



# Village Aid Annual Report

2007 - 2008

# Welcome to the Village Aid Annual Report

All of these phrases have been used about Village Aid's work in the last year:

**practical, progressive projects in Africa, which put people first**

**African development from African roots**

**giving people the chance to make their voices heard and their hard work bring just rewards**

**a hand up not a hand out...**

Some of them were first used eighteen years ago, when Village Aid started. They all still hold true today!

Our core values and mission remain the same as in 1989. This is how we express them today:

## Mission

***Village Aid works with people in Africa to secure long term positive change in their lives***

## Vision

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

International Development professionals often talk of "outcomes". Of course Village Aid, our supporters and funders in the UK, and our implementing partners and friends in Africa, all look for positive and practical outcomes to their project initiatives and hard work.

But facts and figures alone don't tell the whole story. In this Annual

Report, which covers our work over the last fifteen months and presents the summary financial accounts for 2007, we hope pictures as well as words and numbers convey some of the complex and encouraging stories of hope and struggle which have shaped our work and our partners' activities, as together we pursue our mission.



■ **Susanne Garnett**  
Executive Director

# Partners and Beneficiaries

Not just development jargon, but real people! Our partners are community based organisations local to the African countries where we concentrate our development support.

These are largely youthful, idealistic small organisations, staffed by a younger generation of African activists, both men and women, who want to see their continent develop and benefit from its own rich resources and cultural heritage.

Village Aid explored partnership as the main theme of a major conference we organised in June 2007, when staff from four different countries, and organisations, met together to strengthen our network and improve our understanding.

One important outcome was a new Partnership Agreement which is

now the foundation document setting out agreed rights and responsibilities in all our partner relationships.

Village Aid believes strongly in the autonomy of our partners and their right to self determination. We want to do business with them as respected colleagues and co-workers, and get away from any notions of paternalism, neo-colonialism or patronage.

Friendship and fun however still have a central role to play in our relationships, and our visiting partners, housed in Sheffield University halls of residence had time and opportunity to socialise with us and each other in their two week visit. An external facilitator ran the programme and led a partner driven evaluation of Village Aid's performance. ■



*Working to feed the family*

*“ Village Aid believes strongly in the autonomy of our partners and their right to self determination ”*



*Friendship and fun have a central role in our partnerships*

# Working with women

for access to land and water. Forests for their future.



*Watering the organic gardens in The Gambia*



*Village Aid has enabled many widows to gain access to their land*

## Who is a typical Village Aid “beneficiary”?

She is a rural young woman farmer in West Africa today.

She might be a member of a literary circle in any of our five partner countries, a teenage mother, perhaps a wife of a much older man. Village Aid’s partner

organisations have helped her battle against the barriers of prejudice, poverty and poor health care. She carries water twice daily from a polluted stream a kilometre away. She rises before dawn to prepare food, wash clothes, work in the maize field, pound rice and yams, and care for her children.

She has never been to school, but she wants her children to enrol and her younger sisters to get to school as well, and stay in education. She is excited by the literacy learning circle she has joined, the

discussions, the drama, the singing and dancing, the learning to read and write... She wants to use this new knowledge to open a small grocery store in her remote village...

She is strong, resourceful and full of hope. The future rests on her shoulders. ■



*Community gardens create livelihoods and are an opportunity to gain skills*

### In 2007 Village Aid supported:

	Literacy Circles	Enterprise groups
The Gambia	20	45
Ghana	30	40
Cameroon	30	45
Sierra Leone	60	45
Nigeria	0	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>187</b>

# Empowerment to all

through learning for all

Rashid Bawah has visited Village Aid twice over the last twelve months. Firstly to the partner conference, then in Spring 2008 as a valued contributor to our World Class Act Spring Academy held in Derby. This was a highlight of a very successful year for our drama based UK global education awareness raising project, headed up by Helen Hunter.

African children and their stories have informed young people in Derbyshire about the millennium development goals and

increased knowledge, understanding and empathy for young people in West Africa.

Rashid, a highly experienced dramatist, radio presenter and "Reflect" Literacy trainer, works for SIMLI, a partner organisation based in Tamale, Ghana.

While with us in the UK, he explained some of the challenges facing women in Ghana. ■

## Simli, Northern Ghana...

- Employs 150 facilitators
- Works in 75 communities
- Has helped over 2250 people
- Addresses negative traditions (e.g. young marriage, through literacy circles and broadcasting them on radio

“A mother will spend up to 6 hours a day fetching and carrying water. You may ask why don't they move nearer the water? They do. Water holes dry up because of human activities, and women have to walk further and further year after year.”

*Rashid Bawah*



Adult learning under-pins our work

In July 2007, Josephine Sackey, the Director of Drama Network, also in Ghana, visited Village Aid to support the first **World Class Act** holiday activity week, "Over the Hills and Far Away". This explored the historical and current connections between West Africa and the industrial valleys of Derbyshire, and resulted in a lively drama written by the children who took part and spanning three hundred years, and two thousand miles! ■



Josephine Sackey helps compare daily life in Ghana and England

# Investing in people

and their potential

Starting a new project is always exciting - when it's in a new partner country, it's doubly so! In 2007 Village Aid opened a new important partnership with a group of widows and single mothers, The Abanbeke Development Association in Cross River State, South Eastern Nigeria. Its director is Agnes Ingwu.

“Although Abanbeke Development Association (ADA) has been working since 1986, it has never had international support. The year 2007 was therefore a remarkable one for ADA because Village Aid saw our potential and helped us with our activities.”

*Agnes Ingwu, ADA Director*



*Young women entrepreneurs helped by Drama Network in Ghana's Eastern region*

Enterprise development, using small group loans to start up business has been a success also in Cameroon, where we continue to work in partnership with Comic Relief and Mboscuda NorthWest.

In 2007 the midterm evaluation conducted by Village Aid in Cameroon found the following statistics:

## Credit and enterprise development

18 more loans have been provided to enterprise groups with over 300 members

Most groups are trading in household and food provisions, many of which are the first shops in some very remote communities

The monitoring process shows a repayment rate of 87%

## Mboscuda Reflect circles

32 literacy circles held once a week

99% of learners are women

99% are Mbororo

20% of facilitators are women



## Para-legal work

Majority of cases deal with farmer/grazer land disputes

From March 2005 to March 2007, over 460 different cases have been resolved without resorting to police or court action

The programme has supported over 2500 people to register to vote.

Mbororo candidates are now standing for the main parties in local elections, resulting in Mbororo representation on state decision-making bodies

# Nigeria

## Micro Credit

40 small retail businesses set up

12 women's groups have set up small scale farms

Demonstration site set up for agricultural training

Community forest regeneration site set up

## Social exclusion

30 widows have acquired access to land previously denied by traditional law

Conferences tackling traditional views on inheritance

## Increasing Education

88 young mothers are now paying school fees for their children

Youth seminars held in 5 communities on health issues

11 orphans supported at school

Computer training for unemployed young people

# Cameroon

# Challenging injustice and corruption

freedom of speech

The quality of life for many people depends on peace and good governance, and Village Aid has put a great deal of effort into promoting these. In Sierra Leone, the General Elections took place in 2007, peacefully, for a second time, only five years after the end of an eleven year, brutal civil war!

Compared to some other countries, a second change of government happened peacefully, and a transition took place to a newly elected administration. Many struggling young people felt their voices were heard for the first time, and that was partly due to the work undertaken by

two key Village Aid partnership groups within the country.

The Sierra Leone Youth Empowerment Organisation, and the Youth Alliance for Peace and Development worked with Village Aid's support, and with funding channelled through us from the British Government's Department for International Development, (DFID) and the Diana, Princess of Wales, Memorial Fund.

They ran education and awareness raising campaigns to urge participation through the ballot box, not street violence or corruption. They did this with radio

programmes, music, song writing, posters and T shirt promotions, and travelled all over the country, encouraging young people to make their voices heard.

In spite of the lack of employment prospects and acute struggles of many young people, the fact that violence was averted and street chaos was kept to a minimum, is a credit to their hard work.



*Dave Phillips and students from The University of Sheffield partner Gambian people to challenge injustice*



*Good governance can help to overcome injustice for groups suffering discrimination*

# Overview

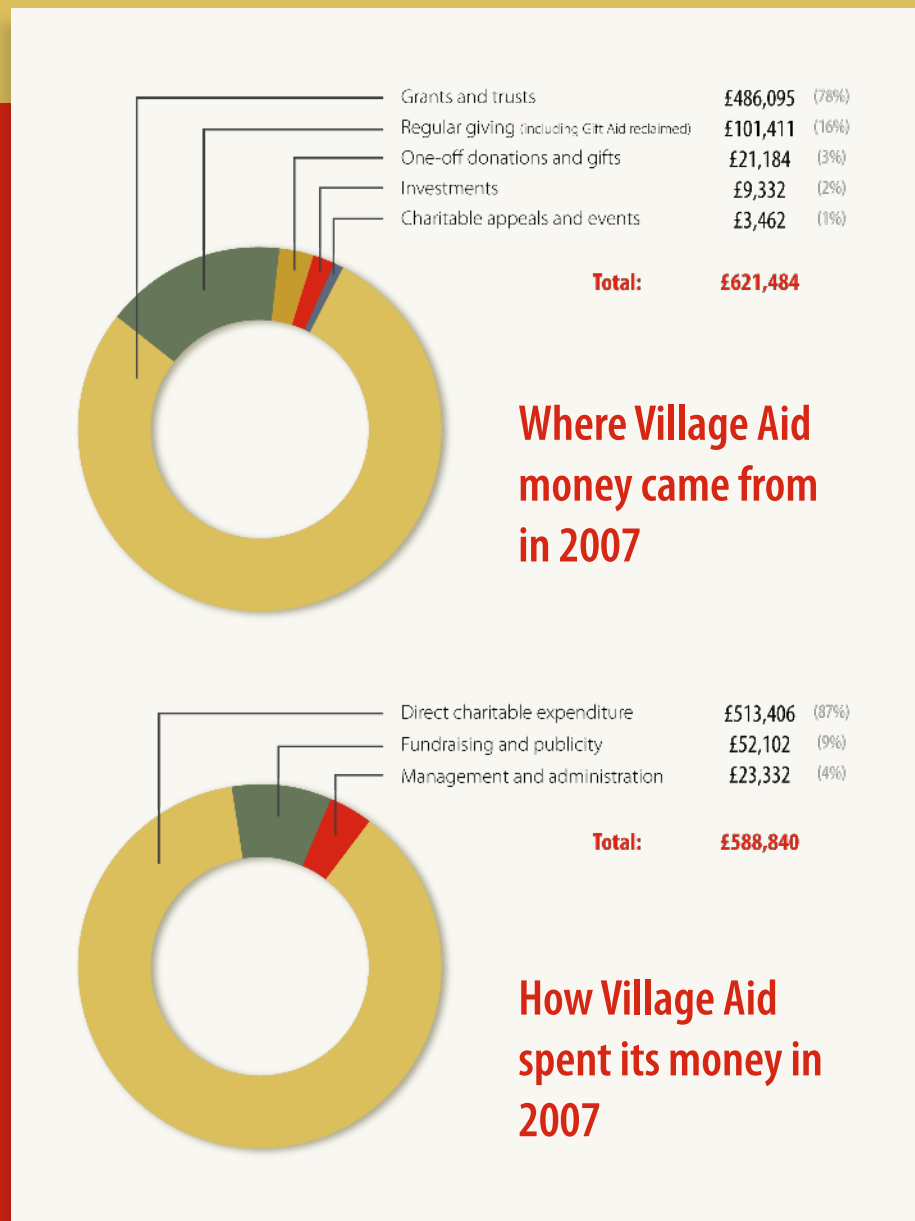
## Message from the Chair

This has been an exciting year for Village Aid despite the reduced financial turnover in our 2007 accounts. You can see the variety of activities in this report and how benefits are not measured by money alone. Our new vision and mission statements voice this excitement.

The expanded initiative in Derbyshire schools is aimed at improving knowledge of Africa and awareness of successes as well as needs; I find it frustrating that so little media attention has been given to successful elections in Sierra Leone when so much has been given to problems in Zimbabwe. There are still many problems to solve in all the countries where we work but only paying attention when things go wrong is not the way to solve these problems.

Although finance does not tell the whole story, it is still vital and we are very grateful to all our supporters and funders. Without you, these results would not have been possible but in an increasingly difficult climate for charities we ask you all to continue and if possible increase your support.

James Kellie



Village Aid  
Unit 1B Riverside Business Park  
Buxton Road  
Bakewell  
Derbyshire  
DE45 1GS

Tel: (+44) 01629 814434  
Fax: (+44) 01629 812272  
Email: [info@villageaid.org](mailto:info@villageaid.org)  
Web: [www.villageaid.org](http://www.villageaid.org)

In 2007 Village Aid received support from many donors including: Comic Relief, DFID, The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, and The Baring Foundation



The Baring Foundation



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