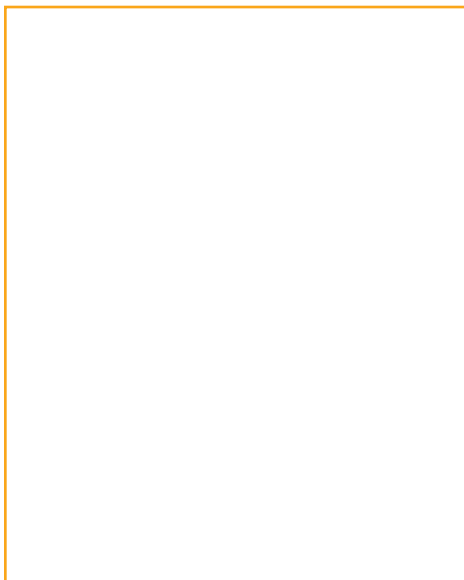


# Village Aid

## Annual Report 2006



## Chair's Message...

After three years of continuous growth 2006 has been a year of consolidation with a slightly lower Africa expenditure than 2005. In part this has been due to the phasing of grants, but there have also been exciting new initiatives in all the countries where we work.

In The Gambia a new independent partner, AVISU, has formed to replace the last Village AiD subsidiary. They are already initiating new projects which include a new emphasis on forestry aided by a private funder. We expect this to become a much larger project as part of a greater ecological involvement which we have identified as a longer term strategic goal. Although it has not hit the headlines to the same extent as the Amazon rainforest, West Africa has suffered considerable deforestation which in Gambia has been estimated at 90%.

In Ghana, aid finance becomes difficult as the country is regarded as increasingly prosperous; a victim of its own success! This does increase the urgent need for continuing aid in the areas of deprivation where we work. We are keen to foster sustainable trade as part of our micro credit operations and are looking for sources of new finance to push this forward.

In Cameroon, excellent work is being done by our partners in the northwest and I saw this for myself when I visited them in August 2006. New aid programmes are hampered by the erratic politics of the NGO sector there but we are searching for ways to build on the excellent partnership that we have built up in the North West province. We are also looking for ways to work with other partners such as the Forest People in the South who face similar marginalisation to the Mbororo in the North West.

In April 2007, Susanne Garnett and I visited partner communities in Sierra Leone and admired the positive energy the people are exerting in their efforts to rebuild the nation after the civil war and rise from poverty.

Another new initiative has been our UK educational programme, 'A World Class Act' which is introducing social drama projects similar to those used by our partners in Africa. This begins to fulfil a strategic goal at Village AiD to promote better awareness and understanding of Africa in the UK, and is connecting us with lively young people in both places..

We have also started a small adult learning and micro-credit initiative with young widows in Eastern Nigeria (bordering NW Cameroon) through a small group led by Agnes Ingwu whom George Ferguson has known from his years as a VSO volunteer there. This shows how important wider networking is to our progress.

Overall, I hope this very brief overview shows that the reduction in African expenditure shown in our accounts does not imply a reduction in effort or delivery of benefits to West Africa.

I would just like to close by thanking all members, staff and volunteers who have contributed to Village Aid's success whether financially or by their work and also to remind people of the value of the financial contribution that supporters make. This money finances our core costs which are not covered by our major funders, contributes to many larger projects, and enables us to finance more speculative small initiatives such as the Nigerian project, which may become a pilot for the future.

We do worry that despite Village Aid's growth the number of people making a regular committed gift is not rising. These are the core of our income support. I do ask you all therefore to consider whether you could increase your subscription this year, and maybe also introduce new members. This will help secure our future, and those of our partner communities in Africa.

**James Kellie**

**During 2006,** our main activities were as follows...

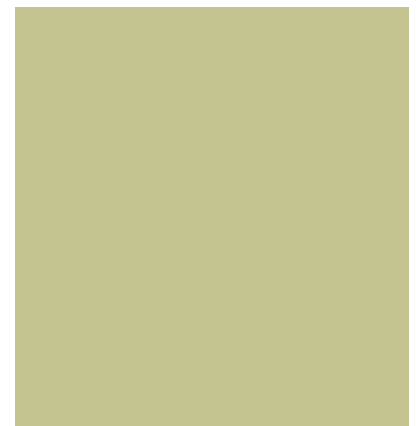
# Capturing the Learning...

As a small organisation, Village AiD concentrates the majority of its resources on working with our partners to benefit the poor. Whilst this is necessary to maximise the positive impact of each project, it means that until recently Village AiD has had little time to step back to compare the work of one partner with another and capture the learning from each project effectively so that others can benefit.

From 2006 Village AiD has been the recipient of a three year grant from the Baring Foundation which has allowed us to review our partners' programmes, compare the alternative approaches used in different contexts and understand the reasons for different success rates of projects. From this process Village AiD is producing best practice papers covering the five main themes of its work - economic, political, environmental, health and legal literacy.

These papers will be used by Village AiD and our African partners to compare, contrast and learn from each others' development practices, and to approach UK academic institutions, donors and businesses who may be interested in Village AiD's work.

An important part of this process will be the 2007 Village AiD partners' conference. This two week long event will involve all of Village AiD's African partners coming together in the UK to discuss each others' work, develop stronger partnerships and meet people in the UK interested in development. This will end with a public conference in Sheffield on 30th June where Village AiD members and the public can get involved in sessions exploring the problems faced by African people and the techniques used by our partner organisations to address them.



**During 2006,** our main activities were as follows...

# The Gambia...

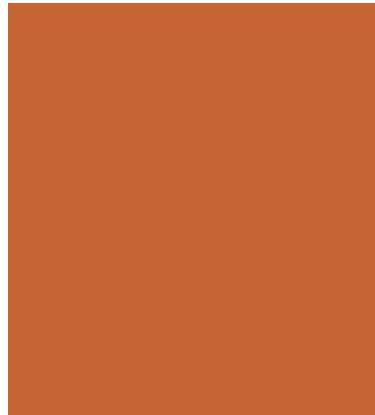
Kebba Lowe, the Programme Manager, has successfully overseen the registration of a Lower Saloum based NGO called Agency for Village Support in The Gambia (AVISU). Seven board members were identified and enrolled to support the registration process. Nuhu Salihu, our Africa programme coordinator responsible for The Gambia programme, was invited to join the board as an interim mechanism for managing the transfer of functions and decision-making between Village AiD and AVISU. Kebba continues to show leadership and commitment.

AVISU's networking is beginning to open new opportunities, for example on-going consultations with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) have led to the development of a project which if funded will enrol AVISU in the fold of partners CRS works with in The Gambia. Before now CRS has only worked with a select number of NGOs there.

Work is on-going on building websites for all our NGO partners Gambia Food and Nutrition Association: - [www.gafna.gm](http://www.gafna.gm), the National Association of Cooperative Credit Unions of The Gambia - [www.naccug.gm](http://www.naccug.gm), and AVISU - [www.avisu-thegambia.gm](http://www.avisu-thegambia.gm). Village AiD has secured £200,000 for a new 5-year development programme

(coming on the back of a 5-year DFID funded project). This new project focuses on 40 rural communities in three Districts (Lower Saloum, Upper Saloum and Nianija) of the Central River Division. It aims to support the scale-up of a literacy programme, which promotes learning, community action and low input, organic and sustainable approaches to agriculture. It also aims to promote the sustainable use of "community forests" resources such as wood which is used for cooking and house construction thereby contributing to environmental protection. One of our regular supporters, following a visit to The Gambia, made a generous donation of £16,000 to support an agro-forestry project, which is now funding 3 tree nurseries and bee keeping projects.

However, one of the biggest achievements for this programme has been the recruitment and enrolment of women working on the programme. This has come a long way in terms of having the right balance between female and male staff and community resource persons. At moment the programme has 4 female staff (2 at senior level) and 14 women working as community resource persons (facilitators).



- a. Michelle in Simbara orchard.
- b. Gamo, a community resource person in Jahaur.
- c. Pair of Jimbala dancers.
- d. Tree nurseries, wells & women working on a garden.

# Cameroon...

The programme in Cameroon which focuses on Mbororo cattle herders and their organisation is approaching the end of the second year of a Comic Relief funded 5-year project. George Ferguson travelled to Cameroon in May 2007 to support a mid term evaluation as part of his introduction to the programme. This visit facilitated a greater cross-over between Village AiD staff in supporting the Africa programme. Our partner in North West (MBOSCUDA) held an Ordinary General Assembly meeting in November 2006 at which a new board was elected (made of a mixture of old members and new faces).

MBOSCUDA has become split into two main factions—a national group made of elites with strong political agendas and the North West Province with a growing number of interested funding agencies and grassroots projects.

In the last year the UN development programme (UNDP), Plan Cameroon, CARE/Global Fund and DFID (Forest Governance Facility) have all expressed interest in the work of MBOSCUDA and/or funded small projects. These range from “the sustainable management of the wet lands and peaceful co-existence between cattle herders and farmers in Ngoketugja Division”, “sponsorship to some 145 Mbororo girls in secondary and high schools in the North West Province” to

“combating land degradation and enhancing sustainable management of natural resources in some 10 Mbororo communities of the North West province”.

The capacity building support that Village AiD provides to its partners, which has enabled MBOSCUDA in the North West Province to become an attractive and credible organisation to work with, is something that is usually overlooked when reporting our achievements. Perhaps, however, it is the one factor which distinguishes Village AiD’s approach and relationship with its African partners. We do not shy away from the inherent conflicts or transforming limiting institutional cultures!

One of the most visible achievements of this programme in the last year is the construction of 3 schools in remote and/or deprived villages and 2 community training halls financed by the European Commission and Village AiD.

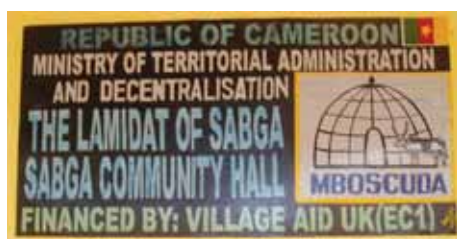
The impact of these projects has gone beyond the obvious creation of a safe and clean learning environment for school children, to greater inter-ethnic collaboration between Mbororo cattle herders and farming communities and greater respect for both MBOSCUDA and the communities from Government officials.



Development is not only nice buildings...



from this...



...It is also giving the word “Human” its proper meaning



...to this

**During 2006,** our main activities were as follows...

# Sierra Leone...

Village AiD has been working in Sierra Leone since 1992, and it now represents our largest country programme. 2006 saw the establishment of two major contracts.

The first of these, “Literacy and Livelihoods to empower young people and their organisations in Sierra Leone”, has been funded by the Department for International Development and is worth £495,959 over four years.

The programme is investing in 65 communities from Tonkolili, Kono and Pujehun districts, using REFLECT literacy to strengthen life skills, local institutions, and rights awareness. Working in partnership with the Sierra Leone Youth Empowerment Organisation (SLYEO), we will deliver £58,000 of micro-credit to marginalised people

and invest in the development of viable, grassroots chiefdom-based organisations. The project started very well this year, with a 50/50 gender balance achieved amongst community facilitators.

Village Aid’s second major contract is funded by the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund. “Empowering young people’s organisations to mainstream gender, disability, and HIV issues within decision-making processes in Sierra Leone” is worth £229,957 over 3 years and is a national advocacy programme which is being implemented as a partnership between VA, VSO Sierra Leone, and the Youth Alliance for Peace and Development (YAPAD), a national network of forty-five youth serving agencies.

- a. Facilitators from Kono and VA staff at reflect training workshop.
- b. Julianna Fornah (Office Administrator) and Krystle Lai (VSO Advocacy Advisor).



**The ability to project what is in your head to the rest of the world so others can understand it.**

**“Literacy” defined by Reflect participants**

**The ability to bring what is out there in the world into your own head to be a better person.**

# Ghana & the UK...

Village AiD received funding support from DFID for a new and exciting initiative, 'World Class Act', which takes our development education work to a new level and into secondary schools across Derbyshire, linking them with schools in Ghana. 'World Class Act' engages young people with a new awareness and understanding of, and empathy towards, the issues of world poverty, and empowers them through the use of drama to be active change makers and campaigners for global poverty reduction into adult life.

This project was inspired by the work of our partners in Africa who commonly use social drama as a means of engaging people in local issues that affect their lives. These are not just passive shows, but actively draw in the audience to participate and then debate and discuss the issues, as well as finding and planning actions to tackle them. These social dramas are very popular and highly effective. They are run by experienced staff from our partners and community-based resource persons. Some of Village AiD partners who specialise in this work are Drama Network, SIMLI and YOWE in Ghana. Josephine Sackey of

Drama Network and Rashid Bawah of SIMLI will be working with Village AiD during the course of 'World Class Act'.

Helen Greenwood was appointed as Drama Education Co-ordinator for the 'World Class Act' project and has begun preparations for a series of drama and performance projects to take place in local schools within the academic year. She will work with young people to devise pieces of participatory Social Drama which raise awareness of African culture and explore issues relevant to young people locally and in West Africa.

Buxton Community School, Hope Valley College and Highfields School, Matlock, are the first schools to be involved with World Class Act. Drama 'taster' workshops, summer schools, after-school clubs and public performances will involve hundreds of young people in the area in learning about issues in a fun, creative and exciting way.

SIMLI and YOWE both continue to provide excellent Reflect based support in literacy, agriculture and micro-credit across more than eighty villages in Ghana.

Below: A social drama in action

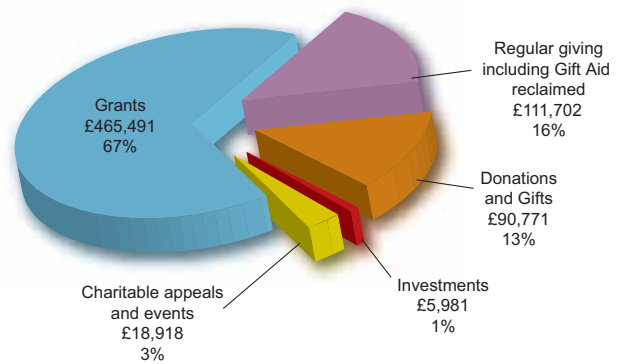


# Other information...

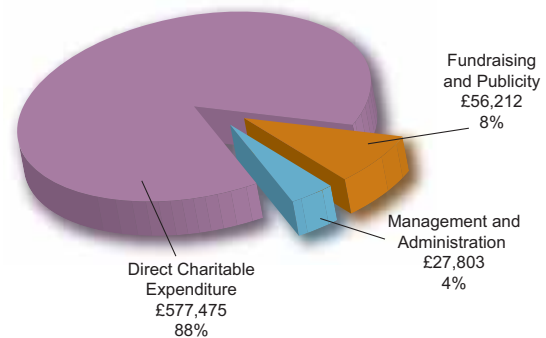
## Purposes of Restricted Funds...

1. A Europeaid Block Grant supports three actions. These are 'Challenging social and economic exclusion among the Mbororo Fulani' in Cameroon 'Addressing Youth Poverty in post-war Sierra Leone' 'Empowering African Organisations to drive their own development processes.
2. DfID continued to support Village Aid The Gambia through the "Working with marginalised women in Lower Saloum" project.
3. Comic Relief's "Building Civil Society Capacity in Cameroon" started in 2005, and is due to run till 2010.
4. The Big Lottery Fund and JJ Charitable trust supported the programme "Empowering the most marginalised people" in Northern Ghana.
5. The Baring Foundation provided funding for a learning programme in Sierra Leone and Ghana, which will run from 2006-2008
6. States of Guernsey Overseas Aid Commission and the Isle of Man Overseas Aid Committee funded the 'Empowering Young People to build sustainable communities' project in Tonkolili. They also supported community development work in the district.
7. Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund supports the work of YAPAD in Sierra Leone in a national youth advocacy initiative to help young people play a full and productive role in society.
8. The Department for International Development supports the Sierra Leone Youth Empowerment Organisation in an expanded adult literacy and economic development programme in Tonkilili, Kono and Pujehun districts.

Where Village Aid money came from in 2006



How Village Aid spent its money in 2006



9. An anonymous Trust supports the Literacy and Microcredit programme of AVISU in the Gambia.
10. The Shepley family supported the work of "Youth and Women Empowerment" in Ghana Eastern Region, and the work of SIMLI (Friendship) in Northern Ghana.
11. Simon Gershon supported the work of AVISU in the Gambia in community forestry and reproductive health education.
12. DfID Development Awareness Fund supports the World Class Act drama education programme in the UK.

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## Board of Trustees 2006

James Kellie (Chair)  
Peter Dent (Treasurer)  
Cathy Butcher (retired August 2006)  
Caroline Dobinson

Sandi Filby  
Nick Gregory  
Dr Sam Hickey (retired May 2006)  
Dr Margaret Ince

Graham Jones  
Peter Peel  
George Wolfe

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