

14<sup>th</sup> January 2007

The Scrutiny Office  
States' Greffe  
Morier House  
St Helier  
Jersey  
JE1 1DD

### **Overseas Aid Projects**

It has recently come to my attention that your office is undertaking a review of the allocation of funding for overseas projects. It may be that my views, based upon a relatively unique experience, may be of some interest to you since I was both a participant and, subsequently, a host for projects in Eastern Zambia.

I am advised that of the four criteria you are examining the third is "The methods of measuring the effective utilisation of the Aid budget by recipients" and perhaps it is to this that my experience may be most appropriate.

I was part of the 1993 JOA Nursery School Project to St Francis' Hospital, Katete, and on returning from this I retired from full-time employment. This gave me the opportunity to apply for the post of Hospital Secretary at St Francis' Hospital and within six months my wife and I were employed there. I served in that capacity for four years before transferring, for a further two years, to the Anglican Diocese of Eastern Zambia by whom the Hospital was governed. In both these positions I was instrumental in bidding for and managing both "funds only" projects and "group supported" projects. This allowed me to see the effect of JOA funding on both the recipients and the participants.

In the case of the former it must be said that in my experience there never was a project that wasn't essential to some aspect of the receiving community and the satisfactory outcome of a project was always an advance in the wellbeing of the community, being either the Health or Education services of that area. This improvement, in my opinion, could only be measured empirically since there is no way of statistically measuring the effect. The area does not have the means or the skills for assessing mathematically the value-added effects after completion of a project. For example, increased attendance at school or health clinic can be influenced by many factors not least of which was the quality of the annual harvest.

A much understated benefit of the JOA group funded project was the impact it had on the participating volunteers' lives, and in my experience this was always for the good. One direct benefit to the community linked to the project is the number of volunteers who returned to work there. In my own case I was so much moved by the plight of the people in Eastern Zambia that I sought the opportunity to return. Others did likewise and at one time St Francis' Hospital was served by four people who had been introduced to it by being on a JOA funded project. These included doctors, engineers, administrators and teachers, one of whom is currently in his eighth year of working there. These skilled people would not have come to serve in these areas had it not been for the impetus of JOA funded projects. I have no idea how you would calculate the value of this form of post-project service but for

us at St Francis' and the Diocese it was a very real and valuable recruiting source for skills.

The other indirect but very real benefit of JOA project funding and its effect on participants is the long term friendships that develop with local people and the financial support and encouragement that this entails. I can only quote with certainty my own situation; eight years after leaving Zambia I am still involved with the area and through my involvement has come my family's and friends' direct funding of Zambian colleagues through college, or via our churches the funding of projects to serve isolated rural communities. Again I cannot see a method of measuring the value of such an open ended and very much ongoing connection that started with a JOA funded project. It would be nice to think that over time it may equal, pound for pound, the original funds - effectively a doubling of the initial benefits. I am aware that others have also developed similar connections and commitments but to what measurable extent I cannot judge.

When we entertained groups from JOA funded projects we always tried to persuade them that they should not think that they were coming to change Africa, but that they should be open to letting Africa change them. Their involvement as volunteers was more about seeing and knowing how the other half, the poor half, of the world lived, and taking away attitudes different to any they brought with them. If this succeeded then, on their return, they could talk to others of the real "third world" and perhaps change opinions and policies. This was a very real effect of JOA funding, with immeasurable consequences.

I trust that highlighting some of the longer term implications of JOA group funded projects may lend support to the retention and possible expansion of this invaluable method of aiding the people of the third world, who struggle against almost insurmountable odds, but hope for improvements in their lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. J. T.', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned to the left of a vertical line that extends downwards from the end of the signature.