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Vakoka Vakiteny...

...is a young and professional publishing company producing literature for children and youth in Malagasy language.

...is owned and run by a team of young Malagasy.

...contributes to growth and development in Madagascar - culturally and materially.

...promotes the joy of reading and develops the understanding for literature and art in a modern Malagasy environment.

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Mparany Rakotondrainy

Vakoka Vakiteny News

Dear friends of Vakoka Vakiteny.

In this newsletter we present some of our activities during the last few months. We have been at different events in the Antsirabe area, and we have distributed books to different schools. Especially the continuous distribution of Hiverina aho, Dadabe has been in focus.

We hope that you will stay with us for next year as well, as we still have several project to continue with after new year, especially the Madagascar environment book.

We wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy new year!

Mparany Rakotondrainy

Manager of **Vakoka Vakiteny**

Youth and adults love Dadanaivo

Mrs Hanta has been to the public upper secondary school / high school (Lycée) Andre Resampa in Antsirabe to talk about whether they would be interested in having some of our books in their library. The librarian was very eager and wanted to have three copies of all our books since she was sure that the students would love them.

Mrs Hanta was very surprised since some of the books are for children. But when she let some of the students at this school read Dangaligny and Dadanaivo Tefy, which originally were written for 10 year old children, she could confirm the words of the librarian. These students had rarely read any books in Malagasy, and the easy and funny stories of Dangaligny and Dadanaivo appealed to them. We also hope that once they get used to reading books, they will soon start on bigger projects, like reading Hiverina aho, Dadabe.

Another incident is from the Vitrine de Vakinankaratra. A lady came to the stand where Mrs Hanta was displaying the books and spontaneously bought a copy of Dadanaivo Tefy. As it appeared, she bought the book for herself since she has no children. When she had finished reading it at home, she found the telephone number of Vakoka Vakiteny in the back of the book. When she called, she thanked us for making such a wonderful book. "I enjoyed reading this book so much, and it was so funny I laughed tears when Dadanaivo did something strange", she said.

We are very happy that also youth and adults can enjoy reading our books. They were written exactly for this purpose: to give people joy of reading, and if we have achieved this for some of our readers, we feel that we have already accomplished a lot.

Distribution in Antsomaina

This autumn we have been able to distribute the book “Hiverina aho Dadabe” about Todisoa at different schools and institutions. In September we went to a school on the countryside outside Fianarantsoa. Joel Dimbison, who is the headmaster now, started the school together with his wife and only a very small number of pupils. Now Antsomaina is a rather big primary and secondary school, and pupils from all over the area come here to continue after 5th grade since this school is the is no other secondary school.

When we came to Antsomaina after a rather hard trip on a bad road, we were greeted by pupils and teachers, and they started carrying the books down to the school. A teacher was about to make the cement floor in one of the classrooms as the school cannot afford to pay workers for this.



Students carrying the books down to the school

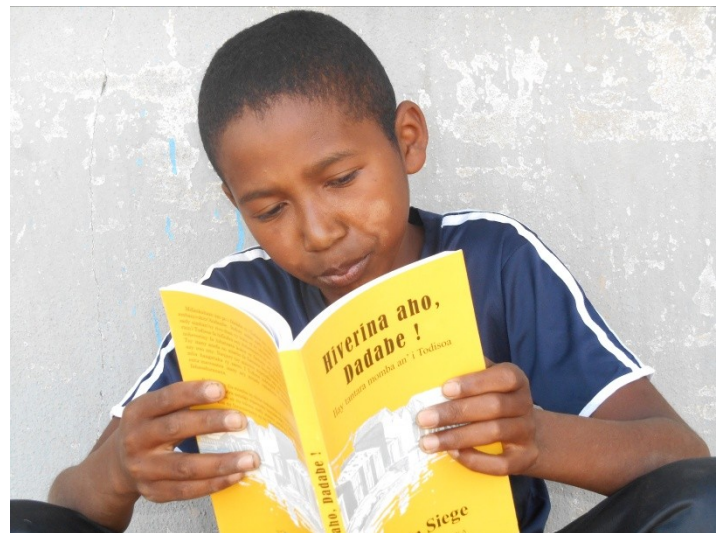


The smaller pupils with Dadanaivo

We decided that we would distribute one class set of Todisoa for the secondary school and one class set of Dadanaivo Tefy to the primary school, as we also still have some of this book left. In addition we gave each of the students who will finish secondary school this year, i.e. 9th grade, one Todisoa as their own property, and we gave those who will finish primary school this year, i.e. 5th grade, one Dadanaivo Tefy as well.



Mparany is talking with the pupils about reading books



This is a boy will get Todisoa as his own property after having read it in class.

Especially for the older students who received a copy of *Todisoa* it was important for us that they will read it in school before they are left to read them on their own. This is to assure that they will find out how to read a novel of this length and not be discouraged by the amount of text. We have to remember that many of these students have never read a book before, and especially not a novel.



A fruitful meeting with the teachers

Therefore, we had a meeting with all the teachers in the afternoon where we talked about how to encourage children and youth to read, and how to do this in the classroom. We then worked out a programme with them, where they will read a certain number of pages every week, preferably one or two chapters. Then they will have a discussion around key issues in the chapter read, let the students imagine what will happen next and also encourage them to see the story from the point of view of

different characters. We also hope that they sometimes will do some theatre or other activities based on what they read in the book. When they have finished reading the book, the 9th graders will get the book as their own property and the class set will remain at the school.



The headmaster Joel Dimbison has already started to read the first few pages

The teachers were very eager to read the book themselves, and they also assured us that this is a chance they have never had before. Even the teachers are not used to reading books at all, so also for them, this opens a whole new world. We hope to receive regular reports on their progress in reading, although we should not expect them to finish very soon as it might take much time to get through the book on top of the rest of the curriculum.



Two friends having fun with looking at the pictures in the book and discussing what the content might be

Todisoa is on her way to Beroroha



Gilbert Ndriaka Lahimalaza, director of the Beroroha education district

In last newsletter we told that we were in contact with the district education authorities and wanted to go there to distribute Hiverina aho, Dadabe. We have now proponed our trip, but we have finally had a thorough meeting with Gilbert Ndriaka Lahimalaza, the director of the education authorities in Beroroha. He is very eager to distribute the books in his schools and also came with several nice suggestions on where else to distribute the books. For example, he will bring some copies of different Vakoka Vakiteny books to the public library in Beroroha and also distribute Todisoa to upper secondary schools / high schools in the area. However, lower secondary school, i.e. grade 6 to 9 is the main target group for Todisoa, so this is where we will put most effort in the distribution.

Mr. Gilbert has now taken 190 Todisoa books with him to

Beroroha, and we will stay in contact with him concerning the distribution. In addition he took a few copies of some other Vakoka Vakiteny books with him, and he says that he will be very happy to work more for the spread of “joy of reading” in his district. We hope that we will have pictures from some schools in Beroroha receiving Todisoa in next newsletter.



Sport scolaire and Vitrine de Vakinkanaratra in Antsirabe

The annual “Sport scolaire” is a national school sport festival in Antsirabe with pupils from all over Madagascar. All regional and district education authorities from the 22 regions were present and hundreds of pupils. For two weeks all kinds of different individual and team sports were exercised around in different Antsirabe schools who also hosted the pupils from different areas.

Vakoka Vakiteny participated for five days and went around to the different sites where the participants stayed and had their activities. Mrs Hanta did some speeches and activities to promote reading. She also had many quizzes for the pupils with books as prize for the winners. Many pupils came to her stand and asked for the contact details of Vakoka Vakiteny because they wanted to start inventing stories and paint pictures. In total, 65 books were distributed, and a much higher number was read at the stand.

Vakoka Vakiteny also participated in the annual Vitrine de Vakinkanaratra as we have done for two years in a row now, and at the big Antsirabe Easter market. Here we had a stand and a reading corner for children, and also some publicity from the podium.

Book distribution to the prison

For a long time now, we have had negotiations with the prison authorities for book distribution in the prison. We have now accomplished the first step in this direction by distributing books to a public institution cooperating with the prison. Under-aged children and youth are sent to this institution if they have done a crime not serious enough for going to jail, but still so that the authorities want to keep an eye on them. It must be said that children often are imprisoned for small delinquencies like stealing a chicken. Often these children don't have parents or parents who cannot take care of them, and they end up in a criminal environment on the street.

Therefore, we encourage the idea of this institution that takes care of the young "criminals" until they find an orphanage or a host family for them instead of them being imprisoned. The director of this institution is a dynamic lady who is committed to giving the children that pass through her house a second chance.

However, the facilities here, as in many other public institutions, are very bad. The houses would need renovation and isolation from the cold Antsirabe weather, and there are no toys or sport materials at all. In the director's office there were some old French books without pictures, and they did not appeal for reading. The children and the director were therefore very happy when we distributed three copies of each of our books, to give them a small "library".



These children are waiting for a permanent place at an orphanage or, hopefully, a nice host family. In the meantime they will at least have the possibility to read



Two books at the printing house

The Bara Fairytales "Tsingolangola" and the autobiography by Voninirina Rakotoson "Sedram-piainana" are now at the printing house, and we are awaiting the first test print.

Although the process always takes quite long time, and neither Mparany nor Sophie are in Madagascar at the time, we hope to have some copies already before Christmas, or at least right after new year.

