

PART 1

Introduction

Prior to commenting on the present Overseas Aid policies, as a former member and President of the Overseas Aid Committee I believe that it is important, and hopefully interesting to the reader, for me to explain how the programme and policies evolved and why it is that Jersey has developed an Aid programme which has received considerable international recognition for its sensitivity and effectiveness.

Personal background

My personal background and understanding with regard to development issues, prior to being elected as a Member of the States, was acquired through non-government organisations (NGOs). For several years in the 1960s, I was the Parish organiser of St Ouën for Christian Aid Week. I also had the responsibility for recruiting and organising marshals for the annual Island World Aid Walk (at its peak involving over 4000 walkers) which raised funds for Oxfam, Christian Aid and Save the Children Fund. Whilst these activities brought me into contact with local representatives of important aid organisations, it was largely through professionals working overseas with organisations such as the Church Missionary Society, TEAR Fund, Christian Aid, Oxfam, etc., that I became acutely aware of development issues, the needs of communities in the developing countries and the pitfalls of inappropriate funding of projects.

Early days of the Overseas Aid Committee

In 1967 Senator Clarence Farley brought a Proposition to the States requesting that the sum of £10,000 should be given to Oxfam. The following year he proposed that the Overseas Aid Committee should be established (Senator C. G. Farley became the first President of the Overseas Aid Committee) and the sum of £14,000 was voted by the States for that Committee to administer.

I was elected to the States in 1972 and invited by the President (Senator C. Farley) to join the Overseas Aid Committee. The sum voted by the States for the Committee to administer in 1973 was £100,000, remaining at the same level until 1976 when it rose to £125,000. It stayed at that level until 1980 when increased to £155,000.

I wish to record that it was both a pleasure and a privilege to serve as a member of the Overseas Aid Committee for a period of six years under the leadership and guidance of Senator Farley. It offered me a unique learning experience enabling me to understand the opportunities and the pitfalls of funding projects in developing countries. It has to be remembered that the Committee had no professional support at that time except for the Committee Clerk whose role was to take the Minutes and to offer secretarial support to the President. This period also provided me with the opportunity to develop the Overseas Aid Work Projects on which I will elaborate later on in the submission.

I believe that, whilst the overall sum voted for Overseas Aid up to 1978 was not large, this early period enabled the Committee to “tread cautiously” when administering the funds and to develop good relationships with NGOs. In persuading the States to give a sum to Oxfam and subsequently to establish an Overseas Aid Committee, Senator Farley had stressed that in the Island’s “hour of need”, it was the people of Canada and New Zealand who had come to our assistance through the International Red Cross with emergency parcels delivered by the “Vega”.

Senator Farley provided clear leadership as President of the Committee and sought funding opportunities involving grass roots projects which proved to be an extremely important foundation in the early days. The involvement of the Education Department in sending teachers to the Seychelles and the production of the “Ocean Readers” (illustrated early reading English books) were good examples of involving the Jersey community in projects overseas. The projects funded during those early years tended to be small and easily understood as having a measurable impact in an area of need. Senator Farley made a point, during many of his leisure travels, to visit projects which had received funding from Jersey.

In 1978 Senator Farley invited me to take over as President. This began an interesting 12 year adventure in developing and firmly establishing the Overseas Aid programme for the Island.

The Work Projects.

In 1972, prior to my election as a Member of the States, I was invited by the Deputy Director of Tear Fund, Mr Bill Latham, to lead a "Short Term Overseas Project" for volunteers (part of the "STOP" programme which was a new concept being developed by TEAR Fund) at the Nazareth Hospital. This Hospital was financed largely by private donations through the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society. The intention was for the work group volunteers to be entirely funded and recruited from the UK. I accepted the invitation to lead this first pioneering team on condition that 50% of the volunteers would be drawn from Jersey and that 50% of the funding would come from the Jersey World Aid Walk. Eventually the entire funding came from a combination of the World Aid Walk and the Overseas Aid Committee. The project was extremely successful, not only in the work achieved over a three-week period but also from the experience gained by the volunteers. The Jersey Work Projects as we know them today had been born.

Following the extraordinary success of the Nazareth project, the following year I was able to persuade the Overseas Aid Committee to fund two further projects. The first was at a Hospital in Khemisset, Morocco (which was a Save the Children Fund project) led by John Alner (Senior Lecturer in Construction at Highlands College), whilst the second (led by myself) was at the Helen Keller Blind School for Girls on the West Bank north of Jerusalem on the road to Ramallah. Over the next five years I was able to organise a large number of projects further afield. One was at the Red Cross Dagoretti Children's Centre near Nairobi, other projects on the West Bank, an Arab School in Haifa and others in several African Countries. The main objective for each work project was that the task should be completed within a three week period. The project should engage the local community and the materials were normally funded by the Overseas Aid Committee. The Committee also funded 50% of the travel costs for the volunteers together with the provision of food whilst undertaking the project.

It was an exciting time as it was very new as a concept and no other community to my knowledge had developed a similar volunteer scheme. In spite of considerable opposition and criticism for a number of years, the principle gradually became accepted. It was seen as being an extremely practical way in which our Island community could offer assistance and inspire local communities in developing countries to aspire to do even more for themselves. A small team of people with acquired expertise was gradually formed into a Work Projects sub-committee under my chairmanship. The task of the sub-committee was to find projects, assess them and then prepare a proposal for submission to the Overseas Aid Committee. Following my election as President of the Committee, I felt that it was no longer appropriate to continue as Chairman of the sub-committee, so I invited another member of the main Committee to become Chairman and for the sub-committee to be advised by Dr David Steiner. Dr Steiner had acquired considerable expertise in the field having been a member of my original team to Nazareth and having also led a team to Kenya. We continued in this structure until I ceased to be President in December 1990 and Dr Steiner resigned in 1992 to take up a year's appointment at the Katete Hospital in Eastern Zambia.

Perhaps I should add that, during the entire period both as a member of the Overseas Aid Committee and subsequently as President, I was privileged to travel extensively in both the Middle East and in numerous African Countries but this was mainly undertaken at my personal expense. The exceptions were the two occasions that I organised media visits, firstly to Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania and secondly to the Eastern and Northern Provinces of Zambia to visit projects funded by the Committee. On both of those visits my travel and accommodation costs and those of the media groups were privately sponsored.

Project Selection and Funding up to 1990

As outlined earlier, the projects funded by the Committee in the early days were relatively small and easy to assess and monitor. Following my election as President I was conscious that the budget needed to be increased but, in order to achieve that, we would have to source a greater number of projects.

Early in 1979 I visited a significant number of NGOs based in the UK to encourage more applications and also to begin to establish basic criteria which would be used when selecting projects.

The areas of health and educational provision together with agricultural projects and the supply of clean water seemed to me to be the basic essentials for any community. One has to bear in mind that at that time there were no other small communities such as Jersey making significant donations to projects in developing countries. We were, therefore, required to establish our own guidelines and to assist NGOs to identify projects that met our basic criteria. During the 1980s I was invited to visit both Guernsey and the Isle of Man to share with their elected members how we had developed our policies and the way in which we worked with NGOs.

It was extremely satisfying subsequently to learn that in the main both Islands chose to adopt similar guidelines. This proved to be very important, particularly for the NGOs when submitting funding requests, as they would have found it more difficult if each Island had developed a different set of criteria.

Relationships with NGOs

During several visits to Africa, particularly in the 1970s, I learnt that projects undertaken by Government departments (often funded by European and American governments) tended to be large and frequently had conditions placed on them (donor conditionality) which had an economic link with the donor country. Examples were the construction of dams for irrigation projects with a condition that the export of crops (or at least a percentage) must be to the donor country. Whilst superficially this may have appeared to be beneficial, the large companies involved rarely engaged in developing basic health, education and medical facilities for the area. There may well have been exceptions, but sadly there were frequent allegations of exploitation of local communities.

There was also the inevitable suspicion that corruption and mismanagement of projects resulted in real benefits at "grass roots" being far less than would have been expected. I was convinced that the only "safe" route for the Island, particularly as the sums involved were relatively small, would be to develop good relationships with trusted NGOs who had the expertise both in assessment, implementation and management of projects.

As previously mentioned, in 1979 I established the meetings with NGOs in London with a view to developing firmer relationships with them and also through face to face meetings, developing a better understanding of the difficult issues facing communities in developing countries.

It needs to be recognised that, whilst it is claimed that the administration costs of the Jersey Aid programme were very low, the agencies through which we worked took on the costs of assessment, supervision and monitoring of all the projects which were funded.

As a principle I believed that there was great merit in the States reflecting, at least to some extent, the efforts of our Island community in its support for projects in developing countries. I believed that the Overseas Aid Committee should use, at least initially, the same Aid agencies which already enjoyed widespread Jersey community support.

So whether it was with large or small organisations such as Save the Children Fund, Oxfam, Christian Aid, TEAR Fund, Action Aid, Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind (now Sight Savers) to name but a few, I believed that it was proper for the States to entrust these organisations (whose projects were within the established guidelines) with the responsibility of using taxpayers funds carefully and wisely, as they were already supported by local volunteer groups. The challenge of carrying out development projects in third world countries should not be underestimated (perhaps more particularly in the early days) and the integrity of those who became our "agents" was paramount.

During my Presidency the Committee adopted a policy to contain the total number of organisations with whom it worked unless a new organisation could demonstrate that it was working in a geographical area or in an area of specialist need not covered by existing organisations.

There was also a recognition that the submission of projects by NGOs to funding organisations such as the Overseas Aid Committee required a considerable amount of preparatory work which was not normally required when projects were financed through general fundraising. The Committee felt that the level of support for projects through organisations should be relatively constant if confidence between the Committee and the agencies was to grow. Encouraging agencies to undertake a considerable amount of work in presenting projects without a reasonable expectation of success (assuming projects were within the established guidelines) would undermine the trust which needed to be established between the Committee and the NGOs.

Emergency Projects

There was early recognition that a quick response in the event of emergencies was an important responsibility of the Committee. Steps were taken to establish rapid communication and a close working relationship with Dee O'Connell, the Chief Executive Officer of the Disasters Emergency Committee, which is a grouping of Aid Agencies involved in Emergency Relief. As a result the Committee was informed immediately an appeal was launched and was able to respond with a decision usually within 24 hours. With the assistance of the Treasurer of the States, the Island of Jersey was often the very first to respond tangibly with funds to offer practical emergency assistance following a disaster. An appropriate sum from the budget was set aside to enable the Committee to respond immediately when the need arose.

Raising Awareness About the Effectiveness of the Aid Programme

As President of the Committee I recognised the importance of informing both States members and the public about the nature and geographical spread of projects funded by the Committee.

A number of initiatives were undertaken including the production of reports listing and explaining all the projects funded. This was a considerable task and was undertaken for many years by Mr Wally Clarke who was formerly Assistant Director of Education. There were special meetings for Members of the States and the public when senior members of staff from NGOs were able to present important issues relating to development goals and to explain the way projects were undertaken.

There were also two media visits to Africa which were privately sponsored but which gave all the Island media an opportunity to visit and report on projects funded through the Aid programme. One of the visits to Zambia coincided with a work project led by Mr Roland Heaven at a remote village called Msoro in Eastern Zambia.

The Appointment of Honorary Executive Officers.

In my early days as President of the Committee it was clear to me that it would be impossible to “grow” the aid programme without greater administrative support and I was very fortunate to recruit all three of the excellent Honorary Executive Officers. The first was Mr Vernon Palmer who had just retired as head of the Customs Department. He was followed by Mr David Le Feuvre who had been a sub-editor and journalist at the Jersey Evening Post and finally Mr Leslie Crapp who had retired as a senior partner in a large accountancy firm. In addition, I was very fortunate to recruit Sir Robin Vanderfelt, former Secretary General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Organisation, to assist the Committee in developing better links, particularly with smaller developing Commonwealth Countries. I believe that the Island is greatly indebted to all those mentioned and many other volunteers too numerous to mention individually, for the way that the Aid programme has been able to increase to its present level.

PART 2

An Overview of the Present Programme

Reading through the most recently published 2005 JOAC report (18th July 2006), it is pleasing to note that the main principles and objectives which were established during my time as President have been maintained to the present day.

The main areas of funding continue to be in health, education and water. There is also an added category of income generation which clearly includes agriculture but extends to other economic activity. There is, however, insufficient detailed information in the last annual report to comment on this important aspect of development funding.

There is a broad geographical spread of projects but perhaps the question which could be raised by a casual observer is whether over 50% of the annual budget being spent in Africa is the correct proportion if one considers the population levels in different parts of the third world. I would imagine that this aspect is reviewed annually and perhaps there is a good reason for the bias, but there is no explanation about this in the annual report.

The concept of three year funding also appears to be encouraged, but the guidelines restrict this to ten agencies each year.

It is also wonderful to see that the Community Work Projects have continued to be supported and encouraged and we should recognise the hard work of those involved in what is an incredibly time-consuming activity. In addition to each project, there is a considerable amount of preparation and work which has to be undertaken in selecting volunteers and preparing them for the experience.

The level of the Disaster Aid budget appears to have been maintained, but the grant of £500,000 towards the Tsunami Appeal in 2005 suggests that the level of funding for other disasters was significantly down (£386,785 in 2005 compared to £745,434 in 2004).

The level of support for Jersey charities which raise funds for overseas projects also appears to have been maintained and proper recognition is given by the President in the annual report to the considerable of work undertaken by these groups.

PART 3**Comments re Terms of Reference of the Scrutiny Panel**

- (a) the States' policy for upgrading the Island's Overseas Aid budget in line with GNI.**
- (b) The Island's Overseas Aid contributions in comparison with other jurisdictions.**

It would probably be simpler to deal with these two aspects at the same time as they are inter-related.

Over the years there has been considerable debate as to whether the funding from the States of Jersey of the Overseas Aid programme is at the correct level. Much work has been undertaken to demonstrate that the Island should strive to increase the level of funding to match countries of similar wealth mainly in Europe. Probably the most extensive work in this regard was undertaken by the Review Group and published in February 1998.

This report drew on considerable research and recommended that Jersey's Overseas Aid programme should be expanded in line with international targets. Whilst there can be a debate as to the most appropriate figure for Jersey as a wealthy community, the figures produced in the 2005 annual report clearly demonstrate that on a per head basis Jersey's contribution is marginally ahead of Portugal. With the level of wealth that we enjoy as a community, we should surely be higher than the UK, Belgium and France. Some would argue that we should aim to be at the same level as the Scandinavian countries. As yet I have not heard any evidence from any States Member as to why we should not aim to achieve such a level of funding. Whatever the arguments, I recognise that we should be doing better than we are currently and the States should resolve to increase the budget towards a specific target over the next ten years. As a broad brush comparison, it is interesting to note that in 1986 with a total States budget of £110 million (including Trading Committees) the Overseas Aid budget was £980,000.

Some twenty years later the States budget for 2007 is £488 million (excluding Trading Committees) the Overseas Aid Budget is £5.5 million. This suggests to me that over a 20 year period there has been very little movement in REAL terms of the percentage of funds (when compared with the total States expenditure) voted for Overseas Aid.

- (c) the JOAC's policies and procedures for the distribution of its grant aid budget.**
- (d) The methods for measuring the effective utilisation of the JOAC's aid budget by recipients.**

I would prefer to deal with these two elements together as again they are very much inter-related.

The fact that the Overseas Aid Commission (and previous Overseas Aid Committees) have chosen to follow the principles which I established nearly 30 years ago is obviously very satisfying and I believe that the International recognition of the Islands Aid programme has been largely due to prudent distribution of funds following policies established in the early days of the Committee.

I fully support the ongoing relationship with NGOs, but there needs to be a recognition that the real costs of "delivering" the Overseas Aid budget (the cost of project assessment, submission to the Commission and monitoring to completion) is borne by each organisation and should be recognised as being a reasonable part of the total cost of the project. A statement by the President about the low cost of administration by the Committee, whilst true, can be misleading in that the main administrative cost of a project is borne by the NGO.

I believe that generally the Commission has established good relations with the agencies, but that is not to say that improvements cannot be made. Most agencies, if invited to comment, are likely to focus on the positive aspects as, understandably, they would not wish to disturb any goodwill between themselves and the Commission that has been developed over the years.

Nevertheless, it would be naïve to assume that problems between the Commission and agencies either do not occur or have not occurred from time to time. There are a number of questions which can be raised and which affect agencies applying for funds. For example, in order to maintain good relationships with organisations, it is helpful for consistency in funding from one year to the next providing that the projects submitted meet the criteria. The Commission is effectively in partnership with the NGOs and irregular funding can create significant difficulties if they have to operate with a high level of uncertainty year to year. Consistent funding may be the intention of the Commission, but it is difficult to deduce from the annual reports whether or not this is the case.

Whilst the guidelines in the Explanatory Booklet 2006 appear to be simple and clear, there may be some room for improvement. When projects fail to obtain funding there has been some reference over the years to “scoring” which presumably means that some projects are more likely to be accepted if they score more highly than others. I have enquired of the Executive Officer whether I might see how the scoring is undertaken but the reply which I received clearly stated that no such scoring is used. I quote “The Commission do not use a scoring system as such in that the agencies are *not* awarded points against their applications or for their presentations”.

Yet in para 4.5 of the Explanatory Booklet it clearly states that “The Commission is aware that some outcomes such as the provision of school desks and chairs may not score as high as other projects or may be difficult to assess etc.” If a scoring system is not used, how are projects assessed and how are agencies to know which projects they should submit and indeed whether they are likely to be successful?

There is a growing awareness that long term planning and funding of Aid projects is more likely to achieve lasting results in what is often a very fragile environment. I believe that there is a need for the Commission to consider developing the existing policy and increase funding to a greater number of long term development projects. Whilst there has been a move in this direction, the limit of ten agencies (and for only a three year funding programme) does not reflect a vision for identifying communities with which Jersey can develop a real association and where the prospect for long term benefits can be increased.

There has also been recognition that income generation is important to help communities to help themselves. In the setting of a third world community, a three year project starting with very little infrastructure is unlikely to develop to its full potential within such a short timescale. Whilst this element may have already been recognised by the Commission, there is an opportunity for Jersey to become a leader in development concepts. I have the impression that currently very few funding organisations are prepared to commit to long term projects. Jersey can lead the way in this regard.

Whilst a safe policy has been pursued avoiding Government sponsored projects, there is considerable merit in seeking support from Government sources where there is potential for local Authority/Government involvement perhaps to meet ongoing costs. This is particularly true for educational and health provision establishments, but could also be applicable in the provision of clean water projects, etc.

Long term projects often need the support of the local council and even the local MP. There may be great opportunities to use the valuable worldwide CPA links which Jersey has established over the last 50 years. As a former Vice-Chairman of the World Executive of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, I am convinced that a considerable amount of goodwill towards Jersey exists and the strong links with CPA have not been used to their full potential.

The policies of supporting local groups who raise funds for deserving projects should also be expanded. I am unable to understand why the pound for pound funding (as explained in Explanatory Booklet Para 8.1) has a limit on each project of £3,500. Furthermore there appears to be no logical reason given as to why a restriction should apply as detailed in Para 8.2 where it clearly states that subsequent applications must be for different projects affecting different communities. This does not support the adoption of long term projects which give a community a real possibility of sustainability and potential economic benefits.

The policy in Para 8.6 also appears to remove the possibility of longer term benefits in any particular community as the Commission will not consider a further application at any time for a material grant.

The groups which are active locally in raising funds for deserving projects should be encouraged and I am convinced that an increase in pound for pound funding would receive widespread support. The upper limit would be set by the public response rather than by the Commission. I would wish to emphasise that there may need to be clear criteria established for local groups to be recognised as having the necessary skills and experience to work in developing countries. It could be that a certain number of Trustees with recognised overseas experience and/or links with recognised agencies may be a requirement to qualify for recognition by the Commission.

The composition of the Commission.

When the Overseas Aid Committee drew its membership from States members it was accepted that few, if any, members would necessarily have any depth of experience in development issues or may not have spent any time at all in developing countries.


Following the establishment of the Commission it was suggested that membership of the non-States members would be drawn from the legal, accountancy, banking and business professions. Whilst undoubtedly such individuals would be of great assistance as members of the Commission I believe there was an assumption that the criteria used for non-States members proposed for membership, would also include people with extensive active overseas experience and a full understanding of complex development issues. Indeed, as the budget increases and the emphasis changes to more sustainable development projects, I believe it will be essential for such skills to be available from within the membership of the Commission. I understand that during the interview process candidates were invited to discuss development issues, but the documents which I have seen make no reference to any specific knowledge or experience requirement in order to become a Commissioner. This may be a simple omission in the advert etc but for the future I would strongly recommend that adverts should state that, as a minimum requirement, Commissioners should have a good working knowledge of the Brandt Commission report, Millennium Development Goals and similar key reports and recommendations on development issues. Reference to having a reasonable level of overseas experience in developing countries would also be very helpful, as I assume that is also considered to be important.

Conclusion.

The Aid programme has been carefully administered since the formation of the Overseas Aid Committee. The funding of Disaster Emergency appeals, grass roots projects, community work groups and match funding for Island groups has ensured that funds have been used wisely and have minimised the risks of public funds being misused.

There are now new opportunities and new challenges which will require a deep understanding of development issues if they are to be embraced in a way that enables Government funds to be used at the leading edge of longer term community development projects in third world countries.

As a small Island Jersey has the potential, in partnership with NGOs and possibly through our links with CPA, to be involved in sound and visionary initiatives in developing countries. The time is right for the sound principles and policies adopted by the earlier Overseas Aid Committees to be built on in a new and exciting way. This can be achieved if the Island wishes to embark on a planned programme focussing on longer term sustainable projects and entering more enthusiastically in match funding with local fund-raising groups.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. A. H. Maitland", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

17th January 2007.

