

Newsletter September 2023

Dear friends,

It is a privilege to update you again on our adventures in Madagascar.

Fantastic News!

We are a bit late with this newsletter, for which we apologise! BUT! Despite taking a while, we do have some awesome news to share.

When we were still living full-time in Maroamboka, Jurgen went to different villages almost every week to share the Bible stories. In one village, Beono, Jurgen had a good relationship with the king, iaban'i Velotia.

Back in 2020, iaban'i Velotia testified (on camera) that he would love to follow Jesus but his faith was not yet sufficient: <https://www.jurgenenkatja.nl/the-king>

Last July, we returned to the village with the whole family. We shortly met iaban'i Velotia. He told us that he, together with his wife, started to attend church every Sunday. We didn't quite realise what he was saying. Later we made some enquiries and were told a wonderful testimony: <https://www.jurgenenkatja.nl/deliverance>

What had happened? The son of iaban'i Velotia had fallen ill. No ordinary illness, but evil spirits had taken up residence with him. The situation was becoming unmanageable and iaban'i Velotia decided to call in the witch doctor. Whatever the witch doctor tried, the evil spirits refused to leave. One of the Bible stories shared by Jurgen dealt with exactly this kind of situation! Iaban'i Velotia decided to seek the help of Christians. When the Christians came to his house, they saw all the magic tools lying and hanging in the house. That had to go first they said! Iaban'i Velotia agreed—we are talking about resources and objects that are worth a lot of money. After they 'cleaned' out the house, the Christians turned to the boy with the evil spirits. A simple prayer in the Name of Jesus was enough to send the spirits away.

Now iaban'i Velotia had seen the Bible stories become reality. He came to the conclusion that he and his wife really needed to start obeying the Lord—starting by attending church. This is a big step and has quite some consequences for him. In all likelihood, he can no longer be king. After all, the king's job is to teach his fellow villagers about ancestor worship. That will no longer be possible. People are also looking suspiciously at what will happen next. After all, the move to follow Jesus means angering the ancestors. The villagers are convinced that something bad is going to happen to iaban'i Velotia's family.

This month, September, Jurgen hopes to travel to Maroamboka again. Hopefully, he will meet iaban'i Velotia in person and hear the story first-hand.

Second Fantastic News!

The second update is certainly no less beautiful! Another village that Jurgen visited regularly was Tsiombivohitra. This village is about seven kilometres away. Jurgen went almost every week to share the Bible stories. The king of this village, iaban'i Merlice and his wife were very interested. Yet, as far as we know, they did not get beyond a general belief that the Bible is true.

In this village lived a very young couple. This couple, whose names we don't know, was frowned upon. They were the odd ones out. One Sunday, they decided to go to Maroamboka to worship in church. There were no churches around their own village. Not long after, more people from their village decided to join them on Sundays. In July, our fellow villagers told us that the group had grown to about twenty people!

Twenty people is a big group compared to the village they come from. We have since heard that they are planning to build their own church in Tsiombivohitra!

<https://www.jurgenenkatja.nl/growth>



Maroamboka & Translations

Jurgen has been back in Maroamboka regularly. In April, together with Abbey and Simeon, they visited Menja, our translator, to see if he had already checked the last chapters of the book of Acts. He hadn't managed to do that at the time. However, a few weeks later we were sent thirteen photos of the latest translation work. Admittedly, it is difficult to read from the photos and to see what needs to be corrected because of the low quality. But thanks to the experience we now have in grammar, words and Menja's handwriting, we succeeded. Jurgen now has the first edition of the book of Acts ready for distribution.

In June, Jurgen went to Maroamboka together with Issa. Menja and Jurgen agreed that the book of Genesis should be the next project. We were still briefly thinking about the letter to the Romans because it contains a lot of church teachings. However, Katja thought that the book of Genesis should take precedence because this book narratively clarifies the history of man. Several Malagasy friends agreed with Katja. Menja was a bit shocked by the fifty chapters. Besides, Genesis contains very different expressions and words compared with the New Testament writings. After some thought, he wanted to do it anyway.

So, a month later, July, we travelled again, this time with the whole family, to our village. Jurgen immediately paid a visit to Menja and was happily surprised! Menja had already written out the first five chapters in a small notebook. Jurgen took pictures and started checking it at home. Are the words chosen correct? Does it not violate the theology? Do any words need to be explained in footnotes, and so on. A big job!

Normally we didn't pay Menja a salary as he didn't want that. Instead, we gave him some money as a gift for every translated chapter ... After all, a gift is not a salary, right? This time, Menja asked if we might 'gift' him a laptop. We thought that was a good deal and one has since been purchased which we will give to him next time.

Both translations can be viewed via our website:

Acts of the Apostles [<https://www.jurgenenkatja.nl/acts-mg-antanala-dialect/>]

The Gospel of Luke [<https://www.jurgenenkatja.nl/luke-mg-antanala-dialect/>]

All the Work [<https://www.jurgenenkatja.nl/#translations>]

Sambivelo

Yes, Sambivelo has now been back in the village for two months. The idea is that he can provide general medical assistance to the people. Basically that, what we also did ... But a bit more professional.

His return journey was not easy. The bus crashed and all passengers, including Sambivelo, had to go to hospital. Fortunately, Sambivelo came off well with only some muscle pain. He arrived in Maroamboka three days later.

Last July, Jurgen had a conversation with him and the elders about the next steps. It was agreed upon that he will go back to school in September. If he has time to spare then he can provide medical care. We agreed that this should start calmly, and only if he can combine it with his other work.

In the next visit, Jurgen hopes to hear how he is doing.

Car

Which brings us to the next topic: the car! We are extremely blessed with our car, but even our 'tank' suffers and needs regular visits to the garage. They are usually not major problems. At the time of writing, the car is also back in the garage. The front suspension started sagging and needed repair. The car also required a new clutch and new brake discs. All in all, those costs do add up.

The motorcycle also needs maintenance! Last month, the engine got overheated because the thermostat broke. This blocked the passage of coolant and the engine seized.

These costs are sometimes bothering us. But the Lord knows, and we are regularly blessed by dear brothers and sisters who give us an extra gift to meet these costs. Our thanks for that! It takes away a lot of worry.



That being said, transport is a ongoing major expense. Madagascar's roads are getting worse and worse. Whereas six years ago we were travelling to our village in only twelve hours, now it takes at least seventeen hours! The potholes, cracks, stones in and on the road take a strong toll on a car. So, besides your prayers and other means of encouragement, a special donation for the maintenance of the car is definitely not a luxury. At the bottom of this letter, you will see what the options are.

Furlough

Besides all the events, we have also started thinking about our next furlough in 2024. We hope to come to the Netherlands in February 2024. The leave will be a bit longer than usual.

Vanya hopes to take her exams and Issa is also preparing himself for part of his exams.

Meanwhile, we have already been blessed with a rental house for this period. It is a single-family house in Oudewater, Utrecht. Previous times, it was always a hassle to find a house for our leave. On top of that, most houses are very expensive to rent. So, we are extremely happy that this house is available.

Also, Foundation 'Hand' has already agreed to let us borrow a car from them.

We hope to book the tickets in October and then meet you all soon again. Don't hesitate to get in touch if you would like to invite us to your church or home group, for example. We are happy to share our adventures or give a sermon. While writing this, we also realise that it will be a bit hard to travel to e.g. England or Germany, but maybe we can even do something by means of the internet.

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: "what the Lord intends, happens." (Proverbs 19:21)

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

Together with you, we want to keep trusting in the Lord!

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

We sincerely wish you God's rich blessing!

Katja & Jurgen

Vanya, Issa, Abbey, Dani and Simeon Hofmann



Jurgen & Katja

God dienen op Madagaskar



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www.jurgenenkatja.nl/en/

Support us!

Mandate form (UK donors)

Donors from other countries can contact the following offices:

US: receipting.us@aimint.org

EU: supporterfinance.eu@aimint.org
Tel: +44 (0)115 9838 133

NL: finance.nl@aimint.org
Tel: +31 (0)317 7124 67

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 are doing fine as a family;
- 3) we've finished the translation of Acts;
- 4) we see that there is a lot of interest in translation work;
- 5) it might be possible to start the translation of Genesis.

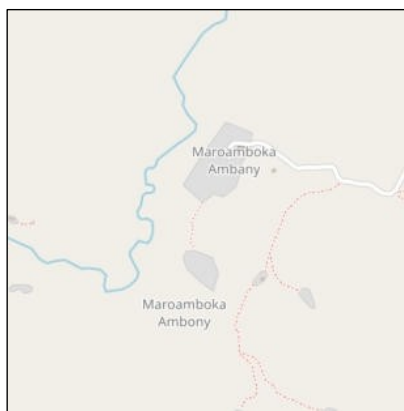
Pray that/for:

- 6) Vanya & Issa can prepare themselves well for their exams;
- 7) the cooperation with local Christians;
- 8) Sambivelo is going to be received well;
- 9) many may be blessed through the translations;
- 10) Katja will have enough energy to educate our children.

Where do we serve?

Location Openstreet Maps:
Maroamboka, Madagaskar-
[21.59506/47.87529](https://www.openstreetmap.org/?lat=-18.25506&lon=47.87529)

Location Google Maps:
Maroamboka, Madagaskar-
[21.595055,47.875621](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Maroamboka,+Madagascar/@-18.255055,47.875621,15z)



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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