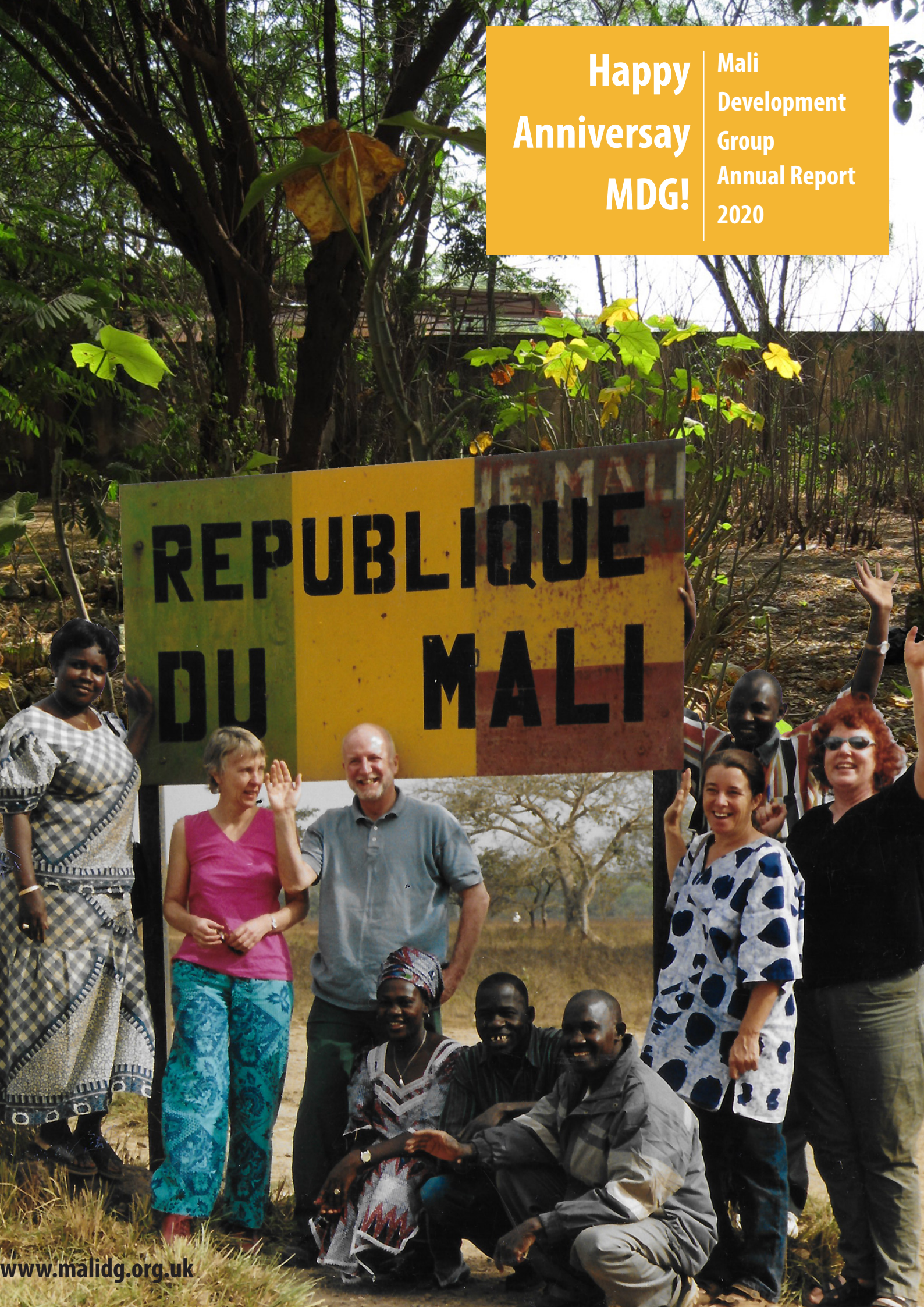


Happy Anniversary MDG!

Mali
Development
Group
Annual Report
2020



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

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 Maliz2 to 70070, for example, Maliz2 £5.

Linda King (Chair)
Judith Hartley (Secretary)
David Hedge (Treasurer)

Other committee members:

John Hedge,
Janice Hedge,
Luke Hedge,
Sue Upton (co-opted)
Wilfred Willey

A message from John Hedge

MDG at 21

When, in 2000, we first started to plan the setting up of MDG I don't think any of us knew exactly where the journey would take us. Inspired by Sue Upton's work with J&D, and her friendship with Kader Keita we wanted to have a more hands on involvement with development than just contributing to big charities and leaving it all to the professionals.

Since our first very small projects and early efforts at fund raising we have all learned a great deal not only about Mali and its wonderful people, but about the hard realities of development work and what it takes to make things happen. We made mistakes of course but learnt from them too, and we discovered, among other things, that email and the internet made it possible for very small organisations to have close working relationships with partners in Mali and quite often the direct recipients of our funding. So a country whose very location was a mystery for many of us at the beginning gradually became a place we all loved and cared about, even if not everyone was able to visit.

We have relied on partnership and friendship to get things done and the length of our working relationships with J&D, PAD, and earlier on Sahel Eco have all been long lasting, as has our friendship with the Malian community in Britain. Sue has continued to help with our liaison work and she remains crucial to our being able always to be clear with members and funders about the strengths and weaknesses of work on the ground and the progress of projects. There have been ups and downs - hardly surprising over 21 years - and we have needed to have some straight talking on both sides now and then, but that, after all, is what strong partnerships have to be able to do.

We have a long record of projects achieved. Many of the J&D ones have been to do with helping rural women to

develop their income making capacity. Others have been about health, and the promotion of sustainable services - notably the Mutuelle, support for which was the subject of a major Comic Relief grant. That project faced many problems and both J&D and MDG learned a great deal from the experience. The Mutuelle, though, managed by a group of brave and resilient women has survived in the most testing of circumstances and, as ever, we salute their courage and commitment. With PAD, founded by Kader Keita we are still the main funders of a small but wonderful project supporting some of Mali's most vulnerable children. Kader shows that art and creativity can be the healthy heart at the centre of true rehabilitation.

Being involved with MDG means that you can never again feel neutral about Mali and its fate. The problems of political upheaval, terrorism and epidemic can all make you feel helpless - until you hear from Madou, Tanty or Kader that they are still working and managing to cope. Then you know that you too have to go on. It can make you angry, though - particularly about Government policies which have made it almost impossible in recent years for Malian colleagues and friends to see us here, in England. The way that they have been treated, when they have tried to obtain a visa is insulting and offensive in the extreme, and so far as British Development policy is concerned, need now takes second place to British trade interest, though we have done our best over the years to challenge this cynical and self-satisfied approach.

These are tough times here, and tougher still in Mali, but we hold by our core principles that a small group, with very low overheads operating exclusively on the skills of its members can make a real difference. Over the years that has amounted not only to £1.25 million in direct funding but much more than that in terms of help in kind and moral support. Many of those most closely involved at the beginning

are still in place and have made wonderful contributions but we do need fresh legs and energy. If you or someone you know, would like to join us as the journey continues do please let us know. You will be assured of a very warm welcome. As I think we have shown prior experience is not necessary, and in the modern world most skills are easily transferable.

Above all, to each and everyone of you, a profound thank you for all that you have done and for your great loyalty and generosity. It is that which has made it all possible.

Looking back over the MDG/J&D partnership

An overview of activities 2001 - 2020

Initiative	Place	Period
Provision of multi-functional grain grinding mills	Lemouroutoumou (Manankoro)	2002
	Woma (Manankoro)	2003
	Farabalé (Manankoro)	2006
	Kourou (Yanfolila)	2008
	Kambali (Kangaba)	2013
	Kolondièba Ville (Kolondièba)	2017
	Yanfolila (for the Mutuelle)	2018
Infrastructure and equipment		
Construction of a dam	Mafélé (Manankoro)	2006
Construction of a mini-barrage	Soromba (Manankoro)	2008
Donation of 4 x 4 vehicle	J&D office, Bamako	2006
Contribution to J&D office building	Bamako	2016
Strip donated to Yanfolila town football team	Yanfolila	2015
Education support		
Construction of two class rooms, a management block and 3 latrines	N'Téntou, Bougouni	2004
Support for Karamoko Sangare Primary School (Installation of electricity, ventilation and water tower; Purchase of television and video recorder; Gardening equipment; cultural and twinning activities with UK school pupils & teachers) and other school twinning.	Bolibana, Bamako	2001-2013
Health support		
Youth Reproductive Health awareness raising programme for peer educators	Commune IV, Bamako	2005-2011
Provision of drugs and an ambulance to Bougouni Health Centre	Bougouni	2004
Provision of equipment, materials, medicines for the dispensary	Wogona (Manankoro)	2007-2008
Provision of a motorbike ambulance to transport urgent cases to community health centres	N'tian (Yanfolila)	2009
Support for women with fistula income generating activities	Dar es Salaam, Bamako	2009
Construction of blocks for community maternity and child health clinics	Kolondièba town	2010
Support for Mutual Health Insurance	Yanfolila	2014-2019
Support for development of market gardens by women's groups	Lemouroutoumou (Manankoro)	2003-2004
	Manankoro town	2004
	Mafélé (Manankoro)	2006
	Tomboni (Yanfolila)	2017-2019
	Bounounko (Yanfolila)	2017-2019
	Solona (Yanfolila)	2017-2019
	Niakarako	2017-2019
Training for women		
Shea nut processing into shea butter	Doussoudiana (Bougouni)	2016
Processing of mango and cashew nuts	Yorobougoula, (Yanfolila)	2017-2019
Shea nut processing into shea butter	Djèguénina,	2017-2019
Peanut butter processing	Kolondièba ville	2017-2019
J&D staff and training		
Salary and operational costs for MDG liaison worker		2002-2020
English language development for J&D director	Oxford, England	2002
Contribution to Mr Gadio Moussa's qualifying study expenses	USA	2008



Donation of a 4 x 4



Mamadou Kone, Tanty and Andy Benson



Grain grinding mill



Market gardens



Shea nut processing into shea nut butter



Yanfolila football team



Construction of a dam, Mafélé



Reproductive Health



Provision of an ambulance to Bougouni Health Centre





A message from Sue Upton

Kader and PAD (Pensons à Demain)



...how it all began...

I first met Kader in the street not long after I arrived in Mali in 1996, when he was studying at the National School of Art, and he introduced me to the art of creating bogolan (traditional mud cloth) and to his family and friends. When he completed his studies, he started working with groups of children running workshops and encouraging their creative talents. Around 2001 MDG funded a pilot course teaching several boys who were living on the streets in Bamako how to create bogolan cloth. Kader and a colleague taught the course at J&D's premises in Lafiabougou (Bamako). One of the boys eventually went back to school, and returned to his family and others went on to make some money selling the bogolan that they made. For Kader this was a step on the way towards his vision of a centre offering skills, education and support to children living and working on the streets. He went on talking to children, working with other artists in various locations, including on a table in the street outside his lodgings. In 2004 he and associates created PAD, an Association to support children on the streets of Bamako through music, storytelling, arts and craft. They saw that participating in artistic activities enabled children to express themselves and their emotions and helped them to come to terms with their life experiences. As an Association, PAD was able to raise funds and create partnerships with other organisations, and MDG became their main funder, supporting basic salaries and operational costs. Activities continued from Kader's home and he made links with other organisations supporting children in Bamako, with government ministries and with the local authorities in Commune IV, where he lives. He established four regular courses every year, each for 15-20 children and added basic literacy and numeracy to the arts activities. Children were presented with graduation certificates at a ceremony attended by national and local dignitaries – the first time most of them had ever achieved any such recognition of

achievement. The PAD team got to know each child and their story and made many visits to their families both in and outside Bamako, often negotiating a return home and reintegration into family life.

In 2005 Kader visited the UK and carried out bogolan workshops in a prison and a young offenders' institution, as well as running workshops for adults and children in the Devon and Oxford areas.

In 2011 PAD rented a house in Lafiabougou and the TMSUEJOHN centre was born. This enabled PAD to offer residential courses and broaden its activities and is the base from which it continues to operate today. MDG supported one of the team to study and qualify as a social worker and Kader continued to broaden his funding base. There are two groups in France that support PAD, as well as Mali-based government and non-government bodies. ABama, one of the French groups, helped to expand activities to include more girls and young women, focussing on sewing training for young mothers so that they have a means to support themselves and their babies. Kader's dream for the future is for the centre to own a property so that rental costs are a thing of the past and investments can be seen as permanent improvements. This whistle stop tour serves as a reminder of PAD's origins and the organic way it has developed with support from MDG and others. It has consistently worked with the some of the most marginalised children in Bamako and responded to immediate needs in changing times and circumstances. Past students often visit, and even make small donations to encourage the work, being very clear that it played a formative part in their lives. Many have said that it was with PAD that they were first encouraged to tell their stories and value themselves and their lives.



A message from Judith Hartley

In last year's Annual Report, I wrote about my trip, with two colleagues from MDG, Andy Benson and Michelle Chadwick, to Yanfolila in Mali. The purpose of the trip was to assess how the Mutuelle, the health insurance scheme being run by villagers, was going. For the period January to June 2019 the Mutuelle was still being supported by an extension to the Comic Relief grant that we had received over the previous 3 years.

Those additional 6 months enabled the Mutuelle to improve its financial stability and to build a small office with meeting room, helping to improve their visibility in the community, and enhance villagers' confidence in the scheme. There were some delays in getting the building ready for the keys to be handed over to the Mutuelle, but we were really pleased when we received photos of the building and the official handover. In June 2019 we made our final report to Comic Relief and the funding came to an end.

We kept in touch with the volunteers who were helping the Mutuelle; Tiori Diarra, Djibril Sidibe and Tembely Modibo, and the President of the Mutuelle, Mariam Diallo, but there was little more we could do to support them. If the Mutuelle was going to survive, the Committee members of the Mutuelle had to find a way of making it work themselves.

We were aware that several serious challenges remained as the main obstacles to a stable and sustainable Mutuelle – the need for support from the local council, and most significantly the problem of 'overprescribing'. This related to in-built incentives for health centres to charge as much as they could to patients, in order to ensure their own financial survival, resulting in higher costs than the Mutuelle could really support.

In December 2019 MDG received a request for financial support (about £500) direct from the Mutuelle, saying that they could

not meet the bills of one of the health centres, and if these were not paid, the Mutuelle would in effect 'go bust'. We asked our partner in Mali, Jeunesse et Développement (J&D) what they thought. They were concerned that if MDG bailed out the Mutuelle this time, it would send the wrong message to both the council and the health centres and would not solve the problem in the long run. In the end J&D agreed to meet the cost and the Mutuelle survived into another year.

We received news that the Mutuelle Committee held a meeting on 5 May 2020 and there are encouraging signs. The number of beneficiaries was 1,940 and there had been a small surplus of funds in the first 4 months of the year. There are also some changes happening: the Ministry of Health had told them to reduce their members' subscription fees by half, saying that the Government would make up the difference. I hope the Government stick to their word. And there are plans to roll all health insurance schemes into one, to cover the whole Circle (area) of Yanfolila. In addition, the Mutuelle has revised its agreement with the health centres to introduce a cap of 10,000 FCFA per prescription, to reduce the risk of 'over-prescribing' and limit costs.

To end on a personal note, I was very pleased to hear that the Mutuelle have decided to name the meeting room in their new building 'Andy Benson Hall' and to display photos of Andy, Michelle and myself in recognition of our efforts to support the Mutuelle. It is an example of the close relationships that MDG builds with our partners in Mali and one of the unique aspects of our approach to funding.





A message from Wilfred Willey

Friend and committee member remembers MDG's early beginnings with Malians in the UK

A bit of history:

I first came across MDG through Andy Benson and John Hedge whom I met in 2003 at a cultural fair in Brockwell Park, South London. At that time I was on the committee of the first Malian community organisation in the UK called MAWA (Mali Welfare Association). We had a stand where we exhibited Malian artifacts to promote the country. The relationship built on from there and our collaboration carried on when I became the head of the Malian Community Council (MCC-UK) in 2006. In fact, I can say without a doubt that it grew from strength to strength, as we were galvanised by a common goal: helping Malians here in the UK and there in Mali. The highlights of this collaboration would probably be:

- The letter we co-wrote and addressed to the Malian Embassy in Brussels to convey the plight of Malians living in the UK and that of UK citizens traveling to Mali, and ask them to consider opening a representation in London. This would have made obtaining a visa for tourists and national documents for Malians much easier.
- The conference we organised in November 2008 to show the economic and cultural potentials of Mali to investors in the UK. This has been to date the most successful event of this nature organised by an NGO and a community association for Mali in the UK. The event was attended by the Mali ambassador in Belgium, Dr Ibrim Bocar Bah, the then minister for Culture and Tourism N'Diaye Bah, several NGOs, journalists and the Malian musician Bassékou Kouyaté.
- The "Mali at a Crossroads" conference in 2012 at SOAS to talk about the socio-political crisis that had started in Mali following a coup by the military.

The present:

After working with MDG on these events, I was asked to be the speaker a couple of times at the AGM. And how could I decline the opportunity to become a member of the Committee when I was offered the opportunity? This allowed me not only to take part in the discussions and decision making process but to familiarise myself more with the work that is being done on the ground in Mali by the partners Jeunesse & Développement (J&D) and "Pensions à Demain" (PAD). I also got to know some of the members better.

What is in store for the future?

The work that MDG are doing in rural Mali and Bamako is great. The collaboration with the local partners is direct, sincere and effective. The impact is visible on the ground. The MDG committee, the members, sponsors and donors should all be proud of the many achievements in helping villagers with schools, market gardening, healthcare through the Mutuelle, and street children in Bamako. That said, I'd like MDG to use this platform to expand further afield and reach out to more local organisations in more areas. Mali is going through a tough time at the moment, where most of its central and northern regions are not easily accessible, making life really hard for the rural populations. Maybe this is an area that MDG can explore and consider working with local organisations that operate in those regions.

21 years! This is the age of maturity and needs to be celebrated as such. I wish MDG many more years of success in helping those in need in Mali.

On behalf of the Malian Community in the UK and the people in Mali: Happy Anniversary and thank you very much.

A message from Sue Raikes



Adrian Moyes

When I met Adrian in 1980 he had already been everywhere, Africa, Asia, South America, the Middle East. He said he'd had the best job in Oxfam visiting all the countries where Oxfam worked and trying to identify what we would now call "best practice" so Oxfam could share and build on those ideas. So when I first introduced Adrian to the Mali Development Group in its early days, I didn't really expect him to embrace it so wholeheartedly!

But MDG had all the hallmarks – working very close to the ground with local people, making personal connections, listening and spending the money where it's needed... not on offices and conferences in the UK.

When we visited Mali in 2006, Adrian – like everyone else, was captivated by the colour, the music, the friendly welcome and the amazing people. But he also understood the huge challenges of institutional poverty, domination by the west and unfair trade - all the issues he campaigned about throughout his international career.

He also had great respect for the local MDG - people who made things, sold things, washed up, and acted as stewards and chefs, in the knowledge that every penny would be spent in Mali.

He named MDG in his will because he knew however small, the money would be spent where it was really needed.

Thank You MDG
Sue Raikes





A message from Linda King

Fund Raising

Over the years many, many people have been involved in making money for the charity. They have been creative, inventive, energetic, enthusiastic and very successful. Our thanks to every one for their contributions.

I often remark that our volunteer fund-raisers will do almost anything for money. When I've looked back for this annual report at the things we have done, it's been true! So here is a list of things that we've done, with apologies if anything is missing.

Some people have done sponsored events for us. This has included 3 runners in the London Marathon, 12 cyclists in Ride London 100, 1 open water swim and 1 parachute jump.

A huge number of people have made things for us which we have been able to sell in a variety of venues. The items have included cards, photographs, paintings, pots, mincemeat, aprons, knitted toys, peg bags, table cloths, tote bags, cakes, cushion covers, Christmas puddings, chutney, candles and gift vouchers

Other people with musical talents have performed for us namely Musical Banquet and Redhouse Radio, both of them on more than one occasion

We have arranged a variety of events to raise money – quizzes, race night, a meal with entertainment (including a tango demonstration!), book sales, Christmas markets, a bat walk, cycle and walking tours, boot sales, a quilting workshop, a 50:50 club, raffles, a street collection, bridge afternoons and the annual cricket match against the Bank of Montreal which has for several years followed our AGM

Then we have been involved in events organised by others but for which we have been paid for our support or our cooking. We were stewards at a music festival for several years and car park attendants for a steam rally. Three times a year for a few years we dismantled staging at 10 pm on a Saturday night. We have taken over the tea rooms at a local abbey and provided food for weddings, funerals, christenings, 50th wedding anniversaries, leaving parties, away days, Burns Night, teas for open gardens, bacon rolls and hot drinks at a sale room and Christmas lunches. We have also been washer uppers, waitresses and dogs' bodies for events catered by others. For several years we had a campaign asking supporters to donate to us any of their winter fuel allowance that they could spare. We also printed out labels so that people could collect their 1p and 5p coins to donate to us and have encouraged people to use Easyfunding when they made purchases via the internet.

So it's definitely true. We have been prepared to do almost anything for money! And most of the time we have enjoyed ourselves doing it. We certainly have some good tales to tell.

Thank you to all the wonderful people who have responded to our fundraising efforts and who have bought, donated and eaten in response.

Over the years of MDG we have raised around £112,000 by all these efforts. It's pretty remarkable for a group of volunteers. Thank you all

Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2020

David Hedge - Treasurer

As a volunteer based charity, MDG has received over £1.2 million since inception in 2001. This includes grant monies from CR in support of the project that was developed by J & D in southern Mali.

The charity remained in regulatory compliance and we have now concluded our involvement with the Comic Relief (CR) sponsored Community Health Insurance Scheme. An Independent Examiner provided a satisfactory financial overview.

Income:

Gross income for fiscal 2019/20 was £41,248 and this was lower than in the prior year due to a large reduction in Comic Relief grant funding that concluded the Mutuelle related project in 2018/19. Excluding project funding, unrestricted receipts for MDG were virtually unchanged in 2019/20 and, as before, this mainly emanated from donations and subscriptions, plus monies collected from fundraising activities.

Comic Relief and Yanfolila Community Health Insurance Scheme:

Overall, approved CR funding for the project amounted to £365,943, with MDG acting in a liaison role between CR and J&D. Our Project Accountant was responsible for monitoring and controlling the budgetary process and project reconciliation. Satisfactory project reports were provided to Comic Relief and they provided a final £8,185 in 2019.

As noted in the last Annual Report, an external report covering the 3-year project was prepared in late 2018. This Evaluation Report was prepared by Dr. Harry Jeene and submitted to CR in October 2018. The charity plus J & D also were provided with copies.

As previously mentioned, this Report identified certain problems that led the Mutuelle to experience problems so a "rescue plan" was put into place in 1H 2019 to assist the project in an orderly way. CR

assisted and all funding has been transferred for use by the project.

Unrestricted Donations:

These derived from diverse sources, including:

Just Trust £3,500
States of Guernsey £3,593
Florence Martin legacy £500
Birchwood Hall Community £1,140
Sudbury Rotary Club £430
plus contributions of Member standing orders.

The charity also received a Gift Aid refund from HMRC during the fiscal year in the amount of £2,432.23 and another claim will be processed at the financial year-end.

We thank all individual, organisational and trust donors for their help in providing a strong continued commitment. This provides assistance in underpinning our work and giving a strong foundation for our own fundraising activities.

Fund raising produced another strong contribution that was much in line with previous financial years. This reflected diverse activities that continue to be very efficiently coordinated and managed by Linda King including donations relating to the London Marathon. The latter was arranged and proceeds shared with another charity. Funding also came from the Burns Night Supper (£915), the CRUX raffle (£1,501) plus sponsorship by The Bank of Montreal (£635) of our annual cricket match.

Expenditure:

Annual outgoings amounted to approximately £40,851 and this mainly comprised quarterly Malian transfers to meet agreed funding needs plus concluding Project transfers of £8,000 to J&D for use in the Mutuelle project.

Other CR related project expenses mainly comprised final project accountancy costs

of £1,500 that were designed to both obtain information and for monitor and control purposes.

MDG's general overheads continued to be modest in line with given the voluntary nature of the charity and regular non-project quarterly transfers to J&D and PAD are made in conformity with agreed requirements. MDG receives regular progress reports from our partners in Mali and funding priorities can be adjusted based upon both feedback and new information.

The Current Financial Year (2020/21)

Income:

The income raised during the initial five months of the current fiscal year have been greatly affected by Covid-19. MDG recorded total income of £11,756. During this period, the largest individual item was £4,922.75 that was received from the Network for Social Grant Charitable Trust (NSCC) to assist the funding of PAD. Additionally, £750 was received from Birchwood Hall Community plus special donations and increased standing order receipts.

Gift Aid tax: claim is being prepared and this is expected to provide a refund comparable to that previously received.

Core outgoings:

These continued to be primarily for regular PAD quarterly transfers (£5,644) and J&D remittances (£21,735) in line with planned requirements including Second Step projects. We continue to work closely with partners, and recognise that our on-going support is important in achieving their agreed priorities.

Total bank balances:

Current and Savings account balances, as at 31 August 2020, amounted to £11,700. These accounts are maintained at Lloyds Bank and Virgin Savings.



Photograph by Adrian Moyes