

# Busy bees on our rooftop



## Protecting Destinations

Culture & biodiversity



## Summary

Due to the (well-documented) decline of bees and their essential environmental function, the Luxembourg City youth hostel decided in 2013 to collaborate with a local beekeeper and lend its roof to three colonies of bees.

## Objectives

We wanted to support the local biodiversity and raise awareness of both the vital importance and harmlessness of bees. The honey we receive in turn is used in the in-house restaurant as well as sold to guests in jars, which helps us maintain the project and break even.

### HI Association

**Youth Hostel Association Luxembourg**

### Hostels involved

**Luxembourg City Hostel**

### SDG Contribution



## Economic

Value for guests  
Financial support

## Social

Community education

## Environmental

Awareness and biodiversity



## Methodology

### **What would you recommend to those who would like to have their own busy bees on the rooftop?**

Don't fear bees! When we started with the project, there were worries that the bees could potentially annoy our guests. But that never happened. You would be surprised how little the bees care about humans even when standing right next to the hive. If it wasn't for us promoting our own honey, guests wouldn't have even noticed the fact that we have three colonies of bees living on our roof. It's been over 4 years now and we haven't received a single complaint, on the contrary.

The programme has been very successful and initial fears that bees could have a negative impact on our guests' travel experience have turned out to be completely unfounded.

### **Which concrete steps did you follow to implement this initiative?**

Very straight forward:

- \* Contact local beekeeping association
- \* Discuss formalities with beekeeper (price per kilo of honey provided, access to the hives, etc)
- \* Notify city council / ministry for permission
- \* Let the bees get to work
- \* Receive honey, fill into jars, add labels
- \* Create educational material on display at point of sale of honey



### **What was the initial aim to start such an initiative?**

The plan ranged from raising awareness to supporting biodiversity. As a bonus, we get honey to use in the restaurant or sell in jars, the proceeds of which help us maintain the project. Truth be told: It's not profitable, but we break even. We do something good for the environment and it doesn't cost us a thing!



### **Who is involved in this project?**

The beekeeper stops by for regular checks, maintenance, and eventually the harvest. Once the hostel gets the honey, its staff fills it into jars, labels them, sells them at the reception or passes them on to the restaurant. We rent the hives from the local beekeeper, and in return he gets part of the proceeds from honey we sell. It's been working very well for both sides.

### **What equipment is necessary to carry-out this activity?**

All necessary equipment is provided by our beekeeper, except for the jars we buy and labels we have printed.

### **How much honey are you able to produce with the hives?**

In total, the three hives produce roughly 80 kg (176 lbs) of honey per season.

### **What else other than beehives can we find on your green roof?**

Initially we wanted to add a herb garden to the roof, but due to practical reasons (easier day-to-day access for our kitchen staff), we decided to instead have it as part of our regular garden. We plan on getting more bees at other hostels though!

### **What are the positive outcomes of this project?**

Above all, we have been overwhelmed with the positive feedback. Our first batch of honey sold out within days, much of which went to curious neighbours who were excited to buy something locally produced. As the project has also appeared in various newspapers, we certainly managed to raise awareness and perhaps even encouraged others to take up beekeeping.

### **Why do you think bees need protection?**

Like all animals, bees form an essential part of our ecosystem and furthermore play an underestimated role in plant diversity and pollination.

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## **Technical details**

**Duration of the activity:** Ongoing

**Reach:** Local/National/International

**Frequency:** Constant

#### **Target audience:**

- HI Members
- Guests
- General Public
- Staff
- Children

#### **How many people are required to organise the activity?**

- Staff members: 1

#### **How is the activity funded?**

- % by YHA: 100%

#### **How many people are required to run the activity?**

- Staff members: 2



**How did you communicate this initiative to find participants?**

- NA eNewsletter
- Posters in the hostel
- Web page
- Social media

**How did you communicate this initiative to your members/stakeholders?**

- eNewsletter
- Social media

**Partners' satisfaction:** 100%

**Participants' satisfaction:** 100%

**Hostel/Association's satisfaction with the activity:** 100%

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**Would you like to know more about this initiative?**

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