

## Project Update: April 2008

Our project HONCO operates in the SW of Madagascar, where mangroves are not that abundant. They are very important to local people (Vezo) as most are fishermen and they depend on the healthy status of the mangroves. HONCO aims through sensibilisation, education and eco-development to guide local communities towards a durable management and restoration of their mangroves.

First site visits in the Bay of Ranobe were conducted. HONCO arranged meetings with the different local communities depending on the natural resources from the mangrove forests along the coast. Local laws (dinas) are being written up and authorized and small mangrove conservation associations are being set up.

Scientific surveys have been started to inventories and estimate the natural status of the remaining mangrove areas within the Bay. For the moment one Ph.D. student is working alongside with us to get this achieved.

We are holding a reunion gathering all participating communities and authorities in mangrove conservation. The overall aim is to encourage communication between the communities and learn from each other. We will also provide them with case studies from around the world on how local communities can sustainable manage and benefit from healthy communities. It is of outmost importance that communities realize that the mangroves are theirs and they have to look after them. Based on the outcome of the reunion, a conservation action plan will be developed. Different alternative livelihoods will also be discussed and researched through targeted local participation.

