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VSLA, ODF (Open Defecation Free) Commune, and Commune management: the birth of two entrepreneurs in Morarano gare



RANDRIAMAHARONIRINA Arthur and RANDRIANJANAHARY Tafitasoa Carlos



RANDRIAMAHARONIRINA Arthur in front of the cookie oven that he acquired thanks to the VSLA.

«The bamboo used for the furniture comes mainly from a field where the local population practiced open defecation.

Morarano Gare has become the first commune to be declared ODF in the Alaotra Mangoro region. Very dynamic, the town hall also took

the initiative to gather all 49 surrounding VSLA groups. The idea was to create a platform for exchange and discussion so that the VSLA groups all have the same vision. In case of a dispute, for example, the town hall acts as a mediator.

It is within this framework that private initiatives were born.

RANDRIAMAHARONIRINA Arthur and RANDRIANJANAHARY Tafitasoa Carlos have been members of the VSLA Tanjona group since January 10, 2020. They lived mainly from the sale of charcoal and struggled to make ends meet.

After joining the VSLA group, however, and for the first time, they were able to save more and increase their capital to start two small businesses. The first one is to acquire an artisanal oven to produce cookies. The second focuses more on the production of bamboo furniture.

«We always wanted to start our own business, but it was impossible due to lack of funds. We had nothing at the beginning, but joining VSLA changed everything. To be honest, we still had some apprehensions

at first. For example, we were afraid that the money we invested would disappear. To reassure us, the RANO WASH team came often and made us aware of the many advantages. For example, the local promoter and the field agent shared that the money invested can only be used by VSLA members. No third party can touch it. We had no doubts and decided to take the plunge. In retrospect, there were only benefits.

«We would like to start by offering our furniture in the surrounding districts, and why not even export it?»

Arthur and Carlos, father and son, are determined to expand their business in the long term. «We would like to start by offering our furniture in the surrounding districts and why not, even export it?» said RANDRIAMAHARONIRINA Arthur.

The bamboo used for the furniture is mostly from a field where the local population used to defecate before the arrival of RANO WASH. Since the ODF celebration in Morarano Gare, this field is only used to cultivate bamboos which contribute to a considerable income for the two entrepreneurs.

The activities of RANO WASH have contributed to the capacity building of the Morarano Gare teams and sensitize the local population to join a VSLA group.

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Water technology developed by Sandandrano: unexpected impacts on the environment and the living conditions of households



Aerial view of the hybrid dam that serves 10,000 people in Foulpointe, Atsinanana Region

In 2010, the USAID funded project Santénet provided project management support for the commune of Foulpointe. The support consisted of capacity building of the Kaominina Mendrika Salama in drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene.

In 2011-2012, the city was supplied with drinking water for the first time under the Public-Private Partnership. However, the existing borehole, which dated back to 2002 and was salvaged from unfinished projects, had reached the limits of its capacity. This saturation was already expected to occur around 2019.

Before the arrival of RANO WASH, the local population in Foulpointe had always experienced a shortage of water, especially around vacations. Local access to water was insufficient, and 40% of the population consumed water drawn from rivers or wells.

«We noticed that access to water was very limited. The small systems in the fokontany are not enough. Not enough for the fokontany of Ambohimamarivo, Antaratasy, Ambohimarina,» says Ranaivoson, mayor of Mahavelona in Foulpointe.

In order to improve access to drinking water, the USAID-funded RANO WASH project has initiated the construction of a water conveyance system that currently serves 10,000 people and will guarantee access to water for 17,000 inhabitants of Mahavelona by 2038.

The project uses a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model in which the private sector plays the role of constructor, investor, and water system manager.

In terms of technology, the RANO GASY concept or Rapid Approach to New Opportunities with Gasy System, implemented by Sandandrano, is a private initiative to boost the Rural World towards rapid and sustainable development based on water control. It considers the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the General State Policy (GSP).

This concept is anchored around the construction of a «hybrid dam» in earth and ferrocement. The dam at Foulpointe is 170 m long, 4 m high, and contains 47,000m³ of water covering 2.3 HA of the surface. This type of dam even takes into account climate change and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).



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Aerial view of the Sandandrano offices with the surrounding drinking water infrastructure

In addition to the provision of drinking water, there have been many positive externalities due to the construction of the drinking water supply system by the RANO WASH project. While the local population used to harvest rice only once a year, it is now quite possible to harvest twice in the same year.

There has also been a strong development of fish farming and a great change in behavior. Today, thanks to the RANO WASH project, the surrounding forest has returned and many types of animals and birds. The local people who used to cut down trees for charcoal have become the very protectors of the forest because they grow cloves, vanilla, and other fruit trees.

Foulpointe is considered a training site for the RANO WASH project. Project staff, staff of the project's intervention Communes and companies already working as Manager-Investor-Constructor or wishing to engage

in this profession have undergone practical training on site to learn the existing construction technologies and the PPP model adopted with a water service coverage of 63% in June and a Commune, a managing company and committed communities each assuming its role.

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SUCCESS STORY

Involvement and collaboration between decentralized structures in the management of a conflict with the local population over the construction of a new drinking water supply system in Soanindrarinny



Riot of the local population in Itendro, Vakinankaratra Region



Involvement and collaboration of different local actors to resolve the conflict

Itendro is a village in Soanindrarinny, district Antsirabe II, in the Vakinankaratra region.

To improve access to drinking water in the town, the RANO WASH project is initiating the construction of a hybrid dam.

At the time of the implementation of the work and at the very beginning of the work, the local population of Itendro rises, threatening the very life of the workers for the construction of the dam. «We will never give up our source of drinking water,» the inhabitants declared.

It was the beginning of a long series of discussions between the local population, the regional manager, the district chief, the surrounding mayors, the representative of the contractor, and the regional coordinator of the RANO WASH project in Vakinankaratra.

With signs, the Fokonolona of Itendro categorically refuses any discussion. «We do not have enough water from this source, let alone if we share it with other Fokontany» was their main argument, according to Marcelin RANDRIANTSITOHAINA, regional coordinator of the RANO WASH project in Vakinankaratra.

With the help of local actors, Marcellin decided to prepare several documents and files to convince the local population of the feasibility of the dam construction project. The inhabitants began to listen but remained firm in their position.

It was only during the second meeting with the District Chief and the local population that the information was passed on to the RANO WASH project coordinator: the refusal of the population was not related to technical problems but came from a long tension between the Soanindrarinny and the town of Itendro.

In 2010, two young people from Itendro were victims of a popular judgment and were burned alive for banditry and terrorism in Soanindrarinny. This explains the tension for the last 11 years. From this fact comes the idea that «It would be impossible for Itendro to share its water source with the commune of Soanindrarinny.

Despite the difficulties and tensions, Marcelin has a clear vision: «to make the dam a source of reconciliation between Itendro and Soanindrarinny.

Tensions continue, and even though the mayor has gathered traditional leaders and even some gendarmes, the local population still refuses; discussions can go on from 9 am to 6 pm to finally come to nothing.



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A man stands still in the water to show how much he refuses to give up the water source in Itendro

The mayor even wanted to give up and proposed another location for the construction of the dam. The population now demands the presence of the deputies and a traditional sacrifice of a zebu for reconciliation.

A third attempt was organized, this time with the arrival of two deputies. Just before their arrival, some ill-intentioned actors persuaded the local population to refuse any discussion once again. When the deputies arrived, the entire population of Itendro, men and women alike, were drunk; it was impossible to establish any discussion. The deputies, with other actors, had returned empty-handed.

After many attempts, this time with a new parliamentary assistant, the president of the association of mayors, and a sacrifice of a zebu, the local population gave in. The parliamentary assistants who had participated in the previous exchanges then pleaded with the deputies, and the latter agreed to finance the cost of the zebu for reconciliation.

«It is easy to tell the story like that but having fought on the front lines is another matter,» said Marcelin, relieved that the reconciliation has been achieved and that the work has finally begun and is currently at 70% completion. The provisional reception of the works will take place on November 29, 2021

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SUCCESS STORY

The major challenges of becoming an ODF (Open Defecation Free) commune: testimonies of the First Deputy Mayor and a field agent in Bejofo, Alaotra Mangoro Region



Behavior change begins at an early age



Celebration of the ODF Bejofo commune, Alaotra Mangoro Region

Bejofo in the Ambatondrazaka District, Alaotra Mangoro Region is now an ODF commune.

According to the First Deputy Mayor, Henri RAKOTOMALALA, the local population has been doing its best for the three years of collaboration with RANO WASH.

The beginnings of the behavior change activities were difficult because open defecation has always been a common and traditional practice. It was «fady» or forbidden at the time to have a latrine and to «trap the feces».

Together with local promoters and field agents, the RANO WASH team began by gradually educating the population. It was necessary to emphasize the benefits of having latrines at all levels (health, economic, social). All the actors were involved, and the town hall of Bejofo was divided into four sectors of intervention. The RANO WASH team and doctors, traditional leaders, and even pastors all contributed to these behavior change activities.

«The sensitization started at the Fokontany level; we wanted to understand the opinions and expectations of the local population,» recalled Nicolas RANDRIATSILAVINA, field agent of Bejofo. It was only afterward that we reported to the OSCEAH, the SLC, and then to the town hall.

The commune encourages each household to have garbage bins while keeping their yards clean. Following this initiative, every Thursday morning is reserved for a general clean-up in the entire commune of Bejofo. The commune then decreed that open defecation was henceforth forbidden.

«Health is the first wealth, and it is by being in good health that one can fully contribute to development, for a real, sustainable development» recognizes the local population of Bejofo, and today, they are more than grateful for all the changes brought.

The ODF commune of Bejofo is a crucial step in achieving the goals that the Alaotra Mangoro region has set for itself: to become an ODF or open the defecation-free region by 2022.

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The management of the Ranomainty commune, Alaotra Mangoro region: the testimony of a young and very dynamic mayor



Celebration of the ODF Bejofo commune, Alaotra Mangoro Region



Celebration of the ODF Bejofo commune, Alaotra Mangoro Region

During the 25th anniversary of the Commune Ranomainty, District Amparafaravola, Alaotra Mangoro Region, the commune was consecrated as an ODF (Open Defecation Free) commune or commune without open defecation well as a Model Commune.

Of all the 51 communes in the Alaotra Mangoro region in collaboration with the USAID RANO WASH project, Ranomainty thus becomes the 8th ODF commune in the region. It is also the second model commune after the neighboring commune of Bejofo.

«In the past, we can say that the commune of Ranomainty was in a deep state of crisis,» reports Jeannot RANDRIANARIMBOLA, the young and very dynamic 31-year-old mayor of the commune.

«It was in April 2020 that we began the collaboration with RANO WASH. The commune has since experienced unprecedented growth and change,» says the mayor.

Thanks to the partnership with RANO WASH, the Local Consultation Structure has been fully established. It is a space for dialogue and consultation that has allowed the inclusive participation of all development actors. There has been more accountability and better cohesion to bring the commune of Ranomainty to its ODF status.

Changes brought about by RANO WASH also include the creation of the OSCEAH or Organization of Civil Society for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (OSCEAH), which has advocated for an increased budget for WASH.

Collaboration with the fokontany chiefs ensured that Ranomainty's ODF status was achieved. There had been strong opposition

from some Fokontany chiefs «are we going to be paid by you, Mr. Mayor or by the RANO WASH project?» recalls Mayor Jeannot RANDRIANARIMBOLA. «They do not understand that this is a state program under the aegis of the Ministry of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene; there should be no more criticism of this kind,» he continues.

These difficulties were finally overcome after much discussion, a clear vision, and well-defined strategies.

Today, Ranomainty has a budget for sanitation and hygiene. The local consultation structure meets every three months, and the local promoters meet monthly.

«All these efforts will be in vain if we do not manage to maintain the ODF status. From now on, all households must become model households; that is, they must respect the five key behaviors of sanitation and hygiene,» concludes the mayor. Today, supplying the commune with drinking water is one of the priorities and visions of the young mayor.

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Mauricia, a little girl blossoming thanks to drinking water



They are Elisabeth and Mauricia. Elisabeth is a single mother and Mauricia, her 9-year-old daughter who has Down syndrome. They both live in Mahatsara, in the commune of Ilaka Est.

Since the arrival of water in her home, Mauricia has changed a lot in her behavior. She can wash and even has her bucket to use. Her mother testifies that she has become more independent.

Mauricia's mother Elisabeth could never teach her disabled daughter much about hygiene because of the lack of clean water in her home. She spent more than 8000 ariary per month on the salary of the waterfetchers in addition to the clean water, whereas with the arrival of water in her home, she only spent 3 to 4 thousand Ariary, or half.

VOAMAMI : a great opportunity for Elisabeth's family

Thanks to her membership in VOAMAMI, Elisabeth borrowed 45 thousand Ariarys to buy a water connection for her house, thanks to the WASH fund of her association. A sum that she has already paid back every month. Since then, she does not have any more difficulty in meeting the needs of her daughter, who is learning little by little.



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Consecration ODF (Open Defecation Free) Andrainjato



VSLA in Parade



Handing over of pennant



Inauguration stele

The consecration of the Andrainjato Ambalavao commune was celebrated on September 25, 2021 with the presence of all the local actors who contributed to this success. A consecration is marked by the massive presence of village savings and credit associations or VSLA, which are 38 throughout the commune.

With the collaboration of the ATEAH or technical agents of water, hygiene and sanitation who raise awareness and even go door to door with local promoters for the respect of hygiene and good practices.

The municipality headed by the mayor has put in place a good strategy for household inspections. Internal competitions have been organized between the VSLAs to motivate them to raise awareness among their members. Thanks to all these actions, the commune of Andrainjato has achieved its goal of being an ODF Out Defecation Free commune

with its five fokontany, all of which are ODF verified. As confirmed by the head of the NGO MIARINTSOA, the projects are just passing by, but the rest of the works should be from now on the priority of the commune. The handing over of the pennant between the commune and the NGO MIARINTSOA that day marks the follow-up of the results and the perpetuation of the works that have already been done.

This is the result of a collaboration between the Ministry of Water, Hygiene and Sanitation, the region of Haute Matsiatra, the NGO MIARINTSOA, and the project RANO WASH. A ceremony marked by the inauguration of the ODF stele with the presence of all the entities mentioned above



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Androy, an example of rapid development thanks to the leadership of the mayor and his collaborators



People paying taxes



Infras Androy

Androy, a commune with a population well-motivated in the payment of taxes. During the fiscal years 2020 and 2021, 14 million Ariary of taxes were collected in the commune. Grandiose if we refer to the status of the commune.

Since his election in 2018, the mayor of the commune RANDRIANIRINA ALIJAONA has found a form of awareness and a new development strategy: the payment of taxes. Since then, meetings have been held between the mayor and his collaborators, including communal advisors, partners such as RANO WASH and its representatives. New structures such as local consultation structures and civil society organizations were created thanks to RANO WASH and implemented. During these actions, the objective is to convey the message that taxes will be used for the population's good in the development of everyone and the commune itself. The community meetings serve as a forum for exchange and sharing between the commune population and the administrations.

«Our strategy was to sensitize the fokontany chiefs and the village chiefs. We taught the population that taxes are mainly used to develop the commune,» explains the mayor.

As a result of sensitizations to the fokontany, various associations such as VSLA have been made during 2020 and 2021. The mayor was able to share his knowledge with his collaborators thanks to the training he received from RANO WASH. The 13700 inhabitants of Androy have seen their lives change, and they are directly involved in the development of their commune. Let us mention the projects in the fokontany: rehabilitation of bridges, painting of public schools.

Thanks to taxes, the materials for these works have already been bought and are stored in the commune's shed.

RANO WASH is currently implementing water systems through the PPP model. The company Mickael is the co-investor, builder and manager. Two Fokontany will have access to drinking water services through this intervention. The Commune, thanks to its increased capacity in resource mobilization, is negotiating with the Mickael Company to co-invest for the extension of services in two other villages not yet served.



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An individual sanitary block became a model in Mandritsara



A genius idea on the part of the local mason of the commune of Mandritsara, of the district of Betafo in the region of Vakinankaratra to have built a sanitary block different from the others.

Decorated with flowers, well painted, and built-in hard, the sanitary block of RAKOTOARISOA Jean Alfred has created thanks to the training he received from RANO WASH. «It is a great opportunity for me to have benefited from this training that has changed my life,» says Jean Alfred. After three years without a toilet for his family, he now serves as a model for the people of his village. At the entrance of

Proud of his work, Jean Alfred is currently receiving orders to create others for his neighbors. In one month, he receives an order for the total reproduction of his work. According to him, it is because of the well-respected hygiene norms that the inhabitants of his village are persuaded to sacrifice the same expenses as him.

Jean Alfred's neighbors who ordered his work do not care about the expenses, 500 thousand Ariary to have a nice sanitary block. Moreover, these new blocks embellish the village of ANKAHABABA and make it a model for all the other villages of the commune.



Caption: A neighbor who ordered the same model

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Tolotra, the young entrepreneur who succeeded in creating a start up thanks to training given by RANO WASH



Training of entrepreneurs vakinarakatra



Tolotra

From the top of his 21 years, TAHINJANAHARY Tolotriniaina Benjamin provides for the needs of his family. Becoming head of the family despite himself, Tolotra has already lost his father and is forced to take care of his brothers and sisters. Very concerned about respect for women, Tolotra works hard so that his sister can study and get a diploma, he told us. Moreover, to continue that: «Thanks to RANO WASH, he has the chance to blossom and to train».

At the beginning, the local seamstress of his commune of Ambalamahasoia, in the district of Lalangina, Haute Matsiatra, Tolotra, made washable mouthwashes during the periods of confinement in Madagascar. Activities that helped his neighbors fight against COVID 19 and sanitary napkins to destroy the taboos that girls dare not approach boys during menstruation periods. Tolotra himself sold the washable sanitary napkins to young girls in his high school.

Thanks to the various training in business and meetings provided by RANO WASH, Tolotra has succeeded in creating a start up and is now at the head of a small company composed of 4 dressmakers and 30 retailers.

Every 15 days, he manages to sell 1000 masks and 200 washable sanitary napkins, allowing him to feed a dozen families and his own family.

Tolotra, ambition in his veins

Ambitious, Tolotra never stops gaining experience. Having participated in the CL FY20 competition or local tailors in the Lalangina district,

he is a laureate. He has become the pride of his district: a young entrepreneur at the service of the community and the creation of jobs.