

Senator James Perchard,  
Scrutiny Office,  
States Greffe,  
Morier House,  
St. Helier,  
Jersey JE1 1DD

12 January 2007

Dear Senator Perchard,

Thank you very much for your letter of 12 December inviting me to submit my thoughts for the Jersey Overseas Aid review panel. I am delighted to do so.

I was born and brought up in the island (my grandfather was Connetable of St. Brelade in my pre-school years), and both my parents were teachers. My father, as a Swiss national, was particularly impressed by the work of the Switzerland-based International Red Cross.

My involvement with Jersey Overseas Aid started when in 1972 I was invited to join the very first Jersey work project which visited Nazareth Hospital in Israel. It was a life-changing experience for me! When I returned to the island in 1974 as a GP, I started helping the JOA projects sub-committee with medical advice, and in fact personally undertook several hundred immunisations for volunteers. In later years I was more involved with organising Jersey work projects, and then left the island with my family in 1992 to work for a year at a mission hospital in Zambia, and then moved to the UK where my wife and I set up HANDS AROUND THE WORLD as a national overseas development charity.

I mention these historical matters because I think it is a pity to see the success or otherwise of Jersey Overseas Aid in purely financial terms. I know that HANDS AROUND THE WORLD would not exist but for the experience I gained and support we have received from JOA. We have sent over 300 volunteers to Africa, India and

Brazil and I have seen many lives transformed by the experience – both volunteers and members of the host community. International understanding and friendships are priceless assets in these troubled times and there is a great need to continue to develop them.

My work with the charity often brings me into contact with professionals from the UK aid and development community, and I have come to know from them how great is their regard for Jersey Overseas Aid. Jersey is a significant player in the international community through the work of JOA, and its reputation is greatly enhanced by it.

Of course the amount of work which can be undertaken is affected by the funds available, and as the need is so huge, I would encourage Jersey to continue to develop its work. As I am no longer a Jersey resident, I do not feel it appropriate for me to judge what the extent of the island's contribution should be – I would merely encourage all those of good will to support this kind of work to the greatest possible extent, in a demonstration of support and encouragement. I feel that we are devalued both as individuals and as a society, if we do not seek to treat our fellow world citizens as equals – equal in rights, respect and opportunity.

Please be as generous as you feel able to, and then a bit more!

With very best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

David Steiner