

Antananbaobe Village Womens Cooperative
F.V.M.A.- Fikambanana Vehivavy Miraihina Antananbaobe
Improved Agriculture Project

SRI- Système d'Intensification Rizicole
Conservation through improved food security

Progress Report #1
Antanetiambo Nature Reserve
Association des Partenaires Ecotouristiques

“Izay mamboly vary maroanaka miaro atiala”
“Those who farm SRI protect the forest”



Photo: *Fikambanana F.V.M.A.* Ambodigavo cooperative members in the 1 hectare rice field they will farm January-May 2009 with help from Fideline's husband (left) and rice paddy owner (right).

The Antananbaobe SRI Project began with a training *formation* held 15-16 November 2008 with Rachel (Peace Corps Environment: taught basics of SRI and money management training), BOSCO (PSDR-Trained Rural Agriculture Extension Agent: functioned as technical trainer and will provide consulting throughout the farming process) and Desiré RABARY (Antanetiambo Nature Reserve: taught fundamentals of environmental education).

BOSCO will play a critical role in the project. His presence as a local agricultural educator will make this project sustainable. The goal is that each woman in the cooperative will learn from BOSCO how to farm using the SRI method, demonstrate with their one-hectare collective plot exactly what a higher yield results, and then teach their own families and other subsistence farmers in their rural commune.

At our two-day classroom seminar, we taught the cooperative women to:

- **LEARN** how to farm rice using the SRI technique
- **PLAN** a calendar for field preparation, planting, transplanting, irrigation control, weeding and harvesting
- **UNDERSTAND** money management for this project and financial planning for future SRI farming endeavors
- **DISCOVER** the important role adopting the SRI method can play in increasing lowland rice yields and thus reducing the need to slash and burn surrounding forested hillsides, thereby **preventing erosion, preserving critical watersheds, and protecting local biodiversity** (the village of Antananbaobe is close to protected Anjanaharibe Special Reserve).



Photo: Fidèline, the Ambodigavo *Fikambanana* president, and other cooperative members at the EPP elementary school, learning the SRI step-by-step method with BOSCO. Not all the cooperative women are literate, but all were eager to learn and obviously enjoyed being in a classroom environment again after years of child-caring and farming.