

Dear friends of *Vafoha Vakiteny*

It has been a long time since last newsletter, and we apologise for that! The silence from our side, however, does not mean that we have not done any work.

The book about the turtle Fano and its discovery about the plastic and other waste in the ocean has been printed. Finding the right way to print such a colourful book with pictures flowing across two pages was not an easy process and needed several months of sending files back and forth. Now we can proudly hold the result in our hands!

The manuscript of new book about Bonenitra has been sent to us together with all pictures. The work of editing the story together with the author will start now.

Best wishes,
Mparany Rakotondrainy
Manager of *Vafoha Vakiteny*



Fano distribution has started!

The distribution of *Fano sy ny fako an-dranomasina* (Fano and the waste in the ocean) has started! The book was successfully printed in February and the children were already waiting for it.



Ms. Hanta happily collects the books at the print house in Antananarivo

The first distribution was done by Ms. Hanta in Toliara - the place where the story of Fano is set. Ms Hanta acted the story for the smaller children and told them to take good care of the waste and not throw it into the streets. The students promised to tell their parents and siblings.

The distribution was a huge success among the students, who instantly loved the story and the pictures!



The banner the students are holding on the picture above is saying "MISAOTRA", meaning "THANK YOU" in Malagasy. It is made by the illustrator of the book, Beth Dickens and contains the logo of Vakoka Vakiteny and Zara Loko which is established by Beth and Tahiry who wrote the book together and work on environmental protection in Toliara.



A new volunteer

Mr. Ny Avana is Mparany's brother and principal in the secondary school in Ambohimambola east of Antsirabe. He is the author of the book *Takoboka*, which tells the story of a boy who starts school later than the other children, and his struggles as well as his care for the environment.

Mr. Ny Avana has now volunteered to do different work for Vakoka Vakiteny in his spare time, such as distribution of books to schools. This is a huge help for Vakoka Vakiteny since Mr. Ny Avana is a appreciated and respected person in and around Ambohimambola. He is not only school principal, but has been in the committee of the municipality for many years.



The students at the Catholic school in Ankelaka. Mr. Ny Avana is in the upper right corner.

In January, Mr. Ny Avana went to a Catholic school in the village Ankelaka in the municipality of Ambohimambola and distributed 60 books to children in grade 1-5. It was the first time for the school to receive Vakoka Vakiteny books, and they also had no other books.

He told about the history of Vakoka Vakiteny and how the work started. He also gave the teachers a training in how to use books, how to store them and register them. He ended with making teachers and students aware of environmental issues, since most of the Vakoka Vakiteny books have an environmental message.

The books that were distributed were displayed during the training of the teachers and students



Madagascar Book for university graduates

69 bachelor and master students and one PhD candidate in Environment and Tourism studies at the University of Antananarivo got a copy of Madagascar – a living museum each as a present at their graduation. The costs were shared among Vako-ka Vakiteny and Mr. Arild Bakke, Norwegian Consul to Madagascar, working for the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS). Mr. Bakke was appointed as mentor for these students and did some interviews with them after they had read the book.

The feedback from the students is overwhelmingly positive, and they all assure us that they will use it well in their future work.

All of them started by appreciating the book, the information, the pictures and the resource this book will be for them in their future work. PhD candidate Fanantenana Andraina Rajoelimanana acknowledged the extensive scientific updates and editing done in this second edition. Also Tahina Radoniaina Randrianoelisoa said that the book is really important for her "since it has all of the newest scientific research. We should really distribute this book all over the island."

Many of them told about their plans for the future and how this book will help them. For example Gabriella Ranivomaharo said: "I would like to use this book when I start working, hopefully in the Ministry for Environment, so that I can work for the protection of the Malagasy nature." Serenah Barrini tells about her plans to work with mining and underground resources such as gemstones, charcoal and oil, and how the book taught her many things about the history of her country, and that it encouraged her to protect the environment more.

On the picture below we can see two of the graduates together with Mr. Bakke (second from the right)



A graduate named Joeline plans to become a teacher in secondary school. She says: "The first thing I would like to teach the students is how rich Madagascar is, and that we need to take care and love the environment. It is important to start early to teach the children these lessons."

The only critical feedback we got is that there are some few graphs without explanation in Malagasy. We acknowledge this, and have noted it down. As one of the students said: "Not all people here do need to know a foreign language." This again really shows us how important it is that all our books are in Malagasy language. Even some untranslated legends of maps can cause problems for people.

Here are some other quotes from the interviews.

I like the way the book is designed, and that you can enjoy the beautiful pictures while you read.

Jhonny Razafimaharo

I have learned that the wealth of our nature is getting scarce and I really want to do something to prevent all this to become history. I would like to engage in teaching people that they are the real owners of this treasure, so they will start valuing it.

Rakotonirina Hervé

I have no words, except that this book is REALLY GOOD! It was like a dream to read it, especially with the beautiful pictures. [...] There are many people who do not yet know the treasures which are unique to our country. Everyone in Madagascar should get this book and learn about our nature.

Tokiniaina Ravelonjatovo

This book really shows the beauty of the Malagasy nature and it is visibly explained in graphs and writing, and in clear Malagasy language. If you are a Malagasy and you can read and write, I think this book will teach you a lot about things you have never seen and do not know about yet, concerning the Malagasy environment.

Damuen Rajoelison

Madagascar book loved by students and principal

21st February was the day of the mother tongue. Hanta seized the opportunity and made particularly much publicity for Vakoka Vakiteny in February. She visited schools around her home and talked to strangers on the street.

On 14th February she went to the school Mesange Bleues to distribute 70 copies of Madagascar - a living museum. The students, teachers and the principal thanked Ms. Hanta very much for the books as well as her awareness raising session.

The book distribution at Mesange Bleues was a big event for all students and teachers on the secondary level.



Many of the students immediately started reading the book and didn't want to put it down.

The principal, Ms. Saholy Raobelina wanted to thank Mparany, Sophie and all donors supporting Vakoka Vakiteny directly, and wrote a letter to Mparany:

"I write to you to say thank you for the books. I hope that the publishing company Vakoka Vakiteny will continue to flourish and reach the whole world. The students, the administration personnel, the teachers and the parents give a very very big thanks for the donation of the books!"

The book is perfect for the curriculum in the secondary level and it fits well into the context of the things we are teaching. This book is very needed to make the students aware of the state our environment is in since we can see the big destruction of the environment. The children are the future of Madagascar, so they really need to know about these things.

We also want to add thanks to you for the support you are giving all Malagasy people and the whole nation through your work."

"Vive Madagascar!"



Ms. Hanta (on the right) hands over the books to the principal of Mesanges Bleues, Ms. Saholy



Interview with a Boy named Tsota

A boy named Tsota came to the Vakoka Vakiteny stand at the book fair last year and liked the books a lot. After the fair he tried to find Vakoka Vakiteny again, but didn't know where to look. One day he talked with one of his friends, Jonathan, and told him that he really would like to find the lady reading books for children. Jonathan started laughing and told Tsota that the lady is his mother, Ms. Hanta!



So Tsota came home with Jonathan and met Ms. Hanta again. He really wanted to show her that he had started making his own stories because she had encouraged him to be creative when they met at the fair.

Ms. Hanta interviewed him and sent us a video. We have put it on YouTube for you all to watch and become inspired by this boy's determination. Please click on the picture.

Vakoka Vakiteny on TV

There is a program named "Tolotra sy ny Tinady" on the channel TVM every Sunday. In November, the channel brought news about Vakoka Vakiteny after book distribution in Toamasina which had been done without the involvement of Ms. Hanta. She was very surprised and happy when she suddenly saw Vakoka Vakiteny on TV! The project distributing the books helps people open libraries and they had received some copies through the association of publishing companies in Madagascar. There were extensive interviews with children on the TV who told that the books were interesting and funny, and that the quality of the books was exceptionally good. They especially liked the book Takoboka.



Books and food for starving children

Vakoka Vakiteny has started a cooperation with Catholic Church in Toliara. The Fathers got a donation of Hazobe Farany and other books which they distributed to very remote areas like Ejeda, Ampanihy and Ambovombe Androy where there is famine almost every year. The Fathers walk by foot with big chests full of books to the children in the villages. It is important for them that even when people are in desperate need for food, the children still need hobbies and education. So they distribute food and also read for the children. Vakoka Vakiteny is very proud to be able to assist children in big need.

Association's 10 years' anniversary in 2019

The Association for School and Children's Books in Madagascar (Förderverein Madagascar Schul- und Kinderbücher e.V.) will celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2019. It is incredible that we have been working together for 10 years already!

We hope we can meet the association again this summer and celebrate with them.

The picture is from last year's annual meeting in Christel Schelshorn's garden.



About *Vakoka Vakiteny*



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Sophie Küspert-
Rakotondrainy
Public Relations/
Editor



Hanta
Rakotondrainy
Book distribution/
Trainings

Vakoka Vakiteny has since 2008

- ... published 15 titles
- ... distributed 27,500 books
- ... encouraged thousands of children to read
- ... introduced reading in hundreds of schools
- ... strengthened the Malagasy language
- ... promoted Malagasy authors and artists
- ... participated in many cultural events
- ... supported the Malagasy natural environment through books and campaigns

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