

# Annual Review

2008 - 2009



# Our Vision

...is our driving force, it states the future Village Aid wants for those we work with:

***A world in which all people in Africa enjoy a peaceful society, a prosperous economy and a healthy environment***

# Our Mission

...is our unique contribution to making this vision a reality; it describes who Village Aid is, what we do and how we do it:

**Village Aid is an international development charity that empowers disadvantaged people in Africa to improve their own lives.**

**We achieve this by developing strong working relationships with local community based partners, supporting them to build their own capacity and to deliver grassroots programmes including:**

- Education and Learning
- Securing Livelihoods
- Advocacy and Justice

**In the UK we empower schools and their communities to engage with global issues through drama and participatory learning.**

## Introduction from the new Chief Executive

In the few months that I have been in post I have seen and heard about the real difference Village Aid makes to lives and communities in West Africa. The human stories and figures in this review illustrate the breadth and scale of the work that Village Aid supports through its partners. I feel privileged to become part of such valuable work and look forward to working with staff, partners, volunteers and funders to develop the impact of Village Aid's work in the coming years.

My enthusiasm and excitement have, of course, to be tempered by the fact that we are facing challenging economic times globally and this is having an impact

on ourselves, our partners and the communities we seek to help. For some countries, like Cameroon, just the changes in exchange rates means our partners are receiving 10% less in local currency than they did six months ago. Furthermore grant aid and economic earnings from exports are likely to decrease and it is those whose daily struggle is just to feed and clothe their families who are likely to be hit the hardest.

Your ongoing support is therefore even more important than ever. On behalf of all our partners, thank you for all that you have given to Village Aid over the last year whether this was money, time or simply sharing our interests and concerns. Whilst

we realise this is a difficult time for all, please do use the donation form on the inside rear cover to give additional funds to those in need in West Africa.

Thank you,

*Adrian Masters*  
Chief Executive



# Developing Relationships with Partners

Village Aid believes in equal partnerships. We don't like telling our partners what to do or how to do it. Instead we enable the communities to articulate what they want. We then support local grassroots organisations - our partners - to build their own capacity and develop programmes meeting the local needs they have identified.

## Learning from Each Other



Empowering African Organisations conference, Sierra Leone 2008

In November 2008, all partners attended a conference organised by SLYEO, in Sierra Leone entitled 'Empowering African

Organisations'. Experiences and skills were shared between partners, identifying learning and developing ideas that would contribute to the enhancement of their work.

## Our partners

### UK (HDI 21)

Village Aid

### Ghana (HDI 142)

Youth and Women Empowerment Organisation (YOWE)  
Simli Aid

### Cameroon (HDI 150)

Mbororo Social Cultural Development Association (MBOSCUDA)

### Nigeria (HDI 154)

Abanbeke Development Association (ADA)  
Eastern Obolo Community Development Foundation (EOCDF)

### The Gambia (HDI 160)

Agency for Village Support (AVISU)

### Sierra Leone (HDI 179)

Sierra Leone Youth Empowerment Organisation (SLYEO)  
Youth Alliance for Peace and Development (YAPAD)

The Human Development Index (HDI) is an index used to rank countries by level of development. It takes into consideration factors such as life expectancy, adult literacy, school enrolment rate and standard of living.

1 = Most Developed

179 = Least Developed

Source: [www.hdr.undp.org](http://www.hdr.undp.org)

## Building the Capacity of Partners

We believe that building the capacity of our local partners is crucial if they are to deliver high quality and effective programmes. By helping them develop their organisations, partners become more independent and less reliant on Village Aid.

During 2008, Village Aid worked hard to develop partner capacity. Partners accessed training in areas of IT and advocacy. YOWE, Simli and SLYEO accessed website development and were connected to broadband. Partners in The Gambia, Nigeria and Cameroon also received support with strategic planning and governance.

Simli set up an internet café using their broadband and some old computers which was open to paying customers. It proved successful in covering some staff wages and utility bills. Simli staff were also trained in fundraising and as a direct result, Simli has been successful in securing grants from other funders such as Simavi and the Methodist Relief Development Fund.



Agnes Ingwu from Nigeria sharing learning with partners

# Education and Learning

Improving self confidence and literacy for adults and children through community based learning circles



Mbororo women learn to read at a Reflect class

Reflect\* is a participatory learning method that enables people to learn what is relevant to them. It is facilitated by a trusted member of the community who has been trained by our local partner. Regular sessions are held and they focus on the particular issues of the community at that time.

\* Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques

Here are some of the people we supported in 2008:

## Cameroon

- 679 women were educated to read and write. They are now able to make decisions at home
- 12 women and young people with disabilities received treatment for their eyes and were given tricycles depending on their need

## Ghana

- 503 were attending Reflect classes regularly
- 25 community facilitators were trained in Reflect

## Sierra Leone

- 1,968 participants were in literacy circles
- 90% of facilitators are now fully trained primary teachers as a result of Reflect training

## The Gambia

- 1,538 individuals were supported in literacy circles
- 31 facilitators were recruited

## Growing in Confidence

Amina Saidu's Reflect group in Cameroon was keen to learn how to read, write and count. As with many of our beneficiaries, they were continuously being short-changed whilst going about their daily activities. By learning basic literacy, the group felt they would have more confidence to stand up for themselves.

On one occasion, a nurse tried to exploit Amina by overcharging her for a consultation. However, Amina insisted on knowing why she was being asked to pay so much. The nurse pointed to a contact list pretending that these were prices for consultations. Amina told the nurse, *"I can't see that sum, only names and contact numbers."* Realising that Amina could read the list, the nurse let her go. *"Without the knowledge I gained from Reflect sessions, I wouldn't have had the confidence to stand up to the nurse. I am putting what I learnt into practice."*



YOWE provided Beatrice with a wheelchair so she could be more independent

## Supporting the Most Vulnerable

Reflect aims to give a voice to the most excluded within a community. It educates those who have not been to school and so find conventional methods of learning ineffective.

Beatrice initially joined a government led literacy class in her community. She could not understand anything, she was not even able to identify numbers or letters. Her teacher soon became fed up and asked Beatrice to leave the class. *"I felt so bad and I cried when I saw others going to class."*

Due to her experience, she was reluctant to join the YOWE Reflect circle when it came to her community. *"The facilitator spent a long time trying to persuade me before I finally joined. The classes are simple and participatory and in no time I could write in basic Krobo, record things and lead discussions at circle meetings."*

£20

Make a difference

A £20 gift could pay for a community facilitator for one month

# Securing Livelihoods

Creating jobs, income and food for those living in challenging circumstances through enterprise training, micro-credit support and support with sustainable agriculture



Madam Christiana harvesting crops

Many of our beneficiaries are unable to get loans from the local banks as they do not have any assets. Village Aid provides loans and business training to communities where there is high unemployment. We support people who are determined to become independent and who want to make a positive difference in their lives.

## Sustainable Agriculture

Here are some of the people we supported in 2008:

### Nigeria

- ADA provided 659 women with credit to set up their businesses
- 48 young people were involved in vocational training and small business development
- 30 unemployed women have set up small retail businesses

### Ghana- YOWE

- 25 communities accessed livelihood training
- Micro-credit loans were given to 550 beneficiaries

### Sierra Leone

- 40 groups received loans for food production and trading
- 4,800 people started group saving schemes

### Cameroon

- MBOSCUA trained 480 women in business management and gave them loans to set up their businesses

### The Gambia

- AVISU helped 1,118 people set up their own businesses
- 503 people were provided with agricultural assistance and tree planting equipment

Madam Christiana from Nigeria received agricultural training in growing and harvesting crops and a micro-credit loan that enabled her to set up her own business, trading in groundnuts. "With the training and loan I received, I can now afford to feed my children and send them to school. My life has changed and my business is going well. Now, when problems like school fees or medical bills come up, I can loosen the tip of my wrapper\*."

The training Madam Christiana received has enabled her to become fully independent, whereas before, she was struggling to provide food for her children.

\* In Nigeria, "Loosening the tip of my wrapper" means a woman is able to pay cash on demand for the basic needs of life.

## Enterprise Training

Jeremiah, from Eastern Obolo, Nigeria, was struggling for many years to find work as a welder. Unemployment in his area is one of the highest in the country. When EOCDf started a project in his village they encouraged him to join one of their micro-credit groups where he received a loan of £100. Jeremiah was able to buy tools and build a small welding workshop at home. He has been very successful and was able to pay for his wife's tailor training whilst also putting his children in school. Jeremiah says "I would really like to help others grow to achieve their full potential in the way EOCDf did for me." This aspect of EOCDf's work is not directly funded by Village Aid at present. We are currently working to develop a micro-credit project in this area as there is an immediate need for additional support.



Workshop that Jeremiah built with support from EOCDf



A £100 gift could provide a micro-credit loan to help someone work their way out of poverty

# Justice and Advocacy

Enabling communities to fight injustice and challenge corruption by extending legal services and building confidence to defend rights

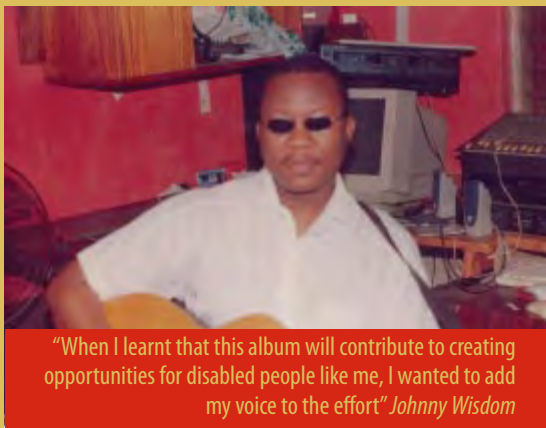
## Giving a Voice to the Voiceless

*"You that have the sickness called HIV  
What should we do?  
Let us embrace them  
We should not mock them  
Today it is them, tomorrow it could be you"*

YAPAD, with the support of local artists compiled a music album, taking popular songs and altering the content to highlight issues such as disability, HIV/AIDS and youth empowerment. The album is being distributed across the country, creating awareness about the issues vulnerable people face.

Village Aid supports advocacy campaigns that highlight the issues affecting the vulnerable and excluded within the community.

They focus on issues that many feel uncomfortable talking about, create awareness, provide facts and eliminate myths. Advocacy such as this has helped empower people to access their rights, fight inequality and demand respect.



*"When I learnt that this album will contribute to creating opportunities for disabled people like me, I wanted to add my voice to the effort" Johnny Wisdom*

Here are some of the people we supported in 2008:

### Sierra Leone

- 74 learning circles; 1,968 participants in 69 communities covered health topics such as HIV awareness and water sanitation
- 2,000 young people were educated in 40 communities on HIV/AIDS
- 12 HIV/AIDS awareness clubs have been formed
- 5,800 people were educated on the three Gender Acts passed by the Government

### Cameroon

- 135 people were advised on their human rights so they knew what to do if they were abused
- 4 students were sponsored to study law
- 4,383 people were educated in election participation, land registration and women's and children's rights

### Ghana

- 350 people were educated on maternal health, teenage pregnancy and abortion

## Accessing Justice

The loss of a husband is hard for anyone to deal with, but in many cultures, a woman who becomes a widow, not only loses her husband, but also her home. This was the case for four widows married to the same man in Cameroon.

Mary, Quirina, Esther and Elizabeth are from a village called Wum. When their husband died, the property was automatically handed over to his eldest son who sold it. The women and the 21 children they had between them were chased away from their home.

Through the help of MBOSCUDA, the women were able to secure a human rights lawyer who represented them in court. The women won the case and gained back their family home and farm land.

Women receiving legal advice in Cameroon



**£50**  
Make a donation

A £50 gift could help resolve a legal issue

# UK Programme

In the UK we encourage schools and their communities to engage with global issues through drama and participatory learning

## World Class Act

World Class Act was drawing to a close in 2008 and it was a huge success. Through the use of drama, World Class Act raised awareness and understanding of the issues of world poverty amongst secondary school pupils and youth groups. Last year, young people in Derby became Ambassadors for Change at our Spring Holiday Drama Academy, helping Village Aid to raise awareness and understanding of the challenges people in Africa face today. Young people aged 8 - 14 explored the Millennium Development Goals whilst also learning African drumming, dancing and singing, devising their own stories and performing an original piece to a public audience of 100 people.



"All the World's a Stage" participants giving an "African clap"

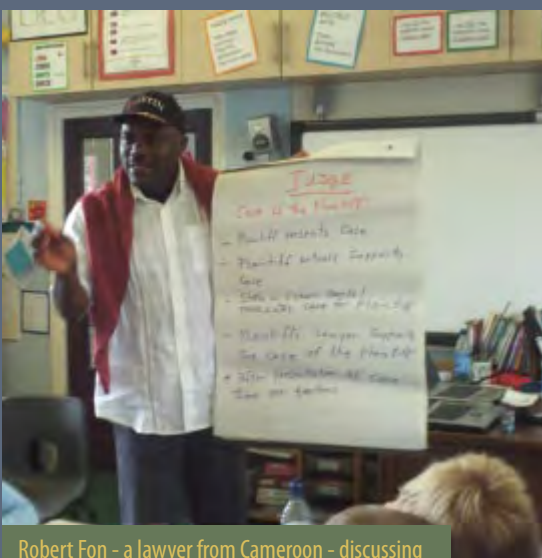
"There is so much going on in the world which I had no clue about ... It taught me a lot about problems and how we could prevent them from happening." *Year 9 pupil, Lees Brook Secondary School*

"He gained knowledge that is not available at school...Thank you very much for your efforts." *Parent of a participating child at All the World's a Stage*

### In 2008 the UK programme involved...

- 9 Secondary Schools
- 1,200 young people
- 39 teachers
- 9 African performance partners
- Groups have delivered performances to community audiences totalling more than 595 people

## Growing Global



Robert Fon - a lawyer from Cameroon - discussing human rights case studies with the children at Taddington & Priestcliffe Primary School

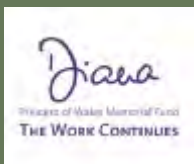
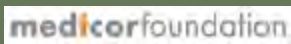
In 2008, we expanded our excellent development education initiative, creating a new and unique global learning experience for rural primary schools. It aims to engage junior aged pupils in global issues through drama and storytelling. Research projects took place in two Derbyshire schools and sessions are now being offered to rural primary schools around the region.



"The Growing Global project has been wonderful! The children have got a real insight into village life in West Africa. They've remembered a lot through their games and drama. They now have a really good understanding, they've got an empathy with the children of West Africa as opposed to just thinking of the practicalities, they've really thought about how those children and their families feel about the options that they face in their daily lives and how they might deal with it if they were in that situation."

# Overview from the Chair

In 2008 Village Aid received support from many donors including: Comic Relief, DFID, The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, Medicor Foundation and The Baring Foundation



As this report demonstrates, 2008 has been another excellent year. I hope you enjoy the stories from our partners showing how Village Aid continues to empower people and communities in West Africa to change their own lives for the better.

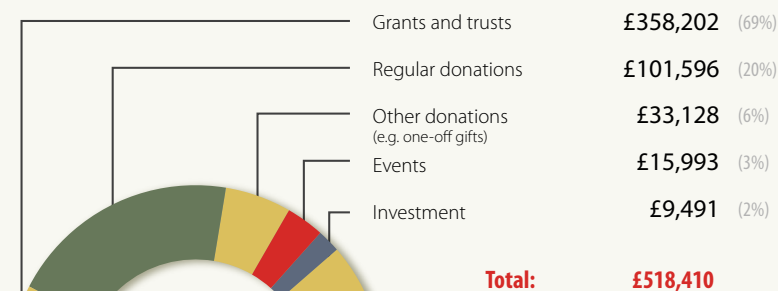
Learning and advocacy are increasingly important features of our work, whether through our UK programme, where school's awareness of African issues is being extended into primary schools, or the 'Empowering African Organisations' conference where all our African partners met one another and exchanged learning experiences on all their programmes, thereby establishing guidelines for best practice.

From a financial perspective we spent more in 2008 than we received. This is primarily due to the phasing of income and expenditure against large grants from major funders. We are expecting that it will be harder to maintain and develop our income over the next few years due to changes in the grant making policies of major funders and the overall economic situation. As Adrian said in his introduction, your continued support will be more important than ever before.

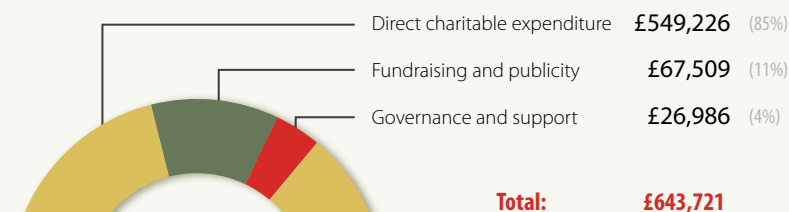
This overview would not be complete without a tribute to Susanne Garnett who left Village Aid at the end of 2008. Susanne joined us in 2002 and saw Village Aid through a period of considerable growth as well as pioneering the establishment of the UK development education programme. Her friendly approach and lively manner were the visible face of Village Aid to all our contacts and we are immensely grateful for all that she achieved.

Susanne has been succeeded by Adrian Masters who has an extensive background in charitable work. His energy is already apparent as he makes himself known to staff, volunteers, members and funders alike.

James Kellie



## Where Village Aid money came from in 2008



## How Village Aid spent its money in 2008

## Board of Trustees 2008

James Kellie – Chair	Margaret Ince
Hajara Allison	<i>(resigned Feb 08)</i>
<i>(appointed Dec 08)</i>	Andrea Ingram
Alan Davies	<i>(appointed Dec 08)</i>
Peter Dent – Treasurer	Graham Jones
Caroline Dobinson	<i>(resigned Sept 08)</i>
Kate French	Tony Okotie
Melanie Gingell	<i>(appointed Oct 08)</i>
<i>(appointed Dec 08)</i>	Sarli Sardou Nana
Nick Gregory	<i>(appointed Dec 08)</i>
<i>(resigned Sep 08)</i>	

# Support Village Aid's work

Please help Village Aid to continue to make a difference to some of West Africa's poorest people and communities

*A small amount of money can make a big difference, for instance:*

£100

£100 in Nigeria or Ghana could enable a group of four or five vulnerable women to establish an income generating farm and lift themselves and their families out of poverty. Provided as a micro-credit loan it can be used to purchase seeds, tools, equipment and to pay for initial land rental.

£50

£50 in Cameroon could overturn a decision taken by a local chief to deny a widow access to her husband's estate by paying the court costs of a legal challenge.

£20

£20 in Sierra Leone or The Gambia could develop the literacy skills and confidence of 25 vulnerable women by supporting a skilled community-based facilitator to run a learning circle.



Women developing their literacy skills in Ghana

Send your completed form below to:

Village Aid  
FREEPOST DY559  
Bakewell  
Derbyshire  
DE45 9BR

*Yes, I would like to help empower lives in West Africa...*

## 1 STANDING ORDER FORM

Bank name and address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PAY VILLAGE AID £  EVERY MONTH / QUARTER / YEAR  
(delete as appropriate)

ON THE  DAY OF THE MONTH STARTING FROM   
(e.g. "12th") (enter start date)

Account name:

Sort code:

Account number:

Signature:

Date:

**BANK USE ONLY:**

Please pay to 'Village Aid', Account Number: 13845244,

Bank: Royal Bank of Scotland, Sort Code: 161224

Ref:

\* Village Aid keeps names and addresses of its supporters on computer for the purposes of keeping them up to date with our work and we promise not to pass your details on to other organisations.

Please tick here if you would prefer not to be contacted by Village Aid.

## OR ONE-OFF GIFT

£100  £50  £20 Other amount:

I enclose a cheque made payable to Village Aid.  
Alternatively visit the Village Aid website and donate via credit or debit card via a secure server ([www.villageaid.org](http://www.villageaid.org))

## 2 ABOUT YOU

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

POSTCODE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are a tax payer please complete the Gift Aid declaration below so that we can claim an extra 28p for every pound you donate

## 3 GIFT AID

I am a UK tax payer and want Village Aid to claim tax on this and all subsequent donations that I make. I understand I must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax in the relevant tax year equal to any tax reclaimed by Village Aid for that period. I will tell Village Aid if I am no longer a tax payer.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

*giftaid it*

# A big thank you!

Village Aid has wonderful supporters who raise money for our work in West Africa. We would like to extend a huge thank you to all of you for all the hard work, energy and effort you put into raising money for so many fantastic projects. Here are just a few of them.

*"Doing a 10k was a big challenge for me. Thinking of Village Aid and their amazing work when I was ready to give up really helped me through."*

Noemi Salvaudon - Great Yorkshire Run

On 5<sup>th</sup> July Village Aid is celebrating 20 years of our work in West Africa by walking in the Peak District and Getting Active for Africa! There are two distances to choose from and a children's walk. If you are interested in taking part, get in touch.

*"The Village Aid volunteers wanted to do something special. Lots of us like walking, Africans in rural communities walk a lot, so we came up with the idea of a Charity Walk!"*

Sue Walker - Get Active for Africa walk

*"It was great to be able to raise money for Village Aid. I have seen first hand the impact this type of work can have."*

Murray Lambell - London Triathlon

This year Jemma Jones is doing the London Triathlon. You can sponsor Jemma at <http://www.justgiving.com/jemmajonestriathlon>

Soroptomist International of Derby held an Auction of Treasures.

*"We decided we wanted to support a water project in Cameroon, so knowing that Village Aid works in Cameroon, we thought they could identify an appropriate village to receive our aid."*

Celia Beizsley - Soroptomist International of Derby

*"Last year, I undertook research on AVISU, I saw first hand, the valuable contribution Village Aid makes in supporting the lives of those living in the poverty stricken rural areas of The Gambia."*

Jemma Jones - London Triathlon

Walk Talk for Africa, supported by Nando's restaurants is taking place from 9<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> August, walking from Leeds to London, in support of Village Aid and VA32 South. To take part in this event please contact [jacquihogan2000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jacquihogan2000@yahoo.co.uk)

*"I joined Village Aid in 1988 and became part of a dynamic group of volunteers. Since then, Village Aid has grown beyond our wildest dreams. I am inspired, as a volunteer, by what has been achieved in 20 years."*

Stephanie Adams - Village Aid volunteer

*"We are doing this to raise awareness of the difficulties some people face in Africa and to raise funds for the charities that are doing their best to support them."*

Tina Hardy - Walk Talk for Africa



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