Proceedings of the Inaugural Madagascar PHE Network Meeting

Antananarivo, 30-31 July 2014

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# Table of Contents

**Executive summary**  ................................................................................................................................. 3  
**About PHE in Madagascar**  ........................................................................................................................... 4  
**About the meeting**  .......................................................................................................................................... 4  
**Organisers**  .................................................................................................................................................. 5  
    - Blue Ventures .................................................................................................................................................. 5  
    - Voahary Salama ............................................................................................................................................... 5  
**Partner ministries**  ......................................................................................................................................... 5  
    - Ministry of Public Health ............................................................................................................................... 5  
    - Ministry of Environment, Ecology and Forests .............................................................................................. 5  
**Agenda**  .......................................................................................................................................................... 6  
    - Wednesday 30 July ....................................................................................................................................... 6  
    - Thursday 31 July ......................................................................................................................................... 6  
**Wednesday 30 July**  .................................................................................................................................... 7  
    - Opening ......................................................................................................................................................... 7  
    - Introductions ................................................................................................................................................ 7  
    - Context, approach, benefits and challenges of PHE in Madagascar ........................................................... 7  
    - History of PHE in Madagascar ..................................................................................................................... 8  
    - Spotlight on Marie Stopes Madagascar’s experiences ................................................................................. 9  
    - Spotlight on the Duke Lemur Center’s experiences ................................................................................. 10  
    - Spotlight on Ny Tantintsika’s experiences ................................................................................................. 10  
    - Questions and answers relating to these PHE experiences ....................................................................... 10  
    - Small group discussions about PHE experiences ....................................................................................... 11  
        - Advantages of PHE ................................................................................................................................. 11  
        - Challenges related to PHE .................................................................................................................... 11  
        - Lessons learned .................................................................................................................................... 11  
    - Small group discussions about the functions of a PHE network ................................................................ 12  
        - What a network could do ....................................................................................................................... 12  
        - What different actors could contribute ............................................................................................... 12  
    - Next steps and actions for individual participants .................................................................................. 12  
    - Welcome back and summary of the first day ............................................................................................. 12  
**Thursday 31 July**  ....................................................................................................................................... 12  
    - Approval of the PHE network objectives ................................................................................................. 13  
        - About the network .................................................................................................................................. 13  
        - Goal ......................................................................................................................................................... 13  
        - Objectives ............................................................................................................................................... 13  
    - Discussion about the structure and activities of the PHE network ......................................................... 14  
    - Close ......................................................................................................................................................... 14  
    - Press conference ....................................................................................................................................... 14  
**List of participants**  ...................................................................................................................................... 15

Produced by Blue Ventures for the Madagascar PHE Network in August 2014

Photo credits: Brian Jones, Marissa Valezquez, Jonathan Coxall, Garth Cripps, Ed Kashi, Erik Patel, Emilie Comrading, Laura Robson
Executive summary

The inaugural Madagascar Population-Health-Environment (PHE) Network meeting was held in Antananarivo on 30-31 July 2014. It was organised by Blue Ventures and Voahary Salama under the patronage of his Excellency the Prime Minister of Madagascar (who is also the Minister of Public Health), and the Minister of Environment, Ecology and Forests.

The meeting brought together health and conservation practitioners, donors and policy makers representing 35 different organisations around the theme of “reinforcing the integrated PHE approach in Madagascar through effective partnerships”. It aimed to:

- Raise awareness, deepen understanding and share experiences of PHE
- Strengthen political and donor support for PHE
- Facilitate the wider adoption of PHE among conservation and health organisations through effective partnerships

The secretary general of the Ministry of Environment, Ecology and Forests opened the meeting, followed by an interactive introduction of participants, and a presentation of the history of PHE in Madagascar by Blue Ventures and Voahary Salama including a summary of major PHE initiatives undertaken in Madagascar over the past 25 years.

Marie Stopes Madagascar, the Duke Lemur Center and Ny Tanintsika shared their experiences of PHE including different models for implementation, and in particular highlighting the complementarity of cross-sector partnerships. Participants then divided into small groups to further share experiences and identify advantages, challenges and lessons learned in relation to PHE.

A number of needs and priorities for support emerged, along with strong consensus for the creation of a national network to advance PHE in Madagascar. This is to be an informal network which connects, inspires and supports a diverse range of actors to address Madagascar’s social and environmental challenges in a comprehensive way.

Objectives for the network include facilitating the development of partnerships, building the technical capacity of members, sharing resources and organising training, measuring and communicating the impact of PHE, engaging with donors and policy makers, and coordinating with other networks.

Immediate follow-up activities include creating a Google email group and simple website, collating and sharing information on member activities as well as PHE resources, and organising another meeting to discuss the conceptual framework for PHE in more detail.

The meeting was officially closed by the inspector from the cabinet of the Ministry of Public Health, who commended participants for their courageous and visionary commitment to working across sectors for the benefit of Madagascar’s people and environment.

A press conference enabled participants to present their experiences of PHE and the outcomes of the meeting to national and international journalists.
About PHE in Madagascar

In remote areas of high biodiversity where communities depend on natural resources for their livelihoods, human well-being and the conservation of ecosystems are closely linked.

Population-Health-Environment (PHE) initiatives that combine addressing unmet health needs with local management of natural resources can kick-start positive feedback loops: providing communities with the means to plan their families, invest in their children’s education, improve their livelihoods, and take an active role in the management of fisheries and forests.

Madagascar is renowned within the global PHE community as one of the birthplaces of this integrated approach.

With a new democratically elected government that has identified access to health services and biodiversity conservation as key priorities, and the return of a number of international donors supporting sustainable development in the country, a wide range of actors have expressed their desire to get involved in a movement to advance the broader adoption of this approach in Madagascar, at a time when it is also gaining momentum worldwide.

About the meeting

The meeting brought together health and conservation practitioners, donors and policy makers representing 35 different organisations around the theme of “reinforcing the integrated PHE approach in Madagascar through effective partnerships”. It aimed to:

- Raise awareness, deepen understanding and share experiences of PHE
- Strengthen political and donor support for PHE
- Facilitate the wider adoption of PHE among conservation and health organisations through effective partnerships

The meeting capitalised on participants’ experiences and facilitated increasing collaboration between sectors in order to strengthen the implementation and impact of PHE across the country.
**Organisers**

**Blue Ventures**

Blue Ventures is a marine conservation organisation that recognises the links between poor health, unmet family planning needs, gender inequality, food insecurity and environmental degradation.

As a holistic response to these interconnected challenges, Blue Ventures has developed an integrated Population-Health-Environment (PHE) programme combining reproductive health services with marine conservation, sustainable fisheries and alternative coastal livelihood initiatives in southwest Madagascar. The reproductive health element has been running since 2007 in partnership with Population Services International, Marie Stopes Madagascar and the Ministry of Public Health.

Blue Ventures is committed to supporting the wider adoption of PHE by conservation and health partners across Madagascar and beyond.

**Voahary Salama**

Voahary Salama is a platform of Malagasy associations and non-governmental organisations working on integrated Population-Health-Environment (PHE) programmes in Madagascar.

It was created in 2000 to coordinate a large-scale PHE evaluation funded by USAID, which found that integrated PHE programmes generated more positive outcomes than single-sector interventions in relation to some indicators. Its members work throughout the country on initiatives ranging from family planning and community health to nutrition, education and environmental protection.

Voahary Salama also works closely with government ministries in order to promote the inclusion of PHE in national policy, and as a civil society platform for a range of social and environmental issues.

**Partner ministries**

**Ministry of Public Health**

The meeting was organised under the high patronage of the Prime Minister of Madagascar and Minister of Public Health, Dr Roger Kolo, and officially closed by Cabinet Inspector Alain Ben Aboubakary.

**Ministry of Environment, Ecology and Forests**

The meeting was also organised under the patronage of the Minister of Environment, Ecology and Forests, Mr Anthelme Ramparany, and officially opened by General Secretary Marcellin Rabeantoandro.
Agenda

Wednesday 30 July

9.00  Opening by the Ministry of Environment, Ecology and Forests
9.45  Introductions
10.30 Break
11.00  Context, approach, benefits and challenges of PHE in Madagascar (Blue Ventures)
11.15  History of PHE in Madagascar (Voahary Salama)
11.30  Spotlight on Marie Stopes Madagascar’s experiences
11.40  Spotlight on the Duke Lemur Center’s experiences
11.50  Spotlight on Ny Tanintsika’s experiences
12.00  Questions and answers relating to these PHE experiences
12.30  Lunch
13.30  Small group discussions about PHE experiences, feedback and group discussion
14.30  Small group discussions about the functions of a PHE network, including how individual participants could benefit and contribute
15.30  Break
16.00  Feedback and group discussion about the functions of a PHE network, including how individual participants could benefit and contribute
16.30  Discussions in pairs about next steps and actions for individual participants, followed by proposal of network objectives

Thursday 31 July

9.00  Welcome back and summary of the first day
10.00  Discussion and approval of the synthesised PHE network objectives
10.30  Discussion about the structure and activities of the PHE network
11.00  Close by the Ministry of Public Health
11.45  Press conference
12.30  Lunch
Wednesday 30 July

Opening

The meeting was introduced by Ny Aina Andrianarivelos, who presented the co-organisers Blue Ventures and Voahary Salama, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Environment, Ecology and Forests.

Dr Vik Mohan of Blue Ventures gave a short introduction to the Population-Health-Environment (PHE) approach, and then General Secretary Marcellin Rabeantoandro of the Ministry of Environment, Ecology and Forests officially opened the meeting.

“It is time to find sustainable solutions; this requires the mobilisation of all sectors and the involvement of all stakeholders.”

He spoke of Madagascar’s extraordinary biodiversity, and how the management of such natural resources is linked to the well-being of the country’s population, with reference to the Libreville Declaration on Health and Environment in Africa. He called for the mobilisation of all sectors to form effective partnerships and support interdisciplinary solutions, and encouraged all stakeholders to engage actively in this meeting.

Introductions

Kitty Brayne of Blue Ventures and Andriamandranto Razafimandimby of Voahary Salama then presented the workshop aims and agenda, before facilitating an interactive introductory session.

This involved the meeting participants arranging themselves in different zones around a large map of Madagascar according to the region(s) where they work, and sparked some interesting conversations. In several cases, contact details were eagerly exchanged as opportunities for working together immediately became apparent.

A microphone was circulated so that each participant could introduce their neighbour to the entire group, describing a little about the organisation that they work for.

Context, approach, benefits and challenges of PHE in Madagascar

Kitty Brayne, Country Coordinator, Blue Ventures

Kitty gave a short introduction to PHE in Madagascar, including the environmental and social context for this approach.

PHE is an approach combining health education and services with community-based natural resource management, alternative livelihood and biodiversity conservation initiatives.

She highlighted how this integrated model responds to community needs in a comprehensive way, and allows the sharing of costs and resources between projects. It enables health organisations to reach isolated and under-served populations, while allowing conservation organisations to support community-based natural resource management more effectively. Challenges include coordination of activities and funding, and evaluation of “value-added” impacts.

- As much as half of the island’s most easily identified “primary” forest has been converted to other land cover since 1950.
- 80% of Madagascar’s plants and animals are found nowhere else on the planet.
- Food insecurity affects almost 2/3 of the population.
- 92% of the population live on less than US$2 per day.
- 3/4 of a million women in Madagascar have an unmet need for family planning (want to limit or space their pregnancies but are not currently using contraception).

References:
1. Dewar et al, 2013
2. Le Marais et al, 2012
3. Maplecroft, 2011
4. UNDESA, 2012
5. McConnell & Kull, 2014
History of PHE in Madagascar

Andriamandranto Razafimandimby, General Manager, Voahary Salama

Andriamandranto described the history of PHE in Madagascar, stretching back to the early 1990s when integrated conservation and development projects (ICDPs) were first initiated around protected areas.

PHE projects implemented in the late 1990s and early 2000s included the Environmental Health Project (EHP) and Madagascar Green and Healthy Communities (MGHC), funded by USAID and the Packard Foundation, and implemented by members of the Voahary Salama platform (created in 2000) and the JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. respectively.

This included the development of a “champion community” approach, which supports communities to set and monitor progress towards the achievement of targets relating to health, education, livelihoods and environmental management.

Conservation International (CI), the World Wildlife Fund and the Wildlife Conservation Society partnered with health NGOs including local members of Voahary Salama, Population Services International and CARE in order to implement PHE programmes in target ecoregions in the early to mid 2000s.

More recent PHE developments in Madagascar include CI collaborating with Voahary Salama member Ny Tanintsika, marine conservation organisation Blue Ventures partnering with PSI and Marie Stopes Madagascar (MSM), and the Duke Lemur Center working with MSM.
Spotlight on Marie Stopes Madagascar’s experiences

Amelia Yeo, Project Coordinator, Marie Stopes Madagascar

Marie Stopes Madagascar (MSM) currently delivers contraceptive services across all of Madagascar’s 22 regions (97% of districts). In addition to condoms, pills and injections, MSM offers long-acting reversible methods (implants and intra-uterine devices) and permanent methods (vasectomies and ligatures).

Services are delivered through a variety of channels including “mobile outreach teams” (medical professionals who travel to remote villages by 4x4 and operate out of available facilities such as community buildings) and “Marie Stopes Ladies” (nurses or midwives trained and supported by MSM who particularly work door-to-door in urban and peri-urban areas).

Amelia highlighted how MSM is partnering with Blue Ventures: training community health workers to inform clients about long-acting methods and refer them to mobile outreach teams or MS ladies as appropriate, and training Blue Ventures’ midwife to work as an MS lady so that she is able to offer these methods herself.

“We are proud to be partnering with Blue Ventures to reach women in remote communities. Our mobile outreach teams play a complementary role by offering long-acting contraceptive methods and increasing access to the whole range of family planning options so that women can choose what’s right for them.”

Amelia also highlighted how MSM is partnering with the Duke Lemur Center: a local MS Lady offers contraceptive services in their communities. She explained how these partnerships maximise the complementary strengths of each organisation and work towards achieving a common objective: increasing access to voluntary family planning for under-served communities.

Conservation organisations wishing to discuss collaboration opportunities with MSM should contact their partnerships director, Eugene Andriamasy.
Spotlight on the Duke Lemur Center’s experiences

Erik Patel, Project Director, Duke Lemur Center SAVA Conservation

The Duke Lemur Center’s SAVA Conservation project began in 2012 and includes lemur research, environmental education, freshwater aquaculture, reforestation and fuel-efficient stoves.

Through community discussions and research into public health needs in the region, access to family planning services was identified as a priority by local villages, so the project set up a partnership with MSM in 2013 to address this unmet need.

Erik described how a working relationship with local MS Ladies based near Marojejy was quickly and easily established, with their services promoted through flyers and radio announcements, and information on the full range of contraceptive options provided by MS Ladies themselves. He highlighted the extremely low cost of this initiative for the SAVA Conservation project and the high uptake of these services.

INITIATIVE COSTS

Average 435,980 Ariary / £105 per family planning outreach day

Includes:
- Cost of the radio announcements
- Printing and distribution of flyers
- Stipend and transport for the MS Lady
- Education by community health workers

UPTAKE OF SERVICES

- Average 25 clients per family planning outreach day
- Typically mothers aged 14-40 years
- Hormonal implants each providing up to 3 years of protection are the most popular contraceptive option among these women

Spotlight on Ny Tanintsika’s experiences

Nathalie Raharilaza, Director of Programmes, Ny Tanintsika

Ny Tanintsika (local partner of Feedback Madagascar and member of Voahary Salama) has experience of implementing broad-based PHE programmes encompassing family planning, maternal health, water and sanitation, education, nutrition, agriculture and forest management.

Nathalie used the village of Ambohimahasina near Ambalavao as a case study to highlight the advantages of this integrated model, including combining short-term actions such as improving access to health services with long-term environmental initiatives, and the way that the approach reflects the multifaceted nature of the everyday lives of villagers. Coordinating funding and activities were identified as major challenges.

Questions and answers relating to these PHE experiences

Vik Mohan of Blue Ventures concluded by noting that there are a variety of partnership and implementation models which can be applied depending on the context.

This was followed by a series of questions and answers, which covered topics including respecting local cultures (the importance of building trust with communities, listening to their needs and if necessary providing information about contraceptive services to dispel any misconceptions about the risks of hormonal methods), engaging with public health structures (integrating programmes with community agents and clinics in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health), and measuring the environmental impact of health service delivery (including using Marie Stopes’ Impact 2 tool, and collecting qualitative and quantitative data to demonstrate how PHE functions and compares to single-sector interventions).
Small group discussions about PHE experiences

Participants gathered in small groups for the next session in order to discuss advantages, challenges and lessons learned in relation to PHE. They recorded their thoughts on flipcharts, and shared them with the whole group:

Advantages of PHE
- Responds to local needs in a comprehensive way (i.e. relevant to communities)
- Reaches isolated and remote areas
- Strengthens trust with local communities
- Impacts and involves many sectors (i.e. complementary benefits for health and environment)
- Enables sharing of resources and opportunities between projects
- Efficient and effective at achieving outcomes
- Locally adaptable model
- Engages with communities through a variety of entry points
- Improves local ownership
- Engages non-traditional audiences (e.g. men in family planning and women in natural resource management)
- Promotes gender equality and women’s empowerment
- Broadens the vision of conservation
- Reduces pressure on natural resources

Challenges related to PHE
- Securing funding for working in a holistic way or across different sectors
- Long-term sustainability / continuation of short-term projects
- Incorporating other aspects of community health besides family planning
- Fear of losing / confusing identity by broadening scope of work (e.g. lack of clarity regarding how PHE relates to conservation / health strategies)
- Coordination and communication between partners
- Monitoring and evaluation of the “value-added” aspects of integration
- Measuring success – particularly environmental impact
- Lack of knowledge about the Libreville Declaration among certain stakeholders
- Difficult to access particular conservation sites
- Scaling up the approach

Lessons learned
- Understanding and definitions of PHE can be different among different stakeholders
- Must adapt to different contexts and sites
- Important to communicate success through data and stories
- Must have a strong and consistent presence in the field, and build trust with local communities
- There is a lot of interest in and demand for family planning services in rural Madagascar but access is the problem – PHE is a direct response to this unmet need
- Simplifying partnership models and aligning goals can improve complementary benefits for each partner
- Measure progress, listen to and have confidence in local communities, and constantly adapt to the context
- Ensure a participatory approach
- Fit this work with national policies and strategies
Small group discussions about the functions of a PHE network

After a short break, participants reconvened in their small groups to discuss how a network could enable the continued exchange of ideas about PHE. They recorded their points on flipcharts, and shared them with the whole group:

What a network could do

- Facilitate the flow and sharing of information between actors – including the exchange of best practices, success stories, challenges, practical tools and lessons learned
- Communicate about PHE with a united voice – including through a website
- Engage with national and international policy makers and donors – including efforts to inform policy
- Facilitate technical and financial partnerships
- Organise training and capacity building workshops
- Mobilise field staff
- Coordinate the activities of different actors at all levels
- Synchronise evaluation methodologies and monitoring indicators
- Develop and manage a database of impact results that could be used to produce national reports on PHE
- Integrate with sector-specific networks
- Create a larger Western Indian Ocean PHE network

What different actors could contribute

- All: share any relevant information and resources including practical tools, community education materials, evaluation results and insights into best practices
- Ministries: develop a reference framework for PHE
- Donors including UNFPA and Tany Meva: possibility of leveraging financial and technical support
- Conservation International, WCS: integrate PHE into field programmes, monitor and communicate impact
- MSM, FISA: health service provision
- Blue Ventures: website creation and report production, exchange visits, training and capacity building
- Dahari (Comorian NGO): international reach

Next steps and actions for individual participants

To close the first day, participants arranged themselves into pairs in order to discuss one thing that they were personally going to do to advance PHE within their organisations, identify an organisation at the meeting that they wanted to connect or work with, and write down an objective that they wanted to propose for the national PHE network (these were written on cards and handed to the organisers to be summarised for discussion during the second day).

Thursday 31 July

Welcome back and summary of the first day

Andriamandranto Razafimanidimby of Voahary Salama welcomed participants to the second day, and Kitty Brayne of Blue Ventures outlined the agenda for the morning.

Zo Zatovonirina of Conservation International then gave a summary of what was discussed during the first day.
Approval of the PHE network objectives

A list of proposed objectives for the national PHE network was presented by Blue Ventures and Voahary Salama for discussion, as summarised from suggestions made by individual participants towards the end of the first day.

The content of these objectives was met with broad approval, with recommendations to condense them into four statements. These were therefore further elaborated and approved by members following the meeting:

**About the network**

The Madagascar PHE Network connects, inspires and supports practitioners, donors and policy makers to address Madagascar’s social and environmental challenges in a comprehensive way.

**Goal**

To enable a range of actors to support and implement Population-Health-Environment (PHE) activities for the mutual benefit of Madagascar’s people and environment.

**Objectives**

To facilitate the development of new partnerships and the effective coordination of PHE activities by nurturing relationships between members and sharing information about different organisations’ activities.

To build the capacity of members to support and implement PHE programmes by organising or commissioning training and technical assistance, exchanging best practices and sharing resources.

To improve our ability to demonstrate and communicate the impact of PHE by deepening our collective understanding of the conceptual framework for this approach, coordinating monitoring and evaluation efforts, sharing data and information, and developing effective ways of communicating this model to a range of audiences.

To support and coordinate efforts to promote the wider adoption of PHE among stakeholders at national and international levels by engaging with donors, ensuring that PHE is incorporated into national policies, and coordinating with other networks in Madagascar and worldwide.
Discussion about the structure and activities of the PHE network

It was agreed that the PHE network should be a loose, open group with a simple, informal structure, leaving the door open for further developments at later stages, including the potential for smaller groups of specific actors to align themselves for certain purposes.

Blue Ventures offered to create a website for the network, with content provided by all members. Ideas for this online portal included details of all members (intervention zones and scope of activities), and a resource library containing articles about PHE. An interactive forum was also suggested in order to facilitate the exchange of information between members, and Blue Ventures agreed to facilitate this in the form of a Google group. Several organisations including Conservation International and MSM offered to share documents.

It was decided that another meeting would be organised towards the end of the year to discuss the conceptual framework for PHE in more detail, and to consider appropriate methodologies for monitoring and evaluating PHE interventions.

Close

Andriamandranto Razafimandimby of Voahary Salama closed the meeting by reflecting on the unanimous support for the creation of a national PHE network.

Alain Ben Aboubakary, Cabinet Inspector of the Ministry of Public Health, officially closed the meeting. He spoke of the need to work together to improve ecosystem and human health in Madagascar, and commended the courageous and visionary resolution of meeting participants to do so.

“Creating this national PHE network is a timely and commendable initiative; it will support our country to move towards real sustainable development.”

Press conference

A number of journalists were invited to the closing ceremony and given the opportunity to ask questions about PHE to the meeting participants. This resulted in press coverage in national newspapers including Les Nouvelles and L’Hebdo.
## List of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kitty Brayne</td>
<td>Blue Ventures</td>
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<td>Vik Mohan</td>
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<td>Caroline Savitzky</td>
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<td>Ny Aina Andrianariveolo</td>
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<td>Mahasoa Lahatse</td>
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<td>Brian Jones</td>
<td>Blue Ventures</td>
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<td>Timothy Smart</td>
<td>British Embassy</td>
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<td>Bruno Rajaspera</td>
<td>Conservation International</td>
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<td>Luciano Andriamaro</td>
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<td>Hugh Doulton</td>
<td>Dahari</td>
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<td>Erik Patel</td>
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<td>Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust</td>
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<td>Dominique Rakotomanga</td>
<td>FISA</td>
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<td>Robert Cook</td>
<td>Helmsley Charitable Trust</td>
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<td>Renu Saini</td>
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<td>Adam Sanders</td>
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<td>Tiana Randriamboavonjy</td>
<td>Royal Botanic Gardens Kew</td>
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<td>John Watkin</td>
<td>MacArthur Foundation</td>
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<td>Liliane Parany</td>
<td>Madagascar National Parks</td>
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<td>Eugene Andriamasy</td>
<td>Marie Stopes Madagascar</td>
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<td>Amelia Yeo</td>
<td>Marie Stopes Madagascar</td>
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<td>Michelle Andriamahazo</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
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<td>Liliane Randrianomenjanahary</td>
<td>Ministry of Environment, Ecology and Forests</td>
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<td>Ministry of Environment, Ecology and Forests</td>
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<td>Philippine Noasiharilalanomenjanahary</td>
<td>Ministry of Population, Social Protection and Promotion of Women</td>
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<td>Ministry of Public Health</td>
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<td>Alain Ben Aboubakary</td>
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<td>Voahirana Ramiaramananarivo</td>
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<td>Venance Tata</td>
<td>Ministry of Public Health</td>
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<td>Miara Randrema</td>
<td>Ministry of Water</td>
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<td>Zarina Harinandrianina</td>
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<td>Jeremie Razafitsalama</td>
<td>Missouri Botanical Garden</td>
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<td>Nathalie Raharilaza</td>
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<td>ONG Mateza</td>
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<td>Jessica De Jarnette</td>
<td>Pivot / Centre ValBio</td>
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<td>Planet Madagascar</td>
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