

Dear friends of Vakoka Vakiteny

Slowly, Madagascar is getting back to normal again, but it will take a long time before everything works like it did pre-corona.

Ms Hanta is taking up her work again with energy and she has been on long trips to remote areas. As you can see in this newsletter, the building of the library has started, and participation of the community is very encouraging. We would like to again thank all of you who contributed to donating for this project.

We also want to extend our thanks to those of you who donated to the local initiatives for food distribution in the famine affected areas in the south of Madagascar. This was not carried out by Vakoka Vakiteny, but we were happy to channel the donations to the responsible people and making sure the support ended up where it should, in the areas with acute food shortage.

Best wishes,

Mparany Rakotondrainy

Manager of **Vakoka Vakiteny**



Madagascar is slowly opening

Slowly, Madagascar is opening up its borders to international travelers again. Until now, there have only occasionally been flights to Nosy Be in the north, and after those stopped, only repatriation flights carrying people with special authorization were allowed to enter the island.

Now, there are again regular flights from Paris, Mauritius and a few other destinations. We are still waiting for the direct flights from Addis Ababa to Antananarivo to resume.

325,084 people have been vaccinated so far in Madagascar, less than 1,5 % of the total population. However, vaccines are now available even in small, rural hospitals (CSP 1). Unfortunately, the level of trust of the population in the vaccine is not very high. All the individuals Vakoka Vakiteny is cooperating closely with, including Mrs Hanta, are now vaccinated.



'Fa nankāiza daholo ny tany?' is printed

The environnement book called 'Nankāiza daholo ny tany?' (But where did all the soil go?) about erosion is finally printed. We experienced many challenges in the printing process, mainly due to restrictions in the work of the printing house caused by COVID-regulations. Ms Hanta was in Antananarivo countless times and finally, she was able to bring it on her book distribution trip which you can read about in this newsletter.



Girls in Mitahy, one of the schools visited by Ms Hanta, are looking at the pictures in this brand new book. They hope they will soon be able to read the text, too!

Laying of the foundation stone of the library

On 21st October, the foundation stone of the library in Mahazoarivo II was laid. It was a big ceremony with high guests. The Governor of Vakinankaratra region attended; the Regional Director of Security in Antsirabe; the director of the Regional Education Office (Direction Régionale de l'Éducation Nationale, DREN); the leader of the District Education Office (Circonscription Scolaire, CISCO); a delegate from the district office; teachers from different schools in the whole district; and parents and students. The total number of guests was 110 people, due to corona rules less than those who were interested to attend.

The event was outside and lasted the whole morning. There were many speeches and never-ending thanks to Vakoka Vakiteny and the donors for providing financial support for building the library. The children from Mahazoarivo sang different songs for the guests which expressed their happiness. These had been written for the purpose of the celebration of the library, and one of the songs had the title: «We are happy to get a library».



Ms Hanta officially lays the foundation stone of the library

These are some lines from one of the other songs:

Faly faly indrindra, faly faly lalandava (We are always very happy, happy)

Mazotoa mamaky ny boky, mitombo fahendrena ianao (Be eager to read books and you will grow in knowledge)

Ankalazao ny teny raha mbola velon'aina ianao (Celebrate your language as long as you're alive)

The principal of Mahazoarivo II, Mrs Tsiriniaina Rajaozandry thanked Vakoka Vakiteny and everyone



The children singing. Please click on the picture or on the link below to hear the song on YouTube

who has supported Vakoka Vakiteny in collecting funds for the gift of the library. The cooperation between the school and Vakoka Vakiteny has always been excellent, and the school is grateful for this longstanding cooperation. She also regretted that the work started later than anticipated due to administrative hurdles.

The director of the Regional Education Office (DREN) thanked Vakoka Vakiteny for con-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqV2vaHEg-U&t=2s>

tributing to the vision of the Malagasy government for education. The plan of the government is to build a library for each school on the whole island, but it is difficult to accomplish this for the government in a short period of time. He also appreciated that Vakoka Vakiteny encourages the love of reading in their own mother tongue — also one of the visions of the Malagasy government.

The delegate from the regional office told everyone that they should be very grateful to get books for free but that they should also respect these books, and those who can afford, should buy books in the book stores. He further expressed that it is difficult for Malagasy authors and artists to live off this work and that it is important for them to sell their books.

The parents of the students at Mahazoarivo have participated with 130 Euro for paying the constructors for some work that they cannot do themselves. This is one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Antsirabe, and this participation shows a great level of commitment. Much of the work will be done voluntarily by parents.

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The construction has now started and they envision it to be finalised by Christmas.



Mrs Tsiriniaina Rajaozandry , the principal of the school Mahazoarivo II holds a speech for the attending guests



Furniture for the Library

The children in Mahazoarivo will soon get a library but the house does not yet contain any furniture. We will need some simple shelves, tables and chairs, handmade out of wood and iron by local carpenters.

We would therefore like to thank the Association Madagascar School ad Children's Books in Germany who promised to run a fundraising campaign for the equipment of the library

Here are some unit costs:

- One table: 40 €
- One bench: 15 €
- One big shelf: 50 €

If you would like to contribute, you can give your donation marked with «Furniture for Mahazoarivo» by transferring money to the following account:

Förderverein Madagaskar Schul- und Kinderbücher e.V.

Sparkasse Wiesental

IBAN: DE 16 683 515 57 000 3077286

BIC: SOLADES1SFH



Cooperation with environment initiative

Mangoky Reserve

We have distributed books to a very remote, new school in the west of Madagascar in a village called Mitahy. The school has been built by the Association Mangoky Reserve (www.mangokyreserve.com). The aim of Mangoky Reserve is environmental protection of a vulnerable forest area along the Mangoky River. As part of their social responsibility, they have built two rural schools for the villages close to the reserve. You can read more about this school on their web page:

<https://mangokyreserve.com/2021/10/02/school-in-mitahy-ready-for-use/>

Ms Hanta was there to distribute *Bonenitra* and *Nankaiza ny Tany* (the environment book about erosion). She found that neither children nor parents can read and write. In the beginning, some of the children hesitated and said that they couldn't take the books in their hands because they cannot read them and because the books are so nice and they were afraid they would be spoiled. Ms Hanta reassured them that they could look at the pictures and that they one day would be able to read the books if they took well care of them.



The village Mitahy lies beautifully in the forest, but the population has no access to infrastructure or social services and there is no road leading to this village. It is only reachable by foot or by a 2-days ox cart trip through forests, over hills and crossing river beds.

During the ten days she spent in Mitahy, Ms Hanta played with the children every day. The parents also often joined and she used these times to read aloud from the books. The parents and children enjoyed these times very much and they are now looking forward to welcoming a government teacher. It will be the first teacher ever in Mitahy, since this village has not had a school building before and the government has not been able to build one in such a remote place.



First time holding a book! The children quickly started enjoying their new hobby: 'reading'



Book distribution

While Ms Hanta was in the South-West, she visited seven schools, most of them in rural areas. One of them is on the 'main road' between Toliara and Morondava. When she visited last, the school had no walls and just a grass roof. This time, the government had built a nice new school house. However, there was no equipment like tables and chairs at all — and no books. So Ms Hanta was warmly welcomed to donate some class sets of the new books of Vakoka Valiteny. As usual, she explained about the content of the books, the value of reading and about the importance of environmental protection. Some of the schools she visited are schools we have visited before and which know Vakoka Vakiteny, whereas others were new schools who have not yet received books. In total, Ms Hanta distributed 450 books on her trip.



The students and teachers in front of their new school, and with their new books

Vakoka Vakiteny is also continuing the cooperation with the schools in Ambohimambola, a rural municipality east of Antsirabe. The parents came to attend the book distribution and many of them expressed how happy they are with the books. In this area, the rivers are dry and the cattle does not have enough to drink and there is not enough water for irrigation. They understand the relation between deforestation and water shortage/flooding, and they are therefore happy that the books often have messages about environmental protection. Some of the parents also asked when the supporters of Vakoka Vakiteny, the members of the Association in Germany, will come to visit them. They are eagerly waiting to receive guests! In this area, Ms Hanta distributed 200 books.

Ms Hanta is always encouraging the children to write stories and paint pictures themselves. Not few have started making their own stories after they have received books by Vakoka Vakiteny. Writing stories has many benefits — most obviously on increased fluency and better spelling and grammar, but other benefits are creativity and ability to present and explain their own thoughts.



Students in Andranomena close to Toliara



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About *Vakoka Vakiteny*

Vakoka Vakiteny has since 2008

- ... published 17 titles
- ... distributed 30,500 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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