Mali Development Group

Mali Development Group Annual Report 2026

Resilience



Introduction

Welcome to the 2026 Mali Development Group Annual Report

The past year has been a very difficult one for Mali, but life has continued, and the Malian people have shown huge resilience in coping with day- to- day restrictions and many challenges. However, if you had to rely only on the limited media coverage available in this country you would gain a very bleak image of Mali and its prospects.

Fortunately, we have other sources of information, notably from our Malian committee member, Wilfred Willey, whose regular family visits and network of contacts enable us to have a more accurate, and often more positive picture. He is currently in Mali , and you can read his analysis of the situation later in this report.

In the past year we have also established a link with the UK Ambassador to Mali, His Excellency Angus McKee, and he has shared information about his work in Bamako and the groups he comes into contact with.

The committee has met regularly through the year, and shares responsibility for the range of activities mentioned in this report. Our primary focus, of course, is the support of our partner Pensons à Demain, which is well illustrated in Sue Upton's contribution. She is in regular contact with Kader Keita and the quality and regularity of feedback from PAD is the main feature of our regular supporter's newsletters.

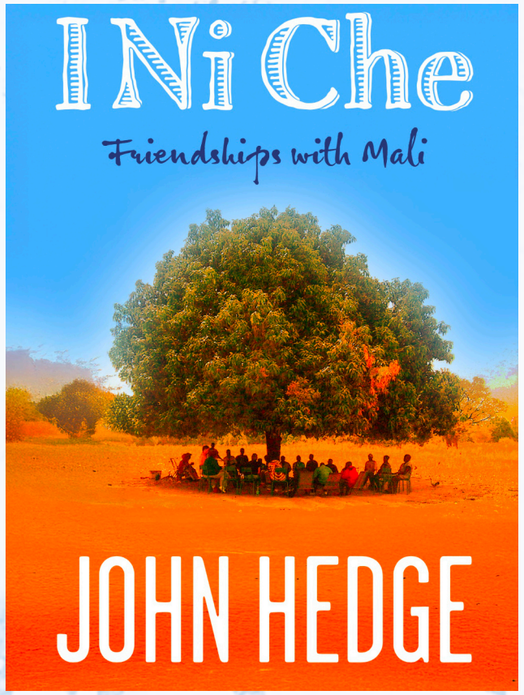
Beyond the work done by committee members MDG is well supported by a number of volunteers- notably our Babs caterers, led by Linda King. Their work is the mainstay of our fundraising activity, alongside the bids Sue Upton makes to a range of funders.

We have relied on Andrea Hewes for her excellent design skills from the very beginning of MDG. Though we started in 2000 and had a very simple report in the first couple of years, Andrea has produced a fully illustrated report every year since 2003/4, as well as countless leaflets, fliers, and newsletters. Her work has often made our group stand out ahead of many other small charities and it has made a big difference. All those annual reports are available on our website: www.malidg.org.uk

This year's AGM includes the Oxfordshire launch of John Hedge's book about MDG, I NI Che. It has been well received, and is endorsed by the ecologist Satish Kumar, our own Wilfred Willey and the Bishop of Exeter, a long- standing supporter of international development. We have also received very positive 'reviews' from our old friends Mamadou Kone, and Tanty Samake, who both received the book in draft, and made helpful suggestions. If you can't come to the AGM but would like to buy the book, it is available on Amazon, and by order through main booksellers. If you would like to know more about John's work you can also visit his website: www.johnhedge.co.uk



Copies of the book have been delivered to Kader Keita, director of MDG's partner PAD, and Tanty Samake, formerly MDG's link worker with Jeunesse et Developpement. They are pictured here with their copies, which they were delighted to receive.



News from PAD
Sue Upton

2026 has been another positive year for PAD as it consolidates and grows its sewing and tailoring training for young single mums. It marked the graduation of the ninth cohort and the enrolment of cohort number ten. This is a month by month summary of work at PAD of the year so far, from January to September.

January saw the 2025/26 cohort joining master tailors around Bamako for three weeks of work experience, monitored by two PAD facilitators. Their course then finished with two weeks planning for leaving and the future.



February brought the annual graduation ceremony when all students received their certificates and start up kits in the presence of friends and partners. Samu Social Mali helped with costs of the leaving party and the US Embassy provided the wax fabric for ceremony uniforms. A good time was had by all!

March was another busy month with the departure of the 2025/26 cohort, along with their sewing machines and the start of the tenth cohort, which is the largest ever, with over twenty participants enrolled.



April 10th provided the opportunity to celebrate Eid at the end of the Ramadan. A visiting American funded the feast, and as you can see in the picture everyone is enjoying it.

In **May** PAD was allocated a social worker by the ministry and so Fatoumata SIDIBE started working alongside the team. She sent us a brief biography of each of the current 24 students, including Sira KOITA (right) of Lafiabougou quarter of Bamako, who is 19 years old with a daughter of 9 months called Salimata Keita. She's from a poor family where her father is a sheet metal worker and her mother is a housewife. Sira had to leave school in year 7 as the family could no longer support the expense. She wanted to enrol last year but there weren't enough spaces, so she focussed on learning bogolan (traditional mud cloth) and enrolled this year, thus demonstrating her determination and motivation.

Mariam DOUMBIA (right), originally from Kangaba, is also 19 and has a 2-year-old son called Sekou. She also comes from a poor family and never went to school. She came to Bamako to keep house for a family but couldn't get on with her boss, became pregnant and gave birth to her son. She's now learning tailoring, bogolan and literacy with the PAD team.





Sira KOITA



Mariam DOUMBIA



In **June** the team settled on calling the tenth cohort "John Hedge" and contacted us to let us know.

In **July** PAD animater Yacou led a course in bogolan and here you can see some of the work in progress.









In **August** the tailoring students underwent a test to see how they were doing. They started using the more expensive wax cloth as can be seen below:

In **September** a video call from Kader confirmed that all is still going well. In spite of the day-to-day hardships of life in Bamako (high costs, low levels of electricity, insecurity etc…) life goes on and more young people are learning to support themselves and their children. The PAD team is doing well in terms of finding local support and resources and continues to work with partner organisations in Bamako. The running costs that MDG continues to send regularly enable the work to continue. The team is stable and the workers use their well-developed skills to support the vulnerable youngsters who attend the centre. Kader and the team express their thanks regularly, not wanting anyone to doubt the value of the work we support. We at MDG in turn pass on our thanks and hope you will recognise the part you play in the smiling faces you see in the pictures.





Mali Today - a message from Bamako
Wilfred Willey

Mali stepped into the year 2026 on the back of a fuel crisis which started in September 2025, when the terrorist groups, struggling with great losses in frontal war with the Malian army, turned to attacking defenceless fuel convoys from Senegal and the Ivory Coast. This created an unprecedented fuel shortage and contributed to exacerbate the ongoing electricity supply with the national grid not able to receive the fuel necessary to run the thermic power plants.

Then came the 25 April 2026 when two groups, JNIM and the FLA, launched coordinated attacks on the garrison city of Kati, Bamako airport, Gao, Kidal, Sévaré and Mopti. Although the army responded vigorously there were losses on the side of the government forces, including Sadio Camara, the defence minister. whose residency was subject to a car bomb attack.

Fast forward to the 22 September 2026, when Mali celebrated the 66th anniversary of its independence from France. A few days earlier, I was very happy to see president Assimi Goita inaugurate the new units of the Kati Military Polyclinic, equipped with the latest technology and medical equipment. In the coming weeks, another military hospital will be opened in Banankoro near Senou. Both hospitals will treat primarily the military but will be used by civilian patients too. In the field of health, Mali lagged behind other countries, but with the launch of an ambitious programme of building 15 another district hospitals over the next few years, with 7 in Bamako and 9 in other regions, the transitional government is on course to bridge the gap.

In terms of road infrastructure Bamako is undergoing a transformation with the road linking it to Koulikoro being widened and new ones being built to bypass the airport, and to have an alternative access to Kati, among others.

The electricity supply has improved, and the fuel crisis has now been resolved; there are no queues at stations anymore, as fuel convoys continue to pour into Bamako, escorted by the army. There are obviously many other ongoing projects in the fields of education, mining and renewable energy which cannot all be listed here. What is important is that Mali still manages to build infrastructure to make life easier for its population despite heavy budgetary constraints due to the current security situation.

Having been back in Bamako for over a month now, I am aware that there are huge challenges faced by the population. However, I see and feel the resilience, courage and determination in the eyes and everyday activities of its people. I can also sense that, despite all the negative press from the mainstream media, the people are behind the military regime and look forward to the future with more positivity. That's why I'd like to share this message from Oumou Sall Seck, Minister of National Entrepreneurship, Employment and Vocational Training, speaking at the Cairo Dialogue in Egypt on 06.09.2026.
"Mali does not want to be defined solely by the crises it is experiencing. It wants to be recognised for the resilience of its people, the quality of its human capital, and its ability to transform constraints into opportunities."
My thoughts exactly!

Secretaries Report
Judith Hartley

It has been quite a busy year. We again submitted our accounts and Annual Return for 2024-2025 to the Charity Commission on time, and we continue to participate where we can and where appropriate in virtual Webinars hosted by the Commission's Charity Engagement Team, on different aspects of running a charity.

Last year we made contact with the UK's Ambassador to Mali, His Excellency Angus McKee, and we offered to make contact with the Chevening Scholars coming from Mali, and one of them did get in touch.

Earlier this year we learned that a new Malian Honorary Consul to London has been appointed. His name is Mr Kolado Landoure. He is a businessman and accountant based in east London.

We regularly get invitations from students, artists and others asking us to take part in various projects, or to identify potential Malian contacts to approach. We are happy to help with these whenever we can.

We also sometimes get requests from Malian or other NGOs asking if we can provide funds or partner with them. Unfortunately, due to our limited finances and capacity, we are rarely able to do so. However, we are continuing to fund our existing partner, Pensons à Demain.

The Mali Interest Group on Facebook has its ups and downs but is a useful group to join if you want regular information and news about Mali. There are about 800 members. It is a private group, but you can ask to join.

Fundraising
Linda King



Cakes, cakes, more cakes and occasional other comestibles - the work of the Babs Team.

This group of local friends and amateur cooks have continued to raise funds for MDG as well as doing quite a bit of chatting too. Regular events include providing refreshments at a local sale room; a garden open to visits from, and supper at a village cinema club. We have also catered for a range of club and family events.

We are very grateful indeed to all our customers and to everyone in our group - Marlene Fishbourne, Maureen Baker, Wendy Mannix, Pam Caudwell, Cheryl Boorman, Penny Boas, Claire Speirs, Roz Davies, Janice Hedge, Sue White, Sue Sloggett and Michelle Chadwick.

If you live in or near Oxfordshire and think you would be able to join the team you would be very welcome, so please get in touch.

Financial Report
Ken King

Financial Report for year ended 31st March 2026

Regular donations continue to make up the bulk of our income, but these have been boosted by substantial donations from the Ashworth Trust, the Just Trust and the Carmela and Ronnie Pignatelli Foundation plus the efforts of our fundraising team (the Babs)

During the year we have made 3 quarterly payments to PAD (including the first payment for Financial Year 2026-27), to provide funding for their regular activities.

The cash funds at the end of the FY year gave us confidence that we would be able to meet our commitments to PAD for at least the next two Financial Years (2026-27 and 2027-28). Subsequently we have received a legacy donation, from the estate of longstanding member Pat Goodwin, which has confirmed this position.

The accounts for Financial Year 2025-26 have been approved by the committee and reviewed by an Independent Examiner. A summary of the figures is as follows.

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st March 2026

	Unrestricted	Restricted	TOTAL	Last Year
Receipts	£	£	£	£
Donations, legacies and grants	16,121	-	16,121	13,548
Gift Aid Refunds	4,900	-	4,900	
Fundraising	4,382	-	4,382	4,660
Interest on Deposits	3	-	3	3
Refunds	-	-	-	88
Transfer between accounts	-	-	-	4
Total Receipts	**25,406**	**0**	**25,406**	**18,303**
Payments				
Donations paid (transferred)	10,500	0	10,500	29100
Insurance	269	0	269	260
Bank Charges	56	0	56	133
Other expenses	-	0	-	192
Refunds	-	0	-	60
Transfer between accounts	-	0	-	4
Total Receipts	**10,825**	**0**	**10,825**	**29,749**
Net Receipts	**14,581**	**0**	**14,581**	**-11446**
Cash funds last year end B/F	2,814	0	2,814	14,260
Cash funds this year end C/F	**17,395**	**0**	**17,395**	**2,814**



Mali Development Group
www.malidg.org
Charity number: 1088140

Linda King *(Chair)*
Judith Hartley *(Secretary) Email: secretary@malidg.org.uk*
Ken King *(Treasurer)*
Janice Hedge *(Communications Secretary)*

Other committee members:

John Hedge
Tim Hewes
Sue Upton
Wilfred Willey

Mali
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