

Annual Report 2018



An idyllic view of Indawgyi Lake in Myanmar



The first group of Little Rangers from Kirindy-Village

Dear friends and members of Chances for Nature,

on the following pages, we want to take a look back with you to the year 2018, in which the focus of our work was on two environmental education projects. In Southeast Asian Myanmar, where Chances for Nature participated in building an environmental education center in the newly created Indawgyi lake UNESCO biosphere reserve, an elaborate permanent exhibition could be opened. In her Madagascar project, Dr. Hanitra Markolf Rakotonirina received international appreciation for her commitment to environmental education for children.

In total, approximately 50.000 € were spent in 2018 for the projects in Myanmar (app. 60 %) and Madagascar (app. 30 %) (editorial note: annual statement of account not available at the time of print).

You will find these and more topics in this annual report.

We wish all friends and sponsors a successful and happy 2019 and we would like to thank you for your commitment to nature conservation!

Your Chances for Nature team

On our own behalf: Chances for Nature with new management

In July of this year, a new managing committee was elected. Christian Roos resigned from being president, but he will continue to perform important scientific and representative functions as assessor. The new president is Matthias Markolf, former coordinator of our Madagascar projects; this function is now executed by Hanitra Markolf Rakotonirina. New treasurer is Susanne Schliehe-Diecks, who is handing over her function as secretary to Gunhilde Wilz. Furthermore, Thomas Ziegler was elected assessor to the managing board. He managed the Siberut Conservation project for the German Primate Centre and brings years of practical experience in nature conservation to the committee.

We wish the new managing committee success for their work!

Pictures at an Exhibition: the key element of the environmental education center opened

After being completed last year, this October the environmental education center in the newly created UNESCO biosphere reserve at the Indawgyi lake received its key element, a permanent exhibition featuring biodiversity, ecology, and sustainability. About 5,000 people in 36 communities depend on the lake ecosystem and its surroundings whose natural resources provide the livelihood for these fishermen and rice farmers. Those natural resources are being increasingly depleted by overfishing, illegal gold mining, a lack of waste management and unsustainable agriculture. The lack of awareness and knowledge about ecology and sustainable resource use within the local population are a fundamental part of this problem.



The environmental education center which opened in October 2017 seen from Indawgyi lake

The exhibition features the ecological context and its importance for the local communities as well as sustainable methods for an environmentally sound resource use in an interactive, enthralling and plain way. On 175 m² the exhibition covers topics like the lake as an ecosystem, its threat by humans but also approaches to solving these problems like sustainable fishery and rice cultivation. This way the exhibition contributes to building environmental awareness and basic knowledge about ecology and sustainability among the local population.

The exhibition is bilingual (Burmese and English) and addresses different groups of local people (fishermen, rice farmers, students), who might profit directly from the things being learned, as well as national and international visitors. For the latter, it serves as an important information center in the Indawgyi lake biosphere reserve. Our local partner, the ecotourism

group **Inn Chit Thu**, operates from here and organizes natural history tours into the biosphere reserve by kayak, bike and on foot.



The exhibition features information panels as well as exhibits from the everyday life of the residents of Indawgyi lake

The official opening of the exhibition will be held on December 14th in the presence of Burmese government officials. Chances for Nature will be represented by Dirk Meyer.

The conception of the exhibition was developed by staff of our partner **Fauna & Flora International (FFI)** in cooperation with Christian Matauschek and Dirk Meyer. We especially thank Frank Momberg (former country director of FFI Myanmar) and his staff as well as Imoel Y.M. Adhimiharja for the artistic design. We also thank the **Niedersächsische Bingo-Umweltstiftung** and the **Manfred-Hermsen-Stiftung** for financial support of this project.

Calls in the woods: protection of rare primates

Chances for Nature is part of a team engaged in the protection of highly endangered primate species in Myanmar. The project is mostly about critically endangered and hardly researched species like the hoolock gibbons. Extensive studies about population sizes of those species in three project areas, trainings for rangers and local environmental groups and the expansion of protected areas are the objectives of this project.

The project area around Pauk Sa mountain is one of the few remaining larger forest areas in the region and offers an important refugium for the endangered western hoolock gibbon. A part of the area is projected to become a nature reserve. In May of this year, Dirk Meyer and a team of local biologists and rangers visited the Pauk Sa mountain to determine gibbon population size in the area. As gibbon sightings are



extremely rare in the dense vegetation and moving through the terrain is impeded by steep topography, the most suitable method to estimate densities of gibbon populations is the monitoring of their morning songs from fixed listening points. Recent and previously collected data result in an estimated population

of 1,400 animals in 420 groups within the projected nature reserve. The investigations show that this is one of the largest populations of western hoolock gibbons in Myanmar emphasizing the importance of the planned conservation area for the protection of this primate species.

Fauna & Flora International is heading this project, Chances for Nature is responsible for the scientific and primatological measures. The project is funded by the **Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)**.

Two is better:

Awards for environmental education project

Hanitra Markolf Rakotonirina, project coordinator and driving force behind Chances for Nature's environmental education programme in Madagascar, has won this year's **Terre de Femmes Award** of the **Fondation Yves Rocher** for Germany. The price is awarded to women globally for their commitment to the environment. The prize money is 10,000 €. At the international award ceremony in April in Paris Hanitra's project also received a special award of 5,000 € by the **UNESCO**. We congratulate Hanitra on these awards which are a great acknowledgment for her work with our organization.



Hanitra Markolf Rakotonirina (center) at the award ceremony of the Fondation Yves Rocher in April in Paris with baobab photographer Pascal Maitre und Noeline Rakotoarisoa of UNESCO

Hanitra used the prize money for a multi-day environmental education camp for children in the Kirindy forest in the Menabe region. 99 children between eight and 15 years and six teachers from five surrounding villages took part in the camp in September.



A card game developed by Chances for Nature assists in learning

„When walking in the bush the kids were excited about for how long they could observe red-fronted lemurs, sifakas and other animals in their natural habitat; of course, animals in the Kirindy forest are used to the presence of humans because of the researchers working there” says Matthias Markolf, who supported the children's activities together with members of Chances for Nature and two employees of the German Primate Centre. An erosion experiment illustrated the negative consequences of deforestation on soil stability. Hanitra also developed a little educational book in the Malagasy language about the Kirindy forest. Furthermore, the **Little Sun Foundation** donated a solar lamp for each child so they could go on a night walk. The lamps could also assist the children in reading or doing their homework after dark as there is no electricity in their homes.

It is planned to expand the project for two years and carry out two camps per year. The next environmental education camp is scheduled for April 2019 and shall include the planting of trees.



The children at a night walk searching for red-fronted lemurs and other nocturnal lemurs

We thank **Vogelpark Marlow, Duisburg Zoo, Longon'i Kirindy**, and the staff of the **German Primate Centre** and **CNFEREFs** in Madagascar as well as the **Little Sun Foundation** for their support for this and other projects in Madagascar. Special thanks go to Anna Sperber, Andrea Springer and Mamy Razafindrasamba for their creativity in designing the T-Shirts and the educational book.



The enthusiastic children of the first environmental education camp in Kirindy



Hanitra explains the dry forest ecosystem to the children in Madagascar



The Little Rangers observing red-fronted lemurs in the Kirindy forest

Support our environmental and wildlife conservation projects

We have several options for you: a one-off donation, a company or individual membership or sponsoring your favorite project.

For more Information:

www.chancesfornature.org

info@chancesfornature.org

[donations account](#)

IBAN: DE15 2605 0001 0056 0235 18

Imprint: Chances for Nature e.V., Brauweg 9a, 37073 Göttingen
Text and editing: Markus Adamek
Picture credits: Matthias Markolf, Paul Schreiber, Aung Lin, Susanne Schliehe-Diecks