



## **CASE STUDY – FUNDING FOR THE VELONDRIAKE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH PROJECT**

### **Background**

Madagascar is one of the poorest countries in the world, and the national average contraception prevalence rate is approximately 20% (amongst women in union), and the population doubling time of the country is 20 years. Maternal mortality figures are high (1 in 200 live births), abortion is illegal and deaths from unsafe abortions push this figure higher still.

Velondriake<sup>1</sup>, which means “to live with the sea” in Malagasy, is the largest network of community-run coastal and marine protected areas in the Indian Ocean. Velondriake is managed by communities from 24 villages in the remote southwest of Madagascar, working together with a common goal: to manage the region’s marine and coastal resources sustainably. This is being achieved by protecting the region’s unique marine environment through community-managed marine reserves, and creating sustainable livelihoods through managed fisheries, and the development of alternative livelihoods through aquaculture and ecotourism.

The Velondriake Committee, working with a range of partners, oversee the implementation, management and monitoring of the reserve, and management of local fisheries.



However, this model of sustainability does not account for the huge increase in demand on coastal resources that will result from population growth (the live birth rate is 6.7 births per woman, with an approximate population doubling time for the region of 10-15 years). This growth in population is driven by lack of access to contraceptives services; women have had to walk up to 50km through spiny forest to access the nearest family planning clinic. Members of coastal communities living within and around the Velondriake region clearly recognise the importance of family planning, and having expressed a need for such a service, and family

<sup>1</sup> [www.livewiththesea.org](http://www.livewiththesea.org)

planning services are being developed in the region with the support of Dr Vik Mohan.

Dr Vik Mohan is a GP in the UK with training and many years' experience of providing a range of contraceptive services, and is a trained and practicing medical educationalist. He has worked extensively in Madagascar setting up family planning services, and developing and implementing sexual and reproductive health education.

The grant award of £5000 from the Optimum Population Trust's project, PopOffsets, is to the Velondriake Sexual and Reproductive Health Project, and is a contribution to assist with implementing community-based distribution of contraception during 2010 and to increase community education and awareness raising using social marketing methods to improve its effectiveness (see [www.livewiththesea.org](http://www.livewiththesea.org)).

Roger Martin, Chair of OPT explained the rationale behind the decision to fund this project " While OPT is very aware that the CO<sub>2</sub> output of a typical Madagascan is many times lower than a UK citizen, we have chosen this project to emphasise the wider environmental benefits of our carbon offset programme compared to all others – no other carbon offset scheme can claim to reduce carbon emissions and, for example, protect fish stocks and coral reefs as a beneficial spin off. In addition, all poor people rightly aspire to become richer and the evidence is now conclusive that the lower the rate of population growth, the faster nations develop. We cannot expect Madagascans to remain poor and continue to emit low levels of CO<sub>2</sub>, it's unfair, and yet development programmes are doomed ultimately to fail if human numbers, rich and poor, keep rising indefinitely on our fragile and finite planet".

While carbon offsetting has its critics, the fact is that the carbon offset market is now a multi-billion dollar business, and the unmet need for access to family planning is rising. To quote Kofi Annan, "Population stabilization should become a priority for sustainable development".