

Guernsey Overseas Aid Commission

Media Release – For Immediate Use

Innovative design for school funded by the Commission receives international recognition for sustainability

In 2012 the Commission made a Grant Aid award of £40,000 to a local charitable trust, the Ellen Jane Rihoy Charitable Trust, for the construction of a primary school in Laikipia, Kenya.

The school has been built using the “Waterbank” design, which has been developed by the Zeitz Foundation and engineers and architects from Princetown University to maximise rainwater harvesting and has been specifically designed for arid areas of Africa.

The Commission has recently learnt from Dr. Liz Rihoy, Executive Director of the Zeitz Foundation, that the “Waterbank” design has been listed as one of the ten award winners in the building category of the Sustain100 awards. The inclusion in the Sustainia 100 List is a significant accolade.

Waterbank schools are low-cost rainwater-harvesting school buildings comprising a large roof, a central underground cistern, and an integrated ceramic water filtration system providing clean water and food year round. The school buildings integrate community spaces with a wide range of school needs: classrooms, offices, dormitories, canteens, and sport-courts. The construction costs are similar to those for a conventional school design.

The project funded by the Commission was for the construction of the first Waterbank School. Since the school opened in late 2012, attendance has risen by 25% to 95% and instances of waterborne disease have dropped to zero among pupils.

The school provides 4 full-sized indoor/outdoor classrooms, a protected vegetable garden for the children, 4 teacher’s rooms, community spaces and workshop, a courtyard theatre and a 150,000 litre water reservoir with integrated water filtration. The workshop spaces can be used for health projects and other local initiatives that strengthen the school and local community.

Sustainia100 included the Waterbank school design in its top 10 building solutions because,

“The majority of the 345 million people in Africa without access to clean water live in regions with inadequate rainfall. The World Bank estimates that 200,000 classrooms need to be built in sub-Saharan Africa each year. Waterbank schools place a sustainable supply of clean water at the heart of the school, improving children’s health, while educating them about sustainable lifestyles and practices.”

Deputy Mike O'Hara, Chairman of the Commission said,

"The Commissioners were delighted to learn of this prestigious award. In agreeing to fund the project, the Commissioners recognised the positive impact the provision of a primary school, clean water and facilities which would be available to the wider community in Laikipia, Kenya.

This type of project underlines the principle aim of the Commission's work, namely how funding a specific project can make a lasting and sustainable improvement to the lives of some of the world's poorest people. The Commission hopes that this innovative school design will be widely used across Africa and other arid areas of the world."

Monday 17th June 2013

Notes for Editors:

The Commission has been making Grant Aid awards on behalf of the people of Guernsey since 1980. The underlying purpose of the contributions made by the Commission, has remained unchanged, namely:

"To support projects which will help to provide the basic needs of the world's least developed countries or to help the indigenous population to provide those needs."

Basic needs includes medical and health facilities, educational programmes and facilities, housing, water and sanitation provision and the means of sustaining a living, e.g. through agriculture, horticulture or through training in sustainable employment skills.

The Commission has always sought to direct its contributions to projects which will generate a lasting and sustainable improvement in the living conditions for the communities receiving the aid. This ethos underpins how all applications for Grant Aid will be assessed and is reflected in the assessment process and criteria and can be summarised as offering a "hand up" to some of the world's least developed areas rather than simply giving them a "hand out".

In 2012, the Guernsey Overseas Aid Commission received a Grant Aid budget of just over £2,500,550 from the States of Guernsey and this was used to support some 83 three different projects.

Sustainia100 (www.sustainia.me) is an annual guide to 100 innovative solutions from around the world that presents tangible projects, initiatives, and technologies at the forefront of sustainable transformation. To qualify for recognition all solutions are readily available and introduce state-of-the-art practices with a positive impact on communities and industries worldwide.

The **Ellen Jane Rihoy Charitable Trust** is a Guernsey registered charity established by Rihoy and Son Building Contractors which supports projects in the Laikipi district in eastern Kenya. (Contact: Gavin Rihoy at J W Rihoy and Sons)

The **Zeit Foundation** (www.zeitfoundation.org) is a non-profit organization based in Kenya, and with representation in the United States and the United Kingdom. The goal of the Foundation is to maintain or improve the integrity of ecosystems through sustainable management practices that ensure ecosystems continue to deliver services - such as clean water and air, carbon sequestration, and healthy soils.

Contact:

For further information please contact:

Elizabeth Dene, Secretary to the Guernsey Overseas Aid Commission

Telephone – 01481 717284

Mobile – 07839 786076

Email – liz.dene@gov.gg

A technical representation of the WATERBANK School at Uaso Nyiro

