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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.

Currently we are working with several new manuscripts. The one closest to completion is an autobiography by Voninirina Rakotoson, the young Malagasy woman who went to Lebanon to work as a maid and had a very hard time. In this newsletter we are presenting the translation of a passage from one of the chapters. In addition we continue to have illustration workshops with children for the Bara fairytales, and we have plans for a third project - a book about the Malagasy natural environment. In this newsletter we also discuss the continued distribution and sale of our books.

We want to encourage all our readers to buy our trilingual book about *Toliara and the Southwest of Madagascar*. It is a wonderful gift that in addition supports Vakoka Vakiteny's work. Please contact us for more information.

Mparany Rakotondrainy
Manager of **Vakoka Vakiteny**

Easter Market in Antsirabe

In the week before Easter and on the Easter days we participated in the Easter Market in Antsirabe. There were stalls selling clothes, food, handicrafts and books. We shared a stall with an organization for Christian literature so we could share the fee for the stall and the supervision of the sale. Although we did not sell too many books, we were happy to be there as we were able to exhibit our books, get some new contacts and show some public presence.

Antsirabe is famous for its Easter activities and people from all over the island visit Antsirabe for Easter. Unfortunately we were not able to take pictures of the stand, but the picture on the right is from the Avenue in the centre of Antsirabe and it shows how many people were at the place where we presented our books.

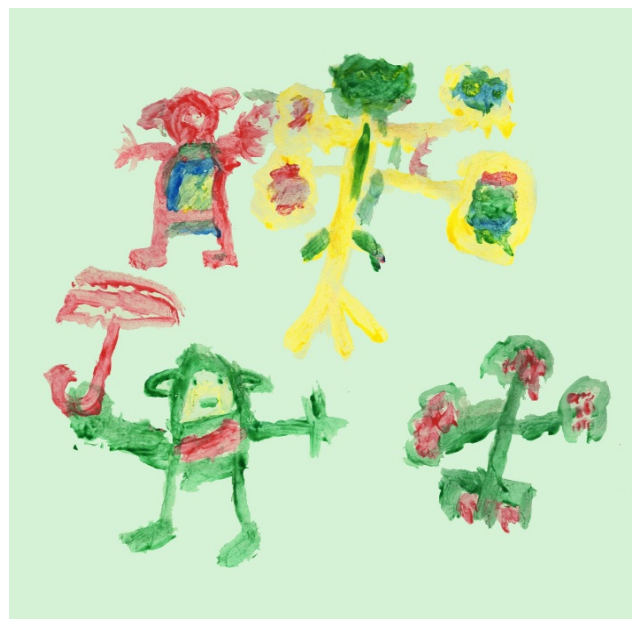


Progress of the "Bara Fairytales"

We now have a manuscript with quite a lot of fairytales that we can chose from. However, we have not yet decided how many we are actually going to print in the book. In addition to revising the texts of the fairytales, we are now working on getting more pictures. On Saturday, 18th May we had a second workshop with children where several nice illustrations were produced. The pictures below are from the workshop.

The children were very happy to create these illustrations as they rarely - or in some cases never before - have gotten the opportunity to paint. We were therefore pleased to see how well they painted after all, and how much imagination they had.

The children who participated in this workshop come together every Saturday. When they meet they get food from a project located in Toliara, that is run by the local church. Many of the children suffer from malnutrition as this area outside of Toliara is very poor.





These pictures are from the first workshop we had in February. They were painted by children who live on the countryside (one days walk by foot to the next secondary road). The children were around 10 years of age and they had never painted with a brush before! When taking this into consideration, the results are quite impressive.



Progress with Vony's Autobiography

Voninirina Rakotoson, the author of the book about her life in Lebanon, is now about to revise the third and probably last draft of the manuscript. It is now much more vividly written than the first draft, with dialogues and detailed descriptions about incidents in Lebanon, and how she reacted to that emotionally. The text below is the translation of a passage from chapter 6:

Those who sent me here did not tell the truth because they didn't want to hurt their business and they made me make this long journey just to exploit me and make me lose my dignity and rights. Every day I feel like I live in the middle of a nightmare because worries and concerns fill me up and make it impossible for me to think about the future.

[...]

It is true that the culture of people is different, but the basic human rights are the same for everyone. Employers should respect this because we are all human beings, yet I was treated like random equipment. I explain: there were different machines in the home of Mrs. Madian like for example a food-mixer. When you use that equipment, it doesn't stop until you want it to stop. It was like that for me as well, even if I was tired and sick.

"I feel so sick, Madam, I have such terrible pain in my back!" I approached Mrs. Madian and petted my hurting back.

"Take your medicine and stop complaining. There is a lot to do and you alone will finish it whatever happens. There is no one else here to do the work", she said, showing how angry she was to hear that I was sick.

"My back has been hurting for days now, but I was quiet and did not complain, Madam. Now I cannot bear it any longer", I continued begging her.

[...]

"Now take your medicine and don't whine anymore, I'm sick of it! When you're used to doing the work it will go by itself. You have just done a little bit and you are already nagging. You should not take brakes, and the work must be done even if you are tired or sick because that was the reason why we ordered you from far away. We paid a lot to get you here, so don't be lazy or slow when you do something", she said without noticing me anymore. She turned her back on me and went into her room so that I couldn't disturb her anymore.

Distribution and Sale

The distribution of *Hiverina aho, Dadabe* (Todisoa) continues, but the distribution of *Dadanaivo Tefy* is about to finish. As for *Hiverina aho, Dadabe*, we are now in contact with a public prison in Antsirabe, in addition to schools. There are several young people in this prison who are preparing themselves for the 5th and 9th grade school leaving exams (CEPE and BEPC). It was, in fact, the prison that contacted us in the first place on behalf of their inmates with the wish of having some books for them to read. We are very positive towards this request and think that it is a real need to provide some materials to the very badly equipped prison. The book *Hiverina aho, Dadabe* also tells about the imprisonment of Todisoa's (innocent) father and how bad the conditions are in Malagasy prisons. We therefore think that the book will be relevant for the prisoners, and it might also be encouraging for them to read that there are published books that tell about the living conditions of prisoners.

How many books we are going to distribute and whether we will distribute another book than *Hiverina aho, Dadabe* as well, is still unclear as the negotiations have not yet finished.

As for the sale of the book *Toliara-Tuléar*, we have now been able to place it at almost every hotel in Toliara and several shops in addition to shops in other cities. In Antananarivo the book is now finally for sale at the airport together with other Vakoka Vakiteny books. We are now negotiating with the retail chain, Score that has supermarkets in Antananarivo, Antsirabe, Toliara and other cities. They are positive towards taking in our books, and especially the *Toliara* book. Hopefully everything goes well in this process.



Airport Ivato in Antananarivo where our books are for sale in a shop selling books and magazines in the departure hall for international flights.

Of course we are only selling books that are produced by our own means. Books supported by our donors are distributed for free to schools and other institutions. Since Vakoka Vakiteny is a non profit organization, the income from the sale of books like *Toliara—Tuléar* is unabridged used for the development and production of new books!

Another Project?

We have wanted to publish a new edition of the environment and nature book *Madagasikara, ilay nosy mbola nahatahiry ireo lovary mandraka ankehitriny* which means “Madagascar, the island that has kept its natural heritage” for a long time; the Norwegian edition of the book was published under the title *Madagaskar - et levende museum*, “Madagascar - a living museum”. The book was written by the Norwegian biologist Jon Bakke and a Malagasy and Norwegian version was published in 1994. The author is positive towards publishing a new and revised edition.

We have not yet finished the negotiations with the author, and therefore we put a question mark in the headline. What we wish to do, however, is to make the book more suited for youth, with bigger pictures and somewhat less text. The facts will be updated according to the newest research on the Malagasy nature and environment. A biologist from the WWF office in Toliara is willing to help us in this process as he is in great favour of such books.

The feedback we have gotten so far from people who have heard about this project is very positive, as there do not seem to exist many books about the Malagasy nature available in Madagascar. There is also a big wish for a French version, and we are still discussing whether we should print the book with bilingual Malagasy-French texts or not.

