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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.

Layout and content: Sophie and Mparany Rakotondrainy

Vakoka Vakiteny News

Dear friends of Vakoka Vakiteny.

As you can see in this newsletter, the activities of Vakoka Vakiteny have continued and will continue further even if Sophie and I are not going to live fulltime in Madagascar. Mrs. Hanta has plans for further book distribution, especially of the two new books *Tsingolangola* and *Sedram-piainana*. The next trip she has scheduled is to the municipality of Ambohimambola where there are schools that also previously have received books from us.

In this newsletter you can see many pictures of children, youth and adults receiving books from us. Some of them live in cities, some on the countryside, some in the south, some in the central part of Madagascar. This means that our books reach different parts of the Malagasy population, something we are very happy for.

Mparany Rakotondrainy
Manager of **Vakoka Vakiteny**

An trip full of adventures

In the end of April, Mparany went on a long trip from Toliara to Anka-zoabo and further north to Bereroha in order to distribute copies of *Tsingolangola* and *Sedram-piainana*.

On his way he had to cut several trees that had fallen across the road, he had to dig the car out of the mud and drive it across river beds. But the effort was worth it when he saw how well the books were received by children, youth and adults. Read more about this on the next four pages.



The fairytale tellers got their books

All the nine fairytales in Tsingolangola have been told by Bara children living in the Bara region. We were able to meet some of these children again and give them our appreciation for their contributions. They received a copy of the book, a school bag and colour pencils for drawing pictures. All the other children who also told fairytales will receive their presents through the teacher in the village.

It was a special moment for Fokonay, Damy, Sylvin, Tsivevy and the others when they saw their fairytales and pictures in the book. These children hardly ever hold books in their hands, and now they have got a book that carries their own names in it! We really hope that this will encourage these children to be more confident in their own ability to tell stories, to write and paint, and increase the value they give to the Bara culture.



The picture shows two of the girls who told their fairytales for *Tsingolangola*, Fokonay and Bano together with their teacher Mr. Soja on the left.

Book distribution in Ankilirano Tsaramandroso, Ankazoabo



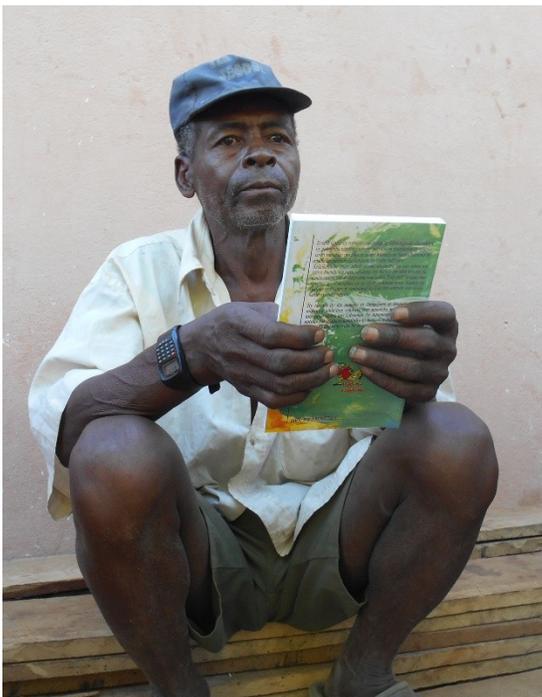
People in the small village of Ankilirano Tsaramandroso outside Ankazoabo seem to have a special love for books. When the Land Rover with the Vakoka Vakiteny books arrived there, it was hard to arrange an organised distribution of the books because people wanted to get their hands on a copy of *Tsingolangola* and *Sedram-piainana* as quickly as possible. Mothers with babies in their arms started to read *Sedram-piainana* at once, and the children adored the pictures in *Tsingolangola*.

The literacy rate in this village seems to be quite high, yet people don't have anything to read as not even the newspapers arrive in this remote place. The reason for us to choose going to Ankilirano Tsaramandroso was that one of the elders in the village asked us specifically to come and distribute books. It seems like the community as a whole has already talked much about the wish for getting books, so we are confident that not one single of the books we distributed will remain unread.



This time we decided that also specifically eager adults should receive copies of our books. We believe that this will have a positive influence on the learning of their children as they will learn the value and joy of reading from their parents. Particularly mothers are important role models for children, so we were happy that there were many young mothers among those who received books. With *Sedram-piainana*, a book written by a young mother about her life abroad, we do have a title that fits particularly for this target group.

The village elders were among the main initiators for the book distribution. This is a good starting point for the use of the books. On the countryside in Madagascar it is important to get the consent of the elders as they have power to manipulate the public opinion. By getting the consent of the elders we can gain the trust of all people.



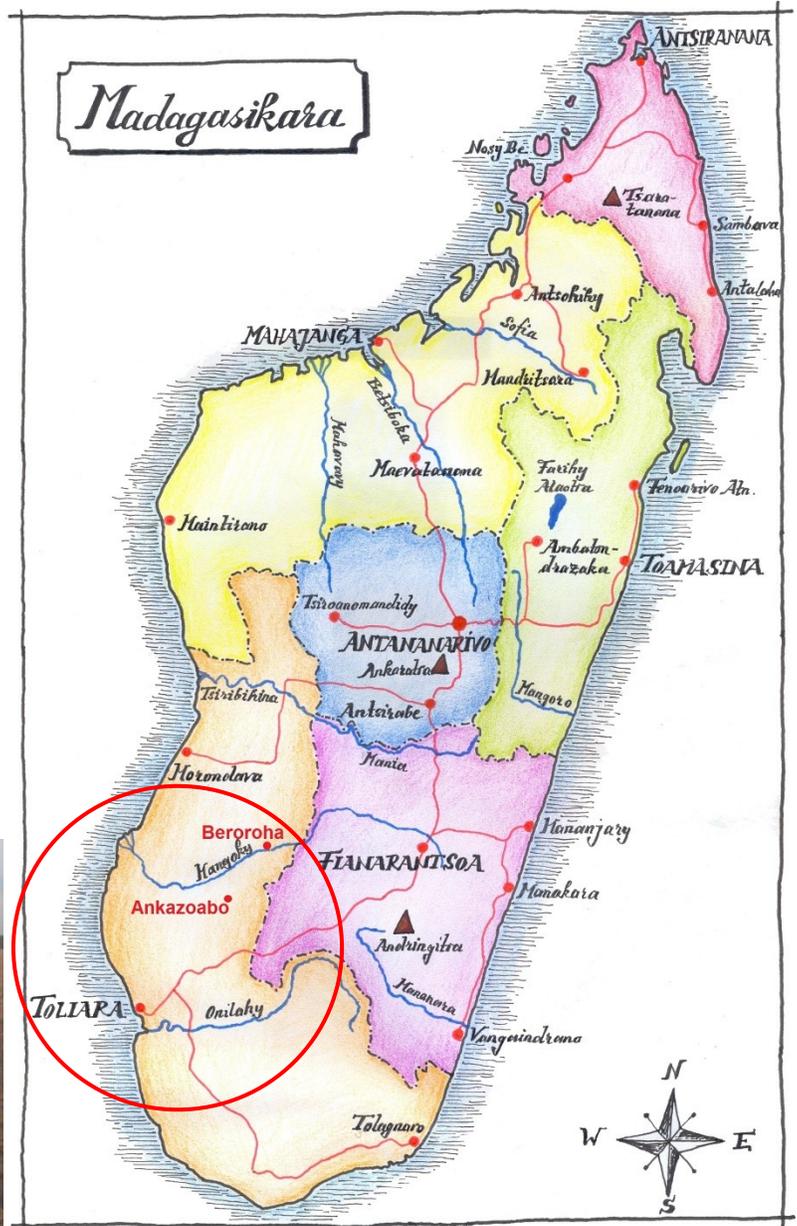
Right: Mparany has got many eager listeners when he explains what you can find between the covers of *Tsingolangola*.



Book delivery to Beroroha

Last year we already cooperated with the director of the education authorities in Beroroha, Gilbert Ndriaka Lahimalaza, for the distribution of almost 200 *Hiverina aho, Dadabe!* in his district (cf. Newsletter 2013—4). Now Vakoka Vakiteny has finally been able to visit Beroroha district and bring even more books to this very remote area in the north of the South-Western region within the province of Toliara (see map).

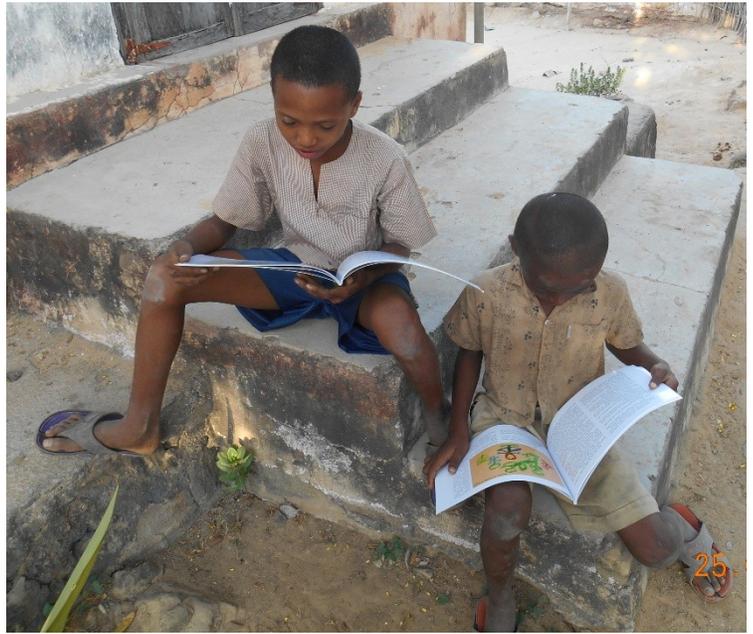
The road from Toliara to Beroroha is in a very bad condition for almost 500 kilometres. For the last section crossing the Mangoky river the books had to be transported first by ox cart through the deep sand of the river bed and then by canoe. The books arrived in Beroroha with the last light of the day, as you can see on the picture below. The transport across the Mangoky river had been arranged by Mr. Gilbert.



The next day many people arrived at the district education authorities to attend the handing over of the books to Mr. Gilbert and the staff of the education authorities. Some first books were also directly distributed to teachers and students who attend schools close to Beroroha.

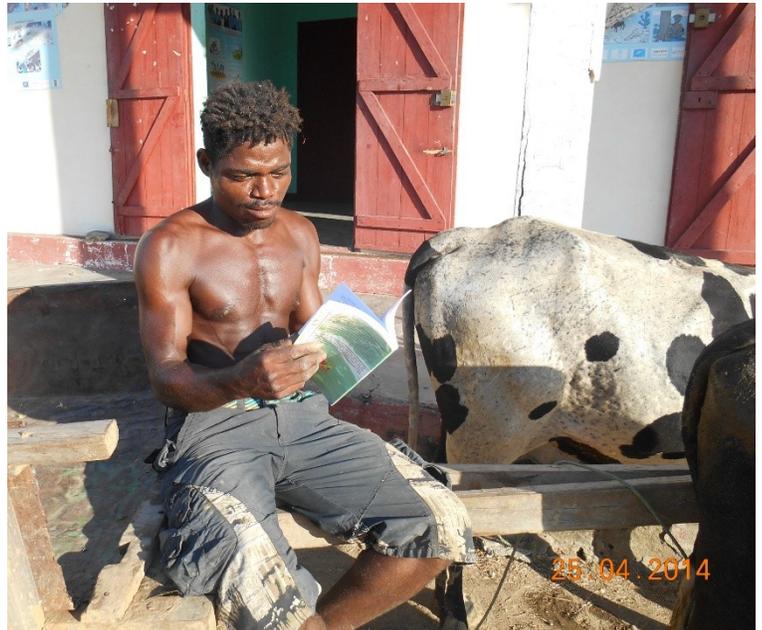
In addition to bringing *Tsingolangola* for the primary schools and *Sedram-piainana* for the secondary schools, we also brought copies of *Dadanaivo Tefy* in addition to *Hiverina aho, Dadabe!* which they already previously had received.





Children starting to read in their copies of *Tsingolangola* on the stairs outside the education district authorities in Bereroha. The people living in this area are Bara, and they will recognise some of the fairytales in the book.

20 year old Jaona was the driver of the ox cart who brought the books to Bereroha across the Mangoky river. While everyone else was busy taking the books inside the office of the education authorities, he picked up one *Sedram-piainana* and began to read. It turned out this young man has completed secondary school, but has never had the chance to continue his studies and is now a farmer.



It was very encouraging to see how interested he was in reading and how eager he was to learn more. He kept the copy of *Sedram-piainana* and we hope that he will find much joy in reading this book besides all his duties as a farmer!



Book distribution at EPP Mahazoarivo II, Antsirabe

Mahazoarivo II is one of the rather underprivileged quarters in the city of Antsirabe. Still, the primary school here has introduced a library hour every Friday where they want to encourage all students to read. Their problem is that they do not have a room they can use as a library, and previously they also did not have any children's literature in Malagasy language.

When the school administration heard about Vakoka Vakiteny they contacted Mrs. Hanta at once and asked if they could get some books for their Friday library. In March Hanta went to Mahazoarivo with copies of many of our books. Furthermore, the school received class sets of *Tsingolangola*, *Hiverina aho*, *Dadabe!* and *Fantaro ny Nosintsika*.

The teachers and parents of the children in EPP Mahazoarivo II would like to expand their school library to make it open for the public living in this area of Antsirabe. We are happy to hear about their eagerness and are going to deliver more books to them whenever we publish new books.



Above: Friday library hours are outside in the school courtyard because of a lack of facilities inside the school building.

Below: Mrs. Hanta holds a short training for the teachers and students of the EPP Mahazoarivo II in the use of books in class.



6th grade students at the EPP Mahazoarivo II received a class set of *Hiverina aho, Dadabe!* by Nasrin Siege.

