

Dear friends of Vakoka Vakiteny

Summer is just around the corner and many things have happened in the first half of this year. The library in Mahazoarivo is open every day and there is not enough space for students who come there from all over Antsirabe to read books. In April, members of the Association from Germany visited Madagascar to see our work with building libraries. It was a very successful trip where they amongst others visited the people in Ambohimambola. In addition, Hanta has conducted several workshops with the government the last months. The first half of the year has been very exciting, and we are looking forward to accomplishing many great things in the second half, too.



A new book about the environment will be released soon and we will organise a workshop on how to produce books. However, it is sad that Hanta will not be able to come to Germany for a visit this year since she did not get a visa. We will try again next year.

Madagascar will celebrate its 64th anniversary of independence on the 26th of June. However, even after 64 years, Madagascar still struggles with its economic development and with building a strong system of education. Thank you for supporting us to get a step closer!

Best wishes

Mparany Rakotondrainy

Manager of **Vafofa Vakiteny**



The joy of reading continues

The library in Mahazoarivo is open every day. It provides a safe space for children to come and read. The library also organises a variety of activities. Therefore, the children around the library are eagerly awaiting its opening in the morning. When Hanta arrives at Mahazorivo at 7:30 am, many children are already standing in line outside.

Inside the library, Hanta organises various activities and programs to engage and inspire children. From storytelling sessions to craft workshops, the library provides a platform for kids to explore their creativity and expand their knowledge. Additionally, they have access to a range of books that transport them to a different world and ignite their imagination. Every day, not only children from the schools in Mahazoarivo, but also from other areas of Antsirabe, come to the library.



Hanta is supervising the children in the library



Children reading books in the library



The library is so full of children every day that not all can get a chair to sit on. They sit on the floor and in the doorway, but they don't mind since they get the chance to read and enjoy something else than the daily routine at school or the chores at home.



Fabrice and Tahina enjoy the library

Tahina is 13 years old and Fabrice is 14. Every time they don't have class, they come to the library in Mahazoarivo to read books and enjoy playing memory or puzzles.

They both attend 8th grade at another school. One day as they pass the library, they see this building with beautiful paintings on the walls. They are eager to find out what is inside the house. People on the street tell them that it is a library. Starting from that day, they came to visit the library almost every day, especially when a class in school is cancelled, the teacher is not coming or is sick. Tahina and Fabrice have already made up their minds. Whenever they don't have class, they come to the library to read and play games. The library not only provides Tahina and Fabrice with a productive and educational alternative, but it also brings them happiness. They explore new subjects, enhance their knowledge, and find joy in learning outside the classroom by engaging in activities like reading and doing puzzles. There aren't many books at school, and it's not fun to read them since they are school books, usually in French. In the library, there are different and colourful books. «We love it because it brings us happiness and makes us laugh,» they say.

Both of them wish that the library would always be open, especially during the summer holidays. All in all, the library has become an invaluable resource for students, providing them with both entertainment and knowledge.

We would be happy to receive more games like jigsaw puzzles and memory games for our libraries in Madagascar. Please let us know if you have any to spare.



Fabrice is playing memory at the library in Mahazoarivo



Tahina is playing memory at the library in Mahazoarivo

Cooperation with the government

To help children learn and master the language, the government produces educational resources and promote children's literature. «Reading to learn» is their slogan. In Madagascar, this project, called «Resources & Education» works in three main areas: education, book production and public reading in four target regions: Analamanga, Sava, Boeny and Amoron'i Mania. Analamanga is the region around the capital Antananarivo, whereas Sava and Boeny are in the north, and Amoron'i Mania is south of Antsirabe, not far from the city of Fianarantsoa in the centre of the island.

Vakoka Vakiteny cooperates closely with the project «Resources & Education», especially in the regions of Analamanga and Amoron'i Mania. Together, they organise public readings and art workshops throughout the year.

In February 2024, a book reading and theatre competition was held in Fandriana in Amoron'i Mania region. 250 students from the district participated. Vakoka Vakiteny was represented by Hanta and she was selected to be one of the members of the competition jury. The participants received prizes and among these were books from Vakoka Vakiteny.

This project gives children new motivation to engage with books and at the same time, it heightens the visibility of Vakoka Vakiteny and the importance of reading. Therefore, we are happy that the government selected Vakoka Vakiteny as a cooperation partner and invites Vakoka Vakiteny to their events.



The pictures on this page are taken by Nambintsoa Rakotondramanga

Author's day and reading celebrations

During one whole week, Hanta participated at another government event, this time in Antsirabe. The event was part of the same «Resources & Education» project. Every day, children met to read and to discuss the books they had read in groups. The days were structured around individual reading and group work. The event focused particularly on the role of the author. Therefore, students from surrounding universities were invited to come and write stories, share their experiences and discuss different styles of writing.

The role of Hanta was to facilitate different groups and share her experience of producing stories and books. She also encouraged the participation of children to read as much as they can and start writing stories.

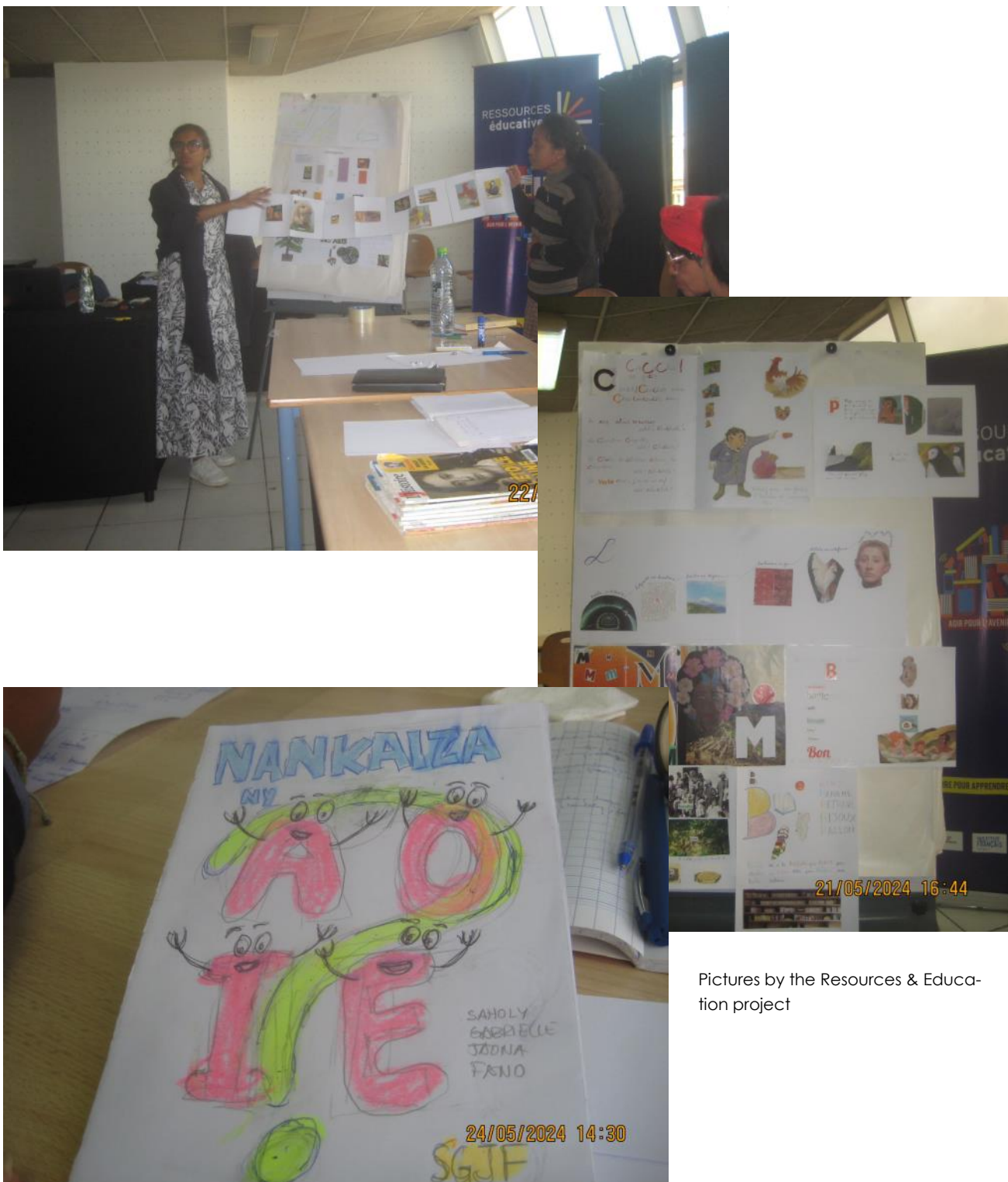
The number of students who participated was around 80 per day. Some of them came every day of the week, whereas others only participated at some of the workshops.



Workshop for the publishing companies

The governmental project «Resources & Education» organised a one-week workshop for publishing companies. Vakoka Vakiteny was invited to participate and learn about different resources and opportunities to publish books in Madagascar. The companies shared their experience and were able to network among each other, which was one of the most important results of the workshop. 16 publishing companies from all over Madagascar participated.

As you can see on the pictures, the methods were creative and the trainers made use of different resources.



Pictures by the Resources & Education project

Fara's trees of change: (New book from Beth Dickens)



Beth Dickens

Beth Dickens spent two years living in Madagascar and four years working for conservation charities in the country. Now she has written a new book for Vakoka Vakiteny. The first book was «Fano» and the second book was «Where has the soil gone?».

The new book tells the story of a girl called Fara. The forest where Fara lives was once healthy, but now it is disappearing and her village is struggling. She is a strong-hearted girl and is determined to change this! The reader follows Fara's adventure as she learns about the many amazing reasons why forests are so important, and how she and her village can work together to restore and protect their own nature.

«Fara's trees of change» is the third environmental education storybook that Beth has illustrated and written in her series, Zara Loko, for primary schools in Madagascar. This educational storybook covers the benefits that

trees and forests bring to humans, animals and the environment, and follows the story of Fara's restoration journey to bring resilience back to her community.

Topics covered include the importance of trees for food security, wildlife habitat and conservation, income generation, village life, preventing desertification, maintaining healthy ocean ecosystems, clean air, and climate change mitigation; as well as growing and caring for trees, managing a newly established community forest and female empowerment.



Welcome to Fara's rural village in the forests of Madagascar, where she lives with her grandma and two brothers! When her grandma was young the forest was healthy and the village thrived.

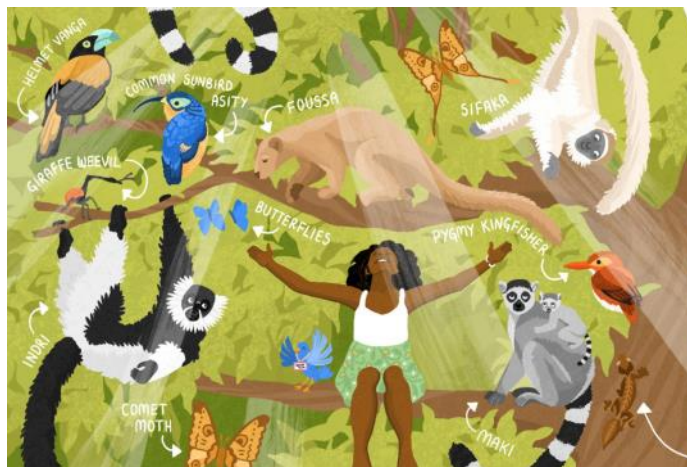
Now the forest is disappearing and the village is struggling.



BEFORE



AFTER



'The forest is also home to so many animals'.

'85% of these animals are endemic, meaning they are only found in Madagascar. This means that people travel from all over the world to our famous forests to see the wildlife, bringing money to our villages. By protecting the forests, we protect the homes of many animals and therefore we protect local jobs as well.'



Fara thanks the Forest Guide for sharing his knowledge. She now understands why forests are so important!

On the taxi brousse ride back home, she thinks about how she can save her home forest for her village.



The forest is saved and the village celebrates! A healthy forest means a healthy village, with happy people that are connected to their ancestors!

Everybody thanks Fara for being so brave, courageous, and determined - she is the hero of her village.



The Madagascar-adventure of the association



Sybille and Clemens Däschle, Christiane Kaluza-Däschle, Sabine Angelsen and Klaus-Christian Küspert visited Madagascar for almost three weeks in April. They were able to see the work of Vakoka Vakiteny and also enjoy some touristic activities in the Central Highland as well as on the south-western coast.



To the top: group photo on the way to Antsirabe

To the left: The group outside of the library in Mahazoarivo.

At the bottom: Outside of the school in Mahazoarivo watching a theatre play featuring the story of Takoboka, one of Vakoka Vakiteny's books.

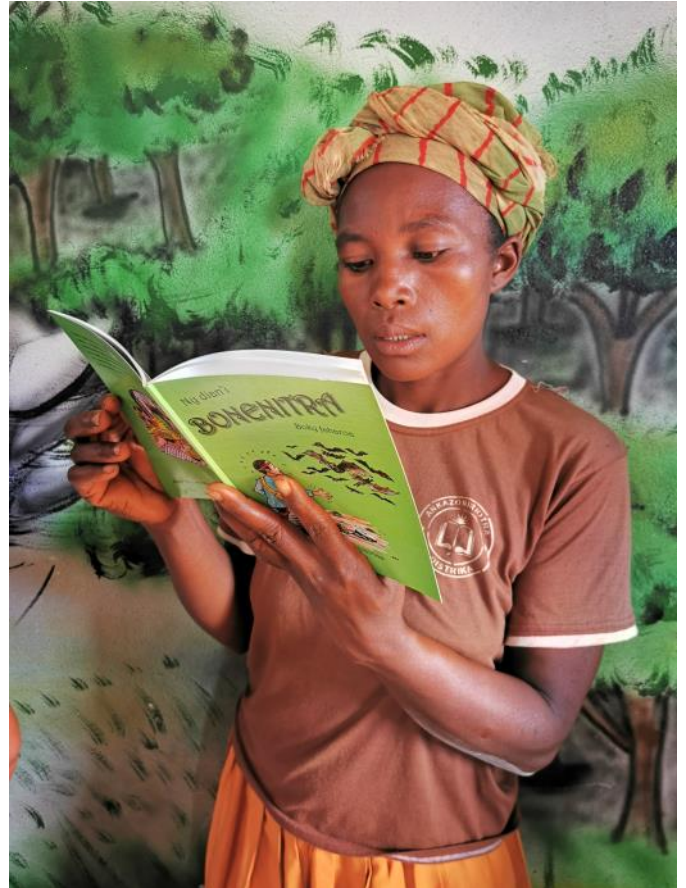


Inauguration in Ambohimananambola

At the beginning of April, members of the association from Germany went to Ambohimananambola to attend the inauguration of the school library there. The road to Ambohimananambola was in such poor condition that it required the efforts of the local community to make it passable. Without their help, it would have been nearly impossible for the members of the association from Germany to reach the library for the inauguration. The library was officially opened on 11th April 2024 in the presence of the mayor, the education district representative, other local officials, teachers and many parents of the students. Hundreds of people were gathered. The students and teachers at the secondary school in Ambohimananambola put on a spectacular programme, showcasing their talents in dancing, singing, and other performances. The lively atmosphere and enthusiastic participation made the library inauguration a truly memorable event for everyone in attendance.

The visitors from Germany donated games and other materials to the library, which were greatly appreciated by the children. The library was inaugurated with great success and everyone was pleased with the results. After the programme, the guests received a tour of the library. The students and teachers were excited about the library and how it would benefit the community. Everyone left with smiles on their faces.

All the walls both inside and outside are colourfully decorated by the artist Rivolala with pictures from our Vakoka Vakiteny books.



Pictures from the inauguration



Sibylle Däschle from the association is teaching the memory game to the Mayor of Ambohimananambola (in the middle), the local doctor (to the left) and the police officer (back to the right).

We wish you all a nice summer!



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About *Vako- ka Vakiteny*

Vako-ka Vakiteny has since 2008

- ... published 19 titles
- ... distributed 36,000 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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