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Ambodigavo Village Womens Cooperative Sewing & Tailoring for Income Generation Workshop October-November 2008

Week 1 Progress Report

Thank you all for your support of the Ambodigavo womens association sewing and tailoring workshop, which is currently teaching an important income-generating skill while empowering three generations of women in this wonderful village in northeastern Madagascar! The 30 participants of the Ambodigavo cooperative just completed their first week of class, learning planning, drafting, measuring, cutting and sewing skills necessary to make a woman's ensemble (every member will have finished her first outfit by this coming Wednesday). These women have wanted to learn to tailor for many years but have not had the means to host a workshop in their village until now.

The village association began its three-week workshop this Monday, 12 October. I am simply coordinating and teaching money-management, while our excellent sewing instructor (husband of the respected community midwife in the village of Marovato), is a tailor who got certified to teach in Antananarivo and has led several other sewing trainings in larger communities in this region.



Of our 30 participants, four women are illiterate and one is nursing a new baby. Each of these women has a son or husband that has joined them each day so far of the seminar, to write for them, help when needed, and learn along with them.

There are three generations of women learning sewing and tailoring skills in the workshop.

Students are paired into partner groups in the church where the class is being held (a wood and raffia palm long-house with a sheet metal roof and earth floor).

Three of these groups are mother-daughter pairs, like Emilienne and her daughter (right).



Each workshop member is taking meticulous notes in her “cahier” on how to accomplish each step of every pattern she is taught, so that she will be able to repeat them in future and even teach others in her family how to tailor clothing. It is incredible to see these women and girls all learning together, engaging in such a stimulating and creative activity. For these women, the sewing class is a wonderful break from their daily responsibilities of cooking and caring for children and working in the fields.

The village has come together to help care for the children of women in the class, so that they are free to learn. Family members have arranged a make-shift daycare in the field outside the church, where children play together when they come home from school. Husbands, fathers and brothers are helping care for infants and babies.



Because sponsors exceeded expectations, we were able to purchase two manual sewing machines for the cooperative members who do not have their own, to learn on during the workshop and share the use of in future.

These heavy and precious sewing machines are carefully transported to and from the classroom every day on top of the heads of the cooperative ladies, like other goods.

In the upcoming week the women of Ambodigavo will learn how to better use their sewing machines and begin another in-demand clothing pattern. Every woman I've spoken to this week has been enthusiastic about the class, thrilled with the teacher, and extremely eager to learn. It's a joy to visit Ambodigavo and see the cooperative members working so hard and with such a sense of purpose!



Morning of Day 3 of sewing class, learning clothing patterns.

Participant List

Anarana sy Fanampiny Full Name of Participant	Andraikitra Role in Womens Cooperative
Zafinosy Olivianne	<i>Filoha</i> -President
Ravoobia Emilienne	<i>Mpitantsoratra II</i> -Second Secretary
Zafisy Vivianne	<i>Mpitambola</i> -Treasurer
Rasoa Martine	<i>Mpanolotsaina</i> -Vice President
Tobavy Helene	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Soatsara Martine	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Rasoa Eline	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Rasoanary Marie Solange	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Soavavy Veronique	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Rasoanarivo Mangaso	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Rasoanatiana Emilienne	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Floriette	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Denise	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Rasoandalana	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Zerimamy	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Landy	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Ravaorisoa Melanie	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Lea Jeanne	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Rasomalala Angeline	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Rasoa Manarina	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Natacha	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Fatima	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Angeline	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Marie Helene Clarisse	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Vavisoa	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Vitasoa	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Fidizaramila M. Sophie	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Rasoamandrasana M. Cecil	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member
Genie	<i>Mpikambana</i> - Member



Expenses to Date
(Local receipts available)

Purchase	Quantity	Total Cost (Malagasy Ariary)
Manual Sewing Machine	2	220,000
Blue Pen	30	6,000
Red Pen	30	6,000
Pencil	30	6,000
Drafting Ruler	30	84,000
Measuring Tape	30	23,100
Notebook	30	12,000
Notebook cover	30	6,000
Eraser	30	9,000
Sewing scissors	30	82,000
Peroque (hand-carpentered)	30	60,000
Material (4.5 meters)	30	405,000
Zippers	30	3,000
Drafting Paper	60	6,000
Needles	60	6,000
Epingle	3	3,000
Instructor Food	15	40,000
Student Enrollment Subsidy	30	240,000
Total Spending for Sewing Workshop (MGA)		1,217,100 AR
Total Spending for Sewing Workshop (US\$)		\$811.40



The village is in need of a community-owned boat to assist children and others with river crossings. I have been working with the cooperative secretary to plan to have a large wooden dugout canoe built for the community. I would like to use excess funds to cover 75% of the cost of having this canoe built and transported to Ambodigavo when the sewing workshop is completed successfully. A payment of 1,000AR or \$0.60 by each household in the village should lend an important sense of collective ownership and responsibility for the boat. We estimate the cost of construction will be **134,000AR** or **\$90.67**.