

# CHEC

## ANNUAL REPORT

### 2020





**The Commonwealth Human Ecology Council (CHEC)  
is a Commonwealth civil society organisation and UK Registered Charity  
that promotes,  
disseminates and applies the principles of Human Ecology in the  
Commonwealth and beyond.**

**It has been a catalyst in promoting sustainability, particularly in terms of human  
settlements, fisheries, afforestation and strengthening community action,  
especially for the advancement of women and youth.**

**CHEC is highly active in advocating and promoting the role of civil society and  
participatory decision making in good governance and sustainable development**

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### Commonwealth Human Ecology Council (CHEC)

Registration address:  
c/o Brown McLeod  
The Old Workshop  
1 Ecclesall Road South  
Sheffield S11 9PA

Tel: +44 (0)20 3689 0979

e-mail:  
contact@checinternational.org

Website:  
www.checinternational.org

Registered Charity No. 272018

\*\* NGO in Special Consultative  
Status with the UN Economic and  
Social Council (ECOSOC)

\*\* Accredited to the  
Commonwealth Secretariat

\*\*Member of Commonwealth  
Consortium for Education (CCfE)

\*\*Member of BOND

Editors: Ian Douglas  
Eva Ekehorn  
Mark Robinson

Layout: Eva Ekehorn

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*Sungai Buloh, Selangor, Malaysia*  
(Photo Ian Douglas)

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## 1. Message from the Chairman

Mark Robinson



During 2020 CHEC has focused on areas of great international concern such as climate change, air pollution, food and water security, plastic in the oceans, urban resilience as well as the role of education where CHEC believes human ecological thinking can help towards sustainability. CHEC's work on Mangroves, which was supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat, highlighted the concerns of rising sea levels, tropical storms and protection of coastal fishing grounds.

CHEC UK works with other CHEC Chapters and contacts around the Commonwealth, and in partnership with other civil society organisations with a similar focus. CHEC is a member of the Informal Forum of Commonwealth Organisations (IFCO) which brings Commonwealth Accredited Organisations together to discuss where they can work in greater harmony and partnership. CHEC is also in Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). As human ecology is a global subject, CHEC also works in partnership with other ecological organisations, supporting conferences on sustainability and human ecology as well as other relevant activities. CHEC works in concert with both the Commonwealth Secretariat, to which it is accredited, and the Commonwealth Foundation. CHEC has also registered for COP26, to be held in Glasgow November 2021. Approval of the application is still pending.

In October 2020 CHEC moved out of its office in London and became a virtual organisation. This means that meetings take place on Zoom, and an archive will be set up online, to facilitate access for CHEC's Governing Board members.

## 2. Projects

### 2019-2020 Mangrove Project



In July 2019, CHEC decided to respond to an invitation to bid for funds for activities as part of the Commonwealth at 70 celebrations (<https://thecommonwealth.org/commonwealth-70>). Mangroves were seen as a crucial issue of environmental and social significance to people throughout the Commonwealth and are a major focus within the Commonwealth Blue Charter. Many Commonwealth countries with tropical shorelines, from Belize to Australia, have significant areas of mangroves. For many island states, such as the Maldives and Kiribati, mangroves are crucial protectors of the coastline and nurseries for fisheries. CHEC trustees and partners in the SW Pacific and West Africa made suggestions about partners to involve in two actions: the production of a special issue of the journal "Human Ecology" and the making of small grants to NGOs in low-income countries.

Mangrove forests, occupying less than 14 million hectares, just 2.5% of the size of the Amazon rainforest, provide a broad array of ecosystem services. Mangroves are critical nursery habitats for fish, birds and marine mammals; act as effective nutrient filters; buffer coastal communities from storm surges; and support numerous rural economies. These ecosystem service benefits have been valued at an average of 4200 US\$ per hectare per year in Southeast Asia. Fishing, in addition to being a source of nourishment and income (provisioning services), frequently provides spiritual activity and aesthetic benefits for communities and individuals.

The Journal special issue contained contributions from Australia, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, The Gambia and the UK. It is available online at [CHEC Journal - 'Human Ecology 30: Mangroves' Published - CHEC International](#). The writers of the articles made suggestions about organisations which would benefit from a small activity grant. Confirmation of funding (£ 5,000) came with a request that the expenditure be

completed within a month. However, that challenge was met by engaging swiftly with key personnel in Fiji, the Gambia, India, Malaysia, Maldives, and Samoa. Activities varied from workshops for fisherfolk and for community members in Kerala, the World Mangrove celebrations in Malaysian coastal villages, the preparation of exhibition posters in Fiji and Samoa, and mangrove replanting exercises in Maldives and the Gambia. Many hundreds of people benefitted from these activities, through the effective outreach organised by our partners.

It demonstrated that practical action can be achieved with limited resources through effective personal interaction. Reports on the activities and their outcomes are available at:

[CHEC Celebrates World Mangrove Day 2020 on Three Oceans - CHEC International](#)

[Maldives-Mangrove-Project-Report.pdf \(checinternational.org\)](#)

[Mangrove Project activities under COVID-19 in Kerala, India - CHEC International](#)

This model of rapid establishment and delivery of small community-based participatory events could make an effective mechanism for helping on-going conservation and community development programmes or initiating interest in longer term project plans.

## **Bees and Pollinators**

The CHEC Uganda Youth-led beekeeping and entrepreneur pilot project got off to a wonderful start in the Spring of 2020 with the YOFENET (Young Farmers Entrepreneur Network), a community-led organisation managed by Mathias Walwana, and a professional young trainer, Angela Namukwaya, who worked with YOFENET training youth in beekeeping. Prior to the CHEC pilot project, the young farmers of YOFENET had been mentored by Dave Bonner of Bees Abroad for several years. During that time the young people had been trained in beekeeping and set up a training apiary. They had learned to make their own hives and harvest honey. They had been taken to Nairobi for extensive expert beekeeping training and sold their harvested honey at Uganda agriculture fairs. Angela Namukwaya, the project manager, was chosen for her extensive experience in beekeeping training working with many Uganda beekeeping and honey producing companies. She had a knowledge of VSLAs, (Village Savings and Loan Associations). This was vital for preparation of the beneficiaries to ensure the young entrepreneurs would safeguard their livelihoods in producing honey. Angela had provided CHEC with a dynamic proposal for the training of 16 young single mothers who had dropped out of school in four parishes of Baitambogwe Sub-County, Mayuge district of eastern Uganda. The VSLA, would provide them with the foundation of saving skills for their business. When the CHEC review team first considered their application, we recognised Mathias and Angela were the only youth-led community organisation who had provided us with such a detailed project proposal. They were also a young organisation, which had limited capacity still to be realised, yet a substantial amount of enthusiasm, drive and determination which Dave Bonner of Bees Abroad confirmed. We agreed, with the ongoing support and guidance of our Uganda advisor Bosco Okello, CEO of Apitrade Africa, and Dave Bonner, from Bees Abroad, the YOFENET youth-led organisations would have the skills and encouragement to attain the goals of the project.

Bees Abroad visited the CHEC/YOFENET pilot project in February 2020 to check the beekeeping equipment purchased with the CHEC Grant and confirm it was up to standard. Dave provided a wonderful film with Angela, the YOFENET young farmers and the beneficiaries. Bosco Okello attended the pilot project a few weeks later when the YOFENET young farmers and Angela organised a ceremony to hand over the equipment to the 16 beneficiaries with their families. The training began and continued through February and March providing an extensive overview of beekeeping theory and practical skills including making handmade basket beehives and smokers.

The 48 Kenya top bee hives were then sited at sixteen apiaries across four parishes along with 32 handmade hives providing a total of five hives for each beginner's apiary. The training included learning to bait the hives, hive management, inspirational talks and introduction of a village saving and loan group so the young mothers could learn to save from their honey sales. The CHEC and HEF Grant included providing

lunches for the single mothers during the training sessions. Following the siting of the hives, within the first weeks, 20 hives had been colonised. The plan was for Bosco Okello to attend twice a month to assist Angela, the trainer, and the YOFENET team, to attend each apiary and oversee hive and apiary management with each of the 16 single mothers for the next eight months. Due to the young single mothers having no formal education, and forced to drop out of school due to pregnancy, they lacked confidence and discipline. For these reasons, the CHEC Review team impressed upon both Angela and Mathias, that a condition of the grant was that the YOFENET young farmers' organisation and Angela would need to support the inexperienced beneficiaries with hive management each month during the early stages of hive management, April to December, until their confidence and skills of hive management and honey harvesting increased. Hive management skills included colonization, managing swarms and abscondment of bees and the ongoing decongestion, cleaning from ants, rodents, rebaiting, and debranching and overall health of apiaries.



The news of the Covid-19 Pandemic reaching Uganda mid-March sent everyone into an instant panic. Having experienced past pandemics, they knew what was coming. The President of Uganda immediately called for a lockdown of everything, banning all transport, travel, including closing the airports. It was by far the earliest and harshest lockdown in all the African countries. The CHEC Uganda advisor, Bosco, based in Kampala, was forced to lock down in Northern Uganda where his company is based and did not see his family in Kampala for many months. Angela, the trainer and project manager with YOFENET, was in lockdown in Western Uganda where her full-time work was based. Bees Abroad, based in the UK, could not travel to Uganda and indeed they agreed to provide funds to YOFENET to grow emergency food crops.

The Uganda lockdown remained in place for many months. Mathias and YOFENET were left with sole responsibility to oversee monthly hive management training with the beneficiaries and support of the 16 apiaries across four parishes. This should have been possible as the 16 beneficiaries had completed the basic training, and agriculture and beekeeping were considered frontline work and could continue during the lockdown. Unfortunately, YOFENET, as a young organisation, did not withstand the extreme strain of the pandemic. Mathias lost the support and could not delegate work to the other trained beekeeper farmers needed to oversee and encourage the 16 beneficiaries and their apiaries across four parishes. It was not until July when CHEC realised no one had followed up with hive management of the single mothers. Indeed, of the 20 hives colonised in March, 16 colonies had absconded. The honey harvest subsequently failed in July through to September primarily due to neglect of colonisation and hive management.

The pilot project was to end in December 2020 but it was not until September 2020 before CHEC could arrange for the Uganda project advisor, Bosco Okello, and Angela, the trainer, to get to the site by renting cars, staying in hotels in a different town as the local guest's houses nearest to the project site remained closed. The reports of both Bosco and Angela confirmed, that the YOFENET organisation with

trained bee-keeping farmers were no longer functioning to the agreed responsibilities; the other Beekeeper farmers were no longer involved. Due to the pandemic many of the 16 beneficiaries had to leave the area for a variety of reasons. Those that remained had lost their morale when by September not one of the 80 hives harvested honey. Without a local committed organisation to provide the needed support to the remaining beneficiaries, and with lockdown restrictions continuing to make it extremely difficult for both Bosco and Angela to travel to the site, it was agreed to bring the project to a close. During the months of October and November, Mathias on his own attempted another honey harvest without any success. Then in January 2021, one of the beneficiaries who had family encouraging her beekeeping skills, harvested her own honey. It was a blessing, a glimmer of hope; that out of the hardship of the pandemic lockdown, one apiary had succeeded to yield honey, and one of the young women would continue with beekeeping.

CHEC was not alone with projects collapsing due to the pandemic and severe lockdown in Uganda. Yet for the CHEC project, the pandemic could not have happened in Uganda at a worst time when the beneficiaries were most vulnerable having just sited their hives and without the skills to manage their apiaries. Six months later and the 16 single mothers would have had the confidence to oversee the hive management on their own. It was a real disappointment yet this must not overshadow what YOFENET and Angela had achieved from the early days of their project with the enthusiasm of the baseline survey, determining the 16 beneficiaries, involving local community leaders and experts, a remarkable project launch, the purchasing and distributing of equipment and the siting of 16 apiaries in four parishes. Their project had enormous potential for success and no doubt if it were not for the pandemic arriving when it did, would have succeeded. A great deal was learned and all efforts appreciated by everyone involved along the way.

CHEC would like to thank Angela Namukwaya, the project manager with YOFENET; Mathias Walwana, co-founder and director of YOFENET; Jane Samuels, chair of CHEC bee and pollinator steering group; Ian Douglas CHEC Trustee and Chair of HEF; Caryll Stephens CHEC Trustee; John McDonnell CHEC member and CHEC website editor; the Uganda Advisor, Bosco Okello CEO of Apitrade Africa for his continued support and advice throughout, and David Bonner at Bees Abroad.

## Ponds and Freshwater

**Background:** For decades to come, cost-effective and environmentally appropriate water systems will be a priority for managing water scarcity and building resilience in the rapidly expanding cities and city regions of South Asia. The proposal is to look at urban local ponds, and the potential to link them with domestic water systems and build resilience. The proposal builds upon research that local urban ponds can facilitate resilient water-supply provision by making them an integral part of the urban waterscape. It highlights a multitude of benefits that ponds can potentially bring to urban resilience, in particular affordable and accessible water provision with low environmental footprint, managing climate shocks or stresses, ecological restoration in urban areas as well as potentially generating new skills and livelihoods for communities.



Images: Taken in Khulna, Bangladesh (2019) and Bhubaneswar, India (2020) by Ripin Kalra

### 3. Publications

#### Journal 30 Mangroves

CHEC published a new Journal in 2020 titled, “**Human Ecology 30: Mangroves**”. The journal addresses the important issue of mangroves in the global context. As it is known, mangroves are an important part of ecosystems and play a vital function in the world today, however, the impacts of climate change are damaging mangroves all over which is having devastating effects. The journal looks to address some of these issues and features contributions from people across the Commonwealth and world. The Journal is published on CHEC’s website: [human ecology journal on mangroves](#).

### 4. Website

The CHEC website has continued to grow at a good rate over the last year. The website is updated regularly, and new features have been added that are aimed at increasing engagement with the website. These features include:

- A new way to view PDFs in an interactive way on the website.
- A new sidebar that is aimed to keep users engaged with the CHEC website
- Language options to have pages on the CHEC website converted to the users’ language.
- A rework of the CHEC Points Page
- A revamp of the CHEC newsletter
- The addition of further sharing functions to ensure CHEC’s content can be shared easily.

Work has also focussed on the back end of the website with the aim of making the CHEC website load quicker and faster. Furthermore, a number of important new posts have been added to the website to increase website traffic.

### Social Media

CHEC has continued to use social media as a way to share information relating to CHEC. As a result of this CHEC’s social media presence has increased over the last year. At this time last year CHEC was only active on Twitter and Facebook. Today, however, we have active accounts on YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn as well. This will help in the long run build CHEC’s online presence and see more users come to the website. This year has also seen CHEC reach over 500 Twitter followers.

CHEC would also like to record a big thank you to CHEC trustee, Emily Robinson, for her work on reactivating the LinkedIn page and running the CHEC Instagram page, as well as to John McDonnell for his hard work in developing both the website and interaction with social media.

**CHEC is dependent on the contributions of members, both in the form of voluntary work and through contributions from funds. We have a range of membership options available and will also display any job or volunteer opportunities on this page.**

**We have annual and life-long memberships available as well as a student membership and concessions for over 65s and SHE Members.**

<https://www.checinternational.org/support-chec/>

## 5. News from CHEC's Network

### New Zealand: Zena Daysh Doctoral Fellowship Waikato



Dr Sangion Tiu from Papua New Guinea, the first recipient of the University of Waikato's Zena Daysh Doctoral Fellowship for Sustainability, has graduated with her PhD



Shaaliny Jaufar, the second choice for Zena Daysh's Doctoral Fellowship has left her home in the Maldives to study for her PhD at the University of Waikato. Her topic is: ***Young People and Sustainable Citizenship.***

She's a woman with a social conscience and has been awarded the Zena Daysh Fellowship in Sustainable Development from the university to research what factors and experiences inspire young people to become active citizens. Shaaliny's focus is to demonstrate what it means to enact "sustainable citizenship" in the face of climate change. Sustainable citizenship is a concept that two of her supervisors, Professors Priya Kurian and Debashish Munshi, have developed, and she is planning to apply it in her doctoral research. She is based in the Political Science and Public Policy programme of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences during her time in New Zealand.

"There is this view that democracy is in crisis and that young people are not interested or engaged in political issues but I don't believe that," Shaaliny says. "I think young people are very much invested, and engaged in new and different ways for social and environmental activism. It is my aim to find out what fosters active young citizens."

## CHEC KENYA

In Kenya, we had very few activities that took place due to Covid 19 Pandemic that swept across the entire country. We are grateful that those in the cities did not suffer loss a life.

We missed the services of the Germany Volunteers that we have been getting through the American field service (AFS). However, the following activities were implemented:

1. We were supported by the Lake Victoria North Water Works Agency and implemented the Mukwa community micro water supply and piped water from a drilled bore hole to serve, Mukwa primary school, Mukwa market, Mukwa Health facility and the Mukwa community.

2. With the support of a NGO from Turkey, we developed six community water points with in Siboti Ward of Bungoma County. People in these rural areas at long last are having clean and safe water.

We have had discussions with our Government Parastatal (Lake Basin Development Authority) to assist with the provision of tree sockets to continue with our seedlings production.



A picture from CHEC's former office at Hurlingham Studios

## 6. CHEC's partners

### **Australia**

Dr Donnell Davis  
UNA Australia  
PO Box 2029  
Runcorn  
4113 Australia  
Donnell.davis@unaa.org.au

### **The Gambia**

Mr. Badara N. Bajo  
PO Box 21, Banjul  
The Gambia  
Fax: +220 4486026  
Tel: +220 4486301/9955063  
gepadg@yahoo.com

### **India**

President: Prof T I Khan  
Vice president,  
Dr Rashmi Pareek  
Mrs Gerda Unnithan,  
International relations  
University of Rajasthan  
Jaipur – 302004  
Rajasthan, India  
gjunnithan@hotmail.com

### **Kenya**

Mr. Norbert M. Sangura  
PO Box 1702-50200  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel: +254 735 409867  
chec.kenya@yahoo.com

### **New Zealand**

Margret Evans  
TOTI  
www.toti.co.nz  
www.Facebook.com/TOTItrust  
info@toti.co.nz

### **Nigeria**

Hon. Levi Oguike  
C Plot 118, Z Close,  
21Road, Festac  
G.P.O. Box 9216, Marina  
Lagos.  
levi.oguike@gmail.com

### **Pakistan**

Dr Saadyah Chishti  
House 29A, Street 18, F6/2  
Islamabad, Pakistan  
Tel: +92 – 51 864 077/824 944

### **CIANEA, Uganda**

Patricia Kabatabazi  
Community based Impact Assessment  
Network for Eastern Africa (CIANEA)  
P.O. Box 8277, Kampala- Uganda  
Tel: 256 – 414–221277  
cianeauganda@yahoo.co.uk  
Website: cianeauganda.org

## 7. CHEC's Governance

### Members of the CHEC Governing Board Nov 2020

Honorary President:	Hon. Levi Oguike, CHEC Nigeria
Patrons:	Mr Norman Stannard, New Zealand Ms Narelle Townsend, Australia
Chairman:	Mark Robinson, CHEC UK
Honorary Treasurer:	John Bonham, CHEC UK
Company Secretary:	Eva Ekehorn, CHEC UK

### Other Members of the Board:

Rhonda Cox, Trinidad & Tobago High Commission, UK  
Dr Saadyah Chishti, CHEC Pakistan  
Hon. Sannusi Daggash, CHEC Nigeria  
Dr Donnell Davis, CHEC Australia  
Emeritus Prof Ian Douglas, School of Environment, Education and Development,  
University of Manchester, UK  
Dr Morteza Honari, Dr Honari Education Institute, Tehran  
Daniel Hunt, Santander UK  
Subbu Loganathan, Pico Analytics UK  
Patricia Kabatabazi, CIANEA, Uganda  
Ripin Kalra, University of Westminster, UK  
Dr T I Khan, Indira Gandhi's Centre for Human Ecology, Univ. of Rajasthan, Jaipur, India  
Michael Mutter OBE (formerly DFID UK)  
Trevor Peel, National Liberal Club, UK  
Emily Robinson, Pico Analytics, UK  
James Ross, Conductor and Music Director, UK  
Norbert Sangura, CHEC Kenya  
Caryll Stephen, Foundation for Water Research, UK  
Jane Samuels, Tools of Change, UK  
Kabir Shaikh CBE, formerly UNESCO, UK

### Staff and Consultants:

Yahya al-Witri, Accounts and Office Manager, retired in 2020  
John McDonnell, Communication Officer

### Zena Daysh and Donald Denman Human Ecology Foundation (HEF)

CHEC is supported by its subsidiary charity, the Human Ecology Foundation (HEF). This can provide support to small projects either solely or in joint funding, either financial or in kind, with other partner in Commonwealth developing countries.

## 8. Financial Statement 2020

	£	31.12.2020	31.12.2019
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>			
<b>Voluntary income</b>			
Grants		5,000	-
Subscriptions & Donations		1,478	1,401
<b>Total</b>		<b><u>6,478</u></b>	<b><u>1,401</u></b>
<b>Investment income</b>			
Investment income received		18,999	19,427
Deposit account interest		6	85
<b>Total</b>		<b><u>19,005</u></b>	<b><u>19,512</u></b>
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b><u>25,483</u></b>	<b><u>20,913</u></b>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>			
<b>Charitable activities</b>			
Project expenditure		5,798	1,800
Project consultancy		-	203
Finances, charges, interest		16	114
<b>Total</b>		<b><u>5,814</u></b>	<b><u>2,117</u></b>
<b>Governance costs</b>			
Wages		1,633	7,566
Accountancy and legal fees		1,500	2,190
<b>Total</b>		<b><u>3,133</u></b>	<b><u>9,756</u></b>
<b>Support costs</b>			
<b>Management</b>			
Trustees' expenses		746	1,480
Rent, rates & insurance		7,679	9,638
Light and heat		1,303	345
Postage, telephone & fax		645	613
Printing, publications & stat.		13	1,079
Sundry expenses		1,696	1,268
Travel, conferences		239	3,349
Administration		1,050	830
IT Consultancy		8,272	8,174
Fixtures and fittings		-	249
Loss on sale of fixed assets		1,408	-
<b>Total</b>		<b><u>23,051</u></b>	<b><u>27,025</u></b>
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<b><u>31,998</u></b>	<b><u>38,898</u></b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>		<b><u>(6,515)</u></b>	<b><u>(17,985)</u></b>

# SUPPORT CHEC

There are several ways you can help and support CHEC and the work we do:

## Become a member!

Membership information and a membership form can be found at <https://www.checinternational.org/joining-chec/>

£10 for students, £30 for ordinary members and £20 for those over 65.

## Donate!

Any sum is most welcome! Please send a cheque to CHEC or pay by bank transfer: Sort Code: 20-69-15; A/C 73900398



## Follow us on Twitter!

@CwHumanEcology



## Join us on Facebook

/InternationalCHEC/

## Instagram