

Proposal 1st Draft

Introducing coastal science, conservation and management curriculum into the Primary Public Schools of the 11 communities of the Bay of Ranobe.

Needs Assessment:

The communities surrounding the bay of Ranobe in southwest Madagascar are collaborating with the NGO Reef Doctor and with the local association Fimihara in an effort to sustainably manage their coastal resources. The population of this region depends heavily on these resources, but each year the pressure increases due to overpopulation and unsustainable fishing and harvesting practices. A sustained, thriving human population requires a healthy, sustainably managed fishery and conservation of coastal resources.

Conservation is difficult, however, in the face of poverty: people often engage in environmentally destructive behaviors (such as beach seine netting, taking juveniles and already threatened species to cutting mangroves for charcoal) because they believe they have no other way to feed their families. Children are sent to fish and collect aside their parents instead of staying in school, which creates a new generation of poor and uneducated people with few choices.

Arguably the best tool for fighting poverty is education. Literacy and numeracy opens new doors and gives young people alternatives to following their parents' footsteps.

The children of the rural communities surrounding the bay of Ranobe have little chance of continuing their studies beyond elementary school (only 12% of elementary pupils continue onto higher education), which negates their chances of moving out of poverty. Uneducated, they will have little understanding of basic ecology of the marine resources that they depend on for their livelihoods. They won't have the knowledge and reasoning to consider preventative health methods or good nutrition. Thus the cycle of poverty continues, and the natural resources are abused and eventually exhausted.

Proposal

In this program, we propose to train teachers in elementary schools in the 11 fokontanys (villages) bordering the bay of Ranobe using an environmental education curriculum developed by Reef Doctor. We will train teachers how to use the curriculum, which includes background information, exercises in reading, writing and math, songs, games and visual aids to instill in their students a love of the environment as well as a love of learning. We will help teachers develop their pedagogy to engage students' curiosity and to accommodate diverse learning styles.

We will support teachers and encourage them to use more effective teaching methods in the classroom for environmental education as well as all subjects, helping them attain a higher level of satisfaction in their work and in seeing more students succeed.

After working with motivated teachers over the school year, we will propose a contest with their students to create an environmentally themed comic book. The winning comic will be reproduced and distributed to school libraries and the winner awarded a scholarship for school related expenses and materials.

Goals:

1. To train teachers on important themes in marine science and conservation
2. To help teachers develop better teaching materials and methods
3. To encourage teachers to employ diverse teaching techniques to help all of their students learn
4. To inspire in students a love for learning and a desire to continue their studies in spite of difficulties
5. To instill in children a love for the environment and a sense of stewardship
6. To help students express themselves using art, music, theatre and performance
7. To reach all communities surrounding Ranobe, through their school children, to educate about reef doctor's work, fimihara and other efforts for management of resources, environmental protection and conservation.

Steps:

1. Identify and invite motivated teachers as well as school directors to participate in training
2. Train teachers with lesson plans and materials
3. Make scheduled visits to each class to lead planned activity
4. Make scheduled visits to each class to evaluate teachers
5. Invite class on a field trip to Reef Doctor to participate in half-day interactive program and meet staff members
6. Introduce Comic book contest and set deadline
7. Collect and judge comic book entries, choose winner
8. Award winning author scholarship and present comic book at Environmental Education themed party
9. All work will be linked with the regional and national Ministries of Madagascar involved in Education, continuing the already establish collaboration with the Regional Ministries of Tulear of DREN (Direction Regional du Education National) and CISCO (conscription scolaire).

Expected Results

We expect an increase in 7ème students passing the CePe exam in participating schools, a decrease in students leaving school, and a higher return rate of teachers.

Indirect effects include greater environmental awareness in each community as well as more voluntary participation and understanding of students' parents in general conservation efforts run by ReefDoctor and FIMIHARA.