



Village Redemption Strategy 2020

A 7-Point Blueprint for Spiritual Growth and Economic Prosperity in Rural Villages in Madagascar

“Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers” (3 John 1:2)

“Ministries come and go, but FOMM has been a friend all the way through since 2010. They give 100% of what they promise” - *Leader of a Malagasy program funded by FOMM*

Village Redemption Strategy

1. Background:

The Betroka historical life style and the challenges for village redemption

Poverty, poor education, climate change, drought, famine, political corruption and a history of kleptocratic rule have all but destroyed the way of life and welfare in rural villages in the south and south-western regions of Madagascar. As a result, villagers have a low level of literacy, poor health support, insufficient water supply and resulting high malnutrition and mortality rates.

In response to this need, FOMM is developing a strategy that can stimulate sustainable growth and enterprise in villages in order to bring positive changes to the lives of villagers.

The **Bara** people are a Malagasy ethnic group living in the southern part of the central plateaus of Madagascar, in the Toliara Province, concentrated around their historic capital at Ihosy. They are spread across a vast area of the central-South of Madagascar, with tentacles into the West and East. This region is home to the approximately 520,000 Bara, a pastoral people who have remained faithful to the ways of their ancestors. The Bara are the largest of the island's zebu-herding peoples and have historically lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle, although an increasing proportion are practicing agriculture. Bara society is highly patriarchal and endogamy and polygamy are practiced among some Bara tribes. Young men practice cattle rustling to prove their manhood before marriage, and the *kilalaky* musical and dance tradition associated with cattle rustlers has gained popularity across the island.

The Bara culture is not unique in that they are animists who practice ancestor worship and the offering on sacrifices to the spirits. Their lives are controlled by rules and more rules that govern eating and sacrificing and as a result they live in fear under the oppression of demonic spirits. The enforcer of the rules is the “ombiasa” or witchdoctor. He is the one who intermediates the contact with the spirits of ancestors (evil spirits) and knows how to please them. The common practice is to follow the rules or your ancestors will punish you.

Life is hard for the Bara people. Poverty, sickness and death are part of their life. Nevertheless, they keep faithful to their traditions. Bara society, hitherto impermeable to new ideas, is being increasingly forced to consider foreign concepts like schools and alternatives to cattle herding because of insecurity; there is the constant threat of losing their herds to organized theft which in some cases forces them to abandon their villages and find a different way of life.

The Bara have been one of the most resistant group of people to reach out with the Gospel in Madagascar. The stronghold of Satan is powerful and the spiritual welfare is constant. In many cases, Bara people have become disciples of Jesus after seeing the greater power and authority of Jesus to expel demons and heal people. Many Bara villages open up to listen about Christ, so every effort to reach them with the Gospel is important.

We trust that Christ will honor every effort to glorify his name among the Bara people. This strategy is not prescriptive, but represents an openness to hearing God's voice of leading as we seek to bring the message of the Gospel as well as social upliftment to the Bara people.

2. Aims and Goals of the Village Redemption Strategy

In consultation with locals (Betroka Bara people), FOMM aims to be instrumental in restoring and stimulating health and wholeness to rural villages that have been threatened, damaged or destroyed by natural disasters such as famine and drought, as well as political and economic neglect and corruption. FOMM aims to identify activities and actions that will bring about restoration of wellness, dignity and quality of life and encourage people to grow in health and wellness without threatening the Malagasy sense of community.

In addition, FOMM aims to stimulate and fund the implementation of economically sustainable projects that are initiated, owned and managed by communities that cause communities to grow in self-management capability, resilience and resources through times of drought and famine.

The Village Redemption Strategy is therefore a holistic, integrated development and aid blueprint that has the twin aims of bringing the message of the Gospel and social justice interventions to the Bara people in rural villages in Madagascar.

In supporting these aims, the specific goals of FOMM are:

- to support the Bara people in identifying key areas of development
- to implement sustainable programs and projects that will restore dignity and quality of life to the Bara people
- to stimulate and fund projects that facilitate self-sustaining enterprises rather than dependency on external support
- to facilitate education and enterprise that will promote resilience to the forces that threaten the growth and survival of Bara communities
- to encourage people in the Western world to become aware of the needs of the Bara people and to participate in prayer and practical support of these goals

3. The Development Model

The proposed development model consists of a unified system of 7 key components that can be set up and replicated in villages across the Betroka region. The 7 key components are outlined in the following table:

	Model Component	Key Descriptors	Comments
1	Churches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central point for evangelism and discipleship training • Multi-purpose community center for adult education and life skills training • Gathering place for community to discuss issues of social justice • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop church facilities as multi-purpose facilities
2	Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide formal education based on government core curriculum • Venue for informal training programs e.g. for the management of water and agricultural systems • Provide holistic education for the whole of life e.g. health training, education, water purification, care of children, enterprise training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate alternative curriculum e.g. International Baccalaureate • Initiate regular conferences to facilitate community input, collaborative planning and sharing of resources
3	Wells and Water systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digging wells in villages using professional equipment e.g. truck, well drills and trained teams • Provision of solar-powered water pumps • Setting up storage tanks and pipelines for human consumption and irrigation • Implementing water management processes that ensure a sustainable water supply for the needs of villagers, animals and agriculture • Provide training and drip irrigation systems for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, wells are dug by hand and are too shallow to provide sufficient water • Shallow wells do not produce a great amount of water • Digging deeper than the hand dug wells would be necessary for an adequate water supply

		villages	
4	Clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up clinics and dispensaries for maximum access by villages • Provide health education programs to villagers as part of the clinic program • Clinics staffed and managed by SALFA and the Betroka Synod 	
5	Seed banks (see Appendix A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide centralised seed banks for ensuring a sustainable supply of seed to villagers and for re-stimulating forestation • Ensure that villages always have sufficient seed for the next crop • Seeds can remain viable for a long time if stored correctly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeds are "deposited" into secure storage with the intention of "withdrawing" them in the future when they are needed. Just as you might keep money saved for an unforeseen emergency.
6	Enterprise training programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up training programs with the goal of facilitating economic inclusion for villagers • Facilitate the development of an economic enterprise in each village based on skills, interests and available resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate processes to identify the most accessible skills and enterprise opportunities for each village
7	Emergency supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal is to be prepared for dire circumstances, but the key goal is to develop sustainability and resilience in the first instance, 	

4. Upholding the Values of the Malagasy Culture in the Strategy

- Malagasy cultural values would run through the model.
- FOMM needs to remain aware of challenges that can arise through being givers and that may not be in the best interests of recipients
- There needs to be a concept of giving and sharing that lessens dependence on outside support over time
- The strategy goes over and above material values and seeks to foster a culture where those who are recipients also see themselves as not just me as sharing surplus produce, goods and skills

The 5 Key Values (Learning, Growing, Participating, Giving and Sustaining) underpin the 7 Strategic Actions, as depicted in the following diagram:



5. Current stakeholders

	Name	Role	Comments
1	Pastor Jean Norbert Andriamihaja (“Haja”)	Betroka Synod President	
2	Pastor Rasolondrazany Manoela	Pastor of Cathedral in Betroka	Currently managing an outreach program that has shown the Jesus movie to 201 villages and planning to reach an additional 100 villages in the next year
3	Fernando Basso	Brazilian mission worker with AIM (Project Coordinator)	Cooperating with Lutheran Synod in the area to conduct research and facilitate the implementation of rice cleaning machines in villages
4	Jeannot Luther Razafindrabefitory (“Luther”)	FOMM’s official translator	Luther resides in Antananarivo
5	Andry Ranaivosan	Research Associate, University of Minnesota	Trained hydrologist (University of Minnesota, Israeli University) and university lecturer
6	Andrianaivo Tsimbina (“Tsitsy”)	Teacher and consultant	
7	Meta Paubert Kaurin	Nofi I Androy (Dream of Androy)	Founder and president of this educational organization that supports young women to continue their school and university education
8	Steve Lellelid	Missionary in south-west Madagascar	
9	Dr Elson and his wife Hanitra	Evangelism coordinators for FOMM in the South-west	
10	SALT seminary, Fianarantsoa		Second largest city in Madagascar

6. Successful models and lessons

- There are 2 successful drip irrigation projects at Ejeda and Manasoa
- Ejeda Hospital has no springs, only hand dug wells
- Manasoa springs are used as a water source

7. Staff and resource needs

- A local village leader is required to manage, coordinate and oversee the project
- The services of a hydrologist will be required to formulate strategy and guide the well-digging process and formulate a plan and schedule for digging wells in 400+ villages
- A well-digging rig is required i.e. a truck with well-digging equipment and two trained operators
- Teachers for villages schools
- Trainer for skills-based education programs
- Nurses and doctors to work in clinics

8. Projects with potential for immediate implementation

- Rice-cleaning machines for Tobys
- Expansion of drip irrigation projects
- Sandal manufacturing from old tyres as a possible village enterprise project

Appendix A

Think of a **seed bank** as a savings account. Seeds are "deposited" into secure storage with the intention of "withdrawing" them in the future when they are needed. Just as you might keep money saved for an unforeseen emergency. When stored correctly, seeds can remain viable for a long period of time.

The goal of a **seed bank** in the Friends of Madagascar Mission Village Redemption Strategy is to always have available an adequate amount of seed to plant the next crop.

The secret for a successful **seed bank** is described in two words: cool and dry. Ideally, there should be no moisture around your seeds. The temperature should be **40 degrees Fahrenheit** or lower, but should not drop into sub-freezing temperatures as that kills some forms of plant embryo. It should be dark or dim, and it should be pest and critter free.

Tip 1: Maintain Cool Conditions

Keep seeds out of direct sunlight in a cool spot that maintains a fairly consistent temperature. Consider a location where the seed remains at a constant, cool temperature year round. Freezing isn't necessary for short-term storage, but you can refrigerate seeds, provided they are sufficiently dry. In the Betroka region the cool, dry conditions might be found by digging down into the earth.

Tip 2: Maintain Dry Conditions

Before you place your seeds in storage, it's important that they are dry. Not sure? A simple bend v. snap test is a good starting point. If the seed can be cleanly snapped in half or shatters under stress, it is likely dry enough for storage, even in a freezer. But if it bends or smashes, the seeds should be dried further before being stored.

Consistency is key when it comes to temperature and humidity levels to keep the seeds safe.

Tip 3: Protect the Seeds

We've all had a plant or two that's caught the attention of a pest. Critters, rodents, and bugs also enjoy nibbling on seeds that are waiting to be planted. Choose a storage spot that is pest-free and you can keep a close eye on to ensure it remains that way. Glass jars, metal containers, or wire mesh can further protect seeds from invaders.

Some seeds do not fare as well in storage. Crops like carrots, parsnip, onions, and leeks are notoriously short lived. With these safeguards in place, you'll be able to plant your seeds later and enjoy watching them grow.

Details of how to build and maintain a **seed bank** according to these tips will be developed later, according to the conditions in the Betroka area.