



communiqué de presse

de l'Ambassade des Etats-Unis

14 - 16 rue Rainitovo, Antsahavela, Antananarivo 101 - Madagascar - Tél.: 261 20 22 212 57

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USAID inaugurates New Educational Radio Programs in Toamasina

USAID Mission Director, Mr. Henderson Patrick, and the Minister of National Education and Scientific Research (MENRS), Mr. Hajanirina Razafinjatovo, launched on January 11 in Toamasina the Ministry's regional educational radio programs on school-community partnerships, through the distribution of wind-up radios to community group leaders in the Toamasina II school district. The radio programs, developed by educators from the Regional Direction of Education, Atsinanana, with technical support from the USAID-sponsored ATEC program (Appui Technologique aux Educateurs et Communautés) and Mediascope, a local NGO partner, are part of the Ministry's overall initiative to improve the quality of education in primary schools across the country by encouraging greater parental and community participation in school governance.

Broadcast once per week on local public and private radios, the 25 community radio programs have a dual purpose: to encourage all parents to play a more active role in the life of the local school, and to provide practical training for parent-teacher associations. The programs are produced and recorded in Toamasina by local actors and technicians. They combine local examples of successful community-school partnerships with information on how to develop and implement effective school improvement plans.

Community listening groups have been established in a total of 100 communities in the Vatomandry and Toamasina II school districts. The weekly meetings will provide community members with a forum to discuss issues surrounding school-community partnerships and to identify specific actions they can take to improve teaching and learning.

Commenting on the distribution of radios, Mr. Patrick said, "This gift is a testimony of the commitment of the American people in supporting the Malagasy government's efforts to provide a quality education for Malagasy children". The USAID-sponsored initiative supports the Ministry's goal of expanding distance education offerings and of developing technical capacity in radio design and production at the regional level. The training production being provided by the USAID-ATEC program will ensure that regional education offices have the necessary resources to develop customized programming for parents and teachers in their region.

Similar programs are also being developed by the Regional Directions of Education in Haute Matsiatra and Atsimo Andrefana, in partnership with ATEC regional offices in Fianarantsoa and Toliara, and with technical support of a local NGO, the Federation of African Women Educators (FAWE).

Launching ceremonies to distribute wind-up radios to the 300 communities in the six school districts involved in the pilot project were organized in the December -January period, presided over by national and regional MENRS authorities, and USAID representatives.