



Communiqué

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de presse

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The U.S. Ambassador R. Niels Marquardt swore-in thirty Peace Corps Volunteers on Tuesday April 29th, 2008 at the Botanical and Zoological Park of Tsimbazaza. Of these 30 volunteers, five will be assigned to Peace Corps Madagascar's newest program: the Small Enterprise Development (SED) program. The other 25 will be assigned to Environment Program.

The first Small Enterprise Development (SED) Pre-Service Training (PST) took place in the rural commune of Ambatolaona and the village of Mahitsitady from February 22 to April 29, 2008. The goal of the technical training was to provide trainees with applicable, practical, and contextual knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding small enterprise development in Madagascar. In order to accomplish this goal, trainees participated in technical sessions, Qualifying Projects, Peer Presentations, Technical Trips, and Guest Speakers' sessions. In addition to technical training, trainees participated in language and cross-culture training and lived with Malagasy host families. All five SED trainees successfully achieved the competencies required of them.

The five SED trainees are assigned to the following communities:

Mahasolo (Bongalava)

Ambatomenaloha (Itasy)

Sandrandahy (Amorin'I Mania)

Miarnavaratra (Amoron' I Mania)

Manompana (Analanjirofo)

The Peace Corps Small Enterprise Development (SED) project is partnered with the Ministry of Economy, Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests, and Tourism. After being sworn-in, SED Peace Corps Volunteers will work with their partners for three months to integrate into and assess their communities. Following their three month community-entry, SED Volunteers' work will be focused on building capacity in these three basic areas: business creation and development for individuals and groups, marketing and access to resources, and ecotourism. SED Volunteers will help meet Peace Corps' first goal of helping the people of interested countries meet their needs for trained men and women by helping to create and strengthen economic opportunities and income generating activities and support the improvement of living standards and business practices. As a result, individuals, groups, and organizations, especially women and youth, will be active in their own sustainable economic development. SED PCVs will also strive to achieve the additional two goals of Peace Corps: helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the Malagasy people, and helping promote a better understanding of the Malagasy on the part of Americans.

According to Leif Davenport, Associate Director at Peace Corps and Project Manager, Peace Corps Volunteers in the Environment Program work throughout Madagascar, however nearly two-thirds of sites are located along the east coast, where the last remaining pockets of Malagasy rainforest are located. Each year about 25 Volunteers are requested, with half the group expected to have forestry experience while the other half will arrive with agricultural work experience or knowledge. The primary Malagasy organizational partners for the volunteers are the Environment Ministry, Malagasy Forest Service and ANGAP, the Malagasy Park Service. The primary role of Environmental Volunteers is to work with host country partners to identify already existing and successful forestry and agricultural practices and then working to disseminate these practices to other people in their communities.