

THE ANDREW LEES TRUST HAS CLOSED

After thirty years of service to the people of Madagascar, the Andrew Lees Trust (ALT UK) has closed.

The Trust was conceived after the tragic death of its namesake, [Andrew Lees](#), a renowned environmentalist who had travelled to the south-eastern Anosy region of Madagascar in 1994 and collapsed whilst filming in Petriky, where indigenous littoral forests and communities were under threat from mining. The initial impetus of the work focused on building local capacity for leadership in environmental stewardship, to address a gap in higher education opportunities and ensure a Malagasy professional base for long term management of the unique environment.

Operating initially under the auspices of [Friends of the Earth](#), where Andrew had been Director of Campaigns, and, collaborating with local actors, the Trust helped launch and develop an environmental education centre, the Centre Ecologique Libanona, reflecting Andrew's commitment to the environment and the island's unique biodiversity.

The Trust went on to develop its own field [programme](#), working directly on the ground with Malagasy field agents, civil society actors, local leaders, communities, NGO partners and local service providers. Delivering activities across eight regions of the south over ten years, and addressing multiple regional challenges, the Malagasy team created a substantial track record in community social engagement. In particular around food security, communications for development, natural resource management, fuel efficiency, health education and emergency relief. This paved the way for the Trust's further efforts and investment towards the team's local ownership and leadership of the work.

These efforts manifested through the 2006-2010 [responsible exit](#), in a handover of the Trust's assets and know-how to the Malagasy field team, assisting them to become a sovereign Malagasy NGO entity, Andry Lalana Toahana (ALT MG - keeping the acronym 'ALT'), which developed through its early years with accompaniment from the Trust.

Fifteen years on, [Andry Lalana Toahana \(ALT MG\)](#) stands as a testimony to local ownership, recognised as a leader in famine and emergency relief, education, and communications for development in the south.

The Trust adjusted its [strategic objectives](#) in 2015 to better reflect its accompaniment and support of ALT MG and other local and national Malagasy civil society actors. This included research and [advocacy](#) to promote human rights, social and environmental justice, and to amplify the struggle of communities affected by mining.

Between 2023-2025, to support long-term research and advocacy around mining in Madagascar, the Trust assisted Malagasy colleagues to launch a national mining observatory – a fitting endnote to Andrew's legacy in Madagascar.

Reflections during all the evolutions in the Trust's history, together with multiple reviews of its activity status, led the Board of Trustees to determine in 2024 that the Trust had completed the work for which it was established¹.

Moreover, the Trust's solidarity with the Malagasy people fostered enduring relationships, which have enabled planning processes and exit strategies to align with Malagasy actors in order to stand the test of time.

The Board and Director are deeply appreciative and hugely grateful to all the Malagasy teams, international staff and all Trustees who have worked with the Trust, bringing their passion, expertise and dedication to activities locally, nationally and internationally. Also, to the donors, the many volunteers, advisers, partners and *pro bono* service providers who have given time, energy and resources to support the Trust and help manifest its vision. Thank you!

The Board and Director also express their profound respects to those Malagasy who take the work of transformation forward locally and nationally. We wish them every success, and the country a peaceful and prosperous future.

The Board of the Andrew Lees Trust: Mary Taylor, Christine Orengo, Mike Childs, and the Director: Yvonne Orengo.

Note: The [ALT UK website](#) will remain active for sharing the Trust's resources and history.

For any relevant inquiries that the website cannot answer, please contact yvonne@orengo.co.uk

¹ A delay to closure occurred due to finalising all the administrative actions required for sending funds to a partner organisation in Madagascar.