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Dear friends,

Together, we face challenging and uncertain times. Fewer and fewer of us are able to avoid the impact of the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Our charity and young people doing their Award are no different, although our story is not all gloom and doom. We are having to react, but in a way that we hope you would expect from a charity that believes in being empowering, progressive, diverse and connected. It is exactly at times like these that building resilience, enhancing communication, encouraging adaptability, problem solving and tenacity are even more essential. As an Award community, we will be striving to do that more than ever.

This pandemic has re-written the way that we interact and the ways in which we go about our daily lives. For many, this presents a very large challenge and young people are certainly not exempt from that. We strongly believe the Award has an important part to play in young people's lives over the coming months and we are working with Award Operators worldwide to ensure that, even if they can't attend school or youth organisations, young people can still participate in Award activities and gain their Bronze, Silver or Gold recognition of their efforts.

More importantly, we believe that young people can do more than just participate. We want to empower them, through proper guidance by their adult mentors, to volunteer safely and provide the support that their own communities need to be resilient in these unprecedented times. Around the world, Award participants and their adult supporters are already demonstrating that spirit: from ensuring that those who are isolated receive a phone call and a chat; to finding creative ways to distribute essentials such as food, soap and hand sanitizer. The global Award family is already working hard to support local communities responsibly.

Over the coming weeks we will be collecting and sharing stories, insights and ideas with you and our entire Award family, to show how Award participants are helping to inspire us all to make a positive difference.

Inevitably, the staff of the Foundation have been affected, seriously limiting our ability to move around and deliver face-to-face training. Thankfully, the introduction of our digital systems and platforms over recent years means that we can continue to operate reasonably effectively. Planning or running events, especially over the next 3-4 months, will have to be radically re-imagined as it is impossible for people to travel.

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#WORLDREADY

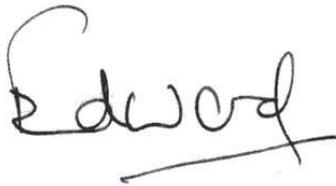
So we are thinking, for instance, of replacing our annual World Fellowship gathering, due to take place on 29th June, with a virtual one. We will send you more information as and when the idea develops. We will also endeavour to keep you, as an important member of our Award family, better informed and connected through regular digital newsletters on a range of stories, rescheduled dates for events and plans for forthcoming ones.

We can't recall a time when your understanding, friendship and loyalty has been more important. You probably can't truly imagine how much we appreciate your support, knowing that we face these challenging times with you beside us. We want and need to celebrate the contribution of the World Fellowship and other supporters to the Award and to young people globally at this critical time.

Our thoughts are with all those who have been impacted by the COVID-19 virus to date and those who will inevitably be affected in the coming weeks and months. We send our very best wishes to you and your families and we hope you all remain safe and well.

There has rarely been a more important time for our young people to be #WORLDREADY.

Our warmest wishes,



HRH The Earl of Wessex KG GCVO, Chairman of Trustees



John May OBE DL, Secretary General