



# ZAHANA

## RURAL TRANSFORMATION THROUGH PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

**Zahana** is a non-governmental organization in Madagascar dedicated to participatory rural development, education, revitalization of traditional Malagasy medicine, reforestation, and sustainable and environmentally friendly agriculture.

It is Zahana's philosophy that development must be based on local needs and solutions proposed by local people. Participatory development means asking communities what they need. A community claims ownership of their own development successes by working collaboratively on their priorities.

To realize the community's priorities, Zahana hires in-country experts to assist with specific tasks and buys supplies and materials the villagers are unable to afford. Villagers donate their labor and locally available materials to each project. In the village of Fiadanana, on the high plateau of Madagascar, integrative participatory development has been implemented since 2005. Community priorities identified and addressed were: clean water, a school and a communal grain storage building.

Please visit our website [www.zahana.org](http://www.zahana.org) (or write to us) for photos and more information about our other projects:

- Starting a micro credit system
- Addressing hunger (food security)
- Introducing new crops
- Malaria prevention
- Village clean up and building toilets
- Building fences and animal pens

**Clean Water:** Access to clean water was the community's top priority. Until 2005, all water used for drinking, cooking, and other purposes came from two communal water holes and a nearby river. Women and children carried water in buckets back to the village.



The community built their own water system that pipes clean water from the mountains into the village - over more than 1.5 miles (2.5 km)! From a large storage tank in the village, it is distributed to seven communal faucets. The community contributed sand, stones and their labor (digging trenches, laying pipe) to the project. Zahana bought the pipes, cement, and materials not locally available as well as hired water engineers, who lived in Fiadanana for two months directing the project and teaching the villagers how to maintain the system.

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**School:** Built with community labor and self-made bricks, Fiadanana now has its first school, attended by over 150 children. Zahana hired and committed to pay the two teachers' salaries for two years. To prepare and train them to teach children who have never gone to school before, an educational specialist was hired to spend six weeks in the village conducting the training. To provide enough room for all students, a second school building is the next step for the community, who started making the bricks in the spring of 2008.



**Grain Storage Building:** Without a place to store their crops, farmers were forced to sell immediately after harvest when prices are lowest. A communal grain storage building, again built with self-made bricks and the labor of the villagers, allows them to store their harvest of rice and corn safely.

