

A SAD LOSS

It is with sadness that we inform you of the passing away of Mitsinjo's President, Jean Noel Ndriamiary, on the 12th of February 2020.

Jean Noel was one of Mitsinjo's founding members and he dedicated many years of his life to protecting the forests around Andasibe. In the words of Yousouff, Mitsinjo's nursery manager and reforestation expert, *'Mitsinjo would not have progressed without his humour, his analytical skill and his capacity to lead, which was tragically impaired in the later months of his life. We will forever be thankful for what he achieved for our association, for his companionship and his jovial character'*.



Misaotra tanteraka Jean Noel. May you rest in Peace'.

We are confident that the Mitsinjo team will continue the good work that Jean Noel believed in under the guidance of the new Director, Lucie RAZAFINDRAMIADANA .

REFORESTATION SINCE 2015

Since MfM started working with Association Mitsinjo in 2015, we have been gradually increasing the area of restored forest around, Andasibe at a rate of about 10ha per year. Mitsinjo's reforestation work has provided vital employment opportunities for local people and helped to raise awareness of the value of the forests. By planting corridors to join isolated fragments of primary forest, this project has extending the habitat for many endangered species.



In the areas already planted, reforestation has brought immediate benefits to the land in terms of erosion prevention and water absorption. In the longer term, Mitsinjo's painstaking restoration technique provides the best conditions for the natural forest to regenerate. By using a mix of up to 60 carefully selected indigenous species, the Mitsinjo team harness the power of nature to complete the restoration process! By including a range of fast growing fruit trees, attractive to seed dispersers such as birds, fruit bats and lemurs, the Mitsinjo reforestation team ensure that wildlife is drawn to the re-planted areas, bringing in seeds from other plants in their faeces and facilitating the return of the natural forest. Restoration of natural forest is not a fast process but replanted areas have seen the return of key indicator species such as the Blue Coua and brown lemurs.

REFORESTATION AND LIVELIHOODS 2019-2020

MfM's reforestation work with Mitsinjo has always considered the needs of the local population and has emphasised ensuring local employment in reforestation, protection and ecotourism. This year, we are excited to be able to extend and develop our work in important ways.

New funds in 2020 (partly from the COVID 19 appeal) have made it possible to increase the annual level of planting to 20,000 trees (20ha) and to embark on a sustainable livelihoods project in the hamlets of Sahatay and Sahakoa, in the Torotorofotsy buffer zone.



Supporting the development of sustainable livelihoods in these isolated communities is vital for the long-term success of Mitsinjo's conservation and restoration efforts. 90% of the population living around the Torotorofotsy Protected Area are extremely poor and heavily dependent on the forest and wetland to meet their basic needs. Away from the eco-tourism hub of Andasibe village, they do not currently reap the obvious benefits of keeping the forest in tact. However, without their support for forest restoration and conservation, unsustainable subsistence agriculture, wildlife poaching and illegal logging will continue unabated, transforming this unique ecosystem into rice fields and destroying its rich biodiversity.

The rationale of MfM's 2019-20 project is to help families from these isolated and impoverished communities to engage positively in forest restoration, so that they have a stake in protecting the newly planted trees, and to develop improved agricultural practices which will increase their yields and reduce their need to put pressure on the forests. The project has three main strands:

Raising awareness of climate change and the importance of the natural ecosystems:

Community members have attended awareness raising sessions on climate change and the importance of local forest and wetland ecosystems for supporting human life. They have learnt about the unique value of their local environment and the long-term opportunities, such as eco-tourism, that arise from protecting the forest and the wetland.



Restoration of 20ha of denuded land, employing local people to plant and protect the forest:

Local people have been employed in the planting, maintenance and protection of indigenous trees giving them a positive stake in the future of the forest. 5 hectares have been planted so far this year. 15 more will be planted over the coming months.



Transporting seedling to the planting site



Locally employed tree planters



Planting out seedlings



Planting out seedlings

Training households in improved sustainable agricultural practices to reduce the need for slash and burn farming:

32 families, from the hamlets of Sahatay and Sahakoa, in the Torotorofotsy buffer zone, have benefitted from training in sustainable techniques for cropping and livestock raising, compost production as well as establishing tree nurseries, tree planting and forest restoration. Each family has received the seeds, plants and equipment needed to establish more sustainable and productive agricultural systems. The families are benefiting from on-going technical support. 430 fruit trees have already been planted by 23 families. 500 quick growing timber species trees will be planted later in the year. These will benefit the families by a) providing fruit as a source of nutrition and income and b) reducing the need to cut down the native forest for timber and firewood.

