



TA 'NA 'NA COLLECTION

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TA 'NA 'NA
Nature Inspired Cocoon Silk & Raffia Textiles



Conservation through Poverty Alleviation, International (www.CPALI.org) is a US-based non-profit that works in northeastern Madagascar.

Madagascar is home to over 200,000 plants and animals found nowhere else in the world and is considered a “biodiversity hotspot”. The future of Madagascar’s rainforests is heavily dependent on the communities that live in and around them. Resource exploitation, unsustainable farming practices and lack of alternative livelihoods have led to the erosion of forest resources.

CPALI designs income-generating activities that support native ecosystems and engage communities in the protection of forests while profiting from them.

Helmet vanga (Euryceros prevostii), Masoala National Park. Conservation status, “threatened”



Where is Madagascar?

Madagascar is the fifth largest island in the world and has over 24 million inhabitants. The island was once a part of Africa and India but due to plate tectonics it is now isolated in the Indian Ocean off the eastern coast of Africa. Madagascar has been isolated for over 66 million years and over 90% of its plants and animals have evolved nowhere else in the world. This very isolation, so important to maintaining Madagascar’s rich and unique biodiversity, has resulted in neglect and continuing resource extirpation and humanitarian disregard that is pushing the island’s unique biodiversity to extinction.

Madagascar lacks the needed infrastructure, political stability, health services and educational services to support the island’s population and protect its unique biology.





Mrs. Marie is 49 years old, her husband Mr. Velo is 54 years old. The couple has three children and they are part of a network that provides cocoons for SEPALI. They own a bakery made of bamboo walls and dream of building a concrete house. Their dream is still far from today's reality.



Why should we worry about an isolated island so far from home?

There is nowhere in the world that has been unaffected by the changing climate driven by the industrialized countries. Madagascar averages at least three major environmental disasters— cyclones, droughts, earthquakes, floods and locust invasions— every year. In 2008 tropical cyclones combined with rain, wind and flooding resulting in \$333 million of disaster related damages that affects worker productivity, health, schools, infrastructure and food supplies.

Eighty percent of Madagascar's population lives on less than \$1.90 day and one in two children under 5 years of age suffers from stunting due to malnutrition. The Human Development Index (HDI, a measure of life expectancy, educational attainment and adjusted real income) ranks Madagascar 149 out of 179 countries.

Industrialized countries have created many of Madagascar's environmental problems and their attempts to introduce methods of top down conservation have failed. The Malagasy want to maintain healthy ecosystems, but they need our assistance. CPALI has designed a bottom up approach working with subsistence farmers and local communities to make unique cocoon silk and raffia textiles whose sales are reinvested in the program.



Tainambalana river canal in Maroantsetra.





Silky Sifaka, (Propithecus candidus) lemur, Marojejy National Park. Conservation status is "critically endangered".

Conservation impact

The income of farmers and artisans depends on the maintenance of the natural vegetation and endemic silk moth diversity. The caterpillar host trees recover damaged habitats by retaining water and returning carbon to soils in cleared areas. The excretions of caterpillars and pupae provide sustainable inputs of minerals and iron to soils; excess pupae are a source of protein for farmers' families and livestock.

Communities assign new value to trees and insects not previously valued and thus generate a sense of the worth for the resources that surround them.



Ms. Dalina is 26 years old. She works full time for SEPALI. On the weekend she sells potato chips in the local market. The living costs in Maroantsetra, the village where SEPALI Madagascar is located, are high for the local and one must fend for oneself to survive.



Dip-dyed textile.



Lalina hangs textile to be dried.



Lowland rainforest in Madagascar.





Mr. Jafoe is 36 years old and has been working for SEPALI since 2007. He sews cocoon silk and fixes broken sewing machines. Mrs Zoela is 24 Years old and a single mother. She has a 5 year old child and struggles to pay the bills at the end of the month. Sewing cocoons one by one is time consuming and very meticulous work.



Economic impact

In the area where we work the median yearly income is \$54. Individuals working with SEPALI Madagascar earn an additional \$30-\$89 from silk cocoon farming or collection. An additional team of 15 workers is employed full-time earning \$64/month (about \$700/year) to produce cocoon and raffia textiles. The program adds about \$45,000 to the Maroantsetra economy each year.

Cocoon silk

Cocoons are ironed and sewn into unique, non-spun textiles. Each type of textile is made from cocoons spun by a different species of endemic caterpillar. Hence cocoon silks vary in texture, reflectance and pattern. CPALI sells cocoon textiles that can be dyed and transformed into finished products such as art objects, fashion accessories (handbags, jewelry, hats, shoes), objects for home use (vases, plates, cups) and art panels.





Dip-dyed decorative Panel.

*Blue Coua (Coua caerulea)
endemic Madagascar,
conservation status, "least concern".*



Silk papers made for artists' use.





All of the cocoons must be washed and ironed. Due to the high cost of electricity, the workers must use charcoal irons. Ms. Wilvina (left) is 25 years old. An agricultural science student, she works part-time for SEPALI. Ms. Ninckela (middle) is 18 years old. She started to work for SEPALI in May 2018. Since then, she learned to weave. Ms. Josea (right) is 25 years old. She had to stop working because she has appendicitis; she cannot afford hospital expenses.





Translucent, natural colored, textiles made from cocoons spun by the ghost moth (*Ceranchia apollina*), conservation status unknown.



Magnification of cocoon silk spun by *C. apollina*



Collared nightjar (*Gactornis enarratus*), conservation status, "threatened".



Boophis sp., frog endemic Madagascar.





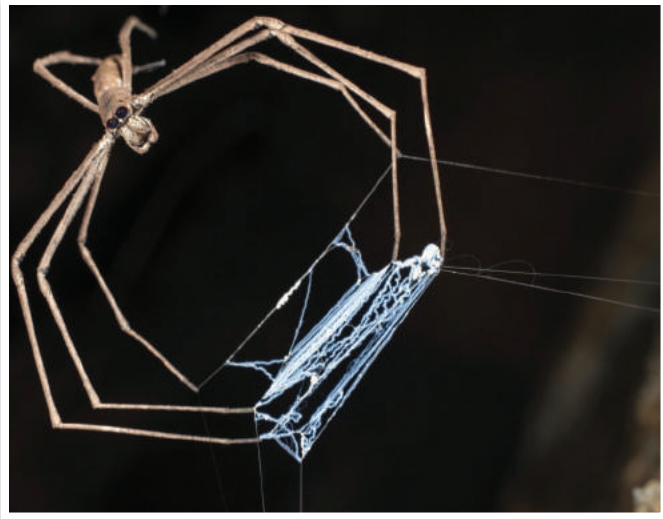


Mr. Tsola is 20 years old. Before working for SEPALI he guarded pirogues (wood canoes). He didn't finish elementary school due to his parents' lack of money. Today, his goal is to help his three-year-old son go to school. Mr. Tsola has perfectly mastered resist-dyeing techniques using string, sticks and leaves to make the beautifully patterned cocoon silk and raffia textiles shown here.



Dyeing textile.

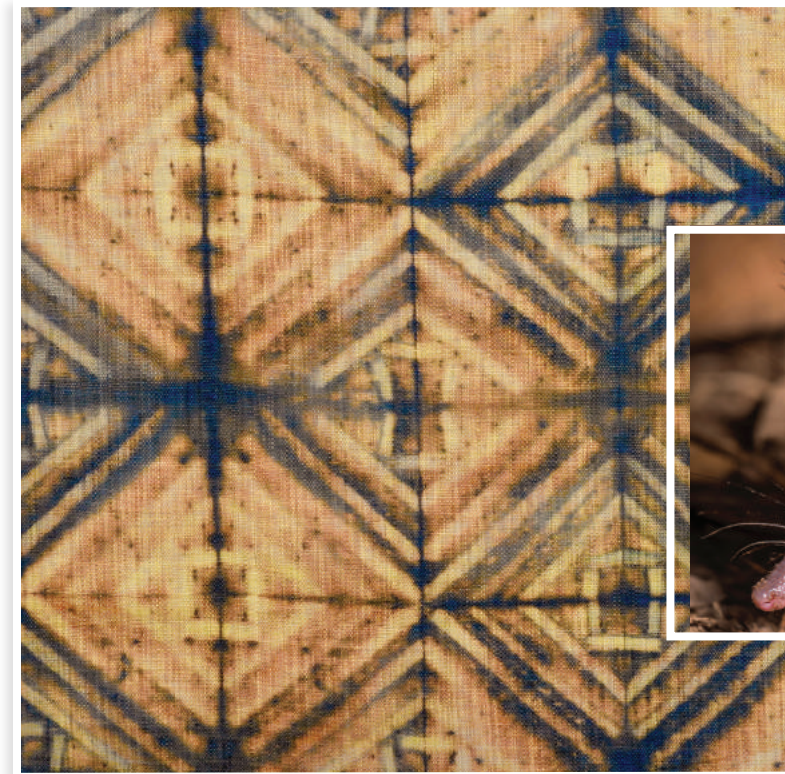




Deinopis madagascariensis,
conservation status unknown,
habitat threatened.



Web patterned, dark blue, 24"x24", raffia textile.



Close up of resist-dyed, streaked black and
burnt-orange, raffia textile.



Lowland streaked tenrec (*Hemicentetes semispinosus*),
widely distributed, conservation status of "least concern"





Hand dyed raffia mats inspired by the Madagascar's giant, fire millipede (Madabolus maximus), whose conservation status is "threatened".



Hand dyed raffia runners inspired by the Radiated Tortoise, (Astrochelys radiata) whose conservation status is "critically endangered."

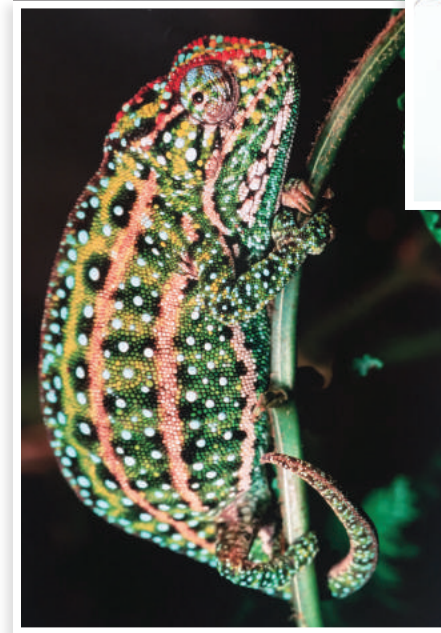




Ringtail lemur (Lemur catta), carrying infant, is "endangered".



Raffia prepared for dyeing.



Fucifer campani's mating display. The jeweled chameleon's conservation status is "vulnerable".

Ringtail raffia

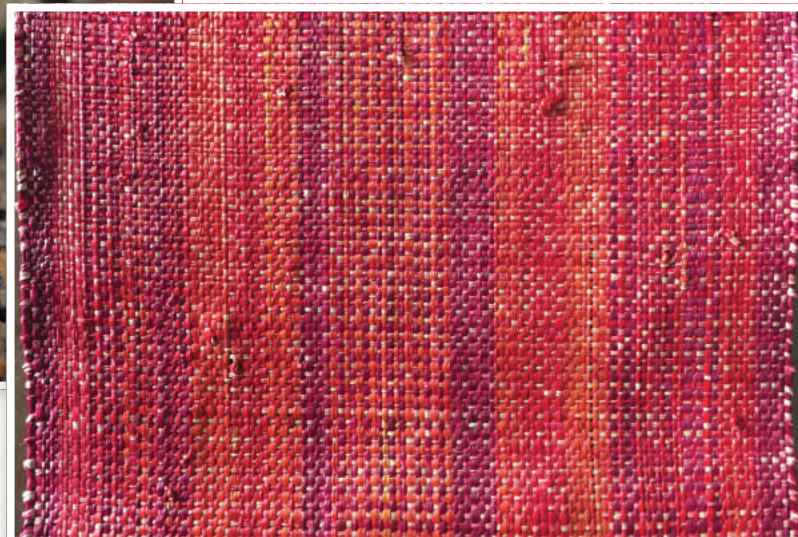


Cathy weaving with Ringtail raffia.





The Tomato frog (Dyscophis sp), is endemic Madascar; its conservation status is of "least concern".



Cathy's weavings are inspired by the tomato frog's colors.




Ms. Cathy is 20 years old. After her dad became sick, she had to work to finance her younger sibling's studies. She is happy to work for SEPALI and wants to gain more experience.





Mamy Ratsimbazafy is 38 years old. He has a masters degree in entomology, and has been working with CPALI since 2006. He founded SEPALI Madagascar in 2009. He worked to sensitize farmers to the value of endemic silks and taught farmers how to intercrop the host trees of caterpillars on their farms. Since then, CPALI farmers have planted over 20,000 trees.

30  *Those who are rearing wild silkworms are considered wizards in the local belief.*



Argema mittrei, silk moth and conservation icon of Madagascar, disappearing due to habitat loss



The SEPALI Madagascar project works to recover forest sites damaged by slash and burn agriculture.

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Mrs. Lalaina, 35 years old, is the leader of the women's artisan association of SEPALI Madagascar. Maroantsetra, where the project is based, is isolated from the rest of the world and shipping the final product abroad by plane is more expensive than the artisans' combined salary.



Lowland rain forest canopy, threatened habitat



*Parson's panther chameleon (*Calumma parsonii*), once common in the rainforest, is now "threatened".*





SEPALI Madagascar artisan team.





In September –December 2018, the Sheehan Gallery, Whitman College, hosted “Requiem for a Rainforest” to display cocoon silk and raffia textiles made by the SEPALI Madagascar team, and highlight Madagascar’s conservation and economic needs.



In addition to decorative silks, the SEPALI Madagascar team sews cocoon-silk burial shrouds to support the Green Burial movement and to honor Malagasy custom.





"Keeper of the Forest" burial shroud

*Silk sculptures by Mandy Coppes-Martin illustrating the life cycle of one of Madagascar's conservation icons, the silk moth *Argema mittrei*.*



"Life Begins Anew"



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Indri (Indri indri) lemur, endemic Madagascar, morning call, conservation status, "critically endangered".

