OP-198 [Beekeeping for Rural Development]
Engaging youth and children in beekeeping through the honeyway.by initiative: a model for education, sustainability and community empowerment

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1. Introduction
Pollinators are vital to global biodiversity and food systems, yet their populations are declining due to habitat destruction, climate change, and chemical overuse. Engaging youth in apiculture presents a strategic opportunity to reverse this trend while fostering sustainable development.

2. Problem/Objective
However, existing educational programs often fail to integrate hands-on practice, community engagement, and digital tools, limiting their ability to inspire long-term youth participation in environmental stewardship.

3. Here We Show
Here we demonstrate that the Honeyway.by initiative, a six-year Belarusian program combining school-based education, apiary training, and public events, significantly enhances ecological literacy and empowers youth to drive pollinator conservation.

4. Main Results & Conclusions
From 2018–2024, the program engaged 2000 children (8–16 years) and 400 adolescents through three pillars:
1. Curriculum-aligned workshops using films and online classes improved understanding of bee ecology (78% proficiency gain).
2. Hands-on apiary training with mentors enabled 45% of teens to launch advocacy projects or micro-apiaries.
3. Annual World Bee Day festivals strengthened community ties, with 32% of families adopting pollinator-friendly practices like planting bee friendly gardens.

The hybrid model—blending education, mentorship, and public outreach—proved critical in sustaining engagement across age groups.
5. Implications
This framework offers a scalable solution for regions facing pollinator decline and rural depopulation, directly supporting SDGs 4 (education), 13 (climate action), and 15 (life on land). By transforming youth into ambassadors for bees, Honeyway.by provides a replicable blueprint to cultivate ecologically literate, proactive communities worldwide.

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HONEYWAY INITIATIVE

Engaging youth and children in Beekeeping through the HoneyWay initiative: a model for education, sustainability and community empowerment

Volha Haurylik
CEO and Co-founder of Honeyway
Belarus

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WHY IT MATTERS?

- Decline in bee populations worldwide
- Disconnect between youth and nature because they do not spend much time outdoors
- Lack of educational programs focused on sustainability and beekeeping
- Information overload what can lead to Physical-mental disconnect both in Youth and adults

CHALLENGES WITH CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

- Lack of hands-on practice
- Weak community engagement
- Limited use of digital tools
- As a result: lowlong-term youth participation

HOW TO FIND AN APPROACH TO YOUNG PEOPLE DURING THE ACTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF AI AND CONSTANT CHANGES?

WE HAVE FOUND
A WAY!

THIS IS THE WAY-

HONEYWAY INITIATIVE !

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YOUTH ENGAGEMENT =

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY FOR SUSTAINABILITY

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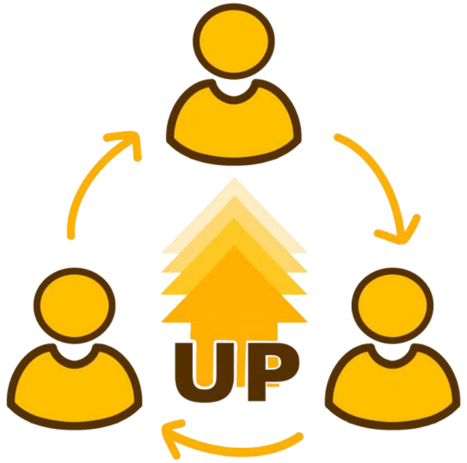
ABOUT HONEYWAY INITIATIVE

It was founded in 2018 to preserve beekeeping traditions and support rural communities

OUR MISSION:

- Promote sustainable honey production
- Educate youth about bees, ecology and entrepreneurship
- Empower communities through skills and collective action



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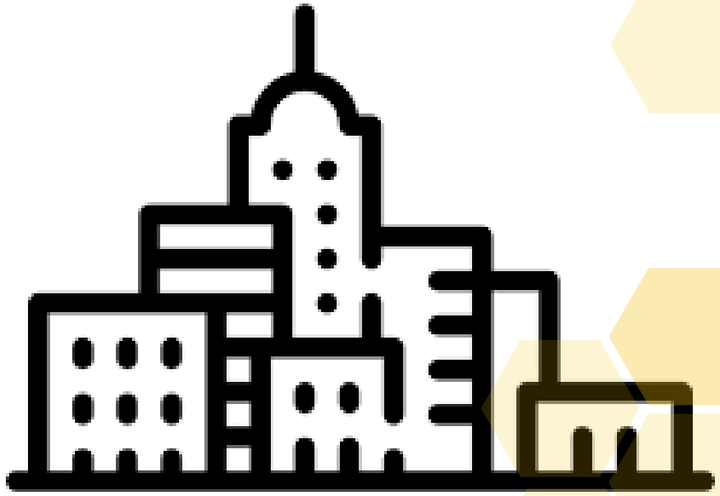
Our Roots: Where Honeyway Began

PROJECT LOCATION:

Based in the small village of Poreche - surrounded by nature and traditions of beekeeping

PERSONAL STORY:

A real-life example of how people can move from a city to a small village and build a successful, sustainable life connected to nature and community.



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Results of the Honeyway Initiative from 2018 to 2025

- 8 drawing contests
- 3workshops (students led it for their classmates)
- 2000 children (ages 8–16) and 400 adolescents involved over 6 years
- 28 schools and 3 universities involved
- 12 Workshops in Schools
- 10 online classes

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Hands–on training

Lecture for classmates

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RESULTS OF THE HONEYWAY INITIATIVEFROM 2018 TO 2025

1.Education:

workshops & online classes → 78% gaining understanding bee ecology

2.Hands-On Training:

Mentored apiary practice → 45% of teens launched advocacy projects or micro-apiaries
(usually one of the parent is a beekeeper)

3.Community Impact:

Annual World BeeDay festivals → 32% of families adopted pollinator-friendly practices

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WORLD BEE DAY IN PORECHE

2018

2023

2025

CHEESE AND HONEY FEST IN GRODNO 2025

DRAWING CONTESTS

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM HONEYWAY

Mobile-Free Zone (Digital Detox)

Encourages focus, creativity and real-world interaction

Helps participants reconnect with nature and each other

Explore New Professions

Beekeeper, Honey Sommelier, Entrepreneur, Biologist, Teacher and more

Hands-On Experience

Try these professions in practice through workshops, mentoring and apiary activities

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CONCLUSION: OUR IMPACT

- **Hybrid model:** education + mentorship + public outreach
- **Engagement** across all age groups
- Improved **ecological literacy** and **community participation**
- Not just keeping bees — **growing their greatest advocates**

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WHY INVEST IN YOUTH?

Protect bees and the environment

Empower a new generation of informed citizens

Build values of sustainability and community

Inspire practical action for lasting change

Global Impact of Honeyway.by

Scalable solution for:

- Pollinator decline
- Rural depopulation

Transforms youth into bee ambassador

Supports SDGs *:

4 – Quality Education

15 – Life on Land

13 – Climate Action

*Sustainable Development Goals

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION !

Join us and bee a mentor, partner or supporter to foster this movement and guide the next generation of bee ambassadors!

HONEYWAY.BY

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