



## Newsletter November 2022

Dear friends,

It is a privilege to update you again on our adventures in Madagascar. We have now been living in the capital for nine months. Life in the big city is getting used to and is taking shape. We enjoy the luxuries the big city brings. For instance, a supermarket around the corner and running drinking water in the house!

### Maroamboka

Meanwhile, Jurgen has been back to our village Maroamboka several times. Each time, he has travelled up and down with one of our children. They thoroughly enjoyed it! The visits were mainly dominated by picking up our belongings. Jurgen has also been busy with the translation of the book of Acts, but more on this later. In addition, of course, the necessary news had to be exchanged with our fellow villagers. A common expression then is: 'Mangina-ahy' (it is quiet among us). In other words, *"It is very quiet in the village without you."* This is the people's way of telling us that they miss us.

Our house is now mostly empty. All that is left are some beds, cupboards, tables, and chairs. We also left the gas cooker behind. This is handy for our own visits. But we also hope to use the house as accommodation for (Malagasy) Bible students. These students can then gain much-needed practical experience in our area.

### Ranomafana

Ranomafana, you must have come across this name many times in our newsletters or conversations. It is a tourist village in the middle of the national park. We use this village as a stopover during our travels to and from Maroamboka. By now, we have met a lot of people there. It is easy for us to engage in conversation with them because people in and around Ranomafana also speak Antanala.

We have also met a meat seller called Charlie. Charlie told us several times that he would like to see missionaries come to Ranomafana. There are various churches to be found, but many of the pastors do not have the resources *and* time to go out and preach the Gospel. Charlie also heard of our translation work. He urged Jurgen time and again to stay some extra time so that he could distribute these translations. Finally! In October, Jurgen, together with Vanya, decided to stay in Ranomafana a few days more.

Armed with the Gospel of Luke, Jurgen and Vanya went to the market. To attract attention, Jurgen loudly shared some Bible stories in dialect. And attention they got! Many people bought a booklet. The printing cost of the booklets is around €1.70. That is a lot of money for the Malagasy, who earn about €0.80 a day in rural areas. So we decided to sell the booklets for €0.55. Jurgen joked that he is just a bad seller because he made no profit. As said, the booklets were flying off the shelves, and people asked whether Jurgen could come back the next day. The advantage of the larger villages, like Ranomafana, is that most people have been to school and can therefore read. In our own area, literacy is very low and that can be seen by how little interest people have when it comes to the written word.

Jurgen managed to get several police officers involved as well. He asked them where they were born. Almost all of them were from the capital. The second question was whether they could understand the Antanala dialect – after all, they work among this group right? No, the officers still had quite some trouble with the dialect. No worries! Here we have the Gospel of Luke in dialect to the rescue! It costs only 55 cents, *and* it is a unique opportunity to learn the dialect! People in the market held their breath (police are feared by many). A few moments later: Loud laughter and clapping as the policemen each bought a copy of the Gospel.

Vanya shot some footage during the trip and hopes to edit it soon (if she has time). She will put it online on her video channel when finished. We will share it with you as soon as she is ready.

### Acts of the Apostles

Even before this visit, Jurgen and Dani (in September) also visited Maroamboka. Jurgen had the first 20 chapters of the book acts ready to be checked for mistakes.

When Jurgen and Vanya returned in October, they were pleasantly surprised. Menja had already checked all 20 chapters. Menja is a local teacher and that became clear in his way he checked the pages. Every page could count on improvements, adjustments, and comments. All clearly visible in the colour red! Very briefly Jurgen had some flashbacks of his years in primary school... You know, the dreaded red pen of the teacher! Anyway, apart from some childhood sentiment, it is of course great that these 20 chapters are ready for final processing. Chapters 21 to 25 are now also with Menja to be checked, and we hope to bring the last three chapters next time.

Menja doesn't want to receive a salary, but we solved this in a creative way a long ago. We don't give him a salary. No! We give him a present per chapter. That means for the 20 chapters, we gave Menja a gift equivalent to half a month's salary. On top of that, we also gave him a young goose (also worth almost half a month's salary). He was very happy with his 'gift.' He can use it well because he (and the other people in our area) are going through a tough time. The marks of the two cyclones that swept over the area in February and March are still visible. The rice harvest, and all the fruit trees are late. Other crops are also struggling to get going.

### **Further translation work**

Menja is well aware that the translation work is progressing steadily. He suggested translating several other books of the Bible. Jurgen told him we should finish the book of Acts first. Maybe after that we should first check the Gospel of Luke so that it can be brought away for the second printing. But we are definitely not ruling out the translation of other books.

We still have some time to decide what that next book should be then. Jurgen thought of Romans because from that book we can learn a lot about life as a Christian. Katja leans more to Genesis because this book makes it clear when, how and why the Lord started history with man. Presumably, if we continue, it will indeed be Genesis. Several of our Malagasy friends have indicated that this is the logical next step. But as mentioned, first let us finish what we started.

### **Meanwhile, in Tana**

Meanwhile, we are not sitting still in the capital either. Developing a training programme for Malagasy students is still a bit of a struggle. This has everything to do with the fact that our friends, Manoa and Parany, are busy with various other things and not the least life on Madagascar itself. We are used to it. Madagascar is the land of 'moramora' (slow down). It is not a big deal because we still have plenty to do.

One of the great things about living in the capital is that we now have the opportunity to help new missionaries. During our leave in 2020, we got to know the family of Wouter and Sanne van Holst. They came to us with all kinds of questions about life on Madagascar. They have since taken the big step and arrived together with their three children and Miriam (teacher for the children). The van Holst family will be working with orphans in the south-east of Madagascar, close to our area.

Just before they arrived, we had already dropped off the first small necessities at their hotel. It is such a tiring journey! And then, when you arrive, it is not nice to have to search for a shop right away. In the first few weeks, we helped them get acquainted with the capital. We were able to introduce them to our church, where they were warmly welcomed. But we were also able to help them in practical matters. Where can you get wholemeal flour? Where can you find certain electronics? Where can you eat out, learn the language, get your car repaired, and what is handy to bring from the capital?

We remember very well that we too were helped in the first weeks. That makes the transition a lot easier. Of course, it is still difficult to adjust to the new culture, but it is pleasant to at least know people who know what you are going through.

Meanwhile, within our own organisation (AIM), we are expecting a family from England. The Desborough family will come to Tana d.v. in February. Their intention is to build a ministry here among the Gujarati group (people of Indian origin). We took extensive time last week to speak to each other via Zoom. They have a nine-month-old daughter and so Katja in particular was asked many questions in terms of any requirements. We look forward to meeting them in real life.





In addition, Katja is also in e-mail contact with another Dutch family. This family, with five children, also want to come to Madagascar in the coming year. The idea is that they will work together with the aforementioned van Holst family in the south-east.

### Challenges

Despite the many wonderful things we get to experience, we naturally also have the challenges of living in a big city. One such challenge is the massive air pollution right here in Tana. At first, we were just thinking that we might have been spoilt by the clean air in the countryside. But no, other people also complain of headaches, sore eyes and fatigue. Katja actively sought solutions. She keeps doors and windows closed during certain hours and Jurgen has made air filters using fans and pollen filters (or cabin-filters as found under the dashboard of many cars).

Teaching children takes a lot of time and, most importantly, creativity. Vanya is working towards her exams (2024). Issa also hopes to take exams by then, but in a selection of subjects. We are blessed with the arrival of Rahel. This young, Swiss lady helps the children understand German even better. Rahel comes here weekly! This allows Katja to spend some more time with the younger children, Dani and Siemen.

The children also have their own challenges. In some ways, they sometimes long for the simple life in Maroamboka. Here, in the capital, they have a large community of peers. Such a large group also brings along many activities. Football (soccer), youth club, game afternoons, and so on and so forth. At first, of course, they wanted to participate in everything. But, a little peace and quiet is also nice at times! This means that sometimes they have to choose: *"Do I go to that sleepover, or do I stay home and read a good book?"* We try to help them, so they learn that even though you can join in all kinds of activities, it doesn't automatically mean you have to. Tricky, (especially) for teenagers. But fair is fair, they seem perfectly capable of finding their way in this jungle of peers. We are proud of them!

Thank you!

We hope that after reading this letter, you, like us, are also looking forward to what the future holds. We can make plans but one thing we know for sure: *"whatever the Lord has planned, will come to pass."* (Proverbs 19:21).

We feel privileged to have so much support in our work. Thank you for your prayers, compassion, support, and encouragements!

Together with you, we want to continue to trust in the Lord!

***For God is good, all the time! And all the time, God is good!***

Many blessings!

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



# Jurgen & Katja

*Serving God on Madagascar*



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[www.jurgenenkatja.nl/en/](http://www.jurgenenkatja.nl/en/)

## Support us!

### Mandate form (UK donors)

Donors from other countries can contact the following offices:

**US:** [receipting.us@aimint.org](mailto:receipting.us@aimint.org)

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Please go to our website for more details about how you can support us.

## Things to pray for:

### We are thankful because:

- 1) we serve a great God;
- 2) we were able to help other missionaries;
- 3) the translation of Acts is going very well;
- 4) we see that there is a lot of interest in translation work;
- 5) we feel supported and encouraged by you and many others.

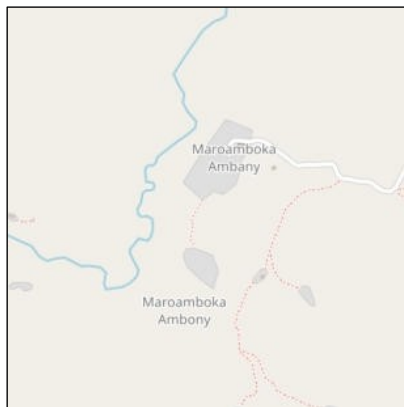
### Pray that/for:

- 6) the continuation of our ministry on Madagascar;
- 7) the cooperation with local Christians;
- 8) the Lord will go before us in the ministry from Tana;
- 9) The challenges we face whilst in the capital city;
- 10) Many may be blessed through our work.

## Where do we serve?

Location Openstreet Maps:  
Maroamboka, Madagascar-  
**[21.59506/47.87529](#)**

Location Google Maps:  
Maroamboka, Madagascar-  
**[21.595055,47.875621](#)**



## Disclaimer

Thank you so much for your interest in our ministry to the Antanala people on Madagascar. We greatly appreciate the love and support of the wonderful people that God has put around us. This ministry is much larger than our family, and we cannot do it alone.

You have either signed up to receive this newsletter or you have been an important part of our lives and we thought you would like to know about our journey. If at any point you no longer want to receive this newsletter, please unsubscribe:

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