

2024.06.25

3.2 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier Central of the Minister for International Development regarding improving international poverty levels (OQ.128/2024)

Further to publication of the *Best Things First* book by Professor Bjorn Lomborg and the conclusions arising from that publication, what is the Minister's assessment of the effectiveness of her department in improving international poverty levels?

[10:00]

Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville and St. Martin (The Minister for International Development):

Lomborg is good and we have taken much of his work into account alongside others of the effective philanthropy movement, such as Open Philanthropy, and resources like GiveWell. While I have not yet read this particular publication, which only came out last year, I am familiar with the fact that Lomborg, among other things, maintains that targeted efforts can make a significant difference. Which is exactly what we have done by structuring Jersey Overseas Aid in the way we have, focusing on 3 thematic areas and where we can also add value and expertise.

3.2.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Could the Minister suggest what progress has been made away from the physical building of community centres in Africa or wherever and on to the adoption of its skills-based advice and assistance in Africa? What progress has been made?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

I think the Deputy is referring to community work projects when he talks about building community centres. That is one very small aspect of our work and we still send volunteers out there. We are now looking at sending skilled volunteers who can offer their skills such as teaching, such as medics and possibly in the future we will look to veterinarians.

3.2.2 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

There is also another school of thought that specific development aid only changes a small part of life and actually looking more at systemic causes of poverty in developing countries is the way forward. Could the Minister advise if any part of her role is to encourage policy coherence across government policies and initiatives to prevent unintended negative consequences on poverty reduction and the impact of climate change in developing countries?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

Well, as the Deputy will know very well, we focus on conservation livelihoods. I would say that all aspects of a project are taken into account, including the negative aspects that there may be. So it is a case of looking at a project in the round, the benefits versus the negatives. I have to say that the projects that we support, the benefits always outweigh any negatives.

3.2.3 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Sorry, the Minister maybe misunderstood my question. I was asking if, as part of her role, she is looking at Government in Jersey and any policies or initiatives outside her remit that potentially could have an unintended consequence on poverty reduction in developing countries, if she encourages and influences that policy coherence, to ensure that there is wider benefits to the work she specifically does.

The Bailiff:

Well, I think it is whether you have a view across Government for the purposes of identifying any policies not within your Ministerial remit that might nonetheless touch upon the interests of your Ministerial remit. Is that a fair assessment?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

I am not sure that relates to a book from the original question, but it is an aspect I would have to think about.

The Bailiff:

That was the first question. Do you want to have a supplemental question, Deputy Jeune? It is not compulsory.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

No, it is okay, I have more later.

3.2.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The Minister mentioned the use of teachers or getting teachers involved in Africa, could she inform Members how many teachers have been involved in recent initiatives and for what periods?

Deputy C.F. Labey:

I think we touched on this in the good Deputy's Scrutiny Panel hearing on Thursday. So this year is the first year we sent teachers out and we sent a cohort in the Easter holiday for 2 weeks. We are sending another group of teachers in August. They go for 2 weeks and they teach English in schools.