

# Zahana in Madagascar: Rural Transformation through Participatory Development

Zahana Newsletter

December, 2009

Dear Markus,

We hope you have a Happy Holiday Season and a wonderful New Year.

Our friends in Madagascar just returned Dec 22 from a site visit to the villages and here is a short update on the latest Zahana events (quick links to the right). Although there are just a few days left, we hope you consider Zahana in your end-of-year giving (details below). The GlobalGiving challenge from the last few emails is over and thank you if you helped us meet the challenge.

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## The new school



The [school in Fiarenana](#), Zahana's second, is to be completed soon by the community and January 17 has been chosen as the date for the official inauguration. But: we just learned that the parents and children decided to already attend school, despite the incomplete building, without doors and windows. Early in the morning the bell rings around

7 am and all 55 children in the village rush to school. They stay all day and are all taught by one teacher. See our website for more information.

To support the local economy all school uniforms were sewn in the village. Zahana bought the fabric and hired a local woman to sew them. The original plan was to have her sell them to the parents for \$2.50, but due to the hard times during the planting season Zahana bought all of them and gave them away to the students.

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## Teacher's training



Three teacher candidates have been selected by the communities and Zahana. Two teachers will work at the school in Fiadanana and one in Fiarenana. All teachers attended a 3-week training with Zahana's educational consultant in the village. The

first week was taught in conjunction with the agricultural specialist and the remaining two focused on the school curriculum. In February or March (depending on the rainy season) another week of training in cooperation with the agricultural specialist will round up the teacher's training.

## Crop improvement



The potatoes provided by Zahana as a "[seed fund](#)" back in July '09 have been harvested. Since the price of potatoes has since plummeted they are mostly eaten by the families growing them and provide much needed food in the current "époque dure" or 'hungry time' before the rice harvest.

## Revitalizing the nursery



Growing coffee and papaya seedlings is a success story in Fiarenana: 2,703 coffee seedling plants are under way to be planted. Each family was given between 20 to 370 baby coffee trees. Seventy-six new papaya trees have also been planted. Zahana decided to retain the gardener longer and pay him to grow more seedlings for the community. The village of Fiadanana received 150 coffee seedlings, as a goodwill gesture from their neighbors. [Please see our website](#)

[for more information.](#)

## Micro-credit in action

The agricultural specialist did not only teach about improving rice and corn yields, but also focused on potential income generating projects. The communities decided to focus on poultry, pigs and fish. For 27 community members in Fiarenana, the first step is to build a communal henhouse with three rooms. They gathered the materials and are ready to start construction as soon as the rice-planting season is over. It was decided to start with 4 chickens and 1 rooster, bought by Zahana. The goal of this project is to first increase the number of chickens and later focus on egg and meat for the community. The total cost of this project is estimated at US\$150. Fourteen individuals joined forces to start the aquaculture project. If they start with 100 fish in January they might be able to sell them in June. The total cost for the fish stock is estimated at US\$120. [Please see our website for more information.](#)

## Donate to Zahana

There are three ways to make a tax-deductible donation (US taxes only) to Zahana:

- 1) Write us a check (must be postmarked Dec 31 for 2009 taxes)
- 2) Donate directly to Zahana on-line with our "[Donate Now](#)" button
- 3) Support one of our three projects at GlobalGiving

Checks and using the "Donate Now" button would be the best choice for Zahana as the fees are lowest. To donate by check please make the check payable to: 'Tides Foundation' and in the memo field: 'Zahana fund'. Please mail your check to: Project Zahana, PO Box 62223, Honolulu HI 96839. Your envelope must be postmarked by December 31 to count for 2009 taxes. [More details on our website.](#)

Happy Holidays and thank you for your support!

Ihanta, Jeannette and Markus

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