

Radio Meva Ankarana 98.0 FM, Antsaravibe, Madagascar

RMA Vital Statistics

Full station name: Radio Meva Ankarana

Location: Antsaravibe, Northern Madagascar

Frequency: 98.0 MHz

Transmitter power: 150 Watts

Installed in: November 2006

RadioActive's role: Supplied and installed radio studios and transmission equipment; provided two weeks' training in radioproduction and studio and station management.

Station run by: AINGA (local Malagasy NGO)

Main objectives: Providing a local noticeboard for the area and promoting better health, education and agricultural practices.

Station contact: Christi Turner (email: [christi \(at\) radioactive.org.uk](mailto:christi@radioactive.org.uk))

Latest News

May 2008: RMA's radio tower is finally up!

After several years of planning, the funding, equipment and team have finally come together to build a radio tower for Radio Meva Ankarana. Funding for the tower came from the North Kingstown Rotary Club and the US Embassy of Madagascar.

As a result the antenna for the station has now been moved from a nearby mango tree up a few metres and onto the side of the new tower. Photos of the installation are visible on the left.

The project

In October 2006, RadioActive went out to Madagascar to get Radio Meva Ankarana on the air in the community of Antsaravibe.

Antsaravibe is a rural village 130km south of Diego Suarez in the Ankarana region of northern Madagascar.

The station is a vehicle for sustainable grassroots development by and for the local population, a unifying force in the community, an all-inclusive space for community collaboration. After over a year of planning, preparation, and design, the radio installation has taken place. The station is now broadcasting daily to the Antsaravibe population, numbering around 15,000.

Solar Powered Radio!

We are pleased to be able to announce that this radio station is powered entirely by solar power. Not just the transmitter site, but the whole station is run on solar. The PV (photovoltaic) solar panel system used involves 5 x 120 Watt Panels with 4 x 150 Amp-hour "maintenance-free" batteries.

The village of Antsaravibe has no electricity. It also lacks running water, septic or drainage systems, or any other such modern infrastructure. The Radio Meva Ankarana station is the first fully solar facility in the community, a major step in an ongoing effort to introduce solar energy into the region before unsustainable, fossil-fuel powered electricity makes it there. So far, the Antsaravibe clinic has a solar-powered vaccine fridge and halogen lamp (for night deliveries), as does a new community clinic in the nearby Mahatsarafokontany. A local ecotourist bungalow also uses solar power for its lighting system; other small endeavors involving solar power in Antsaravibe are in the works."

In the photo gallery to the left is a photo of the panels being installed on the roof of the studios. Please click on the photo for a larger image. This system allows the station to be used for 6 hours a day with all of the equipment running.

RadioActive supports the use of sustainable energy sources wherever possible in our radio projects. If you have any comments, suggestions or questions regarding the use of sustainable technology in community radio projects, please get in touch.

Community Radio Training

In November 2006 we brought out two BBC radio reporters Eve Jackson and Tamasin Ford to give training at the station. They trained the station team in radio production, presenting, and field recording. They also spent time working in the local secondary school teaching students to produce radio drama.

Addressing important social issues

The dramas they produced addressed different important issues affecting the local community, such as unwanted pregnancies, promiscuity and sexually-transmitted diseases. They also spent some time visiting other villages in the area to introduce the radio project and encourage involvement in the station from other villages.

Thanks to thank Eve and Tamasin for coming out to Antsaravibe to share their expertise with the team at Radio Meva Ankarana. We look forward to working with them again on future projects.

You can find Eve's report on her experience in Madagascar on the BBC Birmingham website if you click [here](#).

If you are interested in volunteering on at Radio Meva Ankarana, please visit our [volunteer page](#).

Video from the project..

Here is a short film about Radio Meva Ankarana. [History of Radio Meva Ankarana](#)

At present, social development efforts are a daily struggle, against badroads, no phones, a village made up of small "fokontany" (divisions of the village) dispersed over long distances, rural subsistence-agriculture living, inadequate schools, insufficient health services, and an under-funded and dysfunctional local government. After introducing the idea through community focus groups, an association of enthusiastic community members was created to develop a project to make the radio idea a reality.

The community association is called AINGA, which means "beginning" in Malagasy. (To listen to a little excerpt of Malagasy, scroll down to the audio clips at the bottom of this page).

AINGA decided to apply for the US Embassy's DHRF II, the Democracy and Human Rights Fund, which provides financial support for Malagasy projects designed to improve local human rights conditions in a sustainable way. AINGA spent several months working out the project vision, goals, and plans for sustainable management and community involvement in producing radio programming. AINGA submitted its proposal in December 2005 and awaited the Embassy response due in May 2006, optimistically continuing with planning in the meantime.

The project was approved for \$15,000; the signing ceremony was held in the capital city of Antananarivo on September 21st 2006, attended by the AINGA association president and Christi Turner, a Peace Corps Volunteer working in Antsaravibe, who has been working in Antsaravibe since 2005, and has been involved with the organisation of the radio project since its inception. It was Christi who found and helped put AINGA in touch with RadioActive.

Radio Meva Ankarana means "Beautiful Ankarana Radio". The name was chosen from a variety of submissions in a community vote held during the training and installation process. To the right is a photo taken during the community vote. Ankarana means "at the harana", and harana is the local word for "limestone massif". These amazing, enormous rock formations are what make the region world-famous, and literally surround the Antsaravibe area. They harbor a unique environment filled with flora, fauna, and geological wonders found nowhere else on the planet.

Installing the Equipment

Installing the station will take place in three stages: first the audio and transmission equipment was delivered and installed in early November 2006. In the second stage the solar panel system was installed on the roof of the studios. At this point the antenna was installed on a 12 metre pole attached to the side of the station. A photo of the team attaching the antenna to the pole can be seen on the right.

In the third stage the 12 metre pole was placed on top of a 20 metre antenna tower, so that the signal could reach much further.

To find out more or to make a donation, please contact Radio Meva Ankarana via Christi Turner at: [christi \(at\) radioactive.org.uk](mailto:christi@radioactive.org.uk).