



**Supporter
Review 2019**



Village Aid supported over 500,000 people in West Africa in 2019, the vast majority of whom were women and girls



Foreword from the Chair.....4

Message from United Purpose.....5

Our 2017-18 highlights.....6

Snapshots from our work:

 Ghana.....8

 Cameroon.....9

 Senegal.....10

A lasting legacy:

 Cameroon.....11

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Page 1: Jason Florio
Page 8: Jason Florio
Page 9: UP Cameroon
Page 10: Jason Florio
Page 11: UP Cameroon
Back page: Jason Florio



Foreword from the Chair

On behalf of our team of Village Aid Trustees I would like to warmly welcome everyone to the 2019 Supporter Review.

It is a real pleasure to volunteer my time as a trustee to Village Aid – and I'm delighted to introduce some of the highlights and achievements from the past year. Most importantly, I hope you will enjoy reading about the impact that we are continuing to have across rural communities in West Africa, thanks to our vital strategic partnership with United Purpose.

Village Aid has always been driven by a strong sense of purpose. We have always been deeply committed to supporting transformative change – the kind of change that shifts hearts and minds – in the poorest rural communities. And we have always been driven by a strong conviction that collaboration with others who share our vision, values and guiding purpose is the only way to bring about that change.

Now, more than ever, rural communities in the poorest parts of West Africa are having to adapt and respond to some of the most intractable challenges of the 21st century. Perhaps none are more significant for the planet than vulnerability due to climate change, which highlights the profound importance of the sustainable stewardship of vital natural resources like land, water and forests.

We couldn't do our work without the incredible generosity and kindness of Village Aid's supporters – and I would like to offer a heartfelt 'thank you' on behalf of all of the Trustees! We hope you enjoy the 2019 Supporter Review.



Dr Kemal Shaheen
Chair of Village Aid



Kemal joined the Village Aid board at the end of 2017 but his involvement in, and commitment to, this very special charity dates back further to 2010. Volunteering at first, he eventually joined full time as Africa Programme Officer in 2011 and served as Chief Executive Officer from 2012.

Message from United Purpose

It has been another busy and fulfilling year for United Purpose and Village Aid. We are delighted that our continued partnership is continuing to have a hugely positive impact on the communities we work with in West Africa. We hope you will enjoy reading about some of our key achievements from 2019 in this Supporter Review.

We are deeply passionate about our community-led approach, which puts people in the driving seat of their own development and ultimately leaves them with agency over their own lives. We believe it is only this that will enable those living in some of the world's most challenging places to move beyond aid.

In this Supporter Review, you will learn about how we are building bridges between communities that have been in conflict over natural resources in Cameroon, as well as helping to protect vital water sources for those communities. You will also discover how we are strengthening environmental governance through the sustainable management of community forests in Senegal. And you will find out how our women-led social enterprise in an arid region of Ghana has improved livelihoods and food security.

Over the past year, UP reached 3 million people – over 500,000 of whom were in West Africa, the vast majority female. None of this would have been possible without our partnership with Village Aid, which raised an income of £94,000 in 2018-19. Thank you so much to all of our donors, supporters and volunteers for helping us to make this possible.

Tim Kellow

Village Aid Trustee

UP Country Director of Senegal, The Gambia and Cameroon



Village Aid merged with United Purpose in 2015. We retain our own independent Board and registered charity status and we work together on projects, financial processing and fundraising to reduce our overheads, share learning and increase our impact.

Our highlights

None of the innovative and brilliant work we do could be done without the wonderful people and communities who fundraise and volunteer here in the UK to support Village Aid. We'd like to say a huge thank you to all of those who have supported us, and made a real difference to the lives of people in rural West Africa over the past year.

Perhaps you organised an open garden event, a fashion show or you took part in the Sheffield Half Marathon or provided valuable monitoring and evaluation support. Or maybe you hosted a bake sale, bought a Christmas pudding, spoke at an event on our behalf or simply helped to spread the word about just how brilliant Village Aid is. Whatever it was, you have all done some pretty incredible things and we couldn't do what we do without your support. *Thank you.*



Sheffield Half Marathon

A big thank you to all our runners who took part in the Sheffield Half Marathon on behalf of Village Aid – they exceeded their fundraising targets and raised an incredible
£3,222

ebay™
GIVE @ CHECKOUT

We took part in Ebay's 'Give at Checkout' scheme again, which raised
£2,103.71

2018



We developed a successful retail line which included cards, tea towels, notebooks and our own Village Aid Christmas puddings



£200 was kindly donated by the Over Haddon Well Dressing Committee, following our creation of this beautiful well dressing



The University of Sheffield's Gospel Choir Christmas concert raised us **£157**

Snapshots from our work

Village Aid will be funding three vital projects in West Africa over the coming financial year in Ghana, Cameroon and Senegal, respectively.



Northern Ghana Shea, Ghana

Ghana has made considerable progress in reducing poverty. Despite this, there is growing inequality as the gap between the rich and poor widens. Poor households lack food for around a quarter of each year. In bad years, this rises to more than half the year with little or no food. Access to financial services is scarce, with 78% of rural families lacking access to even the most basic financial services.

In Ghana, we work with United Purpose and Northern Ghana Shea to build women's skills in high quality shea butter production, and then support them to reinvest profits into community development initiatives of their own making. We support communities to link to buyers, which provides them with a regular, reliable income. This improves access to markets for rural women, ensuring they receive fair prices for their nuts and butter.

Zainabu (pictured above) is just one of the many women we have supported through our shea butter project. A widow with seven children, Zainabu has found this project a real lifeline for herself and her family: "This project has helped me make more income for my household expenses," she says. "The money I make keeps food on the table to feed my children and also pays their school fees."



Bridging the Gap, Cameroon

Cameroon has a population of 22 million and one of the highest literacy rates on the continent, but the communities living there face many challenges. In North West Cameroon, more than half of the people survive on less than \$1.25 per day and life expectancy is just 55 years. Against a wider backdrop of political tension between French and English speakers, there is increasing competition over access to land and water between Mbororo cattle herders (a semi-nomadic minority) and crop farmers.

Funded by the EU, we're working in partnership with MBOSCUDA, a local human rights organisation, to reduce conflict between the cattle herder and crop farmer communities. Through our EU- funded project, 'Bridging the Gap', we're promoting intercultural dialogue with a view to reducing conflict and ending the marginalisation of minorities, youth and women in the North West region.



**It's because of this project
that we now live in peace with
the farmers"**

Manou, cattle herder





GoEco, Senegal

Senegal has a long history of stable governments and civilian rule, but ongoing, low-level conflict has been rife in the Casamance region of the country since 1982. Competition for natural resources, combined with fear and mistrust, means communities remain isolated from each other and are reluctant to work together to solve the common problems they are facing.

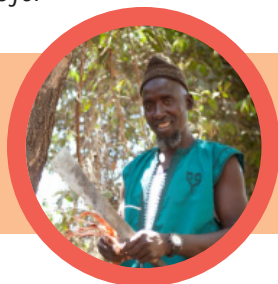
We believe that one of the most successful ways to combat poverty and rebuild community cohesion is for people to work together on small, community-driven livelihood projects. Through EU funding, we're working with United Purpose and a local organisation to help communities improve their livelihoods and preserve the valuable forests in the region.

The project has already helped create 1,909 'green' jobs in fields such as fish processing, organic salt farming, soap making, shoe making, bio charcoal, furniture making, beekeeping and the processing of forest fruits such as hibiscus and sesame seeds. 12 forests are now under community management and 14,200 trees have been planted as a result.

Meet Bakary Jallow, a member of the management committee for his community forest. He says:



The most significant change is that people's attitudes have completely changed towards the forest because everybody, female and male, has equal rights and benefits from the forest."



A lasting legacy

We are delighted to share the incredible impact of our recent project in Cameroon...



In Search of Common Ground for Peaceful Livelihoods, Cameroon

Until recently, 85% of people in Akum – a remote, rural farming community in the ‘conflict hotspot’ Santa district of North West Cameroon – were collecting their drinking water from streams, rivers or unprotected wells.

In the dry season, women and girls would have to walk around two and a half hours, up to four times a day, to collect water from unsafe sources polluted by livestock. This lack of water often caused illness (cholera, typhoid and diarrhoea) and prevented the girls from going to school. It also led to violent conflict between cattle herding and crop farming communities.

Thanks to our ‘In Search of Common Ground’ project, funded by Big Lottery and implemented by our local partner MBOSCUA, 1,731 people living in Akum now have access to clean water (647 men, 684 women and 400 children). The project has also vastly improved relations between the cattle herding and crop farming communities as they work together to jointly manage the water scheme.

“ Not having to carry water for an hour a day has made a huge difference to the women in our community”
Amina, member of the water management committee in her village



Get involved

Every mile you run, cycle or walk, every minute you volunteer and every penny you raise will enable communities in rural West Africa to forge bright futures, not just for themselves but for future generations too. So what are you waiting for?

To find out about how you can support or fundraise for Village Aid, please visit www.villageaid.org or email: info@villageaid.org to find out more.



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Village Aid is a member of the United Purpose family.
www.united-purpose.org