

WHY MADAGASCAR?

Madagascar is one of the most beautiful yet one of the world's poorest and most vulnerable countries to natural disasters. Frequent cyclones and tropical storms batter the island nation, devastating communities and making it hard for families to break the cycle of poverty and constant rebuilding. At the same time, the island has to face recurring droughts and locust invasions, leaving thousands of families extremely vulnerable.

Madagascar's geographic isolation is a struggle, especially for small communities in the northeast of the country. Many communities can only be reached by water or on foot. Isolated villages are highly susceptible to cyclone damage and subsequent disease. Shelters are flimsy, health and hygiene awareness is low, and knowledge is lacking about how to prevent or reduce the risk of damage from cyclones.

With no source of safe water, and no access to sanitation structures, these populations are highly vulnerable to diarrhoea and other hygiene-related illnesses.

Inversely, communities in the south struggle each day to find water to survive. Since 2015, the region has been affected by a prolonged drought. The El Niño phenomenon in 2016 exacerbated the situation, leaving more than a million people thirsty and starving. In September 2016, the Government of Madagascar declared a national emergency and requested aid from the international community.

WHERE DO WE WORK?

Medair has been active in Madagascar since 2002. With its support office based in the capital city Antananarivo, Medair provides relief in the northeast region of Analanjirifo, particularly the district of Maroantsetra, which have been assessed as amongst the most vulnerable areas to flooding and cyclone damage in the country, and where some of the biggest needs in terms of safe water and latrines lie.

Medair is also currently setting up a base in the southern region of Androy, one of the driest regions of the island, in order to respond to the humanitarian crisis where people are in desperate need of potable water.

To provide the Malagasy population with lifesaving aid, Medair has set up a national emergency response team that will deploy, if needed, wherever a natural disaster hits the country.

FORMER PROJECTS

Disaster Risk Reduction

- Training builders in cyclone-resistant construction
- Establishing early warning systems
- Building refuge shelters

Emergency Response to Cyclones and Flooding

- Distributing WASH kits (buckets, chlorine solution, cups, and soap)
- Delivering cash distributions to help families repair homes and overcome food scarcity

WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)

- Disinfecting wells
- Promoting hygiene to protect against illness
- Building elevated water points, gravity-fed water systems, and latrines

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- Using creative methods (film, puppet shows, simulations, radio, board games) to motivate positive behaviour change

CURRENT PROJECT

Safe Water and Sanitary Latrines

As these are two of the greatest needs in the area, Medair has been helping communities gain better access to safe drinking water and sanitary latrines. Community participation is strongly encouraged (for example, by helping to drill boreholes), which creates a strong sense of ownership and leads to more sustainable outcomes.

Rano Tsara 2, the current Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) project, aims at:

- installing 720 safe water points (hand pumps and gravity fed systems) for 100,000 users
- building 800 EcoSan latrines for 5,800 beneficiaries
- training 50 local entrepreneurs to build and sell 500 improved latrines (San Plat latrines)
- training 1500 Village Volunteers whose job will be to advise their neighbours on hygiene issues and proper use of the latrines
- strengthening local capacities by setting up 442 water point committees, 24 associations of water users and enough trained village technicians

All the activities are supported by a team of Behaviour Change Communication promoters, who raise awareness across the entire project area on hand-washing, latrine use, safe water storage through such tools as puppet shows and mobile cinema screenings.

THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

"I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the finished toilet, building by Medair. It was so beautiful and practical, with a shower space. For the price we paid, we expected to get a very simple toilet. I was so happy I actually did a little celebration dance. Thank you so much, Medair." KALO Laurencine, 56, who received an EcoSan latrine in Maroantsetra.

IMPACT IN 2017 (September)

- 583 new water points built, providing safe water to 75,021 people
- 800 new composting EcoSan latrines built, benefitting 6,000 people
- 48 new local artisans trained to build latrines fitted with SanPlat slabs
- 188,176 people were reached with hygiene promotion messages through public events and shows (including puppet shows and open air cinema screenings)
- 1,590 trained Village Volunteers made 28,930 household visits to promote good hygiene practices
- 1,911 members of Water Point Committees were trained to provide local maintenance and operation of water points

ORGANISATIONAL AND PRIVATE DONORS

Medair's humanitarian response in Madagascar is supported by Swiss Solidarity, EC Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Agence de l'eau Rhône Méditerranée Corse (FR), Zürich Zoo (CH), Leopold Bachmann Foundation (CH), and generous private donors.

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For Media

Interviews, photos, and stories are available in English.

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Village volunteers are very important for the continuity of Medair's work. Here are the village volunteers in Antsirabe Sahatany, Maroantsetra.

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The kind of sanitary latrine installed in the urban commune of Maroantsetra: EcoSan latrine.

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A Medair car travelling on the National Road linking Maroantsetra to Mananara.

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A mother gives drinking water to her daughter in the village of Ankofa, Maroantsetra.

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