



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Building Change and Food Security





Table of contents

6	Foreword	28	Purpose 2: Agriculture and Livelihood	46	Purpose 3: Disaster and Risk Management	66	Cross-cutting: Gender, Youth and Social Dynamic
12	Project summary	29	Lead Farmer	47	Disaster and Risk Management Committee	67	Male Leader Group
14	Implementing areas	29	Farmer Field School	48	Weathering the Storm	67	Mama / Papa Miova
15	Acronyms	30	Surviving the Storm	51	Infrastructure	67	Women Empowerment Group
16	Purpose 1: Health and Nutrition	32	Farmer Market School	51	Food Assistance for Assets	68	A Woman's World
17	1000-days Approach	32	Seed Producer Group	52	Fortifying for the Future	70	Tanora Miova
17	Mother-to-Mothers (M2M)	33	Starting from a Seed	54	Community engagement	71	Blind but not Disabled
17	Model and Mentor Family (MMF)	35	Income Generating Activities	54	Model Commune	73	A Change of Heart
18	Mother-to-Mothers Groups	36	Forged in Fire	55	Going for Gold	75	School Based Approach
20	Community Mother Support Group	38	Savings and Loan Association	57	One Change at a Time	76	A Curriculum for Life
20	Baby Friendly Community Initiative	39	A New Home for Simonette	59	Natural Resource and Watershed Management Committees	78	Acknowledgment
21	Tsikonina	40	Literacy and Numeracy	59	Go Green		
22	Fiovana in the Family	41	More than Words and Numbers	60	Rewilding the Forests		
24	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Infrastructure	43	Impact Investment Fund	63	Locally Managed Marine Areas		
25	Open Defecation Free	44	Economic Development in Rural Community	64	Defenders of the Sea		
26	Latrine Eradicate Diseases						

Foreword

Michael Kruger



Madagascar has long been loved for its unique and beautiful biodiversity, but in recent years it has also become an unfortunate epicenter of climate change and related natural disasters. As the island country experiences worsening cyclones, floods, and brutal cycles of drought, its people too often face hunger and the devastation of homes and livelihoods, with limited access to quality healthcare and other vital resources. In response to these growing concerns, ADRA established the FIOVANA project in 2019. Appropriately named, “fiovana” translates to “change” in Madagascar’s Malagasy language, and my heart is full as I see how many people have experienced change in their lives throughout the five years of this project.

Mothers and caregivers are better able to help their little ones thrive after learning to diversify their diets and monitor growth. Young people have a platform for their voices and goals as they take part in income-generating activities. Farmers are seeing increased harvests and income after learning advanced agricultural and market approaches. Communities are more resilient thanks to the establishment of Community Disaster Risk Management Committees who focus on shock preparedness and recovery.

“

In all, 431,520 people across 108,482 households have been blessed with positive and sustainable change thanks to ADRA’s FIOVANA project. Each one of those people is an inspiring example of strength.

”

Even as natural disasters continue to escalate in their country and the effects of climate change continue to ripple throughout their communities, we are grateful for these men, women, and young people who continue to work alongside ADRA as committed collaborators for change.

In addition, I want to express ADRA’s deep and tremendous gratitude to USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and our partners who made this project possible in Madagascar. We are grateful for your support, we are proud to share FIOVANA’s success with you, and we look forward to working together again.

Lastly, I want to share a heartfelt thank you to the ADRA Madagascar team and other colleagues involved with this project. Thank you for your hard work and your dedication to empowering those you serve with justice, compassion, and love.

I pray that the change we have seen from the FIOVANA project is a change that will be felt for years to come and will continue to grow in the communities of Madagascar.

Thankfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Kruger', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Kruger
President, ADRA International



We thank God for completing this work and being able to deliver in your hands, this copy of the photobook of the Fiovana Project. This book graphically exposes the results of the change experimented by this project's beneficiaries. There is an adage that says: "an image speaks better than a thousand words." What is shown in this book speaks and perfectly describes the objectives of the project, embodied, in the lives of silent heroes who, despite their struggles, sufferings, and challenges, have found opportunities, success, and hope, initiating a bright future for themselves and their children.

Children who did not have the chance to have a stable diet now have a better quality of life thanks to ADRA Madagascar's community involvement strategy, which has led to the decision in dozens of these communities to open the possibility of creating a better future. The project has taught farmers how to improve their land, and as a result, production has increased by up to three times. Other benefits that the beneficiaries are now enjoying, may include the ability to market their products, the inclusion of women in the family and community decision-making, and the introduction of young people into the world of entrepreneurship.

Every image displayed here conveys a tale that people need to know. The people whose lives are depicted here are the ones who give the technical reports' measurements and numbers, life. Real actors can be seen in their context and show how the project had contributed to their current state of well-being that has significantly improved.

Fiovana had made a deep change in many persons and their households. For that was the Change (Fiovana) ever waited for.

Luis Miguel Acevedo
Country Director, ADRA Madagascar

Five years ago, ADRA embarked on a journey to catalyze profound change within the communities of Manakara, Madagascar.

Before putting pen to paper or hiring staff, we engaged deeply with community leaders, influencers, youth, mothers, fathers, and grandparents. We listened intently to their experiences and aspirations for their neighborhoods, families, and futures. We wanted to understand their visions for transformation and explore how ADRA could contribute to realizing those dreams.

Today, looking back on these five years, we are immensely proud of what we have accomplished in collaboration with these dedicated individuals and communities. Their pride in the progress made fuels our own, and we are overjoyed at their excitement about their futures.

Thanks to the unwavering commitment of individuals and communities to enhancing quality of life, resilience, and economic prosperity, many households now enjoy consistent access to food, clean water, sanitation, and employment opportunities.

We see children, healthy and full of energy, playing with friends and attending school. Many female farmers have expanded their enterprises, reinvesting in their homes and communities. Meanwhile, aspiring entrepreneurs are taking bold steps and fostering innovation. These achievements reflect the fulfillment of dreams envisioned half a decade ago, well before the world was forever altered by a global pandemic.

The strides made in FIOVANA have been hard-won, and we extend heartfelt gratitude to our communities and staff for their steadfast dedication. We are forever grateful for the enduring partnership with USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), whose support and guidance have been instrumental in fostering sustainable change throughout FIOVANA.

We look forward to even more transformative change in the years to come.

Sonya Funna Evelyn
Vice President for Sustainable Development, ADRA International





FIOVANA (Malagasy: Change) was born out of a deep-seated belief in the power of human kindness and the profound impact of community driven efforts. This belief informed the project's focus on empowering individuals by providing not just immediate relief but sustainable solutions to foster long-term development and self-reliance. As we bring FIOVANA to an end therefore, it is with immense gratitude and pride that we present this photobook, a vivid testament to five years of unwavering dedication, resilience and hope. The images contained in this photobook encapsulate the spirit of our journey, offering glimpses into the lives touched and transformed by FIOVANA. As we reflect on these past five years, we are reminded of the extraordinary human connections forged, the challenges surmounted, and the dreams realized.

This photobook is more than just a compilation of images; it is a narrative of perseverance and community spirit. Each photograph tells a unique story, capturing moments of joy, struggle and triumph. Its pages illustrate the experiences of those who have been at the heart of the project – the resilient beneficiaries, the tireless volunteers, the generous donors (the American People) and the dedicated team members whose combined efforts made this to happen. We salute the communities we have served whose strength, courage and willingness to embrace change was the driving force behind the success of FIOVANA. This photobook celebrates your indomitable spirit and unwavering hope for a better future. To our volunteers, we are deeply grateful. You gave your time, energy and skills to make this project a success. To the American People, whose generous donations through USAID, made this journey possible, we thank you for trusting us. We also appreciate our partners whose support enabled us to implement a project have had a lasting impact on the many lives. And to the project team, both past and present, thank you for your vision, passion and relentless pursuit of excellence which have driven the success of FIOVANA. This photobook reflects your dedication and the collective achievements we have realized.

“

As we turn the final page on this chapter, we do so with a sense of fulfilment and optimism. The impact of FIOVANA's five years will continue to resonate – the relationships built, the lessons learned, and the lives changed will endure, serving as a foundation for future endeavors.

”

This photobook is a celebration of what we have accomplished together. We hope it inspires us to continue the work of love and compassion and to strive for a world where everyone would live as God intended them to live.

Thank you.

Chidi Victor Nweneka, MBBS, PhD, MBA
Head of Programs, ADRA Madagascar



“

There is nothing more rewarding than contemplating the changes that have occurred in the daily lives of women, men and youth whose lives have been positively impacted by deliberate acts of love and compassion.

”

Since its launch in 2019, the FIOVANA Project has provided opportunities for change to 431,520 women, men, youth and children with astounding results. Each of these individuals has a unique story to share about how this project has helped make a difference in their daily lives. The stories as well as the photographs shared in this photobook bear witness to the significant changes made in the lives of members of the various communities served by FIOVANA. The interventions highlighted in this photobook have contributed to move these communities beyond incremental improvements in health and nutrition status or household income levels to become healthy, prosperous, resilient communities capable of intentionally pursuing further development of their capacities and resources.

This result could not have been achieved without a very close collaboration between community members and a motivated and dedicated field team who, despite the challenges of implementation, worked every day and spared no effort to provide opportunities for change and to serve their fellow human beings with dedication. National and international colleagues, partners and volunteers have also been instrumental in the success of this program. Their support not only had a significant impact on the project results, but also motivated the team to excel in the field. As the FIOVANA project draws to a close, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the efforts of each and every one of my colleagues. Their cooperation and dedication were the backbone of this achievement, which sets a high standard for future projects. My deepest thanks also go to the American people through USAID, whose financial support was indispensable to the success of this project.

To you dear readers, please find in the smiles expressed on the faces of each of the people portrayed in this photobook an expression of their deep gratitude and desire to continue the adventure towards their sustainable self-sufficiency, for it is said that the end of a journey is always the beginning of a new adventure.

May God bless you!

Joseph Menakuntuala
Chief of Party, ADRA Madagascar



The FIOVANA project

FIOVANA means “change” in the Malagasy language. Like the word implies, the FIOVANA project aims to change lives through the sustainable improvement of food and nutrition security and the resilience of vulnerable populations in three specific interdependent domains:

- 1) Sustained improvement in the health and nutritional status in women of reproductive age, adolescent girls, and children under five years;
- 2) Household income sufficiency to access food, non-food essentials and build savings; and
- 3) Enhanced social and ecological risk management.

From October 2019 to September 2024 (5 years), FIOVANA targeted **108,482 households** with a total of **431,520 members**, of whom 190,843 individuals, including 64,006 young people, were unique direct participants at the end of the project.

Project goal

To achieve the sustainable improvement of food and nutrition security and resilience of vulnerable populations.

Donor

USAID (United States Agency for International Development)



Partners

The consortium, composed of ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) as prime, and FIANTSO, AVSF, TANGO International, and FHI 360.



Vision

FIOVANA’s vision is to reach beyond incremental improvements to health and nutrition status or household income levels, and to instead ensure sustainable, healthy, prosperous, resilient communities and households who can further their own capacities and resources.

Strategic approaches

Interventions were designed to address barriers to food security through a socio-ecological model that transforms behaviors and norms at the individual, household, community, and institutional levels. FIOVANA achieved the desired changes through three specific purposes:

Purpose 1: Sustained improvement in health and nutritional status of women of reproductive age, adolescent girls, and children under five years

Outcomes: Increased dietary diversity and adequate nutrient intake, improved caregiving and care seeking practices through access to health and nutrition services, and reduced incidence of pathogen related diseases through improved sanitation and hygiene practices. WASH interventions enabled the use of a safe water supply, maintained a hygienic environment in the community and household through adequate sanitation and essential hygiene actions.

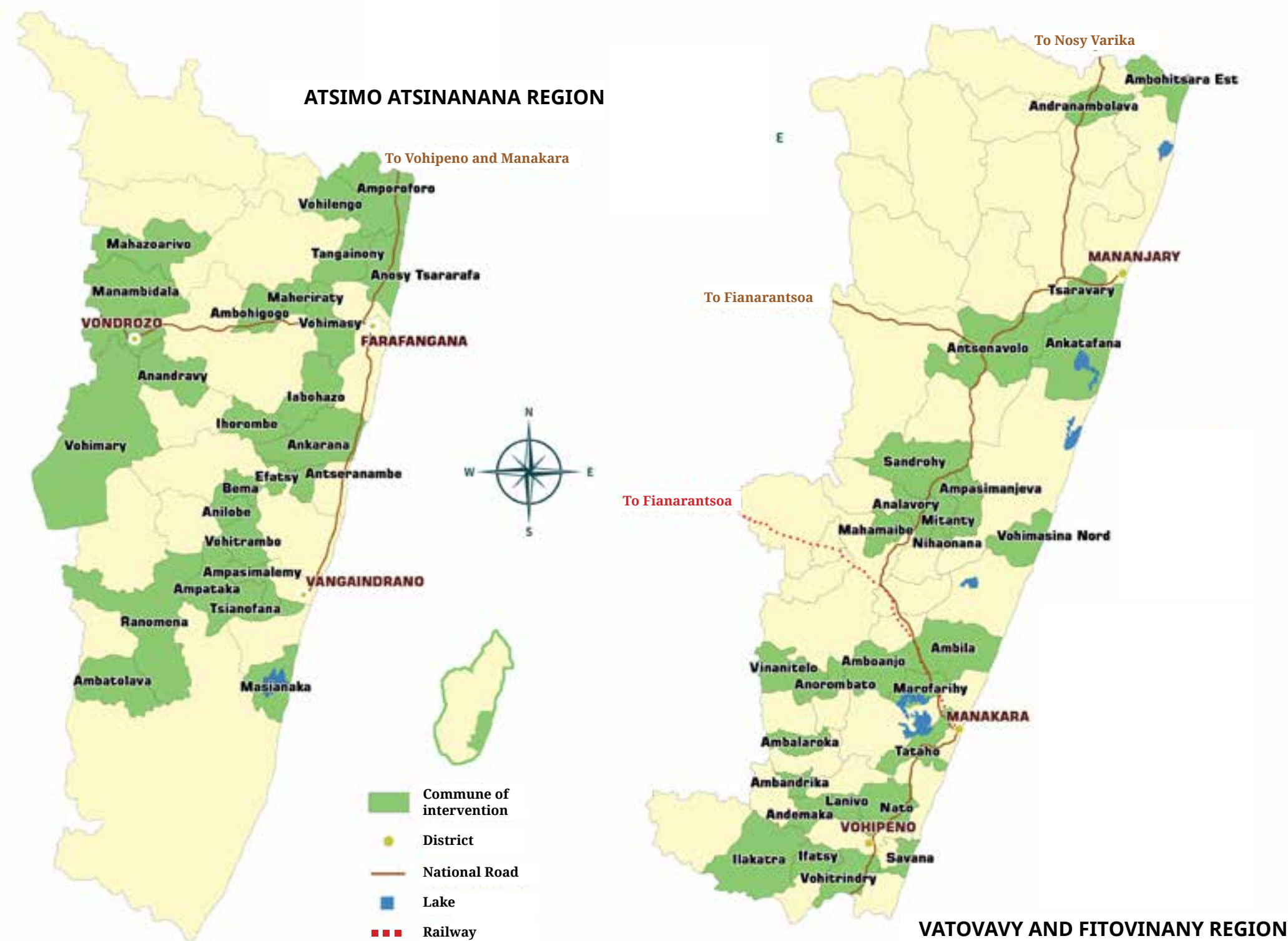
Purpose 2: Household incomes and production are sufficient to access food and non-food essentials and build savings

Outcomes: Increased income and production of nutritious foods among extremely poor and chronically vulnerable households through home and school gardens, the Farmer Field School model, and ADRA’s tested Farmer Market School; improved access to nutrient-rich vegetables and animal source protein; increased capacities and resources for climate smart agriculture; built numeracy and business skills; created a lasting network of local peer support and business partner linkages; diversified and strengthened livelihoods; facilitated market entry; and strengthened resilience capacities through extensive local capacity engagement through market and cooperative strengthening activities.

Purpose 3: Enhanced social and ecological risk management

Outcomes: Created the foundation for a sustainable program with interventions that included disaster risk management (DRM), governance strengthening, and natural resource management.

Implementing areas



FIOVANA has targeted 60 communes and 475 Fokontany (villages) within 6 districts of the Atsimo Atsinanana, Vatovavy and Fitovinany regions of southeastern Madagascar.

Acronyms

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AVSF	Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières
BFCI	Baby Friendly Community Initiative
CMG	Community Mother support Group
DRMC	Disaster and Risk Management Committee
FL	Farmer Leader
FFA	Food for Work Asset
FFS	Farmer Field School
FHI	Family Health International
FMS	Farmer Market School
IIF	Impact Investment Funds
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IMA	Infrastructure Management Associations
KM	Kaominina Modely
LMMA	Locally Managed Marine Areas
M2M	Mother-to-Mothers
MLG	Male Leader Group
MMF	Model & Mentor Family
NRWMC	Natural Resource and Watershed Management Committees
ODF	Open Defecation Free Community
SBA	School Based Approach
SLA	Savings and Loans Association
SPG	Seed Producer Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WEG	Women Empowerment Group



Purpose 1:

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

1000-Days Approach

The first 1,000 days of a baby's life — known as the “window of opportunity” — is the foundation for optimal health and development. This is the period of rapid brain development and growth, and adequate nutrition is required to prevent nutritional deficits.

As part of this 1000 days approach, FIOVANA has:

- Provided support through the distribution of food for 57,205 pregnant and breastfeeding women, and 56,421 children aged 6 to 23 months.
- Carried out 16,625 awareness-raising sessions activities to promote antenatal care (ANC), delivery at the center, vaccination, family planning and more.
- Reached 8,045 women with modern family planning
- Distributed food rations to 48,564 Children Under 2 (CU2) and 95,332 Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW)



Mother-to-Mothers (M2M)

This all-woman community group is composed of 9 to 15 members. The main targets are pregnant and breast-feeding women, women of childbearing age and mothers of children under the age of five.

As a result of the FIOVANA project, 1,425 M2M groups have been created.

Model and Mentor Family (MMF)

MMF is an approach to sequencing and layering health and nutrition activities throughout the life cycle and integrating the essential actions of the various technical components of FIOVANA.



“
I see visible changes in the children and the community members, thank you for bringing these new changes to our community.
”

- Christine -

Mother-to-Mothers Groups

Christine is proud to lead the women in her Mother-to-Mother group, and to share with them everything she learned from the FIOVANA project.

Women in rural community learn and grow together, with visible impacts on their children

The mothers gather in the health center, their babies nursing or sleeping in their arms. They review areas of improvement in their lives, share achievements or setbacks, talk about their husbands and children. One mother weighs her baby, smiles in approval over his gains.

Christine observes it all from her corner of the health center, an open hut adorned with posters on breastfeeding, handwashing, the proper use of mosquito nets, and more. It is part weight room, part classroom, and part open forum, and as Lead Mother in this community, Christine presides over these gatherings of women, known locally as Mother-to-Mother Group, or M2M.

“Before FIOVANA, I had no idea that things weren’t right,” Christine said. “Once FIOVANA came, I became aware of the issues of which we had

been ignorant.” Issues like stunting and malnutrition; birth spacing, birth control, and family planning; improved gardening and diversified diets; the rights of women and children in society.

A mother herself, Christine had lived her life and raised her children without much of this lifechanging information. When FIOVANA offered her the opportunity to train under a Community Health Volunteer (CHV) she accepted the responsibility, both for herself as well as the other mothers she would train.

Today, the women in this community are experts in what it means to live healthy lives, and whatever they lack they learn together with Christine.

“We can exchange ideas and share advice with each other,” she said. “Even me, as the leader, I am still learning from the other women.”

Another woman cites handwashing, another cites the eradication of open defecation, another cites diversified diets. Christine herself feels most changed by the topic of family planning.

“Birth spacing was the most important thing I learned,” the mother of five said. “Before I had no time to do anything between pregnancies. Now I have more time for my life.”

The mothers also have more time for their lives because of the sensitization of their husbands, who once scorned the idea of helping their wives around the house. When asked about the changes, all the women in the health center grow excited, corroborating the anecdotes of their peers, gesturing with their hands, and laughing with amusement over the topic of men and marriage.

“I never thought my husband would have this transformation,” said Georgia, a 33-year-old mother of two. “Before, I tried to find ways to make him change. I never thought I would achieve it, but thanks to FIOVANA that transformation has occurred. Now there is gender equality. Even the men will do work that they used to call ‘women’s work,’ like washing and cooking.”

Christine laughs and nods her head vigorously, then chimes in with her own experience.

“Before, when they came back from work, they would just rest or drink alcohol,” she said. “Now they ask how they can help and contribute to the housework. My husband even goes to the market to shop for me. Before, he never did that once.”

The women are amazed by the changes, not only in their husbands, but in their children and themselves, too.



Left: Mother to Mother groups provide a safe space for women to learn more about their bodies, their children, and the healthy development of their families.



Right: Christine discusses diversified diets with the women in her group



FIOVANA created 1,425 M2M groups, each containing between 9 and 15 women or young women.

Community Mother Support Group (CMSG)

Complementing the M2M, the CMSG is a community group of 8-12 people that forms the basic structure of the BFCI approach. It is a group whose members are influencers such as grandmothers, traditional birth attendants and community influencers.

Their explicit role is to support M2Ms; to mobilize communities to participate in health promotion activities; to ensure the success of BFCI; to monitor the health and nutrition of mothers and children under 5 years of age; and to report problem cases to Community Health Volunteers (CHVs).

As a result of the FIOVANA project, 475 groups have been created in which 3,000 women and 2,188 men have received training.



Baby Friendly Community Initiative (BFCI)

The Baby Friendly Community Initiative is a community-based initiative to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding, optimal complementary feeding and maternal nutrition. It is conducted through:

- Setting up and training of mother-to-mother support groups (M2M)
- Community mother support groups (CMSG),
- Conducting home visits and community mobilization
- Close links to primary health care facilities.



TSIKONINA

This is an ADRA approach, tried and tested during the ASOTRY project. It has been adapted to the context of FIOVANA's intervention zone to guarantee its effectiveness.

The TSIKONINA approach impacts the nutritional recovery of young Moderate Acutely Malnourished (MAM) children, the promotion of good nutritional practice based on locally available foods and the prevention of malnutrition.

To date, FIOVANA has conducted 10,450 TSIKONINA sessions.





“
When I gave birth, people from the project came, so that is why I named her Fiovanasoa.
- Ginette -
”

Fiovana in the Family

Inspired by lifechanging lessons on nutrition and health, one woman chooses a unique name for her newborn

Ginette organizes her seven children into two categories: before FIOVANA and after FIOVANA. The four born prior to the project experienced malnutrition and frequent bouts of bad health. Back then, she had no access to prenatal and postnatal care, limited understanding of diversified diets, and inadequate support from her husband.

Since FIOVANA came to her rural community five years ago, she has given birth to three more children. In those five years, she visited the clinic more frequently during pregnancy and learned more about health concepts like vaccinations, nutrition, and mosquito nets.

“I could even feel the difference during pregnancy and when I gave birth,” she said. “They just felt bigger and healthier.”

The youngest, a healthy one-week-old girl, is swaddled in blankets and breastfeeding as Ginette shares in animated detail the life-changing lessons she learned from FIOVANA. The daughter in her arms is a testament to the success of the project—so strong a testament that Ginette even named her Fiovanasoa: “Good Change.”

“When I gave birth, people from the project came, so that is why I named her.”

They were not the only ones there during delivery. Her husband, Ossen, was by her side the whole time. After participating in trainings on gender equality, he reevaluated his role in the household.

“In the past, anything in the house was woman’s work, and my work was outside,” he said. “During FIOVANA, I learned the importance of helping each other. I learned that it’s very tiring for her to be pregnant while also doing things in the house like fetching wood, making the fire, and cooking. It is much easier to manage the different tasks now that we do them together.”

The changes in the family are not limited to the family alone. Ginette serves as a Lead Mother in her local Mother-To-Mother (M2M) group, where she supports, advises, and teaches mothers in the community. They garden together, harvest their diversified crops for improved household nutrition, and even mill and process the ingredients to support TSIKONINA sessions, the communal process of mothers feeding their young children healthy, nutritious diets.

The result is healthier, stronger babies. Now, instead of feeding toddlers the traditional diet of cooked rice and shrimp ground into gruel, they provide a nourishing option: Kuba, porridge made from either banana,

sweet potato, or cassava, depending on the season and the age of the child.

“We grow all those ingredients here,” Ginette said. “FIOVANA taught us how to maximize our local products, and they taught me how to make the flour and the porridge. After I received the training, I shared it with the members of M2M. I was eager to share the skills because they should not be kept to yourself but shared widely.”

Ninette, a local field agent for the FIOVANA project, is delighted by the results. “I look around and see the difference,” she said. “The children before FIOVANA are smaller, and the babies now are much healthier and bigger. Before we had many cases of malnourishment to the point of death. Now, the mortality has significantly decreased.”

Because of the transformations in her community, little Fiovanasoa will grow into a woman with improved opportunities for health and wellbeing. Change is not just in her name. It is all around her.



FIOVANA has conducted 10,450 TSIKONINA sessions across southeastern Madagascar.

Thanks to the project, Ossen has learned more about sharing household responsibilities, like caring for his daughter, and Ginette has learned more about diversified diets for her family.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Infrastructure

To improve the community's food security, access to a safe water resource is a prerequisite. In their Integrated Disaster Risk Reduction Plans (IDRRP), several communities have prioritized the rehabilitation or construction of water points and drinking water supply systems. After various technical and environmental studies, FIOVANA worked with construction companies, authorities and WASH technical departments to carry out the work. Management committees (trained and equipped) or private managers ensure the sustainability of these infrastructures.

FIOVANA rehabilitated or constructed 120 compact water points, 13 larger gravity-feed (or borehole with solar pumps) water systems and 12 sanitary blocks, managed by private sector actors or by the communities through Water User Committees trained by FIOVANA.



Open Defecation Free Communities (ODF)

To eradicate widespread Open Defecation (OD), FIOVANA worked with youth groups and traditional authorities to sensitize communities. 347 Sanitation Action Plans have been established in communities, and, as a result: former OD areas were cleaned, internal regulations against OD were implemented, latrines and hand-washing facilities were built and used, and 126 villages achieved ODF status, as verified by the local government.





Latrines Eradicate Diseases

Nestor demonstrates proper handwashing technique from the bamboo tippy-tap placed directly outside the new latrine.

Rural villages change open defecation habits, break taboos, and save lives

Even before FIOVANA came to his village, Chief Flavin knew the problem of open defecation was serious. Diarrhea was rampant, diseases were proliferating, and children were dying. The government had already warned his community about the risks, but ministry of health workers didn't visit often, and the villagers of Tantsara remained unconvinced about the perils of open defecation.

"Before the project, there was no restriction at all, people were free to go wherever they wanted to, even next to their own houses or crop fields," the village chief said. "In the early days, if I told them not to, they would simply wait for me to leave. Back then if I tried to manage the situation and tell them not to go wherever they pleased, they would think I am too strict, so I often dropped the subject."

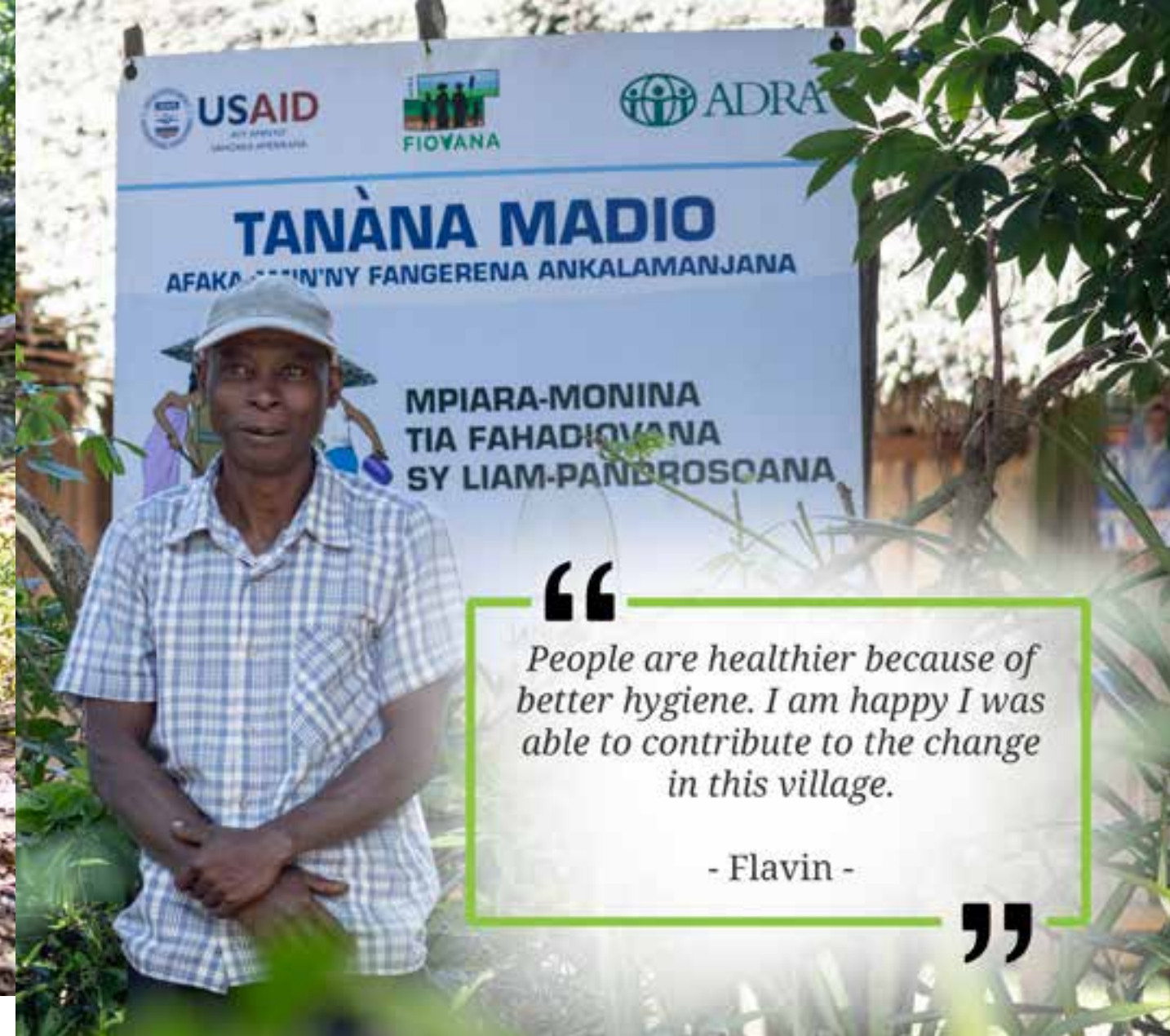
When field staff from the FIOVANA project first arrived, Flavin had low expectations for his community: if the villagers didn't care before, why would they care now? He soon learned the project was about more

than occasional visits and casual admonishments. Field agents provided frequent demonstrations on handwashing, clear information on the spread of diseases, and consistent follow-up on the progress of building latrines.

Flavin admits he had been discouraged by his community's attitude toward life-and-death hygiene and sanitation. "It is not easy to convince people to change their behavior," he said. "We don't all have the same mindset."

That mindset runs deep. According to Nestor, a Community Health Volunteer in the nearby village of Ambodivoahangy, open defecation is part of their traditional lifestyle, and to change it was considered taboo.

"Because our ancestors practiced open defecation, that became our culture," he said. "Also, the thinking was: excrement is filthy, why would we contain it near our homes?"



Chief Flavin is proud of the changes in his community, and the role he played support positive development.



126 communities have been certified "Open Defecation Free" by the government

Right: Nestor had to fight local taboos in his community to convince people to use latrines. Today, latrine use is commonplace.

Both Nestor and Flavin, in their respective communities, continued to work with FIOVANA to guide people away from harmful traditions and toward a healthier, more hygienic way of life. The results are a testament to their efforts.

Today, there are enough latrines and handwashing stations for every household in both communities. Even the government has confirmed the change, officially declaring the two villages "Open Defecation Free" in 2023.

Eveline has observed the change firsthand. "I am thankful for the changes FIOVANA brought, especially with open defecation," she said. "The situation was much worse in the past. Since we have used the latrines, the rate of diarrhea and disease has decreased significantly."

And though she admits to letting her guard down with her toddler on occasion, the 18-month-old boy holds her accountable. "Even if I am relaxed with him, he refuses to defecate anywhere else but the latrine," she said. "He is much healthier as a toddler than my firstborn was."

Nestor is pleased with the changes.

"Now, we all clearly understand the purpose of the latrines and we are all satisfied," he said. "Children used to be regularly sick with diarrhea and other illnesses. But now, there is a dramatic reduction in sickness among our children."





AGRICULTURE AND LIVELIHOOD

Lead Farmer (LF)

Lead Farmers are trained individuals who serve as extension agents within their communities. They provide guidance and support to fellow farmers, disseminating best-practices in agriculture and facilitating access to resources and information.

As a result of the FIOVANA project, 2,074 Lead Farmers (707 women and 1367 men) have been trained to provide agricultural technical backstopping to their farmer peers. Of this number, 84 have been selected and certified by the project as Produce Service Providers (PSP). The achievements of these farmers include:

- Enhanced agricultural practices: Lead Farmers have played a crucial role in the adoption of improved agricultural practices among farmers.
- Peer support: Lead Farmers provide ongoing support and mentorship, fostering a collaborative farming environment.



Farmer Field School (FFS)



The FFS is a participatory education approach that brings together farmers from the same locality who are guided by a facilitator (technician or farmer facilitator) and work together on an experimentation and observation plot.

As a result of the FIOVANA project, 38,465 Women, Youth and Men (WYM) farmers from 2,336 farmer groups have been trained through the FFS approach in climate-smart and natural resource-friendly agricultural improvements. The trainings have resulted in:

- Improved practices: FFS training has significantly improved farmers' agricultural practices through enhanced knowledge and skills in modern farming practices, including climate-smart techniques, pest management, and sustainable farming methods.
- Increased crop yields: The adoption of improved farming practices taught in FFS has led to increased crop yields and quality, contributing to enhanced food security.



Surviving the Storm

Today, Claude works his own fields, something he never dreamed was possible when he was a day laborer for other farmers.

As climate change devastates the region of southeast Madagascar, communities learn to fight back

To live in the southeast region of Madagascar, just off the Indian Ocean, is to be exposed to the brunt of every cyclone that blows onshore. Claude and his community have endured every manifestation of the volatile weather, from heavy winds buffeting the house to catastrophic storms that destroy the house altogether, and everything inside.

“We are the first victims of cyclones, and bad weather in general,” Claude said. “And with climate change, the storms are getting worse and worse every year. The worst impact is on our agriculture. It destroys all our crops and ruins everything.”

Back when he was a daily laborer on other people’s farms, Claude lived by the vagaries of the weather. During the cyclone season, entire fields would be washed away, reducing his work and income. Then, when the season of drought descended on the community, he had no food or savings to supplement the period of scarcity. Every year, he and his family—a wife and two young children—barely survived.

This was the life Claude had always known. He never imagined it would change.

“I had to drop out of school to help my parents because there was a lot of work to do and not enough money,” he said. “That is when I began working as a laborer and helping my parents around the house. When I was young, I never thought about owning my own plantation one day.”

When FIOVANA came to his community, Claude was excited by the opportunity to learn improved farming techniques with better tools. Alongside 14 members of his village, he joined the local Farmer Field School, accepted the training, tools and seeds, and began developing his own field for the first time in his life. Success followed soon after.

“In the past I had no techniques, I would just find a space, clear it out, and plant the cassava,” he said. “It took ten plants to accomplish what I get with one plant now.”

He attributes much of his success to the “basket method” of planting cassava taught by FIOVANA, which instructs uniformity in the size, depth and distance of each hole, followed by layers of compost, manure, and soil. The contrast in technique is profound.

“I just sold two metric tons of cassava,” Claude said, proud of the \$400 USD sum that is bigger than any paycheck he has ever earned. “Before FIOVANA, I didn’t really invest in agriculture, I was a daily laborer for other people’s farms. When I worked for others, it felt like I gave them all the benefit. Now that I have my own farm, the benefits come to me.”

One result of the new benefits is a future for his family that he never thought possible. That includes a school education for his young children that he never got.

“I really hope my children can go much farther than I did,” he said. “All the way to the university. Once they get to the university, they can choose what comes next, but I want them to get there.”

His wife, Fleurette, shares his dreams.

“I hope they can grow up and find better work and education than us,” she said. More than just his dreams, she also shares his skills and passion

for farming. While Claude is working in the cassava field with his FFS community, Fleurette is tending the family vegetable garden. What they don’t eat, she sells at the market to supplement their growing income.

“Claude taught me the techniques he learned from FFS,” she said. “I really like the work. It pleases me.”

Claude is proud to share the knowledge. Indeed, passing along the positive changes is a core value of the FIOVANA project.

“With FFS, we can learn together and share techniques,” Claude said. “I don’t want to farm alone, because we have a bigger impact together. When we work together, we all get benefits together.”

“Before FIOVANA, March, April, and May were very hard for us,” he added, referring to the brutal season of drought. “We didn’t have money and the prices for everything during that time are high. Now it is changing.



“
We have plenty of cassava to eat and sell. Now we are more resilient to endure cyclones and the worsening climate.
- Claude -
”

Claude recently sold 2 metric tons of cassava and earned a bigger paycheck than he has ever earned before.

Farmer Market School (FMS)

The FMS is designed to equip farmers with market literacy skills, including market analysis, price negotiation, and customer research. FMS helps farmers understand market dynamics, identify market opportunities, and develop effective marketing strategies to enhance their agricultural business operations.

As a result of the FIOVANA project, a total of 463 Farmer Market School groups, consisting of 9193 members, have been trained in market access development. The observed impacts include:

- Market linkages: FMS groups have successfully connected with various buyers, enhancing their market reach and profitability.
- Knowledge transfer: FMS has facilitated knowledge transfer on market trends, helping farmers to make informed decisions about their produce.



Seed Producer Group (SPG)

FIOVANA Seed Producer Groups consist of local farmers and community members organized to produce high-quality seeds. The Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with FIOVANA, provides guidance to their activities to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability.

As a result of FIOVANA, 37 Seed Producer Groups have been trained to produce certified seeds of various crops. The training includes:

- Specific agricultural techniques
- Understanding of seed legislation to ensure high-quality seed production
- Access to the best seeds, leading to improved crop yields and food security.



George in his field of groundnuts, which he sells as seedlings to local distributors.

Local seed producers meet demand with expanded supply of seedlings

George remembers when he used to sell groundnut seedlings in a small can as his primary source of income. In a season, he might earn 200,000 Malagasy Ariary, the equivalent of \$50 USD.

Today, thanks to the local Farmer Field School that improved his farming techniques and the Farmer Market School that connected him with more buyers, his earnings are tenfold. Last season, he earned two million Ariary on the sale of 500 kilograms of groundnut seedlings.

Part of the success is the switch from chemical fertilizer to more biological methods of composting and fertilizing; another part of it is better methods of farming, like row planting, crop rotation, terracing, and more; still another part was the soil analysis done with FIOVANA, which determined that peanuts and groundnuts would have the most success on his land.

There are many factors that have led to George expanding his farming operations, doubling the number of harvested crops per acre, and successfully registering his seedling cooperative at the regional level of government. But the results are what George cares about most. Because of his newfound success, all eight of his children are attending school.

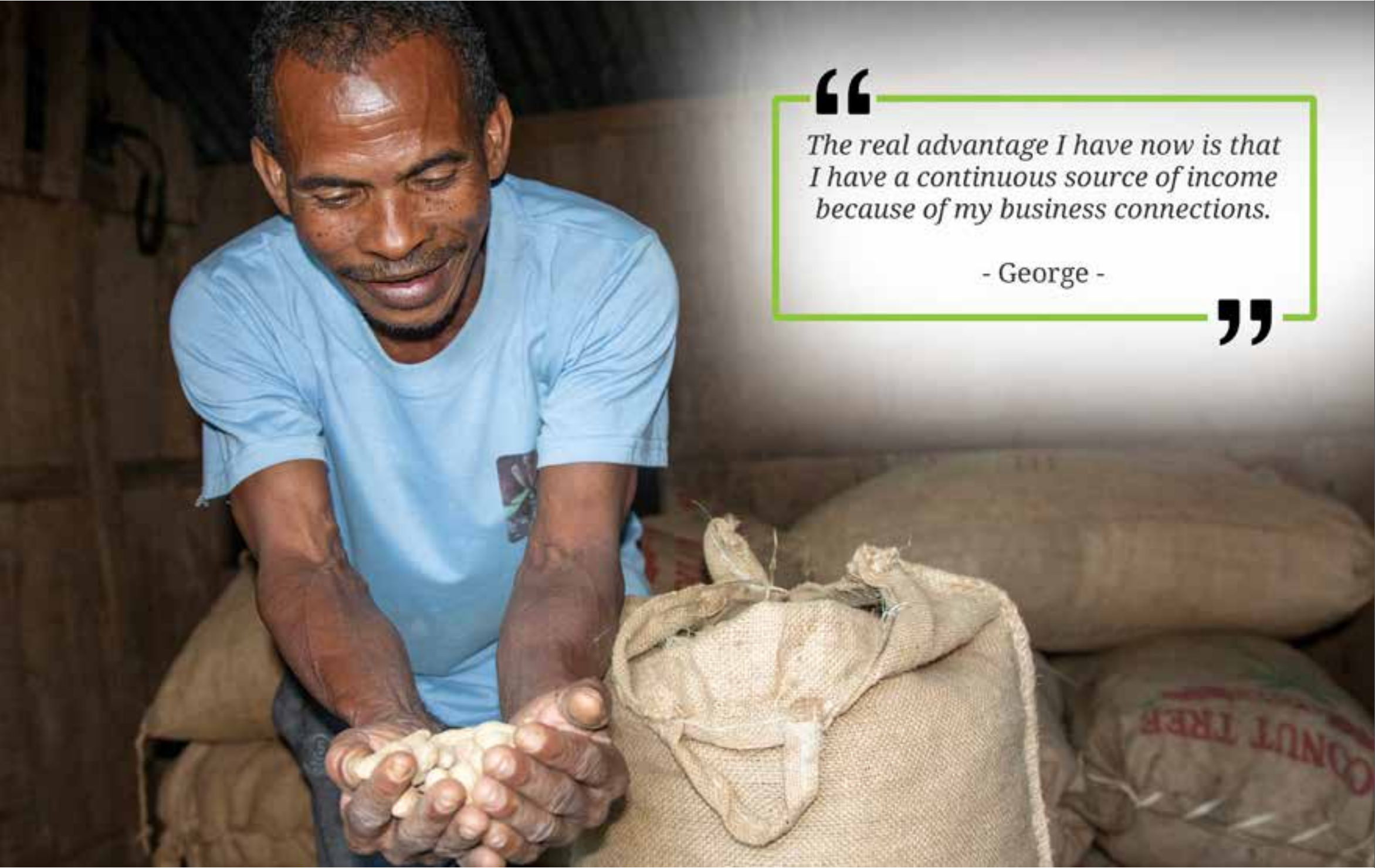
“One of my kids had to drop out of school because of finances,” George said, “but I am now able to send him back to school.”

Because George and the 21 members of his cooperative are among the few registered seed producers in this region, the demand for products continues to climb. Before, buyers would have to travel all the way to Fianarantsoa, hours away by car, just to procure the crop. Now, they can buy it locally.

Thanks to the marketing connections developed in partnership with FIOVANA, the cooperative has the assurance that what they grow will find a buyer, even before it is planted in the ground.

“Thanks to the project, I have a guarantee that my products will be sold, which allows me to expand my farming,” said George, who expanded his farm from five acres to twenty.

“The real advantage I have now is that I have a continuous source of income because of my business connections. They are all just waiting for the harvest.”



“

The real advantage I have now is that I have a continuous source of income because of my business connections.

- George -

”

Last season, George sold 500 kilograms of groundnut seedlings, which he stores in a secure warehouse.

Income Generating Activities (IGA)

Income Generating Activities are initiatives aimed at diversifying the income sources of community members, particularly women and youth. These activities include training in various trades and crafts, as well as providing the necessary tools, kits and resources to start and sustain small businesses. Observed impacts include:

- Economic empowerment: 1,601 IGA promoters have received material support from the project and are starting their small business, increasing their household incomes and financial independence.
- Skill development: Beneficiaries have acquired valuable skills in trades such as soap-making, dressmaking, and agricultural processing.



Razafimila is able to support his entire family with his improved blacksmith business, and even pass on the family trade to his daughter, Sabrina (far right).



“

I see an improvement in our income because the money you earn depends on the money you invest. Before, my investment was small, and my profit was small. Now, thanks to the SLA, it is much bigger.

- Razafimila -

”

Forged in Fire

Razafimila works the bellows to stoke his flame and heat the metal for shaping.

Access to tools and support boosts the Income Generating Activity of local blacksmith

For 25 years, Razafimila has been forging tools from iron and fire. His work as a blacksmith has given him a better life than he imagined as a boy selling peanuts, too poor to go to school, but for much of his career, he has lived paycheck to paycheck, hoping for a bigger break in his business.

That break came when his wife returned home from her Savings and Loan Association (SLA) with exciting news: his Income Generating Activity had been among those selected to receive additional support from the FIOVANA project. Shortly after receiving the news, Razafimila was given a bench vice, an anvil, pliers, gloves, safety glasses, and hammer. In addition, he and his wife were able to borrow money from the SLA to invest in additional sheets of iron.

“Before, I could only afford one sheet of iron and I could make only 50

spades,” he said. “Now I can afford four sheets of iron to quadruple my output.”

During the planting season, from February to May, Razafimila makes and sells 200 spades per week. With his extra income, he has invested in land and crops to supplement his earnings and diversify his income. Best of all, he can afford to send all five of his children to school, an opportunity he never got as a child.

“When I was a young boy, I really wanted to go to school to become a mechanic, but I understood there was no way for my parents to send me,” he said. “I am happy because my children have opportunities to access education. Their situation is nothing like mine.”

In addition to formal education, his 13-year-old daughter, Sabrina, is learning the family trade. Using leftover scraps of iron, she forges small knives for rice harvesting and sells them to supplement her school supplies. On Sundays she makes six and uses her money to buy pens, pencils, and notebooks.

“I like it because I don’t have to ask my parents for money,” she said, smiling proudly over the fact that she is the only girl in school to make knives. “My classmates say I am blessed to have this skill.”

Razafimila is proud, too. “I’m very pleased,” he said. “I think she can even be a better blacksmith than me.”

Though he has been working for 25 years, Razafimila shows no signs of slowing down. On the contrary, he hopes to expand his business even further, perhaps opening a professional workshop to replace his informal courtyard business.

“I am motivated to keep working because this is a good source of income, and it is a business with potential,” he said. “I see an improvement in our income because the money you earn depends on the money you invest. Before, my investment was small, and my profit was small. Now, thanks to the SLA, it is much bigger.”

Forging Spades with Razafimila



Trace the outline of the spade in sheet raw iron



Cut away excess metal with hammer and chisel



Stoke the fire



With long tongs, place iron on the coals of the fire for 10-15 minutes



Remove from the fire



Shape the spade on the anvil with hammer



Set aside to cool

Savings and Loan Association (SLA)

Savings and Loan Associations are community-based financial groups that enable members to save money and access small loans. SLAs promote financial inclusion and provide a safe platform for members to invest in income-generating activities.

31,172 members belonging to 2,144 SLA groups have been trained in SLA processes and financial skills. Observed impacts include:

- Financial inclusion: Many community members, especially women, have gained access to financial services through SLAs.
- Savings culture: SLAs have instilled a culture of savings and financial planning among members.
- Business growth: Access to loans has enabled members to start or expand their businesses, improving their economic stability.



“
I managed to build this house by
myself, I didn't rely on my
parents or a man.
- Simonette -
”

A New Home for Simonette

Simonette with her sons in front of her new house.

Training in business and financial management gives local SLA member new opportunities to save money

There is a broom in the corner of Simonette's new house, right by the doorway where visitors remove their shoes before entering. She sweeps the concrete floors often, straightens the furniture, adjusts the toiletries hanging in an organizer on the wall. Every detail of her clean, compact home reveals the pride she takes in her space.

Simonette knows how special this house is: young, single mothers in the poor coastal village of Marofarihy do not own their own homes. She also knows better than anyone how hard she had to work to get it.

“I feel proud, and I don't feel ashamed at all about my situation,” she said. “It's true I'm alone taking care of my children, but I have the means and I managed to build this house by myself. I didn't rely on my parents or a man.”

When she was forced to drop out of school at the age of 14 to help her

struggling mother with living expenses, Simonette did not despair. She applied herself to sewing, the trade her mother taught her, and began to expand her customer base. Eventually, she borrowed money from the bank to buy her own land and to open her own sewing shop. Business was good, but it was hard to keep up with the loans.

When FIOVANA came to her community, she was drawn by the opportunity for holistic change in her life. More specifically, she was eager for the opportunity to develop her financial acumen through business trainings, money management workshops, and the local Village Savings and Loan Association. When she joined in 2021, she was the youngest member.

“Young people need to know about managing their finances, otherwise they aren't able to invest their money or learn about a business,” she said. “They just spend their money on trivial things without thinking about the future.”



Simonette with members of her SLA: “The Female Entrepreneurs of Marofarihy.”

Together with the other 22 members of Vehivavy Mihary Marofarihy, whose name means “The Female Entrepreneurs of Marofarihy, Simonette can leverage the power of group savings. Alone, she could not afford to invest in new economic opportunities without taking loans from the bank. With the other women pooling resources and taking turns withdrawing funds, however, she has greater access to opportunity than ever before.

Recently, she borrowed 500,000 Ariary, the equivalent of 100 USD, and bought cloth to make school uniforms. Within weeks, the \$100 loan had netted \$100 profit. She paid back the loan to the SLA group, and used her

profit to pay back the bank, complete her house, and plan for her next sewing project.

Her mother, Francois, is amazed by her daughter’s success, and proud of the woman she has become.

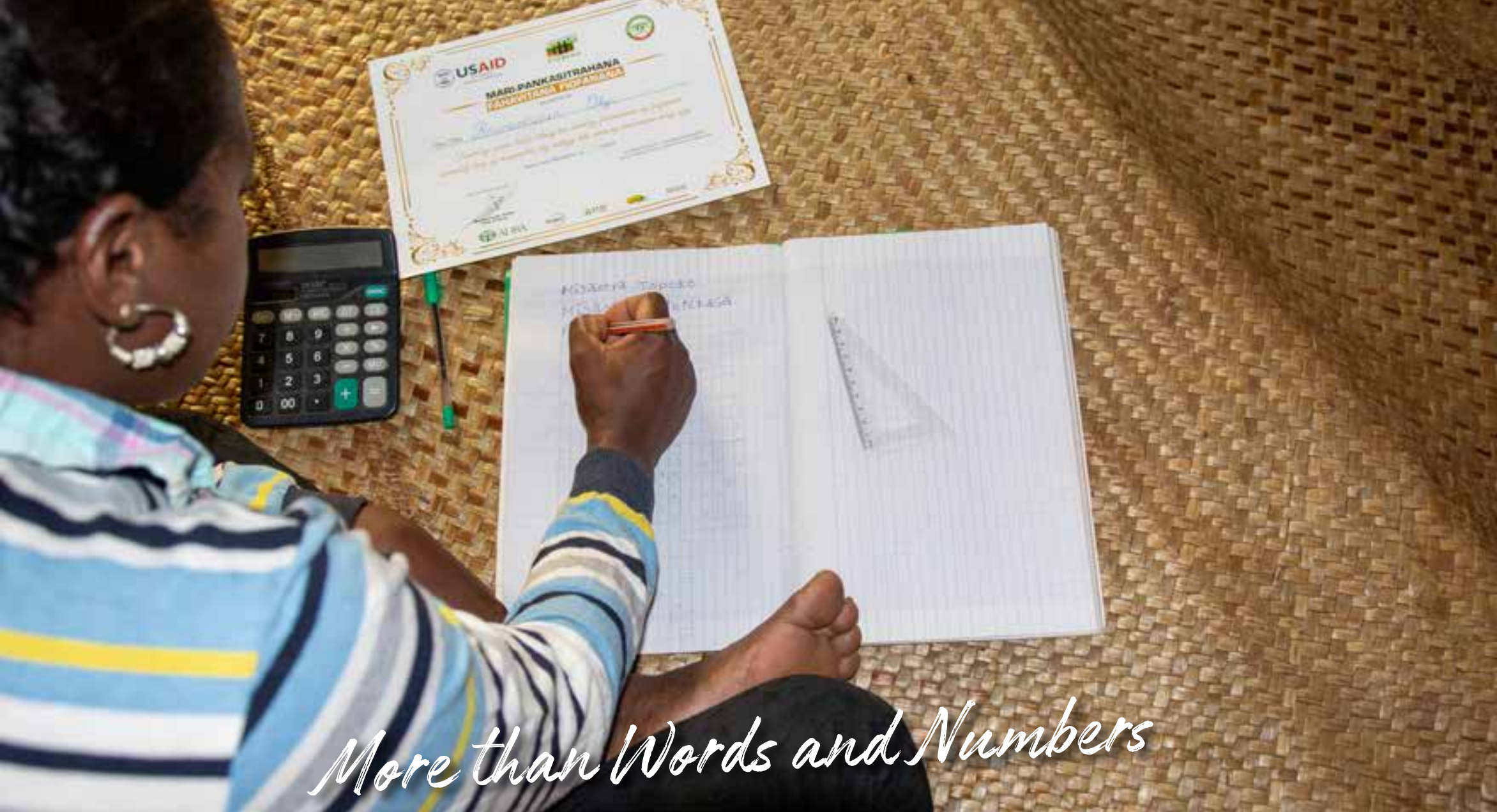
“I see a real improvement in our current situation compared to the past,” she said. “I could not afford the school fees and had to pull Simonette out of school. Now I see more success and I hope that my grandsons will be able to learn from this.”

With a mother as ambitious and strong-willed as Simonette, it is easy to imagine that her sons will follow in her successful footsteps.

“I dream to have my own workshop where I can supply the cloth, fabrics, and accessories,” she said. Thanks to the project my life is really different. I’m not worried about the future thanks to everything I learned from the project.”



**31,172 members
belonging to 2,144
SLA groups have been
trained in SLA processes
and financial skills**



Olga demonstrates her proficiency in writing, a skill she recently learned.

Literacy and Numeracy

The objective of FIOVANA was to reach 37,054 participants from different technical groups in initial literacy and 27,975 participants in basic complementary training. Three Regions and 60 Communes were covered by the functional literacy activity.

1,373 sites have been set up and opened and 1,299 of them are functional and will be completed until the end of the literacy campaign, which represents a 95% site functionality rate. Of the 37,500 learners recruited, 31,670 of them attended the set up, and 29,063 succeeded in the campaign.



Literacy and numeracy training inspires hope for a better future

In the living room of her house, just off the busy intersection where she sells rice and cassava, Olga opens her notebook and writes with a steady, confident hand: “Thank you, FIOVANA.”

Six months ago, Olga didn’t own a notebook or a pen, because she had no use for either. Back then, Olga did not know how to read or write—not even her name.

“I was one of eight children, and my father was usually drunk,” Olga said. “Anytime my mother saved up enough money to buy me a lesson book, my father would take the money and get drunk. As a child, I really wanted to attend school, but I could not.”

Instead, she worked. Alongside her mother and siblings, she worked to

save money so her youngest brother, the only one in the family, would get a chance to go to school.

“We helped our mother earn money so we could all send him to school,” she said. “At least we would have one member of the family with an education. At least one of us would be successful.”

It was not easy for Olga to miss school and work while her brother got the education she desired. She watched him, and many of her neighbors, go to school and come back a little smarter, a little more educated, each day.

“I envied the other children because they had someone to pay for their education,” she said. “I really desired to go to school.”



“
*I was very happy when I completed,
because the program changed my life.
There are so many things I didn’t know
before, but I know now.*
”

- Olga -

Olga is saving her money so her son can go to school—something she never got to do.

“Because I could not count or calculate, I would have to ask the customer to help me,” she said. “I often gave too much change back to the buyer.”

When she joined the Savings and Loan Association in her community, she learned that FIOVANA was offering more than just a chance to save money. They were offering classes in literacy and numeracy, too.

“A member of the group told me about the program and asked if I would be interested,” Olga said. “I told her I was very interested, because I thought I would never be able to go to school again.”

Olga enrolled, and for four challenging months she worked to master concepts that had once been out of reach. She started writing the alphabet and single-digit numbers in chalk on a small slate board. Soon after, she graduated to words and double-digit numbers with a pen and notebook. By the end of her program, Olga could read and write full sentences and complete equations.

“I was very happy when I completed, because the program changed my life,” she said. “There are so many things I didn’t know before, but I know

now. Even how to use a phone and a calculator. Those are things I never knew, and now I use them all the time for work.”

Olga still sells rice and cassava, but her income has increased with the use of her new skills. So, too, has her ambition.

“I am motivated to keep working hard,” she said. “I want things that other people have. A better house, for example. I want to get my diploma. I want to learn French and English.”

She also wants her son to have the life she never had, one that leads to university and beyond. She is already saving money for his education, something she once did for her little brother, who is now in his last year of high school.

“Sometimes my brother is lazy and doesn’t want to go to school,” Olga said. “I remind him he has an opportunity that I never had, and he should take advantage of it. If you have the opportunity to learn, you should do so.”

Impact Investment Funds (IIF)

The Impact Investment Fund (IIF) is a financial mechanism designed to support Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) within the agricultural value chain. IIF aims to enhance the business capabilities of these enterprises through investment in technology, infrastructure, and capacity-building activities.

As a result of the FIOVANA project, 32 private enterprises have been supported to enable their work with FIOVANA structures that include FFS, FMS, SLA Cooperatives, and more. The impacts include:

- Enterprise growth: Several enterprises have expanded their operations and increased their profitability through IIF support.
- Market expansion: IIF-supported enterprises have expanded their market presence both locally and regionally, contributing to economic growth.





Once destroyed by cyclones, this rural farmland has been replanted with more resilient—and lucrative—cash crops.

Impact Investment Fund transforms local business and community

In March 2023, in the wake of a devastating cyclone, Carl trekked out to his rural farmland through washed-out roads, standing water and fallen trees. What he saw filled him with hopelessness.

“I had a good business before the cyclone, but it was completely destroyed,” he said. I felt despair, and I was sure I would give up.”

Before the cyclone, Carl worked with 72 local farmers to grow and harvest cassava, alongside a few other staple crops, and sell them in bulk to distributors and exporters. He managed a successful small business, but often felt like he and his community of farmers weren’t maximizing their yields or profits. Cyclones took their annual toll, harvests were sporadic and inefficient, roads were impassable, crop storage was nonexistent, and the local community suffered from such abject poverty that many of the farmers were simply too hungry to work.

After the cyclone, Carl felt sure his business was finished. But when

FIOVANA agents reached out to discuss an opportunity with the Impact Investment Fund (IIF), he felt a glimmer of hope.

“I told them about my challenges,” Carl said. “My farmlands were 90% destroyed by the cyclone. They told me about their goals to maintain sustainability even after the project ends.”

Together, Carl and FIOVANA developed a business plan with two primary goals: to create permanent food access for hungry farmers and their families and to create a continuous cash flow through the promotion of a resilient cash crop. The success of these two objectives would create a feedback loop of more food and money in a community desperate for both, which would then enable the development of more land and employment opportunities for more farmers.

Within one year, Carl’s business and the entire local community have experienced complete transformation.

“I thank FIOVANA because it arrived at the perfect time,” Carl said. “Because the project supported me, I am able to support the community.”

Thanks to the Impact Investment Fund, Carl now manages two warehouses, utilizes an improved road network, and works with 230 farmers, 130 of whom have been trained by FIOVANA to implement improved techniques. Crucially, they have diversified their crop rotation for increased resiliency: in addition to their staple crop, cassava, they have also started farming peppercorns, coffee, and cloves, the best harvests of which are exported to Europe for a high price.

Because his business has expanded, the entire network of farmers has expanded. Before, Carl struggled to find skilled farmers, and the resources to pay them. Today, those obstacles are nonexistent. Because the crops are so profitable, there is more money to pay the farmers. And because FIOVANA implemented the Farmer Field School (FFS) in this community, there is more talent.

“My motivation to hire more farmers is that they were already skilled because of their training through FIOVANA,” Carl said. “The expansion of

the business is directly linked to FIOVANA.”

Begys is president of the local FFS and one of the farmers who works with Carl to sell their harvests in bulk. He has observed the transformation.

“Before, our production was so low, we didn’t even have enough to eat before, let alone to sell,” he said. “Now we can sell our crops in bulk and generate more income during the periods of harvest. Our production has improved, our diets have diversified, we eat more regularly, and we can save money for the first time in our lives.”

Gone are the days of eating one small meal per day, foraging for wild tubers during the long months of drought, and missing work due to malnutrition and starvation. Today, Begys, his family and his entire community of farmers are eating regular meals, using their new income to send their children to school, and developing their community together.

“Before, we were not motivated to work because we were hungry and weak,” Begys said. “Thanks to this partnership, we got support and now we are developing alongside the farm.”



Left: Carl and Begys discuss the most recent harvest and the plans for the next season.



Right: Provided by the FIOVANA project, this warehouse keeps crops secure from thieves and bad weather and allows for more profitable bulk sales.



Purpose 3:

DISASTER AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Disaster and Risk Management Committee (DRMC)

The DRMC at the Fokontany and Commune levels are groups created to help communities better prepare for and respond to emergency situations. Established by the FIOVANA project, these committees receive specific training on Disaster and Risk Management as well as kits and materials to assist them in their missions.

Their main role is to raise community awareness about risks and disasters, to develop risk and disaster reduction plans, to coordinate actions in the event of a disaster, and to ensure the implementation and follow-up of the actions described in the plan. They also receive technical support from the FIOVANA project, enabling them to have the necessary knowledge and tools to effectively protect their communities.

FIOVANA has established and technically supported 475 DRMC committees at the Fokontany level and 60 DRMC committees at the Commune level, providing them with training and kits.





Weathering the Storm

Community members demonstrate the usage of the cyclone warning flags, a component of Disaster Risk Management.

Disaster-prone community learns to mitigate the impact of cyclones

Eliace remembers the helplessness he felt during each cyclone season: the knowledge that a storm would inevitably strike Karimbelo, his coastal community, but never knowing when it would make landfall or how much chaos it would leave in its wake.

“In the past, the only awareness of a cyclone was through the radio,” he said. “When I would hear about it, I was afraid. I would think, what is going to happen? I didn’t know what to do, I felt paralyzed. All I could do was wait and see. I didn’t know how to prepare, or how to endure the many damages to the house and the livestock.”

Every year was the same: hope to survive and pray it doesn’t get worse. Managing a cyclone seemed impossible, like trying to harness the wind. Eliace was resigned to the fate of living so close to the ocean.

When FIOVANA came to his village, he was amazed to learn the extent to which a community can endure, and even mitigate, the violent inevitability of a cyclone. As the head of the village and the elected leader of the newly formed Disaster Risk Management Committee (DRMC), he was eager to absorb everything he could about mobilizing a community in a time of crisis.

Before, villagers stayed in their homes during the storm and ensuing floods. The outcome of residing among standing water was the proliferation of diseases. As a result of their training, they now evacuate to higher ground where they shelter in the school. While they wait for the water to recede, designated members of the community organize food and water, as others assess the damage and plan for repairs.



“
It is very important
responsability because it
is lifesaving
- Eliace -
”

Eliace shares key disaster messaging learned from the FIOVANA project, a responsibility he takes seriously.

Additionally, FIOVANA supplied flags to indicate the four different stages of cyclone preparedness, which are raised on a pole in the center of town for all to see. The green flag indicates a cyclone is at sea and will likely make landfall in a few days. Yellow indicates the storm is imminent; all fishing should cease, and households should head to the evacuation site. Red indicates the storm has made landfall. Blue indicates the storm has passed, but flood risk is still high. When the water has receded, the flags are removed and the village begins the work of recovery: shoring up damaged houses, clearing trees, and repairing roads.

Beginning in October, a few months before the start of cyclone season, Eliace makes the rounds in his community to inspect home preparations, remind the community of the proper procedures, and generally be a resource to those with questions, doubts, or fears. As a result, he has seen a dramatic reduction in damage and disease in the wake of a cyclone.

“Before, the impacts were tremendous on the households and the families,”

he said. “I thought there was nothing you can do but wait for it and deal with the damages. It was very important for me to learn that there are actions you can take to reduce the impact. It makes me feel empowered, and also challenged, to continue to find ways to protect the community. If I don’t take responsibility, the community will suffer, and I will feel I failed them.”

Eliace continues to work with his DRMC committee to find ways to mitigate cyclones, which includes conducting trainings, workshops, and annual cyclone simulations. He is proud of his work and plans to continue indefinitely.

“It is a very important responsibility because it is lifesaving,” he said. “Working together makes the work easier and more wide reaching. We can manage any disaster now.”



FIOVANA has established and technically supported 475 DRMC committees at the village level and 60 DRMC committees at the county level.



Infrastructure

FIOVANA, through P3, the infrastructure component focuses on road rehabilitation and micro-irrigation. All these infrastructures are spread across the 5 Districts and 60 Communes of the project. The roads comprise 16 sites with a total length of 90 km, while the 55 micro-irrigation sites have a target additional surface area of 1,800 Ha. The total length of the irrigation canals is 1900 km.

Each site has an infrastructure management committee, whose creation was supported by FIOVANA. These committees are trained by the project in the management, organization and, above all, maintenance and upkeep of the infrastructure. Equipment such as spades, shovels, hammers and wheelbarrows have been made available to each committee.



Food Assistance for Assets (FFA)



The Food Assistance for Assets initiative addresses immediate food needs through food transfers, while at the same time promoting the building or rehabilitation of assets that will improve long-term food security and resilience, such as rural roads, irrigation channels, and more.



Fortifying for the Future

Members of the local Disaster Risk Mitigation Committee gather at the site of the rehabilitated dam.

A rebuilt dam restores the crops, and hopes, of a community

When Cyclone Emnati struck off the coast of southeastern Madagascar, countless communities were forced to evacuate to higher ground. The village of Amboafandra, located near a river with volatile flood patterns, was no exception. When the storm hit, all 130 households evacuated to the local school to wait in safety. Two weeks later, when the flood waters had finally receded, they returned to a scene of devastation.

Much of the damage was expected: fields washed away, fruit trees leveled, tin roofs ripped from the walls. What was not expected, however, was the total destruction of the local dam, the lifeblood of the community's year-round irrigation.

"I was sad to see it, because the dam is required for the livelihoods of so many of us," said Auguste, head of the village and the local Disaster Risk Management Committee (DRMC). "Normally, the strong men of the

community would try to repair the damaged structure, but the destruction was so complete, that we did not have the technical skill to fix it ourselves."

Gaston, one of the men of the village, remembers vividly.

"The big river flowed backwards up the tributary toward our village and flooded very high up the hill," he said. "The water destroyed the foundation of the dam. All the trees were destroyed in the winds. I was very sad to see the extent of the damage, especially to our crops."

Not only was the damage to the crops extensive, but without the dam, the entire future of the crops was at stake. Without the ability to manage water use during the dry season, the community was at risk for months of famine.

"As head of DRMC, when I saw the destruction, I reported it directly to FIOVANA," said Auguste. "Not only did they replace our dam, but we learned many things, like how to manage the water for agriculture, improved crop rotation, and more."

As a component of infrastructure activities, FIOVANA worked with a local engineering firm to rebuild the dam, and they partnered with the local communities in a Food for Work program to dig 4 kilometers of irrigation ditches.

Today, water flows freely, and even further than it did before the cyclone, which allows the communities to plant more crops than ever.

"Thanks to the dam, we can control the use of the water and guarantee a good harvest," Auguste said. "Once it was repaired, we were motivated to

extend our rice paddies."

Gaston indicates the expanded fields, pointing to distant rice paddies that are newly planted because of the extended irrigation.

"This is the first time we've had such crops since the cyclone," he said. "The project really worked here. Many projects came her in the past, but none accomplished as much as FIOVANA."

The villagers of Amboafandra cannot control the cyclones or the droughts, but now they can control the flow of water, and the increased harvest that will help them survive the disasters to come.



The dam and irrigation channels are the lifeblood of this agrarian community, which subsist almost entirely on farming.



Under FIOVANA and their Food for Work project, 90 km of rural roads and 120 Km of irrigation channels have been rehabilitated.

Community engagement

Before any intervention, the FIOVANA project convinced its participants to get involved in activities that could improve their daily living conditions. This conviction was translated into the effectiveness of community involvement. Community involvement is based on the simple premise that communities should be listened to and play a meaningful role in the processes and issues that affect them. This helps communities to take their own action to solve their most pressing problems. Community engagement is intrinsic to the human rights-based approach.

- Communities want to be actors in their own development, rather than spectators :
- To ensure the sustainability of the actions undertaken by involving the community in our development dynamics.
 - Establish principles and parameters that enable communities to plan, act and be heard on all issues that concern them.
 - The support and participation of the people and groups most affected by food and nutrition insecurity are essential to the program's success.
 - Community participation can vary from passive compliance to local ownership of interventions.

Some interventions simply work better when the community is involved. The strategy for community involvement depends on the problems to be solved and the mechanisms that can be used to achieve this.

Effective community engagement requires consultation with the community to understand its needs, priorities and aspirations. The project has developed a consultative process with the population it intends to serve, to discuss with community leaders and groups representing different constituencies (e.g. women, forestry workers, marginalized groups, etc.) solutions to make food insecurity interventions more effective, more accessible and to ensure that all community members benefit, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, etc. Must always be adapted to the specific cultural and social characteristics of populations.

Model Commune (Kaominina Modely)

KM is a community ownership model that empowers the community to set common, clear, and reasonable goals. It recognizes success through public celebrations, and it replicates community engagement through mentorship, with a view to post-project continuity.



Members of the model community proudly display their chart of achievements, which measures community, hygiene, sanitation, health, and other indicators of success.

Model Community works together to alleviate suffering

Many communities in southeastern Madagascar suffer from the lack of healthcare and education, the proliferation of diseases, few resources for mothers and young children, and a general and pervasive poverty. As a result, the goal of the FIOVANA project is to inspire as many changes for as many people as possible, rather than focusing on one or two development goals for a subset of the population.

These sweeping changes are most apparent among Model Communes: communities that have embraced holistic development for all. Participating communities are recognized for their efforts with a bronze, silver, or gold status, an indicator of how far they have come together.

Andranovolo, a small village along the banks of a wide river, is currently a silver community, and it shows. Unlike neighboring villages in this area, there is no trash on the ground, there are latrines for every home, and the

children show no signs of malnutrition.

Julia, a community member and participant of the local Savings and Loan Association, has seen the difference firsthand.

“The project really brought change in the community,” she said. “The word fiovana means change and we have observed that physically, spiritually, and mentally.”

Florent, the head of the village, is proud of his community, and inspired to push even further.

“First is the development of the community,” he said. “Now that we have moved from the old ways to a better and improved status, we want to keep growing and evolving.”

Growing and evolving means graduating from silver status to gold, an achievement that proves the village has implemented all the subcomponents of FIOVANA: disaster risk reduction, health, hygiene, income generating activities, improved agriculture, prevention of early marriage and pregnancy, and much more. It means eradicating abject poverty and developing together as one.

Claire, a local Community Health Volunteer, is one of the women holding her community accountable.

“I am so eager to reach the gold level,” she said. “For us to reach silver, all the members of the community participated. Even the leaders, who gave land to the women to practice farming techniques or helped households

build latrines. Everyone played their part because it is important to us. We are making efforts to reach the gold. We all understand we have roles to play to reach this level.”

Though they have not yet reached that final status, Julia is thrilled by their current achievements. She has seen the community work together and pull themselves out of suffering.

“We are happy—really happy,” she said. “There have been many projects in this area, but FIOVANA was the most exceptional because of the way it helped us as individuals and a community. It opened a new vision of a new life.”



The community is cleaner healthier, and wealthier than ever before, thanks to collective adherence to initiatives of the FIOVANA project.



Though beautiful, this rural community has endured generations of poverty and disaster. Today, they are more resilient than ever.

A transformation in a rural community creates a ripple effect of changes

Surrounded by an endless panorama of rolling hills, terraced crops, and groves of fragrant clove trees, the small village of Vohipanany is a beacon of community development in this fertile, but vulnerable, region. The village name, translated as “The Hill of the Spirits,” has seen the worst of southeastern Madagascar: the catastrophic weather, the lack of basic infrastructure, health and hygiene, and patriarchal traditions that stripped girls and women of fundamental rights.

But that was in the past. Today, Vohipanany is experiencing a transformation.

The change started when FIOVANA came to the remote village, a small gathering of traditional huts hours away from the nearest town or city, accessible by 4x4 vehicle only during the dry season. It was then that the villagers first learned about reforestation to combat worsening cycles of drought; about fortifying fragile homes to survive the cyclones; about building latrines to mitigate diseases; about protecting young women

against early pregnancy and domestic violence.

FIOVANA worked through the Disaster Risk Reduction committee, a collection of community members led by the elected president, Jehatao, to provide trainings and workshops focused on community development. This life-changing—and in some cases, lifesaving—information was then shared widely among the entire community.

“I led the process, but of course I could not do it alone,” Jehatao said. “I needed the help of the whole community.”

Jehatao understood from his training that complex subjects like gender equality could take a little more time, but the impacts of drought and cyclone were well understood by even the youngest children. Crops withered under the sun or were washed away by floods and people went hungry.

“Because we used so many trees for houses and furniture, we had destroyed many of our forests,” Jehatao said. “It did not take much convincing for everyone to agree to replant what we had used. That led to open-mindedness about other improvements.”

Once they understood the value of healthy soil, stable slopes, and thriving forests, the villagers were hungry for more development. With the support of FIOVANA, they rebuilt old homes to withstand the elements, dug latrines for all the households, improved their farming techniques and crop rotations, and diversified their diets.

Amazingly, the villagers continued to develop themselves beyond even the scope of the FIOVANA project. “FIOVANA opened our eyes to the fact that we can do things together,” Jehatao said. “That’s when we started thinking bigger than the projects.”

Next was a central market for all the villagers to bring their cash crops for bulk sale. Instead of traveling by foot across rough roads for 10 miles to the nearest town, buyers now travel to them for clove, peppercorns, coffee, cassava, sweet potato, rice, and more.

After the success of the market, the villagers were finally ready to examine gender inequality in the community. Unanimously, they agreed to create and enforce new protections for women, including land ownership and inheritance, and legal obligations for any man who impregnates an unmarried woman.

“Fiovana taught us how to collaborate,” Jehatao said. “The way they designed and organized the Disaster Risk Reduction committee, for example, is an outcome of the project. That spirit has infused our whole community. Now we feel like we are a big family. Even if our houses are scattered in different places, we are all one family together.”



Every member of this community participates in and adheres to local initiatives and rules, including tree planting and protections for girls and women.

Natural Resource and Watershed Management Committees (NRWMC)

Local Natural Resource and Watershed Management Committees work in partnership with local stakeholders to develop conservation strategies, implement watershed protection measures, raise awareness among residents about the importance of preserving natural resources, and regularly monitor the state of these resources to adjust management actions accordingly.

As a result of the FIOVANA project, 20 NRWMC committees are operational and carrying out their tasks autonomously.



Go Green

The Go Green concept, an inter-Fokontany competition, emphasizes behavior change and the adoption of environmentally friendly practices within the 475 Fokontany of the project, thus encouraging participants to adopt environmentally responsible behaviors carried out by the communities themselves.

After evaluation, 1,800 participants were rewarded with certificates of merit for their adoption of environmentally friendly behaviors, and they act as awareness agents to encourage their communities to do the same.





Rewilding the Forests

Before FIOVANA, farmers here knew little about deforestation, erosion, and terraced planting. Today, they are saving their forests and pulling themselves out of poverty.

Reforestation projects lead to improved harvests in a hungry community

In an open-air hut, less than a mile away from their tree nursery, the members of the Natural Resource and Watershed Management Committee (NRWMC) gather. They are all wearing their FIOVANA t-shirts, with a message on the back that says, “Protect the Environment.”

The shirts are new, but so is the philosophy. Before FIOVANA, farmers in this community were slashing and burning trees for charcoal, clearcutting whole groves for fields that produced very few crops and digging up wild tubers during the months of drought, when all the food and money were gone.

“Our situation was in crisis,” said Orlando, the president of the NRWMC. “As conditions worsened, even the wild tubers were threatened.”

Orlando and Abdou, the committee’s vice president, watched as forests disappeared, hillsides eroded or sloughed into the river, birds and lemurs fled their native homes, and villagers starved.

“We were very worried during those times,” Abdou said. “We were helpless, just eating whatever we found. Our children were so weak we were afraid they would die. I was very sad to pull my children out of school, but I didn’t have the means to pay for their education.”

When FIOVANA came to the village, they saw a community in crisis. The first step was to help form a Disaster Risk Management Committee (DRMC) and explain to the leaders the link between deforestation and starvation. When forests are depleted, the soil is depleted. When the soil is depleted, crops won’t grow well, landslides are common, the watershed is vulnerable, and the effects of drought are exacerbated. The next step was immediate remediation.

The process to mitigate erosion was two-pronged: reforestation and terraced farming. The DRMC worked with FIOVANA to establish a tree nursery where they could reproduce a steady supply of seedlings to reforest their hillsides. The team and their community have already planted 2,000 trees.

Next was to reconceptualize how they farm. Instead of clearing out entire forests on hard-to-find flat ground, the DRMC team learned how to utilize the rolling hills of their homeland. Now, instead of eking out a meager harvest of cassava from nutrient-sapped soil, they produce a variety of seasonal crops in terraces along the previously unused hillsides. Today, they farm cassava, banana, clove, and coffee, all on the same hill.

“The techniques that FIOVANA brought improved the quality of soil which increases production,” Abdou said. “Before, we could not plant because the soil was so bad, so we had no food during the famine. But now, because of the increased production, we can harvest more frequently and sell more than ever before.”
What this means for Abdou is more food for his children, and more money to send them all back to school.

“I can pay all the school fees and supplies,” he said. “All this comes from improved agriculture.”

Today, as members of both the DRMC and the NRWMC, Orlando and Abdou take great pride in their work, as well as great responsibility.

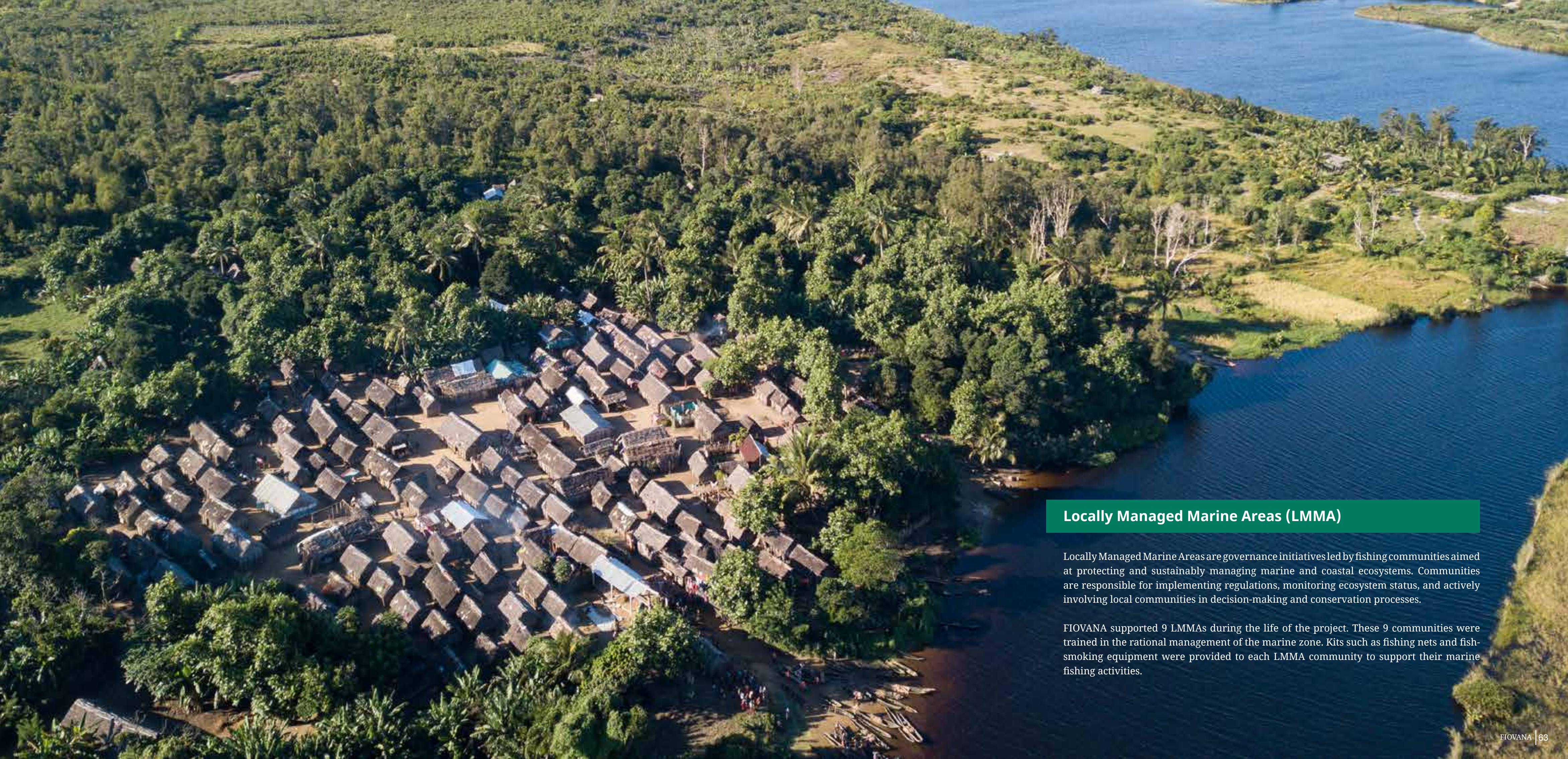
“I feel responsible for the protection of the environment, because I have seen the results of what we have done,” Abdou said. “We have more water, the soil is better, and production is improved. I encourage all community members to take care of the environment.”

“We are happy,” Orlando added. “Fiovana brought knowledge we never had, and it really changed our lives.”

Abdou and Orlando proudly display their tree seedlings, which they plant by the thousands.



Currently, 20 NRWMC committees are operational and carrying out their tasks autonomously.



Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMA)

Locally Managed Marine Areas are governance initiatives led by fishing communities aimed at protecting and sustainably managing marine and coastal ecosystems. Communities are responsible for implementing regulations, monitoring ecosystem status, and actively involving local communities in decision-making and conservation processes.

FIOVANA supported 9 LMMAs during the life of the project. These 9 communities were trained in the rational management of the marine zone. Kits such as fishing nets and fish-smoking equipment were provided to each LMMA community to support their marine fishing activities.



Defenders of the Sea

Dornin and his fellow fisherman have reimagined what it means to profit from the sea, while also protecting it.



“

Fiovana helped us see that we needed to protect the marine area so we can protect the generations to come.

- Dornin -

”

Sweeping changes save a community from the brink of ecological disaster

Hours down a muddy, potholed 4x4 road, then another mile down the river by dugout canoe, there is a fishing village made up of 266 households, a fleet of hand-hewn boats, and fishing nets in various states of repair hanging from walls, roofs, and tree branches.

The lifeblood of this community is the sea, a short paddle down the river delta and into the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. Until recently, it has also been the source of their suffering.

“Fishing is the only livelihood we have. It is our heritage from our ancestors,” said Dornin, community member and lifelong fisherman. “Before, we were struggling a lot. If one fisherman worked half the day, his bucket was hardly filled. The prices were very low, the cost of living was very high, and we could hardly buy rice for the family with that money.

The situation became worse and worse.”

The worsening situation was the result of a combination of overfishing, underregulating, and market manipulation by unethical middlemen. In desperation, communities along the river took to poaching illegal harvests of marine life and battling neighboring villages for fishing access. Though each community maintained internal regulations for fishing, they were often ignored or at odds with the regulations of other fishing communities. These inconsistencies led to more conflicts and fewer resources.

“We had associations in each community, but when FIOVANA came, they encouraged us to form a more comprehensive association,” Dornin said. “We were encouraged to reinforce collaboration over competition.”

Recognizing the value of protecting and sharing the sea instead of battling for its spoils, the local fishing communities turned to a government program called Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA). With the guidance of FIOVANA, fishermen learned how to pull back from the brink of ecological disaster.

As elected president of the LMMA, Dornin oversaw the sweeping changes in his community: strict regulations on the size and season of fish, shrimp and lobster; banning the use of mosquito nets as fishing nets; reforestation projects along the seashore; even beach cleanup days.

The impacts on the health of the marine area and the community were profound, but most noticeable for many was the impact on their income. As a unified front, the LMMA has more bargaining power with seafood brokers—the same ones who had grown rich exploiting these poor fishing communities. Instead of accepting the criminally low price of the past, the

LMMA demanded a much higher price, a standard rate they had learned in visits to other LMMAs in the area.

“Now that we work as a larger community, we can set the price instead of being cheated by the collectors,” Dornin said. “The project taught us we have that power. Thank you for changing our mentality. Now we know our value.”

Today, the sea is more protected, the income is higher, and for the first time in years, the people of this community are optimistic about the future.

“People have savings for the first time now, and more resources to help us survive,” Dornin said. “We believe we are protecting the future of our children. Fiovana helped us see that we needed to protect the marine area so we can protect the generations to come.”



Cross-cutting

GENDER, YOUTH AND SOCIAL DYNAMIC



Male Leader Group (MLG)

The MLG is an association of fewer than 20 men who exchange experiences and discuss relevant issues so that they become role models in their household and community and accordingly support women's empowerment. The main goal of this group is to improve and increase the responsibilities of men in their home and communities to ultimately impact food security activities.

The FIOVANA project organized, trained, and supported 120 MLGs.

Mama/Papa Miova

A Gender, Youth and Social Dynamics (GYSD) volunteer over the age of 30 is called Mama Miova or Papa Miova. The roles and responsibilities of these volunteers are:

- (1) Disseminate key GYSD messages including Gender Based Violence (GBV);
- (2) Conduct home visits (VAD) to discuss the GYSD approach with local officials (leaders, notables, lineage chiefs, etc.); and
- (3) Ensuring the adoption of the GYSD approach.

The objective of this "MAMA/PAPA MIOVA" approach is to make the participants responsible for the GYSD approach and promote the approach by the participants themselves to ensure sustainability.

60 GYSD volunteers have been identified, trained and equipped with operating tools in the 60 Municipalities of intervention of FIOVANA. Training includes gender approach, the fight against GBV, reduction of women's workload, access/control of resources, and more.

Women Empowerment Group (WEG)

WEG is a group of women who support each other to periodically discuss issues that concern them, share their challenges with each other, build their self-confidence and achieve equality and empowerment.





A Woman's World

Fernande shares what she has learned about the rights of women, information that is transforming her community.

Mama Miova and gender activist inspires sweeping changes in her community

The entire history of land ownership in southeastern Madagascar is one of male inheritance. In death, a man's land is divided among his sons, while his daughters are left to serve the land and property of a new man: her husband. If she outlives her husband, or if he divorces her—both common scenarios in this region—she is at the whim of her sons who inherit the land, or her parents who take her back.

This traditional legacy of land rights forces women to depend on the caprices of men. It is a system Fernande has devoted her life to fighting.

The 48-year-old knows firsthand the insecurity of being a dispossessed woman in Madagascar. When her father was still alive, he promised she would get a fair portion of the family plot. When he died, however, her brothers refused to share the inheritance. In her culture, the word of men is law, and a woman does not contradict it.

“Before, I did not have a place in society,” Fernande said. “If there is a meeting, I would not speak up. I knew that was not right, but I was afraid. I didn’t have the courage to fight for my right.” When FIOVANA came to her community, she was asked to participate as

a Mama Miova, or “Mother Changemaker,” a local woman who attends trainings and workshops on gender rights and shares what she has learned with the rest of her community. Themes include domestic abuse, family planning, early marriage, and economic violence, which encompasses the dispossession of women from their rightful inheritance.

“When I learned about human rights and gender equality, I started to express myself and to fight for my rights within the community,” Fernande said. “My life started to change after that.”

To dismantle the system of land dispossession, Fernande started at the very top.

“I went to the king of the village and asked him to allow the women in his family to inherit land. He said, ‘this is not the way our society is, a woman cannot inherit land.’”

Undeterred, she continued to advocate for the rights of women using the information she had learned from FIOVANA.

She explained the benefits to society when women have equal rights, and the limitations when they don’t. She made it clear that forcing a woman to return to her father’s land is not only a moral failure, but a practical failure as well, one that burdens society with the contrived limitations of a large demographic eager to develop themselves on their own property.

“I asked him to think about it,” she said. “In this era, we are changing, and women should also inherit land because this is our right. If we cannot inherit land, then women will be a burden on society.”

Shortly after, as if preordained to prove the point, a local woman was evicted from her home by an abusive husband and forced to return to her parents. The king had seen enough, and he made legal arrangements to share his land with his wife and daughters.

Armed with that unprecedented reform, Fernande secured her own portion of land from her brothers and set out to do the same for all the women in her community.

“Because I saw the change in my life, because I grew and developed, I want other women to experience that change in their own lives” she said. “You must change yourself before you can change others.”

Andrine is one of the women who has seen the change in Fernande. She was eager to change, too.

“My husband, when he is drunk, he makes trouble for the family in the house,” Andrine said. “We have four daughters, one of whom married a man in the north. During a conflict, he chased her away, and she came back to live with us. The situation seemed hopeless: either she goes back to an abusive marriage or lives as a burden we cannot afford. I suffered, and I asked Fernande to talk to my husband. I knew he would not listen to me. I knew he would take my desires as an attempt to exploit him.” With the authority of the local king, Fernande met with Andrine’s abusive husband and gave him the same speech she had given the king.



These women have all received legal titles to land ownership as a result of the work Fernande is doing in her village.

“Fernande talked to him, and he changed his mind, so much so that he bought land for me and my children,” Andrine said, still amazed by the unexpected outcome. “Our relationship is completely different now. Before he wouldn’t share any money, even if the kids needed money for school. Now it is completely different. He helps me with my shop in the market and we manage the money together.”

Tovo, another woman in the community, has also experienced the influential power of Fernande. When her young daughter ran away from school to live with her boyfriend, she knew exactly who to call.

“When I learned that my daughter had dropped out of school, I asked Fernande to help me convince her to go back.”

For Fernande, it was one more valuable opportunity to share what she had learned about the rights of women.

“I talked to the parents of the boy and said, ‘this is not a good decision because the girl is still studying, but if he really wants to be engaged to her it should be formalized,’” Fernande said. “I convinced the young lady to go back to school. I told her about the values of education, the danger of early pregnancy, the perspective of a better life and a good future if she finishes her education.”

Today the girl is just months away from graduating secondary school, and thanks to Fernande, she, her six sisters and her mother all have legal rights to the family land, where they grow and sell sugar cane, cassava, breadfruit, jackfruit and lychee.

“I never expected that I would have this life,” Fernande said. “When I was young, my only ambition was to look after children. Now I am an expert who gives advice to women and couples. Now everyone who talks to me has that spirit and willingness to change and grow. I am really proud of my community.”



Andrine, left, recalls suffering the violent whims of her alcoholic husband. Today, thanks to Fernande, there is more peace and equality in her house.



Tanora Miova



"Tanora Miova" or "Youth of Change" is a specific approach adopted by the FIOVANA Project to mobilize, involve and engage young people in its intervention areas.

"Tanora Miova" also designates a young person who adopts certain positive behaviors and acquires a positive change in their socio-economic life that can serve as a model for other young people and/or adults in community or groups.

The term "Miova" reflects three things: (1) the positive behavior adopted by the young person; (2) the ability to play the role of volunteer to share knowledge and experiences; and (3) the success he/she has acquired that can inform and encourage other young people to have a spirit of creativity, innovation and sharing.

Of the 121,467 direct participants, 64,006 (53%) are youth.



Deoni wears one of his bags, which he sells to provide for himself and his mother.

Crosscutting youth platform connects local craftsman with broad network of clients

When Deoni was ten years old, he began to experience a loss of vision. His mother took him to several clinics, but no doctor could help him. Within four months, before his 11th birthday, Deoni was completely blind.

Now, Deoni is 27, and the only indicators of his blindness are the sunglasses he wears indoors and the infrequent pause in his step as he moves around his property. He has spent most of his life working to overcome his loss of vision, and the results show.

"I am motivated to work hard because I want to be treated like everyone else," he said. "I don't want to rely on anyone or be a burden. I just want to be treated normal."

In 2006, a local church sponsored him to attend a school for the blind in Fianarantsoa, the high-elevation city far from his home. As a boy, he left

his mother and the life he knew, and spent the next decade learning to survive as a child from a poor community with no eyesight and no safety net.

Ten years later, Deoni returned home with new skills and a new outlook on life. Motivated to support himself and his mother, Deoni opened a shop to sell the woven baskets he had learned to make at school. Using different colored fabric, a pair of scissors, and his hands and feet to hold, measure, cut, and weave, Deoni began to expand his collection of baskets and clients.

Sales were good, and customer feedback for his handcrafted baskets was even better, but in his rural community, access to market proved challenging.

Other setbacks emerged: one day, when Deoni was selling in his shop, a thief entered his house and stole all his cash earnings, a large sum he had been saving to buy a rice field and goats.

“I wanted to join because I like that the project is called ‘change.’ I want to change and improve my life like any other person would,” Deoni said.

His first opportunity came at a youth fair organized by FIOVANA, a gathering of 225 young entrepreneurs in the biggest city in his region.

“I was really happy to participate in the youth fair,” he said. “I made new friends there and they all treated me normal.” More than just a new group of friends, Deoni connected with a large network of clients.

“Because of that event, many people know me and my products. My story was even posted online, and now my network is extending. I have new clients reaching out to me and ordering from me.”

In addition to the fair, Deoni remains connected to his local youth association, where members give each other advice, microloans, and support. Most recently, the president of his association made the long trip

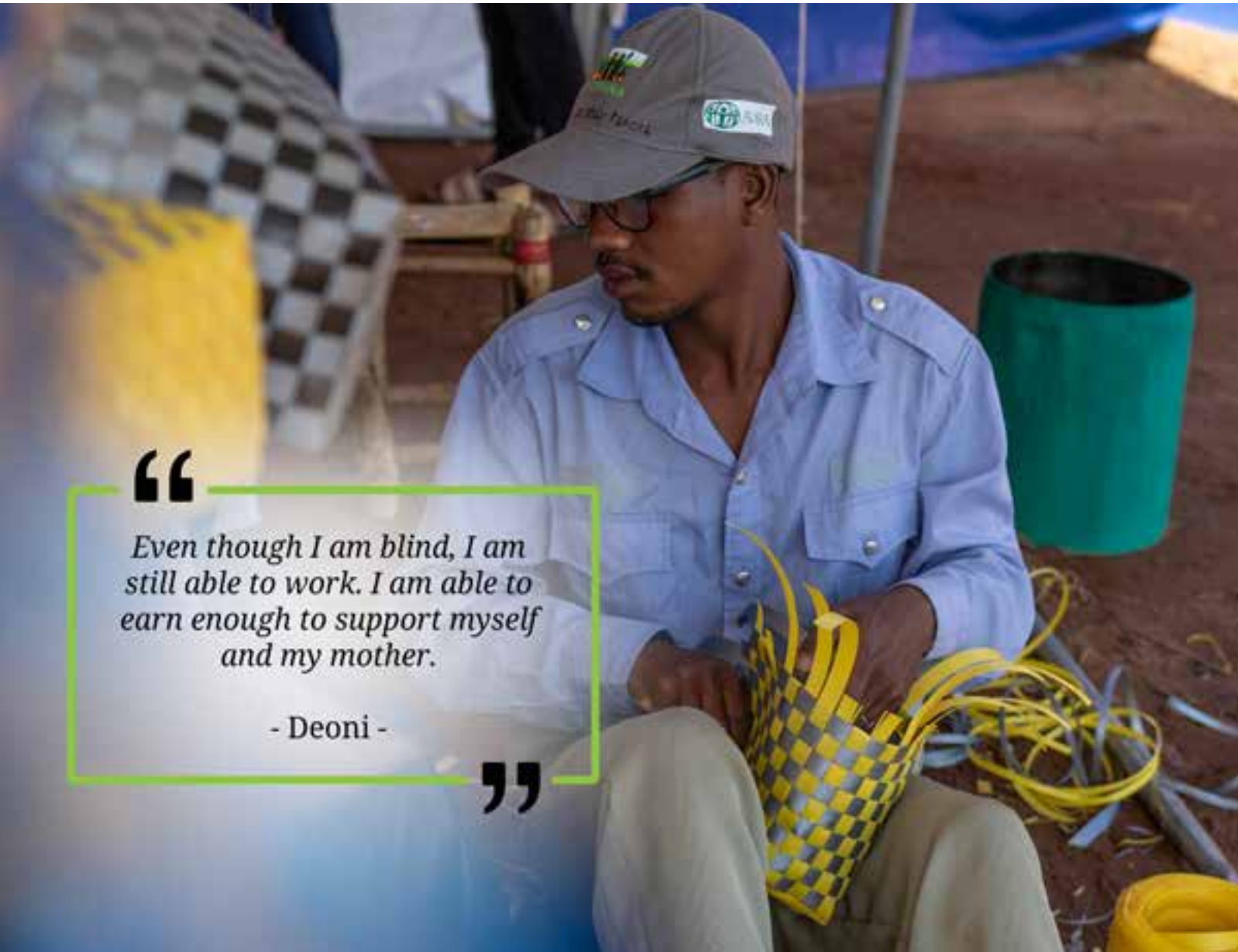
to Manakara just to help Deoni restock his basket weaving supplies.

Now, there is nothing holding him back from his goals. Deoni has more clients, more supplies and inventory, and a growing reputation for high-quality baskets.

“According to my clients, my baskets are better than the others sold in the market, which are not well shaped, and allow things to fall out of the basket, like rice,” he said. “When they use my basket, there is no risk that anything will fall out.”

His expanded business has allowed for expansions elsewhere. He recently bought a second house to use as a rental property, and he also rents out his business space to other local entrepreneurs. The next step is to put his burgeoning savings into a bank, where it will be safe from thieves.

“I thank God for this gift,” he said. “Even though I am blind, I am still able to work. I am able to earn enough to support myself and my mother. I am very happy. I get to honor to all those who helped me along the way.”



Basket weaving is one of the many skills taught in the FIOVANA project. Participants choose what skill is right for them.



Jouelah makes soap using tools she received from the FIOVANA project.

Youth member changes her income, opportunity, and her attitude

Participants of FIOVANA say their lives changed because of the project: more money, fewer diseases, better opportunities, and easier access to education, healthcare, market, and more. Thirty-year-old Jouelah agrees that her life has changed in those expected ways but admits FIOVANA did more than change her circumstances: it changed her heart.

“Like the word fiovana means, everything in my life changed,” she said. “The biggest change was in my personality and character. People often said I was hot-tempered, but the project helped to change that character.”

Part of the change came because she was selected to lead the FIOVANA youth platform in her community, an opportunity for Jouelah to learn about human rights, women’s rights, leadership training, and income generating activities, with the purpose of sharing the knowledge among the members in her youth group. Another part of the change came as she embarked on a soap making activity and learned that a successful

businesswoman must be personable and approachable.

“Before selling your product, you sell yourself,” she said. “You have to be friendly.”

The more Jouelah connected with clients and the peers in her youth group, the more she reflected on her past and envisioned a new future for herself and her daughter.

“I got pregnant at twenty-two,” she said. “I raised my daughter with my parents, and I was a burden on them. Now I can take charge of my own life, and I even help my parents. I learned so many lessons for my personal life about how to behave, how to manage myself, and how to take care of my money.”

As a soap maker, her opportunities for self-sufficiency have grown far

beyond what she expected before FIOVANA, back when she was selling miscellaneous items at a small general store and trying to start a basketmaking business.

“Before the project, my mother took care of both me and my daughter,” she said. “What little income I got from my baskets went all toward my needs and the needs of my daughter. I had no savings left.”

When FIOVANA offered her the opportunity to learn soap making, complete with training and tools, she accepted immediately, even when some of her peers resisted an opportunity that seemed like a big investment.

“People are not really interested in participating in activities unless they see tangible results or changes,” she said. “The young people were not motivated to participate because we had to pay a 30 percent deposit for the tools, but once they saw my profit, they became interested in making the same decisions I made.”

Now Jouelah is a successful businesswoman and member of her local Savings and Loan Association (SLA). She produces, on average, 150 bars of soap per week, and thanks to connections she made during a FIOVANA-led youth fair, her sales are steady. She is currently expanding her general store and building her own house.

“I tell young people: take initiative, have the will to begin, and discover if it works or not,” she said. “If not, try something else until you find what works for you. Don’t just sit and wait.”

Jouelah is taking her own advice, and modeling it for her daughter.

“My objective has always been not to rely on my parents, because that is what I’ve always done,” she said. “I want to become an independent woman.”

“Everything in my life changed,” said Jouelah. With her new skills and income, she is in the process of building a house for her and her daughter.



School Based Approach (SBA)

School based activities or "TIA ANKIZY" is an approach initiated by the FIOVANA Project and the Ministry of National Education to promote behavior change for improved hygiene, nutrition, reproductive health, resilience, agriculture, gender equality and food security; and to offer an environment conducive to the improved well-being of students and their families.

The main goal of this approach is to maximize the number of youth and adolescents influenced by the project and promote youth engagement through all phases of program delivery with their household and communities. Their participation to adopt and practice positive behaviors contributes to improve food and nutrition security and resilience at both the household and community level.



Children learn to wash their hands using a self-built bamboo device.



Children at school play hopscotch during recess. Thanks to the FIOVANA project, more children attend school than ever.



IEC tools have been developed to promote awareness-raising messages.



A Curriculum for Life

As part of their normal curriculum, kids learn how to grow diverse crops for healthier meals. They will take these new skills back to their parents.

Rural schools provide a classroom education alongside skills to overcome poverty

It is common to say, “children are the future,” but for Andranomiteka, a public elementary school in rural southeastern Madagascar, the phrase is so much more than just another figure of speech.

Andranomiteka is one of the many schools in this region to implement “Sekola Tia Ankizy,” or “Child Friendly School,” a partnership with FIOVANA and the Ministry of Education. The program envisions a holistic change for vulnerable communities—a change that begins with children.

By introducing life-changing concepts into the normal academic curriculum, Sekola Tia Ankizy creates an atmosphere that transcends bookwork and tests. In addition to learning mathematics, science, and literacy, students also learn about health and hygiene, puberty, early pregnancy, disaster risk management, environmental protections, home gardens, diversified diets, the rights of children, and more. They learn both in the classroom and out of it, and they take what they learn back home to their parents

and broader community. Dominique is an educator at this school, and one of the first to receive the initial training from FIOVANA, an education he then integrated into his classroom curriculum.

“The children are quick learners,” he said. “It is good for them when they grow up; these are skills they will have the rest of their lives. The parents trust what their children teach them, and when the children are motivated, the parents are also motivated.”

It is an understatement to say the children at this school are motivated. For the first time in their young lives, they are empowered to inspire sweeping changes in their community—changes that are long overdue. For communities that have historically suffered from famine, drought, malnutrition, disease, early pregnancy, and abject poverty, the skills and knowledge of this generation are an incalculable blessing.

“The children are happy because they see tangible results,” Dominique said. “They tell me that what was taught to them is true, and even their parents see the difference. When I visit the families of my students, I find them preparing lunch, washing their hands. I see the way they apply planting techniques in the gardens, the way they reinforce their houses against cyclones, the latrines outside their homes. I am optimistic about their futures because I can see they are applying what we teach.”

Before FIOVANA, school attendance in this community hovered around 70 percent. Today, with the updated curriculum and the diversified school lunches fortified, in part, by the gardens just outside, attendance is now at 90 percent. And amazingly, since FIOVANA took root in this school, the rate of success on the final exam is a perfect 100 percent.

“Education prepares a child for the future,” Dominique said. “If we didn’t have the project, the rate of attendance would decrease, and the children

might not even reach the secondary school. In my opinion, a good future for a child is to become self-sufficient. They are learning self-sufficiency here.”

Thirteen-year-old Fanantenana is one of the children embracing a better future. She taught her parents the improved agricultural methods she learned in the test garden at school, as well as handwashing and proper latrine use. Most valuable of all, the young girl living in a traditional village taught her parents about her rights as a child.

“I have the right to a birth certificate, to education, to access health care, to play, and to live with my parents,” she said. “I have the right to have a voice.”



Dominique teaches more than reading and writing: he also teaches his students about hygiene, sanitation, the rights of children, and much more.



FIOVANA supports 120 primary and secondary public schools. Six hundred teachers and parents have received training and tools from the project.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ADRA would like to thank the following people for their participation in the FIOVANA project.



ADRA International

(From left to right)

Tinotenda Muvuti
WASH Technical Advisor

Rachel Beagles
Senior Business Development and Climate Advisor

Yemisi Songo-Williams
Director for Collaborative Learning

Fahim Safi
Senior Technical Advisor for MEAL

Natsayi Nembaware
Senior Technical Advisor for Nutrition

Fred Opuni-Mensah
Senior Program Manager

Alejandra Lopez
Program Officer

Afia Agyekum
Agriculture & Livelihoods Advisor

Emanuel da Costa
Director for Program Implementation

Hery Henrisse
Associate Director for Program Finance Management

Guillermo Lizarraga
Senior Director for Program Effectiveness and Impact

Davidson Highfill
Senior Advisor for Agriculture

ADRA Madagascar

Acevedo Martinez Luis Miguel
Country Director

Ravoninjatovo Mireille
Associate Country Director

Nweneka Chidi Victor
Senior Programs Director

Chitesah Loveness
Associate Programs Director / Business Development Manager

Razafindraiibe Veronirina Florence
Senior Sustainability Director

Ramiandrisoa Luc Nirinantenaina
Finance and Budget Manager

Phillip Annie Sylvie
Operations Team Leader

Ramiadanarivelo Onja Tatamo Razanadrasoa
Internal Audit Leader

Lanto Ramamonjisoa
Human Resources Team Leader

FIOVANA (ADRA)

Joseph Menakuntuala
Chief of Party

Jean-Marie Byamungu
Deputy Chief of Party

Yolisa Sarah Mashologu
Strategic Learning Lead

Anthony Augustus Mainoo
Agriculture and Market Lead

Rasolofohery Yves Mampionona
WASH Lead

Tafangy Ambinintsoa Nirina
Health and Nutrition Lead

Solo Herimampionona Teofilo
Resilience Lead

Rakotoarinivo Solofotiana Eric
Impact Investment Fund Manager

Zily Jacques Hebert
Monitoring and Evaluation Lead

Zafy Martin
GYSD Lead

FIOVANA (PARTNERS)

Razanatafika Zaza Audoux
Executive Director, FIANTSO

Randrianarivo Harimanga Abel
Technical Director, FIANTSO

Elysée Ramamonjisoa
SBC Lead | Country Representative, FHI 360

Rason Arimin Adellys
Project Manager, AVSF



Thank you to the American people!

This book was developed by:

- Livatina Ranarison**
Design/Photography




Ando Tiambahoaka
Photography
- Michael Rohm**
Writer

Mireille Ravoninjatovo
Writing Support



Contact :

Tel : +261 37 23 872 77
Email : exec-sec.co@adra.mg

-  ADRA.Madagascar
-  adra_madagascar
-  /Adra.mg



ADRA MADAGASCAR
En face EPP Ambatomaro, BP 8218
- Antananarivo 101 -

www.adra.mg



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

