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# Mali at the Crossroads

Mali  
Development  
Group  
Annual Report  
2012



**If you would like any other information about projects, or our work generally, please contact us**

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#### **If you would like to help**

MDG cheques should be payable to  
**Mali Development Group** and sent to:

#### **The Treasurer**

26, Emanuel Avenue, London, W3 6JJ

Please ensure that you give us your name and address together with a statement that you want us to treat this and any other donations you make as Gift Aid donations and that you currently pay sufficient Income Tax and/or Capital gains Tax to cover the amounts given.

You can also access donation forms and membership forms on our web site:

**[www.malidg.org.uk](http://www.malidg.org.uk)**

This also gives details of Standing Order arrangements – a great way to help us.

You can also now text a donation of £2, £5 or £10 by texting Mali22 to 70070, for example, Mali22 £5.

#### **MDG**

#### **Committee members 2011/12**

**Linda King** (Chair)  
**John Hedge** (Secretary)  
**David Hedge** (Treasurer)  
Andy Benson  
Ray Fishbourne  
Janice Hedge  
Andrea Hewes  
Ken King  
Rob Spivey

#### **Co-opted members:**

Linda Francis  
Tim Hewes  
Dan Price  
Judith Hartley

#### **Independent Financial Examiner**

John Goolden

#### **Photo credits for Annual Report**

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Tim Hewes  
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#### **Design:**

Andrea Hewes  
Peter Gill

# A message from **Linda King**

**Chair of Mali Development Group**



The first part of the year went well – our fundraising for the hospital wards at Kolondieba was on target, with particular support from Gifford and Brothers and Sisters; we had been given another place in the London Marathon and had selected our runner; the annual trip to Mali by members of the committee or supporters had gone very well and our work on increasing awareness about Mali was developing nicely.

Then the coup in March and the ongoing difficulties have made many more people aware of Mali, but for very worrying reasons. Because of that our annual report certainly reports the work of the last year but it also tries to address the issues Mali now faces, and we hope that this will help to inform and encourage our members, supporters and friends.

We were able to confirm very quickly that all the staff of our three partner organisations were safe and their work, including the projects we fund, has continued successfully. The situation in the north of Mali is a major humanitarian crisis, made worse by the Sahelian food crisis affecting both Mali and its neighbours. In the south there is political instability and signs here too of increasing food fragility in some rural communities, where this had not been a problem before. Some of our partners' staff have family living in the worst affected areas and people fleeing the north are arriving in Bamako, the capital.

These problems mean that our support for our partners in Mali is even more vital. On a personal level staff there have valued our sustained concern and contact, and this is made clear in Mamadou Kone's message to J&D members.

Other messages in this report give news from MACH, our patron Violet Diallo, and Mary Allen of Sahel Eco, whom we are delighted to welcome to address our AGM.

All speak of a hard road ahead for Mali, and one which will particularly require the skills and ability to mobilise community support which is such a strength of all our three Malian partners.

Our money continues to be well used and appreciated. We know that it goes to where it was intended and has a significant impact. In this report Mamadou Kone speaks of the new wards at Kolondieba Hospital and our plans for the Second Step project to help rural women and their communities. Tim Hewes and Kader Keita describe the new centre which has been established for street children, and Mary Allen describes the innovative environmental work going on further north. Some large European NGOs have pulled out of Mali to protect their staff, but our partners are Malian organisations, and we know that they are there for the long haul.

Finally, we have worked within the last year to develop the political contacts needed to increase awareness of Malian issues. That work, in which the Malian Community Council is a key partner, has become particularly important over the last few months, and an account is given of it later in the report. We have taken a lead in trying to work with other charities to get the British government to take a more active role in seeking a resolution to the present difficulties.

The reasons that more people are now aware of Mali are extremely sad and regrettable, but I hope that what you read in this report will reassure you that the support we give is even more necessary now, and that this will encourage you to work with us over the next year to both support our partners and campaign for peace and democracy across the whole of Mali.



## A message from **Mamadou Kone**

**Director of Jeunesse et Développement**



The situation here in Mali is complex and has arisen from 3 crises, which have followed each other incredibly quickly. They are the food crisis following a bad rainy season; the crisis in the North with an armed conflict leading to the division of the country into two parts, and the political crisis, which followed the coup and created a power vacuum. That in turn led to social economic and political chaos.

This has had many consequences, including the displacement of many people from the North to the south of Mali and to neighbouring countries, with serious impact for health, the economy and food supplies.

In this very difficult context many of Mali's international partners have decided to suspend their involvement, and suspend development aid across a wide range of programmes which had been benefiting our country. As a result all NGOs operating in the north of Mali are experiencing financial difficulties, and some have been obliged to end the employment of staff or shut their doors altogether.

J&D, operating in the south of Mali has not been seriously affected, and its technical and funding partners, including MDG have continued their commitment. However, in one of our areas of work hunger resulting from the bad rainy season last year and the failure of crops caused us to initiate an emergency aid project, and we sought help from partners. Sadly none of our partners, because of their own financial pressures, or their inability to access international funds has been able to respond to this urgent need.

As ever we are delighted, though, to recognise the special character of our partnership with MDG, which, in this last year has worked really hard to fulfil its commitment of financial support to establish two hospital wards for women with difficult pregnancies, and malnourished children, at the Kolondieba Hospital. MDG has also supported our Reproductive Health Programme for young people, and supported a twinning between, Malian and British schools. MDG has also given organisational support to J&D and soon will begin its financial support for new community projects put forward by groups of women in the rural communities where J&D works.

On behalf of the J&D members, our staff, and our community partners I once again wish to express to all MDG members our recognition of their huge efforts and sacrifices over the past year, for their greatly valued funding, and above all for their commitment to a Mali which at the moment is suffering from so many evils. Our profound gratitude goes to everyone involved in MDG.

Thank you, and let us look forward to next year. Inchallah.

# A message from Mary Allen

Executive Secretary of Sahel Eco



2012 has been an unforgettable year for anyone living in Mali. All of us remember vividly where we were and what we were doing when we heard that soldiers had run riot in the presidential palace and that ATT [as President Amadou Toumani Touré is commonly known] had been forced to end his 10 year term “par la petite porte” as people say here, both figuratively and in this case literally “by the back door”, scrambling to safety down the Koulouba escarpment on a narrow, steep path.

I was in Mopti. I had just finished a week of field visits and staff meetings and was preparing to fly back the next day (Friday 23rd) to Bamako. The next four days were surreal! Airports were closed but that wasn't an issue. Staying put certainly felt like the safest option. It was people in Bamako we were worried about. So I hunkered down and kept in touch with Bamako and the UK via France24, phone and Facebook, posting jokey, light-hearted updates to reassure family and friends that I was OK. And that's how it been ever since - watching events unfold, hoping for the best, planning for the worst, business as usual (well almost).

By now (August) many things are back to normal for Sahel Eco. In early May we felt confident to move the vehicles back to Mopti. In June colleagues drove via Koro to Ouagadougou. By July the everyday all-day power cuts in Sèvre were over and in early August, banks had opened there again, putting an end to 2 hour drives south to San, just to draw cash. And activities at community and local levels have continued - tant bien que mal – as well as they can.

Our Sahel Regreening Initiative trains farmers to use simple low cost techniques called farmer-managed natural regeneration (FMNR) to restore the tree cover on their fields. The result is a more productive and resilient dryland farming system with the added bonuses of fuel wood, fodder and fruit (Photo 1) and a reversal of the de-

forestation and desertification processes that have come to characterise the Sahel.

At the end of June we calculated that we had reached over 6000 people with the “regreening is possible” message through workshops, film shows, farmer to farmer visits and field schools over the last three years. Our annual competition, to find Regreening Champions in 20 communes the Mopti, Segou and Koulikoro regions, has attracted 861 entries from “early adopters” of FNMR, each with fields containing 60 to 200 young, naturally regenerated trees (under 4 years old) per hectare. We have trained market gardeners in the Sokura commune in basic tree nursery skills (Photo 2) so they can produce their own tree for planting out in August. Ironically this year floods look like just as much a threat to the planted trees, as was last year's drought.

The more benefits people gain from trees, the more they are motivated to invest time and effort in their management. That's our experience and the reasoning behind our work since 2005, supported by Tree Aid and the FAO, to develop trade in tree products such as shea, honey and tamarind. An added incentive is that women make up about 70% of the small scale producers we work with and the income they earn further strengthens their resilience to climatic risks. Just to give an idea, sales of five products in 9 of the 30 villages where we work, were valued at 46,000 euro in the four months to March 2012. That's equivalent to about 120 tonnes of millet. But training and organising producers while necessary is not sufficient and since January 2012 we have been field testing innovative voice-based systems to link small scale farmers and entrepreneurs to new clients and distant markets using simple mobile phones, radio stations and the internet (Photo 3) in collaboration with the Voices project ([www.mvoices.eu](http://www.mvoices.eu)) developed by the Web Alliance for Regreening Africa ([www.w4ra.org](http://www.w4ra.org)).



Regreening the Sahel – Millet plants are growing strongly in this field under the protection of young trees [mainly *Crotalaria* sp.] which the farmer left behind deliberately when he cleared the field at the start of the season. As the trees grow they will be progressively thinned and pruned to avoid excessive shading of crops (July 2012) while providing multiple benefits to the farmer and his family. [Project – Sahel Regreening Initiative funded by FINHUMF]



Re-greening Sokura: Women from the commune of Sokura learn how to graft cuttings from improved tree varieties onto hardy rootstock. [Project: Regreening Sokura – funded by International Tree Foundation]



Voices: Amadou Tangara of Sahel Eco demonstrates the voice-based Radio Marché system to small and medium forest product business entrepreneurs in Segou (July 2012). [VOICES is a research consortium led by the Web Foundation and funded by the European Commission]

## A message from Mary Allen

(continued)

But if 5 months after the coup it's more or less business as usual for Sahel Eco, it's also clear that the foundations of life in Mali have shifted fundamentally leaving no place for quick or easy solutions to problems in either the North or the South. I no longer wonder when things will get back to normal. This is the new normal and the journey continues from here.



John Williams



The Director of the Karamoko Sangare School in his office, M. Mamadou Sangara

## A message from John Williams

### From Bury to Bamako and back!

Over the past year the Suffolk Schools project has been steadily developing. John Williams, an Installation Artist and photographer, inspired it and this is his account

*Almost 2 years ago now, I was invited to a Mali Development Groups fund raising event and I went quite expecting to see and possibly buy an image from West Africa. I have a real interest in African Art and culture but instead I was confronted with images of East Anglian landscapes!*

*More than a bit disappointed and before I left, I suggested to John Hedge, the MDG Secretary that someone should send "single use cameras" out to Mali and then have an exhibition here and before I knew it, within a few weeks, began a hugely rewarding and eye-opening experience for me.*

*I sponsored 50 cameras which MDG sent out to Sangare School in Bamako, Mali's capital and though I had initially hoped to take or collect these cameras myself and meet the young Photographers myself I was disappointingly unable to. However 38 cameras returned producing over 900 images from Africa and these I set about matching with an equal number from 2 Middle schools here in Suffolk.*



Tanty Samake, our link worker, who has been working regularly with the school to develop the link

*Now 3 splendid shows later, and with the pupils at Sangare school having sets of their own prints as mementos, Westley and Howard schools, the 2 participating schools here in the UK, now possess the 20 large exhibition prints between them. This has helped open up more permanent links between them and the school in Bamako.*

*The photography element now complete, my involvement is pretty much over but Wow, what an experience it was and one I shall not forget!*

Since the exhibitions more pictures and news have been exchanged between the Karamoko Sangare School in Bamako, whose Director is pictured, and Westley and Howard Middle Schools in Bury St Edmunds.

Because Westley School was able to donate two laptop computers we hope to launch an Internet contact in the autumn term. Both schools have more events planned about their new Mali link including shows highlighting Malian culture. Howard students have decided also to support MDG as their chosen charity this year, so both schools are making a real difference.

# A message from **Tim Hewes**

**Mali Association of Culture and Hope**

Mali Association of Culture and Hope has had a very full and demanding year, in a period that included supporting our Malian colleagues "Anga Miri Sini Na" (AMSN), moving to larger premises. They have of course also had to cope with the coup in Mali and a range of other difficulties for key members of the team.

Reports have indicated steady development and a continuing quality of care in our work with street children, which is marked by being highly child centred, and unusually so for Mali. The result has been some excellent outcomes.

In January 2012 there was an extensive evaluation and fact-finding visit, to consider the development of the organisation's structure and governance; staff professional development; the content of the programme that the children were working with, and the viability of moving to larger premises.

We also visited key projects which made referrals or worked collaboratively with AMSN, with a view to further developing and sharing good practice with them and so have an impact on practice more generally. An example of this sharing of skills is Amadou Soumaré, a musician who is funded by the African Workshops organisation and works with the AMSN team, learning elements of best practice and teaching music and instrument making in return.

We visited the Kanuya Centre, a French funded NGO reception hostel for street children. The Deputy Director was passionate in his admiration for the AMSN work, and highlighted the 'art therapy' aspects of it. He told us about the wonderful effect the team had on a group of children who had been rescued by the police as they were being trafficked to Mauritania en route to Afghanistan.

We asked a group of about 30 children what they thought of AMSN and they were hugely appreciative of the team. The theme was 'good training but you need more places!' Many of them stood up in the meeting to say coming to AMSN had changed their lives.

Following our visit to Bamako, AMSN moved to a court-yarded building which allows us to provide a more suitable environment for our activities, appropriate security for the children and to offer accommodation for children taking part on the courses. This was a major step forward for the organisation, which had previously worked in and around Kader Keita's own accommodation. It is intended eventually to provide a broader range of activities, such as music, tailoring and sport, so that a wider range of needs and interests can be met.

Life since the coup has been very difficult for everyone. One example is that an AMSN team member, from the north of the country felt obliged to keep out of sight in Bamako when the trouble was at its most volatile. Another member of staff, our Health Educator, Mrs Walette Dicko, was injured in a road accident, but has since made a full recovery. Walette has an important role with the children. She considers them to be her extended family, 'loving children but not being blessed with her own'. If the children have any health worries they take them to Walette and she also instructs them on personal hygiene, and all manner of health issues including sexual health education. However, with these and other personal difficulties that members of the team are experiencing, they are inspirational in their determination to continue their work. With their country in turmoil, especially in the North, this vital work with children living on the edge of survival is all the more imperative .



**Tim Hewes holding the baby of one of the girls from AMSN who is 13 years old**



**Walette (in blue shirt) asking the children about their aspirations at the Kanuye Centre**

# A reflection from Violet Diallo

Patron of MDG



## What's happening in Mali?

Passage of the north into the hands of Islamists has brought the south to realise its loss: the T.V. weather forecast shows what tomorrow will be like there just as in the rest of the country, even though the population there is neither able nor allowed to watch. Images of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal are still shown regularly, arousing nostalgia for the days when it was simple to hop on a bus when one felt up to the 1,000 km trip to the north.

But there have been moments when ill-informed mobs have attacked northerners and their property in the south. There are still dismissive references to “armed bandits”, a code phrase for anti-Touareg sentiment, but the fact that the south now realizes it has suffered a loss makes it possible to hope that the many ethnic communities in Mali can begin to face what the others feel about them, look at the sources of hurtful words, and move towards a clearer understanding.

In the north, there is much suffering, particularly because of food shortages this year and there are many resource-poor communities in the south, too. So far there is no help forthcoming from the south, beset by its internal crisis, while regional and/or international solutions are unbelievably complicated to negotiate and arrange. Communities in the north now realise they needed to be more self-reliant and to develop critical capacity in the face of incursions of all sorts. The burden falls hard on women, in particular, who are at a loss in a very conservative tradition to know how to express the harm done to them by violations of their rights. When the tide turns, will they be able to impose on men their right to participate in public discussion and decisions?

How will the tide turn? Many are understandably angry and find it difficult to envisage change other than by force, but nobody can predict the collateral damage this would cause to by-standers caught between combatants. Other conflicts teach that the price is high. On the other hand, few people have the expertise to respond effectively to the psychological provocation the jihadi groups are prepared to wield: first the horrors of the massacre of Malian soldiers at Aguelhoc, then limiting women's civic rights, bashing up monuments, and now barbarous application of an extreme vision of sharia law. Why are we not more skilled at understanding these people, and therefore of perceiving their real objectives and next steps? Why are we still reading tea leaves?

In the south, it has taken a mutiny-turned coup to make us realize the dangers of faulty governance. And this has happened, not by chance, at the very time when we need to understand what is going on. People need to be more self-reliant here too: it is not just voices off from overseas who say: “We don't understand, what's happening?” The need for analysis and consensus justifies the kind of careful community development work that NGOs have been undertaking, enabling for instance, participation in public examination of how their rights are respected. But cautious results still don't make it any easier to resolve the need to understand the local, national, region-wide and geo-political conundrum facing Mali.



# Financial Report

## for the year ended

### 31 March 2012

**David Hedge, Treasurer MDG**

#### **Income**

Gross income for the latest financial year exceeded £40,000. This represented an 11% reduction compared with 2010/11, and was largely attributable to the challenging economic environment. However, revenue continued to be sufficient for MDG to proceed with work as planned. Key developments relating to income in the year included the following:

Total donations and subscriptions reduced by approximately £6,000 to £31,208. These included regular member payments plus individual, corporate and trust donations.

A key element in our funding for Jeunesse et Développement was the generous and continued contribution by Gifford, which is now part of Ramboll, the worldwide international group. During the year, staff events to celebrate the company's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary combined with a Gifford contribution amounted to £5,800, excluding available Gift Aid refunds.

Our partnership with the Creative Agency Brothers & Sisters also yielded valuable funding through their charity events, which produced almost £2,000 in the financial year, and substantial further funding has been received since as part of their ongoing commitment.

The J&D Reproductive Health programme was funded almost entirely (£15,000) by the generosity of the Guildford Academic Associates (GAA). Their funding continues through the present financial year and will end in March 2013. We are working hard to find alternative funding after that time, so that this important programme can continue.

The partnership with Kader Keita and the Malian Association for Culture and Hope (MACH) benefited greatly from an award of £6,100 from The Funding Network and also from over £3,000 from The African

Workshop organisation. In addition St Helen's Church, Abingdon kindly donated £1,250 as part of a 3-year annual commitment to MACH.

Small amounts of funding were made available to our third partner, Sahel Eco, and we hope that over the next year we can significantly increase support to them, through new funding sources.

We are grateful to all regular donors, both individual and organisations. Ongoing commitment from organisations like Just Trust and the Birchwood Community is particularly helpful in underpinning our work and providing a strong foundation for our own fundraising activities.

The year saw again a good range of those activities, and support from an increased number of members and supporters ensured that we raised a similar amount to last year through these events, which were ably coordinated by Linda King.

Gift Aid tax refunds, increased to £2,917 compared with the prior year as we benefitted from a higher level of refundable contributions. An outstanding Gift Aid refund submission for an increased amount should further strengthen the charity's financial resources in the near future. We work hard to be as efficient as possible in claiming Gift Aid, and it constitutes a significant element of our annual income.

#### **Expenditure**

Outgoings amounted to about £51,600 in 2011/12 and were principally comprised of Malian transfers. Those directed to J & D represented 76.5% of this total with 16.3% going to MACH. Outgoings are based upon agreed priorities and are subject to approval by the Executive Committee of MDG. In the case of J&D they are based upon a jointly agreed 3-year Work Plan. Negotiations for the next three-year plan from 2013-16 are underway at the moment.





# Financial Report

## for the year ended 31 March 2012

(continued)

Transfers are made to J&D and MACH on a quarterly basis, normally to coincide with the Malian Calendar Financial year of January to December. MDG receives regular progress reports from both organisations and funding priorities can be adjusted based upon both feedback and new information.

MDG's other costs and overheads, such as secretarial expenses, insurance and printing, are very low in line with the charity's 100% volunteer identity.

### **The Current Financial Year (2012/2013)**

The first four months of the current year reveal income of £24,389 with receipts including the second year of funding (£15,000) from GAA for the Reproductive Health project, a further £1,800 from Brothers & Sisters and two of our founder members, Mr and Mrs Ward, yet again provided a very generous donation.

Sponsorship for our 2012 London Marathon runner will yield £3,500, after Gift Aid. Luke Hedge successfully completed the run in great style and he attracted good MDG support that encouraged him around the course.

As before outgoings to date in 2012/13 were mainly represented by quarterly transfers to J&D and MACH and these will continue in line with our regular commitment. Transfers made to Mali in the financial year so far total £28,750, including very recently the funding to ensure that we can complete our pledge to build two wards at the Kolondieba Hospital. We believe that our exchange rate management has proved advantageous, since the CFA is tied to the Euro, and our payment timing ensured that we took advantage of this.

MDG continues to focus on developments within Mali and upon the progress of relevant projects during the current times of great uncertainty. In this we continue to work very closely with our partners, and recognise that our continued support is more important than ever in these very challenging times for Mali.

The charity's total bank current and savings account balances, as at the end of August 2012, amounted to approximately £15,000. Funds are held via Scottish Widows Bank (Charities 7 Day Notice Account) for savings and Lloyds TSB for operating purposes.

# A message from **Daniel Price**

**MDG**

## **MDG and its work in Awareness Raising and campaigning for Mali**

This year has seen a big increase in the campaigning and influencing work of MDG. This work has focused around three particular areas, information sharing and raising awareness about Mali, engagement with the government and partnership building. In terms of awareness raising Judith Hartley (pictured), has been a driving and enthusiastic force in leading on the Mali Interest Group for the organisation. The Mali Interest Group and The Mali Interest Group on Facebook now has 56 members, and of these 15 joined during the last year. The new members include an increasing number of Malians, who have probably heard about this through word of mouth, or through existing contacts. Facebook subscribers come from a wide range of occupations, including journalists, students, researchers, musicians and other artists. Since the coup in Mali, and the occupation of the North there has been a huge increase in postings, and this has provided a great means of exchanging information and getting up to the minute news about a rapidly changing situation.

Our new initiative, the Mali Interest Hub, is being developed to further this work and will be launched at the AGM. Similarly to the Mali Interest Group the aim is to become a one stop shop for English speaking news for Mali, aggregating news sources from around the world. We hope to introduce blog pieces from a wide variety of experts on Mali, and eventually have people contributing directly from the cities, towns and villages of Mali. We intend to synchronise this to the Mali Interest Group and other social media outlets so, for the same amount of work, we can have a presence across multiple platforms.

One of the real successes of the year has been the, 'Mali at the Crossroads' event held in partnership with the Royal African Society. Camilla Toulmin, Director of the International Institute of Environment and Development, Wilfred Willy, President of the Malian Community Council and Paul Melly, Associate Fellow from Chatham House, all spoke at this internationally attended event, chaired by John Hedge, MDG Secretary. The event brought about a range of organisations interested in the situation in Mali, including the Foreign Office, to talk openly about what can be done to help Mali. This was a good staging post for all of our campaigning work for this year and into the future, and we thank the Royal African Society and other organisations for their support in organising the event.

One of the big outcomes from that event has been the creation of the, 'Alliance for Mali'. This informal group of organisations who support a range of projects in different parts of Mali intends to work together to help decision makers in the UK assist Mali both in this time of crisis but on into the future. Work is underway within the alliance to engage the Government and other organisations. The alliance is now looking to the future with the intention to hold another partnership event with the Royal African Society in Parliament.





**Mali  
Development Group**

Charity number: 1088140