



seed **madagascar**
sustainable environment, education & development



A Proposal for

PROGRAMME SEKOLY: FANAKA PHASE II

Improving the learning environment in schools in southeast
Madagascar

July 2024

Introduction

SEED Madagascar (SEED) is currently seeking £78,865 for a *seven-month project* that aims to *improve the learning environment in schools across rural Anosy, Madagascar*. To achieve this, SEED will expand the amount of seating available by *constructing and distributing 1,307 student desk-benches to 17 schools*. The provision of ergonomic desks and benches will increase classroom capacity and create a more comfortable learning environment that is conducive to learning.

Context

Education in Madagascar

Ranking 177 out of 193 on the Human Development Index, *Madagascar remains one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world*.¹ Children bear the brunt of this burden, with over 70% of Malagasy children living in poverty.² Public spending on education is low, even in comparison to other Sub-Saharan and low-income countries. While the government has committed to allocating 20% of the national budget to the education sector, *only 12% has been spent over the last three years*.³ As a result, only 63% of young people complete primary school, 36% of young people complete lower secondary school, and 16% complete upper secondary school countrywide.⁴

The Anosy Region of southeast Madagascar is particularly isolated and impoverished; access to education is limited as a result of the critically underfunded education system. While nearly three quarters of primary-age children are enrolled in school nationally, *in Anosy, the net enrolment rate is just 54%*.⁵



A photo taken during SEED's needs assessments that shows primary school students sitting on the floor of their classroom.

Overview of Project Fanaka

Building on progress and responding to learnings made in Project Fanaka, Phase I (January – June 2024), this phase focuses on improving the learning environment of rural schools, which are much more isolated and even further under-resourced than schools in the town of Fort Dauphin. Through the local Ministry of Education, rural schools across the Taolagnaro district of the Anosy region were encouraged to submit requests if there was a need for new classroom furniture. Upon receiving requests from the Head Teachers of these schools, and with input from the Ministry, SEED then conducted needs assessments at 17 rural schools. These assessments found that students often study on the floor or share two-person benches between three or four students. This situation makes it challenging to write and focus during lessons. Due to the high number of students per classroom and lack of available seating for everyone, teachers frequently rearrange furniture to accommodate student needs at any given time. This often involves prioritising better seating for those facing more demanding exams.

According to the results of the needs assessments that considered student population, number of classrooms, and classroom size, SEED plans to construct 1,307 two-person desk-benches and distribute them across the 17 target schools. By supplying student desk-benches, SEED aims to expand schools' available classroom seating to ensure students do not have to study and write on the floor, thereby fostering an environment more conducive to learning.

Studies have shown that the link between comfortable seating and enhanced learning is strong, highlighting the positive impact of quality furniture on student motivation and development.⁶ Consequently, more students will have the opportunity to sit comfortably, maintain focus, and undertake exams in a more supportive environment. Increasing classroom capacity and improving the learning environment will enhance student wellbeing and enable more children to enrol and complete school. This project is key to addressing Sustainable Development Goal 4, which has been highlighted as a priority area by the UN, as it works to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all.



Primary school students sitting on the floor during a lesson.



This classroom has some furniture, but not enough seats for all students to sit comfortably.



Broken benches piled in a primary school classroom, taken during a needs assessment.



Classroom built and furnished by SEED.

Proposed Project

SEED aims to address these challenges by conducting a seven-month desk-bench construction project at 17 schools across rural Anosy. This project intends to improve the education environment of the schools by achieving the following three outcomes:

Outcome One:

Provide 5,445^a students with improved classroom seating through the construction of 1,307 two-person student desk-benches.

Outcome Two:

Increase classroom capacity across 17 schools to support future population growth.

Outcome Three:

Offset project-related carbon emissions through a community-managed tree planting site.

Classroom Furniture

SEED will construct and distribute 1,307 two-person desk-benches to 17 rural schools across the Taolagnaro district of Anosy, to ensure every student has an appropriate space to learn. This construction will improve the existing learning environment for 5,445 students across the target schools as the provision of new, alongside existing furniture, will ensure that every student has their own space at a two-person desk bench. Not only will the provision of desk benches provide a dignified space for current students to learn, providing more spaces will accommodate increased future enrolment.

Based on learnings from Phase I of the project, SEED will rent an indoor workshop space with electricity access, where the carpentry team will cut, sand, and varnish all wooden components. This will allow for the materials to be flat-packed and efficiently transported to the rural school sites. The carpenters will then assemble and finish the desk-benches on-site, before presenting them to the schools.



Children in a classroom at an Anosy primary school sharing two-person benches between four students.

Sustainability

Following project completion, the schools will be responsible for managing and maintaining their desk-benches. SEED's classroom furniture is made with high quality wood that is well-sanded, secured using durable nails,

^a The total student population of the 17 target schools.

protected with varnish, and their seams sealed with wood glue. The desk benches are designed to last long-term with minimal maintenance costs, atypical of most furniture available for purchase locally. The use of high-quality materials and carpentry skills will ensure that this furniture is durable and thus, can be used by generations of students to come.

Sekoly Maintso^b

SEED recognises that its operations, including Project Fanaka^c, produce carbon emissions that have negative environmental impacts. This disproportionately affects the communities SEED works with in southeast Madagascar, where there are increasingly unpredictable and adverse weather patterns, including cyclones, floods, and droughts. Recognising SEED's responsibility to reduce carbon emissions and protect the environment, SEED launched Project Sekoly Maintso, which aims to reduce the carbon footprint of construction and repairs by offsetting the carbon emissions of all recent and future school construction projects. Sekoly Maintso plants trees at school sites to offset the carbon emissions from construction and provides natural resources for community use. Trees harvested from the community resource use site will be replanted by the community, ensuring the site is sustainably maintained.

SEED's Capacity to Deliver

SEED is an award-winning, holistic international development charity that envisages communities and ecosystems thriving across Madagascar. SEED has 20 years of experience responding to the need for improved education infrastructure in the southeast of Madagascar through its Sekoly Programme. Project Fanaka has run as a complement to this programme on an ongoing basis since 2010, according to need and the availability of funds.

From January to June of 2024, SEED constructed and distributed 510 student desk-benches across 15 schools in the town of Fort Dauphin for Project Fanaka: Phase I. This proposed new phase will build on progress and respond to learnings made in Phase I of the project to continue providing desk-benches to students in Anosy. The focus of this new phase will shift from town schools to provide comfortable learning infrastructure to support children in rural communities across Anosy.



Upper secondary school students seated in a classroom furnished by SEED during Project Fanaka: Phase I.

^b Malagasy for 'green schools'.

^c Malagasy for 'furniture'.

Summary

The project will positively impact 5,445 current students through the distribution of 1,307 desk-benches which aim to increase classroom capacity and support increased future enrolment. Teachers will no longer have to rearrange furniture to accommodate student needs as each existing and new, two-person desk-bench, will support students and foster a favourable learning environment. After project completion, the schools will be responsible for furniture maintenance, ensuring they can be used to support students for years to come. SEED acknowledges that construction produces carbon emissions and will offset these through a community-managed tree planting site to support the wider community.

Programme Sekoly: Fanaka Phase II aims to tackle a serious barrier to development, access to quality education by supporting current and future students to gain an education in a comfortable and dignified environment that is conducive to learning.

Budget Overview

Sekoly: Project Fanaka Phase II	Budget Total MGA	Budget Total GBP
Activities	30,025,000	6,005.00
Carbon Offset Planting Site	28,500,000	5,700.00
Project Launch	300,000	60.00
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning	1,225,000	245.00
Administrative Costs	4,640,000	928.00
Communication Resources	4,640,000	928.00
Equipment, Materials, and Resources	205,955,000	41,191.00
Lumber	171,520,000	34,304.00
Nails	6,540,000	1,308.00
Paint Work	12,635,000	2,527.00
Tools	9,860,000	1,972.00
Workshop	5,400,000	1,080.00
Human Resources	60,463,002	12,092.61
Administration	12,350,000	2,470.00
Employed by SEED Madagascar (in-country partner)	20,073,466	4,014.70
Hired for Project	28,039,536	5,607.91
Running Costs	59,150,000	11,830.00
Madagascar Running Costs	43,750,000	8,750.00
UK Running Costs	15,400,000	3,080.00
Transportation	27,190,000	5,438.00
Material Transport	22,000,000	4,400.00
Staff Transport	5,190,000	1,038.00
Accommodation and Per Diems	6,900,000	1,380.00
Per Diems	6,300,000	1,260.00
Accommodation	600,000	120.00
Grand Total	394,323,002	78,864.61

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- ⁶ Castellucci, H. I., Arezes, P. M., Molenbroek, J. F. M., de Bruin, R., & Viviani, C. (2016). The influence of school furniture on students' performance and physical responses: Results of a systematic review, *Ergonomics*, 60(1), 93-110. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00140139.2016.1170889>