

**SEPALI WOMEN'S GROUP,
VISIT OF SEPALI PARTNERS,
and NEW SEPALI TEAM MEMBER**

SEPALI newsletter:

Organization of Silk Producers

June 2011

English version

3rd Edition

WOMEN'S GROUP IN AMBALAMAHOGO:



The name of the women's group is "Fikambanana Belavaranga Miray, FBM" or "unified women of Belavaranga". This group was set up by SEPALI on May 19th, 2011. Before the end of the day, the 11 members had already elected a board of officials and defined each person's role in the group.

The youngest member of the women's group, Mrs. Clotilde, was elected as the president. All board members collaborated with SEPALI to define leadership roles and responsibilities. During a recent interview, Clotilde also indicated that she is ready to join the SEPALI team of breeders and participate in both cocoon production and processing.



Justin Razafindrakalo was elected as the vice president of the FBM group. As one of the artisan specialists of the group, Justin is already an expert in processing different species of weaving materials found in the forest such as rambo, penja, and raffia. She and her husband, the President of Ambalamahogo, have recently joined the SEPALI breeders group as well.



Rasoamartiny, the eldest member of the FBM group, was elected as the Treasurer. According to the customs of the community, financial responsibility in such a group should be given to the oldest member. In addition to her responsibilities as treasurer, Raoamartiny has also joined the team of breeders and will work to produce cocoons.

INTRODUCTION:

This newsletter is designed to inform the SEPALI farmers about the creation of the women's group in Ambalamahogo. In addition to the existing SEPALI breeder groups, the women's group is a new kind of group that SEPALI wishes to develop in the local communities.

WHY DID SEPALI SET UP THIS GROUP?

In the near future, this women's group will work together to process cocoons and produce the SEPALI silk textile. We have chosen the Ambalamahogo community to set up the women's group because of the availability of local resources for processing and the abundance of women living in the village who are already experts at producing and selling local products. The creation of this women's group allows SEPALI to have a dependable, local team of cocoon processors and it allows the women to build capacity as a group through teamwork and cooperative action. SEPALI will provide different kinds of training to the group as necessary.

LIST OF THE FBM GROUP:

- 1-Clotilde
- 2-Razafindrakalo
- Justine
- 3-Rasoamartiny
- 4-Zafielsie fleurine
- 5-Norozafy Celine
- 5-Razafindrastiraka Girane
- 6-tiazandry Francline
- 7-Zaline
- Marthe
- 8-Raharino Perine
- 9-Radiah
- 10-Razafindrakalo Ernestine
- 11- narnetv

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Visit of the SEPALI Partner and New SEPALI Team Member:



Celine, Fleurine

The first visit was to Ambalamahogo. The visiting SEPALI team consisted of **Cay**: President of CPALI: Conservation through Poverty International, **Mamy**: SEPALI Madagascar Director, **Lalaina**: Coordinator of the SEPALI women's group, **Kerry O'Neill**: New SEPALI team member from Peace Corps Madagascar, and **Cecile Moyart**: Student from Ireland.

During the visit, the women's group (FBM) confirmed their willingness to work with SEPALI and set up a common savings account for the group.



Meeting with FTMTA in Ambinanitelo

Ambinanitelo was the second community visited by the SEPALI guests. 10 members attended the meeting and all continued to express enthusiasm for their work with SEPALI. During this meeting, we showed farmers a sample of textile that the SEPALI artisan team created and distributed 250 plastic planting containers to each new member. The visit in Ambinanitelo lasted 1 day. Visiting Rafanoely's land gave the SEPALI team an optimistic vision for the future.

Ambodivoangy was the third community visited by SEPALI team. There, the SEPALI team met with both the TMA group and FTTFa group. All members in TMA group attended the meeting and exchanged news with the visitors. During this meeting, the attendees brainstormed about a potential rearing experiment in Ambodivoangy in order to improve the breeder's rearing capacity. The meeting with FTTFa group focused on how to effectively share and plant the Talandoha seedlings.



Meeting with TMA in Ambodivoangy

Marovovonana was the last community that the team visited. The visitors met with all members in FTA group and even registered 2 new members. The FTA group now consists of 24 members and they hope to finish planting all of their trees by the end of August. FTA group is one of the most serious of the SEPALI farmer groups, and all members are very interested in the wild silk project. After the meeting, the farmers offered a big lunch to the SEPALI team. The visit ended with a short hike to see Jaojifeno's land.



Meeting with FTA Marovovonana

ADDITIONAL SEPALI NEWS:

New Member:

In addition to the SEPALI partner's visit in June, the team would also like to announce the arrival of a new team member, Kerry O'Neill. SEPALI recently applied to work with "Peace Corps Madagascar" and received one Peace Corps volunteer to share her experience with SEPALI and work closely with the communities for the next 2 years.

The SEPALI team hopes that all farmers in the 5 communities will welcome Kerry warmly. She is looking forward to exchanging new ideas and knowledge with the farmers. We believe that Kerry will be a wonderful addition to the SEPALI team.

SEPALI Boat:

To make our field visits easier, SEPALI decided to build a wooden canoe for transportation to and from the communities. The maiden voyage of this new canoe occurred on June 1st from Ambinanitelo to Ambodivoangy. Farmers from all communities have been asking questions and offering ideas about canoe usage. SEPALI will continue to collect this feedback and brainstorm ideas about boat usage. In the meantime, the boat will be kept in Marovovonana and used only by SEPALI team members.