



In this letter

On the Way

Ministry in Tana

Study

Looking Forward...

Contact

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Give?

Mandate form (UK donors).

Note: In order to benefit from the UK tax policy, British donors need to fill in a second form:

Gift Aid Declaration.

Donors from other countries:

General mandate form.

All downloadable from:

<http://www.jurgenekatja.nl/?p=59>

Newsletter May 2016

Dear friends,

In our last newsletter we have told you about our longing to serve among the Tanala people who are located in the east of Madagascar. The Tanala are considered to be among the least reached people groups on Madagascar. The people are open for missionaries and they want to know more about 'ny filazana tsara' ('the good announcement' or 'the good news'). In one village, which Jurgen visited, the king reasoned: "If the Bible is good news, our people need to hear it!", and right after that he said: "When do you come?". We think we do not need to explain that we are more than willing to go. We are ready to grab our suitcases and move to Sandrohy. However, we are not at that point yet, because...

On the Way

In and around the Sandrohy area we will have to arrange our own transport as there are no buses or taxi's available. The road towards the village is very bad, especially in the rainy season. For this reason we are looking for a robust 4x4. This search turned out to be bit harder than we initially thought. The Malagasy are experts in repairing cars, they are very creative. It is amazing to see how they keep their cars going: many cars are a gathering of different parts which are sometimes altered to make them fit. This technique is called 'Bricolage' and is almost a warranty for breakdowns. It is this reason that Jurgen—together with a befriended garage owner—looked at many cars and counted them unsuitable. Another problem comes with the new law that cars, older than 15 years, are not allowed to be imported. A few cars that looked promising were still registered on a foreign licence plate and therefore would have caused problems transferring them to a Malagasy registration. Sometimes we feel a bit discouraged as the search continues. But...

Even though we do not have our own car we do not have to travel in the crowded buses any more. A few months ago a British couple approached us. We have only met them a few times before. They wanted to know whether we were still travelling by bus—a subject that frequently arose in their social circles. They did not like the idea and thus offered us to borrow their car during their four months furlough in England. Their offer did not fall on deaf ears! It is a true blessing to be a bit more mobile and hopefully we will find our own car soon.

Ministry in Tana

Although we are eager to move to the Tanala, the team here in Tana already expressed that we will be missed. Since we are the only residents in the guest house we more or less took upon us the role of hosting many visitors. We welcome and help international visitors or other missionaries who come to Tana and stay at the guest house. This means showing them around; taking care of meals; arranging transport; answering phone calls in the middle of the night; playing with the visiting children and listening to personal stories. The team is still thinking how to go about this 'job' when we leave to Sandrohy. We start to enjoy our role at the guest house and like it to be a blessing for others.

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One of the main tasks of the Tana Focus team is to help the missionaries on Madagascar. Practically this means a lot of administration and maintaining contact with the government, but it also means prayer and pastoral care. Whenever possible all missionaries are being called weekly in order for us to have an idea what to pray for when we come together. A special happening was that after a training of 2 1/2 years the team was able to send out the first Malagasy missionaries. A young man, Melias, and a young couple, Thadee and Haja, with their two children have been sent to Ikongo. They work—just as we want to do—among the Tanala. Ikongo is about a days journey from Sandrohy. The news we get from them is joyful and promising as they already made some good contacts with the hospitable Tanala. We especially enjoy the short phone calls we receive from Melias in which he briefly talks about his new adventures.

Study

Meanwhile Jurgen was still busy finishing his theology study. He had to hand in all assignments before September. Halfway July he handed in his last essay (eschatology) and five translations for Hebrew. The initial marks were very good and we eagerly await the final marking which will come around November. Jurgen is happy that he now has more time for language learning and our search for a car.

The children are also doing very good with their school work. We are getting used to the different rhythm in Tana and in addition Simeon becomes less dependent on mammy which all helps structure our days more pleasantly. The mornings are filled with the language orientated subjects like history, topography and languages. The afternoons are mostly used for mathematics, science and art. The children enjoy learning and they are making good progress: Dani loves to be read at, Abbey goes strong on maths and Issa starts to get more grips on the Dutch grammar and spelling. Vanya—who will turn 12 in a few weeks—is excited about the upcoming shift towards secondary education. We are happy that it has been quite easy to gather school materials from school suppliers and internet stores. Because of these materials the children are able to stay up to date with their Dutch peers. In the meantime the children learn Malagasy from the gardener, neighbours, street and market vendors and people in church. So now and then they surprise us. Last week Dani wanted to drink a tea at one of the many 'hotely' (a little Malagasy restaurant). In fluent Malagasy he ordered his tea and later thanked the gentleman.

We make full use of the possibilities to learn Malagasy in Tana. We have Malagasy study books and language helpers who speak English. We can ask questions in English about the language and culture and receive the explanation in English. We treasure this possibility because when we move to Sandrohy we will have no people around us who speak English. Sometimes it comes easy to learn new sentences but other times it is really hard. Besides a different sentence structure the use of the verbs is totally different than that of the English or Dutch usage. The use of the passive form is very common. The Malagasy do not say: "I like your house" but rather "your house is liked by me". Action, and not the subject, is central in the Malagasy language. Learning these new forms can be challenging but our love and appreciation for the language makes up for the more daunting aspects.

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Looking Forward...

The coming period our time will mostly be spend on our work and life here in Tana with an emphasis on learning the language and culture and the search for a car. We very much appreciate your prayers. in our last newsletter we also asked for extra financial support to buy a car. The treasurer of AIM Netherlands gave notice that we al ready received about 3,000 Euro's for the car. This is about—we think—a fourth of what we need. This makes us very happy, thanks! For those who want to help us to get on the road towards Sandrohy: You can donate your (extra) gift to AIM with the designation: **'Supporting Jurgen & Katja – CAR'**.

For more information:

www.jurgenekatja.nl/?p=59 (or at the bottom of this newsletter).

Many blessings,

Jurgen, Katja, Vanya, Issa, Abbey, Dani & Simeon Hofmann

Things to pray for:

We are thankful because

- 1) we are able to borrow a car to use in and around Tana;
- 2) Jurgen finished his last theology modules;
- 3) we manage to speak the language better each day;
- 4) the children make such good progress with learning;
- 5) our Simeon (just turned 1 year old) is a healthy and strong boy.

Pray

- 6) that the Tanala will stay positive towards hearing the Gospel;
- 7) that we will be able to buy a robust 4x4;
- 8) that we may be a blessings for future guest house visitors;
- 9) that we will become more fluent in the Malagasy language;
- 10) for all the contacts Melias, Thadee and Haja make among the Tanala and that they will be successful in translating and telling the Bible stories in the Tanala dialect.

Gifts for the car

If you want to donate (extra) for a car you will have to state this in the designation on the forms, on the telephone or cheque. The designation you can use is this: **'Supporting Jurgen & katja – CAR'**.

If you live outside the UK you can use this form:

<http://www.jurgenekatja.nl/files/documents/Supportform-other-car.pdf>

This form can be send by post or by e-mail (the addresses are on the form).

For more information: www.jurgenekatja.nl/?p=59

Or for questions about financial support you can ask directly:

supporterfinance.eu@aimint.org

or

Tel: +44 (0)115 9838 133