



NEWS FROM MADAGASCAR

Providence Solidarity February 2017

Dear Friends, Family and Sisters,

Communication with our two Islands in the Indian Ocean was and is not so easy these last months: difficulties with internet connections and in Madagascar load shedding of electricity, so all the information could not arrive in time. That is the reason why our newsletters are a bit later than usual. But as every year it is with joy and gratitude that we send you some news about our different activities and projects for which your help and your support has been so precious. But first some news about the country

Economic situation

The Malagasy economy is gradually recovering and the medium-term prospects are encouraging. GDP growth should be expected to reach 4.1% in 2016, exceeding the average rate of 2.6% in the past five years. In 2016, economic activity was driven by the expansion of the tertiary sector, public works activities and the recovery of the primary sector, aided by favourable climatic conditions and rising vanilla prices. Controlling inflation and improving the external balance, thanks to a higher inflow of direct investment, have also reinforced macroeconomic stability. However, with an extreme poverty rate (of people who do not have the income necessary to meet their essential food needs) of 77.8% in 2012, Madagascar is among the poorest countries in Africa.

Social context

While Madagascar had made some progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the 2000's, the political crisis of 2009-2014 has been a major blow to these advances. Today, its health education, nutrition and access to water are among the lowest in the world.

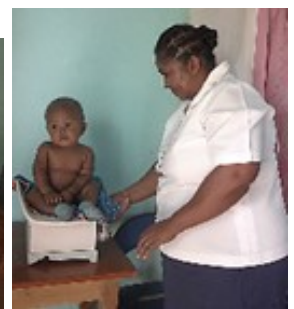
The country's development challenges are immense: 90% of the population live in poverty (lacking enough income to meet its basic food and non-food needs: clothing, energy, housing); GDP per capita is \$ 420, one child in two (under the age of five) suffers from chronic malnutrition; and the country is ranked 154 out of 187 countries for the year 2015 with regard to the Human Development Index.

Madagascar is also one of the ten countries most exposed to the effects of global warming. (World Bank)

Sisters and benefactors, together in the service of the population

MANDRITSARA

At the Dispensary, we receive approximately 311 patients per month, 258 of them come to see the doctor, 39 arrive with external prescriptions to get medicines and 14 patients continue their treatment. For the follow-up of babies, we welcome 63 children per month of which 27 receive milk because they are malnourished. The most common diseases are dermatosis, diarrhoea, malaria. There is a lack of water and therefore also of hygiene so that dermatosis and diarrhoea are increasing.



The literacy courses are attended by 71 pupils, supported by 3 teachers and a mother preparing the meals. The children come from very poor and needy families who cannot send them to school or who in their sorrow to find something to eat every day are not aware of how important it is for the future of their children. Since the beginning of December, because of the drought of the last few months, water is no longer reaching the tap near the literacy classrooms. It is at the Lycée John Paul II, provided with a well, that they can go and get the water they need. 75 children receive lunch every school day; these are children attending the literacy courses and others. Thanks to our benefactors we could carry out the necessary work for the maintenance of buildings



Social Activities - Prison



For social activities in general and in the prison, we continue to help families and prisoners with supplementary food, with clothing, medicines and other necessities.

We also take care of the hospitalised prisoners, both for medicines and for meals, because their families cannot do so, they are living too far away. In the women's quarter, we teach literacy, cooking, and life skills. A lady helps us with manual work. We are trying to stay in touch with the families of those who are far from home.
Photos: Preparing meal at the prison.



Lycée John Paul II

There are 8 classrooms and 381 students. Only 3 fully engaged teachers, 19 are part-time. This regularly leads to absences because their work at the Lycée is not their main job. We are lucky to have 2 aid workers, their help is very precious. We want also to tell you how much the well, financed by our benefactors a few years ago, is helping us, especially as we are going through a period of drought where the entire city lacks water, except us and a few other places. We try to share as much as possible. In the same way we are very grateful too for the generator so needful because the electrical load shedding does not decrease on the contrary!



The Collège Saint-Jean welcomes 633 students in 9 classrooms: 120 in the first year of secondary school, 164 in the second one, 143 in the third one and 206 in the fourth one. The team counts 17 teachers and 7 other people are in charge of the administration.

In previous years, a new building was built and in 2015 we received financial support for furniture and other equipment. In 2016 we were able to build a retaining wall to consolidate the whole of the school buildings.



MAHAJANGA

At the dispensary, the medical scan, the laboratory and the dentistry are functioning well and the daily consultations continue as usual. But people are reluctant to come and see a doctor, they are afraid they will not have enough to pay for medication, so they arrive when the disease is very advanced and sometimes it is too late. How many malnourished children, of 10 months, 18 months, 30 months come to see us! Prices of food and essential necessities increase continuously,



mothers are finding it more and more difficult to feed their children. Because of this the milk powder, to be purchased and distributed for the babies and children we follow up, is also increasing. Family visits in neighbourhoods are important to ensure that nutrition and health education is properly applied.



Literacy courses are this year attended by 128 pupils. Some of them are children abandoned by their parents and living at their grandmother's, some are orphans and some are children whose parents are separated and whose mother is alone to deal with the education of the children, the other children come from families which have no regular income ... Many of them arrive without having eaten in the morning and nearly nothing the evening before. Some of them have 6 to 7 kms. to walk before arriving at the literacy centre.



Social activities



We pay special attention to the elderly and lonely people as well as to the mentally ill who need a permanent treatment. We help them to get the necessary medication. Some families also need help for school supplies. Every week we share rice to alone living elderly people, people with disabilities and families who would otherwise not have enough to eat.



Activities in the prison: the total number of prisoners, 877. 706 are inside: 681 men including 25 minors, 25 women including 3 minors. 171 are outside: 35 in the Beloy criminal camp, 31 in the Mangabe criminal camp and 105 in service elsewhere. In general, the inmates have stolen, looted houses ... often to survive. An average of 30 to 40 sick prisoners are seen each day. With your help, we can contribute to the purchase of medicines and rice

BOANAMARY

Social activities: 21 people benefit from social assistance, including 6 elderly people living alone, 11 disadvantaged families and 4 disabled persons. Every fourth night we give them a supplement of rice. At Christmas, they receive meat and soap as well as candy for the children. In case of illness we help them to purchase medicines.



The School "La Providence" welcomes 181 pupils in this current school year. The 7 teachers do their best to make the children progress and have good results. One of our Sisters is the Head Teacher of the school. The family situation of the pupils has not changed much. Many of them are often alone at home because parents have gone fishing, others live on their own or with grandparents, often their grandma. From November to March, life is really hard because



for breeding purposes fishing is not allowed. Paying the even very low school fee is practically impossible, they only pray to survive! Our small school therefore needs financial support. Without your help, we cannot keep the school going and have enough money to pay the teachers. Since all the classrooms are occupied and to facilitate the work an office for the headmaster and for all that concerns the administration is being built.



The cooperative "Ezaka": 28 people work at the cooperative: 17 men and 11 women including two Sisters. There are two couples among them so 25 families earn their living thanks to the different activities. We have 8 hen houses or coops, 7 with 1000 hens and one, 500 hens. We grow corn and decorticate rice. We also have moments of reflection together and a small outing each year.



MAROVOAY

Social assistance is given to patients who cannot afford to buy their medicines, too expensive at the pharmacy, so we are able to collaborate with the health centre on the other side of the town. We also have a few people who need continuous treatment, food supplements. Visiting people who are alone and in need is also an important part of our social activity.



The community farm with the breeding of laying hens has also some pigs now. The purpose of this farm is to be a support to meet the substantive needs of the Sisters.

The two wells and water towers financed by our benefactors in former years are vital to the community and the farm.



ANTANANARIVO

Centre *Betania Ankasina*:



The primary school counts 555 pupils, 2 classes per level. The literacy courses are attended by 59 children. All these children receive lunch at the canteen and other children from very needy families of the neighbourhood are joining them for the meal. 800 meals are served every day. There is also the *Hay Kanto* project with the method: "I play and learn" which helps our pupils to acquire more and better knowledge.

Social activities

There is also a follow-up of schooling: the centre offers a kind of scholarship to take care of 130 young teenagers so that they can continue their studies. Before that they attended the Primary School "*Betania Ankasina*".

Social workers work hard : more than 400 families benefit from a follow-up in the Ankasina neighbourhood. .

Health care

Every month 299 patients come to the health care centre. The children present at the centre are given priority, but also their families and people living in the neighbourhood come for treatment. The vaccinations are also an important part of the activities.



The Good Samaritan Community: ANYMA Social Centre, Pharmacy, Chaplaincy, Oncology Service ...

These words show us very well where the Sisters are engaged: welcome service at the Social Centre, responsibility at the pharmacy. Those two activities are a part of the NGO ANYMA. They also participate actively in chaplaincy and social activities. A Sister works in the oncology department.

Below you have some photos of the children who were welcomed at the Social Centre during their treatment. You can see the results of the intervention they have undergone.



TANDILA – MORONDAVA



The mission of the community of 4 Sisters becomes clearer.

An important means of encouraging people to do something for their own development is to do it ourselves, the Bishop said. "This population learns more with the eyes," said the Father in charge of the Mission. So the Sisters started a small vegetable garden, there are hens and pigs.



Sick people continue to come to see the community. The service of the sick will be better and more functional when the building will be finished. The construction of this health care centre is already well advanced and now we must begin the process for the opening authorization. Some of our benefactors are preparing to finance the furniture and the medical equipment.

The Sisters were asked to take charge of two small schools, one in Tandila itself and one in Andrianalafotsy. At Andrianalafotsy the building is finished and at Tandila it is in progress.

The school in Tandila counts 145 pupils and in Andrianalafotsy 80 pupils.



In all the places where our communities are present, we also have our part in pastoral work and catechesis

Through all these activities, our attitudes and our way of being and acting, rooted in the charism of the Congregation, we try to be instruments of God's Providence who takes care of each one, especially the poor and those in need.

In concluding this letter, we wish to express our gratitude to each association, group, family and person who, through their help and friendship, make these activities possible and ensure their continuity.

With our best wishes for you and your loved ones.

Sister Denise Raharimalala (Regional)

Sister Brigitte Rakotoson (on-site project coordinator)

And all the Sisters of Madagascar.