

What Madagascar expects from its Youth.

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"We must prove that young people are capable of making things happen."

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"Perseverance, resilience, and adaptability are exactly the leadership traits we need right now."



Meeting the 8 young Malagasy
on the list of the 100 Young African
Conservation Leaders. (p. 22)

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What is Madagascar expecting from its Youth?



Professor Jonah Ratsimbazafy,
President of the Madagascar Primate
Research Group (GERP)

Figures from 2015 showed that 64 percent of Madagascar's population is under 20 years old. In other words, Madagascar's population is almost entirely young. In 10 years from now, here is what will happen: Either they will become a great concern for Madagascar, or they will become a guarantee of development for the country.

Madagascar is a rich country in many ways. The natural resources (animals and plants) and the mineral and marine resources that exist here are what these young people need to manage because the current extreme poverty of the Malagasy people is not worthy of this country and causes young Malagasy to flee their homeland.

What comes to mind when you say **youth** is strength and power; and when education is provided and valued, knowledge also comes to mind. This knowledge should lead to sustainable development. However, it will be difficult to develop a country if the youth who are supposed to be the guarantors of development are illiterate (for example illiterate). So, there are these basic conditions that government officials must prioritize because they are the foundation of development. Development of these young people so that they feel that they are not a burden for their society but agents of development:

1- Educational Aspects

It is the duty of the government to make education important by building adequate and quality schools and by training educators to manage the

schools in place. It is within the field of education that all the structures and foundations can be found in order for children and the Youth to learn about the resources available in Madagascar (What types of resources are available in Madagascar? The pressures they face, etc.). Management skills and the introduction of "**entrepreneurship**" must be included in the development of Malagasy youth as particular skills are necessary for the development of management skills. Knowing the treasures of this land and their values leads to love and only those who know can protect them.

It is true that each child may have different interests and abilities, but all students need some basic knowledge, so no matter where they would like to work, there should be a spirit of cooperation that always pushes them towards development.

Education in ethics and civism is also very important in the development of human dignity.

2- Promoting entrepreneurship rather than just waiting for a job

Young Malagasy people often think that it is better to study first so that once they graduate, they could look for a job (rather than create one). Not only is it already challenging for most to find a job, but the few who do get one still need a very long time before mastering it because the world of work is a new field for them. Moreover, most of the time the work they have to perform has nothing to do with the study they have pursued before,

and therefore it makes it difficult for them to manage people (personnel management) even if they possess high degrees.

There are actually manageable resources in the local area (e.g., forests and/or beaches or cultural heritage sites that can be used for tourism; oceans that can be exploited; beaches that can be cultivated; resources that can be recycled and sold for income; beekeeping, etc.), but if these young people do not know how to team up, immigrants or businessmen will be the ones who will make profits from these resources that the local youth are unaware of.

Young people who are ready to accomplish things must be able to form an organization and work together to develop projects that can be funded by the banks. This has been done before and has worked but the teaching of skills and knowledge should be provided (e.g., *leadership skills*, good governance, conflict management, etc.) to succeed effectively without seeking advanced skills and degrees. As a community-based society, Malagasy youth, especially those in the rural areas need to be encouraged to nurture the love for creativity and the creative spirit (spirit of innovation) through education.

3-Encouraging to take on challenges

Even if people possess the strength and knowledge but are not trained to meet the challenges, it will be difficult to really believe that they can make a difference. It is education that leads

to having a competitive spirit and always aims for the higher purposes in life. As an illustration: to insist that Madagascar should stop importing rice for example. This is the goal that we need them to set and we provide them with the tools they need in addition to the knowledge they already have so that they start with what they have first and they can still stay out of debt.

There is often a lot of granite and many youths in the city, but the roads are still *in very poor conditions*. However, these young people can get together to create jobs using these stones so that they can both create jobs and create benefits for their own town, etc.

We need to conquer the attitude of most young Malagasy today, their tendency to simply wait for an offer and the thought that they cannot create something extraordinary without a high school diploma. The resources that we can exploit without harming the environment must be converted into income for the improvement of individuals' lives and the nation as a whole. He must realize that he does not need to be in another country to get a good, peaceful and prosperous life as a young person.

I have been through a lot in my life. There came the sweet season but there were also the bitter ones that became a lesson that led me to success which I would summarize by defining what retirement means to me: "For me, retirement is not a simple matter of age. Some people are still young, but they are no longer

capable of critical thinking; I consider them "retired". Others are well past retirement age, but still think actively and critically; I do not consider them "retired" at all."

So, what Madagascar expects from its youth is not that they would become a burden for this country, but that they would become agents of positive change in all aspects. Smart, intelligent, confident, and supportive. Not people who are always dependent on others or who just imitate what they see abroad but, youth who will respect and support the Malagasy culture. They will not be ashamed of being Malagasy whether it is in the use of the Malagasy language in academic learning, in their daily lives, or in following Malagasy traditional customs and way of clothing.



By **Professor Jonah Ratsimbazafy**,
President of the Madagascar Primate
Research Group (GERP)

Juliana Ratovoson: “We must prove that young people are capable of making things happen.”

It is the first time in the history of the ministry that a 32-year-old woman has been appointed Vice-Minister in charge of Youth. Through an interview with the AmCham, Juliana Ratovoson announces the upcoming amendment of the National Youth Policy (PNJ) and provides a framework for the scope and direction of the ministry's priorities.

It is not common to see a young woman like you holding a government position. Let us go back over your impressive history within the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

I joined the Ministry of Youth and Sports in 2016 as the director of partnerships and development and kept that position for two years. In 2019, I was promoted Director-General of Youth within the same ministry until President Rajoelina appointed me Vice-Minister in charge of Youth in August 2021.

From your personal observations since you were involved in the ministry, how active and involved are young people in Madagascar, especially those in the regions?

Young people in Antananarivo are quite active. So do their peers in other regions but they do need more backing. As our President said, no region or district should be left out.

Could you give us updates about the National Youth Policy (PNJ)?

The last update of the PNJ dates to 2015. Since then, priorities have



Tahina Juliana Ratovoson,
Vice-Minister in charge of Youth.

changed, and we must consider certain amendments. We must assess the real impact of the PNJ on youth. Today, we focus our efforts on the implementation of the National Youth Council, an inclusive and federating platform and every stakeholder from any region will find their proper place. The National Youth Council will make the amendment of the PNJ easier. The Ministry has also created the Coordination Cell of Movements and Associations (CCMA) to map and gather every single player in every corner of the country. As of now, the amendment is still a project to be submitted to the Parliament.

What are the most pressing youth issues that the Ministry considers top priorities?

Always unemployment first. How to provide jobs to young people and

how to help them create jobs through entrepreneurship. However, there are many other important issues that we must address through civic and citizenship education, personal development, trainings. We must protect young people from early pregnancy and drugs. We must empower young people because many only wait for things to be brought to them on a silver platter.

The Ministry is also launching a new department called “*Direction de la Jeunesse et du Rayonnement International*” to promote our youth's participation in international fellowships, internships, workshops, or scholarships. The directorate will work with these youth programs and embassies. I was fortunate enough to have an international background and I would love to inspire my younger peers to follow the example.

Let us go back to the unemployment issues. What solutions does the Ministry come up with to tackle youth unemployment? What kind of coordination or collaboration is there between different ministries?

Interdepartmental collaboration is essential. We fight for better services to young people, but the other ministries (Technical Education and Professional Training / Industrialization, Trade and Consumption / Crafts / Public Offices, etc...) provide the needed resources. We should offer more professional trainings and build on the talent of our

youth. Young people are not enough equipped. If we look at Fihariana, for example, not a lot of young people have been beneficiaries so far. We must fight for a larger quota of young people. With the "Pôle Emploi Jeune", we are seeking to support young entrepreneurs at the national level to scale up their small businesses.

Youth associations have changed the game these last years. How would the Ministry support their valuable efforts?

I call on youth organizations from every field to lend a hand and discuss about the strategy to implement to address youth issues. The Ministry will keep providing resources (trainings and

equipment). We are going to identify the most talented artists from every region and launch a nationwide competition to boost entertainment in Madagascar. All of these represent a huge challenge, but we must be ready to take it up and prove that young people are capable of making things happen.

Does the government really listen to young people?

Appointing a 32-year-old woman member of the government clearly shows how committed to young people the President is. The purpose of my position as Vice-Minister in charge of Youth is to get closer to young people and to break the wall between young people and government officials.

Your message to young Malagasy people?

Young people are the future of our country. It is high time young people woke up and took their responsibilities. The Ministry is here to serve the youth. However, I call upon youth communities to walk hand in hand with us to develop and strengthen youth policies. We need young patriots, young people who care for the country and its future; and young people who mind their neighbours.

 Interview by **Kenny Raharison**

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What is the role of young people in politics in Madagascar?

In the same way as its sub-Saharan African neighbors, Madagascar has a young population, with 60% of Malagasy labeled as young people. Contrary to what one might think, they constitute an "invisible majority" when it comes to the decision-making process and the political landscape in general.

In its **Generation 2030 Africa 2.0** report¹, UNICEF argues that Madagascar is listed among the 36 **pre-dividend** African countries. That means that they can reap the demographic dividend if they implement policies to that end, so that the next generation can carry the country and does not become a burden, generating other social issues.

When we talk about politics in Madagascar, "how to achieve the common good and improve public services" is not exactly the first thing that comes to our mind, but rather the political quarrels and information warfare between the different political factions in Madagascar. And that is not new. Voter turnout has kept falling for almost 20 years now.

The latest legislative elections were clearly a show of dissent for the political class. The average turnout at the national level was 31 percent. We recorded a maximum of 56% and a minimum of 10% of voters who deigned to make it to the polling stations on election day. In view of this, it is difficult to be optimistic about the forthcoming elections.

Towards the implosion of the Malagasy democratic system...

Indeed, social challenges such as unemployment, malnutrition, education and training, climate change, are too often hidden in the political speeches and discussions in Madagascar. These challenges made the Greta launch climate strikes and Nigerian youth the #NotTooYoungToRun campaign. And there are many other initiatives around the world, and especially in Africa.

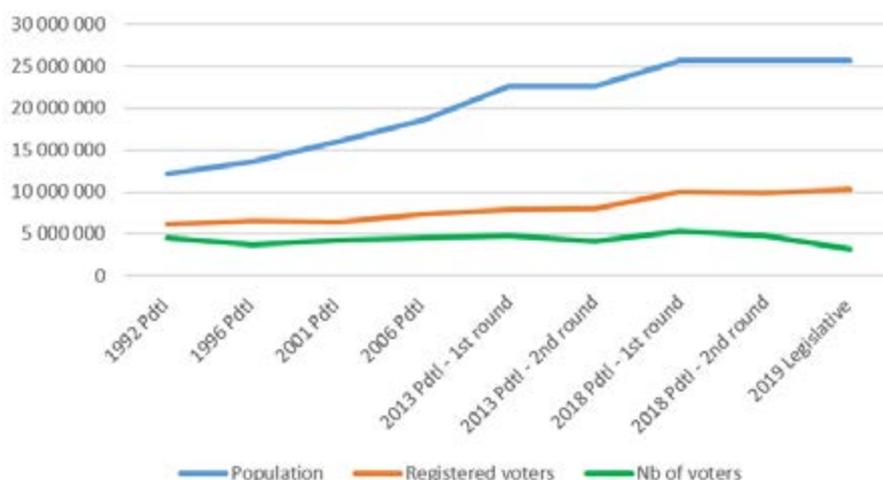
What role for youth in politics in Madagascar? I would say that it is about ensuring the most important function in a democracy, that of "citizen".

"The most important political office is that of the private citizen." – Louis D. Brandeis

Today more than ever, Madagascar needs active and determined citizens to advocate for positive change. As young people, we must express a new political demand responding to our present and future challenges. The political market in Madagascar has long been imposed by the politicians' offer. Given the large number of young people² on the electoral list, it is possible for us to change the story and re-shuffle the cards

 By **Tsimihipa ANDRIAMAZAVARIVO**,
Coordinator, NGO Tolotsoa

Evolution of voting participation in Madagascar



1. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/generation-2030-africa-20>

2. <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/08/remarks-to-the-economic-and-social-council-youth-forum-shaping-tomorrows-innovators-leveraging-science-technology-innovation-and-culture-for-todays-youth/>

SOCIETE GENERALE MADAGASIKARA, STRONG OF ITS COMMITMENTS

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HISTORICAL COMMITMENT OF OUR EMPLOYEES

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2020, A YEAR OF EXCEPTIONAL INVOLVEMENT AND SOLIDARITY



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200 families benefiting from a new water point in Marojela in partnership with the ONG MEDAIR

50 households benefited from food and water distribution with the GRET association

1 000 beneficiaries of emergency food aid distribution with the fundraising of MAHAKAMA HO AN'I ATSIMO



LOCAL SOLIDARITY INITIATIVES AGAINST COVID

04 hospitals and maternity received health care equipments

1 000 families have benefited from PPN donations in partnership with the Commune Urbaine of Antananarivo

01 mobile PCR test mission of the Institut Pasteur of Madagascar in the Eastern part of Madagascar



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370 000 euros of funds granted to CARE International

2 900 vulnerable households received support to restart their activities

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African Youth needs to shine and needs everyone's contribution.

As the Ambassador of the African Youth Charter in Madagascar and as the President of the Pan-African association SOCIAL'ITY, I am sharing here my vision of youth through a Pan-African dimension. I campaign for the promotion of Pan-Africanism in Madagascar and Africa through the SOCIAL'ITY association.

I preach continental solidarity since I am convinced that to move towards real, rapid, and sustainable development in a harmonious society, we must converge our efforts, share our initiatives, exchange with our fellow citizens and those of all African countries. By combining our personal initiatives and bringing together our individual actions, we, as happy and fulfilled youth, will make our respective communities progress towards a prosperous continent.

I envision to successfully forge Africa as a true, independent, and prosperous continent where young people are free and emancipated, where young people influence their own daily lives and the development of their communities and their country through individual and collective actions.

I would like to draw attention, for example, to how important education in political leadership and citizen education are. SOCIAL'ITY is going to tackle that through a Pan-African program called "Pan-African

Leadership Access". Besides, one of SOCIAL'ITY's ambitious challenges is the creation the first "House of Africa" in Madagascar which will be a gateway to Pan-African culture for an entire generation.

Being an **African Youth Charter Hustler** is also a way to achieve this. The "African Youth Charter Hustlers" is a flagship initiative led by the African Union Office of the Youth Envoy, supported by the Youth Division, and in partnership with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The initiative runs for a period of two years (December 2020-2022). The Pan-African platform is made up of **110 young advocates** from the **55 Member States of the AU** and promotes the Youth Charter at the local, regional, and continental levels.

The platform aims to:

Advocate for Action

- Actively advocate for the ratification of the African Youth Charter (AYC) by the 16 AU Member States who are yet to sign and/or ratify;
- Actively Advocate for the implementation by Member states of the African Plan of Action on Youth Empowerment (APAYE);
- Actively advocate for the implementation of the Charter in their countries, including the establishment of effective National Youth Councils (NYCs) where they

are absent, the reaffirmation and strengthening of NYCs where they exist, and the establishment of progressive national youth policies and youth funds.

Promote Africa's Model

- Document the best practices of AU Member States, and encourage sharing, replication and scaling up of these practices on youth inclusion and leadership informed by, and building on, the Status of African Youth Report;
- Promote policy formulation to increase youth involvement and participation in decision-making processes at all levels- political, social and economic spheres;
- Promote Pan-Africanism, Agenda 2063, African solidarity, and intergenerational co-leadership

African Youth needs to shine and needs everyone's contribution.



By **Jimmy Ranitratsilo**, socio-anthropologist, expert in business, political and community development.



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International opportunities for Malagasy youth: to become citizens of the world.

In a globalized context, cultural exchanges have become commonplace. I have always believed that, to some degree, everyone should be a citizen of the world. People's mobility, especially before Covid, was spectacular. For a decade or two, we have seen donors offering young people from almost every country of the world training programs, seminars, scholarships, or exchange opportunities. Some would qualify the move as "soft power" while others see it as offered opportunities. But the facts stand: the world is opening up to young people, including us, Malagasy. Let us take advantage of it!

There are dozens of programs such as training courses and exchanges designed for young Malagasy. Some are (or have turned) virtual while others can be attended in-person. I will share a few with you.

For a decade, the United States has developed the **Young Africans Leaders Initiative (YALI)** – a program that offers fellowships in public management and good governance, business and entrepreneurship, and civic leadership in the U.S. (**Mandela Washington Fellowship**) or in South Africa (**Regional Leadership Center**). The fellowship runs for 4 or 6 weeks, and online courses are also offered alternately with face-to-face programs. I would estimate that nearly 400 young Malagasy have benefited from the YALI program so far.

Besides, the U.S. has also designed the **International Visit Leadership Program (IVLP)**, the **Humphrey Fellowship**, the **Fulbright Scholarship** program, and more.

Recently, **Atlas Corps** has selected a few young Malagasy for a remote training in leadership skills development (scholarship), and allowed some of them pursue paid one-year (or longer) internships in the US (fellowship). Since its launch in 2006, Atlas Corps has trained more than 1,000 young leaders and social change-makers from more than 105 countries. This year, Atlas Corps has selected 13 young Malagasy scholars and three fellows.

Another opportunity comes from the United Kingdom, with its famous **Chevening scholarship**. Outstanding young people from all over the world, including Madagascar, can take a one-year Masters's course in a UK university. Around ten Malagasy scholars are selected each year.

The **French-African Foundation** has launched the **Young Leaders Program**. The program – which is at its third cohort – offers exchanges and seminars for young people from Africa and France and tackles tomorrow's challenges while strengthening the relationship between the continent and the metropolis.

Last but not least, the German **Friedrich-Ebert Foundation** designed the **Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP)** that has annually brought together around twenty young Malagasy leaders since 2005. The program provides trainings in politics, social democracy, and personal development.

Considering that these opportunities are granted free of charge to its beneficiaries, they must earn their spots. Applicants must follow the standard selection approach: eligibility,

submission, and interview. English language proficiency also plays a prominent role as most of the programs are run in English or involve participants from English-speaking countries.

Now, the question is: why are donors interested in young people, and why so much investment?

The first legitimate answer in my sense is **the prominent role of young people as a lever for development**, especially in Madagascar where they represent more than two-thirds of the population. Young people are the present and the future. There should be no argument about that.

The second answer would be the expected **"accountability"** of young people. Is it soft power? In a way, it is; but at the same time, we should not forget that the recipients or awardees always come out winners insofar as they open up internationally, expand their networks, and above all, substantially grow personally and/or professionally.

I would add a third answer: the capacity of young people to better assimilate and adapt to potential **cultural shocks**.

An opportunity remains an opportunity. It is up to us, young people, to assess and strike a balance. We may not have the experience of our elders, but we have the advantage of being well grounded and better qualified to face the challenges of the present and the future. Experience will follow.

 By **Mirado Rakotoharimalala**
Atlas Corps scholar, YALI RLC SA
and YLTP alumna, French-African
Foundation Young Leader



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IN MADAGASCAR



The Mandela Washington Fellowship happened to these 11 Malagasy young leaders.



Alexandre MANAMAMONJY
Civic Engagement, University of Delaware

It has been an honor to be part of the Mandela Washington Fellowship. I had the chance to meet the finest young leaders from all over Africa. Those encounters helped me extend my international network and I am confident it will enrich my professional life. I learned so much, especially about women in Africa. Through the many exchanges between Fellows and institute staff, I have gained incredible insights into the perception of women's rights through the lenses of intersectionality and cross-culturalism. It was an opportunity to talk to the best of the best, and I was inspired by their words to improve my leadership skills. I will continue fighting for girls' rights and wish to collaborate with others advocating for women's rights. I would like to be a role model for our youth namely for girls' access to education.



Heriniaina Zhita Irène ANDRIAMALALA
Public Management, Georgia State University

The Mandela Washington Fellowship was a unique and enriching experience. As a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to develop experiences in a country like the United States, it allowed me to deepen my knowledge and skills. There I could grow as a leader. It was also a great opportunity to connect with African and American leaders. I got expert training on improving my self-confidence, having values, and directing actions towards sustainable goals and ethical behaviors. These new skills will help strengthen my fight for land rights for vulnerable people in Madagascar. As a civil servant, my principal role is to "serve" my country and my people. So, I plan to be one of the key actors in the reform of Land Administration through policies of good governance in an inclusive framework for the benefit of the local population.



Henintsoa Daniel RAKOTOARISON
Public Management, Wayne State University

Through the Mandela Washington Fellowship, I have had the life-changing chance to be ONE with other exceptional youths from across Africa. The knowledge we received from each other was incommensurate both in terms of technical knowledge but also in terms of essential life skills such as adaptability, resilience, and the ability to capitalize on diversity. If one theme emerged from our sharing, it was the principle of "Leading through Strength." Not only were we encouraged to find and explore our strengths, but also to see strengths first in others. As a Child and Youth Care (CYC) worker, this Fellowship has created so many ambitions in me. I would like to partner with influential Childcare institutions and Government bodies to rethink childcare and design services that are inclusive and centered on child development through awareness-raising, advocacy, and advisory work.

James Michael Stuart RAKOTOMALALA
Business, Clark Atlanta University



Thanks to the Mandela Washington Fellowship, I have learned skills that have increased my capacity in leadership and business significantly. Through the Common Leadership Curriculum (CLC), I have had a chance to explore my top five strengths (Ideation, Futuristic, Learner, Focus, Individualization) and enhance my relationship-building skills, especially in a multicultural context. The business track was insightful for me, especially the themes of critical thinking, business plans, and social entrepreneurship. I had the opportunities to learn more about agribusiness with Clark Atlanta University and Purdue University during the community of Practice. Through my professional development experience with Agricycle Global, I am training on food drying, circular economy, and food security. I am planning to implement a fish farming and an artisanal processing facility in Vakinankaratra to tackle food insecurity through fruits processing.

Tojosoa RAMARLINA
Business, Lehigh University



The Mandela Washington Fellowship is the ideal opportunity to meet giants and pioneers in your industry. If you're an entrepreneur and a problem-solver at heart, it is the place to be. The content provided by my institute was top-notch and helped reframe my business approach. In one month, my focus project went from an idea to a realized project with more than five figures in monthly recurring revenue. Above all, I'm now connected to a vast network of leaders and change-makers around the globe. I'm currently working on expanding access to opportunities in the virtual economy through Harato Capital and Rahona Labs. We provide training and resources to 150 people from unprivileged areas in 3 different countries: Madagascar, the Philippines, and Venezuela. Our objective is to onboard 10,000 people in the next few months.

Lova Andrianina RANDRIANASOLO
Public Management, Wayne State University



My motivation to pursue the Mandela Washington Fellowship came from my participation in the YALI Regional Leadership Program. I was fortunate to be selected for the 2021 cohort and to become part of the network of young leaders. The program offered me academic courses, leadership training, mentoring, networking, professional opportunities, and community involvement. But above all, it was a valuable opportunity to improve my leadership skills by becoming aware of my strengths. The public management track helped me understand and harness strategies for developing and influencing policy toward implementing change. Most importantly, I have been equipped with the tools and knowledge to better understand organizational, political, and cultural systems to strategically engage and mobilize support on the ground and to build ownership and commitment of the people I work with and for.

Tsiry Nantenaina RANDRIANAVELO
Civic Engagement, University of Georgia



Professional skills and experiences were part of the assets gained from the Mandela Washington Fellowship, but an extended network and deeper relationships are the most important things I'm taking away. I have been integrated into an active African-wide community. Thanks to the mentorship offered by my focus project coach, my vision of my organization's sustainability is getting clearer. I was even able to elaborate a strategic action plan. Sharing knowledge is among my priorities. By keeping in contact with Fellows and alumni, I am planning to respond to a diverse call for projects and to mobilize volunteers for a community service activity.



Vony RANDRIANONENANA
Civic Engagement, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

What an amazing experience I gained from the Mandela Washington Fellowship in several domains including partnerships, networking, and diversity. In addition to a deeper knowledge of American cultures, I have learned how to explore my strengths to lead and to empower my community through the Leadership Development Action Plan and Common Leadership Curriculum. My current plans are to apply this valuable knowledge to my current work at Clair de Lune Madagascar, developing community projects for women, children, and youth in Madagascar, expanding professional networks with local, African and American people, encouraging team spirit toward the common goal of social inclusion, and being a role model in effective and resilient leadership.



Misa RASOLOFOARISON
Public Management, Arizona State University

The Mandela Washington Fellowship gave me better knowledge of myself and my biases. I was able to identify my talents, which I will develop into strengths for better leadership. I also networked with other fellows, Americans, and other professionals in international trade. I will do my best to maintain that networking, even expand it, to help share best practices and provide mutual support. YALI has also been an opportunity for me to develop a project that is close to my heart and that serves my community. I plan to implement my focus project DIO, a Malagasy word stating « clean » and an acronym for “Dirt Is Over”. It will consist of educating the consumer society for a waste-free environment.



Nadia RATSIMBA
Business, University of Notre Dame

Through the Mandela Washington Fellowship, I learned about American culture, I learned about myself, and I learned how to adopt a strengths-based approach to leadership. I also gained the friendship of my Malagasy Fellows, with the Fellows from other countries, with the university’s team, and during the cultural connection activity. Related to my business track, the fellowship taught me about social entrepreneurship and helped me strengthen my business plan and my leadership skills. I also received advice, guidance, and support from my coach. My plan now is to grow my business to bring it to the next level. I will also use my leadership skills in the associations I lead, and I will continue to bring positive changes to my community.



Patricia Nabeza RAZAFINDRAKALA
Public Management, Georgia State University

The Mandela Washington Fellowship was a very rich program. I gained a lot from it, like knowing my strengths and how to maximize them. As we are living in a particular and uncertain period, the Fellowship taught me the importance of being resilient, flexible, and open minded as a leader. As I have a strong interest in policy, the various sessions on public management, social justice, the UBUNTU philosophy, and public speaking really stood out to me. My next plan is to work with the political party that I belong to in an effort to increase the number of elected members from our party in the next election.

U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Amy J. Hyatt: “Perseverance, resilience, and adaptability are exactly the leadership traits we need right now.”

The U.S. Embassy to Madagascar and Comoros celebrated 11 young Malagasy leaders for completing a six-week intensive U.S. leadership training known as the Mandela Washington Fellowship in an official ceremony on September 14. Here are the remarks from U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Amy J. Hyatt

“It is a pleasure to celebrate the hard work and determination of Madagascar’s young people. I had the chance to speak with some of you at our last networking event, and I can tell you, I was inspired.

It was clear to me why each of you had been chosen for the Mandela Washington Fellowship. Your stories

demonstrated **leadership, innovation, and a commitment to giving back to Madagascar.**

But I am also impressed at well you’ve responded to the unexpected changes that this program has dealt you.

You applied to the Mandela Washington Fellowship thinking you would go to the United States in 2020 for a six-week exchange program. Instead, a global pandemic halted the program for an entire year, forcing you to postpone your plans – only for it ultimately to move online this year.

Confronted with these changes, you demonstrated perseverance.

You displayed resilience, recovering quickly from each challenge. You remained adaptable, embracing the new virtual format and the opportunities that came with it.

These are exactly the leadership traits we need right now.

Like the rest of the world, Madagascar is facing choices as it contemplates how to build back better after COVID-19. How will the country manage its natural resources in a sustainable way that benefits all its people? How will the country develop long-term solutions to food insecurity in the south? How will it address the global challenge of climate change?

These are tough questions. But I am confident in Madagascar’s ability to respond because I have met you. I have heard your stories. And I have seen your potential.

I know that you will employ the **perseverance, resilience, and adaptability** you have displayed throughout this program. I believe in you and your ability to find solutions to tough questions.

And I also know that, like “**Mpirahalahy Mianala**,” the United States will be alongside you, rooting for your success.

So, on behalf of the U.S. government, let me say thank you for choosing this program and congratulations on completing it!”



The 2021 fellows with U.S. Chargé d’Affaires **Amy J. Hyatt**, Vice Minister in charge of Youth and YALI Regional Center alumna **Tahina Juliana Ratovoson**, Minister of Economy and Finance **Rindra Hasimbelo Rabarinirinarison** and Minister in charge of Fishing and Blue Economy **Paubert Tsimanaoraty Mahatante** – both alumni of the Mandela Washington Fellowship (Photo by U.S. Embassy Madagascar)



Mental health: for the resilience of young people facing the global pandemic.

The **World Health Organization** (WHO) reports that mental disorders account for **16 percent** of the global burden of disease and trauma among 10- to 19-year-olds. Half of all mental health disorders in adulthood occur as early as 14 years of age, but most cases go undetected and untreated. According to the **International Labour Organization** (ILO) report of 11 August 2020 "*Youth and Covid-19: Impacts on Jobs, Education, Rights and Mental Well-being*", the pandemic has had far-reaching effects on youth. They are particularly severe for young women and young people in low-income countries. ILO findings say that half of young people aged 18 to 29 are prone to depression and anxiety. The pandemic has had a considerable impact on the daily lives of young people. It has exacerbated mental health issues in everyone, but especially young people.

UNFPA Madagascar published in August 2020 the results of a survey of young people aged 15 to 35. This survey was carried out to assess the impact of Covid-19 on young people. The lack of leisure and the suspension of entertainment and sports activities were a great discomfort for 45.7 percent of young people during the lockdown. **39.7 percent** of adolescents and young people reported growing mental health problems, the study finds.

These statistics suggest that the pandemic has weakened young people's mental health and resilience. Even more vulnerability factors have been identified in Madagascar as young people face poverty, violence, stigma, and exclusion. During the waves of pandemic, they keep questioning their future but struggle to find answers in a context of uncertainty. How to remain resilient and face the post-covid crisis? It goes without saying that youth face several barriers when it comes to mental health and well-being. The topic is still taboo because everyone recognizes what they are going through but does not always dare to talk about it. Mental health awareness remains insufficient and is not being acknowledged.

In order to **lift the taboo on mental health issues** and promote young people's good health, it is essential **to grant easy access to mental health services to young people**, so that at least the most vulnerable can benefit from psychosocial support during the pivotal periods of their lives. It is also worth noting and reminding that the well-being of the population is important for young people's fulfilment. Young people must be listened to, and their opinions must be incorporated because they are the ones who will build, together with previous generations, the environments in which future generations will evolve.

Thereupon, I think we need to talk about the importance of mental health **in preschool classes**. This will allow as many people as possible to pay more attention to the younger generation. The results of these preventive actions will be to identify possible sources of mental disorder as early as possible, and to address them as quickly as possible. Finally, young people must not forget that everyone is primarily responsible for their mental health. To maintain a healthy mind, you need to **adopt healthy behaviors** and never forget to **take care of yourself**. These are for me the keys to suffering the lasting effects of the pandemic and to continue to live in the most fulfilled and resilient way possible!

 By **Holitiana Rajaonarivony Rabarison**, Psychologist, Stress Counsellor UNDSS/United Nations Clinic Madagascar



Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: For a responsible youth.

65% of the Malagasy population is under the age of 24 (Third General Census of Population and Housing of 2018/RGPH-3). Among this predominantly young population, 36% of women aged 20-24 have had a live birth before the age of 18 and 56% of currently married or in union women aged 20-24 are not using any contraceptive method (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey - MICS Madagascar, 2018). We are not going to dwell on the numbers because we all know that issues related to youth sexual health in Madagascar remain critical. Instead, let us focus on solutions to address the disastrous situation in which young people find themselves.

As a youth platform, we recommend the following measures:

- Improve the evidence base regarding the SRHR needs of very young adolescents to fill major research gaps. More data need to be provided, specifically data related to the 10-14-year-old age range, the experiences and needs of young male adolescents, and those of the most marginalized or vulnerable groups of very young adolescents (including refugees and other displaced populations, out-of-school adolescents, adolescents exposed to transactional sex, those living with HIV, and those with disabilities);
- Ensure access to SRHR services for very young adolescents by training

providers to offer non-judgmental and youth-friendly services; creating youth-friendly health facilities; informing and encouraging adolescent males and females to seek services; and building support from community members for adolescent service delivery;

- Continue to focus on proven interventions that keep very young adolescents in school, especially girls (including those who are pregnant or already mothers);
- Implement national Comprehensive Sexuality Education policies and curricula that include information on contraceptive methods;
- Address the structural and social root causes of gender-based violence and early marriage, such as discriminatory attitudes towards girls and women, for example, by intensifying programs to promote equitable gender norms.

In addition, it should be noted that Madagascar launched a Demographic Dividend Roadmap in 2019. This is a reference framework that aims to guide major investments in education, health, economy and governance for Madagascar's socio-economic development, enabling it to take advantage of the demographic dividend. In the area of health, one of the key actions of this roadmap is to **“commit senior government officials to prioritize reproductive health and family planning in order to enable the empowerment and economic**

development of the family and the country.”

In that respect, **we, organizations working in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescents and youth, would like to call on the high leaders of the State on the need to focus on the 10-24-year-olds by significantly increasing the number of youth-friendly health centers and by putting in place a mechanism to monitor the implementation (or not) of the Law Number 2017-043 on reproductive health and family planning.** As a reminder, Article 5 of this law enshrines the right to comprehensive services, regardless of age.

A demographic transition will only occur in an environment conducive to equality between women and men. This allows women to access family planning by overcoming one of the major obstacles they currently face (partner refusal). An enabling environment for gender equality also allows women and couples to have the number of children they want, whenever they want; and encourages women to participate in the labor force and contribute more to the economic well-being of their families.



By **Faniry RAMPARAOELINA**,
Country Coordinator, IYAFP
Madagascar (International Youth
Alliance for Family Planning), PhD
Student in Sociology, University of
Antananarivo

Traditional “kilalao Malagasy”: for educational and social purpose

The *Kilalao Malagasy* (Malagasy games or entertainments) were created based on in-depth studies of the *Ntaolo* — or Malagasy ancestors — to train the future generations' minds to be able to cope with daily life, do household chores, and most importantly, to predict life ahead. The Kilalao Malagasy were designed not only for an entertainment purpose, but also to educate, discipline and inspire Malagasy children. Let us explore what the *kilalao*, the *tsilalao* and the *lalao* are.

What is the difference between “kilalao”, “tsilalao”, and “lalao”?

The *Kilalao* refers to the idea of **playing**. The “*ki-*” in the word “kilalao” suggests the idea of something that does not exist, but the players bring to life. For example, *kivarivary* (collecting dust instead of rice), *kiombiombi* (making pictures of cows with clay). Another example of kilalao

is the “*tantara vato*” (telling stories with pebbles). In these various games, there are well-defined objectives, rules and some competition.

The *Tsilalao*, on the other hand, refers to real-life activities but in a miniature form; for example, the *tsikoninkonina* (cooking real but small meals with small kitchen utensils).

The *Lalao*, which means “game”, refers to the game of human beings based on the study of humanity, a study of life. The concept often encourages the use of the players' intelligence and energy.

A few kilalao and tsilalao with their meanings.

The *kiombiombi* was a popular game among our ancestors and modern generations still play it, especially those in the countryside. It was designed for little boys for them to learn how to breed zebus. Same

goes for the *tsikoninkonina* and the *kivarivary*, which intended to educate girls and to teach them already how to cook and take care of the house.

Kindrindrina is also a Malagasy game that consists of bringing non-existent things to life, such as making dolls with bits of cloth. They also created the *tsindrindrina* where children themselves play the role of a couple, parents, everything that already exists but in their own way as children. The goal is to teach the children in advance how to live as adults.

The *tantara vato* helps to broaden the children's way of thinking. As soon as little girls start talking, they can all play stories with stones. Same goes for the *tsobato* which teaches children, usually girls, to read and count.

What makes the tanisa different from the tsobato.

The *tanisa* is performed by one person using two, three or more stones, while *tsobato* is a team play. However, the rule remains the same: never let the stone fall to the ground. In the story of *tanisa*, the game is accompanied by small words in every step of the game, which describe the different categories of people in the Malagasy society.

These are only a few examples of Malagasy traditional games, but there are many other more.

 Edited by **langotiana Rakotovao**
Sources : **Tsidika, Mot Malgache, Malagasy Students Union in Wuhan, Gasy fomba, Bibliothèque numérique**



A little girl playing “katro”



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Meeting the 8 young Malagasy on the list of the 100 Young African Conservation Leaders.

The African Wildlife Foundation, in collaboration with the African YMCA Alliance, the World Scout Movement and the WWF Consortium, seeks to recognize and encourage 100 young African conservation leaders (YACLs) whose work promises to leave a lasting impression on the African conservation landscape.

In 2020, the consortium invited youth networks and conservation organizations to nominate young people under the age of 35 who have been actively involved in community, national or international conservation activities in Africa over the past three years.

Here are the 8 Malagasy on the list:



Vatosoa Rakotondrazafy Andriamampandry

Vatosoa is an ambassador for traditional fishermen in Madagascar and a specialist in partner engagement and mobilization.

Back in January 2021, she coordinated the launch of Alamino, Agora of landscapes and forests of Madagascar, a national initiative aiming at the greening of the country by 2030. They work on the fight against fires, reforestation, land tenure and territorial planning, and education and awareness. In May 2021, she was selected among the six International Ambassadors for the Mangrove Photography Award.



Sarobidy Rakotonarivo

Sarobidy is an environmental socio-economist at ESSA Forestry, University of Antananarivo. Her research in the Forest4Climate&People project focuses on the social dimensions of conservation and restoration initiatives such as social impacts, benefit redistribution, and land tenure aspects.

She seeks to understand the political, socio-economic, and institutional factors that would promote more effective and equitable conservation and restoration policy. She tries to translate the findings of her research into more accessible and useful tools for policy makers and to help conservation professionals become more confident and capable of understanding and addressing the social challenges of conservation.



Faraherijaona Raharimamonjarivelo

Backed with experience and degrees in tourism and environment, and agronomy, Faraherijaona is also a

conservationist. He acts as a youth leader-educator for ECI Youth Volunteer Network and the ECCA Educational Club, association based in Antananarivo involved in various fields such as education, social work, leadership, rural development, and environment.

Their work in conservation is focused on educating and raising awareness among children and young people. They organize trainings, recycling, and especially reforestation, and build a network with other associations involved in environment protection.



Tiana Andriamanana

Passionate about nature, Tiana joined Fanamby, a team of 96 people present 24/7 in each protected area, whose mission is to address conservation issues by building traceable and resilient value chains within harmonious protected areas to ensure sustainable financing mechanisms for remote village development, while promoting responsible and local stewardship in the management of these protected areas. Fanamby seeks to involve corporate partners and local farmers. 500 local communities are working with them on ecological monitoring and over 7,000 local farmers are benefiting from value-added markets through social enterprises.



Max Fontaine

Aware of the danger of climate change and Madagascar's vulnerability, Max founded Bôndy, a social enterprise that works in impact reforestation in Madagascar.

They plant trees on farmers' plots in order to improve the living conditions of rural populations. They develop agroforestry plots that allow farmers to meet their needs in terms of food, energy and especially economic. So far, Bôndy has planted more than 85,000 trees on 114 partner farms. 1,850 volunteers were able to come and plant trees with Bôndy. For the next planting season, they plan to implement projects in four different regions in Madagascar, other than Analamanga.



Rio Heriniaina

Rio is a primatologist by training and project coordinator for the NGO Guides d'Andasibe, Madagascar. His 10-year research on lemurs led him to conclude that the involvement of the local community is one of the sustainable solutions to conserve Madagascar's biological diversity.

During the last two years, with the involvement of the local community, they managed to inventory the Mahatsara forest (612 ha) and observed seven species of lemurs, two of which are critically endangered. As an outcome of the project of safeguarding the forest fragmentation of Mahatsara, through local village patrols and awareness sessions, zero fire was recorded in 2020. 18 ha of degraded areas are restored with 79 native species through community-based restoration.



Tojo Raminoharijaona

Tojo is the founder of Media Click, the web agency that developed the Fako.io app, which is the first geolocation app for garbage cans, public toilets, and cleanliness infrastructures in Madagascar. The Fako.io app is currently available on Android and iOS.

A new and more comprehensive version of the app, with new features, is under development and Media Click is working hard every day to launch it as soon as possible. The objective is to develop an educational platform in the conservation of cleanliness in all its states, while providing information



Nantenaina Tahiry Andriamalala

Passionate about conservation and environmental protection, Nantenaina Tahiry has a degree in Environment and Earth Science. Since 2015, he has been the National Coordinator of Madagascar's Population Health Environment (PHE) Network.

They bring all the partners and organizations together at the national and regional levels to promote a holistic approach to conservation that considers both the well-being and health of the local population with the protection of the environment. They encourage conservation implementing partners to shift from sectoral actions to a more integrated approach to achieve more concrete results and added value at the community level and at their intervention sites.

Source: **WWF Madagascar**

Contemporary dance: RAZAFINOA Kezia stands out from the crowd.

Dance is definitely one of today's most appreciated art and fun activities. Dancing to music was born very long ago and was introduced as important embodiments of one culture's values. More and more people – professionals or amateurs – now express their worldview through dance. We met Kezia, an ambitious Malagasy dancer who managed to turn her passion into a flourishing career.

A bright-eyed and bushy-tailed young woman.

Native of the land of the Betsimisaraka, RAZAFINOA Kezia Jonah is a young professional dancer driven literally by passion, ambition, and motivation. At age 16, after graduating with a bachelor's degree in tourism, she made the most salient decision of her life. She decided to pursue a career gearing towards her passion: dance. Her career took off when she was selected for a three-year training at Ecole des Sables in Senegal – Toubab Dialaw. She was awarded an internationally renowned diploma in *contemporary and traditional dance*.

Life was not always all rosy... Before she gets there, Kezia had to face huge challenges and hardships. It was not an easy thing for a woman to do what she feels passionate about in our societies. "As a woman, it is not easy to be a dancer, especially when you are from an African descent", she explained. Many African families still believe that making art a career has



RAZAFINOA Kezia

no value, hence, brings nothing at all. Anyway, she was fortunate enough to have her family back her up all along her career journey. Another challenge she struggled with is money. She acknowledged how expensive it is to travel abroad, even to the nearest country.

... but she made it through. Kezia has come a long way and she has now become a key figure of contemporary dance in Africa. Not only does she shine in Madagascar but also represents the country at the international level.

Kezia's international diploma opened the door to a lot of opportunities. She was invited to work and perform with various well-known dancers and choreographers from all over the world such as Salomon Pinabaush, Nora Chipaumire, Alesandra Seutin, Patrick Acogny, Jonathan Burrows, and Karyn Vyncke .

Kezia still stands out from other dancers and keeps bringing innovation in her field. She has recently created a piece called "*Beloved*". Once again, "*Beloved*" has brought her to the final phase of the Bobo-Dioulasso solo choreographic competition "**AFRICA SIMPLY THE BEST**". The final stage of the contest will be held in Burkina Faso from December 8 to 11, 2021. "*Beloved*" denounces women conditions through contemporary African dance which comes with deep gestures and movements in measured rhythm. One more time, as the only Malagasy selected, she will proudly defend the colours of the country.

You will nail it, Kezia!

 By Volahanta Raharimanana



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Youth-led movements in U.S. history: from the early 19th century to alter-activism.

Revolutions and protests have marked the history of the world for centuries. Humanity seeks ways to fight against various injustices of the world that have become a commonplace occurrence in the lives of American people and affect especially the young generation.

A centuries-long protest history.

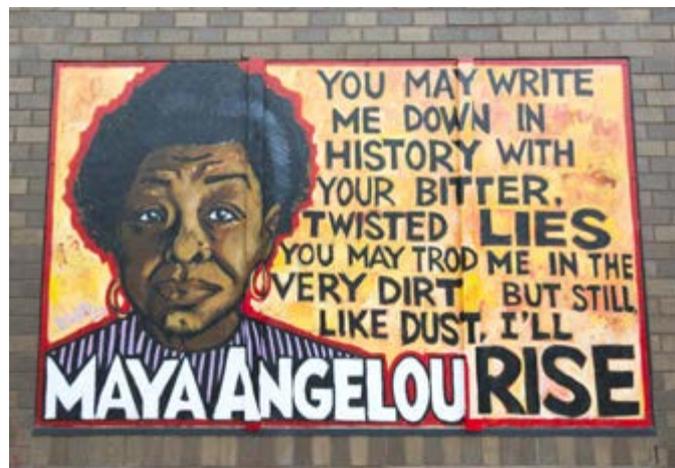
The United States had a long history of activism. The search for social, political, and economic justice in the U.S. has continued over a time span of several decades. Youth-led movements have become major forms of activism over time. Considered as a social phenomenon, youth activism in the U.S. first appeared by the mid-to late-nineteenth century when American young people engaged in labor strikes in response to their low wages and poor working conditions.

Mary G. Harris Jones or **Mother Jones** – an Irish-born American schoolteacher and activist – was the first known youth activist in the U.S., encouraging 100,000 child miners to march from the coal mines of Pennsylvania to the U.S. Capitol in Washington D.C. in 1908. The uprising made Mother Jones become a key figure of youth-led activism across the U.S. and an inspiration to today's young leaders. The fights and protests of all kinds as we know it today have emerged since then. More students and young activists are now seen to actively advocate for socio-political reforms.

In the 1950s, American socio-political activism reached an important milestone during a social upheaval period which gave rise to the civil rights movement – a non-violent social movement led by **Dr Martin Luther King Jr.** to end racial segregation. Dr King involved youth activists in speaking up against racial injustice and in advocating for a peaceful social cause. The movement was game-changing and political participation and activism saw a significant turnaround soon afterwards.

“Alter-activism” as the origin of the modern youth movements.

Alter-activism refers to modern youth activism. It represents an emerging form of citizenship among young people that suggests wider social changes related to political commitment, cultural expression and collaborative practice (**Jurius & Pleyers, 2009**). Compared with past youth movements, alter-



activism is highly globalized, more profoundly networked, and more deeply shaped by new technologies.

Of course, since technology has become the backbone of many of the modern youth movements, today's American youth-led activism can be described as alter-activism. Using communication technologies makes it way quicker to spread information, resources, links, and petitions. From gun violence to climate change issues, American young activists raise their voices via social media platforms.

Here are three youth-led movements worthy of particular mentioning:

- **United We Dream**, an immigrant youth-led network that advocates for immigrant's rights.
- **Team ENOUGH**, a gun violence-related youth movement initiated by Aalayah Eastmond who survived a shoot at Marjory High School in Parkland, Florida.
- **Future Coalition**, a network for youth-led organizations tackling climate issues, gun violence prevention, and advocating for gender equity.

Sources: **AFL-CIO America's Unions / Biography / Common Sense Media / "Alter-activism: emerging cultures of participation among young global justice activists", Jeffrey Scott Juris & Geoffrey Henri Pleyers, 2009**

By **Volahanta Raharimanana**

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