

**Update from the Fruits, Vegetables, and Environmental Education Program in
Madagascar, 23 August 2023**

Dan Turk, PC(USA) mission co-worker

Dear Friends,

The past few months have seen progress on many fronts.

Mango Palace at Mahatsinjo

Much is happening at the Mango Palace at Mahatsinjo, about 4.5 hours NW of Antananarivo. A new gravity-fed water system is being installed which will be used to irrigate over 2 acres of tangerine groves that have already been planted. The new water system should be completed within a month. A third building is currently under construction next to National Road no. 4 which is the main highway (2-lane, paved) that goes to northern Madagascar from the capital. In coming months a retail nursery will be set up on the west side of the new building. When the new building is completed by the end of the year the mango palace will begin selling trees. The new building will likely be inaugurated in March 2024.



New water reservoir (on left) at the Mango Palace



New building under construction at the Mango Palace

FJKM Seminaries

The annual field trip for the 60 plus students at Ivato seminary took place 27 and 28 April. They visited the tangerine groves at Antanetibe Ankazobe, the Mango Palace, and the small forest reserve at Ankafobe. Two of the student pastors at Ivato seminary did their theses on the work of the FVEE which I supervised. The graduation ceremony for the seminary students was 30 July at the Antsahamanitra ampitheater. As usual, the FVEE provided potted native trees and fruit trees for decoration.

Zo Andriana Tsiky Mitsinjo (Tsinjo), who has a degree in Agronomy from the FJKM university, has moved from the Mango Palace to the Ivato seminary where he is in charge of the FVEE nursery there. He is getting married in September. Another Agronomy graduate of the FJKM university, Edmond Randriamitovo, was installed in May as manager of the tree nursery at the Mandritsara seminary. That nursery should start selling trees around the end of 2023. Currently the first well at the Mandritsara nursery is being dug about 3 m deeper than before. A second well is in progress and the diggers have already found water. Edmond got married on 3 August.

FJKM Ravelojaona University

Thirty-three first year Agronomy students from the Ampandrana campus recently finished a week-long internship with the FVEE at Ivato. Three third-year students, 2 studying Agronomy and 1 studying Management, are doing 3-month internships at Ivato. About 40 second-year Agronomy students from Ampandrana on 21 August started a week-long internship at the Mango Palace.

Work in Southern Madagascar

-This year the FVEE has a project with Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP) designed to alleviate the prospect of famine in southern Madagascar. Most of the work is in collaboration with the southern-most synod in Madagascar. So far, as part of this project, 1 well has been dug, 1 water catchment system is almost completed, a pair of oxen have been purchased and a cart ordered to carry water, and 12,486 meals have been served to school children at 15 FJKM schools at an average cost of \$0.17 per meal. Also in conjunction with this project, 3 of my colleagues, Rolland Razafiarison, Germain Andrianaivoson, and Tsinjo, did a trip 13-19 July to attend the consecration of pastor Eric Rakotoarijaona at Betroka. Pastors from all over the southern-most synod came for the celebration and my colleagues took advantage to distribute 220 fruit trees (208 grafted mango trees and 12 citrus) to 13 parishes. Ninety- eight of the mango trees went to the FJKM church at Betroka where the church has over 100 acres of land where mangos and manioc are being grown. Several pastors are particularly excited about growing trees, particularly the pastors at Betroka, Jangany, Amboasary Atsimo, and Mananovy Manandrotsy. Seeds of *Acacia mangium* and nursery bags were left for starting nurseries of fast-growing trees at Betroka, Jangany, Amboasary Atsimo, and Ambovombe. The FVEE has agreed to train a nursery worker from Betroka so that the church there can produce grafted mango trees to plant on the church's land and to sell.



School meal at the FJKM school at Tsihombe



Water catchment reservoir under construction at Esanta in southern Madagascar.



At the FJKM church at Betroka. Some of the 220 fruit trees are in the yellow containers on the roof: 4 trees per container x 15 = 60 trees.

-During the past year, funds from presbyterian sources have been used to construct two new school buildings in the south (at Jangany and Ampanihy) with 2 others in progress (at a school NW of Taolagnaro and at Tsihombe). The FJKM has been sponsoring 7 students from southern Madagascar who are studying to become teachers at the FJKM teacher training school in Antananarivo. The first of these students, Fulgence Mandigne, graduated on 30 July and will be returning to the south to teach at Soatsifa.

Tree nursery at Ankaramena

The infrastructure for the nursery at Ankaramena (about 45 km W of Ambalavao in south central Madagascar) is now almost completed. The manager of the FVEE nursery at Fihaonana recently spent a month at Ankaramena providing technical assistance. Jeremia Ratsirahonana, who has been the nursery manager at Mandritsara, is set to move to Ankaramena in early September to be the nursery manager there after he gets married on August 24. The FVEE is in the process of planning to construct a house at Ankaramena where the pastor can live upstairs and Jeremia and his wife can live downstairs.

Tany Meva Project

This project funded by the Tany Meva Foundation is currently in its second year. The objectives for this project are for each of 350 farmers, half at Fihaonana about 50 km NW of Antananarivo and half at Ankaramena, to plant 400 fast growing trees (350 x 400 = 140,000 trees) and for each of the 350 farmers to plant 12 quality fruit trees. Also, at each of the two communities involved, 100 native trees have already been planted in public places which include schools, health centers, and other public spaces. In the past two months, seeds and nursery bags have been delivered to the 20 volunteer technicians, 10 at Ankaramena and 10 at Fihaonana, to grow fast-growing trees again this year to come closer to achieving the objective of 400 trees planted per participating farmer.

Other

- Ranomafana Arboretum: My colleagues and I helped the Ranomafana Arboretum put up 6 new panel posters printed on tarp material.



One of the new panels at the Ranomafana Arboretum.

-On Easter Sunday Germain and I did a training for a church in Antananarivo focused on planting and growing fruit trees and native trees for fruit and environmental education respectively.

Madagascar Mission Network

The Madagascar Mission Network sponsored a conference on the FJKM's education department with took place via Zoom on June 24. Videos from this conference can be found at the Madagascar Mission Network website. Recommended videos from this conference: [SCHOOL MINISTRY IN SOUTHERN MADAGASCAR - YouTube](#), [Addressing the Teacher Shortage in the South of Madagascar - YouTube](#), [Evidence Based Methods of Instruction \(EBMI\) is vitalizing Madagascar classrooms. - YouTube](#), [Turk Ministry Update 6/24/23 - YouTube](#)

Perspectives going forward

Elizabeth and I arrived in the United States on 21 August 2023 where we will be visiting churches while on interpretation assignment until mid-January 2024. We look forward to visiting many churches that we have not visited in person for many years.

The FVEE has plans to hold trainings for two representatives of each synod's Hazakazaka Masina committee as well as for the two volunteer technicians from each synod trained in 2022. This should be a way to better incorporate the work of the FVEE into the structures of the FJKM.

Items for prayer

-For the health of Rondro, wife of my colleague Germain Andrianaivoson; she suffered a stroke on 6 January 2023 and has been recovering very slowly since then but still does not have use of her right arm;

-For presidential elections scheduled for November;

-For the FJKM as it seeks to promote free and fair elections and participate in election monitoring;

-For 3 colleagues getting married in August-September;

-For Elizabeth and me as we do interpretation assignment in the United States through mid-January 2024.

Grace and Peace,

Dan