

LIA Project: Beyond the Canopy

The Organization

MRCI is a conservation and research organization focused on protecting Madagascar's unique biodiversity through scientific research, habitat restoration, and environmental education. The institute conducts long-term wildlife monitoring and conservation projects while working to preserve the island's ecosystems.



What I Learned About the Community

Working in Madagascar showed me that conservation is deeply connected to the people living alongside these ecosystems. I saw how much of the organization's work depended on the knowledge, labor, and experience of local staff. Being immersed in the community also challenged me to look beyond my own assumptions and understand that different communities may approach environmental problems in very different ways.

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Leadership & Personal Growth

My experience in Madagascar changed the way I think about what it means to be a leader. I learned that leadership is not always about having authority or being the person with the final decision. Sometimes it means speaking up about problems, adapting when things do not go as planned, and continuing to contribute even when your ideas are not immediately accepted.

Personal Growth

- **Adaptability:** Learned to remain flexible in an unfamiliar environment and respond to unexpected challenges.
- **Cultural Awareness:** Became more conscious of my own assumptions and the importance of listening before acting.
- **Humility:** Recognized that entering a new community means learning from the people already there rather than assuming I have the answers.
- **Resilience:** Learned to continue learning and contributing despite frustration, setbacks, and circumstances outside of my control.

Moving Forward: I want to become a leader who combines my instinct to take action with the patience to listen, understand, and build trust. Lasting change requires more than a good idea it requires people who believe in it and are willing to carry it forward.

Organizational Outcomes

My work contributed to MRCI's ongoing conservation efforts by supporting the day-to-day work of the Forest Department. Through field surveys, wildlife monitoring, nursery maintenance, and habitat restoration, I helped provide additional capacity for projects that depend on consistent data collection and hands-on conservation work.



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