



Newsletter 1/2019 – January-March

Dear friends of Boky Mamiko,


We are proud to introduce our first newsletter! We are planning to write a newsletter every three months, to keep everyone interested in Boky Mamiko updated about the most recent activities and progresses.

Boky Mamiko is going to be 1 year old officially on April, 6th 2019. We have started preparing for our second year of activity, and already we have lots of interesting news to share with you.

The Madagascar team of the Swiss NGO ADES visited the Mamiko school in March for a two-day workshop on environment protection, a kindergarten teacher of the Lycée Français of Zurich will stay at the Mamiko school for a week in April, and our volunteers are getting ready to spend their summer in Djangoa.

News about these and many other exciting topics can be found in this newsletter. Enjoy your reading!

Thank you for your support and continued interest,
The Boky Mamiko Team


Rossana Galli
Founding member


Felicia Sexsmith
Educational Director

Health and Nutrition Program

The three months of the rainy season in Madagascar (January, February and March) are called the “hard months” by the Malagasy people. Many families don’t have enough to eat due to the heavy rains and stormy weather which negatively affects agriculture and fishing activities, their primary food sources. The situation is the same in Djangoa, where children in many families eat only twice per day during these months. To support the children’s health and learning capacity, Boky Mamiko is paying for a nutritious morning snack offered every day to all the students of École Mamiko from January to March. Our support covers the cost of the ingredients and the cook’s work.

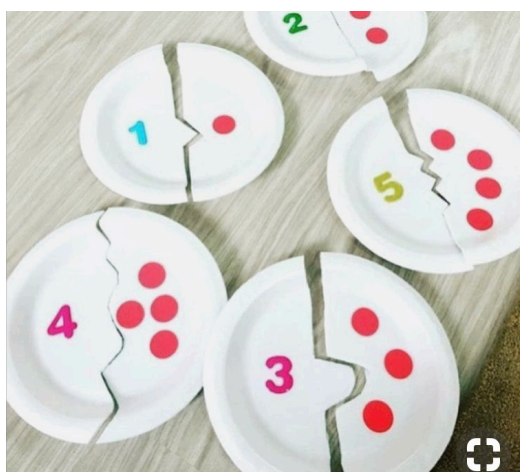


Supporting Early Childhood Learning and Teaching at École Mamiko

Early childhood education is critical for developing solid foundations of children's social and cognitive skills. The presence of a kindergarten at École Mamiko is a rarity in rural Madagascar. One of our goals is to improve the early learning opportunities and outcomes at the Mamiko school through helping further develop their kindergarten class.

With this aim, we have organized for an experienced kindergarten teacher of the Lycée Français of Zurich, Ms. Céline Trimaille, to visit the Mamiko school in April. She will spend a week working with the kindergarten and early primary teachers. Ms. Trimaille is preparing several educational games, based on very simple and recycled materials, which she will bring to the school in April. She will demonstrate modern early childhood learning processes of active and exploratory learning with the classes, which will also serve as a training for the teachers at the school.

At the same time, we are searching for Swiss manufacturers of toys who are willing to donate toys (like wooden puzzles or building blocks) to the school. So far, Lignum, the Swiss association of wood artisans (<https://www.lignum.ch>), has kindly donated 10 wooden Tangrams to Boky Mamiko. These types of games help with geometric and spatial thinking, as well as develop problem solving and creative skills. While we keep searching for donations of this kind, we will probably buy a few more games for the school and/or arrange to have them made in Madagascar.



One of the games prepared by Ms. Trimaille to help with number recognition



The 10 Tangrams donated by Lignum

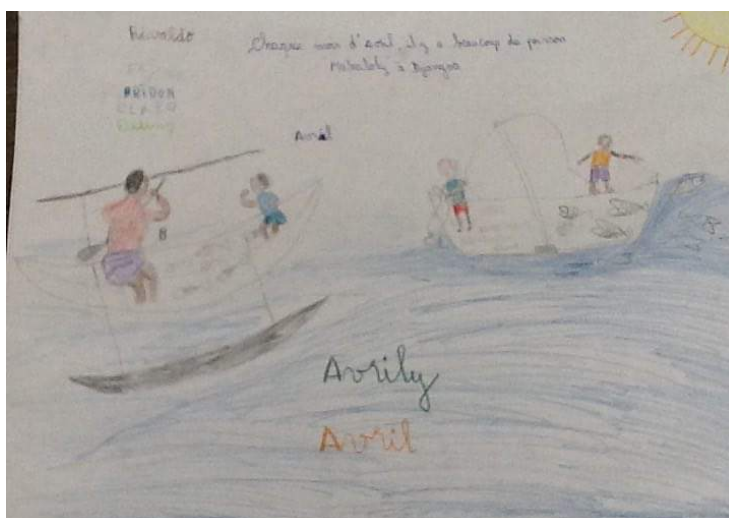
Stimulating Creative Learning Activities in the Boky Mamiko Library

Our librarian, Storya, keeps the Boky Mamiko library alive and active. The children from École Mamiko and from the entire village are welcome in the library every week day. She reads books to them, keeps the library organized and has promptly implemented two suggestions we gave her.

First, she introduced the idea of “buddy reading”, where older children read a book to younger children in pairs. This strengthens the reading of the older students, while providing a model of good reading, scholarship, and practice to the younger ones. Second, she had the children illustrate the different months of the year and the seasons. The children produced beautiful drawings and short French texts explaining the characteristics of each month in Djangoa. We are planning to contrast these drawings with parallel drawings and texts produced by Swiss children. With these, we will produce learning material for students in Madagascar and Switzerland alike. We also hope to be able to use some of the art as fundraising material as well!



“Buddy reading” at the Boky Mamiko library



“Chaque mois d’avril il y a beaucoup de poissons à Djangoa”

Supporting Geography Learning at École Mamiko

Last summer our teaching volunteers realized that the lack of geography maps, atlases and globes matched – not surprisingly – the students' very limited knowledge about continents and countries.

To fill this gap, in November, we brought the school geography learning materials, including five world map laminated posters and a world puzzle, both of which were donated by the Swiss publisher Hallwag Kümmerly+Frey, and two large globes. Students and teachers seem to appreciate this way of learning about the world geography! It is very different than their regular text book learning.



Promoting Environmental Education and Awareness at École Mamiko

One of the current goals of École Mamiko/Boky Mamiko is to introduce environmental education and awareness to the students.

We are in the process of creating an environmental studies curriculum specifically tailored to the students of École Mamiko. We are examining books, learning materials, and organizations which can help us to this end.

Here is some of the specific progress we have made thus far:

- The Zurich-based NGO ADES (<http://www.adesolaire.org>), which produces energy efficient cookers in Madagascar and is active in promoting environmental education within local schools and communities, visited École Mamiko on March 6th-8th. They presented their environment protection education program to the different classes of primary and secondary, and their energy efficient cookers over the course of two days (<http://www.adesolaire.org/en/ades-in-madagascar-en/schooling-programme-en>). Also, we visited the Zurich office of ADES and discussed possible further interactions to promote the adoption of energy efficient cookers by families in Djangoa. These cookers, by reducing substantially the consumption of charcoal, would have beneficial implications both for the families' expenditure and for the environment .
- The Geneva-based NGO Cattamada (<https://cattamada.com>), which focuses on the protection of lemurs and Madagascar biodiversity, has offered to share the learning material they created with us and to exchange information.



The environment protection education program held at École Mamiko by the Swiss NGO ADES on March 6th-8th

Preliminary assessment of feasibility and cost of water infrastructure for the school

In Djangoa the public water system is practically non-existent. The only way to access water is to walk to a faraway public fountain (which is often not functioning) and carry heavy buckets of water to where it is needed. The result for the school is that during school time children drink from a bucket of unfiltered water with a cup shared among 150 students. Besides, they cannot wash their hands at school. This obviously raises hygiene concerns. A Malagasy solar engineer, trained by the Swiss NGO ADES and based in the nearby island of Nosy Be, has been to Djangoa to evaluate the feasibility and cost of building a water well with solar powered water pump, storage tank and filters to provide the school with potable water. He will soon send us his technical report with an offer.

Volunteer Teaching Program Summer 2019

We are happy to announce that the volunteer teaching program will take place again in summer 2019. Four student volunteers (Marie Arnold, Michael Müller, Ona Pierce, and Sarah Steinegger) will leave on July 2nd for Madagascar and will spend about two months in Djangoa.

Neos Airlines kindly offered to keep supporting our project by donating the flight tickets to our volunteers, like last year.

The volunteers will focus on different teaching and support activities, ranging from French, English, environmental education and eco-tourism.

Application to the Cantonal Tax Office for Tax Exemption of Boky Mamiko

After an intense period of work to prepare all the necessary documentation, we sent our application for tax exemption to the Tax Office of Canton Zurich on February 16th.

Obtaining the tax exemption from the cantonal tax office is equivalent to being officially recognized as a non-profit organization carrying out a charitable activity. It is also one of the pre-requisites to apply for the ZEWO certification. Moreover, once the tax exemption will be approved, donations to Boky Mamiko will be tax deductible for donors.

As stated in the cantonal tax office website, it takes at least three months for the office to process applications for tax exemptions. We expect an answer at the end of May at the earliest.



That's all for now!

We look forward to sending you our next newsletter in June 😊