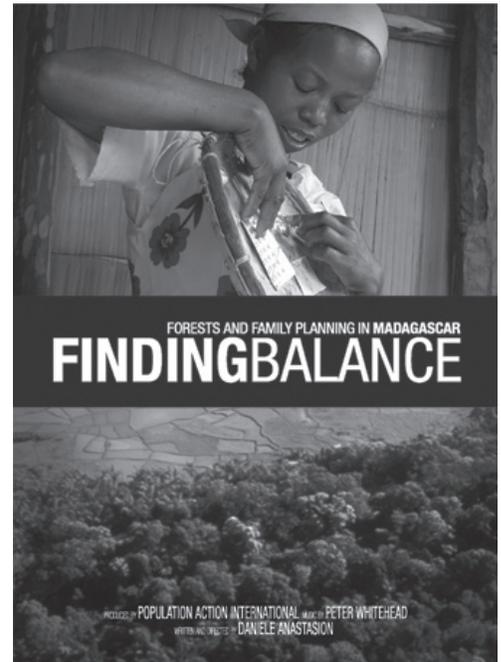


FACTSheet

Finding Balance: Forests and Family Planning in Madagascar

Filmed in Madagascar, this 9-minute documentary explores the linkages between population growth and environmental destruction in one of the world's most biologically unique places. *Finding Balance* profiles Voahary Salama, a local organization working to preserve the island's rainforest by integrating health and family planning into conservation efforts. This innovative approach to conservation and development addresses the needs of women in remote rural areas while offering hope for the sustainability of critical ecosystems and the biodiversity they shelter.



Why This Film Was Made

- *Finding Balance* was produced by Population Action International to raise awareness about the interconnections between women's health and environmental sustainability. The film is intended to be used as an advocacy tool to educate and garner further political and financial support for projects that improve access to reproductive health care while simultaneously helping people manage local natural resources.

About Population-Environment Linkages

- Roughly one-sixth of the world's population – approaching 1.1 billion people – lives in ecological "hotspots." These are the planet's land areas that are richest in biodiversity and most threatened by human activity. While these hotspots comprise just 12 percent of the planet's land surface, they hold nearly 20 percent of its human population.
- In many biologically rich areas, there is little or no access to the health services that allow women and couples to manage the timing of childbirths. Consequently, the hotspot-based population is growing nearly 40 percent faster than that of the world as a whole.

- Integrated population-environment (PE) programs combine aspects of natural resource conservation or similar environmental work with the provision of reproductive health services, such as family planning. These projects recognize that people, in both their numbers and practices, impose severe and often irreversible effects upon the environment. However, people cannot be good stewards of the environment unless their basic needs for health, nutrition and economic well-being are met.

About Voahary Salama

- Twenty conservation, health and rural development partners from five biodiverse regions of Madagascar joined together in 2000 to form a consortium called Voahary Salama ("Healthy Nature"). Voahary Salama works to reduce pressure on Madagascar's fragile and diverse ecosystems as well as improve the health status of the local population. The central philosophy of Voahary Salama activities is that by integrating natural resource management with population and health, they will be more effective and sustainable than unlinked, single-sector approaches. The consortium functions as an umbrella organization to provide training, technical and financial assistance, as well as encourage collaboration among member nongovernmental organizations. Voahary

About Madagascar

Percent of Madagascar's original forest cover that has already disappeared: **90%**

Forest cover lost each year: **150,000 to 200,000 hectares**

Population (in thousands, 2003): **18.6 million**

Total fertility rate (children per woman): **4.89**

Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 births): **71.2**

Life expectancy at birth, both sexes (years): **56.2**

Percentage of women aged 15-49 using a modern method of contraception: **18%**

Salama receives support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), The Packard Foundation, Summit Foundation and Foundation Tany Meva.

Where Else Is This Happening?

- **Biodiversity hotspots are found throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as in many parts of the United States and other industrialized countries.** Successful population-health-environment (PHE) projects tend to be found in and near the tropical forests and tropical coastal ecosystems of the three major developing-world continents, in such countries as Mexico, Guatemala, Tanzania, Madagascar, Indonesia and the Philippines.
- **A variety of organizations are engaging in integrated PHE projects,** including Conservation International in Madagascar, the Philippines and Cambodia; the World Wildlife Fund-US in Madagascar, Kenya and the Philippines; and the Jane Goodall Institute in its efforts to save some of the last of the world's remaining chimpanzees in the Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In fiscal year 2002, the U.S. Congress acknowledged for the first time in law the critical linkage leading from population through reproductive health to natural resource conservation.

Who Funds Population-Environment Projects?

- **Funding for integrated projects is available from a variety of sources, including the United States government.** In fiscal year 2002, the U.S. Congress acknowledged for the first time in law the critical linkage leading from population through reproductive health to natural resource conservation. Under the leadership of the Senate, Congress urged USAID to invest in programs that integrate family planning, basic health and environmental conservation as a strategy to lessen human impact on the environment and biodiversity. As a result, over the past few years the agency has allocated between US\$1 million and \$3 million annually to fund such projects.
- **Integrated population, health and environment projects also are supported by numerous private foundations,** including the Packard Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Summit Foundation.

How You Can Use This Film

- **Finding Balance is a quick and effective way to engage audiences, generate dialogue and encourage action.** PAI hopes this film will raise awareness about the relationship between women's empowerment and natural resource conservation, as well as the benefits of integrated population, health and environment projects.
- **Non-profit organizations can use this film to engage both grassroots membership, staff and donors** working on conservation, family planning or health projects.
- **Arrange a screening with policymakers,** either in the U.S. context or elsewhere, to help build the political will necessary for integrated projects to succeed at the community level.
- **Share the film widely** with those interested in the linkages between family planning and biodiversity conservation.
- **Order more copies** of the film at <http://www.populationaction.org/resources/order/index.htm>.



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