

# NATURAL PRODUCTS, CAM THERAPIES, AND TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

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## Traditional medicines in Madagascar

**Valitiana Rasandimanana**

Mioty Voajannahary SARL, Madagascar

Madagascar is a land many have heard of, but few know much about. As the world's fourth largest island, isolated from much of the world, it holds unique flora and fauna. Most of the Malagasy(my) people still use traditional medicines for preventing and treating illnesses. Villages all over Madagascar have traditional healers knowledgeable with the medicinal properties of plants growing around them and how to prepare them. I grew up with grandparents treating coughs using the aferontany plant boiled in water and midwives using medicinal plants to help with childbirth. Most Malagasy shop in community markets which always have at least one vendor of natural medicines with piles of different fresh and dried plants for sale. These vendors can tell the buyer how to prepare each item, what it is used for, and how much to take. This is a common, effective, and inexpensive method of practicing health care in Madagascar. These vendors always have fresh leaves and little black pills made from Vahona, Malagasy for *Aloe macroclada*. This is a well-known product available all around the central highlands and is used to treat a wide variety of ailments. I've become very familiar with *Aloe macroclada* as I now manage the growing, harvesting and leaf transport for the production of *Aloe macroclada* powder for export.

### Biography

Valitiana has 15 years' experience working for businesses in an organizational capacity. She was born and grew up in a small village of about 800 people not far from the capital. She moved to the city for her studies and is equally capable of conversing with government ministers as she is working with villagers. Valitiana is fluent in Malagasy, French and English. She manages Mioty's interactions with the Environment Ministry, her villages' growing and harvesting, and collaborations with other businesses and NGOs.

rasaval@gmail.com