 percent of the hives (bohungan) have honey population," said Galuk who believed it would bring benefits to the community especially the participants through value-added passive incomes and may also excite curious visitors from foreign lands.

"We hope the unique honeybee project by JICA SDBEC in Kg Tudan will be documented well, for future reference" said Galuk who expressed his gratitude for the "opportunity" to join the project and urged his "fellow friends" to "work hard and work smart" together to make Kg Tudan "a hub for honey production."



A beehive in Kg Tudan.



The 15-strong Kg Tudan Apiculture Group with Ama and Suzuki

Beekeeping project 'a milestone', says Jica chief

JICA Chief Advisor, Kazunobu Suzuki, who spoke in Bahasa Malaysia, described the official bee-hive presentation ceremony "a milestone" which highlights the strong collaboration between Kg Tudan and JICA-SDBEC.

"Recognising that there are pressing needs for livelihood improvement at Kg Tudan, JICA-SDBEC has been providing technical and financial resources for the community and bee keeping is one of them deemed necessary," he said.

"Moreover, I know that bee keeping in Kg Tudan and its local technology has been inherited from your ancestors. So bee keeping can contribute to not only livelihood improvement but also protection of local and traditional knowledge and technology," Suzuki pointed out.