

# Mango Training for Tsarahonenana

## An Update from the FVEE Program in Madagascar

The Fruits, Vegetables, and Environmental Education (FVEE) program of the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM) conducted a training in growing and grafting mangos and other fruit trees for 50 people from the town of Tsarahonenana on 4 and 5 March 2021. Tsarahonenana is about 222 km NW of Antananarivo, Madagascar's capital city. At about 600 m elevation, Tsarahonenana has excellent climate for growing mangos. Already people in the town get some income from selling mangos along National Road # 4, the main highway from northern Madagascar to Antananarivo. By growing selected mango varieties from among the world's best commercial varieties, the people of Tsarahonenana have great opportunity to increase their income and get on a path out of poverty. When Tsarahonenana becomes a production center for good mango varieties, people from other parts of Madagascar will want to get the mango varieties and the grafting techniques that go with them, thus helping to launch a revolution in mango growing that will increase food security and reduce poverty in many parts of Madagascar.



The training took place at the FJKM fruit center at Mahatsinjo, known as The Mango Palace, which is 27 km from Tsarahonenana.



The trainees learned and practiced 4 different grafting techniques: cleft, veneer and approach grafting with mangos and chip budding with citrus.



Each trainee did at least 1 graft of each of the 4 types of grafts. Some did 3 or 4 approach grafts.



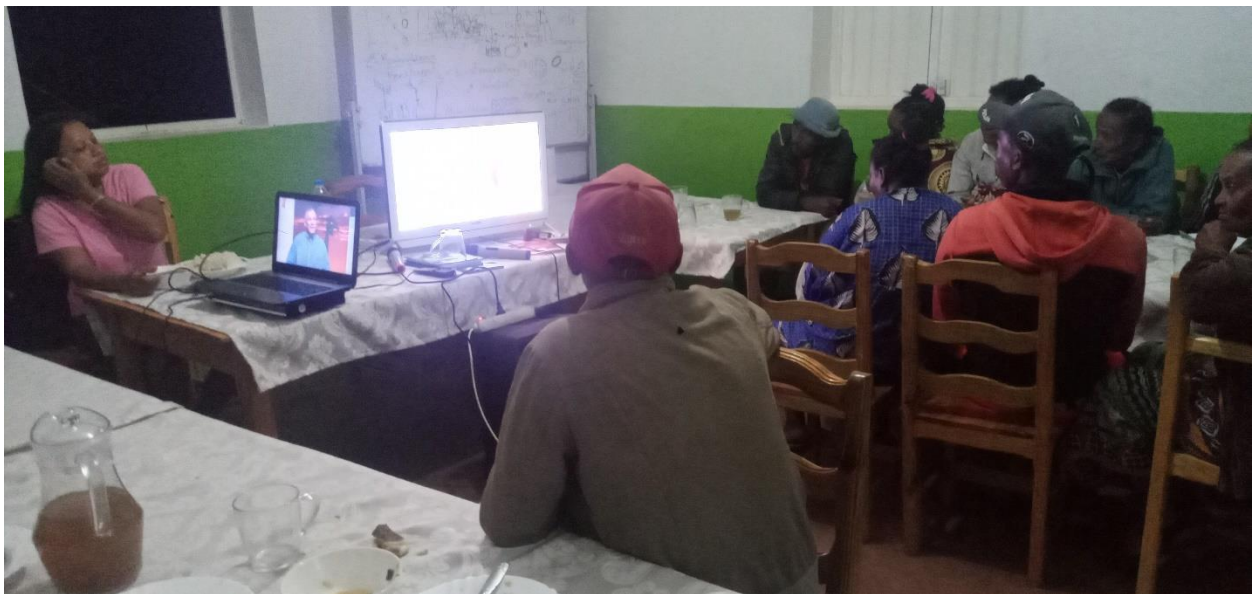
The trainees also learned to plant mango seeds in the nursery, to grow rootstocks in their own home nurseries, to plant fruit trees in the ground, and to care for fruit trees after planting.



The trainees each received a grafting knife, a watering can, a pair of snips, 5 m of plastic pots and plastic for tying grafts. Some also received sharpening stones.



A TV crew took footage of the training to show on national television. While at Mahatsinjo, the TV crew interviewed previous trainees. This is Rakotonoely, one of 3 pilot farmers from Tsarahonenana who previously received training at the fruit center in November 2019. He is holding a mango tree that he grafted himself at his home nursery.



In the evening, the TV crew showed footage from videos that they had previously done for national television about the work of the FVEE program. A generator was rented to be able to show the videos and to have lights.



The trainees have been challenged to each plant 10 mango seeds within a week after the training. The seedlings that grow from these seeds will be transplanted into pots to get at least 20 rootstocks per person. The trainees will graft these mango trees in late 2021 so as to get at least 4 new grafted mango trees per person. The FVEE will do follow-up on multiple occasions to help the trainees achieve these short-term goals as well as the longer-term goal of getting out of poverty by growing select mango varieties.



Early on the morning of the second day of the training, Rolland Razafiarison, FVEE technical director (pictured) took the TV crew to Tsarahonenana to get some 'before' footage of the town. He was impressed by the presence of poles made from endemic *merana* trees (*Brachylaena* sp., a tree-sized endemic member of the sunflower family that has very rot-resistant wood – FVEE technicians will work with people of the town to get *merana* trees into cultivation). Rolland and Germain Andrianaivoson, FVEE technical assistant, were the main trainers at the training, assisted by Odilon Ravelonjanahary and Romain Randrianarimanana. Note small solar panels for lights and charging phones in photo on lower left.



On 1 April, Germain Andrianaivoson delivered over 300 fruit trees to the training participants at Tsarahonenana. Each participant received 6 trees: 3 grafted mango trees, a 'Miho Wase' tangerine, a peanut butter fruit, and a jaboticaba. Four canistel trees were also delivered for planting at Tsarahonenana. Five trees will also be planted at Tsarahonenana's public primary school: a 'Haden' mango, 2 endemic palms (*Beccariophoenix alfredii* and *Bismarckia nobilis*), a jaboticaba and an endemic flamboyant tree for shade.



The mango trees to be planted at Tsarahonenana are from among the world's best commercial mango varieties, including 'Kent', 'Tommy Atkins', 'Van Dyke', 'Kensington', 'Mallika', and 'Valencia Pride'. Pastor Modeste Rasolomampianina (maroon shirt, back row) is the pastor of the FJKM church at Tsarahonenana. He serves several congregations and lives in the nearby town of Andriba. Germain Andrianaivoson is on the right (wearing mask).



The fruit trees and training have the potential to greatly improve the lives of the children in Tsarahonenana. The fruit growing efforts at Tsarahonenana will be expanded to include other people from the town who did not attend the training in March so that all who want to take part will be able to do so. The FVEE technical team will visit the town multiple times later in 2021 and beyond to help make sure that the planted trees survive and grow well, to keep up enthusiasm for the project, to provide more varieties of mangos such as 'Keitt', 'Kesar' and 'Orange Sherbet' as well as other fruit trees such as 'Meyer' lemon, and to help the trainees practice and improve their grafting skills. The FVEE will be monitoring closely the progress of this mango extension work to guide further steps for Tsarahonenana and for improving extension work elsewhere in Madagascar.

The training at Tsarahonenana was supported by funds from the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Central Florida Presbytery's Presbyterian Answer to Hunger (PATH) committee through 5 cent-a-meal donations, the Watersheds Foundation, as well as Presbyterian congregations and individuals.

--Dan Turk, PC(USA) mission co-worker, 13 April 2021; photos by Rolland Razafiarison, Germain Andrianaivoson and Pastor Niaina Raelison