

Climate smart villages

An investment in resilient, sustainable villages and a green, opportunity-rich future for children.

MADAGASCAR



Off the east coast of Africa lies Madagascar, one of the world's largest islands, renowned for its unique biodiversity. Despite its natural beauty, this delicate island is increasingly being impacted by the effects of climate change. The severe drought in the south is having devastating effects on the children who live there.

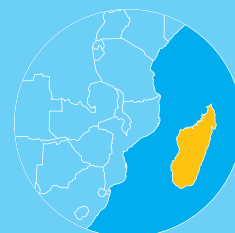
With the innovative pilot project "Climate smart Villages," UNICEF is taking the lead to strengthen 20 villages in the deep south of Madagascar against increasing drought. In collaboration with local partners, we focus on developing sustainable (water) infrastructure, promoting entrepreneurship, and enhancing knowledge. A key aspect of our approach is close cooperation with local governments. Our goal is not only to provide immediate solutions but also to foster sustainable systemic change that will make communities more resilient and self-sufficient in the long term.

Thanks to the invaluable support of our donors, we have made significant progress during this reporting period and continue to advance our mission to sustainably transform the lives of children in Madagascar.

FOUR GOALS WE HAVE SET

1. To better equip Malagasy communities, including thousands of children, to withstand the impact of drought, we aim to make 20 villages in the arid south "climate-smart" by 2025. These villages will gain access to sustainable electricity, water supplies (for both household and agricultural use), internet, and ecological toilets. Additionally, UNICEF seeks to increase climate change awareness, particularly among children.
2. To ensure the sustainability of the project while simultaneously boosting the local economy, we will promote entrepreneurship related to the new infrastructure. This includes training residents to start small businesses and providing them with seed capital.
3. To reach approximately 50,000 people, including 25,000 children, thereby contributing to a more resilient, green, and healthy living environment.
4. UNICEF Netherlands has set a goal to implement climate-smart interventions in at least 2 of the 20 villages.

DATA



Inhabitants
28 MILLION

Madagascar is among the top four countries most severely impacted by the effects of climate change.



14 MILLION
< AGE OF 18

42% of children under the age of five are malnourished.

What did we achieve

Climate-Smart Infrastructure

UNICEF and its partners have nearly completed the installation of climate-smart infrastructure in five villages. This includes the installation of solar panels and sanitary facilities at schools and health centers.

Thanks to the installation of solar panels, UNICEF and its partners were also able to establish climate-smart water systems. These systems, known as Multiple-Use Water (MUS) systems, provide both clean drinking water and water for agricultural use. The water is pumped using a solar-powered pump and then distributed to storage systems, agricultural fields, and drinking water points throughout the village.

The water systems are equipped with sensors that monitor the groundwater level. If the groundwater level drops too low, a warning is issued. After receiving such a warning, the community can take measures, such as conserving water. They can also rely on larger water tanks that UNICEF provides during emergencies. The design of the water systems is tailored to the community's water needs, helping to prevent the potential depletion of water sources.

The implementation of MUS water systems has significantly reduced the cost of water for the local population. Previously, villagers paid around €0.09–€0.79 per liter of water, often purchased on the region's "black market" for water. Now, the cost is approximately €0.02 per liter. Given that about 80 percent of the population in Madagascar lives below the poverty line, this price reduction has a substantial impact on the lives of the villagers.

Entrepreneurship

Promoting entrepreneurship is a key second pillar of the project. Building resilience against the intensifying effects of drought not only involves effective water management but also addressing poverty. By doing so, communities can recover more quickly from climate shocks.



Awareness session in Ambatosola

To further encourage entrepreneurship in the villages, UNICEF and its partners have conducted various training sessions over the past few months. These included training villagers in the production of eco-friendly charcoal and cotton sanitary pads. Additionally, we provided training in permaculture, a sustainable and ecological farming method that emphasizes a harmonious relationship between humans and nature. The type of training offered varies by village, depending on the local context and the community's needs. This ensures that each person contributes their own expertise to the sustainability of the project.



MUS water system installed in Ehavo, one of the villages in southern Madagascar.

Investing in Knowledge

Finally, several awareness campaigns on water conservation have been organized for families in the villages. These campaigns educated families on the preservation, management, and protection of water sources to minimize waste and ensure water availability for current and future generations.

Challenges

The Climate-Smart Villages project is a pilot initiative, meaning that continuous learning and improvement are essential. As a result, the project has undergone several changes during its initial years of implementation to further develop and refine its approach.

The project originally began within the WASH sector (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) but has since evolved into a cross-sectoral program. Increasing resilience to climate change requires a holistic approach. Instead of implementing the same activities in every village, different interventions are now tailored to the specific needs of each village and across various sectors. It is crucial that the motivation for change comes from the village communities themselves. This improvement in the project's core concept has slightly delayed its implementation. water, often purchased on the region's "black market" for water. Now, the cost is approximately €0.02 per liter. Given that about 80 percent of the population in Madagascar lives below the poverty line, this price reduction has a substantial impact on the lives of the villagers.

FUTURE PLANS

Feasibility studies for new villages that could potentially be included in the project have now been completed. These studies identify other villages that could participate in the project and estimate the associated costs. Based on the available funding, UNICEF Madagascar will determine which additional villages can be reached through the Climate-Smart Villages project.

Furthermore, UNICEF will continue the construction of infrastructure and invest further in entrepreneurship and knowledge. In the long term, UNICEF plans to present the pilot results to the government of Madagascar for potential scaling up, allowing even more children to benefit. This approach demonstrates the unique strength of UNICEF: as part of the United Nations, we are a trusted partner of the governments in the countries where we work, and we have a seat at the table. This positions us well to influence policy and achieve structural improvements not only for the children reached through this project but for many more children across the country.

We can only achieve this lasting impact thanks to the support of donors like you.



In the village of Ehavo, a MUS water system has been installed, providing water to various areas, including a vegetable garden maintained by a local women's association. Originally designed to serve the 500 residents of Ehavo, the system has been so successful that it has attracted people from neighboring villages who now come to purchase water here, boosting the local economy.

In addition to supplying water for irrigation, as seen in the photo, the pumped water is also directed to the village schools. As a result, the children now have access to clean drinking water and can wash their hands, reducing their risk of illness.

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