



Water+: Annual Innovation in Sanitation Award

World Toilet Day 2022

RANO WASH

According to the UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey for Madagascar, over 45% of the rural population in Madagascar practices open defecation. The Ministry of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene in Madagascar has been implementing the *Madagasikara Madio Program* since October 2019, which aims to eliminate open defecation in the country by 2025. The RANO WASH project has been a key implementing partner in supporting government, private sector, and communities to meet this goal. As of 2022, the project has exceeded its life of project targets:

- More than **661,000 people** have improved access to sanitation (basic and limited/shared)
- **77 communes**, including **5,543 communities** have been certified Open Defecation Free (ODF), ensuring an open defecation free environment and protecting health and dignity for more than **868,151 people**

From 2020 to 2022, the number of ODF communes rose from 4 to 77 – an impressive achievement. To help accelerate progress against Madagascar's sanitation goals, the WASH sector needs approaches that think big and tackle scale. **The Water+ is proud to award its Annual Innovation in Sanitation Award to RANO WASH for all the hard work and success in supporting communities create clean environments -- one commune at a time.**

Project Overview: Rural Access to New Opportunities in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (RANO WASH)

Dates: June 2017 – June 2023

Project areas: 250 communes of 7 regions

Donors: USAID

Budget: \$33 million

Consortium partners: CARE; WaterAid; CRS; Sandandrano; Bushproof

Impact to date: **\$1.8M** mobilized for the WASH sector, **117 communes** increased public investment for WASH, **40+ public private partnerships** for water service delivery, **222 health facilities** and **schools** with WASH access, **211,179 people** with access to water services and **661,717** with access to sanitation

Interview: RANO WASH

This year, the Water+ team interviewed two staff from RANO WASH: **Avo Ratoarijaona** (Deputy Chief of Party) and **Harisoa Rasamoelina** (Behavior Change Senior Advisor). **Avo** has over 20 years of experience as a specialist in programs for livelihoods, food security, health, disaster risk reduction, and WASH programs. **Harisoa** has more than 15 years of experience in social development, behavior change, and communication. Both have been with **CARE Madagascar** since 1999. RANO-WASH is a **flagship project** for CARE's Water+ program for rural water and sanitation delivery and has been a leader in the WASH sector in Madagascar.

Q: RANO WASH has had tremendous success in sanitation, exceeding its life of project targets and pioneering Open Defecation Free (ODF) certification at the commune level that has led to an open defecation free environment for nearly 1 million people. How did RANO WASH accomplish this? What were the most critical and innovative elements of the RANO approach from your perspective?

Taking a systems approach and strengthening commune leadership were both really important to success, but also crucial was establishing a culture of learning and adaptation within the RANO WASH team. Team members were able to experiment, innovate and ask, **“what strategies are working, and how can we adapt?”** We encouraged regular reflection and exchange between regions and stakeholders, and discussion of both successes and failures. We had simple mechanisms to make sure team members were connected, discussing, and exchanging across regions and administrative levels.

To give an example of this kind of innovation and experimentation - from the beginning of the project, we felt we needed to go beyond Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS), and we started to think about how we could strengthen the impact of CLTS by combining it with other strategies. At first, some were resistant to modifying CLTS, but we quickly began to see that communes and regions that combined and layered CLTS with other

approaches, such as the *Follow-Up Mandona* approach, VSLAs, or market-based sanitation were having better results. This allowed us to examine which combination of approaches could best augment CLTS to impact sanitation adoption at scale.

Thinking big was also crucial to success. The Government of Madagascar had established the national “Clean Madagascar” campaign which set ambitious targets around sanitation, but also established a broader vision for cleanliness in Madagascar. It was important that the RANO WASH team think bigger than just achieving open defecation free status in a few communities, and ask **“How can we help commune governments contribute to the bigger objectives of the Clean Madagascar campaign?”** Once we worked to strengthen commune leadership and planning capacity to demonstrate gains towards this national objective, access to sanitation started to increase widely.

Q: There have been previous CLTS efforts in Madagascar, but recidivism to open defecation has been common. RANO WASH has been measuring slippage rates, and reports relatively low slippage (2-5%) back to open defecation in RANO WASH communities. Why is this? How did RANO WASH approach CLTS differently that has resulted in such low slippage rates?

This is where **strengthening leadership** and **support to governance** really matters. Previous efforts had been focused only on communities, with the belief that the responsibility for maintenance of ODF status is only at the community level. But this isn’t true. **ODF is influenced by the legal and governance frameworks** at the commune level. Ensuring that commune governments have a WASH plan, and governance frameworks to sustain ODF is key.

Slippage happens at the highest rates after rainy seasons, or after floods and cyclones. This is the time when latrines collapse and households are least able to rebuild because they have also lost their house and crops and other resources. The ideal solution is to have durable latrines, that can better withstand these events. RANO WASH worked with sanitation entrepreneurs to offer more durable latrines, but also worked with communities during initial stages of CLTS triggering to discuss durability, and identify resources to invest in more durable latrines from the very beginning. VSLA, for example, began to offer no-interest loans for families wanting to build more durable latrines. This kind of proactive discussion and identification of financial mechanisms to build more durable latrines was key to reducing recidivism.



Q: RANO WASH is supporting the Government of Madagascar's Clean Madagascar campaign, which aims to eliminate open defecation in Madagascar by 2025. This is a big goal, as 45% of rural Madagascar currently practices open defecation. What roles has RANO WASH played in supporting this campaign?

At a national level, RANO WASH was involved in the design, documentation, and launch of the Clean Madagascar campaign, including collaboration with the Ministry of WASH and other stakeholders on the design of tools, and verification and certification processes. For example, prior to launch of the campaign, only national governments were able to certify communities as ODF, but this centralized certification was too onerous to reach the government's goals of certifying all communities as ODF by 2025. RANO WASH brought the Ministry and stakeholders together to think bigger and envision a more decentralized certification process that could help reach their goal.

RANO WASH then helped regional governments to define plans and deadlines for reaching ODF status per the Clean Madagascar mandate. RANO WASH supported regions and the regional coordination groups to define strategies, draft plans, and establish monitoring against targets. To inform these plans, RANO WASH hosted sharing sessions with regional governments and stakeholders (e.g. NGOs and private sector) to highlight approaches and successes, and invite exchange between regions. Thus, RANO WASH's success in sanitation has been **aligning stakeholders behind the goals of the Clean Madagascar campaign**, and was both part of and essential to a broader success and momentum.

Q: Most traditional sanitation programs use CLTS approaches to promote ODF certification at the community level. RANO WASH has certified 77 ODF communes. Why is it important to target commune-level ODF versus village-level ODF? What would you recommend to other CARE teams trying to tackle sanitation at (commune-level) scale?

It is important to **think at the commune level rather than just the community level** because it takes engagement from service authorities to achieve and sustain ODF. As such, it is essential that there is clear responsibility of commune government in the achievement and sustaining ODF status in all of their constituent communities. It should not be just the responsibility of the communities. **Sanitation is a public service, and a human right.** Sustaining it requires that service authorities are accountable to ensuring fulfillment of this right. For RANO WASH, the objectives of the government are very important. We seized the initiative of the government in the Clean Madagascar campaign, and that we should support each other in achieving joint objectives. There are 1,600 communes in Madagascar, and many thousands of communities. The more we concentrate at higher level, the more the results are impactful and sustainable.

As to what we would recommend to other CARE teams:



Most importantly, focus on **strengthening governance at all levels**. Working at the community level only may bring behavior change, but it can only be sustained with support, and the government has the key role in ensuring this. So, we must support the government to play this role effectively.



It's important that we ask ourselves how we ourselves live, and what frameworks support the WASH services in our own homes. In my neighborhood, there are laws implemented by commune government to regulate sanitation. **We need to consider rural communities just like our own communities.** We cannot expect them to find solutions for themselves or govern themselves in ways that we would not, or make investments that we would not.



Finally, the dynamic of the project team is very important. Coming back to the beginning, it's essential to cultivate **a culture of learning, iteration, and reflection.**

Q: RANO WASH takes a systems strengthening approach. What did this systems strengthening approach look like with respect to sanitation? What parts of the system were most important to address in order to achieve sanitation outcomes? What parts of the sanitation systems remain the weakest?

Of course, all of the systems components are inter-related and important. All of them must be strong and well coordinated in order to ensure sustainable services. But in particular, strengthening planning at commune and regional levels, strengthening institutional arrangements and stakeholder coordination, and strengthening commune and regional capacity for monitoring of sanitation outcomes, including ODF verification and certification processes, were all critical to these successes. As for which components of the sanitation system remain the weakest in Madagascar, going forward more attention needs to be paid to:



Service delivery: we need to ensure a more robust sanitation market, and an enabling environment for more durable, higher quality latrines that are also climate resilient



Gender and inclusiveness: too few toilets are inclusive and adapted for people with disabilities, elderly, or pregnant women.



Environment and Water Resources Management: if we don't have broader fecal sludge management, the risk of contamination is still high, particularly in rural and semi-rural areas.

To read more about RANO-WASH (in French), please visit <https://care.mg/ranowash/>

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