



## In this letter

**Moving Takes Time**

**Rain, Rain and even more Rain**

**A Fright**

**Beautiful Things**

**Support**

**Other updates?**

## Contact

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## Newsletter July 2017

Dear friends,

So much has happened since our last newsletter! It is hard to share everything and still keep this letter readable. Jurgen is in the capital at the moment of writing, but more about that later.

### **Moving Takes Time**

In our last newsletter of May 2017 we have shared about our move to Maroamboka. We had so much to do! Repairing leaks and gutters, digging ditches, setting up inside the house, start to school the children again, and so on and so forth. Now, three months later, we can say that we have finally arrived. These first three months were intense and difficult, physically and emotionally.

### **Rain, Rain and even more Rain**

Last May we received Gerla van Zandwijk (AIM-Netherlands) as our guest : <http://www.jurgenenkatja.nl/?p=138>. It was very exciting to have a visitor but visitors will have to leave some day. In Gerla's case her departure came just in time as the road was still fine. The day after the rain came down in torrents. Two weeks later we received another visitor. Anna Jarmy, who already works 23 years for AIM-Madagascar, is used to many different circumstances. However, when her day of leaving arrived it had already rained for more than 24 hours non-stop. The road was bad to say at least. Anna was wondering whether we would make it out of the area. Well, you only find out trying! Jurgen managed to get the car uphill and from there the rest of the 15km should be doable. Anna was lucky! The way back to Maroamboka was more adventurous. The road was one big mud puddle. We have made it back, sliding and diagonal. One thing was clear: it would be impossible to leave the area by car for at least a few days.

### **A Fright**

After that nice adventurous trip we said to each other that it would be very tricky if one of us had to leave the area. And yes, it was that very night that Jurgen got sick. He had a horrible pain in the lower back, in his side, and his whole abdominal area. Katja quickly grabbed our medical books but it was hard to diagnose what was wrong. It is at such a moment that you can feel really blessed with all the contacts you have on the island. Katja started to call friends who know much more about medical issues than we. Still, it was hard to diagnose. Some of the symptoms pointed at very serious diseases. For that reason Katja called Helimission. This is a mission organisation which, just like MAF, executes i.a. emergency flights. A helicopter was the only option to get Jurgen out of the area to a good hospital. The staff of Helimission already knew our coordinates as they asked for them before our move, just to be sure. Despite the bad weather the chopper managed to land near the village. Jurgen was flown to a hospital in the capital.

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The relief came with the diagnose. It was 'only' a kidney stone. Although very painful not directly dangerous. Jurgen was treated and, after discharge, was welcomed in the house of a Dutch friend to get his breath for a few days.

We know ourselves blessed with all the good contacts we have on Madagascar, we cannot do without each other.

## Beautiful Things

We feel it to be unfair to stop the newsletter with a fright story. So many beautiful things are happening around us! In Luke 10 we read that whenever we go out to preach the good news we should look for people of peace. In a earlier newsletter we have mentioned Menja and Maman'i Prisca. The people of peace found us first! It is such a privilege to have them as friends. Maman'i Prisca takes Katja by the hand when it comes to social happenings. Katja has been to several condolences and, even thought a less fortunate occasion, these meetings are very important where we live. Maman'i Prisca explained exactly what Katja had to say and what the protocols entail. Protocol and good manners are crucial. These protocols are very difficult to understand without help. These visits made us even more accepted in the community. Although the white foreigners are still a bit strange, they do belong in this village and are part of the people.

Jurgen spends much time with Menja and they already started to translate Bible stories in the Tanala dialect. It is a grateful job. Jurgen was asked to read from the Bible in church during the Pentacost service. The service was held in Sandrohy, the biggest village in the area. Instead of reading aloud from the traditional Malagasy Bible (which is in the official language) Jurgen read the story of Pentacost in Tanala. It is a short story accompanied with a picture. We gave 8 picture to let them go from hand to hand and then Jurgen started. The responds was one of surprise: "What is this? I understand what he is reading!". In many, not to say most, Malagasy churches the main language used is the official language of the plateau (Merina). Besides that, the Bible version they use can be compared in language usage with that of the King James Version. In our district many of the people never enjoyed schooling and, they will not quickly admit, they just do not understand what is being said or read in church. This also became clear when Jurgen went out into the village to try a new story. Unintentionally he read the wrong transcript, the one that was still in official. It became clear that the story was not understood. Jurgen discovered his mistake and read the good translation. This was very well received.

The children also adopted to their new surrounding and love to walk around bear feet through the village. They had to go through difficulties as well. Leaving their friends behind in Tana and making new friends in Maroamboka. Simple things like playing with eachother are big changes. Vanya made good friends with Prisca but she needs to help her mother with many things. To spend time together Vanya comes along to harvest rice, or to cook together. Being together is more important than playing games. If there is time to play, the games are simple and probably considered childish by many children of the same age in Holland. For example, here girls of 12 years and older still love to play hopscotch.

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It is good to see that one by one the children are doing very good with schooling. Katja's goal is to teach them be independent learners. That way she has more time for the younger children while the older work on their own. Still, we have little Simeon walking around. The older children often take him along to the forest or village. He loves to be carried around like a king, enjoying all the attention.

## Support

Finally a word of thanks for all our supporters. We have mentioned our financial situation in the last newsletter. On an average we have a shortens of 300 à 600 Euro's monthly. Many of you responded generously and we are truly thankful for this. It is difficult for us to see our exact monthly support as many of our sponsors do not give on a monthly basis. Instead many give regular but that can differ from month to month. Of course this is not a problem because the months in which we receive more are used to equalise the lesser months. Still, we dare to take the opportunity to ask you whether you want to consider to give monthly. But again, we are very grateful for any kind of support!

## Other Updates?

Car papers... An ongoing episode. Meanwhile, it seems that Jurgen Malagasy drivers licence is ready. We do not hold it in our hands yet but we have authorised our Malagasy friend, Parany, to collect it in Tana. The green card is still in the process so we will continue to drive around with a temporary paper. This paper needs renewal every months.

The water situation was an adventure in itself. However, we can say that that situation is in the past as well. We no longer have to carry around with jerrycans. We have written an article about the way we have solved it: <http://www.jurgenenkatja.nl/?p=139>

This was it for now. We would like to wish you a very nice summertime (it is winter on Madagascar, brr, +25° Celsius cold).

Many blessings,

Jurgen, Katja, Vanya, Issa, Abbey, Dani & Simeon Hofmann



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## Things to pray for:

### **We are thankful because:**

- 1) the people like to help us;
- 2) we have already started to translate Bible stories;
- 3) the children enjoy themselves;
- 4) we have each other and we are happy together;
- 5) God went before us and prepared the people for our arrival;
- 6) we have so many people behind us who pray for us and encourage us with letters and parcels and in many other ways;
- 7) the water situation is solved;
- 8) Jurgen's licence is ready;
- 9) we have so many good friends on Madagascar.

### **Pray for/that:**

- 1) the car papers (the green paper);
- 2) we will learn the Tanala language quickly;
- 3) Katja, that she will have enough time to teach the children;
- 4) extra financial support. Our budget is not enough yet, overall we have a gap of about 300/600 Euro monthly;
- 5) the Tanala will hunger for God's Word.

