

## Media Release

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### Overseas Aid and Development Commission revises its plans for 2021

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The Overseas Aid and Development Commission (OA&DC) is revising its support for charities in 2021 due to the unprecedented consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In April 2020, the OA&DC announced that it had agreed to provide additional support to the States of Guernsey's coronavirus response. The Small Grants and new multi-year Large Grants programmes for 2021 projects were suspended, which meant that £1m of its 2020 budget could be returned to General Revenue for local initiatives. The decision was made with regret, but the Commission at that time noted that locally the pandemic had put enormous pressure on the public sector and scaling back business as usual also allowed the Commission to free people up to support the response.

The Commission also emphasised that its decision should not change the States' commitment to providing aid and support for international development in the long term. The coronavirus had shown just how connected a world we were, and helping other countries to recover would also benefit our own Bailiwick.

Fortunately the Commission was able to continue with its funding of previously agreed 2020 projects. Although charities have faced great difficulties on the ground in implementing some of the projects due to the COVID-19 restrictions in force in various countries, they have been able to proceed albeit often at a slower pace and by changing their working practices. Vital work is being undertaken on sustainable projects and the Commission is working closely with the charities to help ensure that they reach their objectives.

The Commission has also been able to provide Emergency Relief awards, focusing on the prevention of COVID-19 and the hardship it has caused. This has included supporting a water and sanitation project in a Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh; a feeding programme in the South African Townships through Guernsey based charity Goal 50; a water and sanitation project for schools in Cambodia; a feeding programme for displaced people in Sudan; and a feeding programme and medical supplies for a slum in Kenya through Guernsey based charity School Farms Africa.

For 2021, the Commission has accepted that with the future uncertainties created by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, its proposed budget would also be reduced to a similar level as its revised 2020 Budget. If approved, this would still allow the Commission to launch a Small Grants programme for 2021 and provide Emergency Relief Awards next year, but not launch its first ever Large Grants programme.

Deputy Chris Blin, the new President of the OA&DC, said

“These are difficult times for the World as a whole and particularly so for least developed countries that often do not have the infrastructure to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. I am therefore delighted that, with States Members support, the Commission should still be able to provide Emergency Aid Relief and Small Grants for single year sustainable projects in 2021, as it has always done, and I am sure that some of these will be focussed on the prevention and alleviation of COVID-19. It is of course unfortunate that we will not be able to launch our first multi-year Large Grants programme as planned but until there is more financial certainty in regard to the COVID-19 Pandemic it would be wrong to make any longer term commitments at this stage. However, the Commission will be looking for its budget to be at least fully restored in future years if at all possible.”

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