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**Progress report of the construction of a new  
school building for Ambohitsara I Primary School  
(FF 688)**



**September 2024**

**Feedback Madagascar/Ny Tanintsika (FBM/NT) –  
The Eagle Foundation**

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- a. Donor Name: Foundation Eagle
- b. Name of Charity and Project: Feedback Madagascar / Ambohitsara I Primary school Project
- c. Reference Number: FF 688
- d. Date of grant accepted: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024
- e. Amount: 32,904 GBP
- f. Number of beneficiaries: The direct beneficiaries include 134 current students (71 boys and 63 girls) and 5 teachers (2 male and 3 female) from Ambohitsara I village, which consists of over 100 households. Indirectly, the project will benefit the entire municipality of Tsaratanana, with a total population of 40,926 people.
- g. Name and exact location of the project: Ambohitsara I village, Tsaratanana rural municipality in Ifanadiana district, Vatovavy region, SE Madagascar, Africa.
- h. Expected period of the project: December 2023 – July 2024
- i. Conversion rate, date & amount in local currency: 185,803,556.95 MGA on the 28/02/24 (exchange rate 5,646.84 MGA / £1)

An expenditure report will be included with the final report.



*Figure 1 Beneficiaries levelling the land*

## Context

This project to construct a new school building for Ambohitsara I Primary School follows years of community-led efforts to maintain the school despite frequent cyclone damage. The school's current facilities are inadequate for the growing number of students, with overcrowded classrooms and a lack of proper infrastructure.

The project aims to improve access to education, raise educational standards, and ensure a safe and conducive learning environment for students. This initiative will contribute to the long-term development of the area and help reduce poverty. This report presents progress up to mid-September 2024.

## Expected results

A cyclone-proof school building with three fully furnished classrooms, proper sanitation facilities, and a rainwater catchment system will be built. Additionally, two gazebos and a tree nursery will enhance the school environment, while a trained management structure will ensure future maintenance. Local community contributions in labour and materials contribute to the project.

## Achievements to date

### **1. Community meetings**

The project began with a communal meeting that brought together decision-makers and stakeholders from the village. The purpose of this meeting was to engage the community, making them aware of the significance of the school renovation and construction project. Additionally, it aimed to ensure that they fully take ownership of the initiative and actively contribute to its realisation.

### **2. Earthworks Progress**

The earthworks for the new school building have made steady progress over the past few months. In March 2024, work to level the land had reached 30% completion, then increasing to 95% by April, and they were fully completed by June 2024. This marks a significant step forward in preparing the site for the actual building phase.

### **3. Planting of a hedge**

The planting of a hedge around the school grounds was initiated in February 2024. Unfortunately, the success rate of planting has been low, with many of the plants dying. This challenge will be addressed at the start of the next rainy season, to ensure the hedge fulfils its purpose in providing protection and delimitation of boundaries for the school grounds.

The establishment of a tree nursery, which is an important component of the project for both educational and environmental purposes, is planned for October, to correspond with the tree-planting season.

### **4. Recruitment of storekeeper et AS**

The recruitment took place at the end of March. One storekeeper & security agent is responsible for overseeing the construction site and monitoring the progress of the work. The storekeeper is in charge of receiving the material contributions from the beneficiaries.

## 5. Procurements and transport of materials

The ordering and purchase of construction equipment and materials started in March to ensure the availability of everything required for the completion of the project.

## 6. Sand Supply

The transportation of sand to the construction site has been ongoing, though some delays have been encountered. These delays were primarily due to the heavy rains that caused water levels to rise, making the transportation routes increasingly challenging and, at times, entirely impassable. As a result, the transport of materials, especially sand, was severely hindered between December and April, impacting the overall progress of the construction. The table below outlines progress:

Designation	Units	Planned quantities	April	May	June	July	Mid-Aug	Cumulative quantities	Observation
Medium sand	M3	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	Pending delivery
Fine sand	M3	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	Pending delivery
Coarse sand	M3	60	2.30	16.32	12.24	02	6.64	<b>39.5</b>	Progressing slowly

As of mid-August, the cumulative volume of coarse sand delivered to the site stood at 39.5 m<sup>3</sup>, representing more than half of the planned quantity. However, the medium and fine sand deliveries have not yet commenced; a delay that will be addressed by the end of September.

The project continues to make headway, despite certain challenges. These are being actively managed to ensure the successful completion of the school infrastructure in Ambohitsara I.

## 7. Cement breeze block making

The fabrication of cement breeze blocks took place directly on-site, streamlining the construction process and reducing the need for further transport. The process involved mixing cement, sand, and water in carefully measured proportions to ensure a durable and uniform material. The mixture was then poured into moulds, forming the breeze blocks to the required specifications. After moulding, the blocks were left to dry and harden on-site, with the curing process carefully monitored to ensure strength and durability.



Figure 2 Earthworks (levelling of the land) by beneficiaries



*Figure 3 Building stones and gravel being prepared*



*Figure 4 Work to collect sand*



*Figure 5 Breezeblock production*



*Figure 6 Meeting with the beneficiaries*

## Challenges and delays

This project has faced several challenges that have impacted its progress and led to the delays.

A primary obstacle faced throughout the project was the absence of strong local leadership, which resulted in a decline in beneficiaries' involvement and participation. This caused delays and made it challenging to follow the set deadlines. The current practice of cash distribution linked to post-cyclone recovery efforts by other organisations in the area was one of the primary causes of this. Because of this, people in the community now expect to be paid for their work, which makes it difficult to ask for voluntary donations for continuing projects.

Weather conditions have also posed a substantial challenge. The project commenced during the rainy season, which has introduced significant difficulties. Prolonged rainfall stopped the beneficiaries to do the land levelling work, hindering construction progress. The collection of construction materials, particularly sand, has encountered significant challenges and delays due to higher river levels caused by the recent rains. As the river swelled, the extraction of sand became increasingly difficult.

Additionally, the deteriorating state of local roads has exacerbated the situation. The poor condition of these roads has slowed down the delivery of materials from Fianarantsoa, making it challenging to adhere to the project's schedule and extending the overall timeline. Moreover, one hour of walk is needed to reach Ambohitsara village from the centre of Tsaratanana municipality.

These difficulties underscore the complexities involved in executing construction projects in such challenging conditions and highlight the need for ongoing adaptation and problem-solving to overcome these obstacles.



*Figure 7 Condition of the road to Tsaratanana*

The collapse of a vital bridge between Ifanadiana and Tsaratanana, which occurred subsequent to the submission of our proposal, presented a significant logistical challenge. The bridge remains in a state of disrepair following the incident, resulting in significant delays in transit. The delivery of supplies to this area has consequently become a challenging task. Materials must first be unloaded and then

manually transported across the river or over the broken bridge. They must then be loaded onto other vehicles to complete the journey. In addition to lengthening delivery times, this onerous procedure has made the project's overall logistics more difficult to manage.

## Changes

Several positive changes have been implemented to ensure the successful progression of the construction project in Ambohitsara I. Firstly, significant efforts have been made to encourage greater participation from the villagers, fostering a sense of community involvement and ownership in the project.

Community mobilisation activities have been undertaken, which included visits to all villages surrounding the Ambohitsara neighbourhood, in collaboration with local authorities, community teams, and the Mayor. It is important to highlight that the residents of Ambohitsara have decided to carry out the construction work independently. This decision stems from a desire for autonomy and a commitment to their local community. Unfortunately, some neighbouring villages have been unable to assist due to administrative concerns related to the municipality, particularly regarding requests for independence from the administrative neighbourhood, leading to reluctance in providing support to the administrative neighbourhood to which they belong. Additionally, new sand collection areas have been identified, securing the necessary materials for the next stages of construction.

Given the vulnerability of the beneficiaries, we have also provided meals for those working on the construction site, from the food supplies left of 2023-2024 School Feeding Programme, helping to support their well-being and productivity. Furthermore, we have strengthened the Work Monitoring Committee and enhanced collaboration with local authorities, ensuring better oversight and coordination throughout the process.

## Next steps

The next steps are:

- The laying of the foundations to be finalised by the end of September.
- Major construction work will commence shortly and is expected to be done by December.

## Conclusion

The construction of the new school building in Ambohitsara I has made significant strides, despite challenges such as weather conditions, material delays, and limited community engagement. The successful completion of the earthworks, the partial delivery of necessary construction materials, and the planting of hedges demonstrate the resilience and dedication of the project team and local community.

Efforts to increase village participation, ensure better oversight through the Work Monitoring Committee, and provision of meals to vulnerable workers have greatly supported the project's momentum. Though hurdles remain, particularly with the delivery of sand and the establishment of the tree nursery, the groundwork has been laid for further progress.

As the project moves into its next phase, we are confident that this initiative will provide lasting educational benefits for the children and the wider community of Ambohitsara I, contributing to long-term development in the region.