



CPALI/SEPALI Madagascar Newsletter

26 July 2013

Adding value to combat scarcity thinking

One of the most difficult aspects of the CPALI/SEPALI project has been to change farmer's "scarcity thinking". Scarcity thinking stems from a lack of hope and belief that it is better to spend today than save for tomorrow. Scarcity thinking seems to most afflict the poorest of the poor because their lives are so tenuous. CPALI/SEPALIM is trying to tackle this problem by establishing a "Cocoon Bank" where farmers deposit cocoons but defer returns until they build up enough cash to make a substantial purchase. So far, we have had about 15 farmers take advantage of cocoon savings but that is not enough. We need to figure out how to motivate farmer's to learn how produce more cocoons. Most farmers do not follow the "rules", or the steps we teach to insure maximum cocoon production. Like all of us, they take short cuts. During rearing season, many farmers fail to a visit their fields frequently enough to move larvae to fresh trees, adjust protective nets and collect larvae just prior to spinning. Even though these activities only last for about 40 days per crop, and take about 2 hours, farmers are not sufficiently motivated to return to their fields as frequently as is needed.

Some farmers need to walk 2 hours from the village to reach their fields.

To motivate farmers we are trying a new incentive program - that is to make seeds for vegetable crops available to those who deposit cocoons. Our data show that farmers who successfully rear larvae and produce cocoons are much more likely to continue rearing larvae than those that simply go through the training. Therefore, if a farmer that deposits 500 cocoons in the cocoon bank, he or she will have access to viable vegetable seeds. Our new Peace Corp Volunteer, Donald Quinn-Jacobs, has planted a vegetable garden

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News from the Field

3.8 kg of Red Ruffed Lemur



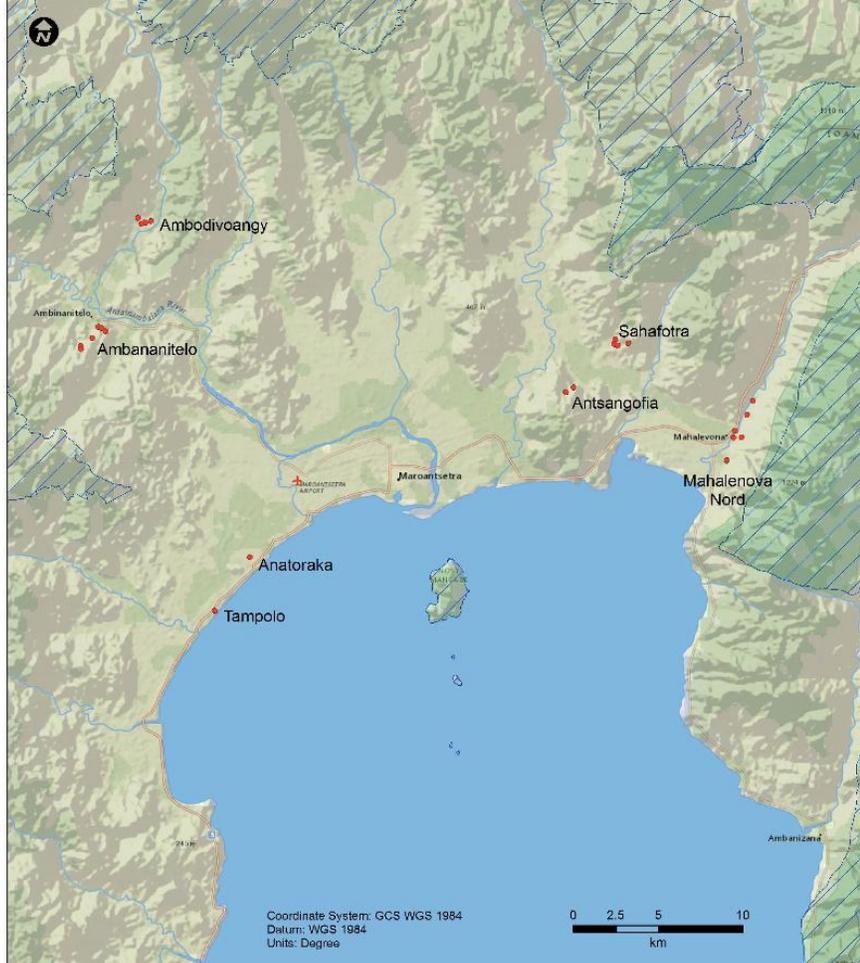
II
4000 silkworm pupae plus 1 kilo of cocoons



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SEPALI farms and protected area edge

on Gony Victor's land in Mahalevona, one of new communities near the Masoala National Park where we are working. Farmers will be able to choose what they want to grow and the number of seeds available will correlate with the number of cocoons deposited. The vegetable seeds can be inter-cropped with Talandoa trees on existing farms to make daily visits to tend caterpillars more productive. We are hoping for some good eating and improved nutrition for farmer families - we will let you know if our scheme works!

News from the Field

Exciting News DATA! Thanks to Dimby and Rija of the REBIOMA project who plotted our data points, and funds from Cornell's Atkinson Center for sustainability research granted by Drew Harvell and Chris Barrett, recent graduate Lydia Gatere and the hard work of the SEPALIM team, we have been able to analyze 140 soil samples taken from a subset of the farmer's fields. At last we have baseline data on soils where Talandoa (silk moth host plant) trees have been planted that will be incorporated into long-term monitoring of the SEPALIM project. The data analyzed so far show there is great variability in mineral content as well as soil moisture, carbon, nitrogen and organic matter that seems to reflect whether farms are on alluvial soils or hillsides. We will use these data to target those farmers most in need of soil enhancement as well as determine the effect of soil nutrients on the nutritional value of pupae for the communities. Thank you to all for allowing us to get this work off

the ground!

Marketing update

SEPALI Madagascar sent 20 meters of beautiful textile made from cocoons spun by two different species of Saturniidae moths: **Antherina suraka** (our old favorite) and our new favorite,

Ceranchia apollina. Instead of mixing inner and outer cocoons, the team made 2 new textiles that have unique and stunning characteristics. The moth loosely spins the outer cocoon and the inner cocoon is spun tightly. The photograph below shows the cocoon as it is found in the field to maximum effect.



Cocoon of *Ceranchia apollina*

The Team decided to take advantage of these differences to make two different textiles. The top fabric is made from



cocoons spun by *Antherina suraka*. The center fabric is made from outer cocoons and the bottom fabric from the inner cocoons. Although it is hard so see the gorgeous translucent effect of the middle layer textile, it is fun to imagine a beautiful gown that takes advantage of the silks double layer beauty - Any designers for the next eco-Oscar sensation?

The final photo shows the SEPALI Madagascar team displaying the textile - can't decide if its a Christo installation or series of prayer flags - both at the same time I think!



SEPALI Madagascar's 3 dreams

We have a lot of dreams and are pursuing those we think will get us to our conservation goal. First, we are raising money to build a textile production house at our demonstration site. With thanks to Architects for Humanity, Boston, we have plans in hand. All we need is to raise \$30,000 to make our dream come true. We have designed a small effective training area that we would like to build for 2014. Can you contribute?

Second, we would like to make fresh vegetable seeds available to cocoon depositing farmers. We hope to enhance local nutrition especially for growing children. Did you know that over 50% of all children in Madagascar are malnourished?

Third, we need to raise funds to support nutritional analyses of new species of silkworm pupae that we hope farmers will soon be raising. In addition to insect protein, Mamy observed an edible mushroom, Juda's Ear, grows on Talandoa that has been cut back to insure new growth. While there are data on Juda's ear nutritional content, we need funds to verify those data for our area. By introducing new sources of nutrition, more efficient

textile production and building a permanent site we hope to reassure our farmers that we are going to be around to promote silk production and watch their children grow. Please consider giving a donation to these new, innovative conservation programs to help us protect Madagascar's fantastic wildlife.

Let the adventure continue!



Catherine Craig, PhD
CPALI President

We welcome your suggestions and comments - please contact me at: or suggest additional products or markets, please contact craig "at" cpali "." org or Mamy Ratsimbazafy at Mamycpali "at" gmail "." com.

Donations can also be gratefully accepted and acknowledged through Global Giving (<http://www.globalgiving.org/projects/help-farmers-produce-silk-and-enhance-nutrition/>) but if you would like a special 4"x4" sample of our silk be sent as a gift, please make a donation of \$100 or more by sending a check to: CPALI, 221 Lincoln Road, Lincoln, MA 01773. Don't forget to include the recipient's address!