



Dear Members and Friends of MDG,

SPRING 2026 NEWSLETTER

Our aim is to keep you informed of any new initiatives and update you on news that we have and here you can read about what we've been up to recently.

News from our partner Pensons à Demain.

Hello to all MDG,

We are doing well and we wish you the same. Currently PAD is working on the girls' training in tailoring, preparing them for three weeks work experience with master tailors, which will be monitored by two PAD facilitators, then they'll come back to the workshop at the end of January 2026. Their course will finish with 2 weeks planning for leaving and the future. Mariam and Thairou are working on this and preparing their diplomas and the US embassy provided us with the wax fabric for uniforms for the leaving celebration. We are also lucky because Samu Social Mali will take care of their leaving party.

Currently we have 20 girls on the tailoring course 15 children doing bogolan and other activities at the centre. Five returned to their families and six came to replace them, brought by the Social Development Service. They are from Mopti – Badiagara area where jihadists are in control. Samu social takes care of some of these activities.

The only thing PAD hasn't managed yet is introducing some boys into the

tailoring training. The ones we have are a bit young for the training. There are only 4 so far who manage a little in sewing. We are still talking with the Samu Social Mali about helping us to include some boys from the street in new training in January. On December 23, 2025, PAD met with the neighbourhood chiefs of Commune 4 to explain the PAD project and how they can be more involved in supporting vulnerable girls and boys.

Otherwise, everything is fine at the centre, and we continue to try and develop our autonomy in terms of equipment and materials. MDG helped us initially purchase 7 sewing machines in 2023/24 and again in 2025 provided us with another 15 machines. The whole PAD team and our students are very grateful. Thank you all for saving lives by giving them the means to learn a profession to empower and support themselves.

We have had requests for internships for 2 people, 2 Bollé interns for 90 days and the activities with Bollé continue. They are now self-supporting after selling some paintings at an exhibition we organised at the Palais du Peuple. The proceeds went to buy, paint, canvas, brushes etc.

Thanks to everyone,

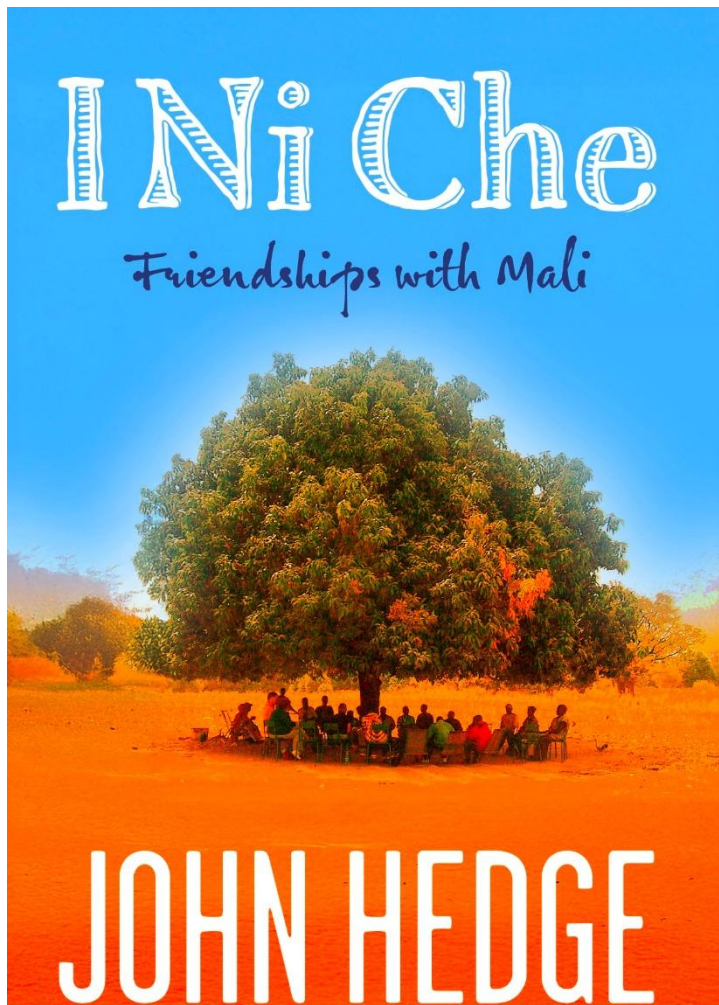
Kader

Fundraising!

Babs does it again...

In December the Babs once again cooked up a 3 course meal for the local Ramblers group. This is quite a feat as there were 45 diners and a choice of menu for each course. We've been doing it for over 10 years, so must be doing something right! It also brings in a lot of money to MDG. In December 2025 it was £1000!!

Exciting news about John's latest book



John Hedge's book 'I Ni Che, Friendships with Mali' about MDG and its work with partners in Mali has now been published by Mereo Press. It is available from Amazon, (search on Amazon for I Ni Che by John Hedge), by request from all good book sellers or by contacting John directly via

hedgejohn59@gmail.com

The ISBN number is 978-1919380773.

Amazon summarises the book as follows:

I Ni Che is a compelling narrative of long-term grassroots development in Mali. Blending memoir, cultural observation and development analysis, Hedge examines the realities of post-colonial Africa, the challenges of aid dependency, and the delicate balance between external support and local ownership. I Ni

Che is both a tribute to friendship across continents and a thoughtful contribution to debates about ethical development practice.

For readers interested in African studies, NGO work, global justice and community empowerment, this is a grounded and deeply humane case study of what sustainable development really requires: patience, respect and partnership.

Talking about the process of writing the book John says:

It has involved looking back over many documents. From the last 25 years, a great deal of personal memory and, of course, the recollections of many of the people involved, including our closest Malian colleagues, all of whom contributed their thoughts to an early draft. It meant recalling many highs, but some low times when things went wrong or the task seemed too much to cope with. The book is dedicated both to Sue Upton, who inspired us in the first place, and the memory of Violet Diallo, a staunch friend of Mali for many decades, who died last year. Andrea Hewes sourced and collated the many pictures, all by MDG members, in the book, including the striking cover picture by Adrian Moyes of one of our village meetings.

Endorsements

The book has had some valuable endorsements, notably the three which follow:

From our own Wilfred Willy, linguist, translator-interpreter, former head of the Malian Community Council-UK, and MDG committee member.

John recounts the journey of Mali Development Group with the eyes of someone who has witnessed it all, from its inception to this day. The events are described in it without complacency and each paragraph makes you travel to a different place, whether it's the harsh conditions of rural Mali, the dedication of the people trying to change things here in the UK and on the ground in Mali, or the bonds of friendship and mutual respect that were created over the years. One thing this book teaches us is that development is possible differently.

From the renowned ecologist Satish Kumar

It is a beautiful book about grassroots efforts to help people to help themselves. It is a great description of bottom-up development. John Hedge

has written an inspiring as well as an informative book. It describes how volunteers are offering their time, resources and love in the service of a community. Anyone and everyone who is interested in the authentic experience of development should read this wonderful testament.

...and from Mike Harrison, the Bishop of Exeter, a strong supporter of international development

A perceptive reflection which exemplifies some of the joys and challenges of development work – whether at the macro-level of geopolitics, climate change and (post)colonialism, or at the micro level of forging positive relationships, clear communication, robust governance and agreed principles and values.

If you buy the book from Amazon, do please post a review - hopefully a positive one, as this does help to promote the book more widely.

We are planning an event to launch and celebrate the book in Oxfordshire in due course.

Satish Kumar supports the work of MDG

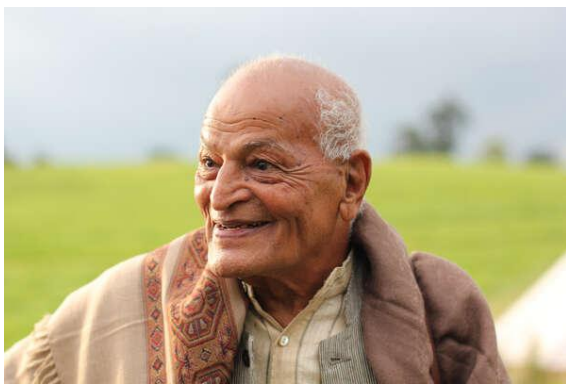
Following his endorsement of John Hedge's book about MDG Satish Kumar declared his wider support for the charity, with the following statement:

Mali Development Group's bottom-up approach to development supports grassroots efforts to help people to help themselves. Volunteers offer their time, resources and love in the service of community in its broadest sense. I'm delighted to endorse this authentic experience of development, where ordinary people in Mali and the UK connect with, learn from and care about each other for the greater good of all.

Satish Kumar is an ecologist and activist of international reputation. He has been a Jain monk, nuclear disarmament advocate and pacifist. Now living in England, Kumar was founder and Director of Programmes of the Schumaker College for ecological studies, and is Editor Emeritus of Resurgence and

Ecology magazine. Together with a companion, E. P. Menon, he undertook a peace walk of over 8,000 miles in June 1962 from New Delhi, to Moscow, then Paris, London and Washington DC for two and a half years, the capitals of the world's earliest nuclear-armed countries. He insists that reverence for nature should be at the heart of every political and social debate.

Satish is now aged 89 but still very active and it is a great privilege for MDG that he has declared his support for our approach to development and the partnerships we have made over the years.



Satish Kumar

Your chance to bid for an original work of art...

Andrea Hewes is an artist and graphic designer. She is one of the founder members of Mali Development Group and has designed the Annual Report and many promotional pieces including several paintings depicting aspects of life in Mali, to support the charity's work over the past 25 years.

'I was deeply impressed by a photo of this precious woman, absorbed in learning a new skill and perhaps considering the possibilities of what that might mean for her future. She appears calm and focused but her background on the street must have been dark and frightening. As she works, her poise and innate human dignity are beginning to shine.' **Andrea Hewes**



Andrea



Medium: Oil pastel

Dimensions: 43cm x 37cm

Our partner Pensons à Demain, led by Kader Keita, another artist, works with some of the most disadvantaged children in Mali's capital city, Bamako, including training young women in tailoring, so that they can earn a living.

Each sewing machine costs £115, and Kader is hoping to be able to give the machines to the students after the course. With this in mind, we would like to auction this painting with a starting bid of £230, or the cost of two sewing machines.

The auction is available online [here](#)

Bidding will open at 9:00 am on Monday 4th May and close at 11:59 pm on Sunday 31st May.

We will contact the winning bidder shortly after the auction closes to arrange payment and delivery of the painting

Please be generous - all the money raised will go to the purchase of machines and a lifetime of use

As always, we greatly appreciate your continued support for MDG and hope you enjoy reading the newsletter.

With all good wishes.

Janice Hedge

Communications