

January 15th. 2007

Re Review of Jersey Overseas Aid.

I write with comments for the Scrutiny panel to consider as a result of an invitation advertisement in the local Press so to do .

The month of August 1988 proved a life changing time for me when I led a group of 24 Jersey individuals to complete a four week Project in Zambia at an ecumenical Mission Hospital in Katete and one of its bush satellite clinics called Msoro. I had only ever led parties of my school pupils on field trips previous to this experience! The resulting changes in attitude, outlook and life style for me was linked on my return to a desire to ensure that many other friends, relations and Islanders should have the opportunity to the same sort of experience. Three years afterwards my wife and I led a party to complete a further project at the Hospital and I was able to renew friendships and find new ways of supporting the Hospital and its invaluable work in the vast Katete District. It was expected at the conclusion of any Project that the leaders reported back orally to the Overseas Aid Committee and publically with a slide demonstration of work completed and the challenges ahead. Although completion of the building was a priority in Zambia, the relationships developed proved equally important especially on return when we considered further support...

- 1 fund raising and sending funds through secure channels to their designated funds
- 2 sending annual containers collecting and packing educational and health resources
3. forging community links developed through schools and Church groups
- 4 raising awareness by giving talks and slide shows at many meetings and events.
- 5 assisting with future JOA projects.

As a result of this last point I volunteered to serve on the JOA Project sub committee and have been delighted to do so for some years now. My colleagues there are all hard working and committed and have JOA principles very much at heart due to their own personal Third World experiences. The basic JOA philosophy is simple...to support those in need...not merely by giving but by teaching and supporting in ways demonstrated above. The criteria for the selection of Projects is declared and we are constantly looking for ways to improve our efficiency and updating our written material .

I have great concern that we attempt to evaluate our Projects solely in financial terms. We can demonstrate effective utilisation of finances because the physical parts of the Project are there for all to see, - or photographic evidence of such - but the other important part of the Project is more difficult to ascertain.

How does one evaluate changed attitudes, life style and outlook for many of the hundreds of volunteers. For some a Project can be a one off experience and life travels on when they return; for some a retention of relationships is affected and some further support for the area visited ;but thankfully for many, more serious changes are evident. This is not a JOA phenomenon, it is revealed in publications issued by former Jersey resident Dr David Steiner's and his charity " Hands Around the World " - a charity based in Gloucestershire and on similar lines to JOA.

Two points to conclude. Jersey is behind both Norway through Noraid and the Dutch equivalent in its giving. We know this because we have seen both these agencies at work in Zambia and talked with their volunteers. In both these contributing countries people are positively encouraged to take part in overseas aid projects, using their highly developed skills whilst their salaries and work positions are safe guarded whilst they are working abroad.

We have also seen the positive effects of the use of Grant Aid to charities - specifically a grant to Christian Aid from Jersey for Aids Orphans in Zambia. One of my Project group members was specifically chosen for her accountancy skills to check on the use of this large donation. Not only did she audit and approve the financial accounts but she was able to go out to surrounding villages areas and see the practical use of the moneys in the form of provision of uniform; hoes; seeds etc.. in their adopted /extended family situation.

I believe that we should not hesitate to invest further in these direct and fulfilling experiences provided for the Jersey public who wish to participate. The invitation is always open to all. The challenge for any charity to expand its work is immense both from the point of view of the ever enlarging Third World with its social, economic, educational and health issues and to Jersey residents who can be cosseted and comfortable in this little Island and for whom the people in the World's poorest situations can easily be ignored or passed by.

Further, I am convinced that ALL of our present budget is well spent...we on sub committee are constantly reminded that we are using and responsible for tax payers money - and rightly so. But I would support the increase in Jersey's budget until it is in line with GNI in the near future to ensure we provide larger charities the opportunity to fulfil more worthwhile Projects and give more people in Jersey the opportunity to have life changing, first hand experiences.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Heaven". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Rowland Heaven