

## **AMS event October 2016**

### **Herizo Andrianandrasana - conservation projects**

Herizo explained how Madagascar is a remarkable biodiversity hotspot but faces threats from poverty, poor education, high social inequality and poor infrastructure.

He saw scope to improve biodiversity and human well-being through community-based conservation, adopted in Madagascar since 1996 and now opportune with the creation of 93 new protected areas.

Herizo's research was to see how effective the policy was in five key areas for Durrell and the country in Lake Alaotra, the Menabe forest, Baly Bay, Manombo forest and the Nosivolo river, which was key to fish conservation.

Between the villages Herizo found that the amount of bush fire was increasing if at a lower rate; that there had been an increase in deforestation over time if lower in the intervention villages; that there was an even higher increase in education in intervention villages; that public health and happiness had declined irrespectively; that poverty had increased likewise; and that villagers did not feel empowered.

Herizo identified problems on land ownership, corruption, abuse of power and lack of law. He maintained that there was scope for community-based conservation to do better but with more resources especially in areas such as road building.

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### **Andrew Cooke - Mining and biodiversity**

Andrew has substantial experience in evaluating the impact of mining in Madagascar and is working now with Estelle Levin. He explained that Madagascar will hold a dialogue on how to transfer the process to small-scale mining, which is usually more of a rush and often deliberately targets protected areas as they are not privately owned and can offer a refuge. This can have a serious impact if on a limited area and if not yet using mercury to leach; with the high recent price of gold and lack of larger projects then such small-scale gold rushes might continue to be significant. The conventional way to deal with the issue has been eviction although newer alternative methods are more flexible. Andrew has worked on tool kits to study and restore with frugal restoration, as in Ilakaka to stop accidents from children falling into disused pits.

The talk's focus was on small scale mining although Andrew related his knowledge of Ambatovy near Moromanaga where vegetation has been stunted by bush fires given the ores but is home to a range of endemic and some endangered species. Andrew explained how a project needed to meet modern requirements of lenders as well as national legislation, using a mitigation hierarchy to achieve a targeted nil net loss, which included the more controversial offsetting of the residual impacts. The project established a conservation area of 25,000 ha to offset the loss of 1500ha, including the Ankarana forest 100km north which also sat on nickel deposit so preserved a similar environment. The approach included tunnels underneath forests, slow directional clearing and lemur bridges.

Ambatovy suggested there was some cause for optimism and Andrew felt it had not all bad at Fort Dauphin although more problematic in part as an earlier venture. Issues remained on how much income passes to communities or indeed government; in small scale mining there was limited collection eg gold where Madagascar exports perhaps \$400m all unofficially.

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### **Michael Rakotoarivony – classical music in Madagascar**

Michael has been studying since 2014 at the Royal Academy; he is a baritone and has recently taken on role as conductor of St Bartholomew's Orchestra. He first took a history degree and sang opera in Mauritius in 2012.

Michael reviewed the major events in Madagascar including the first classic arts festival in 2015 showing footage of Mozart by Malagasy players taught by professors who themselves had been self-taught.

He explained there are at least eleven concerts a year, by young artists playing to a very young audience. There are ten music schools, private, and the challenge is that there is no uniform system of music education and limited academic potential for moving to schools overseas. He felt that while there was talent it was not always enough, as only the cream in the cake or the icing on it. It is a very musical country as evidenced by constant singing in a wake or by cattle herders in hills, although the country seemed to be fixated on copy-cat productions as in the latest TV shows while there was a threat from smart phones.

Michael's own solution will be a Foundation to promote music education in Madagascar by organising summer courses, master classes and lectures by professionals from around the world. He plans also to help introduce a standard music syllabus and strengthen it from a network.