Project Sekoly – Module 2: provision of two school buildings and one two-cubicle latrine for Manambaro Lycée, Anosy Region, southeast Madagascar

Prepared for
Trade Aid UK
Activities conducted from January 2015 to December 2016
1. Summary

Despite nearly half of the population being under the age of 15 (WHO, 2014), Madagascar’s education system is in a dire state. Prior to the 2009 political coup, Madagascar was making measurable progress towards the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education. However, political instability caused an 86% fall in national investment in education (World Bank, 2013), with disastrous results for the island’s children and young people. A lack of classroom facilities undermines the quality of education, making it harder for students to stay in school and progress with their studies. Without finishing education and gaining vital skills, young people are more likely the 87.7% of the population that live on less than 1.25 USD per day (UNDP, 2015).

Unfortunately, secondary education in Madagascar is prioritised a distant second to primary education; there are 22,000 public primary schools, 1,800 public middle schools, and just 250 public high schools (World Bank, 2015). An estimated 65% of young Malagasy people aged 15 to 24 are still illiterate (UNICEF, 2013), severely limiting their capability of securing professional and skilled employment. Indeed, failures in Madagascar’s education system have broad-reaching, intergenerational effects on the country’s economic and social progress; without education and skills Madagascar’s young people cannot drive the socioeconomic progress for themselves or their communities.

Education in the Anosy Region

Manambaro Rural Commune, located in the Anosy Region of southeast Madagascar, is particularly affected by the education crisis that is plaguing the country. In the Tolagnaro Administrative District there are only six public high schools, making it difficult – if not
impossible – for young people to access high school education. Compounding accessibility difficulties are the long distances from isolated rural areas that most of the district’s teenagers have to travel to attend school. To increase access to education, the regional education authority (DREN) started building Manambaro Lycée in 2011. Despite DREN’s efforts, when the school first opened in October 2012 it had no furniture, sanitation facilities or water point. Furthermore, with 16 middle schools included in its catchment area, the classroom capacity of only 200 was severely insufficient. While the Headteacher has arranged for a whole year group to be taught in the town hall, it is a solution that is neither sustainable nor satisfactory.

With the help of Trade Aid UK, SEED Madagascar (SEED) and its partner organisation ONG Azafady began to contribute towards solving these critical issues during the first Module of Project Sekoly – Manambaro. This included the construction of the first new school building, a latrine block and a well, alongside the establishment of water and hygiene management committees and delivery of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sessions.

Thanks to Trade Aid UK’s support of Module 2, SEED has pursued the construction of two further school buildings and a latrine block, and will continue to reinforce the sanitation and hygiene gains made during Module 1. Construction of the first Module 2 school building and the second latrine block are currently both close to completion, and continued monitoring of WASH practices has continued. This report outlines the activities conducted from January to December 2016.

*The building constructed during Module 1, and the first building of Module 2 now close to completion*
2. Activity Details

2.1. Preparation

Having established Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) and consulted with the educational authorities (DREN and CISCO) in Module 1, the groundwork for Module 2 was largely laid. However, as a new Mayor had been elected, a meeting was held with the Mayor and other local officials to ensure their support and motivation, before commencing the construction of the second school building the next day. In accordance with Malagasy culture, the correct timing for carrying out a traditional ground-breaking ceremony was also discussed, with the ceremony taking place immediately after the meeting.

2.2. Construction activities

Project Sekoly Module 2 includes the provision of two fully furnished school buildings and a new two-cubicle double vault ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrine block. Both school buildings will include two classrooms, each furnished with 20 benches, one blackboard, one teacher’s desk and chair, one cupboard and one shelf.

For each phase of Sekoly, SEED ensures that the local population is closely involved in the construction process. Local community members in Manambaro cleared the site and helped unload the trucks transporting the materials necessary for construction. In addition, SEED recruited international volunteers from the award-winning ‘Pioneer’ programme, who provided precious support to the construction team, thus maximising effectiveness while providing valuable opportunities for cross-cultural exchange.

Unfortunately, the construction of the first school building and the new latrines for module 2 was delayed when Fort Dauphin, the capital of the Anosy Region, suffered a cement shortage throughout October 2016. As it was impossible to purchase cement during that period, construction did not proceed until the crisis abated in November.
The following sections detail the progress of the construction work since the start of the project:

2.2.1. **Module 2: First school building**

- Cement, wire and planks were sourced in Fort Dauphin and transported to the site at Manambaro
- Gravel, scaffolding, timber, rocks and bricks were sourced and transported from nearby villages
- Sand was sourced on-site initially and subsequently off-site from local villages, along with clay
- The site was cleared by volunteers from the local community
- The foundations were laid using concrete with metal bars to reinforce the foundations; due to the foundations being laid on a steeper gradient, more material was required compared to the school building previously built during Module 1
- Work began on the reinforced concrete pillars and brick laying
- The reinforcing concrete belt was installed above the windows
- The foundations of the floor were made using the common technique of rock weaving
- The walls were painted
- The roofing frame was erected and covered with a tin roof
- With support from the team of international volunteers, teachers’ cupboards were built using concrete and finished with wooden shelving and doors. Forty benches were built using sustainably-sourced timber, sanded and varnished

2.2.2. **Future activities**

SEED will return to the site to resume construction at the beginning of March 2017, with support from the team of international volunteers. The activities listed below will be completed:

- Blackboards will be built, painted and installed in the classrooms
• Cupboards will be built and installed in the classrooms
• The floors will be rendered
• Doors and windows will be reinforced to ensure durability
• Locks will be attached

2.2.3. Module 2: Second school building

Construction for the second school building will begin in May 2017, following the same method as for the first building.

What the Module 2’s school buildings will look like once complete (pictures of Module 1’s new building)

2.2.4. The two-cubicle double vault VIP latrine

The VIP (Ventilated Improved Pit) latrine is designed to have a ‘scent’ pipe from the pit to above the roof of the building. Air is drawn up the pipe from the pit and fresh air is drawn into the pit from the building, preventing offensive odours from entering the infrastructure. As open defecation has traditionally been practiced to limit the scent caused by ‘trapped’ faeces, this design element is invaluable for sustained behaviour change.

As with the school building, construction of the new latrine block was delayed by the lack of cement available in town. The following sections detail the new latrine block’s progress since the start of the project:

• Construction work began in April 2016, and ended in June 2016
• Items such as cement, wire, planks, tin roof, paint and nails were sourced in Fort Dauphin and transported to the site at Manambaro
• Sand and water were sourced onsite
• Gravel and scaffolding were sourced and transported from a nearby village
• An elevated latrine pit was built above ground from breezeblocks and covered with a concrete platform which formed the floor of the latrine
• Walls were erected behind and on the side of the latrine block to build separate urninals for girls and boys
• Breezeblock walls for the cubicles were built and painted for durability
• WASH murals were painted on the new latrine, and the latrine from Module 1
• Concrete steps were built up to the latrine platform
• The roof was painted
• An elevated concrete platform designed by one of the international volunteers was built at the back of the latrine block for the girls’ urinals. The slightly elevated platform is there to ensure that urine will go directly into the evacuation hole

2.2.5. **Future activities**

• Latrine doors will be installed and painted; locks will be attached
• Vault doors to access the pit will be sealed

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2.3. **WASH activities:**

Before Project Sekoly was initiated in April 2015, the school grounds of the Lycée were heavily affected by open defecation (OD). During Module 1, SEED’s WASH Community Liaison Officer (CLO) delivered WASH sessions to students in all three year groups. This has had a major impact on WASH behaviour at the school ever since.

Monitoring visits showed that despite significant progress in terms of latrine use and maintenance, low levels of OD occurred at the beginning of the school year. While the school was not completely OD free, further investigation and meetings with the Headmistress and a member of the sanitation committee showed that it was new students
that were openly defecating, and not those who had participated in SEED’s WASH sessions. New students at the school come from a wide geographical area that includes rural communities with non-existent or underdeveloped sanitation facilities. With such students often unfamiliar with latrines or their appropriate use, low levels of OD are to be expected at the beginning of school year.

With the gradual institutionalisation of latrine use, it was reported that incoming students are quickly learning how to use, clean and maintain the latrines on a daily basis. These achievements can be accredited to the highly motivated Lycée Headmistress and staff, who have shown strong commitment to WASH education. At the beginning of every school year, the Headmistress now announces the rules surrounding latrines and explains the reasons behind their use. She also runs WASH classes herself for all of the new students at the Lycée, preventing them from reverting to OD throughout the school year.

The school’s commitment to positive WASH behaviour is also reflected by the maintenance of the well located on school grounds. Over the summer holidays, school staff found that the well had been broken by community members, who had been frequently using the well to collect water. Immediately before the start of the school year, well maintenance committee members dismantled the well and discovered a break in the internal mechanism. They subsequently repaired the cracks without support, facilitation or prompting from SEED.

Furthermore, students have taken initiative to improve hygiene at the school. During Module 1, SEED’s CLO introduced a system of tippy-taps to make it simple for students and staff to wash their hands after latrine use. A cheap, low-cost system, they consisted of water bottles cut in half, with small holes pierced at the bottom to let the water through. These bottles were originally tied to a fence with a rope, and were frequently played with by younger children from the local community. The students have developed a sturdier design
by attaching the bottles with wood instead of rope, thus discouraging younger children from playing with the devices.

Such independent action from school students, staff, and management and maintenance committees are a ringing endorsement of SEED’s approach to sustainably improving school sanitation.

From left to right: Mr. Bruno, sanitation committee member; Mr. Daday, well committee member; Lomba, ONG Azafady’s head of construction; Mrs. Yvonne, Manambaro Lycée headmistress; Mrs. Angéline, FRAM president

2.4. Future WASH activities:

Frequent WASH assessment and education sessions will be conducted until the end of Project Sekoly Module 2. Emphasis will be placed on capacity boosting for schoolteachers providing them with enhance skills for WASH education themselves, with a particular focus on reinforcing latrine use.
3. Case Study

Madame Angéline: Manambaro Lycée FRAM President

Madame Angéline is the FRAM President of Manambaro Lycée – the highly motivated parent’s association. She was elected by the FRAM in January 2015, and has since been representing the parents of the students at Manambaro Lycée. Having children who are currently studying at the Lycée helps her relate to the issues experienced by students and parents. Developing the school and improving access to education for the students has always been a great challenge in Manambaro. Before Project Sekoly, the students faced many obstacles hindering their educational progress and attainment. There was a lack of access to drinking water, the students and staff had to resort to OD, and the lack of classroom space available affected the students’ ability to study and perform well during their final Baccalaureate exams. Prior to SEED and ONG Azafady’s involvement, Madame Angéline had to bargain with the Commune Authorities to borrow any space available from a local women’s association.

Madame Angéline believes that Project Sekoly has been highly beneficial for the students at the Lycée. Hygiene behaviour has drastically improved, and she is happy that the school now has access to a functioning well, which prevents students drinking from contaminated water. One of the favourite parts of Madame Angéline’s role as FRAM president is to motivate the children to go to school. As such, she is particularly excited about the new school buildings constructed throughout Modules 1 and 2 and the increased capacity they will bring.
4. Conclusion

Project Sekoly Manambaro is progressing well at the Lycée as it becomes a safer, more sanitary learning environment with more space to enable teenagers come to school and get the qualifications they so desperately need.

The facilities have been managed and maintained effectively and proactively. This is illustrated by the fact that the well was repaired independently without SEED’s support, and by the initiatives taken by the students to improve the hand-washing facilities. SEED’s most recent WASH assessment showed that while the site is not free of OD, signs of excretion on school grounds are minimal. OD is expected to decrease as the year passes, following WASH education targeted at the incoming students to encourage sustained and hygienic latrine use and maintenance.

While sustained sanitation behaviour change is a challenging goal, Manambaro Lycée is highly motivated and is setting the example for the rest of the community. The students, staff and management and maintenance committees have demonstrated throughout this reporting period that they are committed to ensuring pupils have access to clean water, well maintained facilities and learn in an OD free environment. Their actions have underlined the value of building community capacity, and ensuring that people are empowered to affect and sustain positive change.

Construction activities on the first school building of Module 2 will be finished by April 2017. Over the next decade, the two extra school buildings afford the opportunity for an extra 1,600 young people from remote rural communities to attend high school and gain the key Malagasy Baccalaureate qualification. This will enable individuals the opportunity to fulfil their potential, and improve chances of securing formal employment. On a broader level, community capacity will grow along with an improved human resource base that is better able to tackle the stark challenges faced by the region as it works towards socioeconomic development.
5. References


