

Case Study

Alternatives Madagascar

A deep dive into the journey, organisational structure, service model, and population supported by Alternatives Madagascar, with reflections on its impact and key lessons learnt



Alternatives Madagascar

City Antananarivo
District Antananarivo renivohitra
Country Madagascar
Region Africa



“Alternatives Madagascar works to uphold the dignity and fundamental rights of marginalized youth, women, and girls, including boys in detention.”



Organisational profile

Team size	Small (11-50 people)
Age of organisation	6-10 years



Key aspects of our work

Primary contextual issue	Youth
Life stage	Children (0-12) Adolescents & Young Adults (13-24)
Gender focus	All
Level of intervention	Prevention & promotion
Annual Reach	2,000+ people

Contextual issue

In Madagascar, women and girls live in a context marked by deep gender inequalities, strong patriarchal norms, and limited access to resources, economic opportunities, and protection mechanisms, particularly in rural and remote areas. Young people, especially girls, face multidimensional vulnerability linked to poverty, lack of education, and the absence of sustainable economic prospects. **Climate change**, which heavily affects the southern regions of the country, further exacerbates these vulnerabilities through internal migration and economic insecurity.

Many migrant women find themselves in extreme precarious situations, sometimes forced into survival strategies such as sex work, exposing them to high risks of gender-based violence, exploitation, and sexual and reproductive health issues. In both rural and urban communities, **violence, stigma, and social exclusion remain widespread.**

These vulnerabilities also affect the children of these women, contributing to juvenile delinquency and the incarceration of minors in concerning detention conditions marked by overcrowding, abuse, and a lack of institutional protection.

Objectives

Alternatives Madagascar works to uphold the dignity and fundamental rights of marginalized youth, women, and girls, including boys in detention. The organisation also works to strengthen their resilience and social inclusion. It implements **listening, psychosocial support, and referral mechanisms** to respond to the needs of survivors of violence, women in vulnerable situations, and incarcerated minors.

Through **empowerment initiatives, civic education, positive masculinity promotion, and social reintegration**, Alternatives Madagascar creates safe and inclusive spaces that **foster protection, dialogue, and the development of individual and collective capacities.**

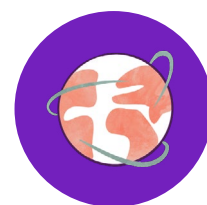
By integrating psychosocial support, advocacy, and community strengthening, the organisation aims to sustainably reduce vulnerabilities, prevent violence, and support more inclusive and protective communities.



WHEN?

When was the organisation established?

Alternatives Madagascar was established in 2019 and formally registered on November 10, 2020.



WHERE?

Where did the organisation start implementing its activities?

Activities began in seven regions – areas with high climate migration and sex work – and later expanded to other regions of Madagascar based on identified needs.



WHY?

Why did the organisation start its activities?

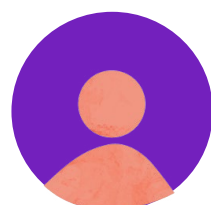
The organisation began its activities in response to rising unemployment and gender-based violence during COVID-19, later expanding to other regions supporting vulnerable women, girls, and marginalized youth.



WHAT?

What did the organisation do in its initial stages?

The organisation initially responded to the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 and the rise in gender-based violence through volunteering, awareness-raising, and capacity building for vulnerable youth and women.



WHO?

Who started the organisation?

The founding members consist of communities and young people committed to supporting marginalized women and youth.



HOW?

How was the organisation's work started?

Activities initially relied on volunteer work, Board members' personal investment – particularly the Chair who is the current Executive Director – and private donations before the organisation secured funding from donors.

Organisational structure

Alternatives Madagascar is **led by an Executive Director** responsible for strategic vision, overall coordination, and external relations with partners and stakeholders. **The Board of Directors provides strategic oversight and guidance**, ensuring accountability and direction. **The organisation is structured around several core units:**

- Coordination
- Administration and Finance Department
- Resource Mobilisation
- Communications
- MEAL

Programmes are organised into four thematic areas:

- Gender-Based Violence (GBV)
- SRHR
- Entrepreneurship
- Human Rights and Advocacy

Financial management

Alternatives Madagascar **follows an internal control system based on structured governance** through an internal financial policy, a clear separation of responsibilities, and a validation process ensuring the traceability of operations. It integrates **control mechanisms such as compliance verification and supplier evaluation**, as well as an ethical alert system managed by the financial officer, ensuring transparent management in accordance with good governance principles, and validation by the Executive Director or the Board of Directors.

At the end of each activity, **a financial report is prepared to ensure transparency and traceability of the actions undertaken**. Consequently, supporting documents are required throughout the implementation to guarantee the traceability of actions.

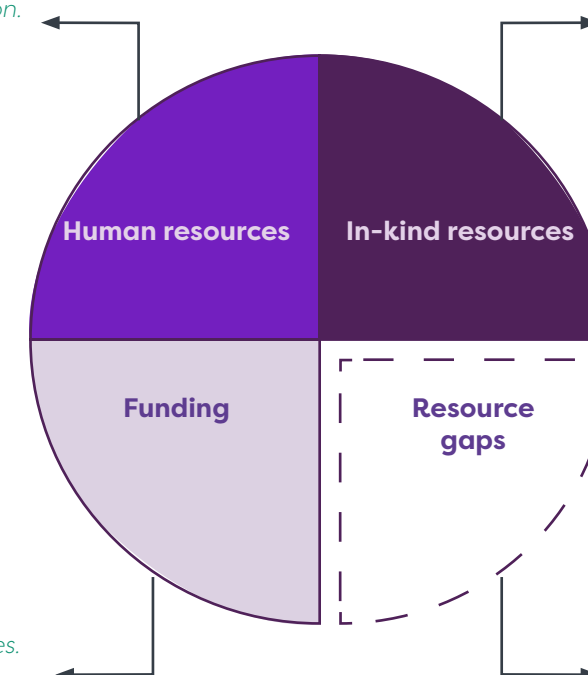
Resources

Alternatives has six permanent staff members responsible for coordinating activities as well as managing the administrative and financial aspects of the organisation.

The organisation also relies on 20 volunteers who carry out field activities and on-the-ground interventions, including students in law, psychology, sociology, and other social science disciplines.

Alternatives Madagascar benefits from material resources provided through partner donations, as well as technical support from professionals through coalitions and partnerships. The organisation also relies on local knowledge and networks of partner CSOs to strengthen the effective implementation of its programmes and activities.

The organisation operates on an annual budget of approximately €10,000, funded by small grants, partnerships, and consultancy-based, income-generating activities. To strengthen and expand its programmes geographically, Alternatives Madagascar estimates needing an annual budget of €100,000 to ensure sustainability, operational continuity, and effective implementation of its activities.



The lack of long-term funding and the organisation's limited financial absorption capacity. These constraints hinder the development and expansion of programmes, as well as the organisation's ability to provide sustainable support to vulnerable and remote communities.

Model & activities

Target population

Alternatives Madagascar works with **vulnerable communities both in the capital city and in regions that are highly exposed to the impacts of climate change.**

Its main target group is **girls and women facing multiple layers of vulnerability**, including climate change, gender-based violence, prostitution, and economic hardship.

The organisation also supports **their children and close relatives**, recognising their increased vulnerability.

Priority is given to **individuals with limited access to fundamental rights, healthcare services, and essential services**, particularly those living in severe social and economic hardship.

Services or interventions



Alternatives Madagascar is a youth-led feminist movement that promotes sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), works to end gender-based violence (GBV), challenges and deconstructs toxic masculinities, and supports migrant women exposed to climate-related vulnerabilities, including risks linked to survival sex work. The organization addresses systemic inequalities and works toward inclusive societies grounded in human rights and gender justice. It primarily works with marginalized youth, women, persons with disabilities, and individuals facing severe social and economic vulnerability. Its model is structured around four interconnected pillars that collectively aim to strengthen protection, empowerment, and long-term social transformation.

Accompaniment and economic empowerment (ESPOIR 2.0 and Kids in Prison)

The organisation provides accompaniment and economic empowerment for marginalized young women and girls. This pillar begins with safe reception and active listening to identify immediate and underlying needs, followed by a tailored package of support designed to ensure immediate protection and long-term wellbeing and recovery. This includes referrals to specialized health, legal, and social services, skill-building opportunities, psychosocial support, social and economic reintegration, and interventions aimed at strengthening resilience and self-esteem. Support also extends to their children and families to address interconnected vulnerabilities.

Promotion of positive masculinity (Mr. Champion and Young Inmate Care)

Alternatives Madagascar engages young men and boys to promote positive masculinity and deconstruct harmful gender stereotypes that perpetuate inequality and violence. It also empowers them to become active agents of social change by equipping them with the necessary knowledge, skills and values, including in detention settings.

Leadership and life skills development (Leadership Change)

The organisation focuses on leadership and life skills development for marginalized and vulnerable youth. This component builds confidence, civic participation, economic skills, awareness of rights, and leadership capacity, enabling young people to access opportunities and contribute to their communities while breaking cycles of exclusion.

Capacity building of local civil society organisations

Alternatives Madagascar invests in building capacity of local civil society organisations contributing to tackle the roots of marginalization of young women and girls, particularly in rural areas, to improve organisational management, resource mobilisation, income generation, and service delivery. This strengthens community-based support systems and promotes long-term sustainability.

The organisation also conducts research to generate evidence on gender-based violence, SRHR, climate justice, and other human rights issues affecting women and girls. It also undertakes advocacy through national coalitions to advance women's and girls' rights, including promoting the Maputo Protocol and comprehensive sexuality education.



Impact

Key desired outcomes



Strengthened economic autonomy and dignity of vulnerable women and girls so they can fully access their rights and live with dignity.



Improved psychosocial wellbeing and resilience of supported women through mental health support, financial education, and income-generating activities.



Strengthened advocacy and engagement with institutional actors to better address structural barriers keeping women in vulnerable situations.

Methods

Alternatives Madagascar uses a **mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data**.

- **Quantitative data** includes the number of participants and individuals reached by project activities, as well as **pre- and post-training evaluations to measure their progress and changes over time**.
- **Qualitative data** is collected through **discussions, individual interviews, and beneficiary testimonies in order to assess observed changes, feedback on the project, and its impact on their daily lives**.

Reflections on impact so far

Since its creation, **Alternatives Madagascar has supported more than 620 people from vulnerable backgrounds**: young women in prostitution, young incarcerated boys, and young people facing socio-economic precariousness, as well as CSOs and political decision-makers. **The organization has promoted active and caring listening, particularly for women victims of gender-based violence (GBV)**, by providing them with safe spaces for expression and personal rebuilding, as well as guidance towards appropriate services. **These exchanges have helped restore trust, strengthen self-esteem, and encourage social reintegration.**

At the same time, personal development **programs for vulnerable youth have stimulated their leadership and civic participation**, leading them to become involved in decisions affecting them. The beneficiaries testify to **increased resilience, a better understanding of their sexual and reproductive health rights, and a renewed vision of their role in society**.

Information systems

Alternatives Madagascar uses a **hybrid data collection system combining paper and digital tools**. **Paper forms collect participants' personal information** during activities and are later integrated into the organization's internal database.

For technical data, such as **surveys assessing field realities, digital platforms like Kobo Collect are used** to centralize information. **Data is then analyzed and processed to generate actionable insights for the organization.**

Finally, information is stored through an internal system managed by a database manager responsible for overseeing data flows, storage, and security.

Learnings

Strengths or drivers

The main strength of Alternatives Madagascar lies in its integrated approach to empowering vulnerable women and young girls, combining capacity building, psychosocial support, and assistance for income-generating activities.

This approach promotes their financial autonomy, dignity, and transformation into agents of change within their communities. The organisation also strengthens individual resilience through close support and implements advocacy initiatives to raise awareness of persistent structural barriers.

Limitations

The limitations of Alternatives Madagascar mainly lie in the persistence of structural and institutional barriers that hinder women's empowerment. Despite support, more than 90% of beneficiaries remain vulnerable and may fall back into precarious situations due to life shocks.

The organisation also has limited capacity to address systemic inequalities alone, particularly local tax and administrative constraints, making stronger advocacy and engagement with institutional actors essential.

Challenges

The main challenge for Alternatives Madagascar is addressing deep-rooted structural and institutional barriers that continue to limit women's full empowerment and economic stability.

Despite successful interventions, many beneficiaries remain vulnerable to economic shocks and social pressures that can reverse their progress. Another key challenge is the difficulty of sustaining long-term impact without sufficient systemic change, particularly in relation to local regulations, taxation, and limited institutional support.

Opportunities

The opportunities for Alternatives Madagascar include the development of partnerships with local institutions, civil society organizations, and economic actors, which can strengthen the impact of its interventions.



Partnership Journey with Ember

Initial assessment

Alternatives Madagascar has a strong leadership structure, including a Board that meets quarterly to assess activities and support the executive team. The executive team includes key roles like an Executive Director and a Finance Manager. The organisation also has systems in place to support effective management and accountability, including weekly team meetings and an annual review process to assess progress and inform future planning.

- The organization also has a strong foundation to capture its impact, including a Monitoring and Evaluation system which integrates data collection methods such as pre and post tests, feedback forms, group discussions and participant follow-ups. Finally, Alternatives Madagascar is well connected within relevant local and international networks. It participates in platforms focused on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), mental health, gender equality, and the prevention of gender-based violence, including the Generation Equality Forum and the Ministry of Population's gender platform. The organisation also collaborates with international partners, including a South African organisation and a women's rights network, and has secured support from donors such as the French Embassy.
- Looking ahead, Alternatives Madagascar aims to build a more structured and sustainable organisation by securing strategic partnerships, establishing a dedicated operational space, and acquiring the materials needed to support its activities. Their goal is to expand its outreach to families and communities while creating opportunities for psychology students to volunteer, gain practical experience, and receive training. Through these efforts, Alternatives Madagascar hopes to strengthen the sustainability of its work, increase public recognition of the importance of mental health and psychosocial support, and broaden its impact within the communities it serves.
- At the start of the partnership, we identified several opportunities for collaboration. Fundraising and resource mobilization was a key area identified, with a particular need to secure larger and more consistent funding streams to cover core operational costs such as office rental, volunteer stipends, and administrative expenses. While the organisation has an existing website and social media presence, these platforms are not yet being fully leveraged and would benefit from a more intentional communications and engagement strategy.
- We also identified an opportunity to further develop the organisation's monitoring and evaluation systems by introducing stronger tools and processes that could better capture long-term outcomes and demonstrate impact. Internally, the team expressed a desire for greater attention to staff and volunteer wellbeing, as well as strategies to maintain member engagement during periods when project activity is limited.



Key achievements

During the partnership, Ember supported Alternatives Madagascar across several areas of organisational development, including vision and values clarification, model mapping, storytelling, safeguarding, fundraising, and team wellbeing. Early support focused particularly on wellbeing, fundraising, and storytelling, with activities including a wellbeing coaching session, a team retreat, a fundraising workshop, support on a fundraising pitch, a review of branding and website content, and the organisation's inclusion as a case study in the Call Out Insights Report. Additional support included feedback on the safeguarding policy and a model mapping process designed to help the team articulate its approach more clearly.

- Alternatives Madagascar made significant progress over the course of the partnership in strengthening its organisational identity, strategic direction, and internal systems. One of the most important achievements was gaining greater clarity on how to present and position the organisation externally, particularly when applying for grants, engaging with partners, and speaking at conferences. The team developed a stronger understanding of its vision, mission, and values, enabling more consistent communication of its work. The partnership also supported important discussions around the organisation's target population, helping clarify its primary focus on young women and girls while better defining how other groups and thematic areas, including men, prisons, mental health, and economic empowerment, fit within its broader model.
- The healthcheck assessment highlighted several key strengths. Alternatives Madagascar reported significant progress in strengthening its vision and organisational structure, including clearer governance arrangements, and more defined division of responsibilities. The organisation has also established a strong presence within national and international networks.
- The assessment also identified opportunities for further growth. Storytelling emerged as a key area for development, particularly in translating existing documentation, videos, and stories into wider visibility through different communications channels. Strengthening impact measurement, monitoring, and data collection systems would also help the organisation better communicate its outcomes. While progress has been made in financial management and fundraising systems, securing funds remains important.
- Finally, wellbeing remains an ongoing focus, particularly in supporting volunteers and team members with varying levels of engagement and capacity.