

Saturday, 21 November 2020



Madagascar: Conservation for the Bottom Billion



Covid update and the team

In less than 2 weeks you have donated \$3027 to the SEPALI Madagascar team to help them deal with the Covid crisis. **THANK YOU!** Health insurance is non-existent in Madagascar and extra funds in the time of crisis go a long way - the team is very grateful.

The team has decided to spend a portion of the donated funds to provide team lunches until the 15 December holiday begins. This will reduce contact with non-team members most of whom do not wear masks although all team members do. In addition to minimizing contact, provided lunches will also allow the team to make sure that at least

one meal a day is nutritious. Thank you again!



Did you know that revenue from artisan products ranks just below revenue from agricultural products in developing countries? Artisan enterprises generate income, create jobs and develop economic communities. They also respect and sustain ancient skills, preserve culture and memory through practice. In areas of conflict, artisan work can promote reconciliation, healing, and empowerment. When people work together, they have a chance to share their experiences, difficulties in their daily life and share practical solutions. All this happens while working to contribute to local economic development.

Artisan goods, however, can only contribute to economic development if artisans have buyers that can afford to purchase their products. In the case of Madagascar, 80% of the population lives rurally and most are subsistence farmers. Rural people in Madagascar cannot afford to purchase finally crafted materials although they certainly are able to produce them.

Farmer's markets in the US, open air markets in France, Tanzania and Madagascar, are bustling with activity and commerce. Nevertheless local markets are quickly saturated, especially if buyers have limited funds. Artisan products made from native materials like raffia and silk can contribute to biodiversity conservation by protecting native plants and insects. Markets, however, are critical to complete the conservation loop. The most familiar artisan products from Madagascar are made from raffia and in fact raffia is major raw material that is exported. However, the already established market is large and developed making it difficult to compete. CPALI designed a

unique artisan product, non-spun, non-woven, cocoon silk, for just this reason

Cocoon silk is not a traditional artisan product in Madagascar. In fact it is not a traditional product anywhere in the world. Cocoon-silk was "invented" to make use of existing native resources that had not been previously appreciated and to provide new sources of income for subsistence farmers. After only about 2 years of training, farmers were able to raise caterpillars or have learned to collect them sustainably. After about 3 years, the artisans were able to make beautifully sewn cocoon silk from cocoons spun by five different caterpillar species. I can personally attest to the difficulty of sewing cocoons together with transparent thread; thread that one can't see. SEPALIM artisans, however, have become skilled at sewing cocoons into diverse designs including swirls, flowers, stars and concentric circles. All of the cocoons are dyed by team members and textiles are dyed using a variety of resist and dip-dyed techniques. In summary, we are ready to sell our goods to you or to work with you to develop your own artworks and products.

Call to action: Help us build a market by purchasing Tanana Silk products as gifts for family and friends and yourself.

Call to action: Partner with us to design innovative lighting, window shades, curtains and other products that highlight the beauty of cocoon silk.

[Visit the Tanana Silk website](#)

Spotlight on Jerisson, Lalaina and Mario, SEPALIM staff



Mario, Lalaina and Jerisson are working together to create their disc textile. They are free to choose their own design and inspiration. Jerisson have been working with SEPALIM since 2015, he is 28 years old. In addition to the SEPALIM 's work, Jerisson is a good carpenter and he

helped SEPALIM to build up any infrastructure such as fruit dryer, shelter, and storage houses. Jerisson has just married this year.

Mario have been working with SEPALIM since 2008. He is 38 years old now. He finished the first 5 years of school. He has two daughters of 17 and 9 years old. His first daughter is close to get baccalaureate degree. Mario contributed to the design of the multicolored disc textile. This design inspires from the color combination idea that the team learnt from the art magazine booklet. In addition to his design creation skill, Mario is in charge of maintaining as well as

repairing all the sewing machines since 2008.

Lalaina is the director of the artisan team. She has been working with SEPALIM since 2010. She is in charge of artistic design and specializes in card-weaving with raffia to provide trim of SEPALIM's cocoon silk baskets.

Chameleon Not Seen In A Century Found In Madagascar

Armed with headlamps and flashlights, a team of researchers in northwestern Madagascar searched through the night for an elusive chameleon, Voeltzkow's Chameleon (*Furcifer voeltzkowi*), which hadn't been spotted for more than 100 years.

On the sixth day of their expedition, they found it. But the species wasn't in the forest as they expected: it was in a large, uncultivated hotel garden.



In total, the researchers found three males and 15 females roosting on tree branches near the hotel. But this wasn't the only discovery — they also noticed that the skin of the females could change into vibrant colors. “A female sleeping on a branch at night is not very colourful and relaxed females are largely green,” David Glaw said. “But if a female encounters a conspecific male or gets excited when handled by humans they quickly get a very contrasting pattern including black, white and blue as predominant colours. The colour change is probably most intense if the females carry fertilized eggs in their body.”

Extracted from *Mongabay Series: [Conservation in Madagascar](#)*

The image above was taken by Kathryn Glaw.



Best holiday gift Ever!

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[SEPALIM TEAM](#) Thanks you for your donations! If you have not had time to donate but would like to, please [do](#)! We would also love to have you purchase holiday gifts from [Tanana Silk](#).



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