

## News from Akany Avoko - December 2006

The past year has seen Akany Avoko burgeoning with life. At times the endless streams of new children to care for seemed quite overwhelming. In November we almost caved in under the financial strain but thank God many of you rallied to our rescue and now Akany Avoko is blooming again.

In total we now have 140 children, with a drastic increase in the proportion of small children. We now care for 65 babies and small children under 10 yrs old. The main reason for growing numbers is the national freeze on adoptions, which means that we cannot find new homes for the abandoned babies. Compounding this, other centres have refused to take any abandoned babies as neither the government nor adoptive parents are paying for their keep so the babies all come to us. It is true that babies are very expensive to care for. Milk formula alone costs £3 per day for one premature baby. Add to this day and night staff, to care for them, hand wash nappies, cook food and provide medical care and you are past £100 per month per baby! Typically the babies are underweight and sick.



Ginah fighting for her life in intensive care.  
At 20 months old she weighed just 3.5 kilos!



For example Ginah was recently in intensive care for 2 weeks. At 20 months old her weight dropped to 3.5kilos – the weight of a newborn! We almost thought we had lost her, her veins wouldn't support a drip any more and the doctors had little hope, but somehow she turned a corner and started to eat again. Thanks to a kind donor we were able to pay Ginah's £300 hospital bill. She is now 6.5kilos, 8 teeth have come through and she is standing up and starting to talk .

Thank God not every child is as fragile as Ginah. Although medical care is not the primary function of Akany Avoko, most of the children arriving here need medical attention. Most common problems result from malnutrition and poor sanitation prior to arrival at Akany Avoko. But we also have to cope with viruses and diseases like malaria which have been particularly prevalent this year. (For example we treated 250 cases of bronchitis and 130 cases of Malaria amongst our children this year.) Several children also needed surgery this year. Operations included a cleft lip, a perforated ear drum, removal of adenoids, removal of cists, an umbilical hernia and a teenager who needed major surgery to rectify her complete incontinence. To help us keep the children healthy we have an Indian nurse volunteering with us for 2 years. We depend entirely on donations of medicines and money to cover the children's treatment.

Apart from reinforcing our medical team, we have been making efforts to improve the quality of care in a variety of ways. These include improving our primary school and investing in preparation for independence.



September 2005 saw the opening of our new block of 6 classrooms. Numbers of primary school children studying at Akany Avoko had risen from 15 to 50 over the past 5 years. Classes were being held in corridors and even in the cow shed. Thanks to donations from the Kreitman Foundation and Casemir Chocolates we were able to build a new block of 6 classrooms, 4 primary classes, 1 language classroom and 1 IT classroom. The children clearly appreciate learning in a good environment as this year

we had 100% pass rate for the secondary school entrance exam (CEPE).

We have also been improving the training for the older girls. Finding decent employment in Madagascar is extremely difficult even for the most advantaged children. So equipping our teenagers for independence is no mean feat. This year we recruited new teachers for our domestic science programme including 2 Akany Avoko graduates. The programme now covers: cooking, dressmaking, healthcare, family planning, budgeting, literacy and numeracy, French and English, IT, gardening, & hairdressing. In the New Year we plan to add a careers adviser / business management teacher to our team.



Our vocational training program has been much enhanced by the recent opening of the 'Akany Avoko café'. Run by Akany Avoko graduates and staffed by the domestic science students, this provides real work experience as well as generating income to fund

the domestic science programme. Crafts are also on sale in the Café and Tours of Akany Avoko can include environmental or solar cooking or dance demonstrations.

To book email [akany.avoko@wanadoo.mg](mailto:akany.avoko@wanadoo.mg) or tel 00261 202244158. We thank Rainbow Tours, the Whitbreads and UNWG for helping to bring the café project to life. Since opening in July we have welcomed about 200 customers. We look forward to many more satisfied customers In 2007.



Of course not everyone will get a job in tourism. Girls who intend to be self-employed have joined our micro-credit scheme, where they are learning how to set up their own small business. Ideally their business plans will be mature when they leave Akany Avoko so they can take a small loan to start their new enterprise.

To further secure the future lives of our graduates we have developed a social housing scheme which we call 'Habitat'. Thanks to a donation from the Glass House Trust we were able to buy a plot of land which we divided into 22 plots of 120 square metres. In collaboration with 2 NGOs we have helped our young people to produce house plans and take out affordable loans to cover the building costs. So far we have built 15 houses. We are looking for new funds to buy the next plot of land for the next 15 Akany Avoko graduates. We would also love to build a water



tower and to power the little village with a wind turbine or solar panels both to save money and be a model us sustainability. We would be delighted to receive any support for this.

Preparing children for independence starts the moment they walk into Akany Avoko. That's not to say we don't want them to feel welcome! Instead we must work at every level: physical, educational, psychological, emotional and spiritual to help each child find their equilibrium and achieve their potential. We feel that some children are still held back by unresolved problems from the past. To this end we plan to recruit 2 counsellors and a part-time psychiatrist. We also want to further develop our expressive arts programme as we have found music, theatre, dance, art and sports really help the children to become more happy balanced individuals. Any support for this programme would be very welcome. Some people help by supporting activities whilst others prefer to sponsor an individual child. We are delighted to receive whatever help you can offer.

It is a constant challenge to try to meet the diverse needs of all our children. Thank you for your part in helping each child to reach their potential.

## How can I help Akany Avoko?

To make a donation please make a cheque payable to our UK registered charity account "**Money For Madagascar AAA**" with a note to say it is for Akany Avoko and send it to:

Akany Avoko, 14 Robinson Rd, Gloucester, GL15DL, United Kingdom.

Or

you can make a bank transfer directly to our Madagascar account:

**Account name & address** " *Centre de Reeducation FAFFIP* ", Akany Avoko  
*BP29, Ambohidratrimo 105, Madagascar.*

**Bank Address** Bank Of Africa, 3, Ave de L'independance, Soarano,  
Antananarivo 101, Madagascar.

**Bank Code** 00009

**Branch Code** 05500

**Account Number** 11318800007

**Clé RIB** 61

**SWIFT Code** AFRIMGMG

**IBAN** MGMG00009055001131880000761

If you would like information about our child sponsorship scheme or other ways you can help support the children at Akany Avoko then please email us on [akany.avoko@wanadoo.mg](mailto:akany.avoko@wanadoo.mg)

Sincerest thanks for your support, from all the staff and children at Akany Avoko.