

Enabling Communities

Mali
Development
Group
Annual Report
2017





Mali Development Group is a small volunteer-based group committed to supporting non-governmental organisations in Mali working to improve the social and physical conditions of life for people living in one of the poorest areas of the world.

The model of international development to which we work is one that aims to be effective, sustainable, inclusive and egalitarian. We are a donor organisation committed to supporting activities that pursue these aims and at a level of funding that we can sustain. This has been made possible in the UK by fundraising events, grants from trusts and elsewhere, and numerous contributions from individuals who support our aims and our work; and in Mali by the maintenance of relationships with sound, but radical, Malian groups working within their local communities. Intrinsic to the idea and the spirit of MDG is that this is not all about the money, it's also about friendship and solidarity, mutual understanding and respect.

If you would like to know about us and our work and would be interested to find out how you could become involved then please get in touch with us via our membership secretary Janice Hedge - janicehedge@btinternet.com.

A message from

Andy Benson

Chair of Mali Development Group



MDG in 2017

Welcome to MDG's 18th Annual Report, a summary of how we have been 'banging the same drum' for the last year, continuing to support our friends and colleagues working in Mali in circumstances that remain difficult. Though the political and security situation (and every other situation!) in Mali rarely figures in the UK media, the position remains fragile and troubling. The North of the country remains actively dangerous, central Mali is increasingly unstable with significant numbers of people affected by violence and the absence of state services, and in the South sporadic outbursts of terrorism and lawlessness remain a background threat – as indeed it is here in the UK. And – as in the UK – Malians continue to live their lives. But a big difference for Mali is the country's reliance on international aid, the flow of which has an ongoing tendency to focus on immediate humanitarian concerns and less on long term development, as a result of the troubles.

For this reason, we in MDG feel it is doubly important to maintain and nurture our relationships in Mali and to find the funds needed to support the work of our partners Jeunesse et Développement (J&D) and Pensons à Demain, (PAD). In this we can say that our own modest ambitions have been successful over the last year and you can read more of this in the following pages.

For J&D, our major activity has been managing the large grant we have received from Comic Relief to fund the development of a health 'mutuelle' serving 35 villages in Yanfolila in the South of the

country. This is now halfway through the development period and is progressing well. Our other support to J&D continues, especially through a 'second step' project funding a grain grinding mill and market gardens in rural areas, as well as a contribution to the costs of their new headquarters and community centre in Bamako.

PAD continues its work with street children in Bamako under the inspirational leadership of Bogolan artist Kader Keita, whose work graces the cover of this report. For many of the children involved, their contact with PAD is their first experience of adult care, attention and support and the team's flexible and child centred approach is particularly important. We have been able to continue funding core costs thanks to a generous grant from the Patsy Wood Trust.

Back here, fundraising has been 'up' and membership steady, and we received many positive 'keep-on-keeping-on' comments from a review meeting held for members and supporters in February of this year. Nonetheless, we cannot stand still. Our existing commitments remain demanding and the potential for new projects and new horizons limitless, in supporting the extraordinary country that is Mali. For this reason we want to invite more new people with new energy and new ideas to join our merry band. If this moves you to action then please in the first instance bang off an email to Janice Hedge - janicehedge@btinternet.com.

Once again many thanks are due to all those who have helped to keep the show on the road. My own committee, of course, and those closest around us - who help with fund raising events, grant applications and reports, website maintenance, design, financial management, and much more. Thanks also to our grant funders Comic Relief, the Patsy Wood Trust, the Bank of Montreal,

Ramboll UK, Just Trust, Brothers and Sisters, St Helen's Church PCC and the Birchwood Hall Community. And last but not least, thanks to the numerous individual members and donors whose regular – and Gift-aided - contributions provide us with consistent, reliable and valuable income.



A report from **Luke Hedge**

Yanfolila Mutual Health Insurance Scheme.

As members will be aware MDG received funding through Comic Relief for a three-year period, starting at the beginning of 2016, for a project entitled “Strengthening the Yanfolila Mutual Health Insurance Scheme (YMHS) and reducing risks to women’s health”. This project focuses on broadening healthcare access for people in the Yanfolila region. This is done through the use of an affordable subscription based Health Mutual Scheme, with the key focus being on providing preventative and curative health interventions to a rural population when they need them. Members of the scheme pay an affordable subscription, which covers themselves and family members. This entitles them to medical care and prescribing at a much reduced cost.

Income generating activities, such as the establishment of a grain mill in the village of Goualala, seek to support access for the poorer members of the community. Measures such as promoting the rational prescription of medication and the combatting of over prescribing, a particular problem in Mali, also seek to improve efficiency in basic healthcare provision. The Yanfolila Health Mutual Health Insurance Scheme, in common with all Health Mutuals, is not for profit and is based on the principles of social solidarity. The key outcome at the end of the three-year funding period is for the Health Mutual to be sustained by local populations and paid for solely through subscriptions and local income generating activities. The emphasis of much of the work that J&D undertakes, therefore, is focussed on galvanising and enabling local communities.

With its emphasis on prevention and early intervention, the project also involves proactive awareness raising activities about the dangers of Ebola and Malaria and ways of reducing risk, such as through the

WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) Programme. Established Women’s Groups are often the focus of awareness raising activities and there is significant emphasis on recruiting, appointing and training villages representatives to deliver input within their communities.

The focus of the first year was largely on establishing and strengthening the management structures within the Health Mutual, maintaining the existing membership base and building trust and reputation amongst the local populations. A significant success in the first year has been the building of effective relationships with key players and the local infrastructure. Whilst this has taken time, it provides a solid foundation for the continuing development of the project. Slightly less emphasis than anticipated was on increasing member numbers, but with good leadership at a local level and the increase in confidence that this brings, this becomes a much easier task as the project progresses.

A total of 37 communities participating in the Mutual have had involvement through J&D, in order to establish and strengthen village committees. The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer (MEL), Mamadou Tiori Diarra has oversight of the project in Yanfolila. He is known to a number of MDG members and has extensive experience in developing communities, together with profound insight and understanding about the local area and the needs of its communities. He has oversight of the MEL Action Plan, which is informed by a Baseline Study and a subsequent Socio-economic study, both undertaken in 2016. The Action Plan supports the targeting of interventions and resources to meet the projects aims, including supporting access to the scheme across socio-economic groups.

In 2017 the emphasis has been on increasing the number of members, by engaging more with women's groups, monitoring satisfaction levels amongst participating families and addressing issues that may arise. There is a continued focus on engagement with women's savings groups, where management and organisational experience exist already. Through the provision of further training and support it is hoped that the skills that already exist in the local communities can be harnessed and strengthened to ensure longer-term sustainability. Learning from experience is also a priority and links have been made with the Sikasso branch of the Mali Mutual Technical Union (L'Union Technique de la Mutualité Malienne, or UTM). The UTM is an apex organisation to which Mutual schemes in Mali are affiliated.

Radio broadcasts are used to highlight both the benefits of the Health Mutual and promote malaria and Ebola awareness. The use of an awareness raising information "caravan" about the Mutual is also planned. Mosquito nets have been widely distributed to local communities the project, particularly to more vulnerable communities and this has been welcomed by local communities. The promotion of the WASH programme within the 37 villages continues to be established. With the key focus being on galvanising local resources and enabling local people, the basis of the development model upon which the partnership between MDG and J&D is based is again clearly evident. Previous annual reports highlight some of the important legacies of this partnership over what is now a considerable amount of time and the Yanfolila Mutual Health Insurance Scheme has the potential to significantly benefit local people across future generations.



Cultural event at project launch



Training on malaria prevention strategies and appropriate treatment



Director and board of directors of The Health Mutual



Yanfolila Bridge

MDG visits Mali ...

In December 2016 I met Andy Benson at the airport in Bamako and the first MDG visit to Mali for several years began. The original plan had been to host J&D's Director, Nouhoum Haidara and Madou Tiori Diarra, the brains behind the Yanfolila-based Comic Relief funded programme, in the UK but the UK Border Control Agency, in its questionable wisdom, refused their visa applications, so plan B swung into action.

The visit comprised discussions in Bamako with Nou, Tiori and Tante Ida Samaké, the MDG / J&D link worker, to establish an outline for the work plan for the coming three years and catch up with J&D's other activities. There was then a trip to the rural South to visit the team in Yanfolila and see the mutual health insurance scheme in operation. On our return we called in to see our other main partner in Bamako- Kader Keita's centre for children living on Bamako's streets which were being redecorated while he was in France. There was also time to meet with old friends and potential new partners and see the construction of the new J&D offices, which are now virtually complete.

The journey to Yanfolila takes about 3 hours. Leaving the bustle of Bamako, the road passes through bush, cultivated fields and villages before reaching the larger town of Bougouni, where we leave the main Sikasso road to head West along

the now tarmacked road to Yanfolila. The road is used by dilapidated public transport minibuses, huge orange cotton transporters, traffic from the gold mines and local motorbikes, bicycles, donkey-drawn carts, NGO vehicles and the occasional saloon car. Groups of women walk from one village to the next, children can be seen on their way to school and Bakélé, our driver, sets a good pace, delighted to have MDG visitors once again.

We stop at the village of Bounogou to meet a women's group that had asked for funding to create a new market garden. Around thirty women were waiting for us and, after the traditional greetings, we hear about their plans to clear and fence the garden plot. Amelie, the J&D field-worker, explained how internal divisions in the village have made it difficult to communicate information across the whole community but that the new garden will also help to spread awareness about the mutual health insurance scheme that J&D is supporting with Comic Relief funding through MDG.

Travelling on to Yanfolila, we weave our way through unpaved streets, past shops, the market, mosques and houses to arrive at the J&D office, where we were to sleep during the visit. The office comprises a large courtyard, where the 7 project workers park their motorbikes and brew the traditional green tea, a main meeting room and the coordinator's office, plus a couple of store rooms which double as accommodation for visitors. It is presided over by Lassine the watchman, who is always ready to procure whatever is required at short notice.

The next day we visit Goualala village and meet with health centre personnel to hear about the impact and progress of the mutual health insurance scheme. The visit was a mix of ceremonial exchanges,

village hospitality and discussion about the project. We saw the newly installed grain-grinding mill, from which the proceeds will support the mutual health insurance scheme. A meeting of about 50 members of the scheme included the village chief and president of the women's association. One woman told us that she had sought health care four times, her treatment had been good and membership benefits included reduced the cost of medicines. Another woman had been a member for three years and was up to date with her subscriptions, paying annually in advance. Her membership covers herself, two children and two grandchildren and she has claimed five times, and everything has worked well.

Back at the office meeting with the team, Fatim, the team leader, explained that membership has risen from just under 1,600 to 2,600 during the first year of the team's work supporting the scheme. People are beginning to join up more readily as word spreads that it is reliable. At our request several team members described a day's work from the preceding week: "I went to a village to meet with the women's group to undertake the satisfaction survey (this is an annual monitoring exercise to elicit feedback from members) and to work on raising awareness about malaria and ebola. I got back to the office by midday, went home to eat and returned to the office to record the visit" "I went to a village to do the satisfaction survey, not many group members arrived, so I went door-to-door to find them. This enabled some awareness raising and I was able to recruit three new members. I wanted to meet with the women's group to talk about malaria and ebola but I couldn't start until midday as there was a funeral happening. Afterwards I met with 15 women and was back in the office about 4pm" Our time in Yanfolila came to an end and we travelled back to Bamako for

the remainder of the visit. Overall it was reassuring to see the work on the ground underway and the team enthusiastically meeting the not insignificant challenges to establishing the mutual health insurance scheme as a going concern by the end of the three-year project period.



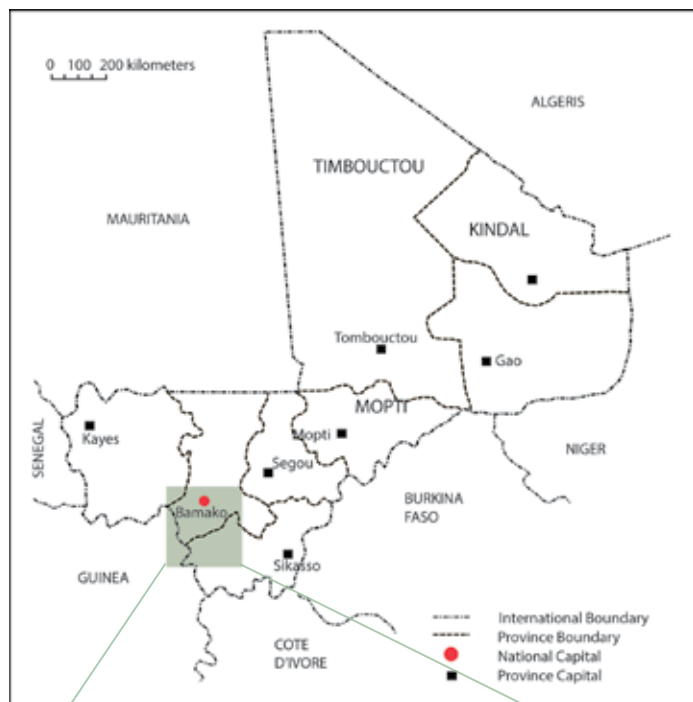
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Yanfolila team



Goualala meeting



A Report from Sam Garbett

MDG Second Step Project Report

The Past: Challenges Overcome

It is with great pleasure I pen my first report as part of the Project Group. Our project work appears to be as busy as ever with the expansion of the Mutuelle, the on-going support for PAD and the construction of new J&D Offices being the major beneficiaries of our time and energy. Amidst all this good work, the opportunities to strengthen our partnerships, to support an ever more capable Malian society, continue to grow.



The start of the new J&D office in Bamako

Many of you at the time of Mali's conflict and political crisis in 2012 would have foresaw the financial turmoil that frightening series of events would bring. Resources were plundered, an economy shattered, a political vacuum filled with broken promises and thievery. It became a far from ideal environment for our determined charity partners to operate in, but operate they must. Worse still, jittery nerves on the part of some international funders led to suspended grants and reduced funding adding to pressure. This was the circumstance that lead to other initiatives being sadly put on hold.

So, it is with these memories and the difficult decisions of subsequent times that we must celebrate the return of J&D's Second Step programme of economic empowerment projects for women's community groups in southern Mali's rural areas. It can be seen as a very positive sign of progress that we – as a partnership – have returned to the position to provide up to 4 of these capital projects each year. I am very proud to have been invited to coordinate MDG's oversight of these.

The Present: Renewal and Resolve

To kick-start this new programme of work, J&D drafted three proposals; one multi-functional grinding mill and two market gardens or "maraichers". All three had previously been in the pipe-line and were familiar in so far that they were similar to previous projects in their type and scope. The Committee approved them in March 2017.

The grinding mill will support the village community of Kolondiéba and will help women with their efforts to generate revenues through the processing of local agricultural products; including peanuts and nére – a commonly cultivated nut/fruit of the region. The mill will facilitate the production of shea butter, peanut paste and soubala – a popular condiment produced from nére. The creation of 'secondary' products allow the women to make higher revenues from their agricultural produce in less time. With the additional time and money these women and their families can greater access to education and healthcare. The project itself has a provision for 20% of its profits to be saved as a crisis fund to make this a sustainable option for economic empowerment for the people of Kolondiéba.

The two market gardens, though similar in type, will run as two very different projects. The first, in Bounoko - a village not far from Yanfolila - is more of a restoration and renewal project, focusing on tasks like relaying concrete to shore-up wells, replacing worn fencing, and providing fresh tools and materials. This market garden aims to improve the incomes of 300 women in the village to cover household expenses and enable participation in the Muteulle health insurance scheme. The second, in the remote village of Tomoni, will be starting close to square one. A greater focus has been place on developing the membership and structures of the women's group there to foster good engagement with and management of the 1 hectare of newly developed garden. With a mixed purpose of produce for market and for subsistence, it will be able to improve the diets of local women as well as boost their incomes.

The Future: Communities Enabled

Each Second Step project brings its own value in their ability to generate revenues for their communities. In a way, this is only step one. The purpose of these projects is to enabling the community by creating a sustainable base for future socio-economic development. We know from experience that these projects can last. MDG plays an important role in partnership with J&D to support the management and maintenance of previous projects to build lasting, meaningful legacies. MDG-funded grain mills in the villages of Woma and Lemouroutoumou have empowered their communities for over a decade, enabling the construction of new classrooms and a market garden.

Personally, reflecting on this programme so far, it has been great to connect more regularly with J&D project staff and get a sense of how things are changing for them on the ground. It has provided me with new insights into the needs of the communities of southern Mali that MDG strives to support. It has been an opportunity to reflect on how MDG and our membership have already made a difference to so many people. That is why it feels great to be in the position to support 3 more of these projects to help meet the needs of some of the poorest people in Mali.

Our membership has increased steadily every year to its maximum today of approximately 400. This includes friends of MDG who are involved with the day to running of the charity, those who support our many events and also those who are on the mailing list who like to keep informed of what we are doing, and to read the newsletters and other links to Mali news from each other. I know that our members appreciate the communication because I often receive an email thanking us for sending them and reminding us what a great job we are doing – always nice to hear that!

Our website has had 353 hits in the last 12 months from 227 different users which is encouraging, and this is a very useful tool to gain access to sponsorship for our marathon runners or Ride 100 cyclists. All our past Newsletters and Annual Reports are uploaded to the website and they give a fascinating overview of the work we have carried out over the last 17 years.

If you know of anyone who would be interested in receiving emails from MDG about upcoming events, or links to topical articles etc, please let me have their email address.

As always many thanks to all of you who have donated your time as well as your cash to supporting us. Particular thanks should go to Thame and Wheatley Ramblers who have booked us for several catering events as well as giving us donations.

As a group we've continued to raise a lot of money around food! Our catering services have provided lunches for away days, Christmas and other events as well as cakes for a number of sales. We organised a successful race night and bridge afternoon. We also need to thank our cyclists and their sponsors who completed the Ride London 100 event for us at the end of July. They were pedalling partners Chris Slade, Ash Hill and Ash Hopson. Sadly William Lay had to pull out of the London Marathon due to an injury, but our place (which is normally every 5 years) will roll over to 2018. Whilst we've decided that we're too decrepit to continue with stage removal at Dorchester Abbey we returned again to car park stewarding for the Bucks Steam Rally. Although we enjoy the events we're involved in we're always keen for other people to join us or set up their own schemes.

If you have any ideas you'd like to discuss, please contact linda.king@malidg.org.uk



A report from **Sue Upton**

Pensons à Demain (Let's think about tomorrow)



Run by Kader Keita and his team of project workers, Pensons à Demain (PAD) is the grass roots association that has developed a unique centre for children living on the streets in Bamako. The centre works with the most vulnerable boys and girls using a child centred approach focussed on learning the traditional art of Bogolan (which translates as “mud cloth”) and other creative skills, coupled with basic literacy and individual counselling and group discussions to help the children come to terms with their past and prepare for the future.

MDG continues to provide basic running costs for the centre and keep the website (www.kaderkeita.org), the international face of PAD, online. PAD is also assisted by the local authority, Orange Mali, one of Mali's two telecom companies, Samu Sociale International, a number of other local donors and benefactors and two French associations: Maliance in Dourdon and ABaMa in Angers. It's reassuring to see that Kader is making good progress in broadening his funding base since the need is not getting any less and diversification spreads the load.

The centre continues to run four courses each year. 2017 has seen increasing numbers of girls and teenage mothers among participants. Displaced children from



other regions as a result of the disturbances in North and Central Mali continue to attend and children with disabilities are welcomed. Some project workers are now signed up to national insurance and Kader plans to extend this basic benefit to the rest of his small team in 2018. In 2016 PAD worked with 177 children, 57 of whom were lodged and fully supported while they attended the course. Overall expenditure for 2016 was 16,624,500 FCFA (at August 2017 exchange rates, equivalent to £23,358).

Particular thanks go to the Patsy Wood Trust for their substantial grant to support MDG in covering core running costs over 2 years, and to Sudbury Rotary which is donating the costs of two children a year for three years. This support is greatly appreciated and is enabling Kader to continue to meet the needs of children who would otherwise have nowhere to turn.

In addition to his work with the centre Kader finds time to explore his own artistic talents through painting and dance and also travels to Europe from time to time to meet with partner organisations.



Kader Keita and the Pensons à Demain centre, Bamako





Financial Report

David Hedge

Mali Development Group Treasurer

Financial Report for the year ended 31st March 2017

MDG enjoyed another successful financial year along with continued regulatory compliance. Satisfactory progress was made regarding the Comic Relief (CR) sponsored Community Health Insurance Scheme whilst an Independent Examiner provided a satisfactory financial overview.

MDG, as a volunteer based charity, has collected over £940,000 since inception in 2001. This rises to in excess of £1,075,000 with inclusion of outstanding committed grant monies from CR in support of the project that is being developed by Jeunesse et Développement (J & D) in southern Mali. This is due over a 3-year period, subject to agreed terms and conditions being met.

INCOME

Gross income for fiscal 2016/17 rose to a record amount of £135,046 mainly due to the receipt of £88,543 by way of grant funds. Excluding project funding, unrestricted receipts for MDG increased 42% compared with the prior year, to a total of £46,503. This mainly reflected an expansion in donations and subscriptions that amounted to £34,511 including regular member and other special contributions.

Comic Relief and Yanfolila Community Health Insurance Scheme:

Total funding from CR for the project equates to £365,943, with 48% received up to the end of the 2016/17 financial year with the remainder due to be paid up to a final 2% in fiscal 2018/19. MDG acts to liaise between CR and J & D, with our Project Accountant responsible for controlling and monitoring the budget. The first CR project report, covering progress to date, has been submitted to Comic Relief and a 50% payment has been transferred to MDG to assist work in Mali. Some project under-spending in the first year is being clarified with CR prior to release of other 50% grant monies due this year.

Unrestricted Donations:

Unrestricted donations came from diverse sources but, in 2016/17, large contributions were received from Patsy Wood Trust (£15,000), Ramboll UK (£5,000), Just Trust £3,000), Brothers & Sisters (over £2,100) and Birchwood Hall Community (£500). Amongst many generous donors, individual contributions included Member standing orders that, on an annual basis, amounted to approximately £4,500.

We thank all regular donors (individual, organisations and trusts), for their help and continuing commitment and assistance. This provides help in underpinning our work and giving a strong foundation for our own fundraising activities.

Gift Aid tax refunds rose to £3,081 and, as these refundable contributions remain important, we strive to efficiently claim this tax relief benefit.

Fund Raising:

Fund raising produced another strong contribution that was slightly higher than that of the prior financial year. Annual income rose to nearly £8,800 with various diverse activities whilst operations continue to be very efficiently coordinated and managed by Linda King. These included sponsorships from both the London Marathon & and the Ride London Bike event plus Bank of Montreal's generous sponsorship of another summer cricket match (receipts exceeded £1,400), a successful annual Quiz, a race night fund raising event and catering for various purposes along with cake pudding sales.

EXPENDITURE

Outgoings amounted to £142,466 in 2016/17 and this principally comprised quarterly Malian transfers to meet agreed funding needs and the agreed Project transfer of £95,580.

CR related project expenses amounted to £6,078 whilst MDG's other costs and overheads are modest given the voluntary

nature of the charity. Quarterly transfers made to J&D and PAD to fit in with their financial year (January to December). MDG receives regular progress reports and funding priorities can be adjusted based upon both feedback and new information.

The Current Financial Year (2017/18)

The initial 4 months of fiscal 2016/17 recorded an increase in total income received to £65,470. Relative to this period:

- Income included a Comic Relief transfer to MDG of £53,503 for the Project and a similar amount is expected within the near future. This will accommodate further scheduled disbursements.
- The sum of £15,000 has been received from the Patsy Wood Trust that represents the second tranche of a generous grant amounting to £30,000 being provided by the Trust to support PAD.
- Approximately £40,000 of restricted funds provided by CR was transferred to J & D for the Comic Relief-funded project. Another project transfer via J & D is expected in the near future.
- Another Gift Aid tax refund will be collected in the 2017/18 financial-year.
- Total bank current and savings account balances, at 31 July 2017, amounted to £45,958 (unrestricted) and £24,683 (re restricted project) making a total of £70,641.
- Core outgoings continued to be primarily for regular quarterly and project transfers to J&D and PAD and this will continue in line with planned requirements. We continue to work closely with partners, and recognise that our on-going support is important in these challenging times.

Committee members

Chair	Andy Benson
Secretary	Nick Linney
Treasurer	David Hedge

Working groups and Coordinators:

Project Work	Luke Hedge
Fundraising	Linda King
Communications	Janice Hedge
Public Affairs	Sam Garbett
	Sue Upton

Report designed by Andrea Hewes

If you would like to help financially, 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 text a donation of £2, £5 or £10 by texting Maliz22 to 70070, for example, Maliz22 £5.

Get involved

August 2017



What could you contribute to MDG? (And what MDG could do for you too!)

The Mali Development Group is a small and effective voluntary group relying entirely on the skills and commitment of its members. All that MDG has achieved has been the result of individuals coming together and making the best out of their collective time and expertise.

MDG is looking to continue and expand its important work. Have you considered how you may be able to support MDG? It's not just about what in it for MDG. It's also about you. Volunteering with MDG can offer you a knowledge of Mali, working contact with international development NGOs, opportunities to visit remote rural villages to see projects in action and an understanding of the difficulties of working in such a different environment.

Here is our invitation to you to browse just some of the varied and many tasks that we would love your help with. Above all, it's hearing what YOU feel you can contribute that matters to us, so please send us your ideas.

Cheers!

The MDG Committee

Supporting MDG's projects in Mali

Co-ordinate on-going projects / develop new ones

Task: MDG's Project team are always in need of people with or looking to develop project management skills. Or perhaps you could build partnerships with other NGOs who are already working, or are looking to work, in Mali.

Time/Place: The Project team requires some commitment but as it's the engine room of all MDG strives for its an interesting and rewarding place to direct your time and energy. A lot of your work could be done by email, with a meeting every few months.

Research new opportunities to support the Malian NGO sector

Task: There is little to no connectivity between the UK-based organisations who are working in Mali. Despite the shared goals and the help we could offer each other, the network between the various governmental and voluntary organisations is nowhere near its potential. MDG wants to play a role in bringing like-minded people together to make all our work more effective. This will involve making connections and talking to various stakeholders.

Time/Place: One-off intensive appeal, or long-term support to the Communications Group? Up to you.

MDG in the UK

Staff a Stall at a Malian concert

Task: Staff the MDG stall at music and cultural events and help disseminate information about MDG's projects. A fun task to do with a friend, you can sign-up new members and donors and generally, help build a positive image of Mali in the UK. Research upcoming music concerts & approach venues.

Time/Place: Evenings and willing to travel to concerts/events etc.

Other: Usually results in getting into gigs for free!

Develop MDG's social media and online presence

Task: Manage the MDG Twitter/LinkedIn/Wikipedia/Facebook etc. profiles. Craft an online presence and character for MDG that reflects its values and interests. Alternatively, write content for the website and Mali Interest Hub or monitor the Mali Interest Facebook page.

Time/Place: As much or as little as you like. Little and often usually works best. Can be done remotely and with relative autonomy, once confident.

Monitor what's going on in Mali and the UK government's (lack of a) response

Task: It is hard for everyone at MDG to stay fully up to date with all that is happening both here and in Mali itself. For MDG to meet many of its other goals for its work in the UK, we first need to know what's happening!

Time/Place: Perhaps a monthly news bulletin to be emailed to all MDG members, with useful links and info?

Fundraising and Events

Research and expand trust fundraising

Task: Help the team identify new sources of income and partnerships to deliver new projects in the future.

Time/Place: Your experience would probably dictate your involvement. This could build overtime of course!

Other: Bid-writing and trust application training available – a great asset to anyone planning a career in international development

Hold a Fundraising event

Task: Holding a fundraising event in your local area is a fun way to raise money and awareness. A quiz? A dinner? A sweepstake at work? Maybe a karaoke, or a poetry slam. The options are endless...

Time/Place: Completely up to you and anyone you decide to rope in!

Other: MDG's low overheads and small size means a small event to make a big difference!

Marathon and Ride London coordinator

Task: Coordinate MDG's participation in the Ride London 100 and the London Marathon. It would be really good to have someone who could identify riders for us, help them set up a donation site and support them in fundraising and any other way that was helpful.

Time/Place: This can all be done online or by phone, though support on the day of the cycle/run would be lovely.

Increase the membership/amount of regular donations

Task: To increase the numbers of people making regular donations to MDG via standing orders. This is particularly helpful as we can rely on it as a regular source of income and so plan our spending. Could also get involved with newsletters and creating ways to engage the membership.

Time/Place: One-off intensive appeal, or long-term support to the Communications Group? Up to you.

"Keeping the show on the road"

Content management of MDG website, newsletters and reports

Task: Write! MDG needs more volunteers to help with getting the message out about all we do; presenting MDG to the public and to ourselves in a way that captures all that makes us special. It may not be all glitter and glamour, there are other essential written tasks that need doing, like at meetings or synthesising reports from other organisations.

Time/Place: Good for an independent worker who can only spare a few hours every now and then.

Make connections

Task: Is your local school or your employer looking for a new charity partner? Or a group of friends looking for a cause? MDG has recently had successful 'twinning' of two schools - one in Suffolk one in Mali – as one example of how you could not only support on-going work, but create something new and important for MDG.

Time/Place: Might be a long-term project, but the rewards could be huge.

Other: It could result in a trip to Mali.

Translators

Task: MDG constantly requires documents and emails translated to and from English and French.

Time/Place: As much or as little as you like. A few hours a couple of times of month? Some tasks will be urgent, some less so. Can be done remotely. Both depend heavily on needs of Project Group.

Other: Opportunity to learn basic Bambara – the language of Mali

Helping with everyday business

Task: You could simply help with keeping everything ticking over; help running the committee, our meetings, the Annual General Meeting, dealing with funders, booking venues, support with banking and managing money.

Time/Place: Anytime you have!

Other: **You can help make it all possible.**

