



Dear members and friends welcome to our latest newsletter.....

Message from the new chair

All change – no change




Readers who have been following our internal ruminations will know that our new structure came into existence on the 8th September at our AGM in Oxford. As MDG's work, in Mali and in the UK, has grown and diversified, so we have faced the need to adjust the ways we work. Part of the purpose of the reorganisation is to

create the space and opportunity for more people to be involved, both in the planning and in the doing of our support work for development in Mali. At the same time, we want to make sure that we are able to protect all that we think is important about what we do and the relationships that underpin that.

Under the umbrella of the management committee we have, therefore, created four new working groups:


- **The Project Group**

responsible for month-by-month dealings with our Malian partners – Jeunesse et Developpement, Eco Sahel and Pensons a Demain - developing and monitoring workplans and nurturing our partnerships.

 Luke Hedge is the co-ordinator
hedgeluke@yahoo.com


- **The Fundraising and Finance Group**

responsible for, well.... fundraising – events, activities, bid writing and so on.

 Linda King is the co-ordinator
linda.king@malidg.org.uk


- **The Communications Group**

produces our newsletters and reports, keeps the website going and looks after our membership.

 Janice Hedge is the co-ordinator
janicehedge@btinternet.com;

- **The Public Affairs Group**

handles our awareness raising and political work in the UK, positively influencing attitudes and policy towards Mali.

 Dan Price is the co-ordinator
dan_primex@hotmail.co.uk

All of us involved in MDG do so as volunteers and, in this, we are committed to working as inclusively as we can. If any of the above take your fancy and you would like to join us in taking forward our work at a time of great importance for Mali, then please get in touch with the relevant coordinator in the first instance. And if you have comments or suggestions to make about MDG's work overall please do get in touch with me:

andy.benson@malidg.org.uk
or with our Secretary John Hedge:
John.Hedge@malidg.org.uk

With thanks for your continuing support and good wishes to you all,

Andy Benson

Chair



Progress report September 2013

Introduction

In 2012 the Trustees of the Patsy Wood Trust provided a grant of £7983 to Mali Development Group towards the Sahel Eco Tominian Trees for Trade project, through the Mingulay Prewell Trust, managed by the Charities Aid Foundation.

As well as helping develop Sahel Eco's capacity and training the money crucially helped one of Sahel Eco's ongoing main objectives, as follows:

Reducing poverty in the Tominian district through sustainable management and improved marketing of non timber forest products (NTFP)

As Mary Allen of Sahel Eco reports:

The Farakunna and Hirosin cooperatives are two of our key local, civil society partners in Tominian. We had already trained members of NTFP enterprise groups in 19 villages to produce high quality shea butter and were asked by the Cooperative leaders to extend this training to women in other villages.

With support from PWT we did this in two stages. Firstly, we asked each of the cooperatives to nominate two experienced shea butter producers, who would be able to train other women. We also invited the women's branch of a third local cooperative, UACT (the Tominian Union of Farmers' Associations) to nominate two women to learn how to produce high quality shea butter with a view to a future extension of our NTFP enterprise development support. These 6 women attended a Training of Trainers session delivered by Amadou Tangara over two days in May 2014 during which they learnt how to run a practical training session



Naomi Dembele, from the Hirosin Co-operative, explains the stages in the production of high quality shea butter using the images on this poster

After this, we asked the Farakunna and Hirosin cooperatives to organise the training sessions for their women members. As soon as the 2013 shea nut harvest was underway, the cooperatives purchased a total of 400 kg of shea nuts from their members and used them to train 181 women from 41 villages how to produce high quality shea butter during two 3-day sessions organised by Hirosin and one by Farakunna .

Participants in the training sessions produced 118kg of high quality shea butter which our newly recruited sales agent, Madeleine Dembele (see picture) packaged in a variety of ways to appeal to different markets. During

September Madeleine has been distributing these samples and meeting with potential clients in Bamako, Ségou and Mopti. Soon she will organise a meeting in Tominian for interested clients and producers to get to know each other, to define their requirements and offers and, hopefully, to begin to negotiate.



Madaleine Dembele with some of the shea butter samples including the novel dual presentation of shea butter and dried fakhoye leaves, used together to make a nutritious traditional sauce.

As a result of this project there are now women trained in shea production techniques in each of the 46 villages that are members of the Farakunna and Hirosin Cooperatives, compared to women in only 19 villages before the project started. Ultimately Sahel Eco estimates that the work to promote NTFP will benefit 1200 people (750 women; 450 men) who harvest transform and trade NTFP in these 46 villages. They will be able to continue to use their skills to manage forest resources and market non-timber products thus ensuring that the positive changes to their environment and livelihoods will be sustained.



A sample of high quality shea butter produced by the women in Tominian

Annual Bank of Montreal (BMO) Charity Cricket Match

The BMO sponsored event was held at Merton College, Oxford on the afternoon of 8th September. Players and spectators were pleasantly surprised to enjoy good weather after the torrential rain endured in each of the last two years. The spacious Pavilion first hosted the AGM, then a lengthy lunch prior to the exciting limited overs game that followed.

BMO have generously sponsored this event for a number of years and the sum of £1,350 was raised this time via donations, sales and a raffle. We greatly appreciate the continued support and organisational skill of Tony Ebdon and, also, the senior bank executive in London. Thanks additionally go to Janice Hedge and others who kindly arranged both a highly enjoyable lunch and a Tea.

Steve Talliss captained the MDG team and they valiantly chased a score of 134 compiled by the very pleasant but somewhat young and athletic investment banking team. All the charity's team contributed to the run chase, especially the captain, Stewart Jeffrey, Dan Price and Rob Hedge but, after he was caught with a flying one-handed catch from Mr. Ebdon, we succumbed by about 30 runs. It is great to see an MDG that both raises money and, maybe unintentionally, a lot of laughter as well as promoting the objectives of the charity.

Despite the loss, we hope to gain some revenge in next year's fixture so will start training soon!

David Hedge (joint Umpire & Scorer with John Hedge)

A Message from the Public Affairs Group

The work on raising awareness about Mali continues at pace. Before Christmas we intend to be at the Ballake Sissoko music gig to engage music lovers about Mali and see if they would like to learn more. We're also looking at holding a music event ourselves in the Peckham area to promote Malian music and culture. Finally in response to the Song of the Week on the Mali Interest hub (<http://www.mali-interest-hub.com/?p=2212>) Malian and Aston Villa footballer Youcouba Sylla spread the word about the website, a fantastic sign that the website is both hitting the right note and bringing Malian culture to new audiences too.

This week the EU published it's 2014-2020 Mali Strategy. MDG as part of the Alliance for Mali have been asked to talk to the EU about the strategy's implementation and we're currently in discussions about how the Alliance might approach this opportunity to influence EU policy on Mali. We're also continuing to work with the Malian Consulate with a view to holding an international conference on Mali in London next year.

This is all promising work, with much to take on and do to successfully raise awareness about Mali. A lot of credit must go out to the public affairs team here - in particular Sam Garbett.

Dan Price

A Message from the Fundraising and Finance Group Winter Fuel Allowance

Following a recent email you hopefully had on this subject a few weeks ago, if you're eligible for the winter fuel allowance, and can spare some or all of it to fund projects in Mali, please send a cheque made out to Mali Development Group to Winter Fuel, Vine Cottage, The Green, Stadhampton OX44 7UA

Prudential Ride London 100

It was a great success this year and promises to be an even bigger event next year with more TV and media coverage. Patsy and Kirsty had a great time cycling for us and we're very grateful to them and all their sponsors. There's already interest in our 2 places for 2014, but if you think you might like to have a go, please contact linda.king@malidg.org.uk

An event coming up this year....

There is an event coming up in Stadhampton (S Oxon) if you're in the vicinity or know someone who will be., on Fri 6th Dec from 3 - 8 pm there will be a Christmas Market with various food and craft stalls (including an MDG stall), live music and marvellous refreshments again by the MDG bakers and tea makers. Both events are in the Village Hall at St John's. Please contact linda.king@malidg.org.uk for more information.



We continue to get a reliable and very welcome regular income from standing orders. This is really helpful in being able to plan our activities with our Malian partners. If you can increase yours that would be great, or if you can start one, there's a form at the end of this newsletter

STANDING ORDER FORM

(to be sent to your bank)

To the Manager

.....Bank

Address
.....
.....

Postcode

My account details are as follows:

Name of account

Number of account

Branch sort code

Please pay the sum of £.....to the Mali Development Group each month on theof each month commencing onand until further notice.

Recipient Bank details are as follows:

Name of account: Mali Development Group

Bank Branch: Lloyds/TSB, The Square, Botley, Oxford

Sort code: 30-19-83 Account number 0215663

Signed

Name Date

GIFT AID DECLARATION

To enable us to reclaim the tax you have already paid on this standing order donation and benefit the charity even more please complete the Gift Aid Declaration below and send it to David Hedge at 26 Emmanuel Ave London W3 6JJ

Name.....

I am a UK income tax payer and want Mali DG to treat all donations from this date and until further notice as Gift Aid donations.

Signed.....

Date.....