

Mada Clinics Madagascar NGO

2016 Volunteer Guide



madaclinics.com

**Health
Opportunity
People
Environment**

1. Background

Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world and is 1000 miles (1600km) in length and 350 miles (570km) across at its widest point. The country has an array of different climates and environments. Geographically, the island can be split into three regions: *the West* being typically a dry, spiny desert or forest; *the East* a lush rainforest and *the Middle*, which is forested (and deforested) highland. Mada Clinics is based at the village of Maventibao, in the Middle region.

Madagascar has a world-wide reputation for the richness of its wildlife and the large number of endemic species. The island's separation from mainland Africa, around 165 million years ago, has resulted in the evolution of a rich array of unique fauna and flora. Lemurs are amongst the most famous of the island's endemic animals. They are members of the primate family, and belong to the 'pro-simian' order (i.e. primates that are not monkeys or apes) which is comprised of over 50 different species which can be found throughout the country, mainly in the 14 national parks (and also in the

forest behind the Clinic!). Alongside these unique creatures there are over 200 species of breeding birds, 300 reptile species (notable are the chameleons and geckos), and 4000 tree species found solely in Madagascar.

For a long period of time the evolution of the natural environment of Madagascar was without human influence, with the first settlers being Indo-Malayan seafarers arriving about 2000 years ago. Since then the people of Madagascar have been under strong influences from outside cultures. Arabian and African traders gradually started to appear, and early in the sixteenth century the island was 'discovered' by European settlers. In the centuries that followed, conflict between European powers for control of Madagascar was rife. By 1850 Christianity had established a foothold. In 1896 there was an end to the various European countries' struggle for control of Madagascar, with France claiming the prize and colonizing the island. Independence from France came in 1960, though strong French influences remain.

Malagasy people hold several values in very high regard; one of the most important is family, and the idea of brotherhood, which results in large extended families and lots of 'cousins'. Reverence of the dead is another firm belief, especially with regard to deceased relatives. Around half the population of Madagascar consider themselves Christians (roughly equal Catholics and Protestants), with a large percentage standing by traditional belief systems and around five-ten percent Muslim (higher in the North). Even amongst the Christian population, many of the traditional beliefs and practices still hold. As part of the traditional belief systems, the Malagasy have many *fadys* (or taboos), though there is considerable variation depending on the region and to whom you are speaking. Some *fadys* which exist around the area of the Clinics include stealing zebus (including killing the free-grazing ones for food); working the earth (including digging) on Tuesdays and cutting wood on Thursdays! Visitors, known as 'Vazahas' (literally white people, but used for all foreigners), are not expected to be aware of *fadys*, but it does show respect to local cultures to abide by the ones we are aware of. In redemption for *fadys* there are purification ceremonies, normally involving large amounts of rum!

Traditional Malagasy food is quite simple, rice being the staple diet of a Madagascan (a legacy from the Indo-Malayan founders). This is often supplemented by Zebu (beef), fish, or beans. Fresh fruit and vegetables are readily available in the towns and agricultural areas but are scarcer in rural

areas, where the hot climate, combined with a lack of electricity, makes storage of perishable goods problematic.

A taxi brousse (bush taxi) is the usual mode of transport in Madagascar. In reality it is a very overcrowded minibus or truck! Sitting alongside chickens and sacks of rice is certainly a unique experience and one not to be missed for true Malagasy experience.

2. Volunteer Opportunities

Maventibao Village

(Google Earth Co-ordinates: -12.936401, 49.249120)

All volunteers will be based in the village of Maventibao where our main clinic is based. Whether or not you have medical experience, you will contribute to the smooth running of the clinic and you will be able to experience a developing-world health care system. Alternatively, volunteers are needed to help at our school, assisting the three full time teachers. There are 100+ children in a purpose built school, mostly aged from 4 to 15 some coming from as far as 10 Km everyday.

You will soon settle into the simple lifestyle, which Maventibao has to offer. Our clinic is open 24/7 for emergencies. Days begin early, with breakfast being served between 7 and 8am. When you surface from your hut, you will often see patients already waiting! After breakfast you can head straight to the Clinic (if volunteering there) to help with the day's arrivals. The number of patients varies from day to day, so sometimes this may take all morning or all day. After lunch and a siesta period during the hottest part of the day, you are free to resume the morning's activities: teach adult English classes, run public/sexual health sessions, help with any required maintenance, perhaps take a hike, saunter through the village or maybe even help Mama Flavy to sort rice or cook! Your hot 'shower' water will be waiting for you around 5pm, the perfect way to unwind as you watch the setting sun. Then after supper and post dinner conversation, it's time to head back to your room. You will have a personal bedroom or hut in our compound near other volunteers. Your room will have a simple bed, a table, and a small reading light/candle. A sheet, blanket and mosquito net are provided for each volunteer.

Our routine is Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursday in Maventibao. Wednesday is a hike to Tanenbao, about 3.5 miles (5km) down in the far valley. We head down in the morning, after breakfast, and return mid-day in time for lunch. There we see 10-30 patients. Friday is a hike to Mahatsara, about 5 miles (7km) down on the main road. You will see 40-90 patients during the day, then hike back to MVB in the afternoon in time for a well-deserved shower and dinner. These 'on foot' clinics allow us to ensure that all the villages in our region have improved health care coverage.

Patients still come on the weekend, but often much fewer than on weekdays. Volunteers are free to take off on the weekends and explore the surrounding areas in Madagascar, such as Ankarana national park, Mont d'Ambre national park, Tsingy Rouge, The Emerald Sea, or just head off to hike around the rolling mountain ridges surrounding the village.

It is both a term of respect and because there is not a separate word for 'nurse' in Malagasy that they/we call our nurses 'dokter'. As is the case in most third world countries, in Madagascar qualified nurses act more like general/family practitioners – seeing patients, diagnosing, prescribing medicines, supervising deliveries and doing simple procedures.

Getting to Maventibao involves a 1½ hour hike from Route 6, the main road in Ambondromifehy. It is not too arduous but it is uphill all the way and often quite hot! In the rainy season there is also a small river we have to cross. We used to have a 4x4 for this journey, but it broke down and we could not afford the repairs required. Our primary goal at the time of writing is to raise enough funds to purchase another 4x4; it is important that we have a form of transport to transfer seriously ill patients.

In order to participate in our mobile clinics and go to and from the village we do recommend that volunteers are able to walk for 2 hours on a rocky path without tremendous difficulty. If you believe this will be a problem we can organize transportation to take you to and from the clinic upon arrival and departure, however it will be difficult to go to Tanenbaum and Mahatsara each week unless by foot.

Amboangamy Clinic
(-12.936401, 49.249120)

Our second clinic was opened in 2010 but we unfortunately had to close it in

2013 due to a lack of funding. We are aiming to re-open this clinic when we have sufficient funding. When it re-opens, volunteers may have the opportunity to stay in this village to help at the clinic.

If this clinic is re-opened at your time of visiting, we can arrange for you to stay at this village. The accommodation is basic but you will be looked after in much the same way as if you were still in Maventibao. Amboangamamy is a 2½ hour hike from Maventibao. The route is not too difficult but you will require a lot of water.

This village is also close to the ‘Black Lemur village’, Anjahankely, which is mentioned in paragraph 8.7.

Teaching Positions

It is an advantage, but not a requirement, if you have had previous experience of ‘Teaching English as a Foreign Language’ or have completed a basic TEFL/ESL course before. If not, it may still be helpful to have read a TEFL textbook. There are some basic materials at our schools, but whatever you can bring with you will be much appreciated – particularly ‘early learning’ children’s books. In addition it is extremely useful to have some basic French to help communicate with the school staff.

Maventibao School

The school in Maventibao was established in 2010. We have 100+ children who are aged between 4 and 15. They come from Maventibao and its surrounding villages. The school is now accredited with the Malagasy government.

There are three teachers in the school. They all have limited English but are very passionate about the importance of teaching English to the children. The children also learn French, Mathematics, History, and Geography.

School usually starts at about 8am and runs until 1/2pm. Many of the children walk very long distances to attend school (up to 10km one way in some cases) so the school must finish early for these children who need to get home for some food and before it is dark.

If you wish to bring or provide some school supplies for the children, it

would be best to purchase the items from the few stationary shops in Diego Suarez. It will be much cheaper here and it will mean you won't have to travel with all the extra items. You can discuss this with our staff who meet you in Diego Suarez on your arrival.

As the school is accredited with the government, it follows the national school holidays. If you are primarily interested in teaching please contact us for school holiday dates so that you can aim to avoid these. If volunteers are visiting during the school holidays, the teachers are happy to hold English classes for any children who are interested.

Maventibao Kindergarten

We are in the process of building a kindergarten for the younger children in the village, who would benefit from having this resource. As such, it will be possible for volunteers to assist in the kindergarten when it is opened.

Volunteer length of stay

We currently recommend a 3 week minimum for any volunteers coming to work with us. Ideally, we would love to have volunteers stay for between 1 to 3 months or longer if possible.

We often find that volunteers are usually only getting into the routine of life in Maventibao after 3 or 4 weeks. The longer you can stay, the more you will be able to settle into the lifestyle in the village and the more you will be able to do for the people of Maventibao. We also welcome volunteers with families. The children coming with volunteers have had wonderful experiences.

Administrator Position for 2016-2017

Our NGO is currently looking for a volunteer to fill a position as an administrator for Mada Clinics here in Madagascar. Our current director, Ben Shipley, has moved back to America in June 2016 and, due to medical restraints, may not be able to return to Madagascar for a year. Ben will continue to be involved with the clinic from the U.S., but it is important that the organization has a local administrator.

Term of position: June 2016 - June 2017

Administrator roles:

- Administration of NGO;
- Leasing with the staff;
- Living in Maventibao when there are volunteers in the village and overseeing their time in the village;
- Overseeing NGO funds;
- Fundraising;
- Overseeing maintenance of NGO buildings in Mavebtibao;
- Dealing with any issues that may arise; and
- Any other tasks related to the above

Helpful previous experience, but not essential:

- Experience with administration,
- Fundraising,
- leadership

During the length of the position, you will be provided with food and accommodation in Maventibao and you will not be required to make any donations. You will effectively be an unpaid member of the staff. If you wish to stay in Diego Suarez when there are no volunteers this will be at your own cost.

Any volunteer who is interested in staying with us at Mada Clinics for an extended stay (6 months or more) should consider this position. You will be more than welcome to volunteer in the clinic and/or school in addition to the administrative duties if you would like, so you could effectively be a long-term volunteer, with some additional duties, staying at the clinic without paying any donation fee.

Please contact us ASAP if you are interested in this position.

3. General Comments

Malagasy is the main language spoken in rural Madagascar, including Maventibao. Although French is also one of the national languages, it is not widely spoken in rural Madagascar. If you do speak some French, you will find it very useful as it is spoken/understood in Tana, Diego Suarez, and Anivarano. Additionally, Jean Yves, our full-time Malagasy nurse, and Jean,

the head director at our school, both speak French. We advise that you take a French phrasebook/dictionary.

Ben Shipley, our local director, who established the first clinic and who spends most of his time between Maventibao and Diego Suarez, is a retired American. The other Clinic staff speak/understand rudimentary English. We currently employ a translator, Nono, who speaks Malagasy, French, and English. He will be your translator during your time with us.

You are advised to let someone know where you are going at all times. Any trekking, excursions, or weekend outings should be approved in advance. The trails around Maventibao are rough, so it is advisable to wear your walking boots/sturdy training shoes.

The rural Malagasy people are almost always very honest. However, avoid temptation by putting valuable things out of sight. There is very little violence in Madagascar. Most people feel safer walking around Madagascar than their home towns/cities. The Malagasy are kind-natured and respectful of women, but if female tourists wear skimpy clothing (including vests and shorts) then they may be stared at, as this is not normal practice. In towns and cities, petty theft is common so keep valuables out of sight.

Please always behave in a professional manner and with courtesy, reflecting the sensitive nature of working in a health clinic/school. Always show respect for elders. If you need to pass by someone, use the Malagasy word 'azafady', which means please/excuse me.

4. Our Work at the Clinic

Background

Since Mada Clinics was set up 12 years ago by Ben Shipley, it has provided free health care and medicine to the people of Maventibao, Amboangamamy and surrounding villages. Without Mada Clinics, the local population would have to walk at least 1½ hours to the nearest main road then take a bus journey of over 65miles/100 km, and most cannot afford the fare, let alone the cost of the medicines.

History of Mada Clinics

The first time our founder Ben Shipley arrived in Madagascar was March 1999. At that time he was working with the Karen in Burma and Thailand. A friend from Bangkok was starting a sapphire mining project in northern Madagascar and had asked Ben, because of his construction and military background, to do a report on what was needed to build a road from the mining camp to the mining site, around 25 miles, what kind of security was needed to protect the operation, and to relocate the current village of Maventiebo. At the time, Maventibao had a population of about 4000 people, who were living in and mining the area the mining company had leased. After spending two weeks in Mada Ben returned to Bangkok and gave his report. Soon after he was offered a job helping with the road building, training and overseeing the security, and finding a way to relocate the people of Maventiebo from the mining site. Soon after arriving at the mining camp he determined it would be impossible to do his job without living in Maventiebo. For \$13 he bought a very small straw and stick A-frame hut and moved in. Seeing the total lack of medical care for the people he convinced the mining company to provide him with a small amount of medical supplies. His medical experience in Burma and the Marine Corps made it possible for him to provide limited medical care and health education to the people including delivering his first baby in a straw hut. He continued with the clinic along with his other work until the mine closed six months later. Before leaving Maventiebo he promised the people he would return. It was almost 5 years before he was able to keep that promise. In 2004 with the finance help of friends he arrived back to find that the people had kept all the cloths and papers he had left and explained they never doubted he would come back. By that time the village consisted of only about 200 people, as most of the miners had left with the mining company.

Working with the village, Ben built a small house that was to be his home for several years. After operating the clinic out of his hut for about six months with money Ben and friends provided they built a new clinic stocked it with medical supplies and had hired a Malagasy nurse. With the help of friends in Thailand a Mada Clinic website was started, requesting funds and volunteers. Three volunteer huts were built as well as a cook house. With a staff of 5 the clinic was providing medical care for 7 remote villages. Ben was still working part time in Burma and during rainy season went back to the US and drove tanker truck for three months to provide funds to keep the clinic in operation. With the help of the people of the villages Ben had a much bigger and nicer house built from rafea and leaf roof overlooking the

clinic and village.

On a very windy night in 2007 Ben and three volunteers had just finished dinner in the cook house when one of the volunteers asked, "Ben, is that a fire behind your house?" Ben, wearing a nylon sweat suit and no shoes, jumped up, grabbed a bucket of water, and ran to his house. Opening the door he could see the whole back wall on fire; unfortunately his pack with all his papers passport and money were hanging on the back wall. As he ran to try and save it the air from the open door caused the leaf roof to explode in flames. A strong Malagasy friend saw Ben run in the house and went in after him. Within seconds of dragging him out the roof collapsed and the house was consumed. Within 5 minutes the fire had jumped to the cook house, three of the staff homes, and the clinic with thousands of dollars of medical supplies. As the sun came up a badly burned Ben, wearing his only remaining possession, a pair of sweat pants, looked at the ashes of so many years of blood, sweat, tears, and money and thought "I can't do it again, I have nothing left to give." Within hours people started coming from miles away with a blanket, cook pot, shirt, a hand full of rice and all said "Please Papa don't quit, we need you and will help rebuild. It will be better than before".

Ben returned to America, determined. He spent the following year living in the cab of a tanker truck, driving 600-700 miles a day, and sending the money he made to Madagascar. By the next year he returned to a new and better clinic. By 2011 we had opened our second clinic, had hired another nurse, were providing free medical care to 20 villages (around 10,000 people), and have had hundreds of volunteers from around the world. Unfortunately in 2012, because of financial problems, we were not able to keep our old 4x4 running and had to close the clinic at Amboangamamy and lay off the nurse there. We are hoping soon to be able to reopen it as we were seeing over 400 patients a week there. On the positive side, due to the help from our Irish volunteers, we were able to finish and open our second school. We are accredited by the Minister of Education and are providing free education to over 100 students. Also in 2012 we received our NGO status and are approved by the Minister of Health. Our two volunteers from Holland donated funds for a solar system so we now have lights!! Also a friend donated a gas electric refrigerator so we now have a way to store vaccine. With your continuing support we hope to grow and continue for many more years.

As far as we are aware, Mada Clinics is the only NGO in the whole of Madagascar that provides free health care and schooling. We are not a missionary organization. Our goal is to provide a better life for the people in remote areas. We respect their customs and beliefs and work with the local medicine men, witch doctors, and chiefs.

Our clinics offer basic facilities for primary health care. One nurse staffs the clinic, but like all Malagasy nurses they are trained to act more like ‘Western’ doctors - diagnosing medical conditions, performing minor procedures and dispensing medications

HIV, STI’s and Family Planning in Madagascar

Owing to the isolation and lack of infrastructure, access to sexual and reproductive health services is very limited in rural Madagascar. On the basis of our research, the average fertility rate in the villages in which we operate is higher than the national average, with anecdotal reports also suggestive of high rates of untreated STIs. This trend is common in the more rural regions of the country. The local area where Mada Clinics operates encompasses a sapphire mining area, and hence there is a very transient population who travel for work. The town near to the mine has many females who work in the sex industry. Our anecdotal evidence is that the transient nature of the mining workers increases the already high rate of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) that we see at the clinic.

Currently family planning services are offered as part of our routine, free, daily clinics. We offer a broad range of free contraceptives – including progesterone shots, which last 12 weeks, a daily oral pill and condoms. Mada Clinics believes that only by offering free advice and contraceptives can we change the high rates of fertility seen in Madagascar, which currently has the 34th highest total fertility rate in the World. Hence it has one of the fastest growing populations of any country in the world and currently less than one in five women have access to contraception. Our education program extends to encouraging the use of contraceptives amongst the population and, in particular, we are seeing an increased use of the progesterone shots. There remains a marked reluctance of males to use condoms.

Whilst we have all sorts of patients coming through the doors of the clinic, we try to emphasize education to our patients. Madagascar is counted as part

of Southern Africa, but unlike its mainland counterparts, to date, it does not have a high HIV infection rate. Currently HIV prevalence in Madagascar is under estimated at below 0.1%. This contrasts markedly with the prevalence in other countries of Southern Africa where estimates range from 5% to 15%. However with the increasing amount of foreigners travelling to Madagascar and the lack of knowledge of HIV among the Malagasy youth, it is doubtful that this will remain low unless steps are taken now.

Continuing to respond effectively to meet this demand is considered a priority for health care in the region. Taking steps to prevent an epidemic of HIV and other STIs has led to the development of our action plan to expand sexual and reproductive health services and education to reach the youth in our locality.

At our clinic we take steps to try to reduce the spread of STI's. We ask any patient who comes in with symptoms of an STI to return with their partner so that they can be treated together. Additionally, we give them a pamphlet, written in Malagasy, that explains the basics of what STIs are, their dangers, and how they're spread, as well as counseling them on this information in the clinic. We try to supply free condoms, but the Malagasy men are very resistant to the idea of using them. Nonetheless, the more condoms the volunteers can bring the better, so that we do have a full stock if patients are interested in using them.

An easy way for volunteers to help participate in this education is to run family planning/sexual health classes during their stay, for both adults and children. This has been very well received when previous volunteers have run such classes.

Expansion/Goals

For the years ahead, our NGO has many funding goals that we wish to achieve to ensure that the NGO does not disappear and also to expand on what we can currently provide.

If you know of any organizations, trusts or funding bodies that may be able to assist us with any of the below, please contact us to let us know. Any assistance is greatly appreciated!

1. Our primary goal at present is to **purchase a 4 wheel drive** for the

clinic. We believe that this will cost us around **US\$10,000 -15,000**.

We previously had a 4 wheel drive but it broke down and it was outside of our funding abilities to pay for the necessary repairs. We paid to get it fixed but the mechanic kept asking for more money and we were unable to keep giving him money. As such our previous 4 wheel drive has been reduced to pieces by the mechanic. “This is Madagascar”.

We believe that a 4 wheel drive is essential for our operations, primarily for transporting critically sick patients from the village to the larger hospitals in Diego. It would also make our operations here much easier in terms of transporting volunteers to and from Maventibao, around the surrounding villages, around the various clinics each week, and to transport food and medicines up to Maventibao.

2. Our second goal is to **build a road between Ambondromifehy and Maventibao**. This will make it easier to quickly transport critically ill patients down the mountain and to a more advanced medical facility. Additionally, we have dozens of sick patients each week who make the trek to our village using this path and it would vastly reduce their struggle if there were a sturdy road for them to use. When asked how we could improve our clinic, many of the patients suggested this project. We predict the cost of this would be about **US\$3,000**.
3. Our third goal is to **expand the size of our clinic** in Maventibao. We dream of turning our modest 2 room clinic into a 5 room complex, consisting of a waiting room, exam room, office, pharmacy, and room for patients to stay over night. This is the common layout of most clinics in Madagascar. When asked how we could improve our clinic, the majority of the patients suggested this expansion. This project would cost about **US\$3,000**.
4. Our fourth goal is to **re-open the clinic in Amboangamamy**. In order to do this, we will need an extra **US\$500 per month** to pay for a local Malagasy doctor/nurse to run it and to pay for the various medicines.

Amboangamamy was a very essential part of the services we provided. Its location meant that people from a much greater area

could receive free medical care.

5. Our fifth goal is to **upgrade the solar power** panels and batteries that we currently have. We estimate that this will cost **US\$500** to do.
6. Bens dream is to have an **airplane** set up as an **airmobile clinic** to reach VERY REMOTE villages, he spent 10 years as an Alaskan bush pilot an already picked out the landing strip above MVB. .

5. Travel Options for flying to Madagascar

Mada Clinics is based in the North of Madagascar – near to Diego Suarez. There are two ‘*international*’ airports in Madagascar - the main one is in the capital **Antananarivo** (also known as **Tana** for short) and a smaller one with less frequent international flight arrivals at **Nosy Be** (aka Nossi Be), an island off the North West coast of Madagascar – see the maps in Appendix IV.

Therefore the options for getting to us from overseas are:

- A. Fly into **Anatananarivo** – and from there go up to Diego Suarez either:
 - a. Travelling by Taxi-brousse (\$25 each way and 24-36+hours); or
 - b. Taking an internal flight on Air Mada (~\$200-\$300 ew and 1 hour).

NB We would recommend the flight if you are volunteering with us for a short time period, i.e. less than one month.

- B. Fly into **Nosy Be** then take a Taxi-brousse (\$10 ew and 4-6hours) to Diego Suarez (or Ambondromifehy – see section 4.5 below).

Whilst at first glance, flying from overseas directly to Nosy Be looks easier, the international flight arrivals are infrequent and often more expensive.

NB If you arrive into Tana DO NOT book an internal flight up to Nosy Be. From Tana you should fly to Diego Suarez.

Airline/Airport Information

Below is a summary of the main airlines which fly to Madagascar, however this does not cover every option and you may be able to find other airlines if you consult with a travel agent.

Air Mada – Paris, South Africa, Kenya, Thailand to Tana twice weekly (and sometimes Nosy Be): www.airmadagascar.com. Although, flights are often delayed with Air Madagascar.

Air France: Paris to Tana 5+ times a week: www.airfrance.com

CorsAir: Paris to Tana (and sometimes Nosy Be): www.corsairfly.com

Air Austral: Paris to Tana or Nosy Be (via Renuion): www.air-austral.com/en/home.html

Air Italy: Milan to Nosy Be: www.airitaly.eu

N.B. If you fly to and from Madagascar using Air Mada you get a 30-50% discount on internal flights. However this needs to be organized over the phone and is not always simple. Internal flights can be arranged once in Tana too although flights may be booked up when you come to booking so we recommend booking this flight in advance (see below in 4.4).

Airport codes: Antananaravo/Tana – TNR, Diego Suarez/Antisiranana – DIE, Nosy Be/Nossi Be – NOS

Visas

Whilst you technically need a visa to visit Madagascar, if you are staying less than 3 months this can be issued at the airport. You have the option to obtain a visa from your local embassy prior to your arrival but this is not necessary and is usually more expensive.

The procedure once you arrive at the airport is quite convoluted so we have put it in **Appendix II** at the back of this guide.

If obtaining your visa on arrival, you will need to have cash ready to pay the visa fee. It is best to have euros or US \$ for this purpose. The current cost of a 90 day visa is about €45/US\$50 and 60 day visa is about €25/US\$30.

However this may change so please check online/with a local embassy.

In the event that you are planning to stay with us for longer than 3 months, you should try to obtain a work visa at your local embassy prior to your arrival. If this cannot be done, you can get a 90-day visa on arrival and then the president of our NGO will be able to arrange the necessary extension.

International arrival at Antananarivo (Tana) Airport

For most people flying into Tana, your onward flight connection/taxi-brousse journey to Diego Suarez (aka Ansttsiranana) will mean you may have to spend one night in Tana. We are unable to meet our volunteers when they arrive in Tana.

We recommend that if you are spending just one night in Tana, you stay at a hotel close by the airport, as traffic can be very slow into the center - particularly during the rush hour. We also recommend that you book your hotel in Tana in advance – look in your guide book, although the most popular is L’Auberge du Cheval Blanc which is close to the airport and offers a free shuttle bus (<http://www.cheval-blanc-madagascar.com/>).

We recommend that you should book your Air Mada flight to Diego Suarez in advance– see above for their web site. If you prefer, you can take the 24+ hour taxi-brousse, but this can take many days (as breakdowns often occur) and the road is very bad especially during rainy season, and you are likely to be travelling overnight which is generally not recommended in very crowded conditions. If you are considering this we recommend looking into getting a ‘Sprinter’ bus, which is more comfortable than the other option ‘Mazda’ for this route. To ensure that you get this type of bus, specify Sprinter with the taxi brousse company.

International arrival at Nosy Be Airport

This is an alternative to flying in from overseas to Tana. It is in the North and is easier/cheaper to get to Diego Suarez and allows you to avoid Tana completely. However we recognize that flights here are not as frequent and can be more expensive.

When flying into Nosy Be you may have to spend a night in Nosy Be. It is a small island geared for tourists with many good clean tourist hotels in the

local town (Helleville) or near the beaches. You can arrange for your hotel to pick you up or you can take an (expensive) taxi from the airport (approx \$20-30; no buses!). Refer to your guide book for hotel options and details about the local town/facilities.

From Nosy Be Island you take a ferry/small boat to the mainland (40 minutes) then there is a 4 hour taxi-brousse ride to Ambondromifehy (a small town quiet close to our village). If your flight arrives early enough, and have the stamina, you can catch the ferry in the morning to the mainland (ferries stop after mid-day as the waves get bigger). It is best to get to the ferry dock between 7am and 8am in Helleville. From Nosy Be you can also fly to Diego on Air Mada.

If using this route, you can meet up with Mada Clinics staff either in Diego Suarez or on the road in Ambondromifehy. If you plan to meet staff in Ambondromifehy it would be useful to have a Madagascar cell-phone number in advance so that you can be contacted (or contact staff). There is some accommodation available in Ambilobe (a large town, about 1½ - 2 hours from Ambondromifehy) if you would like to break up the trip to Ambondromifehy.

Arrival at Diego Suarez

If you are flying to Diego you will be met by a Madaclinics representative at the airport.

If arriving by Taxi-brousse, you can get a local taxi to take you to a meeting point, which will have been arranged in advance with someone from our organization.

In any event, you should budget for one night in a small hotel in Diego, which we can arrange for you. This will allow you to catch up on some rest, check emails, purchase a SIM card for a mobile telephone (see below), do some local shopping and perhaps see a bit of the town (approximate hotel cost: 50,000Ar/\$20 per night). We recommend that our volunteers stay at the Hotel Concord, which is in a safe, central location in town. There is a supermarket in Diego Suarez near the general area of accommodation, which has all the essentials. There are also a few pharmacies, one of which you will likely visit with Nono, the translator, prior to heading to Maventibao, to purchase the medicines for the clinic.

When you are ready, you will make the roughly 3 hour taxi-brousse journey from Diego Suarez to Ambondromifehy. Someone from the organization will accompany you on this journey. Ambondromifehy is a small sapphire mining village and the nearest large village on the main road to our village, Maventibao. It is then a 6km/4m journey to Maventibao up in the hills.

The ascent up the hill involves a 1½-2 hour uphill hike. Or if needed an ox cart ride. Either way, Clinic staff will be in Ambondromifehy to meet you and to help you with your belongings, but it is vital that you bring a rucksack style bag and not a suitcase for this reason.

6. General

1. Take a copy of this guide with you to Madagascar – at least the phone numbers in **Appendix III**.
2. Whether or not you are intending to travel before or after your time with Mada Clinics we advise you to take a Guide Book. The best guidebook is: **Bradt's Guide to Madagascar** (latest edition - 11th).
3. It is also recommended to take a small **French Phrasebook and/or Dictionary** if your French is not very good – to cover basics such as numbers, directions etc.
4. Several countries have an **online registration system** for visiting countries like Madagascar, which we **strongly recommend** you to complete prior to your visit:
Canada - 'Registration' - www.voyage2.gc.ca/Registration_inscription/
US - 'STEP' - www.travelregistration.state.gov
NZ – "Safe Travel" – www.safetravel.govt.nz
5. When you **arrive in Madagascar**, please let our local team know (and confirm your meeting time and place) by calling or by sending an SMS text. Ben's mobile number is +261332490551, Armelle's number is +261324600236, and Nono's number is +261322742665 – but these may change, so please check before you leave on your trip – see Appendix III.
6. At least one week before your arrival, you should **confirm details of your**

flight by email to Armelle as well as arrival time into Tana/Nosy Be and then onward journey plans. We also recommend you **label your baggage**: Mada Clinics Charity, Madagascar, Diego Suarez, Tel +261324600236.

7. Money Matters

Donations

We recommend a donation of \$250 per week when staying up in the village of Maventibao. This covers all your food and accommodation. In addition, your donation goes towards the cost of the Mada Clinic's staff salaries and medicines that we provide free to patients at the Clinics. This fee is reduced to \$150 if you are a medical student and to \$100 if you are a doctor or nurse. For stays of 3 months or longer, your donation is negotiable based on the financial situation. This can be discussed with our staff.

There are a couple of options for payment. We have a bank account set up in Madagascar, to which international transfers can be made. You can find the bank details below in Appendix IV. If you like you can pay on arrival by exchanging your currency to Ariary (50 - 100 Euros or US \$ get the best exchange rate). It is also possible to withdraw the amount in cash from the ATM's in Diego. This may necessitate several trips to the bank - but you can go with a Mada Clinics representative to help. Your withdrawals may also be subject to a foreign exchange fee by your Bank.

Many of our volunteers raise funds to help cover travel expenses and the donation. There are many different ways you can carry out your fundraising – e.g. donations from friends and family, partake in a sponsored event or get the support of local businesses or church groups. Any donations in addition to the required amount are also warmly and greatly appreciated.

Living Costs

When volunteering in Maventibao (or Amboangamamy if/when it is operating), all food and accommodation are paid for within the volunteer's donation. Our cook provides three meals a day and water to drink from the local water source. You also get nightly hot water for your shower (in reality a bucket). The water in Maventibao comes from a spring source and provides clean drinkable water. It was tested this year by an international

organization and they advised it was some of the cleanest water they have tested.

Local Money

There are currently two currencies used in Madagascar, the Ariary (abbreviated to Ar and pronounced “Arry-Arry”) and the Malagasy Franc (abv: FMg). This can be VERY confusing – particularly when you first arrive. The Ariary was brought in to replace the Malagasy Franc in 2003. However, the FMg is still quoted on the street, in markets and in some shops.

The Ariary is worth *five* times the FMg, so please make sure you check what currency you are dealing in when buying goods or being quoted taxi fares. All notes now in circulation are the Ariary (you might very occasionally still see FMg notes in the countryside) but even though many prices are quoted in FMg, you still pay in Ariary.

Money cheat table

(easy but flexible, currently 1US\$=3000Ar)

Ariary (Ar)	Madagascar France (FMg)	US Dollar	British Pound	Euro
<i>Easy exchange rate</i>	<i>1Ar</i>	<i>3,000Ar</i>	<i>4,500Ar</i>	<i>2,700Ar</i>
100	500	0.15	0.225	0.15
200	1,000	0.30	0.45	0.70
500	2,500	0.75	1.125	0.23
1,000	5,000	1.50	2.25	1.40
2,000	10,000	3.00	4.50	2.75
5,000	25,000	7.50	22.50	7.00
10,000	50,000	15.00	75.00	14.00
50,000	250,000	75.00	112.50	70.00
100,000	500,000	150.00	225.00	140.00

ATMs/Exchanging Money

ATMs: in the main towns of Madagascar there will usually be at least one ATM to withdraw cash. The ATMs will give you money in Ariary with a maximum of 400,000Ar (US\$125) per withdrawal, three times per day.

Credit cards: Visa is the most widely accepted credit card in Madagascar (and it is the only card accepted by BFV bank). It is possible at some hotels and restaurants to use credits cards, but generally you are best to have cash to use. Mastercard is the only card accepted by BOA bank whereas BNI bank takes both Visa and Mastercard (there are a couple of ATM's in Diego which accept Mastercard). American Express is rarely accepted anywhere, if at all. For these reasons, we recommend that you have a Visa card for your time here.

Exchanging foreign cash: it is relatively easy to find places to exchange euros or US \$. It is best to have €50/US\$50-100 notes to exchange, there is a worse exchange rate for the lower notes. We recommend that you do not carry around too much cash when visiting here.

Travellers' cheques: it is easier to exchange cash than to cash a traveller's cheque, but most banks do still change them. It can be a very time consuming process here. It is best to bring Euro cheques but US\$ cheques can still be changed. Again, avoid large denominations and remember to bring your purchase receipt, as you will be unable to change the cheques without it.

Western Union: there are plenty of Western Union offices in Diego (and other large towns) for money to be sent to you in an emergency. This requires your family or friends to transfer money from home at a Western Union office or through the website www.westernunion.com.

Indicative Prices

Prices are cheap for local transport, basic hotels and local food. Prices for clothes and fuel are the same as the US/UK. Prices for domestic air travel and technology items are higher than in the US/UK. For personal spending money, we suggest you take \$40 per week for a budget trip or double that for a hassle-free, buy-everything, easy-going trip. Add more if you plan any extra flights or wish to stay in up-market hotels.

The list below is a guide to help you when you first arrive in Madagascar. These prices will give you an idea of what you should be paying, but costs vary from place to place.

Item	Cost (Ariary)	
------	---------------	--

Bottled water (small)	1,000	
Bottled water (large)	2,000	
Coke/Sprite/Fanta (small)	1,000	
Coke/Sprite/Fanta (large)	2,500	
Large beer (THB) (Gold)	2,500 - 3000	
Rum (glass) bottle 1 L at market	3,000 8000	
Chocolate bar (Mars/Twix/Bounty)	2,500	
Carton Juice (small)	1,000	
Carton Juice (large)	4,500	
Bread (baguette)	500	
Croissant	1,000	
Street food:	Samosas	200

Fried bananas	200	
---------------	-----	--

Glass of juice 'sirop'	200	
------------------------	-----	--

Filled whole baguette	2,000	
A bunch of bananas	800	
Internet (per half hour)	2,000	
Taxi journey (Diego) before 7pm three wheeled scouter	500 per person	
Taxi journey (Diego) after 7pm	1,400 per person	
Taxi (Tana/Nosy Be) – Airport to Hotel/City	30,000-60,000	
Lunch/Dinner – Malagasy cuisine	3,000-5,000	
Dinner (Tana/Diego) – smart restaurant	15,000-30,000	
Hotel (Tana/Nosy Be)	50,000-200,000	
Hotel (Diego)	30,000-140,000	

8. What to bring

May-October: hot days and cool nights.

November-April: hot days and mild nights – rainy season.

Clothing

Pack lightly, and dark coloured clothing is best as things get dusty/dirty quickly.

- Flip-flops/crocs (many volunteers wear these for almost every situation in the villages/towns)
- Old sneakers/teva type sandals
- Sturdy hiking shoes/boots (or sturdy training shoes) – suitable for a 2 hour uphill hike
- 2-3 pairs of shorts (cargo shorts are ideal)
- 1-2 pairs of light trousers/pants
- Warm pajamas (or a T-shirt/sweatshirt and light pants for nighttime)
- 2 pairs of scrubs (optional, for working in the clinic – tops more useful than bottoms)
- 4 t-shirts/polo shirts/tank tops/vests
- 1-2 long sleeved T-shirts/casual shirts
- Fleece jacket or heavy sweatshirt (for the cooler evenings)
- Rain jacket (Breathable type) (optional, save for November-April)
- 4-6 pairs of underwear (2-3 ‘easy to wash’ bras for women)
- 3-4 pairs of socks (1-2 pairs of ‘smart wool’ socks are useful)
- 1 bathing suit (optional, if planning to spend time in Diego)
- Sarong/wrap (useful as a spare blanket, skirt, towel etc)
- Light scarf (good for chilly mornings and evenings- optional)
- Sunglasses
- Hat/cap (essential)
- Lightweight sleeping bag (optional but recommended)
- Pillow (compact or inflatable recommended)

Personal Items

As mentioned, there is a supermarket in the centre of Diego, not far from where you will stay when you first arrive. The supermarket has most of the essentials you should require and you can purchase many of the items below from there, or if you run out you will be able to re-stock from there.

- Soap & soap box
- Shampoo & conditioner
- Razors
- Bath towel & wash cloth
- Toothbrush & toothpaste
- Hand sanitizer (optional)

- Soap powder (for washing clothes)
- Feminine hygiene products (NB: tampons are not available in Mada)
- Snacks / Treats - individually wrapped
- Food items to suit – eg oatmeal/granola bars to supplement the local (low fibre) diet, adult beverages, rum or local beer
- Tea bags (if you prefer it to local coffee) and/or hot chocolate, powdered milk, etc.
- Headlamp or flashlight/torch that converts to a lantern (NB take spare batteries or wind-up)
- Sturdy water bottle/metal thermos
- Journal and/ or reading books
- French-English dictionary and/or French Phrase Book
- Money belt
- Mobile/Cell Phone (unlocked - so it can take a local SIM card)
- Camera (you will have the capability of charging a battery if necessary)
- Umbrella (only needed during rainy season, November-April)
- Stethoscope (do not buy one if you do not have one already as there are some spares at the clinic)

Medical Kit

Whilst we have some of these items at the Clinic, it is best to bring your own of the following:

- Anti- malaria prophylaxis tablets
- Anti-mosquito repellent (strong)
- Sunscreen (>30spf) and after-sun cream
- Diarrhea medications (eg Ciprofloxacin) (+/- laxatives)
- Anti-fungal cream
- Antiseptic/Antibiotic cream
- Analgesics – Paracetamol/Tylenol & Ibuprofen
- Band-aids/plasters – assorted & roll tape

Optional things to bring for the clinic / school

Clinic

- Medical books (in either French or English), e.g. a dermatology textbook with pictures
- STD and/or HIV finger prick / home testing kits

- Latex gloves
- Hand sanitizer
- Speculums

School

- Educational posters in English or French to put up in the classroom
- Arts & crafts supplies (stickers, crayons, markers, paper)
- Vocabulary flash cards w/ pictures, workbooks w/ basic English or French exercises

Telephones/Communications

If you have an unlocked telephone, feel free to bring it or you can buy a local phone for around US\$20. You can buy a SIM card for the equivalent of US\$0-5 and then top-up cards at many shops. Both Telma and Orange reception at the clinic can be good, but it is unpredictable. Also with both you can buy data credit for your phone and use Internet in the village; Telmas reception is better, but both are relatively slow. A phone is useful to send/receive SMS text messages home. Overseas calls are very expensive but you might be able (on a good day) to receive international calls. There is an area 5 minutes' walk from Maventibao up the hill with consistently good cell phone reception where you can receive calls.

Family back home can also set up a Skype account to make phone calls to you at much cheaper rates than standard overseas calls. Your family needs to purchase Skype credit in the Skype account and they can use this to call any cell phone number. You do not have to be connected to the Internet in Mada to receive such a call as it is like receiving a standard cell phone call. This has worked well for previous volunteers.

Madagascar is 3 hours ahead of GMT. There is no daylight saving.

A laptop is useful only if you are staying for a good length of time. Please note that we do not have wi-fi access in the village, and a laptop can only run off its battery (same with ipods/iphones etc). There is no main electricity at the village. We do however have a 240 volt generator and a solar panel, which (if working) we run every evening for a few hours and it is possible to charge phones and cameras at that time. But please do not rely upon this – as

is often the case ‘This is Madagascar’ (TIM), so it may not be working. In the past, volunteers have brought portable charging packs (some with solar panels) to charge their phones with, which has worked out well.

Most restaurants, bars or hotels in the city have WIFI and are laptop friendly, so a laptop is helpful to check your emails whilst you are in town, for about 3000 Ar for a Gold beer you can spend hours on the internet. If you so wish, it is possible to buy a Wi-Fi ‘dongle’ for your laptop from Orange for about US\$20, which gives you a slow/sporadic connection about US\$30 per month in MVB. There is also wifi available at the Concorde Hotel in Diego (the hotel we currently use for volunteers on arriving in Diego).

Please make sure you take a copy of Appendix III - the Emergency Contact numbers - with you whilst you are in Madagascar.

9. Volunteer Health

The clinic has basic facilities and a qualified nurse, as well as a selection of prescription drugs. If you need additional care, we also use an English speaking (private) Doctor in Diego if our volunteers have any problems beyond the capabilities of our nurse.

Diego has four hospitals – three principal (government run) ones and a military (private) one. The ‘Hôpital Be’ (Big Hospital) is able to perform basic operations, stabilize patients in critical conditions, and provide other basic care facilities. The majority of doctors speak French and the director of the hospital speaks English.

There is also a nearer smaller hospital at Anivarano. The doctor is French and partly English speaking and is called Dr. Ginette.

For severe illness or injury, it is possible to arrange medical evacuation using: Espace Medical, Antsahabe – 65 rue Pasteur Rabary, Tana . They can supply a simple ambulance, an ambulance with equipment and doctor, or a helicopter if needed.

Ambulance services are available within Antananarivo with Polyclinique Ilafy at 22-425-66/69 or 033 11 458 48 / 032 07 409 38; CDU (Centre de

Diagnostic Medical d'Urgences) at 22 329 56 or 032 07 822 28 or 033 11 822 28.

(You will be able to find up to date details/phone numbers online, or contact us for further information)

Malaria and Medical Vaccinations:

The following advice is for guidance only, and is taken, in part, from the Center for Disease Control in the US (www.cdc.gov). We recommend that you seek advice from your own doctor at least three months prior to traveling.

We recommended that all volunteers take Malaria Prophylaxis tablets. Whilst nets are provided and there are relatively few mosquitoes up at the Clinic, Malaria is rife in Madagascar. Please ask your own doctor for advice. Most of our volunteers take either Malarone (expensive) or Doxycycline.

You should be up-to-date with your 'routine' shots such as, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, and poliovirus vaccine. **Tetanus** is particularly important.

The Hepatitis B vaccine is recommended for all those who intend to spend some time working in the clinics/hospitals. Vaccination against Hepatitis A is recommended although not absolutely necessary. We recommend that all volunteers should be vaccinated against **Typhoid**.

Rabies is a difficult subject to address. Yes, the Clinic is in a rural area, but most guide books do not recommend it unless you are going to have direct contact with Lemurs, which you will as we have lemur pets, but they are safe and friendly. Remember that the anti-rabies injections still means that you may need treatment if bitten.

10. Nearby Places of Interest

At the weekends or in your free time it is definitely worth exploring the local areas surrounding the clinic. The following will give you a rough idea of what there is to see.

Ankarana National Park

15 miles down the road from Maventibao is the 18,225 hectare Ankarana Special Reserve and if wildlife (either flora or fauna) is of interest to you, this is not to be missed. To visit the park is to visit thick green forest, complete with twisting creepers. The trees house many sportive lemurs, which look from holes in the trunks to watch passers-by. The forest is interspersed with the famous Ankarana ‘tsingy’, impressive rock formations, resembling a giant pin cushion, made up from thousands of spiky limestone natural pinnacles. Also within this park are eerie but intriguing bat grottos and beautiful ponds and canyons.

To visit Ankarana, it is possible to catch a taxi-brousse from the road at the bottom of Maventibao’s mountain. The journey to the park’s entrance is then just forty five minutes away (5,000Ar). On arrival you will pay a park entrance fee of 65,000Ar and you also have to hire a guide for your time in the park. The price of guides varies depending on which routes you choose to take and the length of time you wish to stay (from 15,000-40,000Ar). Please note you must take all the food and water (or water purification) you will need into the park with you. An easier alternative to camping are nice clean bungalows (30,000Ar) at the entrance with a bedsheet, candle, mosquito net, good bed, cold showers, and toilets.

At the time of writing, it is not considered safe to stay overnight in Ankarana. But it is fine to take a day trip. You can check for up to date information on the safety in the park on the internet or with our staff during your stay.

Official web site: http://www.parcs-madagascar.com/fiche-aire-protegee_en.php?Ap=6

Anivorano/The Sacred Lake

The last town of note along National Route 6 before the Clinic is Anivorano and a pleasant day can be spent visiting the hospital (meeting the local doctor, Dr Ginette) and strolling around the food market, absorbing a bit of Malagasy life. The Taxi brousse costs about 4,000Ar.

You could also combine this visit with a trip to the nearby sacred lake, 2km down the road from Anivorano. Legend tells of a witch doctor who once came upon a village located where the lake is now. Being dry season, the

man was thirsty from his travels and asked the locals for a cup of water, but was refused by the people who were unwilling to help a suspicious looking soul. In retaliation to their parsimony, he cast a spell to flood the village, turning it into a lake and the locals into crocodiles! To this day, those living nearby still visit the site to pay respect to their ancestors with gifts of zebu meat. On hearing their chants the crocodiles will come right up onto the banks of the lake, a fascinating, albeit scary, sight!

Ambilobe

Further south down the road from the Clinic turn off is Ambilobe, a town of quite substantial size, which is 2 hours by taxi-brousse. It is the nearest place to come if you feel you need to make contact with the 'real' world.

Ambilobe has one internet café: note, like all such cafés in Madagascar, the connection is extremely temperamental and sometimes it does not work at all. Ambilobe also offers interesting clothes and food markets and a handful of nice eateries (complete with ice cold drinks which can be sorely missed up in Maventibao). It can also be the drop off place if you are coming by Taxi-brousse from Nosy Be.

Diego Suarez

If you have a few days to spare at a weekend or for a break from an extended time in MVB, or at the end of your stay, you can spend time in the largest town in the North of Madagascar. It has many colonial buildings (albeit run down) and a huge market. This is the best place for souvenirs, including the aromatic vanilla pods. It has several internet cafés and if you want a guaranteed internet connection, this is your best. You will also be able to meet our director, Ben's, family.

Most shops and banks in Diego are shut between 12 pm and 3 pm Monday to Friday and are open in the afternoon until 5:30 pm. At weekends, shops only open on Saturday mornings. Restaurants are generally open all day. There is also a very good French patisserie at the largest hotel in town, The Grand Hotel.

Eating at street stalls is a cheap option, but does require a strong stomach. If you want to give it a go, make sure you begin with trying small quantities and gradually increasing them if you are sure you are fine. Note that juice 'sirop' at stalls and Malagasy restaurants normally comes from concentrate

that is diluted with untreated water.

Ramena Beach

An interesting day trip from Diego, or if you fancy a spot of R & R, you can spend a couple of lazy hours (or days) on the beach at Ramena. The white sands stretch a length which includes a busier end with hotels and bars and a quieter part where it is possible to watch fishermen go about their daily tasks. Snorkeling at the end of the bay in Ramena is good (it is part of a disused Army base and there is a small charge) and it is possible to hire a fishing boat to take you to the Mer D'Emeraude, where it is even better! There is also a dive centre at Ramena.

Amber Mountain & other National Parks

Montaigne d'Ambre is a short journey from Diego Suarez. There are some good trails and there are lemurs and waterfalls to see. It is in the 'rain' forest – and lives up to its name all year round, so dress accordingly. There is a good website with information about all the Madagascar National Parks and reserves: www.parcs-madagascar.com. The national park organization is known locally as **ANGAP**, which is an abbreviation for the old French name.

Anjahankely Village

Anjahankely village is located 13km walk from Maventibao. This is a well-developed village, approximately twice the size of Maventibao. If you would like, there will be an opportunity to run a 1-2 day clinic there; which is not only useful to the people of Anjahankely, but also to people who live further afield.

Anjahankely is also a gateway to the Analamerana Special Reserve where you can go for a guided walk to (hopefully) spot the critically endangered Perrier's Sifaka (a black lemur). From Diego it is very difficult to get to the reserve so it is a great idea to take the opportunity to go to the area.

11. Terms

By accepting to volunteer in Madagascar with Mada Clinics Madagascar

you confirm that:

- You do not have any ongoing or occasional medical or psychological condition which precludes you from living or working in a rural or third world setting;
- You are aware of the current political situation in Madagascar and travel at your own risk;
- You have adequate travel insurance to cover medical emergencies, evacuation, and your personal belongings;
- You hold a passport of at least 6 months validity; and
- Whilst in Madagascar you will agree to abide by the laws of Madagascar.

Appendix I – Malagasy Phrases

Pronunciation guide: Ah—like *a* in ‘father’; Eh—like *e* in ‘they’; Ee—like *i* in ‘machine’; Oh—like *o* in ‘so’; Oo—like *u* in ‘used’; Ng—like *ng* in ‘morning’

General:

General: English	Malagasy	Pronunciation
Hello	Mbôlatsara	mBo-lah-cha-rah
What’s the News? (usual greeting)	Ino vaovao?	een Voh-voh?
There is no news! (usual response)	Tsisy vaovao!	Tsee-see Voh-voh!
Yes	Eka/la/Oui/Eny	Eh-kah/Ee-ah/Wee/Eh-nee
No	Aha or Ehe/Non	Ah-hah or Eh-heh/Noh
Thanks!	Misaotra!/Merci!	Mee-soh-trah/Mer-cee
Please/Excuse/Sorry	Aza fady	Ahzah-fah-dee
Good-bye!	Sambitsara/Veloma/Au-revoir	Sahm-beet-sah-rah Veh-loo-mah/Ohr-vwahr
Water	Rano	Rah-noo

Useful for the clinic:

English	Malagasy	Pronunciation
----------------	-----------------	----------------------

What is your name?	Azôvy añaranao?	Ah-zoh-vee ahngah-rah-noh?
Where do you live?	Aïa mipetraka anao?	Ah-ee-ah mee-peh-trah-kah ah-noh?
How old are you?	Firy taoño anao?	Fee-ree toh-ngoh ah-noh?
How many days have you been sick?	Firy andra marary anao?	Fee-ree ahdrah mah-rah-ree ah-noh?
Where is your pain?	Aïa marary nianao?	Ah-ee-ah mah-rah-ree nee-ah-noh?
Is there a fever?	Misy fièvre?	Mee-see fee-eh-vreh?
Is there coughing?	Misy mikohaka?	Mee-see mee-koo-ah-kah?
Is there diarrhea	Misy mivalañà?	Mee-see mee-vah-lah-ngah?
Blood	Lio	Lee-oo
Pregnant	Bevohoka	Beh-voo-hoo-kah

Appendix II – Arrivals Hall at Tana Airport

1. **The Immigration Entry Form** is handed out on your flight prior to arrival and should be filled out before you land and enter the Immigration Hall. The Form is contained in a small information booklet and contains three pages – each basically asking for the same information but there is one for each of Immigration, Customs and Police. Detach it from the booklet and keep it with your passport (and a copy of your return ticket details / airline email confirmation - just in case it is needed).
2. Ensure that you fill out your **date of departure** from Madagascar accurately on the Form as the Immigration official will usually use this as the date on which on which your visa will end.
3. At the airport, you can ask for a visa for **up to 90 days**. If you are staying longer than 90 days in Madagascar, try to get an extendable visa from the Malagasy embassy in your country ahead of time. This is the easiest way. If this is not possible, ask for the maximum 90 days at the airport and we will try to help you apply for an extension once you are staying with us.

4. On arriving in the Arrivals Hall there are **four separate queues**. On the right is the queue for a **visa stamp**. Next is the queue for those arriving **Without Visas** (the majority); then a queue for those entering With Visas and the fourth for the Malagasy. It is important to get in the right queue.
5. We use the term ‘queue’ loosely as it is not a widely accepted principle, neither amongst the French (who make up a lot of the incoming passengers) nor the Malagasy (they don’t care), to form a proper queue/line but rather to mass towards a particular point. You just have to try to hold your position as best you can and not fret too much about the others pushing in front of you.
6. For those staying **less than 30 days** you can join the Without Visa (‘Sans Visa’) queue straight away (i.e. there is **no need** to join the first queue to buy a visa stamp).
7. When you arrive at the front of the queue, hand in your passport and your completed Immigration Entry Form. Someone may ask for one part of the Form whilst you are queuing/waiting – that is normal. The Customs, Police and Immigration officials, who all sit in a line in the cubicle, will pass your passport amongst themselves, and it will take about 15-30 minutes for it to appear at the other end of the cubicle.
8. In the meantime, whilst you are waiting and once you have handed in your passport, you may walk past and see if your luggage has arrived. But don’t go too far from the cubicle as they will call out your name when they have finished the formalities. It is a good idea to see who was in front of you and behind you, to see when they get their passports back, as they (usually) stick to the order they receive the passports.
9. If you are staying **between 31-90 days**, before joining the ‘Sans Visa’ queue you need to join the first queue in order **to buy a Visa Stamp**.
10. This will cost **50-65 Euros** (\$80-90) and you should have this ready beforehand **in cash** for each person. Euros are more readily accepted than USD. After you have paid for the Visa Stamp, you then join the Sans Visa queue – 4.1 above.
11. If there are two or more in your party, one can join the Visa Stamp queue (with the passports) and the other the ‘Sans Visa’ queue. When the person

has bought the visa stamp he/she can join the other person already in the Sana Visa queue.

12. In any event, your luggage may not have arrived by the time you get your visa and passport back. Both the Visa queuing process and arrival of your luggage can take **over an hour**. It is just the way it is in Madagascar – so it is best to (try to) relax and start to get used to “Mora Mora” or “This is Madagascar” time!

13. There are (usually) lots of **luggage carts** available. It is good to use these, not least as it will prevent/reduce the annoying requests from both official and unofficial baggage handlers to help you with your luggage once you are clear of customs. These ‘luggage touts’ demand a tip for carrying your bags sometimes only a few yards or just putting them into your taxi/shuttle bus; and as you probably: a) are tired/exhausted from the journey; b) don’t have any local currency; and c) don’t have any small notes/change, they get grossly overpaid. A firm “Non Merci” usually deals with this problem.

14. Likewise ignore all offers to change money at this point. There is an ATM/Bureau de Change available when you exit. – See below

15. Once you have your luggage you go through a **Customs Luggage check**, but they are usually only interested in the Malagasy importing luxury goods; so a polite ‘bonjour/bonsoir’ and you are on your way.

16. After exiting the arrival hall you **will** also be approached by a myriad of people offering you a taxi to your hotel. As explained in the guide, it is best to have booked a hotel near the airport (with a free shuttle bus) or if staying in the center to have arranged a taxi (through Mada Clinics - cost approx 30-40,000Ar). Again a “Non Merci” is usually enough.

17. If you have booked a taxi or have time before going to your shuttle bus it is probably a good idea to get some **local Ariary currency**. There is an ATM and a Bureau de Change (open late) in the International Departure Hall to your left when you exit. If exchanging currency check carefully the exchange rate and what you should receive as some late arriving, tired volunteers have been shorted as much a 100 Euros/\$. It is best to wait until arriving in Diego and having Mada Clinics staff accompany you to bank for large exchanges. The ATM should give you up to 200,000Ar (USD100),

which should be enough to see you through the first evening/day. (See also the section in the Guide re ATMs/Exchanging Money).

18. You can also buy an **Orange** SIM card/phone after you arrive from the Orange Kiosk on the right (and likewise with **Telma**), just after you leave the Arrivals Hall. See the section in the Guide re Telephones/Communications

N. B. Arriving in **Nosy Be Airport** is similar; but there is just one queue - without differentiating between those with/without visas. There is no ATM at Nosy Be airport. If taking a taxi, ask him to stop in Helleville.

Appendix III – Emergency Contact Numbers & Email Addresses

Mada Clinics - Madagascar personnel

Director: Ben Shipley – +261332490551
tahthoo@hotmail.com

Local Representative: Armelle - +261324600236
mora.fenojaby@gmail.com

Local Manager and Translator: Nono - +261322742665

Mada Clinics – overseas

Volunteer Coordinator (based in the US): Maggie – 13012752816
madaclinics1@gmail.com

Appendix IV – Bank information for making donations

Beneficiary name and address - **ONG Mada Clinics Madagascar**, 7 Rue Notre Dame FKT Avenir, Antsiranana, DIANA, 201, Madagascar

Bank Name - **BFV - Société Générale**

Bank Address - **Rue Richelieu, Antsiranana, DIANA, 201, Madagascar; tel: 261 32 82 221 89**

IBAN Number - **MG4600008005100500400751187**

Code Banque – **00008**

Code Agence – **00510**

Swift code/BIC code - **BFAVMGMG**