



"Changing young lives in Madagascar for over 45 years"

Greetings from the staff and children of Akany Avoko! This year marked the 45th birthday of the centre and, with your support, we celebrated by investing in new facilities, strengthening our health, education and leisure programmes and recruiting new staff to improve the quality of care that we offer our 120 children and young people. Whilst we couldn't possibly mention *everything* that we've done over the past year we'd like to share some of the highlights with you.



Steve & Hardy retired as Directors in 2007

The team. 2007-2008 saw some significant changes in Akany Avoko's personnel. Akany Avoko's much loved Directors Steve and Hardy Wilkinson retired after over 40 years caring for children and young people in Madagascar. In February 2008 Ireneé Rajaona-Horne also returned to the UK after a decade of service to Akany Avoko. She has joined Money for Madagascar where she continues to do amazing work on behalf of Akany Avoko and many other Malagasy organisations.

Mme Lalaso has done an incredible job taking over the role of Director at the centre, bringing with her new ideas, enthusiasm and over 15 years of experience. I have the privilege of taking over the role of Project Development Manager from my cousin, Ireneé.

Through 2007 and 2008 we obtained funding which allowed us to invest in several new staff to fill key roles. A counselor, a doctor, an Information Technology teacher, a careers officer and an additional social worker have all joined the team, making a huge difference to quality of the children's lives and futures.



Lalaso

The Akany Avoko staff team

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Education. Our mission at Akany Avoko is to ensure that every child and young person is given the opportunity to reach their full potential. Education is critical to this vision and, this year, your support ensured that 120 children were given the kind of education that is their right. Our kids responded by grasping this opportunity and achieving incredible results. Our pre-school programme went from strength to strength, ensuring that our under-5's enjoyed the best possible preparation for formal education whilst our on-site primary school amazed us again with a third consecutive 100% pass rate for the children sitting their secondary school entrance exams. Julianna and Jessica continued the winning theme by passing their GCSE equivalent exams whilst Hasina, Volatiana and Mampionona are, at the time of going press, awaiting the results of their Baccalaureate. Akany Avoko is also incredibly proud to have four students in further education and university – Ninà (training to be a hospital laboratory technician), Fabie (about to qualify as a social worker), Manana (completing a diploma in tourism) and Mika (studying for a degree in Accountancy). A university education is very expensive in Madagascar; it is your kindness that has made these young people's dreams come true. As well as performing inside the classroom, Akany Avoko's young people have been busy making an impact in the workplace. 17-year-old Hasina spent a very successful work experience in a legal office in Antananarivo – so successful she has been offered a job when she completes her education. Manana is also mid-way through a placement at an international tour agency. These young people have worked unbelievably and overcome many obstacles to get where they are today. We hope that you feel proud to have contributed to their success.

Health. Providing a nutritious diet, and medical and dental care for every child at the centre is another commitment that Akany Avoko is able to make thanks to your support. In 2007-2008 every child arriving at the centre was screened and treated for pre-existing medical conditions. Every child had a dental examination and necessary treatment. In addition we were able to invest in new mattresses, bedding and mosquito nets to help improve health and hygiene. The generosity of our donors also allowed us to ensure that every child received a balanced diet that including fresh vegetables, protein, milk and fruit.

Investing in Akany Avoko. Having been successful in attracting a number of significant one-off grants Akany Avoko has made several investments this year to improve aging infrastructure, reduce running costs and to help bolster our income generating ability. In January 2008 we completed the construction of three rainwater collection facilities, which, in the rainy season, allow us to use rainwater to supply all the showers and washbasins for the main centre, childcare centre and primary school. With the assistance of the EU we were also able to purchase a new minibus to replace "Soixante-Deux" our beloved but decrepit 20-year old Toyota. And thanks to a grant from MfM we were able to rewire 11 buildings.

We also invested in our income generating projects - which provide both an income for the centre and vocational training opportunities for our young people; We built a new house for our chicken rearing project, constructed new basins and drying facilities for our papermaking operation, improved our café, boutique and kitchen, and also to completed the construction of a new wood and metal workshop. This year our income generating projects have gone from strength to strength. Our café attracted tourist visitors and also hosted special lunches for local businesses and NGO's. Our screen-printing workshop has also done very well., producing and selling hundreds of t-shirts. Finally, thanks to an overseas grant, we were able to commission a professional film to be made about the work of the centre to assist in publicity and fundraising.

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Moving On. Helping the young people of Akany Avoko to move on to successful lives outside of Akany Avoko is perhaps the most important part of our work. This year our “Habitat” project allowed another 10 young people to build their own homes on land purchased by Akany Avoko. Donors who helped to buy new land for future graduates secured the future of the project.

This year we have focused a great deal of energy and resources on our programme for helping young people to return to society. This included the formation of a team to plan for and monitor the reintroduction of every young person leaving the centre. We have drafted a plan for every person over the age of 16, stating clearly the education, training and financial support we believe to be necessary for their future. We need help in funding these plans and helping young people begin independent lives. Please contact us if you are interested in sponsoring someone’s reintegration into the community.

I would like to share with you three examples of children and young people who have made a successful return to the community after living at Akany Avoko:



Tsiry & Faniry were placed with us in 2002 because their destitute mother was unable to cope. They returned to live with their mother 3 years ago and have continued to receive support from Akany Avoko to help meet their food and education bills. They recently came to visit us and were in great health. Even better news is that Faniry has just passed her secondary school entrance exam.



Sahondra was placed at Akany Avoko at the age of ten after being severely beaten. This year she has taken over as manager of the Akany Avoko screen-printing workshop. Now 19, Sahondra has left her past behind her and is a confident, helpful and trustworthy young woman on the verge of independence.



Sandy arrived destitute at Akany Avoko 12 years ago. She has now built her own house and moved out of the centre. After studying for a diploma in Information Technology she has just been recruited as a computer teacher. She is now trying to help sisters and her aging alcoholic father.

Fun!! As you, our friends, well know, fun, games and constructive leisure activities play a huge part in the life of every child at Akany Avoko. This year every child had the chance to participate in soccer, swimming, volleyball, traditional dance, foreign language and computer lessons. Our dance group won a first prize in a national dance competition, and our soccer team also struck gold winning the cup in a local football tournament. This year we were also able to take every child in the centre for a fun packed holiday to the North West coast of Madagascar. For children with traumatic backgrounds, such positive experiences are vital in helping them leave the past behind.

As you will all know, at Akany Avoko we never miss out on an excuse for a party and the last year has provided many opportunities for celebration. Friends of Akany Avoko made Christmas and New Year very special by funding delicious festive food and drinks and, in January 26 of our children took a very important step in their spiritual development when they were baptized in our local church. Later in the year we celebrated Akany Avoko’s 45th birthday with a big party at the centre. Friends of Akany Avoko were invited to enjoy a meal with the children and were treated to song and dance performances by Akany Avoko’s kids and staff. Speeches by senior members of the FFPM Church,

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praised the dedication of Steve and Hardy in turning Akany Avoko into the thriving community that it is today.

Visitors. Akany Avoko was delighted to receive many visitors through its doors in 2007 – 08. Amongst them were Glenys Kinnock MEP (a patron of Money for Madagascar), Jean-Claude Boidin (the European Union Ambassador to Madagascar) and Hilary Bradt (Author of Bradt Travel Guides). Hilary Bradt is also a patron of Money for Madagascar and a great friend to Akany Avoko so we were delighted to hear that she has recently been awarded an M.B.E. for her “services to the tourist industry and to charity”. 2008 also saw group visits from friends old and new including the Presbyterian Church of America, the Penrhys Partnership, the entire staff of Red Bull Holland (who descended for an unforgettable team-building day), two groups of volunteers from Lancaster Girl’s Grammar school and 45 Peace Corps environment volunteers who came to Akany Avoko for a training day. Last but not least, international volunteers played an enormous part in the children’s lives.

Helping Akany Avoko. There are more ways than ever to help Akany Avoko! As well as our existing child sponsorship and donation schemes you can now donate via our website

www.akanyavoko.com/helping_us.html .

A number of major retailers have agreed to make a donation to Akany Avoko for purchases made via our website <http://buy.at/akanyavoko> .

A range of gifts are also available from the Money for Madagascar website

www.moneyformadagascar.org including Christmas cards, a 2009 calendar featuring Akany Avoko and the NEW Akany Avoko promotional DVD. (DVDs also available from Irenée.)

You can also sponsor activities at Akany Avoko from as little as £1 a month by buying an “alternative gift”. Some of the activities referred to in this report, such as sports lessons, counseling, social workers and traditional dance, were made possible through EU funding which ended in June. We are currently looking for new sponsors for these activities, most of which cost less than £40 a month to run. Please email us if you think you can help. Finally, if you are interested in running a craft stall for Akany Avoko then hampers are available from Irenée Rajaona-Horne,

irenee@moneyformadagascar.org.

Thank you. Of course none of the work that we do at Akany Avoko would be possible without your generosity. We do our very best to reduce costs and make our centre more self-sustaining through our environmental and income generating projects. Nevertheless we are still dependent upon foreign donations for the majority of our funding. Every year we strive to improve the level of care that we offer destitute children and young people in Madagascar. Your support is vital to our work.

With love and gratitude from all of us here at Akany Avoko

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