

Exceptional Newsletter 02/2025



On Sunday, June 1st, 2025, the annual meeting of the Association Children's Books in Madagascar (Madagaskar Schul- und Kinderbücher e.V.) took place in Herrenwies in the Black Forest. This newsletter is based on the Power-Point presentation that Vakoka Vakiteny delivered at the meeting.

Following the event, we were asked to add explanatory texts to the slides and photos and turn the presentation into a newsletter.

What you are reading now is a summary of our activities from the last annual meeting in June 2024 up to this year's meeting as it was presented at the annual meeting.

Best wishes

Mparany Rakotondrainy

Manager of **Vakoka Vakiteny**



The Association together with Vakoka Vakiteny in Herrenwies on the 1st of June 2025



Vakoka Vakiteny in Retrospect

A Glimpse of Our work



The joy of reading

Since its founding in 2007, Vakoka Vakiteny has published 22 book titles, totalling 39,300 printed copies. These books highlight the organization's dedication to fostering literacy and a joy of reading, especially in the Malagasy language. Some books are bilingual—written in Malagasy and French, or Malagasy and English—allowing children to explore languages side by side. The positive response from young readers shows a growing demand and appreciation for these bilingual editions.

2007 - 2025



22 titles



39 300 copies printed

Areas of distribution

50 schools

+

Street kids

Youth detention center

Children's villages

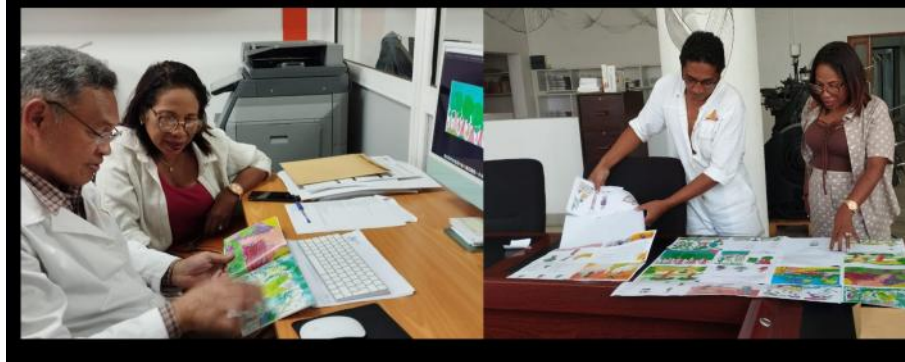


For 18 years, Vakoka Vakiteny has been active across Madagascar — from North to South, and East to West. During this time, the team has collaborated with more than 50 schools, read stories to street children, encouraged young people in detention centers to discover the joy of reading, and led creative activities in the children's own schools and villages. The team is full of energy and passion.

Vakoka Vakiteny is committed to making books accessible to all, regardless of background, religion, or social status. We believe that no one should be left behind. Books are for everyone, and every child deserves the joy of reading.

Printing books in Madagascar presents several challenges. Ensuring consistent quality requires close and frequent follow-up with the print houses. Additionally, fluctuations in pricing and service standards often make it necessary to change print providers in order to maintain a good balance between cost and quality. Despite these difficulties, Hanta manages this process with great care and dedication, ensuring that the final products meet our standards.

Printing



Vaikoà Vaikiteny 2024-25 Report

Mahazoarivo hub of learning and fun



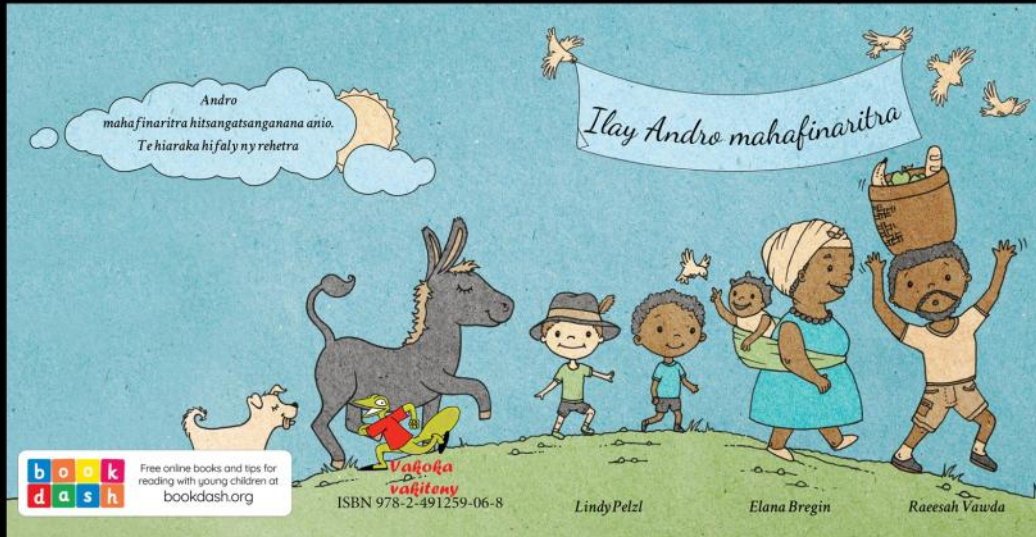
Our two libraries in Mahazoarivo II in Antsirabe and Ambohimananambola on the countryside near Betafo, also in the Central Highlands, have become a huge success. The libraries are open every day and enjoy a high level of activity. They are not only used by students from the hosting school, but also attract children from neighboring schools who come to read, learn, and participate in the engaging environment.

In Mahazoarivo, Hanta leads special sessions every Wednesday where she either reads aloud to the children or organizes interactive games. These weekly activities create a lively and welcoming atmosphere and encourage the joy of reading and learning through play. In Ambohimananambola, the children often stay in the library after school to do their homework or read. Thanks to the solar panels, they even have light after the sun has gone down, which they don't have in their homes.

Ambohimananambola the treasure gift



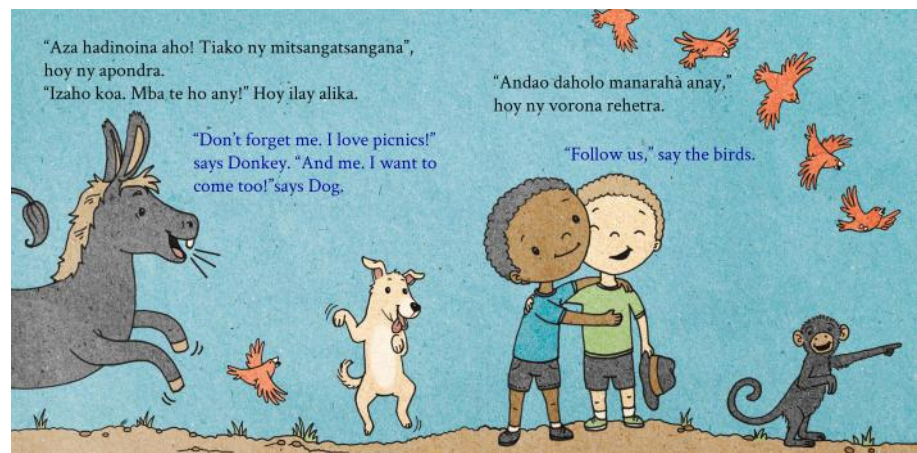
Ilay andro mahafinaritra: Malagasy - English



The feedback on the books from BookDash has been very positive. The bilingual editions in English and Malagasy are especially well received by readers, as they support both literacy and language learning. The new book *A Beautiful Day* has quickly become a favourite among young readers. It's particularly popular with beginners and students who are just starting to learn English, thanks to its simple language and engaging content.



The South African publisher BookDash, who gives the copyright for other publishers who want to translate their titles has also responded positively and encourages us to continue using their platform for future publications.



Hetaheta



The new book *Hetaheta* ("Thirst") is the result of a workshop held in Ambohimananambola, in which children and young people participated with great enthusiasm. During the workshop, they wrote stories and poems and created illustrations. The central themes were the environment and women's rights. The texts and images were then compiled into a book, which was printed in an edition of 1,000 copies.

Hetaheta is a completely original creation—both the texts and the illustrations were developed specifically for this book, making it a unique and authentic work by young voices.



Rebila - Malagasy and French



A new edition of *Rebila*, one of Vakoka Vakiteny's most successful books, has been published in 1,000 copies in total.

This reprint of 240 copies of these was commissioned and funded by the Malagasy Ministry of Education and was published as a bilingual edition in Malagasy and French. The process took some time, but ultimately the 240 books were printed for the Ministry, while the remaining 760 copies are available to Vakoka Vakiteny for free distribution. A continuation of this collaboration with the Ministry is planned.

Cooperation: Vakoka Vakiteny and the Ministry of education



Workshop



The Ministry also invited publishers, authors, and other stakeholders to a workshop, which Hanta attended. In addition, a book fair is planned to take place soon, and Vakoka Vakiteny has been invited to actively participate in the event.

Hanta can be seen on the upper picture as the second person from the right in the uppermost row.

Book fair



New Plans of Vahoka Vakitany for 2025/26

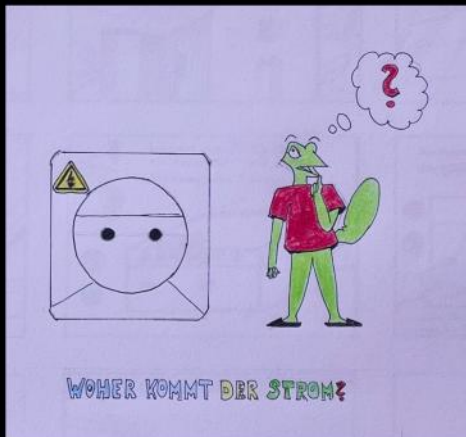


Beth Dickens' book *Ilay hazon'i Fara nitondra fiovana* ("The Tree of Change") is now approaching its final stages. Although the publication was originally planned for the previous fiscal year, the project experienced several delays during the editing phase. Now, however, the book is ready to go to print within the next month.

The story follows a young girl named Fara, who is eager to learn about forests and the natural world. Structured as an interactive learning journey, the book encourages readers to reflect on and understand the importance of environmental responsibility. If funding allows, 1,000 copies are planned for the initial print run.

As part of the preparations, the team also considered whether more cost-effective printing options might be available. Exploring different printing companies is certainly worthwhile, but switching providers can come with new complexities. Any decision must weigh factors such as print quality, reliability, and long-term collaboration.

Where Does Electricity Come From?



- Malagasy / Englisch
- Dr. Clemens Däschle

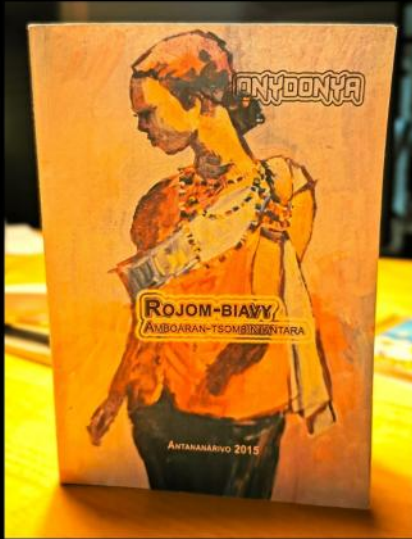


Longstanding member of the association, Clemens Däschle recently approached Vakoka Vakiteny with an exciting idea for a new book. The inspiration for this project came after his visit to Madagascar last year, during which he also toured the library in Ambohimananambola—a library powered by a solar photovoltaic system. Many people are unaware of how such systems work or where the electricity actually comes from.

Clemens aims to explain this process through engaging storytelling featuring the lizard Dangaligny, accompanied by vivid illustrations. The book will describe how energy from the sun is transformed into the electricity we use in our homes.

The plan is to publish the book bilingually, in both English and Malagasy. Vakoka Vakiteny is very enthusiastic about this collaboration, and Clemens, together with Mparany, will continue developing the project.

Rojom-biavy



- 8 short stories, A5, 88 pages
- No illustration yet
- Onisoamino Sydonie Martial (Onydonya)



Onisoamino Sydonie Martial, a Malagasy author writing under the pseudonym Onydonya, privately published her book *Rojom-biavy* in a small edition of 300 copies in 2015.

The title *Rojom-biavy*, which translates to “women’s chain,” carries a double meaning—it can refer to jewellery as well as a symbol of restraint or oppression for women. The book, in A5 format, contains 88 pages and no illustrations.

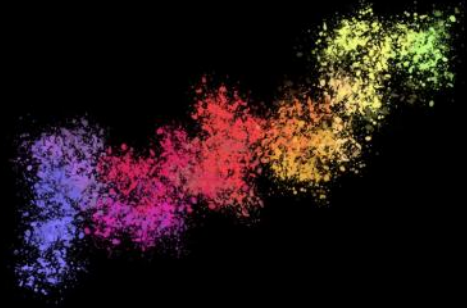
The author has approached Vakoka Vakiteny with a request for support in illustrating and publishing a new edition of the book. If funding becomes available, she would like the illustrations to be created in a workshop with young people. The book is based on field research conducted by Onisoamino on the topic of women’s rights.

Publishing *Rojom-biavy* at her own risk is especially admirable, as it demonstrates Onydonya’s strong personal commitment to giving a voice to women’s experiences, despite the financial and logistical challenges faced by independent authors in Madagascar.

Illustration workshop



- 5 days
- 10 young people



To illustrate the women's biographies written by Onydonya (Onisoamino Sydonie Martial), Vakoka Vakiteny plans to organize a workshop for young people to create the accompanying illustrations. These artworks will differ in tone and style from those produced for *Hetaheta*, which featured stories and drawings by children and youth. Onydonya's texts are aimed at older teens and young adults, and the illustrations will need to reflect the greater depth and maturity of the content.

Beyond enriching the book, the workshop offers a unique opportunity for young participants to express their thoughts and emotions on themes such as social justice and gender inequality. It will serve as both a creative process and a space for reflection. Onisoamino Sydonie Martial will play an active role in the workshop—discussing the biographies with the participants and helping them explore diverse perspectives, challenges, and life experiences. Through this exchange, the young illustrators can develop a deeper understanding of the realities others face, and translate those insights into meaningful visual narratives.

New library

- Primary school in Vatomandry (East of Madagascar)
- cooperation with Parents Association



Hanta regularly receives requests from schools asking for support in building a library. However, there are strict selection criteria that must be met before a project is approved. Key questions include: Is the school and local community truly committed and capable of carrying out the construction? Will the library be used consistently and by a sufficient number of people? Is there a reliable local contact person? And how strong is the cooperation with local authorities?

One current request seems particularly promising. It comes from a primary school (grades 1–5) in Vatomandry, located on the east coast of Madagascar. The school serves 1,445 students and has 43 teachers. The application was submitted jointly by a parent-teacher association, and both the teachers and parents appear highly motivated and engaged.

Hanta is planning a visit to Vatomandry soon to assess the situation on site and to evaluate whether the successful implementation of the library project is likely.

It is extremely important to us that the library is not only built properly and with the involvement of the local population, but also that the community sees it as their project. Our goal is that the library will be operated independently in the long term—without outside support—while remaining open and accessible as a space for young people to learn, grow, and relax.



The current school building in Vatomandry



In 2024, five members of the Association traveled to Madagascar. During their visit, they had the opportunity to experience the work of Vakoka Vakiteny firsthand and to get to know the country, its people, and its rich culture.

We are open to organizing more such trips in the future and would be happy to discuss ideas with anyone interested in joining the next group journey to the homeland of Dan-galigny and friends.



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Rakotondrainy
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Sophie Küspert-
Rakotondrainy
Public Relations/
Editor



Hanta
Rakotondrainy
Trainings/
Book distribution

Vafoka Vakiteny has since 2008

- ... published 22 titles
- ... distributed 39,300 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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