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« KAPINDRE » FOR MARINE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

“Kapindre” is a word in Vezo which literally means competition.

This competition was held for six months (from July to December 2010) to motivate the fishing communities of four principal areas (Ambohibola, Itampolo, Beheloke and Maromena/Befasy) to become more involved in collective marine resource management activities and to encourage the neighboring villages to integrate these systems in place.

There were five award categories: Participation of Women, Cleanliness, Awareness, Application of the “Dina” and Best

Committee.

The awards ceremony was held on February 25, 2011 in Beheloke in the presence of Ms. Melissa De Kock of WWF-Norway and Mr. Richard Hughes, the new Representative of WWF MWIOPO.■



WORKING TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES

Coastal countries of the Western Indian Ocean provide abundant habitats for five regional species of marine turtles are listed on the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species. The alarming threats facing these animals whose numbers are continually declining include hunting for meat, egg collection, and accidental capture by fishing boats.

The IOSEA Convention, an international agreement that aims to conserve marine turtles and their habitats in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (of which Madagascar is a constituent) offers a broad framework among countries in the Indian Ocean.

In February 2011 at a national assembly funded by IOSEA in Madagascar, it was determined that countries that share close and frequent marine turtle populations must collaborate together to achieve these goals (to quote: Mozambique, Tanzania, and coun-

tries of the IOC – Indian Ocean Commission).

The assembly was attended by key figures in turtle conservation such as: the IOSEA Coordinator, Director of Kelonia, renowned experts from South Africa, national experts (including those of WWF), foreign researchers of Maintirano, Blue Ventures, Representatives of the Ministry of Fisheries, and those of Ministry of Research (such as NWRC – National Center for Environmental Research; hosting the focal point of IOSEA) and CNRO – National Center for Oceanographic Research).

This meeting marked the commencement of establishing a framework for regional collaboration. The joint effort in working towards developing strategies for conservation and sustainable management of these species is crucial due to their migratory nature.

WWF will work to support and reinforce commitments of governments and national efforts in the conservation of marine turtles amongst the countries of this region. In addition, we will ensure that by 2015, an effective regional strategy for the conservation of these animals will be implemented.■



REP'S MESSAGE



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I want to give my hearty thanks to all of you for the warm welcome, within WWF and from our partners and colleagues in the sector.

As I look back on my first month it has been a great start, but my main focus is looking forward.

I visited our Tuléar office and several programs.

This was my first opportunity to see our work on the ground, essential for me to understand, represent, and help guide us toward measurable conservation results.

While I can't reach all of our offices at once (much as I would like to!), I am committed to visit each office and I look forward to having you show me your work and operations.

We are at a critical point, ready to launch into a new way of looking at our conservation efforts over this coming 5 years.

We must establish the foundation for our strategy and begin to adapt our way of thinking, programs and expectations to the priorities we have spelled out.

This year we need to flush out our baseline analysis for each of our priorities, review higher level measures of impact, and make sure that we have identified and are addressing the key levers which will help lead us to achieving conservation gains.

I see this as a work that will require us to invest more in partnerships and the development of shared visions for these priority areas and species.

It is a great opportunity for us to look critically at what we are doing and seek out other points of view, perspectives and experiences, in our efforts to continually improve and always to attain more and more meaningful and sustainable conservation results.

Richard Hughes.■



RICK BY RICK

I've spent nearly 20 of the last 25 years living and working in some of the world's poorest countries: Nepal, Guinea, Zambia and Madagascar – yet countries rich in their cultures and natural endowments.

I began my development career in a remote rice-farming village in south-western Nepal as a Peace Corps Volunteer, so I always carry with me a personal understanding of what conditions are for those in isolated and remote rural areas.

Most of my career has been in public health, working to improve access to quality health care, working for Jhpiego (Johns Hopkins University).

However, my academic background is in Biology (BA) and International Development (MA), and I've always had a place in my heart for the natural environment and conservation.

Even before this job was posted, I began a second masters in January 2010, in Environmental Science & Policy, which I expect to complete in 2012.

When I had the chance to move to Madagascar after 8 years in Zambia, at the beginning of 2008, it was to be with my two children who are here attending the American School.

Given my personal interests in the environment and Madagascar's unique place in the world, it was too good a thing to pass up. My role as Jhpiego's Regional Advisor for Africa took me out of the country more than I was here, yet I still had the chance to appreciate the richness of the cultural as well as the Big Island's biological environment.

So, when the position of Representative for MWIOPO was advertised, I could not let the chance slip by.

Around the world, the degradation of our environment continues at a pace that is

unsupportable; if we cannot stop, and then reverse, this situation, all of humanity stands to pay the price.

For me, to have this opportunity to play a role in this effort here, with WWF – renown for its high standards and excellent work – is truly a privilege. ■



POVERTY AND INSECURITY PERSIST

Since the emergence of the political crisis in Madagascar in 2009, the level of poverty and insecurity have increased, with both economic and human development indices showing a decline. In such cases, pressure on the environment increases, while the capacity to enforce laws and protect the environment is generally weakened. As long as the political situation continues without resolution, the environmental resources of Madagascar remain at elevated risk. Unfortunately, there is still no clear indication that such a resolution is near at hand.

Andry Rajoelina, President of the HAT, and ex-President Ravalomanana both signaled in their New Year speeches readiness for compromise on transition government while the SADC mediators work to develop a consensual and inclusive road map suggesting possible breakthrough in political stalemate. Nevertheless, there is no effective concession and the cohabitation between the two main stakeholders of this crisis seems to be more and more unimaginable:

- After Ravalomanana's unsuccessful trial to return to Madagascar (February 19, 2011), both Ravalomanana and Ratsiraka were declared "persona non grata" by the HAT Government,
- The HAT President invited all political stakeholders to sign the SADC roadmap in order to end up this transition through legislative and presidential elections by September 2011. The day after, he was victim of a murder attempt,
- The Madagascar mouvanse, consisting of the parties of the three former Presidents, declared the intention to establish institutions for a new transition, since the current one is outdated and does not have any legality nor legitimacy to govern.

Madagascar and its population are still taken as hostages since one needs to admit that the two camps have both strong popular supports and, apparently, the stake remains as it was at the beginning of the crisis two years ago. The main difference is severe upsurges of insecurity, poverty, inflation and intensification/diversification of natural resources trafficking. ■

WWF LAUNCHING ITS 2050 ENERGY VISION

WWF uncovered its 2050 Energy Vision in the "Energy Report" presented to the great public on February 22, 2011 at Carlton, Anosy. This global vision scenario engineered by WWF worldwide network pledges 100% satisfaction of energy needs from renewable energy sources.

This vision provides an effective alternative for developing countries like Madagascar, heavily constrained by their daily energy use. Data show a 25% electrification rate in a country relying on oil imports for thermal electricity produced by 40% of its power stations. Firewood and charcoal remain the main sources of cooking energy in Madagascar, which energy is provided by the forest. With population data projecting an increase from 17.1 million in 2006 to 26.6 million in 2025, deforestation rates can only rise speedily. "We are convinced it is possible to guarantee economic development without destroying our environment by relying on renewable energies", explains Nanie Ratsifandrihamanana, WWF Conservation Director.

Following the footsteps of the worldwide network, WWF Madagascar contributes to the 2050 Energy Vision by developing a strategy aiming at contributing to development of renewable energies, adoption of measures to economize energy at country level and better integration of environmental aspects in the development of our energy sector. "According to our scenario, humanity could benefit from a 95% renewable-energy-based supply, with marginal use of mining coal in some industrial sectors" stresses Voahirana Randriambola, WWF Footprint program coordinator.

Following a workshop organized in November 2010 on sustainable energy, WWF wants to trigger brainstorming, recommendations, suggestions from stakeholders, institutions, civil society, private sector, financial and technical partners regarding implementation steps in the context of Madagascar. To this effect, a documentary film nicknamed "Angovo Mitsinjo Lavitra" was produced and broadcasted across the country. ■

A LONG RACE TO SAVE TORTOISES OF SOUTHERN MADAGASCAR

Two species of tortoises endemic to the south and south-east of Madagascar - the radiated tortoise, *Astrochelys radiata* and the spider tortoise, *Pyxis arachnoides*, are part of the flagship species of the eco-region, Ala Maiky that are at a high risk of extinction if the current rate of poaching continues.

In fact, researchers estimate that approximately 60,000 radiated tortoises are lost every year and will completely disappear by 2052. Several researchers agree that at this rate, extinction of this species could occur well within the next twenty years.

Aware of this tragic possibility, WWF MWIOPPO has developed an action plan for the conservation of these two tortoise species in 2010.

The Department of Environment and Forestry has adopted this program as the basis of a national conservation effort of the radiated and spider tortoises.

Many projects included in this program have already been implemented, such as: the production of a short video in southern dialect to engage local communities, a conference-debate regarding the protection of tortoises to raise awareness of partners, capacity building of staff in environmental crime institutions, and fundraising for the implementation of the program.

These actions have already produced encouraging results. From December 2010 to January 2011, 393 tortoises - 277 radiated tortoises and 116 spider tortoises, destined for international trafficking were seized by forest service officers and members of the police force.

Consequently, legal proceedings have been taking place. Despite this achievement, there have been some failures mainly due to insufficient methods in handling crimes. However, developments and efforts in promoting proper applications of laws have been made and there is optimistic progress.

Fundraising is one of the biggest challenges for the action program as funding has been imprecise and inconsistent thus far in its implementation.

It is imperative that protecting tortoises endemic to southern Madagascar be a global priority for WWF – it is undoubtedly a key factor in keeping the integrity of one of the most magnificent places in the world. ■



ISLAND PROFILE: COUSIN ISLAND, SEYCHELLES

Cousin is one of the smaller of the central granitic islands in the Republic of the Seychelles, covering only some 27 ha.

Small it may be, but it is an international attraction for birdwatchers and scientists wishing to see vast colonies of seabirds and some of the republic's rare endemic species.

Cousin was purchased in 1968 by the International Council for the Protection of Birds (ICBP) that is now Birdlife International in order to create a reserve for the remaining population of the endemic Seychelles warbler.

The Government recognized its importance for conservation by making it a special reserve in 1974. This status is clearly merited: apart from the warblers and seabirds, the island is a veritable haven for several endemic reptiles and is the most important breeding site for Hawksbill turtles in the Western Indian Ocean.

The reserve is managed entirely by local staff and contributes to the economy of its bigger neighbor, Praslin Island, through responsible tourism.

The national NGO, Nature Seychelles, is responsible for managing the reserve and through well-thought planning, has converted the old coconut plantation that was established there many years ago into an essentially natural environment.

The NGO conducts biodiversity monitoring, research, education, tourism and reintroduction of threatened and rare endemic bird species.

It has received several international awards for this work. Management approaches are quite low key, based on good science, minimal interventionist and clearly focused on globally threatened species.

Cousin is open on selected days of the week to visitors who must observe strict rules of behavior aimed at minimizing disturbance to the vegetation and wildlife.

It is an absolute must for nature lovers visiting the Seychelles as it is easily accessible from Praslin Island which can be reached by air or sea from Mahé, the main island, daily.

It is close to Praslin's globally renowned Vallée de Mai National Park, a world heritage site harboring all of the island's extraordinary palms (most spectacularly the Double coconut known in French as the Coco de mer and bearing the largest seed in the world) and other exotic endemic plants as well as the only place on earth where the Seychelles black parrot occurs. ■



MANGROVE RESTORATION AT AMBONDROLAVA

Honko Mangrove Conservation & Education in Ambondrolava was honoured with the visit of Allan Carlson from WWF-Sweden on 21st January 2011.

This visit was an opportunity to present achievements in mangrove restoration made possible with their support.

During a brief stop at the Visitor & Training Centre, various ongoing programs such as alternative livelihoods (bee keeping, weaving and crab farming), reforestation and capacity building of the community-based organisation were discussed, as well as the challenges involved in working with local communities.

The group then visited the mangrove trail system and explored the official community-managed mangrove reserve.

Mr Carlson was able to see the reforested areas (about 20 ha) and participated in a small-scale planting of *Rhizophora mucronata propagules*.

He stressed the importance of visible short-term benefits and

praised our conservation successes so far. ■



MANGROVES ARE MORE VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Mangroves are one of the most productive ecosystems on earth that play an integral role in the conservation of several species in Madagascar and in acquiring and delivering goods and services to coastal communities.

However, they were identified among many ecosystems vulnerable to climate change.

In 2010, WWF developed a plan for assessing the vulnerability of mangroves by focusing on their climate change exposure, sensitivities and adaptive capacities.

It was found that from an ecological perspective, mangrove deltas of Tsiribihina are more vulnerable (19% of its mangroves are very vulnerable) than deltas of Manambolo (2% of its mangroves are very vulnerable).

From a social viewpoint, the region Melaky (two-thirds of its communities are highly vulnerable) is more vulnerable than the Menabe region (less than half of its communities are classified as very vulnerable).

The actions of WWF at these mangrove ecosystems will continue through efforts in identifying and implementing measures for adaptation to climate changes at these two principal sites. ■

MANGROVES ARE IMPORTANT FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Mangroves that grow in intertidal zones are imperative ecosystems that also serve as habitats for biodiversity.

These particular settings provide significant resources (such as fisheries and forestry) for local communities as they are among the most productive, in terms of biomass, ecosystems on our planet.

However, by anthropogenic threats and climate changes, this habitat and its biodiversity are becoming increasingly at risk.

Currently, mangroves on the west coast of Madagascar are areas of top priority for WWF.

Therefore, projects implemented in areas of mangrove deltas such as Tsiribihina (Region Menabe) and

Manambolomaty (Region Melaky) in western Madagascar are focused on the main goal of sustainable management of mangroves and their associated ecosystems while contributing to the improvement of living conditions for local residents.

WWF's involvement in these projects includes strengthening organizational and technical skills of local organizations and residents who use these mangroves and enhancing its management and sustainability.

A proportion of mangroves in Tsiribihina (15,000 ha) has already been integrated into a new protected area called Menabe Antimena, and another portion (more than 15,140 ha) called Menabe, is currently being managed by grassroots communities.

WWF supports the development of economic sectors that will help improve household incomes that are dependent on these ecosystems. The promotion of systems that will improve the integration of local communities in decision-making for their own development is also part of our plan. ■





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TRIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM WWF MADAGASCAR & WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN PROGRAMME OFFICE

BIODIVERSITY IN THE LIGHT OF CITIZENS

WWF is a passionate advocate of involving of communities in conservation and the protection of biodiversity.

In 2010, the Year of Biodiversity, WWF in partnership with Telma, gave a voice to citizens through a national writing competition.

103 participants from 19 regions responded to our call. Through their stories, poems, discoveries, and for some, a refreshing sense of humor, we noticed the talent, passion, and a willingness of citizens to become involved in protecting nature.

“The contributions were varied and gave us different and optimistic perspectives on nature and biodiversity, giving professionals who work in these fields a new outlook,” said Harilala Cyrille, an environmental journalist and member of the jury.

Voahanginirina Christina Rakotorahalahy is one of these passionate writers; the winner from the region Vakinankaratra, this mother who is originally from Antsirabe also practices commerce, and nature is one of her favorite themes to write about: “As a traveling merchant, I had the opportunity to voyage around the country.

While on the road, I saw the damages done on our environment and asked myself many questions. I saw charred hills for many kilometers and thought to myself that we must do something.”

But for Rakotorahalahy, the triggering event occurred on her return to the place of her childhood, Androy, in September 2010: “I saw a very different yet wonderful environment.

I also found that it was fragile and the coastal residents weren’t enough to ensure its protection.

I had to do something,” she said. Each one of us, at our own level, can do our part for the environment. For the aspiring writers who dream of becoming members of the UPEM – Union of Writers and Poets of Malagasy, their words speak for themselves.

“I decided to participate in writing contests for WWF and here I am, the winner of my area. But my involvement with nature does not start with this competition.

Ever since I started writing, nature and biodiversity have always been my favorite subjects because it contains all the lessons of life..”



Lessons of Life...

Rene Robert Randrianaivoson, the winner from High Matsiatra has not failed to notice these lessons of life.

A teacher of the first and second cycles at Ambohimahasoa, Fianarantsoa, Randrianaivoson, he is inspired by nature to instill his student with respect and understanding: “We can respect only what we are willing to understand,” explains the professor of 53 years.

“Nature gives us a logical explanation of life. The seasons guide us by example. The rain, sun, animals and plants are like compasses that direct and help us in everyday life”.

It is apparent these are cycles that can become overwhelmed and interrupted by the effects of climate change.

This upsetting reality motivates Rene to encourage his students - the next generation: “We must teach them the basics of healthy living through respect and protection of the environment at an early age because they will always be directly or indirectly dependent on nature regardless of what they become or do later in life” .

René Rovert Randrianaivoson also writes about nature and introduces his students to his passion.

“They are equally passionate and do not simply write poems and share stories.

They are also involved in small projects for the environment. It’s a great start.”

A great start for him too, as he is the author of the best piece for his region in WWF’s writing competition.

Beyond this competition, the beauty in nature and biodiversity of Madagascar has inspired writers to awaken undiscovered talents, which gives WWF a strong sense of the will of the Malagasy to become involved in environmental protection through their discovery of self awareness, talent, and potential.

We are also grateful for the public contributions and help in publishing this year’s best pieces of this national competition.■





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TRIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM WWF MADAGASCAR & WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN PROGRAMME OFFICE

NEW PROJECTS

Projet: MG0905.04
Efficient electric lighting in Madagascar as part of the Global Climate and Energy Initiative
Start date: 01 December 2010
Planned end date: 31 May 2010
Donor: WWF-CH
Summary: The envisaged project will consist in preparing the development of the Goldstandard initiative for the spreading of 600 000 CFL in Madagascar.

Projet: MG0933.02
Climate change adaptation for vulnerable mangrove ecosystems in Tsiribihina and Manambolo, western Madagascar
Start date: 01 July 2010
Planned end date: to 30 June 2012
Donor: MacArthur Foundation
Summary: Mangrove ecosystems are amongst the most ecologically important ecosystems on earth. They provide a range of ecological functions and have an important social function and a high economic value. Despite their importance, mangrove ecosystems are subject to a high level of anthropogenic pressures and at the same time, they are amongst the most vulnerable ecosystems to the effects of climate change. The project will develop and implement climate change adaptation strategies in two vulnerability hotspots in the important mangrove ecosystems of Tsiribihina and Manambolo on the west coast of Madagascar.

Projet: MG0949
Sustainable Water and Energy in Ampasindava and Mangoaka (EEDAM)
Start date: 15 December 2010
Planned end date: to 14 September 2014
Donor: ADEME
Summary: The project will be held to improve the lives and livelihoods of the villagers of Ampasindava and Mangoaka, bordering the marine protected area of Nosy Hara, as a contribution to the promotion of environmental conservation. This will be done through improving access to drinking water and electricity, and favoring income generating activities of communities in those villages.

Projet: MG0949
Implementing Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in the World's most Outstanding Natural Places
Start date: 01 February 2011
Planned end date: to 31 January 2015
Donor: European Union via WWF-International
Summary: Protected areas play an important role to cope with the threats posed by climate change and acting now to improve their resilience is an important strategy to support societies and economies in adapting to climate change. The project will have specific and tangible impacts on targeted beneficiaries both in terms of direct benefits (improved PA resilience and management and increased community resilience) and indirect benefits (improved climate change understanding and skills and reinforced policy frameworks). It will be implemented in two protected areas: Nosy Hara and Ambodivahibe MPAs.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Clubs Vintsy en réseau préservant le Corridor Forestier Sud-Est
Donor : FFEM
Duration : 2 years
Status : Concept submitted to donor
 Accompany the establishment and formalization of the environmental Clubs Vintsy Network in the South-East Forest Corridor of Madagascar to strengthen the implementation of the youth movement for the environment and sustainable development and empowering youth to be committed to the preservation and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage of their region.

Supporting Effective Management of the Tsimanampetsotse and Kirindy-Mitea National Parks
Donor : BMZ
Duration : 3 years
Status : Concept submitted to donor
 The project aims to provide continued but progressively phased out support and coaching to MNP park teams in the implementation of the management systems and tools in order to set the parks on to a sustainable path.

NEW STAFF

Faliherilandy
 Andriatsimihetry Ramesy, Warlin Raharijaona,
Senior Operations Officer Project Officer



Richard Hughes,
Régional Representative



Domoina Rakotomalala,
Sulama Programme Officer





STATE OF PRECIOUS WOOD TRAFFICKING

These last months, while there are no official figures on precious wood exports, it is generally accepted that illegal exports have diminished, though reports indicate that illegal logging is ongoing in diverse areas of the island (Mananara, South East, Mampikony, etc.).

This decrease could be attributed to multiple factors such as

- (i) the promulgation of the 2010-141 decree in April 2010 banning ebony and rosewood logging and export definitively;
- (ii) the efforts of the current MEF Minister to tackle the “mafia” activity with the limited means at his disposal;
- (iii) the scarcity of tradable-dimensioned logs; and, (iv) the continuous call of national and international CSOs.

WWF MWIOPPO, through the CSSP programme, continues to support the integration of the Malagasy precious wood within the CITES system financially, technically and through advocacy.

Within the Madagascar PTF (“Partenaires Techniques et Financiers”) platform for Environment (CCPTFE), assessments will be undertaken soon on the current status and perspectives for environmental governance and Malagasy Environmental CSOs.

As part as tools to improve natural resource governance, WCS and Zoo Zurich are also experimenting DNA identification for Madagascar precious woods.

Beyond the borders, there are numerous regional and international initiatives to address illegal trade in natural resource products.

In this vein, three WWF MWIOPPO staff participated in the WWF China-Africa workshop in Johannesburg in February.

This meeting allowed the Africa-China team to review approaches to reinforce WWF policy intelligence and approaches to tackle common issues regarding natural resources trafficking and inappropriate extractive industries.■



THE SIMPONA, THE NORTHERN HIGHLANDS FLAGSHIP SPECIES



The silky Simpona is a large white Sifaka in the North-East of Madagascar. Its body’s length measures 19 to 21 inches (48 to 54 cm) and its weight ranges from 11 to 14 pounds (5 to 6.5 kg).

It is characterized by its long and silky white fur causing it to look like a stuffed animal. Admiring Simponas is a favorite hobby for tourists.

The Simpona is found in the forest area spreading from Marojejy and crossing the Betaolana

corridor and the South-Anjanaharibe national park, to the Antainambalana River in Makira.

Due to uneven distribution, its presence is yet to be shown in most of this area: the corridor linking Betaolana to Tsaratanàna, the northern part of South-Anjanaharibe and the vast northern area of Makira.

A recent study carried out in remote areas in the National Park of Marojejy made it possible to find 7 new groups, which takes the total number of groups in Marojejy to 31 groups totaling 131 individuals (Patel, 2010).

The total number of individuals left in the wild, spread among 47 groups, is estimated at 100 to 1,000. The Simpona basically feeds on leaves and seeds from more than 76 trees and plant species.

This is a seed predator because seeds are destroyed when passing through the digestive tube of the animal (unlike seed dispersers that allow intact seeds through their digestive tube, thus contributing to their dispersal).

The breeding occurs mainly during the months of December through January, the female giving

birth to a baby every two years. The Simpona is threatened by poaching, degradation and disruption of its habitat, even within protected areas.

The recent study at Marojejy disclosed 18 lemur traps and several huts and pathways within Simponas habitats (Patel, 2010). There is no taboo about the Simpona in this area of the island. *Propithecus candidus* was evaluated by IUCN (2008) and deemed in critical danger of extinction (CR). It features among the 25 most endangered primate species in the world. Within the framework of its conservation strategic plan 2011-2015, WWF selected the Tsaratanàna-Marojejy corridor among its priority landscapes wherein special conservation efforts will be deployed.

The Simpona stands as the flagship species in this landscape and WWF will lead, along with partners active in the field, the development and implementation of a specific conservation plan targeting this species.

Patel, E. 2010. *Lemur Survey in North-Eastern Marojejy National Park (Andalany)*. pp. 25.■

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TRIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM WWF MADAGASCAR & WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN PROGRAMME OFFICE

EXPLORE'S VOLUNTEERS

“Without dealing with the local communities, guaranteeing their development and improving their live quality, there can be no conservation”.

“Moreover, the contrast, the need for adapting myself to these ways of life and difficult conditions, but also enjoying of their charm, hospitality and generosity, together the cultural adaptation process and the exchange with the locals was a continuous but rewarding challenge (even if always limited by the language barrier), and probably the most enriching part of the Programme.”

(Sergio Rejado Albaina, Espagne) ■



« I believe the experience on the field with communities is very important to me, both because I came here to meet people in the environment where they live and because I spent some time sharing part of their daily routine, discovering their relationship with the forest and biodiversity and also their relationship with WWF, an organization renowned for its conservation work, present all over the world and whose staff is made up of nationals”.

“Local communities are the main actors as far protection of the environment at local level is concerned”.

Without their participation and willingness to preserve the forest, conservation work would be harder, even useless”.

This human dimension was a major motivating factor in my volunteering, added to the fact that I am Malagasy and immigrated”.

“It is essential for me to know my country and its people”.

(Henintsoa Ravoala, France) ■



“I learned loads during my time in Madagascar, produced some excellent communications work via blogging and video creation, and made valuable connections—both with Malagasy people and with my own teammates”.

“I can't say enough about how indebted I am to WWF for allowing me to take part in this eye-opening, life-changing experience.”

(Cara Brooks, USA) ■



« It was a success. I learned many things, whether good or less than good. So I spent three fascinating months”.

“My expectations were more than met”.

(Kunigunde Baldauf, Autriche) ■



“I really feel that it was a success as I have met my expectation for volunteering for a great international organisa-

tion. Moreover, I'm really happy to have participated to promote and to conserve Madagascar ecological environment with the WWF's Explore programme.”

(Ranto Tantely, Madagascar) ■



“Now, at the end of my three month term with the WWF EXPLORE Madagascar Program, I can assert that the experience has been exactly what I had hoped to find in coming here.

My understanding of Madagascar, its people, and its environmental predicament, as far as one can learn from academic and internet resources beforehand, has been challenged and reshaped.

Our short time here has exposed many harsh realities and inspiring moments that go with conservation work.

Most of all, I have realized that development plays the primary role in any conservation initiative. Before one can discuss and dwell on the intrinsic valuation of Nature, one must address a People's basic, daily needs”.

“I know that there is still much for me to learn, and that what I have witnessed here is only the beginning of what I will be challenged with in the future as a conservation professional. I will take my memories and lessons of Madagascar with me for life. Thank you Explore!”

(Christa Szumski, Canada) ■





VOICES FROM THE FIELD - FOCUS VONDROZO



IOTO Raphael

With the new revenue from community based forest management, the people from Tsaratanana can now decide what is needed most and invest the money according to their needs.

With the money coming from four years of self-responsible management, they were able to build a school for their kids.

They also make sure, they can pay a teacher with rice, eggs and vegetables.

Over 100 kids go to school now in Tsaratanana!

The Sahafatra in Tsaratanana have also completely changed their attitudes towards their natural resources.

“We all have abandoned tavy – slash-and-burn in the natural forests” says IOTO Raphael, the president of the COBA Tsara Mandrosoa.■



Kotobatovisa

When WWF helped to create the COBA in Vohimary-Nord in 2006, there was a brand-new clearing of more than 10 hectares in the natural forest

about an hour from the village. Someone burnt that large patch to grow rice.

“When we decided about our own ‘dina’ (local laws), we fixed the penalty for slash-and-burn in the forest at 250’000 Ariary (about 100 euro)” says Kotobatovisa, a forest policeman who patrols the forest on a regular basis.

“This is a lot, but we actually wanted it to hurt. You are not supposed to burn down our natural resources!

It has become a national duty for me to protect our forests which are sources of food and water.”■



Kotosarahy

“We have produced 34,000 plants of eucalyptus and acacia so far” says Kotosarahy, a gardener in Vohimary-Nord.

“We have planted 14,000 of them already” he adds, making a wide gesture over the land of his ancestors.

And actually, you can see countless little holes on some of the bare naked hills and if you look again, you can see small trees in most of them.

While restoring degraded natural forest by planting native tree species, the reforestation activities aim to produce sustainable fuel wood.

The wood of these fast growing exotic tree species can be used for the construction of houses

and for cooking.

Starting from the fifth year, these new forests should be able to provide for people’s demand for wood.■



Philomène

The holistic programme for forest conservation has helped the women in Tsaratanana to create their own women’s association called Tsara ezaka (“good effort”).

The 24 members attended training sessions in vegetable farming and have started growing tomatoes, eggplants, peanuts and cabbage right afterwards.

Philomène, the president of the women’s association and her friends sold the yield on the market in Vondrozo and earned 370,000 Ariary (about 150 Euro) for the first season!

Four women who live in the village take care of the vegetable gardens and water the plants every second day.

The others take care of the maintenance of the peanut fields which are a bit further away from Tsaratanana.

“If there are too many weeds, we call our husbands to help us” says Philomène and giggles, “but we don’t need them for the rest”.■



Rakontondrasoa Laza Hasinarijaona

Laza is the coordinator in Vondrozo for the holistic programme for the conservation of forest.

When he was little, Laza suffered when he saw people burning their pastures or cutting down the forest.

“It’s like they cut my skin” he says, “This has not changed up until now”.

Fianana being a place very well known for extensive fires, Laza was threatened by a huge fire more than once.

Once he and his family managed to stop the fire just ten metres in front of his family’s house.

This shock made him even work harder to become a good conservationist and an ambitious forester.

“Working for WWF is a dream coming true” says Laza, “and working for the holistic programme makes this even better”.

“I fully support the holistic approach for forest conservation in this project because I think we can’t conserve without taking people’s livelihoods into account”.■



TEMA ADELINE : CLIMATE WITNESS

My name is Tema Adéline and I am 46 years old.

I live in Antsakoamasy in the Anosy region in the Far South of Madagascar. I have 8 children: six girls and two boys. I am single.

I have two huts for myself and my family. We cook outside, but when it rains we move inside.

The name of my village, 'Antsakoamasy', comes from the Sakoa Tree which is sacred because it is inhabited by a spirit.

The village is made up of around 20 households.

We have a sacred forest; a burial site, to the east and the agricultural land takes up all of the North West part of the village.

Like my grandmother and my mother, I am a farmer and I grow manioc, sweet potatoes and rice.

I plant each in a plot of land of about a hectare. Being a single woman, I do not manage to do the agricultural work all by myself.

Instead, I have to call upon the services

of a man who helps me and who, in turn, receives half of the harvest. The yield is mainly intended for use as food.

My rice plantation is situated on an irrigated perimeter and before it was possible for me to plant rice three times a year.

However, there is no longer sufficient irrigation water and it's good if we manage to plant twice a year: this year, we planted just once.

In my mother's day, the harvest was good as there was a lot of rain.

Now it rains less and less often: before it rained from October onwards – now it only rains in the run up to Christmas and even then, only for a few days.

At this time, the Andratino River, which is no longer constant, was full of water. The High-Basins of Mandrare project (PHBM) built a dam to irrigate the agricultural lands, including mine.

Now, certain plots no longer receive water – fortunately, this is not the case for my land.

I am very afraid that the great famine, like that of 2007, may return.■

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MARCH 26th, 2011: EARTH HOUR FROM MADAGASCAR

Antananarivo and Toliara, like other 4,000 cities around the world have celebrated the global Earth Hour Event, as planned. During The Hour and even beyond, important and historical buildings from the capital town have symbolically turned off their lights, rallying to the cause of this broad ecocitizen mobilization.■



The Queen's Palace "Rova Manjakamiadana" turned off its light during Earth Hour 2011.



At the main Train Station, the event did not go unnoticed.