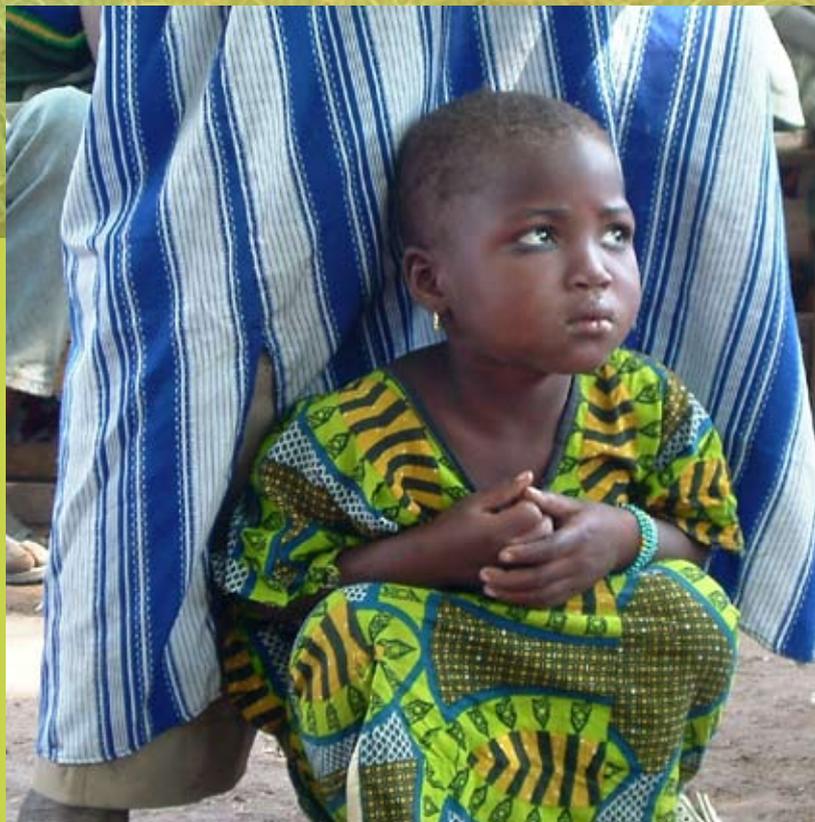




**Mali
Development Group**

Mali Development Group Annual Report 2010

Development on a Human Scale



Welcome to this year's annual report

The Road to Mafélé

At last year's AGM, one of our members, Martin Freeth offered to make a film for us. Some time ago, Mamadou Kone, Director of our main partner, Jeunesse et Développement, also said that a film about the partnership would be useful in Mali as well as Britain. This remained an unfulfilled objective from our 2008/10 work plan until Martin made his offer.

We are extremely pleased with the film that Martin has made. Hopefully many of you will have a chance to see it (in full, rather than the clips on You Tube) over the coming months. If you're unlikely to get to Mali to see the work that you're supporting for yourself, the film certainly gives a really good flavour of what's going on. Later in this report Martin writes about the experience, and he has now completed a Bambara version of the film which will make it more accessible in Mali. We hope that the film will be shown in Britain on the community channel in the coming months. The film confirms our enduring and special relationship with Kone and the staff of Jeunesse et Développement and this report also includes information about the main aspects of the 2011/13 proposed work plan.



MDG's partnerships

This year's report, though, aims to give a fuller picture as well of our work with our other two partners - MACH and Sahel Eco, and we hope that this will give you a good overview of the wide range of work which our members are now supporting. We continue to give regular feedback to supporters through our quarterly newsletters, and our web site, www.malidg.org.uk gives information and pictures about the whole range of activities and projects as well as links to other related sites.

Reproductive Health Programme

This year sees the ending of our funding to the Reproductive Health project in Bamako. We have been supporting it as sole funders for 6 years and it has achieved a great deal in reaching large numbers of young people in Commune IV in Bamako. We have had extremely generous support over the whole 6 years from the Truck music festival and more recently from the Guildford Academic Associates charity. We hope that J&D may be able to find other funding to sustain this work into the future, but a huge amount of preventive work has been accomplished and deserved recognition is due to Soumaïla Moro, the project coordinator and his staff, as well of course to the hundreds of impressive young people who have served as Peer Educators. Over the next year a full report on the overall project will be produced and this will be made available to members.

The 2011-13 Work Plan- MDG and J&D

Over the last 6 months the development, in close consultation with Mamadou Kone of J&D has been the development of our new work plan for 2011 to 2013. This started with a lengthy skype discussion with Kone at January's committee meeting and will be concluded in November, when budgets and programme



plans for the various activities are agreed. As always we have kept members closely informed and if you would like more details of any of our projects do get in touch through our web site.

The main projects planned are as follows:

- Malaria prevention in Manankoro

J&D wish to develop a new malaria prevention project in Manankoro - although J&D has achieved a great deal in the villages over the years this area of work especially still needs to be tackled. The plan will be to develop a pilot project for two years and then to attract longer term funding.

- The Second Step Project- support for women's development

This has always been a theme of MDG's contribution, but this is a very new context. J&D has been working in southern Mali on developing many new women's micro-credit groups. These groups enable women to play a much bigger role in their communities. J&D propose that MDG gives extra support and encouragement to some of these groups by encouraging them to put forward projects for MDG to fund- perhaps 5 or 6 per year. J&D workers would support the development of project plans, but the ideas and detailed planning will come from the groups themselves. This means there may be considerable variety in the ideas put forward! Over three years this will add up to a considerable programme, and through representatives the women's groups will have a direct say over the chosen priorities. We will be applying to funders, but individual or group donations would be very welcome as has always been the case with this aspect of our work- it is likely that many of the smaller projects will be achievable with £1,000 to £1,500

- Community Projects with Gifford

We are very pleased that our partnership with Gifford is going to continue, and we hope that there will be a Gifford supported project on alternate years in 2011 and 2013. The 2011 project will involve construction of two new wards for the Health Centre at Kolondieba, which is desperately short of space to accommodate women with high-risk pregnancy and malnourished children needing intensive support. Since the scheme needs to go on site early in 2011 this is our most urgent need - we are aiming to raise just over £21,000 and we hope that you will be able to support us on this scheme in the coming months

- A new 4x4

J&D desperately need a new vehicle. MDG usually aims to include some 'tools and equipment' items in the work plan- the vehicle and ongoing support for IT will be the priorities. Again we will be looking to trusts and corporate funders, but individual donations will help us make progress more quickly.

Malian Community Council and Mali Interest Group

We continue to work closely with the representative body for Malians in the U.K. - the Malian Community Council, and now collaborate regularly on a range of issues. In May of this year we co-hosted a conference of Mali Interest Group agencies in London. The meeting discussed a number of issues suitable for collaborative work into the future - from feasibility work on Fair Trade Shea Butter to the need for improvements in visa arrangements. Following the meeting a Facebook site for agency representatives was set up which we hope will improve day-to-day sharing and links between all the organisations involved.

During the year, the British government opened an embassy in Bamako. We have made contact with the new ambassador who has been very encouraging and we will be meeting with him shortly. We will report on this meeting in our next newsletter.

Thank you

Despite the recession, our finances have not been too badly affected by a decrease in donations. A greater difficulty has been the exchange rate as the Central African Franc is pegged to the euro. Our thanks to all of you for the support you provide, in whatever form. We hope that this report will show you that we continue to use your donations wisely and that it makes a very significant difference to the lives of Malians. We endeavour to provide a good quality annual report and the same with our newsletters and website as an important way of providing feedback to you. Particular thanks for the professional look of all of these go to Andrea Hewes who does all of the artwork for us for free.

...and finally Congratulations!

22nd September 2010 is the 50th Anniversary of Malian Independence, and we all join together in wishing our Malian partners and our colleagues in the Community Council a very happy celebration and a bright and successful future for a country we have all grown to love and admire.

Linda King

Chair of M.D.G



Financial Report for the Year ended 31st March 2010

Gross income exceeded £61,600 in total for the latest financial year, an increase of 26% compared with the previous year. This has enabled projects to proceed as planned despite a harsher UK economic environment. Some of the income developments were as follows:

- Donations and subscriptions rose significantly to £38,295. This was markedly higher than the past two years and reflects a diverse spread of contributions. These include regular Member payments, individual/corporate/trust donations, partnership income, continued and valued assistance provided by Gifford and £1,560 from incorporation of funds via the Friends of Mali.

Also, to meet J & D Work Plan needs, an Appeal Fund raised around £5,500, including an allowance for Gift Aid refunds, during the second half of 2009 with generous individual contributions from both members and non-members.

Increased income also reflected the activities of two partners included in the MDG charitable group. Within the Malian Association for Culture and Hope (MACH), set-up to assist disadvantaged children, the management and work of Tim Hewes caused receipts to rise to a sum approaching £15,000, before Gift Aid. Tim obtained over £4,100 from a successful sponsored "fasting" project. Also, valuable receipts were provided from the Tree Parties partnership with Sahel Eco which is now established as a part of MDG and carries out important environmental work.

- Regarding fund raising, £7,500 was received from Truckfest and this continued to assist the Reproductive Health project. Additionally, Butts Brewery contributed a valuable £1,000 plus income received from a number of activities including a Christmas Raffle that produced approximately £1,000, pudding sales (Linda King), Fairtrade (Sue Raikes), pottery sales (Gill Hedge), a sky diving sponsorship and activities such as the music of Redhouse Radio (Andy Benson). Many other activities produced important contributions.
- Gift Aid tax refunds, from the Inland Revenue, increased to £9,271 in line with a greater level of applicable contributions.
- Member numbers increased with a corresponding effect on subscription income.
- MDG has raised approximately £360,000 since being granted charitable status in 2001 and the vast majority of this has been achieved by membership activities and donation.

Expenditure

Outgoings are based upon agreed priorities with partners, in particular J&D, and are subject to approval by the Executive Committee of MDG. They are based on a 3-year Work Plan that currently covers the years 2008/11. A new Work Plan, covering the next 3 years, is currently being discussed and worked upon in conjunction with J & D.

Payments are made to J&D on a quarterly basis normally to coincide with the Malian Calendar Financial year (January to December) within which J&D operates. MDG receives regular reports from J&D on progress and priorities can be adjusted on the basis of feedback and new issues.

Outgoings amounted to £42,542 in 2009/10 with transfers to Mali being mainly directed towards J & D. In this regard, the £26,500 figure was less than the prior year as, given timing differences, only three quarterly payments are included. The majority of £8,460 attributable to the Street Children partner was in respect of transfers as was all of the £3,558 with respect to Sahel Eco. The range of funded projects is described elsewhere in this report, and includes work in both Bamako and Manankoro.

Other costs amounted to only 6% of income, such as modest overheads & payments in line with the charity's voluntary based approach. Expenses cover such items as secretarial expenses, project support and fund-raising expenditure, public liability insurance premiums, printing & similar costs.

An annual surplus of £19,093 was realised for the latest financial year in comparison with deficits of £3,649 in 2008/09 and £8,436 in the prior year to that. Accordingly, cash holdings at 31st March 2010, remained strong but were reduced after transfers to Mali in the early part of the 2010/11 financial year.

The Current Financial Year

Income for first four months of fiscal 2010/11 was approximately £4,600 which is lower than that for the corresponding period in the prior year. Given the current UK economic environment, this is understandable and current year receipts have mainly consisted normal standing order payments, donations and some fund raising.

Taking account of current economic realities, it will obviously be necessary to carefully consider the content of the new MDG Work Plan, including assessment and itemisation of priorities and this will necessitate close dialogue with J & D.

Outgoings during this period have mainly comprised transfers to Mali amounting to £14,000 relative to J & D and £2,250 for the Street Children project. It has also been agreed that transfers to this project be made quarterly in line with those made to J & D. Additionally, expenses included £1,248 for part costs of making the film and related DVD's, £176 for leaflet printing, £390 for Tim Hewes regarding outgoings for the Children's partnership, £73 monthly payments for Public Liability Insurance and sundry secretarial overhead.

Following these transactions, the charity's bank account balances amounted to approximately £6,630 at the end of July, 2010. A further outstanding Gift Aid refund submission plus other revenues are expected to substantially increase cash resources prior to the date of the next quarterly transfers to projects in Mali.

David Hedge,

Treasurer, Mali Development Group

August 2010

The Road to Mafélé

I am a ridiculously old hand as a documentary film maker, and have made many films (mainly for the BBC) about subjects in Africa – but none of this had prepared me, or my assistant producer and cameraman Steve Brimson, for the extraordinary experience of our trip to Mali.

John Hedge had told us about similar journeys he and other founder members of MDG had made ten years or so ago which inspired them to set up the organisation. He had also told us how excellent Mamadou Koné, ‘Tanty’ Konate and their local Jeunesse et Développement colleagues were.

At first, the unspeakable toilets in transit at Tripoli airport, and the predicted three-day delay in Bamako to get a visa for travel in and out of Mali, brought back old memories of the frustrations of African travel – but finally we swept out of the J&D compound, crammed into a Toyota pick-up driven by Bakélé Sidibe, with Koné, Tanty, Tanty’s baby and all our equipment, accompanied by the urban music of the capital, heading south.

Music and singing were to lighten our spirits throughout the journey. You might think your spirits would be darkened by the fact that Mali is probably the fifth poorest country in the world with high unemployment, the population growing very rapidly and few resources. But almost everywhere there is an extraordinarily positive and hopeful feeling amongst the people. This is a country which was the centre of a democratic empire a thousand years ago, and the spirit of democracy is alive and well again today.

The proud spirit of the Hunters in Manankoro, for example

(whose extraordinary many-stringed instruments so impressed Steve, a guitar technician in one of his previous lives) illustrates why the French had such a hard time keeping Mali down. But this deserved pride did not prevent J&D and MDG team members, everywhere we went, from admitting when things had not worked well and when they needed to learn more.

The spirit of effective co-operation between local people (nurtured by Koné in particular) and the J&D and MDG project teams is clearly sustaining a wide range of small, practical, human-scale projects.

I was perhaps most impressed by the small diesel grain mill in Lémouroutoumou, saving women from hours of back breaking work every day. Speaking as a film maker, their back breaking work was ideal. We used our new small high definition camera, placing it almost inside the wooden grain bowl, to see the heavy poles being smashed down to crush grain – and every bead of perspiration on the women’s faces was there in



HD. Add to that the melodious singing of local children... and a BAFTA award could beckon. Compare that to a noisy, crude diesel grinder... no competition, of course!

The sharp Bambara people quickly learned to help us with sound recording and lights, and with luck BAFTA awards, too, will be theirs in the future. We found their open and thoughtful approach to be quite striking. I don’t think that I have ever filmed such a frank and reasoned discussion of difficult issues as that offered by a group of young people in the streets of Bamako, tackling tough questions about sexual diseases, family size, contraception and personal relationships.

Then during the editing of our film everything had to be translated into Bamanan for a local version which, hopefully, will go out on Mali TV. Badia Coulibali and Aoua Konate in London worked with drive, creativity and dedication during the many hours it took to get this right.

I have made films in East and South Africa before now. The red earth is the same in West Africa, it seems, but if anything the spirit and friendliness of the people – and their willingness to enter into real partnerships with former colonials like us, beats all the rest.



The Malian Association of Culture and Hope (MACH) Kader Keita

Last year we reported that we had decided to turn our long-standing links with Kader Keita into a more structured partnership. MACH is effectively the U.K branch of Kader's organisation, and operates within MDG. In the past 12 months Tim Hewes has worked hard to develop more secure funding to develop Kader's work, and has represented the new partnership on the MDG committee.

Kader Keita and Bogolan

For those new to MDG's work Kader Keita is a Malian mudcloth artist with a strong sense of social responsibility. A graduate of Mali's art school and a talented painter, Kader's main medium is the traditional textile 'bogolan' (mudcloth).

Bogolan comprises a heavy, cotton cloth with rust-coloured geometric designs printed using a dried leaf called n'galama and iron-rich river mud. Many of the patterns have symbolic meaning in the Bambara tradition. Once solely in the domain of Mali's traditional secret societies and hunters' associations, Bogolan has now gained popularity worldwide and is a renowned symbol of Malian culture.

A champion of Bamako's disadvantaged kids

With some initial help from Jeunesse et Développement, Kader began to run bogolan workshops in Bamako with, amongst others, street children, refugees and young offenders. It became clear very quickly that he had a remarkable affinity with disadvantaged young people and could use his art to help them communicate and confront their difficulties. In recent years he has visited the UK twice to run workshops with young offenders in prisons and in the community under the auspices of Friends of Mali. Participants submitted their work successfully to the annual prison Koestler awards. Kader also ran a workshop at WOMAD.

Kader's abilities and enthusiasm are all the more remarkable considering he is severely physically disabled. A medical accident as a child means that he moves with the aid of crutches and a motorised wheelchair. His skills and strength of character therefore mean he is an inspiring role model for those living with social and psychological problems as well as physical challenges.

Determined to do more to help disadvantaged Bamako children, Kader set up his association and one of MDG's work plan commitments for the period 2008/10 was to find a way of helping Kader develop his organisation and develop support for it from the UK.

Work in 2009/10:

Tim reports as follows:

This community based Association works through art and culture to develop the children's skills and self-esteem and reintegrate them into society.

The Association provides food, transport, social support and counselling and some basic education alongside its principal activities of teaching the creation of 'Bogolan'. This all takes place around the small courtyard where Kader lives.

Kader has helped hundreds of children to return to school, to their families or to become financially independent. Courses run throughout the year, funding permitting and 'graduates' receive active follow up and support.

This year Kader was invited to take part in the International Young Persons Conference in the UK, but was denied a visa at the last moment. The work of the Malian children was however, an inspirational centre-piece for the conference. An appeal against the visa ruling was vigorously pursued, but again denied. In fact only one, of all the invited conference participants, from over 6 other countries were denied entry into the UK.

The extensive promotional programme that was to run while Kader was here, had to be greatly reduced. This left only an exhibition of the street children's work and a workshop in Hay-on-Wye.

However, an exciting exhibition of Kader's and the children's work is to be held at the Saïd Business School in Oxford between 29th November and 31st December. The private view is scheduled for Saturday 4th December and we hope that as many supporters as possible can attend, to raise the profile of The Association work.

We have continued to keep in close contact with Kader throughout the year, receiving regular reports on the work being done. As the partnership has developed a regular format has been agreed for budgeting, planning and reporting. We look forward to a very successful 2011, and hope that Kader will soon be able to make another visit to England!



'Today, I fight for children in difficult situations. They are my reason for living'.



'Every artist dips his brush into his own soul, and paints his own nature into his pictures'

Kader Keita and his work

'I try to make people think seriously about the worlds problems and to remind those, who only too often just utter fine words, of their responsibilities'

Kader frequently takes referrals from other organisations, and the project's work is well understood and respected in the community of Lafiabougou, where Kader lives. So far, over 500 children have benefited from the work of the Association,

Kader has helped hundreds of children to return to school, to their families or to become financially independent. Courses run throughout the year, funding permitting and 'graduates' receive active follow up and support.

But the attitude to children, embodied in the work of the Association remains paramount. The Association treats each of them as a valued individual, listening to their stories, their hopes, fears and dreams, something virtually unheard of for children living on the streets, who are more often regarded as a problem to be contained. Kader nurtures a learning environment where they can feel at ease, with a flexible structure adapted to their erratic and often turbulent life experiences.

When Kader was taken to hospital a couple of years ago for minor surgery, nurses were surprised to find a noisy delegation of raggedy children on the doorstep insisting on seeing Kader. When they refused to go away it was finally agreed that two of them could go inside. They presented Kader with 500 F CFA (about 50p) and said they had collected it to help pay for his medical costs. Needless to say Kader has treasured that 500 F CFA, using it as a feature of one of his works of art.

Yousseuf was a recent graduate of the Association. He is seen here receiving his certificate from Kader at the end of his course



Just before starting the course, this is what Yousseuf said about why he wanted to do the course.

"I would like to learn to do bogolan and to become an artist - that is above all my dream in life. In future, God willing, I would also like to have my own group to train my young brothers."

"Training like this inspires me; I can be creative and also have the means to live on. I would like to become involved in everything that is done here and to become an expert in it all".

That was Yousseuf's inspiration and his dream. Tragically, shortly after finishing the course Yousseuf died in a traffic accident. This was a tremendous blow to the Team and the other students when he died. The Association wants to find a way through its work of marking Yousseuf's life and his dream.

The Association has developed a wide-ranging network of supporters through persistence and hard work. These include other street children agencies in Bamako, Malian government Ministers, local police, foreign embassy staff, national and international NGO's, and visitors from Europe - artists as well as tourists. Kader has also built on Bamako's twinning with Angers in France and has developed many friends and supporters in the UK.

Supporters are the lifeblood of this inspirational work, and vital for the street children. If you have already supported us, thank you. If not, please do. We need you.

To learn more about Kader and MACH visit the website www.kaderkeita.org.



Violet Diallo advises children on finances



'I am not handicapped, either in mind, or in heart.'



Tree Parties – the first year

In last year's annual report we gave information about the setting up of Tree Parties as a means of supporting environmental work in Mali being carried out by Sahel Eco. On the following pages you can read about the first year and the work that it has specifically supported in Mopti - a new area of Mali for MDG to link with. Tree Parties are the vision of a long-standing MDG member, Linda Francis. The following report is from Linda:

On 2nd August 2009 in deepest Oxfordshire I hosted the first Tree Party. It was sparked off by a legacy left by a good friend, Patsy Wood, who loved trees. The proceeds were match funded from Patsy's legacy, processed by MDG and sent to Sahel Eco in Mali to help support two tree-based projects in the Bankasse, Mopti and Segou areas. These projects, identified with the help and advice of John Hedge, secretary of MDG, are Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) and the Village Tree Enterprise. Both programmes are helping people improve their lives through better management of their environment. This in turn connects with Sahel Eco's partnership of the multi-participatory 'Regreening the Sahel' project. You can learn more about it from this website.

<http://africa-regreening.blogspot.com/>

Early developments

One of the guests at that first Tree Party, IT volunteer Chris Cussens, created Sahel Eco's first dedicated website <http://www.sahelco.net/>, which went live on 1st March 2010. On the strength of seeing the website, USAID has expressed interest in working with Sahel Eco next year. This was a tremendous boost.

Another Tree Party guest, Mike Rogers, bird ringer and member of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), suggested that Sahel Eco links up with bird organizations who are concerned at the alarming drop in migratory birds that overwinter in western Africa, the Sahel in particular. The environmental work of charities on the ground such as Sahel Eco could have a valuable part to play in our understanding of this trend. Mary Allen of Sahel Eco is now in touch with the BTO, The Netherlands Bird Protection Society and Cambridge University, all of whom are currently conducting research.

Other friends of Linda have held Tree Parties and over £4,000 has been raised to date. It is hoped that more people (both in the UK – and perhaps further afield!) will pick up the idea and hold their own Tree Parties to support Sahel Eco's 'regreening' projects.

MDG member Ken King has kindly set up an online donation facility on the Tree Parties website for anyone wishing to support Sahel Eco's regreening projects even if they are not partygoers or hosts.

To begin creating a Tree Party community of 'regreeners' with a direct interactive connection with Sahel Eco's work, Linda and Mary Allen are developing the Tree Party Map (see Tree Parties website) This shows the neighbourhood location in the UK of each party and the various projects they are directly supporting in Mali. Viewers can zoom in from above on any of the markers and see the project locations (in some cases even individual trees!) Each marker has a brief description and sometimes a picture. More data is being added all the time. Early days yet, but at the time of writing the map has already had over one thousand hits.

As part of the Village Tree Enterprise project Sahel Eco is helping communities – especially women – process and market shea butter. This is made from the seeds of an improved variety of the karité tree (see Mary Allen's Sahel Eco report) and has a variety of uses including in cosmetics and foods. Sue Raikes, another MDG member, is investigating marketing opportunities for shea butter as a Fair Trade product in the UK.

The Parties still go on ...

Linda continues to promote and raise funds for Tree Parties whenever the opportunity comes along. One way has been through face painting at family events. The next venue will be the Wood Weekend Oct 9th & 10th at Ickworth House, near Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, where MDG has a stand, so there are many ways of getting involved. Why not become a Tree Party host and put yourself on the Map?

If you would like to hold a party please contact Linda at host1@treeparties.org.uk or visit <http://www.treeparties.org.uk> to find out more.



Sahel Eco Report to Mali Development Group

January – June 2010

Report presented by Mary Allen

Funds raised by MDG member Linda Francis and her Tree Party co-organisers and guests are used to support the work of the Sahel Regreening Initiative and the Village Tree Enterprise project in Mali. This report to MDG covers activities in the six month period January to June 2010.

The Sahel Regreening Initiative works to increase the numbers of trees on agricultural land and by doing so, to contribute to reversing the devastating effects of desertification on rural and urban livelihoods in Mali. Sahel Eco in Mali is part of a broader informal coalition of organisations working to promote more sustainable land management practices in dryland Africa (see <http://africa-regreening.blogspot.com/>).

The Village Tree Enterprise project is working in 2010 with 1,250 women and 410 men in 47 villages of the Mopti and Segou Regions to promote the development of small rural enterprises based on “non timber” tree products which include: honey, from hives placed high up in the branches of trees; shea “butter”, a vegetable oil with many culinary, cosmetic and medicinal uses; mats woven from the leaves of the *doum* palm (*Hyphaene thebaica*); and a variety of edible fruits, nuts and leaves.

Funds raised by MDG -Tree Parties were used to support two activities in particular in the first six months of 2010. Firstly in April they helped pay for six Village Tree entrepreneurs to have a stall and display their products at SIAGRI 2010, an international agricultural fair in Bamako and, whilst there were there, to attend the formal launch of the Sahel Regreening Initiative. Secondly in May, they enabled members of the Barahogon association to make a tour of 21 other villages raising awareness of the simple, low cost techniques they use to fight deforestation and regenerate the tree cover in their fields bringing multiple benefits including higher cereal yields and more abundant supplies of firewood and fodder.

Village Tree Entrepreneurs at the SIAGRI 2010 Agricultural Fair

Organised by the Malian Chamber of Agriculture, the SIAGRI 2010 international agricultural fair was held from 24th to 30th April 2010 at the Palais de la Culture Amadou Hampethé Ba, on the banks of the river Niger in Bamako. A couple of days before it started the two VTE project coordinators Amadou Tangara and Meme Sidibe travelled down to the capital with six of their “non-timber tree product” entrepreneurs:

- Mr Luc Doho member of the Noulé enterprise group in the village of Léguéré (Bankass) who collects and sells fruit of the tamarind tree (*Tamarindus indica*)
- Mr Issa Guindo member of the Andoubèrè group in the village of Endé (Bankass) who also collects and sells tamarind fruit

- Mme Mèrèbara Nanatoume member of the Séguérémo enterprise group from the village of Kamba Komodiguili (Bandiagara), who also collects and sells tamarind fruit
- Mr Sabéré Diarra from the village de Bambara (Tominian) who produces and sells honey from hives placed high up in the trees around the village and in the forest
- Mme Naomi Dembele from the village de Sira (Tominian) who transforms nuts from the shea tree (*Butyrospermum parkii*) into high quality shea butter
- Mme Angèle Dembele from the village of Mouni (Tominian) who collects and sells the seeds of the néré tree (*Parkia biglobosa*) which are used to make soumbala, a traditional condiment rich in protein and iron, which is used to flavour sauces.

SIAGRI 2010 was the first time for many of the entrepreneurs to attend an agricultural product fair and the first time any of them had run a stall and displayed their products. Imagine their pride when the President of Mali, Amadou Toumani Toure, paid their stall a visit and chatted to them about their work!



President Amadou Toumani Touré visits the Village Tree Enterprise stall at SIAGRI 2010 in Bamako. Naomi Dèmbélé, shea butter entrepreneur from Tominian, is in the background

Each entrepreneur came to SIAGRI with a small quantity of their produce nicely packaged and labelled for the occasion and the main objective for this first SIAGRI was to learn from the other exhibitors and make contacts. Many potential clients appreciated the high quality of the Village Tree products and spent time at the stall, getting to know the entrepreneurs and swapping mobile phone numbers with them. Quite a few of the carefully prepared pots and packages ended up being given away as free samples and one of the lessons which the entrepreneurs took away from their week in Bamako was that “next time” they would package their products in a mixture of small-sized containers to give away as samples to the professional buyers and large-size containers for those who want to buy. Another lesson was that they need to organise and work together more in order to offer the sorts of quantities which interest the serious buyers. All agreed that meeting people who were seriously interested in their products had given them much greater confidence and pride in what they are doing.

One contact made at SIAGRI was with a trader from Mopti who ordered 10 kilos of the high quality shea butter from Naomie Dembele to test the reaction of his clients to this new and slightly more expensive product. Naomie sent the order off as soon as she returned home and hopes that more orders will follow once this year's shea nut harvest has been transformed. The Tominian district is at the very northern limit of the ecological range of the shea tree, making Naomi and other 27 women the Gnoubourisin (Solidarity is Good) self-help group, well positioned to take advantage of the market for high quality shea butter in the Northern desert regions of Mali such as Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal.



Some of the tree product entrepreneurs and other re-greening champions at the launch of the Sahel Regreening Initiative on 29th April at the Grand Hotel Bamako



Naomie Dembélé, with a container of the high quality shea butter she makes.

Another contact made at SIAGRI was with a young Malian engineer who designs and manufactures equipment for small scale food processing. After SIAGRI he visited some of the entrepreneurs in Tominian to learn more about what technology they need in order to scale up their production. In July, he and a number of other business service providers including micro-credit institutions, will meet with representatives of all the village tree entrepreneur groups at an event organised by Sahel Eco in Tominian.

The Sahel Regreening Initiative was formally launched during SIAGRI by the Minister of the Environment, and the Sahel Eco team and entrepreneurs took time off from the stall to attend the event. In their 'business plans', Village Tree entrepreneurs commit to protecting and improving the resources on which their livelihoods depend, both by planting trees and by protecting naturally regeneration. At the launch ceremony the Village Tree entrepreneurs were acknowledged as 'regreening champions' alongside the farmers from Bankass and Tominian who spoke to the invited guests about their work to protect trees and promote reforestation. All were kitted out in the 'Sahel Regreening' fabric specially designed and printed in Mali, for the occasion.

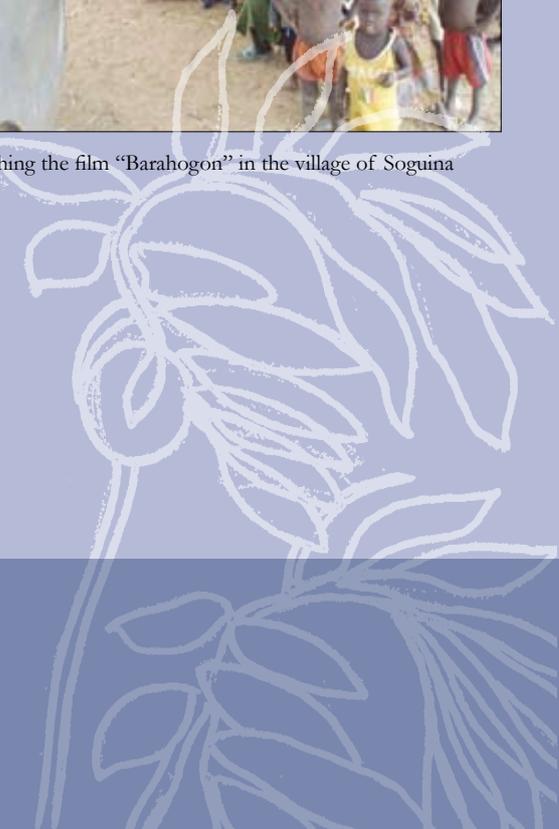
The Barahogon Association on Tour.

Two years ago Sahel Eco made a short, 15 minute film showing how the members of the Barahogon association had successfully restored tree cover on their fields using simple, low cost techniques to protect and manage naturally regenerating tree seedlings. Since then the film has been seen by thousands of people in other districts of Mali, on national television and via the web but ironically, by very few people in the villages closest to where it was made, in the Bankass district

So in May 2010, the Barahogon association took their film on tour, with support from MDG -Tree Parties, visiting 21 villages in the district and showing the film to an estimated audience of 7,500 people including over 4,000 women.



Watching the film "Barahogon" in the village of Soguina



M_{eals for Mali}

invite your friends round and raise money- use Malian recipes on our website

A_{nnounce your firm on our web site}

Sponsorships available

L_{ike Quizzes?}

Why not run a quiz we can help with the questions and the organisation

I_{nnovator?}

We are always interested in new ideas for fundraising- just get in touch

D_{onate}

This can be money, or your time, or your expertise- we can make use of all those things

E_{vents}

Of all kinds are helpful- we have been supported through concerts, plays and even a sponsored silence!

V_{ouchers}

Give our Gift Vouchers for a present which really makes a difference- new vouchers ready

E_{xercise is good for you}

Join one of our walks or run one yourself and raise money with your friends

L_{ove film?}

Organise a screening of our film to raise money and find new supporters

O_{nline giving}

Take a look at our web site to make a donation easily

P_{uddings for Christmas}

Reserve your renowned Linda King pudding now! Buy some Christmas cards as well!

M_{usic support}

Be a Truck steward next year

E_{very penny counts}

Use our small change bottles and push the total up bit by bit!

N_{ew members}

Ask your friends or colleagues- pushing our membership up really helps

T_{ree Parties}

One of those brilliant innovative ideas which Linda Francis has put into action this year

G_{ift Aid}

Do we have your signature so that we can claim the whole value of your donation?

R_{egular donations}

We love Standing Orders because they give us reliable regular income- use the firm on our web site

O_{n line a lot?}

Use everyclick as your search engine and earn MDG money every time. Or use www.easy-search.co.uk as a search engine on which you can register MDG as the charity to receive a donation for clicks - then via them go into easyfunding to buy lots of your internet purchases from places like Amazon, M&S, John Lewis and lots of others who then donate to MDG

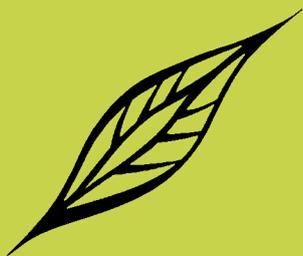
U_{se your skills}

All MDG's work is done by volunteers - from accountancy to web building we can use the skills you have

P_{osh Junk}

Saleable goods and books always welcome for our market stall at Coggeshall

A _{to Z} of fundraising



**Mali
Development Group**

Charity Registration Number 1088140

MDG Committee members 20010/11

Chair - Linda King

Secretary - John Hedge

Treasurer - David Hedge

Andy Benson

Ray Fishbourne

Janice Hedge

Andrea Hewes

Ken King

Rob Spivey

Co-opted member Tim Hewes

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