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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: content: Sophie and  
Mparany Rakotondrainy

# **Vakoka Vakiteny News**

**Dear friends of Vakoka Vakiteny.**

Although this is the first newsletter from us this year, it will also be the last newsletter that we send from Madagascar in a while. As we explain more thoroughly on page 5, Sophie and I are going to work as advisors for rural development in Ethiopia starting after summer holidays.

This does not mean that Vakoka Vakiteny will cease to exist, and by no means that the distribution of the books already printed will stop! Furthermore, the plans we have made for further projects will be carried out, although maybe slower than otherwise.

Thank you for still supporting our work.

*Mparany Rakotondrainy*  
Manager of **Vakoka Vakiteny**

## **Bara Fairytales Printed!**

The book Tsingolangola with the nine fairytales from the Bara region has finally been printed in 1500 copies. The print of 1000 copies has been supported by the association *Madagascar School and Children's Books* (Madagaskar Schul- und Kinderbücher e.V.) and these books will be distributed for free to schools, starting immediately.

There have been two main sponsors behind the distribution of these 1000 books: Endress + Hauser Company in Maulburg, Germany and the association Eine-Welt-Verein Keniahilfe e.V. In Bühl, Germany, who also has supported us before. Thank you very much!

The quality of the print of the book is highly satisfactory. Sophie was in Antananarivo twice to oversee the printing process and assure the quality of paper and colours. The result is a colourful 50 page book illustrated exclusively by children.



## Vony's Autobiography Printed!

Another book is finished: Sedram-piainana, the autobiography of Voninirina Rakotoson. This book was printed at the same printing house as Nasrin Siege's book "Hiverina ago, Dadabe" (Todisoa), and the format and quality is the same. Like the Bara fairytales, also this book was printed with support from the association, and the distribution of 1000 copies has already started.

One of the first readers of the book was 17-year old Emile. Currently in grade 9 he, read the book already before it was printed, to give feedback or suggestions. He found the book interesting and informative at the same time. As this is a true story he sympathised very much with the protagonist, Vony, who is accomplishing heavy workloads in the homes of wealthy Lebanese women.



17 years old Emile, sitting on his bed reading Sedram-piainana

- "As the situation becomes more and more serious for Vony, who is locked up and forced to work, I felt very sad for her", he tells us. "I feel so angry that these things can happen to innocent people looking for a better life abroad!"

Clearly, the book has touched this young man, and we hope it will do the same to the many others who also will read it. Although it is written as a story, the book also contains some teaching about human trafficking and human rights and raises issues such as dignity and respect as opposed to cruelty and humiliation.

Emile recommends the book to youth from 16 years or 8th grade upwards. Therefore, the distribution of the book will, as Todisoa also, be focused on secondary schools. We are also certain that older youth and parents will find the book both gripping and illuminating as well.

## *National Day of the Mother Tongue*

Wednesday 26 February Madagascar celebrated the National Day of the Mother Tongue. This day is an initiative from the government to increase the awareness around the Malagasy language, and it was celebrated with events in several towns and cities.

In Antsirabe this celebration was located at the Alliance Française and lasted the whole day. All public and private schools in Antsirabe participated and there were groups of children and youth who showed traditional Malagasy dance. Furthermore, there were competitions in poem reading and holding speeches (a particular Malagasy tradition).

Vakoka Vakiteny was the main sponsor for the prizes of these competitions. All children who participated, and especially the winners were given books from Vakoka Vakiteny. Therefore, we received special thanks from the arrangers of the event, and we were also able to spread some information about our work and our books.



Some of the participants with their book prizes.  
First person on the left is Mrs. Hanta



"Hiverina aho, Dadabe" by Nasrin Siege was given to the participants who danced, read poems or held speeches

Celebration of the Mother Tongue is especially important in Madagascar where often French receives more focus and weight. Therefore we were very happy to be part of this event and encourage students to use their language and be proud of it!

Left: A young dancer with a small pile of books in Malagasy language.  
On top is "Hiverina aho, Dadabe".

## Distribution of Books

As reported in last newsletter, 190 Todisoa books (Hiverina aho, Dadabe) have been given to schools in Beroroha in the very north of the Southwestern region. The books have reached this very remote district safely and have been distributed to surrounding schools.



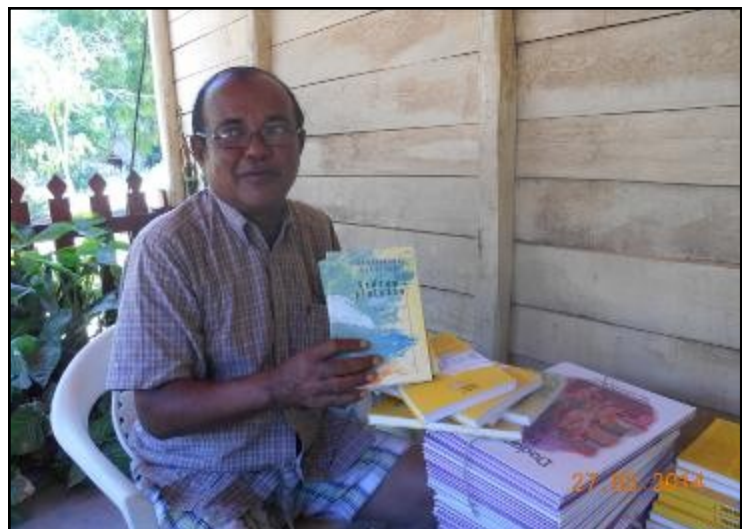
Illustration for a fairy tale done by 11-year old Bano from Mahazoarivo village close to Ankazoabo

We plan a trip to Beroroha with a new book delivery consisting of Bara fairytales (Tsingolangona) and Vony's autobiography (Sedram-piainana) this month. At this occasion we will also be able to verify the distribution of Todisoa and supervise the distribution of the new books. In addition, the teachers will get their promised short training on using books in school.

On our way to Beroroha we will also pass by Mahazoarivo Ankazoabo, one of the villages where children shared their fairytales for Tsingolangola. Of course, this village will be honoured particularly and receive book copies for schools and homes.

The small municipality of Ankatsakatsa is located north of Toliara on the road junction between Toliara, Morombe and Manja/ Morondava. The secondary school in the centre of this municipality received more than 120 books from us the last week in March. We could deliver the books to the mayor, the teachers and parents personally. Focus of this distribution was Sedram-piainana, but they also received free copies of Hiverina aho, Dadabe and other books.

The distribution of books continues also in the Antsirabe area. In January Mrs. Hanta visited a very remote school in Antanambe, located in the municipality of Ambohimanambola where we previously have distributed many of our books. This school was in the lucky possession of a library room which we happily filled with copies of all our books.



The official handing over of the books to the mayor of Ankatsakatsa before they were brought to the school.

## *Work on Environment Book Proceeds*

As already described in Newsletter 2013—2 and 3, we are working on revising the environment book about Madagascar written in 1994 by the Norwegian biologist Jon Bakke.

We have now gone through the whole Malagasy manuscript and done language adjustments and shortenings. This is to make the text more appealing to younger readers in secondary schools. Furthermore, we have started on the process of updating all information concerning species of plants and animals, deforestation and new research done on various other topics. Within this process we have translated the whole manuscript into English as the consultants from WWF who are currently checking all facts are English speaking. Whether or not the final book will contain an English version has not yet been decided.

There is still a quite long way to go before we can finish the work on the manuscript. After receiving a correct and updated English version, the Malagasy version will have to be adjusted to this and then thoroughly proofread for language issues. An even larger task will be to replace maps and illustrations that are out of date with new ones, not to mention making a new layout for the entire book. However, we plan to have a manuscript ready for printing by the end of this year, although we will be away from Madagascar for most of the remaining period (see below).

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## *The Future of Vakoka Vakiteny*

As you all know, Vakoka Vakiteny Publishing Company consists of Mparany and Sophie, assisted by Mrs. Hanta. Mparany and Sophie have now been offered a position as advisors for an integrated rural development programme in Ethiopia, funded by the Norwegian government. We will therefore start working in Ethiopia in August this year and prepare for our new work during summer break in Europe.

During the time we will stay in Ethiopia, however, we do not intend to give up our Vakoka Vakiteny, and as you can see from this newsletter there will be activities proceeding into the new school year. Main responsible for distributing the new books will be Mrs. Hanta. The work with the new edition of the environment book about Madagascar will also continue (see above). We plan to be able to do many tasks concerning this manuscript from Ethiopia, although some things may take longer time to accomplish.

We hope that all our supporters and sponsors will continue to stay tuned in and follow our newsletters which from now on might come only twice a year. The association Madagascar School and Children's Books (Madagaskar Schul – und Kinderbücher e.V.) will continue to exist, and we encourage the supporters to give further donations to the association for the development of the environment book and distribution. Details will be discussed during the association's annual meeting in July.

We will keep you updated on our further activities!

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