



# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



The logo for Onja, featuring a blue stylized leaf icon to the left of the word "onja" in a lowercase, sans-serif font.The Rotary International logo, consisting of the word "Rotary" in a serif font, a red gear icon, and a circular emblem with a globe.

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# About Onja and our mission and values

## Mission

Onja's mission is to nurture talented, underprivileged youth to lead impactful careers in tech, unlock opportunities for others and accelerate Madagascar's development.

## About

Onja is a social enterprise training underprivileged youth into world-class software developers.

We find the brightest students in Madagascar who can't afford to continue their education and train them in English language and software development. After just two-and-a-half years, they are ready to work as remote frontend software developers in international tech teams.

Once in a job, our developers earn a good salary that helps them support their families and pay forward the opportunity to new waves of students. They unlock exciting careers that fulfil their potential and accelerate the development of their nation.

Our first cohort, "Wave 1," consists of 19 talented and committed graduates who are now working remotely for our partner companies in Europe and the US.

With this immensely successful first cohort, and a proven social model, our goal is now to scale our impact by training 360 students over the next four years.

Learn more about Onja's model [here](#).





## Values

### Love:

Love is the fuel to all good deeds and the essence to life itself. Love lets us put our mission before ourselves and have a meaningful impact that will burn bright long after we are gone.

### Diligence:

Our common goal is to help underprivileged youth to get the same opportunities we had, so we work hard and we don't give up, even when things can seem impossible.

### Integrity:

We uphold our commitments, and align what we say with what we do. At Onja, we live by our word and stick to our values even when it might not be easy to do.

### Togetherness:

Our team members are chosen from all over the world and have different backgrounds and upbringings. Being so far from home, we support each other like family.

### Humility:

We keep our feet on the ground and our heads in the clouds: Understanding where we come from and being grounded to that, while dreaming big so we can achieve what others say is impossible.

### Gratitude:

Giving back sits at the core of our model. We appreciate the opportunity and support we receive and do the utmost to ensure our mission positively impacts the community we serve.

### Respect for Malagasy culture and values:

The majority of our team are Malagasy so we strive to ensure that Malagasy culture is given a place of importance. We leverage the strengths of both Malagasy and Western cultures.

### Business Excellence:

We maximise our impact through a thriving social enterprise, which is why we operate like a lean startup. We strive for outstanding results to bring exceptional value to our clients.



# Message from the CEO

**Dear Onja Partners,**

We're excited to report on the productive year that 2025 has been for Onja.

In 2025, we built out almost 70% of the digital English course and 40% of the coding course. Built with scalability in mind, these courses can be rolled out to hundreds, even thousands of students, by locally available talent, without the need for international staff. This work is crucial to ensuring we can achieve our goal of educating 360 students by 2030.

In March 2025, we recruited a pilot wave of students, who chose the name "The Adventurers" for their cohort, to test and refine these digital courses in real time. This wave consisted of four female students with the same profiles of those we will recruit in Wave 2: high-need (underprivileged) and high-potential (bright). This enabled us to refine the course we are building in real time based on educator and student feedback, and is proving to be effective! Within just eight months these students have reached the B2 (upper-intermediate) level of English. This is even faster than the original Wave 1. I do not know of any other organisation in the world whose students learn any language that quickly!

In 2024, we had some challenges when it came to student recruitment which delayed the recruitment of Wave 2. In 2025, we were able to get back on track and Wave 2 is set to start studying in 2026, with large waves following each year thereafter. At Onja, we intentionally devote significant time and attention to recruitment because we know that if we have the right people, everything else will fall into place.

Meanwhile, Onja's Wave 1 developers are doing great. Most have been working for around four years now. It's wonderful to see so many starting their own families and providing levels of support they themselves did not receive in their own childhoods. What's more, their incredible commitment and achievement is allowing the training of many future students after them. It's truly heart-warming to observe Onja's new students looking up to their 'zoky' (older brothers/sisters) in complete admiration and witness the great appreciation for these benefactors, who gave them this truly life-changing opportunity.

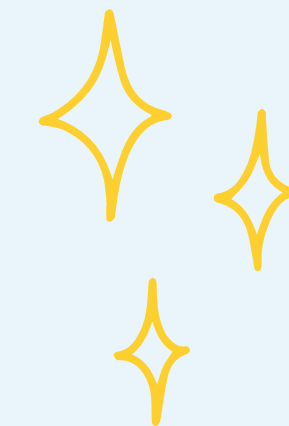
The accomplishments of Wave 1 not only bolster the trust and credibility of our team, they show just how much potential social enterprise models have in advancing Africa's social and economic development. I'm incredibly proud of what the team has achieved in 2025, and I count myself very fortunate to work alongside such a dedicated and talented group of people.

Thank you for your continued support and for believing in our mission.

**Sam Lucas**  
CEO



# Programme updates and progress made



In 2025, we continued to focus on the creation of scalable learning courses to ensure organisational capacity to train larger groups of students. We also worked on fine tuning our recruitment strategy and were able to test this approach, as well as new learning content, with small groups of new students.

## Wave 2 Pilot Cohort

Wave 2.1, also called the 'The Adventurers,' joined Onja in March 2025. They studied as we built out our English and coding courses, giving instant feedback to course designers who incorporated this back into the course material.

While this is a four-student pilot cohort meant to inform recommendations for improving our courses and recruitment process for Wave 2, they are full Onja students in every sense. The students selected to take part in this pilot meet our key recruitment criteria- high need and high potential-and will have the same opportunity to develop global tech careers after graduation.

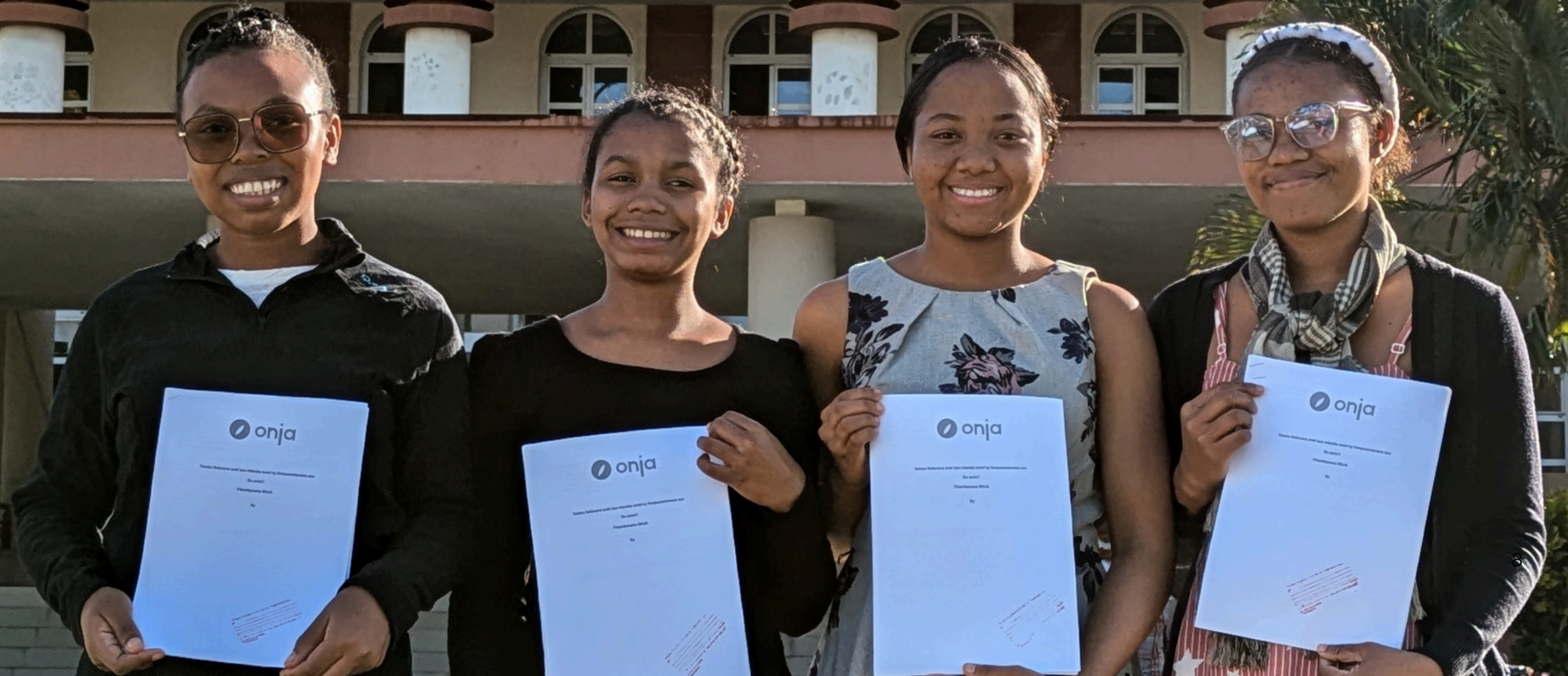
**Thia**, one of The Adventurers, comes from Kelilalana, a town and commune in the southeast of Madagascar. The majority of the population in Kelilalana-98.95%-are farmers. Although she excelled in school, she did not have the means to pursue her studies beyond high school. Five months into her training, Thia sat down with Operations Manager Grace Henitsoa to share more about her life prior to joining Onja and her time as a student. [This interview](#), conducted entirely in English, shows the incredible progress she made in a short period of time.

At Onja we use the CEFR to evaluate student English proficiency. This contains six levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. Note that A1 corresponds to absolute beginner while C2 represents the most advanced level that most (but not all!) native speakers would pass. Like all Onja students, when Thia arrived at Onja, she was unable to pass the A1 level, yet after just eight months she passed A1, A2, B1 and B2 levels!



As Onja prepares to onboard our largest cohort of students to date (Wave 2), we have launched pilot waves to help us refine our training programme and recruitment process.

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## English Course Design

In March 2025, Onja welcomed “The Adventurers” who took to the digital course like ducks to water. Thanks to the dedication of the English Course Design team, not once did we need to pause the pilot programme; our students could continue studying seamlessly. Note that although the courses are now followed on a computer, and managed by “tutors,” our students stay at our boarding school, where everything is provided for them so that they fully dedicate themselves to their studies.

And boy it is working! The Adventurers are matching and even sometimes exceeding the learning rate of the successful Wave 1 cohort. Following the same process we will use for Wave 2, The Adventurers progressed from beginner-level English to the B2 (upper-intermediate) level in just eight months (March to December 2025). The small pilot has confirmed the system’s efficiency and revealed no barriers to scaling due to its repeatable structures and clear progression pathways.

**In 2025, English Course Designers completed almost 70% of all course material.**

Alongside the English course, Onja developed three other courses to support learners’ professional and personal development:

- a growth mindset course, which focuses on instilling a love for learning and curiosity;
- a professionalism course to introduce them to the business world, and nurture them to become great professionals.
- and a speech training course to help learners speak clearly and communicate confidently in English.

These inculcate both values and skills we believe essential to thriving in competitive workplaces, developed to ensure students have the highest chance in securing employment after graduation.

The biggest change from W1 is that all of these courses are digital, with students following lessons online in a classroom setting. While students still benefit from learning in a classroom environment, with access to a local tutor, they can go at their own learning pace. This approach has significantly enhanced the efficacy and impact of Onja’s training programme so we can scale to accommodate hundreds of students and beyond, quickly.



**We must give great credit and praise to our English Course Design team who stepped up to the challenge of building the digital course in real time, often staying just weeks ahead of the students.**



# Coding Course Design

The Coding Course Design team also expanded the curriculum by adding eight backend weeks, making the programme more versatile and giving students stronger end-to-end understanding of full-stack concepts. To ensure the backend topics don't overwhelm early learners, the team rolled out the modules gradually and linked them directly to existing frontend concepts for easier comprehension.

Similar to the English courses, the coding course is trialed by small groups of students to help the team adapt and improve content based on real student needs. This approach also positions the curriculum to support significantly larger class sizes. For example, students shared that while they enjoyed learning new topics, they didn't feel they had enough practice to fully absorb them. To respond to this, the team added more hands-on tasks and reinforcement exercises.

Both the English and coding digital courses are pre-built and asynchronous modular lessons delivered on Canvas, a LMS (learning management system). This allows students to have access to the lessons at any time without live facilitation.

Additionally, we have standardized assessments, project templates, and automated checkpoints to make it possible to support large numbers of students efficiently while maintaining educational quality.



**We made strong progress with the coding course design, with 40% of the courses complete, equivalent to 26.5 weeks of content, at the end of 2025.**



## Recruitment of the next wave of students

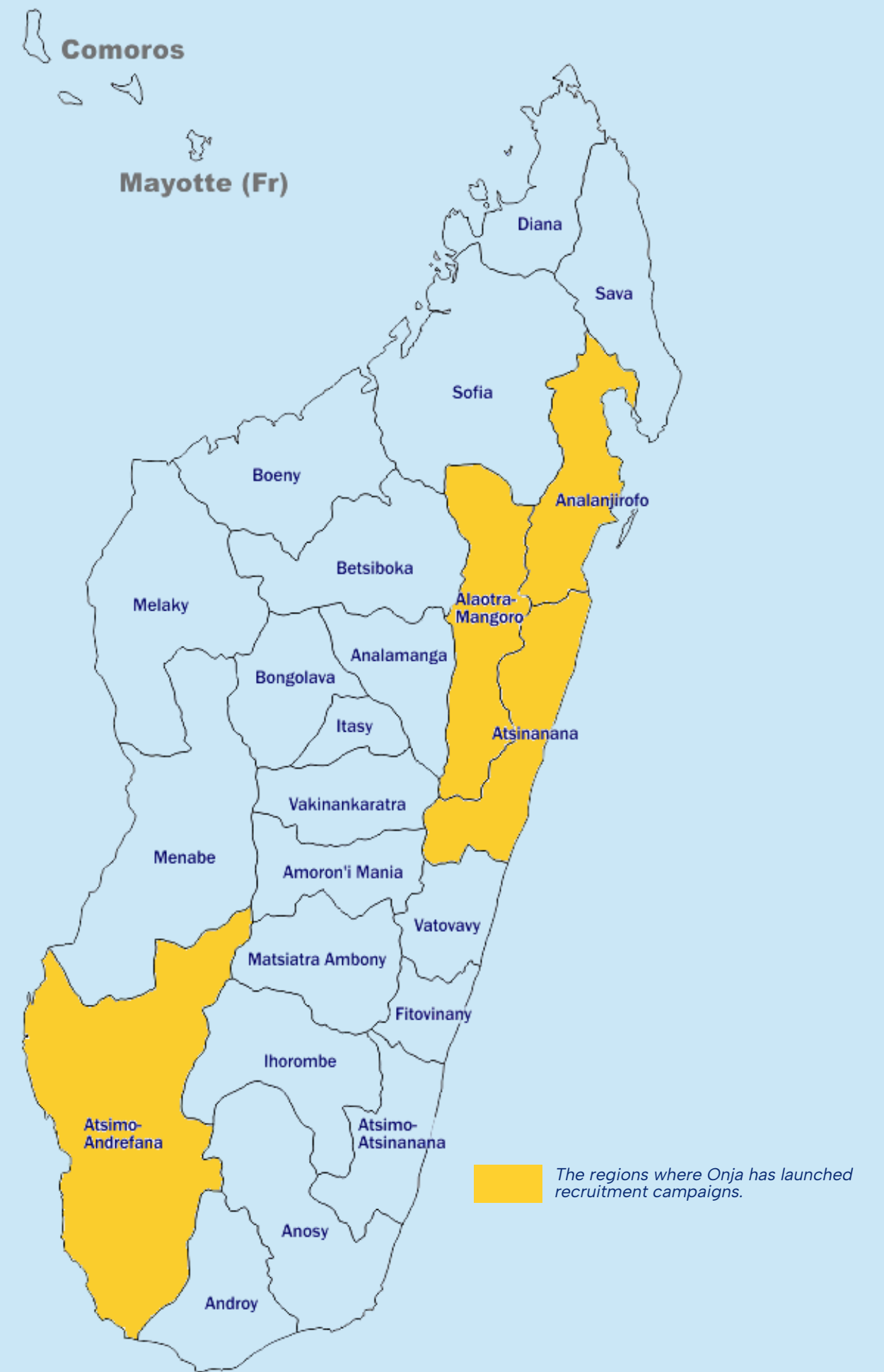
To kick off 2025, we ran a recruitment campaign to identify the four students that would go on to become “The Adventurers”. Recruiting this pilot wave doubled as a Wave 2 recruitment pilot in itself.



We were able to build out a new recruitment programme, building on the learnings of W1. This work represents a large leap forward in how we recruit students. And if this pilot is anything to go by, it's working incredibly well, with The Adventurers achieving their ambitious learning milestones and showing a deep commitment to our pay-it-forward model for a more prosperous Madagascar.

In May, we initiated the official recruitment of Wave 2 with the start of an open call for students via radio announcements and posters to raise awareness about Onja and its training programme. Since many potential students live in hard-to-reach areas, we added social agents to our recruitment team. These local young people travel from village to village searching for students who meet Onja's two criteria: academic excellence and high levels of socio-economic need that have prevented them from continuing their education. This was a huge logistical undertaking, but it paid off, allowing us to reach over two thousand high performing students. Without mobilizing this team of local actors, many of those students would have remained out of reach.

Students who were successful in the interview process were invited to take Onja's exams. In December 2025, our recruitment team hit the road and traveled from district to district to conduct the testing.





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AMBOHIMANGALY

"The past few months traveling around with Onja's recruitment team has shown how great the need is for programmes like Onja. The young people we have met throughout the recruitment process have underscored how much potential there is to be found in Madagascar. I'm grateful to be able to bring them hope for the future – their future and our country's future."

**ANNIE TSIVERIANJARA, RECRUITMENT MANAGER**

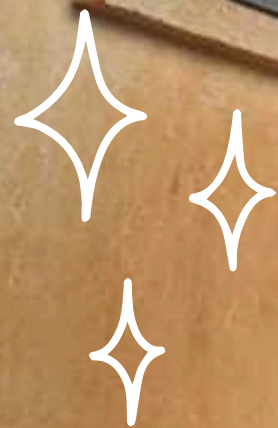




Additionally, we added home visits to the recruitment process. Anyone who is in the final stages of recruitment, receives an impromptu home visit, which ensures that only genuinely underprivileged students receive this opportunity.

At Onja, we invest heavily in recruitment to ensure we get the right “fit”, as we know this translates to the best results over the long term. It's a big undertaking but one that is necessary, as taking part in our programme is a huge commitment for both Oja and students, who on average, study and work together for a decade or longer.

We look forward to continuing this momentum and will have our first large cohort ready to begin studying in 2026.



# Key challenges

## AI risk management

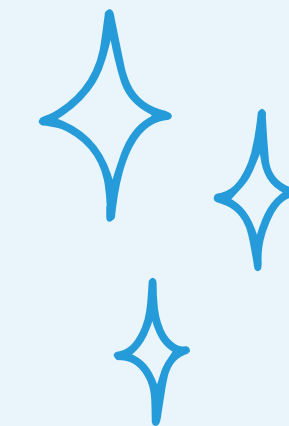
As an organisation deeply rooted in technology, Onja recognises the unmatched potential of AI, and the swift pace at which it is changing the world of tech. We are mindful that AI already handles large portions of development tasks independently and is slowing the job market. This presents a risk of replacing developers altogether. Most leaders in the AI industry believe that if AI development continues as it is, it will take not just software jobs, but almost all jobs. This presents a high-magnitude and unprecedented risk, not just to Onja's mission, but to the world as we know it.

Our Enterprise department worked on an AI preparedness plan, exploring alternative career pathways beyond those within software development. The objective was to identify numerous lower risk and AI resilient pathways so that we are ready to diversify in the future.

In addition to exploring alternative careers, we continued to develop some spinoff SaaS applications to generate extra revenue for Onja. The first of these ventures is [proll.io](#), a payroll app launched in Madagascar in October 2025. Next, we plan to develop a hiring matrix application that will be marketed to companies internationally. Any profits generated will be used to train future students, in line with our social enterprise model.



# Achievements, impact and reach



The qualitative and quantitative insights below capture the tangible outcomes of our work in 2025, showing clear progress toward the goals we set out to achieve.

# Our impact in numbers

## Increase of education and career opportunities for underprivileged youth

Onja's mission is to train underprivileged youth into world-class software developers. In doing so, we're closing the digital divide as well as advancing gender equality in a traditionally male-dominated field.

After an intensive, two-year training programme in coding and English instruction, as well as additional courses to support their professional development and integration into Western workplaces, developers are industry ready. In 2025, 100% of Onja developers reported being confident working in an English-speaking environment and with English-speaking colleagues. 92% said they felt confident with higher responsibilities at work.

With the success and steady progress of Wave 1 and the pilot wave, we look forward to welcoming Wave 2 and remain confident that they will only build on the impressive results we've seen in Wave 1.

## Increase of developer and family income through Onja

Onja developers from Wave 1 would have gone on to work in low-paying jobs if they had not joined Onja. Before joining Onja, 100% were living in a household under the World Bank poverty line (income less

less than 0.96 USD per person per day), and 78% under the World Bank extreme poverty line (income less than 0.63 USD per person per day)\*.

Needless to say, the opportunities found through Onja have drastically changed their lives. As of 2025, all developers from Wave 1 – 70% of which are female developers – worked in full time employment with Onja, with an average of 3.8 years of work experience each. In their first year of work with Onja, developers earn four times more than they otherwise would have without Onja. Over six years of work, they earn nine times more than they otherwise would have without Onja. By their sixth year of work, they are earning 13 times more than they otherwise would have without Onja.

Access to good jobs has improved their economic livelihoods, enabling developers to support their families and communities. Based on 2025 data, 100% of developers send a portion of their salaries back to their families, with 71% of developers reporting their families use that extra income to help with basic living costs. 64% report this extra income goes towards family members' education.

\*You might notice that we don't tend to use the word "poverty." This is because much of our team feel the word has somewhat disrespectful connotations. Our students and developers prefer "underprivileged," so we go with that.



# Wave 1 milestones

Six years on from the start of Wave 1 in 2019, developers continued to progress in their tech careers in 2025, with many achieving some exciting milestones and a few “firsts” for Onja.





# Language pledge ceremony for The Adventurers

May 2025 marked a huge step in students' learning journey. After two months in training, our pilot wave students took their commitment to the next level by making Onja's language pledge.



This is a commitment to exclusively use English in all communications with other pledgers, inside and outside of Onja campus. Our language pledge ensures maximum exposure to the English language to help students gain the confidence and fluency they need to succeed while remaining proudly rooted in Malagasy culture. The impact of this initiative has been significant. The Adventurers advanced quickly, moving from the A1 level (complete beginner) in March 2025 to the B2 level (independent user) in November 2025.

The language pledge is not only for students. By taking the pledge, developers and non-developers staff are supporting students in their journey and acknowledge the role we all play in ensuring the best learning outcomes.

Read more on the language pledge and why we speak English at Onja [here](#).

Watch our Wave 1's experience with the language pledge [here](#).





## More success stories

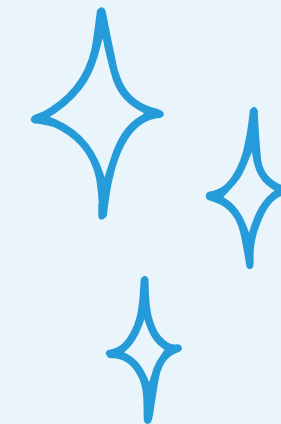
**Meet Fanilo, an Onja developer!** Fanilo is part of the first wave of Onja students, and joined the training programme in 2019. Today, he's coding robot actions as a Frontend Developer at YK-Robotics!

When Fanilo finished high school in 2016, he didn't have the means to continue to university. Where big dreams might have ended, his character, talent, and hard work caught Onja's attention, and he was selected for a life changing journey!

Discover Fanilo's story [here](#).



# Organisational changes



The two biggest organisational updates at Onja concerned our model and our legal status. With a verified model that has delivered strong results for underprivileged youth in Madagascar, we explored how to expand this to other countries in East Africa. Additionally, we successfully registered as a Jersey Charity to ensure our eligibility for a wider pool of grants.

## East Africa expansion updates

We spent time on the ground scoping Rwanda and Uganda, Sierra Leone, and Ethiopia as potential locations. We managed to do this at a very low cost, sending just one person and making the most of competitively priced local accommodation. We identified two most promising options in Ethiopia and Rwanda. Both of these nations:

- Have a high need;
- Have significant numbers of high-achieving students without opportunity to study at university;
- Speak English reasonably widely;
- Are warm, welcoming and reasonably secure;
- And have decent internet.

For now, our major focus remains scaling rapidly in Madagascar, however, we plan to start in one of these nations, with a very small cohort. This will allow us to set up and form the beginning of a team that we can scale in the future.

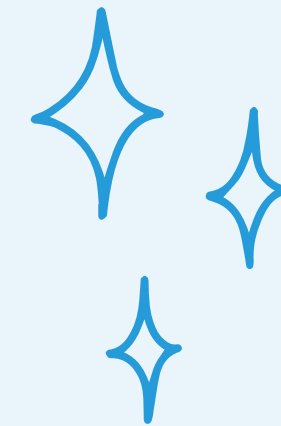
## Relocation to Jersey

In 2024, we successfully relocated to Jersey (Channel Islands) with the registered entity Onja Limited and gained status as a Prescribed Non-Profit Organisation.

Our legal department successfully registered Onja as a Jersey charity following a final determination issued in our favour by the Jersey Charity Commissioner. This will optimise our finances, making sure that maximum resources are directed to underprivileged Malagasy youth.



# Partners and contributors



In 2025, we worked on major collaborations with two partner companies, Wasabi and 90POE, to promote Onja's model in tech. We also highlighted one of our early funders, the Rotary Club of St Johns. These collaborations significantly helped to build trust and credibility for Onja, allowing us to showcase our model's impact and the brilliance of Malagasy youth.



## Onja x Wasabi

Wasabi Technologies has been one of Onja’s valued partners since 2024. Based out of Boston, Wasabi is on a mission to be the cheapest, fastest, most secure and reliable cloud storage in the world. With a company valuation of over \$1.1 billion, this is our largest partnership to date. We’re proud to have earned the trust of innovative, sizable tech companies like Wasabi.

Two of Onja’s talented developers, Clopedia and Peta, have added mountains to Wasabi’s frontend team, responsible for key cloud storage features serving 100,000+ customers and 15,000 partners.

In 2025, Onja and Wasabi worked together to share more on our partnership story across multiple platforms, including a co-authored blog post by Peta and Clopedia sharing their journeys to becoming frontend developers and what they love about working with Wasabi.

Read on more [here](#).



## Onja x 90POE

90POE is a pioneering and industry-leading maritime technology company headquartered in London. Tantely, one of our brilliant developers, has been contributing to the team for over three years now, working on projects key to the company's growth.

In 2025, we highlighted Onja and 90POE's incredible partnership in creating global career opportunities for talented Malagasy youth, showcasing Tantely's great work and the value he adds to the team.

Read more on Tantely's contribution to 90POE [here](#).





## Rotary Club's historical support

The success we are seeing at Onja today is the result of many people's effort and goodwill over the years. Some have been teachers and mentors, while others have been proud supporters, cheering us on from afar. The most important early milestone in Onja's journey came through Rotary Club – Onja's first investor.

The Rotary Club of St Johns Ellerslie in Auckland, New Zealand were the first to believe in Onja's idea and invested generously to make it a reality. At the end of 2025, Sam Lucas and Simon Jones reflected on Onja's origin story in a podcast, sharing advice on what funders look for in early-stage impact ideas.

Listen to the full podcast [here](#).



# Looking ahead

We're excited to build on the momentum of 2025 into next year as we embark on a new chapter in our growth trajectory with the arrival of Wave 2 in 2026. This is a pivotal moment in Onja's story as we set in motion our plan to reach 360 students by 2030.

The Adventurers, who began their journey at Onja last March, will come to the end of their English studies in March 2026, transitioning into software development instruction. Our English Course Designers will finalise the English course material for the arrival of Wave 2 as The Adventurers move on to their technical training.

We will continue to explore alternative career pathways and spinoff ventures into 2026 to help our organisation remain self-funded and sustainable, while strengthening our AI resilience.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all our partners and supporters. Your continued belief in our mission has brought us to this moment and we look forward to sharing and celebrating new milestones in the year ahead.

