




The Ladybug Project 

Strategic Plan: Diego Suarez Urban School Program

January 2012 – January 2014

Authorized by Board of Directors, December 22nd 2011



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Executive Summary

This is a strategic plan for The Ladybug Project Inc.'s Diego Suarez Urban School Project. This project intends to drastically update the *Centre de formation professionnelle (Rue Francois de Mahy)*, which is a secondary school of 1,510 students in the city of Diego Suarez, Madagascar (Ladybug Project Working History, Page 5). The school, a major public education center in the area, caters to children from ages 9-15 and has not been renovated since the country's independence in June 1960. It is in extreme disrepair and the facilities are no longer safe for students to use. Unfortunately, without external intervention, it is unlikely that the school will be renovated or updated to a basic, useable standard, in the near future.


The project is in keeping with The Ladybug Project's mission and values statements (Page 5); The Ladybug Project is the only organization with the local connections and stakeholder permission to undertake a project of this magnitude at this current time (Appendix C and D).

The estimated cost of the project from start to completion is 97,700.00 USD (Appendix F). The project will begin in May 2012 and be completed by August 2013. Goals (Page 9) and an action plan (Appendix A) have been developed to guide the project to completion. Finally, a monitoring and evaluation plan has been developed (Appendix G), and involves monthly updates to the Executive Director and Board of Directors; the plan is flexible, pending Board of Directors approval, and can be updated to reflect the challenges of working in a developing country.

Board Authorization of Strategic Plan

Authorization designates board member's approval of the strategic direction and action plan describe in this (Strategic Plan: Diego Suarez Urban School Program) plan document.

Kim Reuter, Chair:  Date Signed: 12/23/11

Joshua Stewart, Vice-Chair:  Date Signed: 12/23/11

Micah Burkey, Vice-Chair:  Date Signed: 12/23/11

Peter Reuter, Treasurer:  Date Signed: 12/23/11

Audrey Beatty, Secretary:  Date Signed: 12/23/11

Ladybug Project Mission Statement:

1. The Ladybug Project Inc. aims to connect donations to initiatives in Equatorial Guinea and Madagascar. These projects aim to help foster educational and health infrastructure in target countries.
2. The Ladybug Project Inc. does not participate in political campaigns, nor do a substantial part of its activities involve lobbying.

Ladybug Project Vision Statement:

The Ladybug Project Inc. connects communities across the world to advance education and healthcare in Africa. We are currently working in the countries of Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, and Madagascar on education and healthcare projects which would otherwise remain unfunded by non-local sources.

The Ladybug Project Inc. aims to work with schools and clinics in Africa who are in dire need of funding and/or assistance. In these efforts, we work with local, in-country partners as often as possible, as well as with local stakeholders to ensure that aid is targeted, effective, and necessary. As we move forward, we hope to focus our attention on projects which will have a long-lasting, positive effect on a community such as the renovation of key facilities, training events, and local capacity building.

In 2011, 82% of our expenditure was on our charitable causes. In addition, our large volunteer base (200+ volunteer) donated over \$76,000 in volunteer services; \$4 of volunteer effort for every \$1 received in monetary and in-kind donations.

Ladybug Project Working History – Diego Suarez Urban School Program:

The Ladybug Project Inc. has been actively working with the *Centre de formation professionnelle (Rue Francois de Mahy)* in the city of Diego Suarez (also known as Antsiranana) since July 2010. Diego Suarez, located on the northern tip of Madagascar, is a quiet tourist town which is separated from the rest of the country by a sometimes impassable dirt road³. Much of the political instability which has recently plagued the country is felt to a lesser extreme in Diego; this partly due to its isolation and partly because of its warmer climate (more stable agriculture)

³.

Madagascar, the fourth largest island in the world, is located just to the east of the African continent, adjacent to South Africa¹. Madagascar has two official languages (Malagasy and French) thanks to French colonialism which ended in 1960¹. In recent years, Madagascar has been classified as a low-income country² with a 900 USD per capita GDP¹ that has recently crashed⁷; it is one of the least developed countries in the world⁸.

In recent years, the political situation has become more stable. However, uncertainty of whether the current political party, who gained power in 2009, did so democratically^{1,6,8} and so many western countries (the United States included) have withdrawn all non-essential aid from the country⁶. In a land where at one point, 75% of each person's income came from foreign aid, this has been a huge blow to the Malagasy economy. It should be noted that the government releases little information concerning the economic situation⁷.

Additionally, the government has recently been cutting funds to education; in March of 2009 the government's education budget was slashed by twenty to thirty percent^{6,8}. While existing data indicates high primary school enrollment in Malagasy school, there is little data available on actual learning rates. In 1999 a Monitoring Learning Achievement project found a mean test score of 62.8% for urban Malagasy students in grades 4 & 5⁹. In other words, most students were not able to pass a basic learning test for their grade level. It was noted that student learning would increase if the school environments were increased⁹.

Seventy percent of the population lives under the international poverty line (1.25 USD/day) and health care services are limited country-wide⁸.

Background about the Centre de formation professionnelle (Rue Francois de Mahy):

The founder of The Ladybug Project Inc. (Kim Reuter, Executive Director), first discovered the *Centre de formation professionnelle* (hereafter referred to as the Diego Suarez Urban School Project), while teaching conservation biology to some of the school's students in June and July of 2010. In July 2010 the public school catered to 1,034 students³. A visit in September 2011 indicated that 1,517 students were listed on the school register⁴, and this rise in attendance was confirmed in November 2011 when the reported enrollment was 1,510 students⁵.

From interviews with the headmaster and local school authorities, the facilities were built during the 1950s and 1960s (perhaps earlier), and have not been renovated since independence from France (June 26th, 1960)^{3,5}. We have not been able to confirm these claims, although assessments of the structural integrity of the facilities indicate that they have long been neglected.

The school lies in the heart of Diego Suarez. Though it is only a few blocks away from the main tourist strip, it is in a so-called “bad” area of town; students are not permitted to engage in any after school activities as a string of robberies and assaults in the area leave the officials no choice but to send students home as soon as they are finished with classes^{3,5}. This situation has not changed and remains the same as of November 2011^{3,5}.

The students attend classes Monday to Friday, from approximately 7:15am until just after noon, when their classes begin to end^{3,5}. They rotate between the 14 available rooms and receive instruction in Math, Writing, Science (theoretical and not applied), French, and English. Most class sizes range from 90-110, and contain a large age range of students – sometimes the gap is as wide as five years in one classroom⁵.

The school has some electricity and no running water. In 2010, there was a pump for drinking water, but both visits in 2011 confirmed this pump was broken^{4,5}. The restrooms consist of nine “drop toilets” (holes in the ground) and are so squalid that most students “hold” until the end of the school day. There is no outdoor rain shelter, and the roofs leak so that even while in classrooms, students get wet. In classrooms with no electricity, it is sometimes impossible to hold classes during the rain because opening the windows make the students wet and closing them creates an environment where it is too dark to read.

There is a small library, but this remains locked and most students are not allowed to use it; the books are too few and too precious to share^{3,5}.

Desks are too few, and students must often sit on the ground to complete schoolwork. Due to the increase in price in firewood, desks have been stolen from the school in 2009 and 2010; bars on the windows have deterred additional theft.

The school is not secure. There is an incomplete and broken wall surrounding the perimeter and a public trash dump just outside the school property. Much of the metal (be it doors or windows) is rusting and a health hazard^{3,4,5}.

Debris is strewn in the classrooms and on the property including one rusting vehicle, and the ruins of a former classroom building^{3,4,5}.

Ladybug Project working history with the Centre de formation professionnelle (Rue Francois de Mahy):

The Ladybug Project Inc. hired local carpenters to build sixty desks for the school. These were completed and delivered in August 2010.

In-country volunteers for The Ladybug Project Inc. visited the school site in September 2011 and again in November 2011, after a Board of Directors meeting in May 2011 resulted in a

unanimous vote to pursue grant writing efforts in order to fund large-scale renovation of this school site.

In November 2011 an in-country volunteer acquired estimates of labor cost to undertake renovations (assuming that all labor and equipment would be bought locally to stimulate local business).

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Ladybug Project Goals – Diego Suarez Urban School Program:

Goal #1: Work with the local community to set up renovation program.

Strategy #1.1: Complete a thorough assessment of the school's needs and quantify the amount of work to be done.

Strategy #1.2: Accept bids from the local workforce and work with community groups to find capable individuals to complete different aspects of the renovation project.

Strategy #1.3: Ensure that all local laws, regulations, and permitting procedures are being followed.

Goal #2: Create a safer learning environment for the Diego Suarez Urban school students and staff.

Strategy #2.1: Remove dangerous and unnecessary debris from the school property and dispose according to local laws and regulations. This includes the rusting car in one of the classrooms, broken cement blocks, wires, rusting metal, trash, and miscellaneous items.

Strategy #2.2: Build a wall (with multiple entrances) around the circumference of the school (if OK'd by all of the relevant stakeholders and government authorities).

Strategy #2.3: Reinforce and replace broken locks on all doors and windows.

Strategy #2.4: Bar all windows and building entrances as required.

Strategy #2.5: Fill and fix holes in the brick classroom walls.

Strategy #2.6: Fix/remove defunct electrical wiring from classrooms. Where possible, replace with safe wiring and new light fixtures.

Goal #3: Create a more comfortable learning environment for the school students and staff.

Strategy #3.1: Heavily sanitize and assess the need/ability to renovate/build new restroom facilities.

Strategy #3.2: Fix the well at the school to provide the school's populace (and likely, the surrounding communities), with a water source.

Strategy #3.3: Provide enough desks for each classroom.

Strategy #3.4: Provide desks and chairs for teachers.

Strategy #3.5: Place lock-and-key controlled cabinets in each classroom for teacher use.

Strategy #3.6: Build up walls between classrooms to reach the ceilings and pad with insulation, so that teachers do not have to shout over each other and students can clearly hear lectures.

Goal #4: Create a collaborative working process with all local stakeholders.

Strategy #4.1: Meet with school staff, teachers, local school authorities, government officials in a series of meetings to discuss legality and need of renovation projects.

Strategy #4.2: Create a student club to support the renovations and involve them in the renovation process to foster a sense of ownership.

Strategy #4.3: Engage the local community in the beautification of the school (perhaps murals or the planting of a community garden on the otherwise empty school grounds).

Goal #5: Create long-term working relationships in the Diego Suarez community.

Strategy #5.1: Provide a place for community citizens to talk about community needs.

Strategy #5.2: Have full-time project manager working with the local populace on this project, and getting feedback on other training and capacity-building needs of the community.