



Mali
Development
Group
Annual Report
2022

Learning Together

www.malidg.org.uk



Mali Development Group
Charity number: 1088140

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

Other committee members:

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

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:

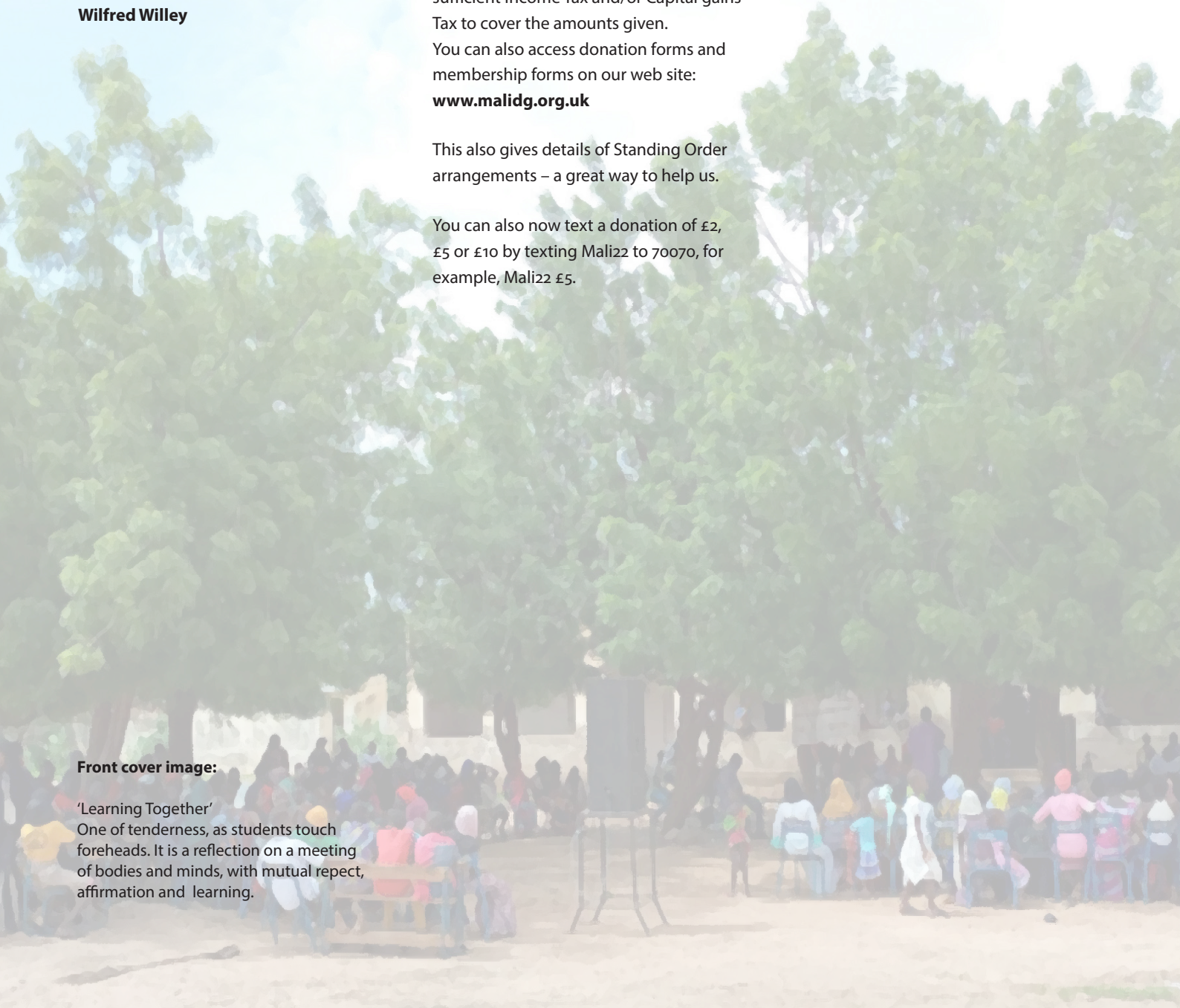
www.malidg.org.uk

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.

Front cover image:

‘Learning Together’
One of tenderness, as students touch foreheads. It is a reflection on a meeting of bodies and minds, with mutual respect, affirmation and learning.



A message from John Hedge

Welcome to the Mali Development Group Annual Report

On behalf of the committee a warm welcome to our annual report for 2022 entitled Learning Together. It has been another challenging year both for our fundraising activities and for our partners in Mali. As you will see, though, we have managed to maintain our planned support both to Jeunesse et Développement (J&D) and Pensons à Demain (PAD). The committee has continued to meet regularly online throughout the year, supported by our secretary Judith Hartley.

Contact with both our partners has been maintained through regular reports and phone calls, and Sue Upton has had the lead responsibility in this. Our overall 'intelligence' about Mali has also been supported greatly by committee member Wilfred Willey who visited his family in Mali for an extended trip during the year.

J&D are still recovering from the severe funding crisis reported in last year's report, and this has meant extra burdens for our link worker Tanty Samake. Her regular reports have been key to keeping us informed and the update on J&D in this report draws heavily on her recent review. We are still in discussion about our next work plan with J&D, but it will probably have an emphasis on support for community work with young people in Commune 4 of Bamako, based around the new youth centre at the J&D building.

PAD's work has been going well and the need for its services is stronger than ever. You can read in this report about recent activities, and the new work, funded by the Angus Lawson Memorial Trust, to provide follow up support to young people once they leave the

project. That is being accompanied by a new assessment and monitoring system, which will, we hope, enable PAD to have clearer data about the type of problems they are dealing with and the longer run impact of their programme.

One of our longer-term funders The Patsy Wood Trust has recently completed its work, as originally planned, after more than a decade of wonderful support to us and a host of other organisations. You can read later in the report about Patsy and the difference which the Trust set up in her name has made to us.

One of those contributions was on a one-off basis to an organisation called Aflatoun, which provides training to young people in Mali. One of its key supporters, Violet Diallo, a friend of MDG's from the beginning, has written about it for this report. As mentioned the theme of Learning Together this year is reflected in the Aflatoun ethos which we are keen to promote.

Our own fundraising owes a huge amount to Linda King and her team of caterers, collectively known as 'The babs'. As normal life began to resume with the end of lockdown restrictions bookings for their services began to increase, and you can read about their work here. One of the great things about the group is that as well as earning money and giving a much-valued service they also tell people about Mali and what the money is for - spreading the information about what we are and why we do it is, after all, important as ever.

Finally, you will be able to read our financial report, prepared as ever by our Treasurer David Hedge. He has been in this post since day 1 making a huge contribution to MDG's work, and despite all the ups and downs always with a sense

of humour and a smile on his face - apart from his occasional battles with the bank about foreign transfers of course! It always gets there in the end.

If you are a member, you will have received our newsletters over the year, all prepared by our communications lead, Janice Hedge. As well as being one of the Babs, Janice has been doing a great job in keeping you as well informed as we can about the things that go well, but importantly also the things that don't. The whole idea of MDG from the beginning was to give members a closer and more direct relationship with development work than is usually possible and we continue to see that as an important priority.

This report, as ever, has been designed by Andrea Hewes, another 'long term'er! Her flair and imagination have always been important, and she exemplifies another MDG principle - that we use the talents of our members whenever possible.

Times continue to be tough for Mali. We need to be aware that amidst other crises the threat from climate change is potentially more drastic in terms of temperature, rainfall and sustainable agriculture than almost anywhere else in the world. We all need to do our best to mitigate climate change in our own lives, but we have a duty to make everyone aware of the implications of slow response from developed countries for those parts of the world, including Mali, where people have done nothing significant to cause the crisis but face the worst of its consequences.

Thank you for all your support over the last year. We hope you will continue to help us and if you are not a member that you will want to join us.

John Hedge



Meeting of participants in Kayes



Two young students concentrating on their studies during international money week

Violet Diallo, originally from England, married a Malian and has been living in Mali for 32 years. For many years Violet, whose career has included Social Work, International Administration and Evaluation, Research and a specific interest in rights of children, has been involved with MDG from the start, about 22 years.

Violet's wealth of experience and knowledge about Mali and has been a source of advice to us over the years. She has been an important figure in the setting up and rolling out of the Aflatoun programme

and we are delighted to have been able to fund some areas of the project over the last year.

Below, Violet sets out the aims of the project and how it has progressed into a valid and noteworthy scheme which we hope will continue to grow and develop, giving young people the very important life skills they need to survive and progress in our modern world.

Aflatoun Progress in Mali 2021 to 2022

AFLATOUN with children aged 6 to 14 :
in Kayes and Bamako

AFLATEEN for teenagers between 14
and 20 : in Kayes, Bamako and surrounding areas 2020 to 2022

Both groups follow facilitated learning with active discussion and activities based on the following elements:

1. Personal Exploration
2. Rights and Responsibilities
3. Saving and Spending
4. Planning and Budgeting
5. Social and Financial Enterprise

2021 took off with a very good start for Aflatoun in Mali. Thanks to a gift from the Patsy Wood Trust, a partner of MDG, we were able to print 1 000 copies of the Aflateen Programme Facilitator's Manual. This is the essential tool for teachers transmitting active methods of pedagogy materials for life skills and financial education, including an all-inclusive gender point of view. This basic document was examined by a team of experts from the Ministry of Education and other Government departments, including Vocational Training and the Ministry for Women and the Family. The Aflateen programme was validated by this committee at the end of 2020. Since 2020 it has trained 90 teacher facilitators and over 3 000 student beneficiaries with a staff of 3 and part time accounting support.

Programme trainers held our first facilitators' training sessions in Bamako and Kayes in North-Western Mali. Photographs show how volunteer teachers enter enthusiastically into activities to repeat with their own student classes.

Matters covered by the programme

- Reflecting on myself and my world, my contribution to the world, peer

pressure, self-confidence, maintaining respectful relationships within the family and community, my rights and responsibilities, inequalities, violence.

- My body - my choices, physical and emotional changes, risky behaviours, HIV/Aids, choices for marriage.
- My money - future plans, understanding finance, having money and resources.
- My business - entrepreneurship and employability.
- Reflection on future steps from action plans and choice of objectives.

Experience of the Aflateen Programme in Mali

Our earliest experiences (2006 onwards) were with primary school children in rural and urban settings. So far we have worked in Kayes and Bamako with middle and high school groups. Perhaps because there are few other organised activities, country school groups are particularly enthusiastic. An area in Kayes with about 60 small schools began a savings scheme with a local micro-finance organisation. Within 2 years they had a collective balance of over £500 all contributed in very small sums of change and handled by chosen students with volunteer teachers, making weekly deposits in the schools' account.

The primary school experience had a number of devoted teachers who held meetings with GAP support, followed annual teacher training and were the first members of the Malian Association of Aflatoun Educators recognised in 2013. Mali's political insecurity - including teachers' union strikes - made it impossible to continue the programme beyond 2018. Teachers tell us they still have children coming to their homes to ask when Aflatoun will start again. Contacts have remained intact between GAP and AMEA association.



Primary children holding their Aflatoun passbooks

It was in 2020 that discussions began between Aflatoun International - the Amsterdam base of the programme for over 100 member countries, and Dubai Cares which supports a number of educational and humanitarian projects. As a result GAP and its partner CAMIDE in Kayes are implementing Aflateen for teenagers in Mali as well as in other African countries. Aflateen has had success largely because of inclusion of its Bamako programme manager in a Malian inter-Ministry committee promoting inclusive banking thus offering a possible entry to involving Aflatoun in the national schools curriculum. It is well known in schools because of a large meeting of students at a competition called Which Change to select the most important changes Aflateen lessons have brought about in their personal handling of finances and future plans. A list of Aflateen students' selection is added below.

How Aflatoun proposes to compliment the programme for adolescents.

During work with Aflateen it became clear that children who began an Aflatoun

programme in primary school classes have been influenced by the material and active teaching approach. They are quicker to assimilate more advanced areas of finance and influence their older classmates to follow their lead, part of "child-to-child education". After consulting fellow Aflatoun promoters we are actively planning an appeal to MDG for support to redeploy primary school level Aflatoun. A first step will be to seek official validation of all Aflatoun manuals for primary classes 1 - 7.

We hope our account of activities 2020 to 2022 will encourage our supporters to continue their contribution to this realistic programme to give Malian youth better employability chances and countering potentially suicidal illicit migration.

Students' own views about how Aflatoun has impacted on their personal attitudes to material and financial planning.

Concerning life skills:

- Improved self confidence noted by several incidents of proof of reduced introspection but greater communica-

News from PAD

tion between youths and a new taste for team work and tendency to listen to others' opinions

- Lessons on family conflict or in school all leading to analysis of conflicts and the fact that everybody has rights.
- Learning to take care of one's body and state of mind.

Concerning financial education:

- Recall the rules for savings including recycling and repair of material to become clever savers.
- Limit and control your expenses.
- Learn how to draw up a Business Plan and to follow its contents.
- Self finance your own small projects.
- The importance of money for local development and social well-being.
- One day - create your own business recruiting young people and reduce their unemployment.

To sum up - "Everyone needs education like Aflateen, whether they are young or old!" Quote from a young Aflatoun student from Bamako.



Kader with youngsters on the street in Bamako – Children begging traditionally use these tomato paste tins to collect food or money

Work continues as normal at PAD. Kader and his staff are standardising their data collection and recording in order to gain a wider picture of the ongoing and changing issues confronting the youngsters they work with, and the impact of PAD's activities. MDG is supporting this and we have started analysing some of the completed records. This extra work is being funded by the Angus Lawson Memorial Trust. It is the first time that they have funded a project in Mali and we are grateful for their support and excited to be working with them. Initial analysis has been discussed with Kader and some changes introduced for the current intake of children. At the end of the year, we hope to be able to share an analysis of the nature of the problems facing the children coming to PAD, and continued tracking over time will help to assess how effective their rehabilitation has been once they have left and returned to their own communities.

Kader recently told me about a worrying situation with a young woman who joined the sewing course from her home in Manankoro in the South of Mali. Her parents were keen to arrange a marriage for her, but an advocate helped her negotiate their consent for her to complete the training with PAD, and then marry a man of her choice. However, 5 months into learning with PAD, she disappeared and no trace of her can be found. There is little

Scene of training of AFLATEEN teacher – facilitators



PAD can do in this situation other than report her disappearance to the police and follow up with them regularly.

On a happier note, the last time I spoke to Kader he had just returned from a trip to Segou when he took two boys who had been lodging at PAD back to their families for a hopefully successful re-integration at home. He will follow up with them and be available to help resolve any issues that arise.

Current PAD activities include ongoing literacy learning, making bogolan cloth, and the sewing course for young mums. Twice a week there is a session about hygiene, reproductive health and how to get on well with other people. Kader also said they started some work with two schools in July and on July 22nd there was an exhibition of the children's work sponsored by the US Embassy as a prelude to the Embassy offering some financial support for PAD. The longstanding partnership between PAD and the Dutch NGO Samu Social is working well – Samu Social refer young people that they encounter on their night runs round Bamako and cover the costs of medical care when needed.

Kader hopes that the theatre troupe funded by MDG will be able to start operating soon. They are all around and hoping to perform the skits and plays they have developed to support young people learning about how to stay safe, but COVID and consequent bans on gathering people in groups has made it difficult to get going as they planned. Kader will keep us updated.

Kader explained that the cost-of-living crisis is affecting Bamako and everything is more expensive by the day.



Youngsters on the street in Bamako



Sewing teaching in progress with young mothers at PAD



A message from Linda King

Remembering Patsy Wood

Fundraising

The band of us raising money by making cakes and related cooking has been in full swing in recent months.

We provided food for two birthday parties, both of which had been postponed since 2020 due to covid restrictions. They were a 102nd birthday lunch and a 120th birthday evening do, the result of 2 people celebrating being 60! The photos are of some of the food for the latter when we were catering for 85 people some distance from our usual base.

A new recruit to our number has started to provide supper for a local Film Club which meets monthly. This makes it a relaxing and enjoyable evening for the film goers as well as making money for MDG. Other events this year have included helping at 2 local weddings, selling cakes at a coffee morning, bacon rolls at a monthly auction, Christmas lunches and a bridge tea.

A local garden which is open by appointment under the National Gardens Scheme uses us to provide the teas. So it gives us a good chance to raise money, have a good chat, enjoy the views and sample the product to ensure it's up to scratch!



Taking a well earned rest at a wedding reception on one of the hottest days of the year



Our friendship with the Patsy Wood Trust over the years has led to our receiving a very large amount of funding, sometimes directly, and sometimes through associated grant makers. During the past year we received £5,000 as a final payment because the Trust was completing its work. It had been established in 2008 to commemorate Patsy's life and achievements and it had always been planned to commit the available resources by this point.

Now seems a very good moment to remember Patsy Wood. An Oxford graduate in agriculture, she went on to become an innovative and inspiring ecological campaigner, winning many conservation awards. Her premature death in 2007 robbed our country and the wider world of a talent and insight which the current climate crisis highlights very poignantly.

The Trust funded a very wide range of causes and organisations both here and abroad, and MDG received help on a number of projects. The work with Pensons a Demain and Kader Keita would, perhaps, have been very special for Patsy, given the use of bogolan, as she was herself an accomplished seamstress and worker with cloth.

She would also, I'm sure, have wanted to hear about the Second Step projects and the women's groups who have worked so hard to develop their market gardens. The Trust also funded work with a former MDG partner Sahel Eco, and again the theme was helping to train farmers to grow and nourish crops in very tough conditions.

Sometimes the support was given for one-off small-scale projects, and that sort of flexibility is always especially helpful. An example is the work to support Aflatoun, which Violet Diallo writes about elsewhere in this report

Our relationship with the Trust included the moral support its trustees offered and we especially thank Sarah Buxton for all her kindness and encouragement. We hope that she will continue to take an interest in MDG's work.

So, as we commemorate another year's work for MDG let's remember Patsy Wood and the Trust with grateful thanks for all the work which their support has made possible in Mali.

Easy Fundraising

This is a reminder to our members to investigate the biggest charity fundraising site available – Easy Fundraising. It is very easy to use – just register, click on the charity you wish to donate to and then start shopping. Nearly all the big retailers are involved and they donate between 1-3% of whatever you spend to MDG. There is no catch, they don't pester you with emails and the amounts soon add up. Since we started using the site our shoppers have raised £949.81 with very little effort. A big thank you to those of you who have contributed to that total.

Financial Report

David Hedge

Finance Report for year ended 31st March 2022

As a volunteer based charity, MDG has received approximately £1.4 million since its inception in 2001. This includes funding for the regular activities of our partners in Mali plus projects.

The charity has remained in regulatory compliance. An Independent Examiner provided satisfactory financial overview.

Income:

Gross income for fiscal year 2021/22 was £32,350. This was slightly lower than in the previous year due to adverse economic conditions and the lingering effect of COVID19. This also resulted in reduced donations. Linda King successfully reinstated fundraising with various catering activities.

There were generous donations received from a diverse range of members and other stakeholders including Just Trust (£2,000), The Angus Law Memorial Trust (£12,000), Universal Music (£1,600) and from Marlene Fishbourne in respect of a legacy from her husband Ray (£3,000).

Additionally the sum of £2,104 was received from HMRC in respect of a Gift Aid refund and another claim will be processed after the financial year end.

We thank all individual, organisational and trust donors for their help in providing continued financial support.

Expenditure:

In the latest year, annual outgoings were mainly comprised of quarterly Malian bank transfers totalling £27,460 to meet agreed funding needs of our partners Jeunesse et Development (J&D) and Association Culturelle Pensions a Demain (PAD).

MDG's general overheads are modest in conformity with the voluntary nature of the charity. For monitoring purposes, MDG receives regular progress reports from our partners in Mali and this enables funding priorities to be adjusted, as applicable.

Current Financial Year (2022/23)

The income raised during the initial five months of the current fiscal year has continued to be restrained by the negative impact of the current environment. Nevertheless, MDG recorded a slightly higher income compared to last year for the same period. The largest individual amount was £2,681 from the Aspen Trust. The bulk of the remainder came from standing orders. A Gift Aid claim is being prepared and this is expected to provide a refund approximately comparable to that previously received.

The core outgoings continue to be primarily for regular PAD quarterly transfers amounting to £4,500. These amounts are in line with budgets approved for projects with our partners.

Total Bank Balances:

Current and Savings account balances as at 31st August 2022 amounted to £23,820. These accounts are maintained at Lloyds Bank for operations and Virgin Savings.

David Hedge, Treasurer
31st August 2022



