Dillon Muhlenkamp
Jay County High School Portland, IN
Madagascar Factor 16: Education

Madagascar: The Key to Success

Madagascar is home to over 11,000 indigenous species of plants and animals. These plants and animals have paved the way for economic growth and development on the island and help feed the growing population. A majority of these plants are used in major medicines that offer life-saving treatments to patients in need all over the world. The growing population causes food shortages and inadequate supply of clean water. All of these problems can be traced back to the resident's education.

Madagascar is the fourth largest island and is located off the east coast of Africa. “The population is 24.24 million people with 35.1% living in urban areas and 64.9% living in rural areas” (Madagascar-urban Population). Madagascar operates under a Semi-Presidential Representative Democratic Republic. This type of government allows the people to vote for their president, and when elected, the president appoints a prime minister. The prime minister then picks different people to be in the cabinet.

The climate of Madagascar is dominated by the southeastern trade winds. These winds are generated near the equator and bring warm moist air to the area. According to *Wild Madagascar* the country is divided into five major areas: the east coast, tsaratanana massif, central highlands, west coast, and the southwest. The east coast is a narrow band of islands that formed from the sedimentation of alluvial soils. The tsaratanana massif is the most mountainous region of the island. The central highlands are very diverse and full of rounded and eroded hills, inactive volcanoes, alluvial plains, and marshes which have been turned into semi-usable farmland. The west coast has deep bays and well-protected harbors with broad alluvial plains.

Despite the fact that Madagascar's economy is basically agriculture, a significant part of the land is unsatisfactory for development due to its hilly territory, broad plains, and deficient or unpredictable precipitation. Just around 5% of the land area is developed at any one time. Not within these figures, horticulture represents 30% of the GDP and utilizes around 75% of the work constraint. Malagasy agribusiness is based on little scale subsistence ranchers developing less than one hectare (2.47 acres of land) of land. *Nations Encyclopedia* said the following things about Madagascar’s crop. Vanilla is the second-positioning farming fare, with fares of 853 tons of concentrate (for an estimation of $9.5 million) in 2001. Universal exchange normal vanilla is controlled by understandings between makers (for the most part Madagascar and the Comoros) and the vital merchants by which send out goods and are exchanged for money. The legislature does not support overproduction, since the worldwide market request is exceptionally delicate due to rivalry from engineered vanilla (vanillin). Madagascar is the world's real normal vanilla maker, representing around 75% of generation. Cloves are the third fundamental fare edit, developed generally by smallholders. Clove generation follows a 4-year cycle with 2–3 years of high yield followed by one year of low creation. Clove trades totaled 16,723 tons in 2001, esteemed at $88.5 million. Other 1999 creation figures for money harvests were seed cotton, 33,000 tons; peanuts, 34,000 tons; sisal, 18,000 tons; and cocoa, 4,000 tons. Pepper is another vital fare item. Pepper sends out in 2001 added up to 635 tons, esteemed at $1.2 million. The sugar part has been restored with the assistance of French speculations. The requirements of the local market are served by five sugar refineries. Generation

of money products has been disheartened by the low costs paid by state offices, which here and there have neglected to gather yields or pay for them on time. In 2001, Madagascar's agrarian exchange surplus was $21.5 million. (Madagascar-Agriculture)

The typical family has on average 8 people per household. The typical family diet consists mainly of rice with the occasional meal of cassava and sugarcane. The common family gets the food they eat from the land they cultivate. If they don't get it from their land, they can buy some at a local farm market. The average farm size is 1.2 hectares, which is equivalent to a small baseball stadium. The average farmer grows rice and may have a few chickens and a goat. The food they eat is usually prepared in large open areas outside of the house. Everyone in the family knows how to prepare rice, clean and skin animals, and cook other foods. Families that live in urban areas are more likely to have better access to healthcare and education than people who live in rural areas. Although the urban people do have better access, it is not the best healthcare due to the fact that the majority of hospital workers are very poorly trained. Most workers have less than one year of schooling and/or training. Minor health problems are treated free of charge in Madagascar, but if the visit is overnight or requires more supplies, it costs the family. Also education in Madagascar is very minimal. While it is required that children ages six to fourteen attend school, most children do not have the time or money to go to school so they do not go. The average adult has less than 4.4 years of any schooling.

Education is a major problem in Madagascar, and it begins with the government. In 2007 the government voted to drastically cut funding for public schools. Due to this cut, schools are extremely understaffed and overcrowded. Schools are now forced to make the students pay to go to school whereas before it was free. The families of these students already do not have enough money to feed themselves let alone pay for schooling. Thus, most families have to make the tough decision to pull their child from school, depriving them of their right to a formal education. The children who are pulled from school usually go out to work on the family farm or to stay home and care for younger siblings or elderly grandparents.

“The education system is broken up into five main areas of primary, middle, secondary, vocational and tertiary” (Education in Madagascar). Primary Education begins with kids 6-14. School is necessary for kids at this age because the initial six years are crucial in developing common education skills. A standard scholastic educational module is recommended for all. Middle Education is where most students go on to the next level. The accompanying 3 years are spent at junior optional level, after which time a finish endorsement is granted. For some poorer kids who figured out how to make it up to this point, this will be the finish of school for them. Secondary education is the final part for those who have made it this far. The last 3 years of Madagascan school are no longer mandatory, and these schools are, for the most part, for the wealthier urban children. The individuals who continue through to the end get a baccalauréat - the equivalent of a secondary school certificate, and which is basic for selection into college. Vocational Education is for those who want to work closely with agriculture and related areas. There are professional contrasting options to scholastic centers and auxiliary schools. Tertiary Education is available at few places in Madagascar. The University in Antananarivo is the first center foundation built in 1961. It produced the island country's other chief tertiary organizations situated in Antsiranana, Fianarantsoa, Toamasina, Toliara, and Mahajanga. Upwards of 40,000 understudies learn at its sources of law and financial matters, science, and writing and sociologies, and in addition to its schools of open organization, administration, solution, social welfare, open works, and agronomy.

15% of children start school where they can't finish primary or secondary school. This is because of the very few schools in the rural areas of the country. The schools that are in the rural areas are often destroyed by the frequent cyclones that hit the island. The government will sometimes help build temporary schools, but most times they do not. The schools that are still in operation are sporadically placed throughout the country where most children cannot reach the schools.

Over the previous decade, Madagascar has demonstrated some vital strides towards achieving its objective of essential training for all; however, challenges still remain. Underneath rising elementary school participation figures lies an instruction framework that still does not address the issues of many youngsters in Madagascar. Out of 100 youngsters who enter the principal review, just around 60 finish their elementary school training. "The lesser auxiliary school finish rate was just 25 percent, and gross enrollment was only 35 percent amid the school year 2008-2009" (Education). The normal Malagasy grown-up has just finished 4.4 years of school. In spite of the fact that 49 percent of elementary school youngsters are young ladies, 78 percent of Madagascar's school regions demonstrate young ladies' enrollment lower than that of young men. Under 10 percent of preschool matured youngsters are enlisted in pre-schools that would set them up for grade school.

Regardless of the quick rise in enrollment in the most recent decade, youngsters are deterred in the opposite direction of schools for different reasons, among them packed classes and an absence of cash to pay educators. Most family units have encountered a misfortune in incomes, even as the cost of fundamental foodstuffs has risen. Destitution increases the probability of youngsters not going to class – particularly on the off chance that they are expected to work to help supplement the family income. Open spending plans have additionally been cut, draining genuinely necessary open assets for training.

The solution to Madagascar's food scarcity problem is to provide the people with a free source of education. Although the Madagascar government did cut public school funding, they could reinstate it with help from the United Nations. The United Nations has a budget of over $7 billion. Under the UN are several subdivisions such as the United Nations International Children's Emergency fund or UNICEF. This division helps children all over the world with many different problems. If Madagascar presented a plan of action to help their youth, they could get funded by UNICEF. Madagascar could take that money and build new schools evenly throughout the country where they are desperately needed. Much needed school supplies and properly educated teachers could be obtained. The children then could go to school for free and receive their education. They would be educated on the core classes like reading, writing, and mathematics. They would also be taught on the basic needs to properly grow crops and raise livestock in Madagascar. They would also be taught new farming procedures, which would increase their farm yields. Although these things would provide an incentive for parents to send their kids to school, but it may also be necessary to provide some other things. These things could be feminine hygiene products, a free meal, and clean, safe water. Most homes in Madagascar do not have these simple products that most Americans take for granted.

Although UNICEF could not provide Madagascar with aid forever, it would help UNICEF in the long term. As the students grow up and apply the things they learned in school to the farms they would then be running, they would be able to produce a larger and higher quality/quantity of food. This would allow

farmers to make more money to live a better life and spend more money within the country. The excess food they could now sell could be bought by the urban families who do not have access to food or land to grow it. When everyone in the country starts to be fed properly, it improves residents' health and attitude. With these things, everyone will be able to work better and make more money, and the entire country's economy will improve since people can work and make money. With the economy improving, Madagascar could then give more money to the UN in order to help protect the whole world from war and start other programs in other countries with similar problems.

Getting people to come to the island to educate the young people would be difficult because of the vast difference in living conditions from what most people are used to. In order to get the needed educators, we could look for local people who already know the land and how to farm it. These people would be the most respected and looked up to in these areas and would efficiently teach the youth. Although these people may have the skills to farm, they may not have the core skills such as math, reading, and writing. We would then have to find volunteers looking to go to Madagascar or pull from the University of Madagascar to go out and educate these new educators about the common core skills and new farming methods. One organization that can help teach the new educators different farming methods is IFAD. IFAD is an organization that helps the rural people of Madagascar. They let farmers know of new economic turns, new farming practices, and how to diversify their crop production.

While Madagascar was under the control of the British and the French empires, the country suffered greatly. The power switched between Britain and France several times. France ended up with the island in 1897 and held power until Madagascar gained independence in 1960. When France granted Madagascar independence, it created a vacuum effect. Although the French had built and developed many good things such as infrastructure and hospitals, when they pulled away they took the people who had taken care of the country. The things the French government developed fell into despair because there was no money or people to fix it. Since the French government did this, they should now provide scholarships or programs to help educate the people. If they educate the people, they could then rebuild the country's infrastructure and work on agriculture. If these things were to soar in Madagascar, they could then trade with the French government and boost France's economy too.

Local people would have an extraordinary impact on how and where the schools are built. A way for the locals to be involved in these projects would be to vote for a president who supports plans for building new schools and then to talk to their elected officials. One organization located in Boulder, Colorado, called Hope for Madagascar is a non-profit organization. This organization was founded by a Malagasy couple who wanted to help the children living in poverty to get the proper education they deserve. They recruit groups of volunteers to travel to Madagascar to build schools, and the locals get to build right alongside them. The locals then know how to build a school that is sturdy and will withstand powerful storms. This organization is a way locals can help with improving their communities.

In conclusion, education in Madagascar is a huge issue that plays a role in the poverty and hunger in the country. With the plan presented above, Madagascar will be able to produce more food by using better methods than before, and the surplus of food will create an upswing in the economy. Although the road to success may be long and hard, it is possible. Nelson Mandela once said," Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

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