Members present:

Principal Committee Members:

Chairperson: Hon. Joy Burch MLA (Australian Capital Territory, Australia)
Hon. Josephine Connolly MHA (Turks and Caicos)
Deputy Inna Gardiner (Jersey)
Sen. Dr Lynette P Holder (Barbados)
Hon. Jean-Claude Micallef (Malta)
Sandra Nelson MLA (Northern Territory, Australia)

Other Committee Members:

Mr David Earl (Alderney)
Hon. Kye Rymer MHA (British Virgin Islands)
Hon. Niki Rattle (Chairperson of the Small Branches)(Cook Islands)
Hon. Tamaiva Tuavera MP (Cook Islands)
H.E. Hon. Sir Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, CF, LVO, OBE (Mil), KStJ, CSM, MSD (Fiji) (Observer)
Tim Baker MHK (Isle of Man)
Bill Shimmins MHK (Isle of Man)
Deputy Robert Ward (Jersey)
Hon. David Agius (Malta)
Jeff Collins MLA (Northern Territory, Australia)
Hon. Hamizan bin Hassan MLA (Perlis, Malaysia)
Hon. Gervais Henrie MNA (Seychelles)

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The Committee adjourned. ............................................................................................ 48
SELECT COMMITTEE, THURSDAY, 30th JANUARY 2020

Inquiry Two:
Social Progress

The Committee sat at 2.15 p.m.
in The Chamber of the Parliament of Malta

[HON. JOY BURCH MLA in the Chair]

Procedural

The Chairperson (Hon. Joy Burch MLA): Thank you and a warm welcome to everyone here today. I just outline formally the process that we have adopted for the afternoon session and I want to thank the witnesses for their time and their commitment beforehand, hopefully we are all respectful and treat you well and our questions are held in a respectful manner.

The session for this afternoon will be that the formal Committee Members and indeed the broader membership of the House may seek to ask you questions. In response if you can keep your responses to two or three minutes, that will allow us to have more of an open discussion. I think the feedback we had from our earlier discussion today was the benefit of having a group of diverse small-branch parliamentarians to really go to some of the detail, but also some of those broader policy questions that you may have.

At the beginning we will go through each witness and ask for a five-minute opening statement. We go through all three and then we start with Ms Nelson from the ACT and then walk our way through.

We ask that everybody – witnesses and members of the Committees – when you first speak, to say your name and where you are from, for the purpose of transcribing.

We have three witnesses here this afternoon. We have Dr Corinda Essex from St Helena. We have Dr Stefano Moncada from the Small Islands Institute; and Katie Gallogly-Swan from Oxfam.

INCLUSION AND EQUALITY; EDUCATION

EVIDENCE OF
Katie Gallogly-Swan, Gender Justice Lead, Oxfam GB;
Dr Stefano Moncada, Board Member, Islands and Small States Institute; and
Hon. Dr Corinda Essex MLC, Member, Education Committee, St Helena

Q21. The Chairperson: So Katie, we might ask you to start with your opening statements.

Ms Katie Gallogly-Swan: Sure. First of all, thank you, Hon. Members, for having me today. I work for Oxfam. My role there is the Strategic Lead of Gender Justice and Women’s Rights in Campaigns, Policy and Influencing.

So in my work I am engaging across a range of different issues that Oxfam works on in the mission to eradicate poverty, to make sure that we are considering the specific needs of different genders and women’s rights within that.
Prior to that, just as an introduction, I have mostly worked in women’s rights, active citizenship, in macro-economic policy, so I will hopefully be speaking about those different issues today.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: As far as introductions, but then we will go to your opening statement, if you have something more substantive to provide? No.

Ms Katie Gallogly-Swan: Apologies, but I was not asked to prepare an opening statement, so I do not have one for you.

The Chairperson: That is fine.

Please.

Dr Stefano Moncada: Good afternoon.

Thank you, Hon. Chair and Hon. Members. I am very happy to be here and thank you for the invite and I am also very happy to share all the thoughts we have and take part in the discussion.

My name is Stefano Moncada. I am an academic here at the University of Malta, where I am also based at the Islands and Small States Institute. My background is in development and economics with a specific focus on all the socio-economic issues that have to do with islands and small states – well, most of them, not all of them. I have been working a lot especially on climate change in the last years, but in general on the developing trajectories of islands and small states as small jurisdictions.

The Islands and Small States Institute has been operating for more than 30 years trying to study, support the work and the development of islands and small states all over the world. We have been co-operating with many of the research centres or universities or governments that are represented here today. So, we will be very happy to share that experience as well.

The Chairperson: Do you have opening statements for the Committee?

Dr Stefano Moncada: I have not prepared a specific one, but I can share a couple of thoughts.

The Chairperson: If you could please.

Dr Stefano Moncada: Following the Second World War – I am not going to go very far back – and through the process of decolonisation, many small states and jurisdictions came about and many scholars and even policy makers were thinking about the survival of small states, or small jurisdictions. Would they make it? Would they be able to trade or sit at the same table even politically with big organisations?

When you fast forward 60 years from there and you see that the majority of success stories or cases where the states have survived or actually thrived are small states and small jurisdictions. Of course, this is just a general overview. There are many other cases which did not work like this but we do recognise that small states tend to be very successful.

This sparked the idea of many scholars to study: how come? Does small size make a difference? We have been trying to grapple with this question and we still do nowadays. What we can notice is that size does make a difference in terms of success stories and we have been trying to ask what the factors are that make small states, small jurisdictions more successful than big ones, if you compare the big numbers.

Well, I think that we have to boil down in a very short opening statement to a few factors: this would be for sure the concept of governance. Governance is meant as good standards and intervening when we are faced with a problem. Size, especially small size, tends to be very
challenging in terms of economic or sometimes social progress, because of lack of resources or limited resources to deal with big economic processes, therefore there are many vulnerabilities which are initially put there for small states.

The capacity of many small jurisdictions and states to overcome these initial difficulties is mostly due to the ability to do something about them – very simple. So to increase the resilience by tackling those problems and intervening with legislation, with procedures, with measures. We should not underestimate this capacity and importance to intervene, because most of the problems that lie in, of course also in small states, but in bigger countries, are the inability to act. Small states have been very successful in doing this, also because it probably boils down to survival or the capacity to count or to exist as a jurisdiction.

If I were to point to a couple of messages – and I will close here – they are exactly this: initial vulnerabilities associated with being small can be tackled successfully by increasing governance and, therefore, have a better resilience to any type of situation, including disasters. Thank you.

Q22. The Chairperson: Thank you for that.

We will move to Dr Essex, who is here as a witness on education.

Hon. Dr Corinda Essex MLC: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to start with a very bold statement, which I hope will not be controversial. In fact, I would be quite shocked if I found to be controversial.

I believe that education is the key to sustainable development. I think that it in some way underpins the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As a result of that, in St Helena Island we have placed a very high priority on education in our planning processes. We are often told, ‘Oh, St Helena lacks natural resources; we don’t have anything of value to offer the world. That’s why we are uncompetitive; we don’t have a comparative advantage in number of areas.’ My response to that is that we have a very valuable natural resource, which is our own people, and that human capital should be central to the sustainable development of our island.

We have basically an English educational system, which is compulsory between five and 16. We have non-compulsory nursery education, to which all parents enter into, although they are not compelled to do so, because they see and understand the value of education.

Beyond 16, we offer A-levels, a number of which have to be done through distance learning, because the critical mass is not great enough to offer the range of subjects that we would like to be able to offer. When it comes to higher education, that has to be either undertaken in the United Kingdom or by distance learning.

There are a very limited number of scholarships that are funded by the British government for university placements in the UK. There are years in which we have to tell young people that although they have achieved the necessary grades, they will not be able to progress to university because there is not a paid place for them, and it is basically not possible for individuals on local salaries to pay themselves through a university course.

The median wage is around £8,000 a year, so we are very constrained with regard to access to further education unless it is sponsored by the British government and a few other scholarship routes: we have sent a few on Commonwealth Scholarships and a few on Chevening Scholarships. That is one of our areas of pressure.

We also have a comprehensive apprenticeship scheme, which deals with vocational training in terms of NVQs, GNVQs and so on. But again, when budget constraints kick in and the education sector is told that they need to tighten their belt, that is one of the areas that tends to suffer, because our biggest priority has to be the compulsory schooling age. So, in order to try and improve universal standards of education, approximately two years ago we opened a community college, which offers courses at all levels, from basic numeracy and literacy for students who did not achieve well at IGCSE, to opportunities for distance learning. Those are subsidised partially but not fully. But they do ensure that, again, with some restrictions on
subjects that are being sought, individuals who want to improve their education after leaving school have an opportunity to do so.

We have a special educational needs programme for those who have learning difficulties and one of our biggest lines of expenditure in the compulsory schooling bracket is actually providing appropriate education for students who, for example, suffer from autism or other major learning difficulties, who cannot be coped with in main stream. In some instances, because of the size of the population, we have to provide one-to-one tuition to these students because of their special needs and that becomes very expensive, obviously. However, under our legislation we have to meet the needs of all students in the compulsory age bracket.

With regard to some of the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities that we face, one of the biggest problems that we have is that there is this huge emphasis now on ‘credentialising’ everything. We have very skilled, very competent individuals who do not have a piece of paper to say, ‘I am a chartered accountant’, because they did not have the opportunity to study to that level when they were coming through the educational system. Therefore when they apply for posts and the required qualification is to be a chartered accountant, they are told they are not successful, although in many instances they have credentials that show that they have performed that type of work at that type of level for a number of years – in many instances not necessarily just in St Helena; in some cases they been performing accounting task in the UK, in the Falkland Islands, on Ascension. So one of our main issues is trying to get experience recognised as well as formal qualifications.

Another major issue that we are facing is upskilling where necessary or recognising the experience, so that we can reduce our reliance on expatriates who come in on short-term contracts, which quite frankly do not contribute towards consistency and continuity and tend to make our own human capital feel undervalued and disadvantaged, because the pay differential is enormous. An expatriate coming into the island gets in some instances ten times the salary of a local person and at least four or five times the salary of a local person with a similar level of qualifications, because of all the incentives and additional add-ons that are put on to their remuneration package.

We also have a major constraint – and here I beg your permission to exceed by one minute, as the hon. colleague from Barbados did earlier! – another major issue that we have is the fact that we rely very heavily on aid from the British government, both budgetary aid and capital aid. As a result of that, we as parliamentarians do not have the autonomy and the power that I think is possessed in other independent jurisdictions, because we have to not only try to prioritise our priorities, but also meet the requirements of HMG for providing the aid that we receive. So we are having to serve two masters: our constituents, who want us to go in one direction; and HMG who in some occasions, I regret to say, want us to go in another direction – although I do not want to in any way suggest that we are not very, very grateful for the budgetary aid and capital support that we receive because if we did not receive it, we would not be able to function. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Dr Essex.
So to the floor, and the first question, Ms Nelson.

Q23. Ms Sandra Nelson MLA: Thank you, Madam Chair. My first question actually is for Katie from Oxfam and Dr Stefano Moncada.

It has been reported over many years and decades that women earn 79 cents for every dollar that a man earns. Not only do women earn less but also their peak earning age is much lower than that of the average man.

The UN Population Fund states in their description for gender equity and equality, they say, ‘We know that gender equity is a process of being fair to women and men, and we know that equity leads to equality.’ So that is from the UN Population Fund.
Just in the context of sustainable development and empowerment for small nations, and just leading into that as well, women make up 50% of the population; but yet women are still under-represented in our parliaments and also in executive positions in corporations and in peak body organisations. That is in every country: that is a fact. I did do some research and gender equity and gender equality obviously are something I am really passionate about. I do work on that quite a bit.

I am going to get to my question. I have got two questions to ask of both of you, to respond in this context.

The first question is: is inclusion easier or harder to achieve in smaller jurisdictions, based on your work experiences; and what strategies have you put in place to actually achieve that within smaller jurisdictions?

And the second question I have: from your experience and observations, what have been the most significant barriers to political engagement specifically for women and how can they be overcome? What strategies have you put in place to overcome those barriers and have they been successful?

I think, just to finish that off, in my opinion it is really important in regards to sustainable economic development. Every citizen needs to be empowered.

Thank you.

Ms Katie Gallogly-Swan: Thank you very much for that question.

I agree completely with what the Hon. Member was saying about how crucial it is for us to grapple with these difficult questions and also for us to consider the difference in distinction between equity and equality: equality being treated the same by the law but equity in recognising that in our differences, we may still be treated differently by the same law. So I think it is important that the Hon. Member brought up that distinction.

I agree also that SDG 5 on achieving gender equality is a cross-cutting issue for all sustainable development goals. As my colleague, Dr Essex pointed out, education is fundamental, and as I am sure my colleague, Dr Moncada will point out, tackling climate justice and climate change is crucial, too. So these are all very interlinked. As part of that, gender equality, gender equity and women’s rights have to be a part of every approach to the sustainable development goals.

But to get round to your question, on the question on inclusion in smaller jurisdictions I have to clarify that I am not a specialist on smaller jurisdictions, but what I will present is some ideas of how we might think about inclusion and inequality, and some of our suggestions in tackling the growing inequality crisis that we are seeing in the world today.

So what do we mean by inclusion? Do we mean political, social or economic? I suppose for that we would want to consider all three and as a part of that, what measurement are we considering for that inclusion? Are we considering the economic – is it income, is it wealth inclusion, is it consumption inequality? If we are posing questions on that economic question then we might be looking at the inequality measurements such as the Gini coefficient or the Palma ratio, which looks at the distribution of income and wealth in nation states. For example, the most unequal women are South Africa, Namibia and Haiti and the most equal are Ukraine, Slovenia and Norway.

If we are looking, however, at another indicator, for example happiness or well-being, which is a bit of a shift in how we understand the success of our economies, then we might look to a different set of indicators. The World Happiness Report looks at GDP but in connection to social support, life expectancy and perceptions of citizens of their freedom to be able to make decisions and of their state’s freedom from corruption. Then we get a different sort of plethora of states.

Lastly, I think that in considering those two different measurements, I would point to every year, Oxfam produces a Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index, where we look at three different areas on how states are performing on trying to close that inequality gap. That is looking at: spending on crucial services that make sure that a range of people from diverse...
backgrounds can access their fundamental rights; on progressive taxation – that is that crucial link between the citizen and the state, that citizens pay to be able to access those services – so ensuring progressive taxation, that is taxation which tackles inequality rather than entrenching existing inequalities; and then lastly, labour rights and how workers are treated.

Across those three different indicators, we have a range of different things that we measure. When we look at that, we get a different picture of how different states are performing.

So for example, the best state when we consider that commitment currently is Denmark, though they have interestingly reduced their public spending; and the worst would be Nigeria. The worsening are Brazil and Belgium. The improving are South Korea and Namibia, despite the fact that Namibia comes out worst in some of the inequalities.

So what we see here is not just about the status of where states are but also the direction of travel, the commitment to reducing inequality.

I think, to bring us back to the very important points the Hon. Member was saying about gender and women’s rights, that underpins all of this. So, for example, with regard to public spending, we recently released this report only last week for Davos. Some of you might be familiar with Oxfam’s yearly inequality report where we look at the status of inequality in the world today. Some of the research that we have done shows that there is a huge inequality crisis: the gap between the richest and the poorest is increasing. We know that the poorest half of the world has gotten 1% of the total increase in wealth in the last 30 years, while the richest 1% have gotten 50% of the total wealth.

What this indicates to us – and there has been increasing recognition that the existence of billionaires might in fact be a policy failure rather than a policy success. We are seeing states that are under-taxing wealth and the rapid accumulation of wealth, but underfunding the crucial public services that people depend on. Why is this a women’s rights issue? Because there is a huge gap in who undertakes the unpaid labour that sustains our economies. We found that the World Bank has measured that women do between two to five times the number of hours of unpaid labour in the world today which sustains our economies. That is rearing children, cooking food, collecting water, caring for older and infirm family members. That work is fundamental to the existence of our societies and yet it amounts to about $10.8 trillion at the most basic minimum measurement, which is three times the global tech industry’s contribution to the global economy. Our world would not exist without this unpaid labour and this unpaid labour falls disproportionally on the women of the world.

So if we are thinking about redistributing some of this labour, in order to free up women to be able to have the choice to access jobs, to access education, to participate civically in political life, then we need to tackle the gap in equality and the care crisis. And how do that? It is important to deliver the services that free that up. That means in some states thinking about infrastructure, transport and access to water; in other states it is about childcare, social care services. Without investing in these progressive social services, we will not be able to see the gains for gender equality that are so fundamental for SDG 5 and all of the SDGs.

Thank you.

Q24. Sen. Dr Lynette Holder: Madam Chair, would you allow a supplementary to this witness? Thank you.

There is a difference between gender equality and gender equity. Can you give us your definition of the two?

Ms Katie Gallogly-Swan: Yes. So a very basic metaphor would be for equality – let’s just take out the gender – equality is giving two people the same pair of shoes. Equity is giving two people the shoes that are their size.

So if we have an economy and a world that is designed for men, that means that women will always be trying to catch up. So equality is about being treated equally, but equity is recognising that different people – not just the differences between men and women, because all men and
women deserve their rights to be recognised, but all intersectional differences. That means different genders but that also means people of different countries, different languages, people who have disabilities, people who are of different racial backgrounds – those differences all make a difference in how we are able to engage in our society.

Thank you.

Q25. Hon. Jean-Claude Micallef: A supplementary question. Thanks, Ms Gallogly-Swan, for your detailed replies.

We definitely highlight the importance of women in society, but we have been emphasising the importance of having women in parliament, because at the end of it, we can empower and speak about inclusion but we need to have women as decision-makers as well.

What kind of parliamentary measures can be taken to make our parliaments more women-friendly? Any best practices?

The Chairperson: Just before I get you to answer, can I just do a ‘show and tell’ and say ACT was the first government in Australia to have majority women in parliament. (A Member: Hear, hear.) Hear, hear, I say.

Ms Katie Gallogly-Swan: Yes, of course, political representation at the highest levels is incredibly important. But I would challenge also the notion that representation only in the highest echelons of our society is important. I would say that we need equal representation across every level of our society. So that means in parliament and that means in board rooms – which is the thing that we get most often told – but that also means in local democracy. That also means in the decision-making processes that happen at the very most local levels. That means to reconsidering, too, where power lies in our democratic system. Does it lie at the highest level of government or is it decentralised, where people can access that power? So that is just one proposition to consider: how representation might be across different parts of our democratic system.

But you are right, and I think that just to emphasise the point that only 25% of parliamentarians at national level are women in the world; only 18% of ministers are women at the national level in the world. In Rwanda, of course, about two thirds of their parliament have been women, so we see a lot of differences in different regions on the representation.

But including women – and again, I want to emphasise how important it is to have different women from different backgrounds, because it is not just about the most elite or the most privileged women, but having women of all backgrounds represented, and men of all backgrounds represented, because that is the equity that we are looking for – is fundamental to being able to make the political decisions that improve the lives of everybody, as part of that sustainable development goal objective of leaving no one behind.

And this reaps results. We know, for example, in peace building that when women are included in peace-building processes, they are 35% more likely to succeed; and yet only 2% of mediators between 1990 and 2017 were women. There is a huge deficit.

The Hon. Member asked me about what we can do. I think it is not just about getting women into the chamber; it is about women in all areas of society. That means going back to gender roles and gender norms and expectations of both men and women in society and what we might expect, for example, in our maternity and paternity legislation – who is being prioritised? Are we assuming that men would not want to take the time-off to care for their child? That is also sexist. Are we assuming that women are not able to bring their children into the chamber? That has obviously been quite controversial in a number of chambers recently.

So I think it is about understanding again that question of equity. Is the parliament designed for women? Is it designed to have part-time workers who might want to also be doing a job share as they might do in another job. What about maternity leave?
A lot of these questions that come up for women who are trying to balance those different responsibilities and the assumption is that they have balance them on their own without a partner or without the state supporting and the re-distribution of that work.

The Chairperson: I have got three questions lined up: Jean-Claude, Inna and then David.


In Malta, for example, we are moving towards a mechanism where we are going to have 12 more women added to our Parliament. But yet again, having women in the Chamber or trying to find mechanisms for how to add female participation in our Parliament, for me it is not enough because at the end of it, we need to find friendly measures for women.

As you highlighted, most practices are totally male-oriented. If we speak about children, I think every parliament should have childcare for example, not just for women but for each and every one of us. Are there any suggestions that you can give? Maybe some best practices in any parliament around the world.

Ms Katie Gallogly-Swan: I think there is obviously an ongoing debate around, for example, intervention strategies like quotas, or selection processes which have been shown to have great success in the short-term to catapult the representation of women, because if we continue at the rate we are going, we will not achieve gender equality by the 2030 SDG deadline, as it were.

So I would encourage considering some of those more intervention approaches, which do mean having potentially quotas, which do mean potentially having expectations of reaching certain benchmarks.

The Chairperson: Before we go to the next question, I also invite the small state perspective in your response. So do not sit silent, witnesses, please.

Q27. Deputy Inna Gardiner: You mentioned quotas. Would you have any evidence, how did it work in jurisdictions who introduced quotas? Did it really work? What was the result and what was the outcome?

The second part of the question: your views on compulsory gender pay report publications for the private businesses.

Ms Katie Gallogly-Swan: I would say that it is not my specialism on the evidence of the quotas, but I would be happy to follow up with the Hon. Member, to share some of the reading that I have done on that.

Sorry, could you repeat the latter part of your question?

Deputy Inna Gardiner: Compulsory publication of gender pay for private businesses.

Ms Katie Gallogly-Swan: Yes, I think that has been incredibly successful. For example, in the UK where I come from, in revealing the inequities within the private sector, but also in the public sector and I think that feel of transparency is important. This is not the responsibility of any one single person, though there are people in power who do need to be held to account, but in recognising that this is not a single issue in one business or one organisation; this is society-wide and, at the end of the day, a global issue of inequality.

One other point I would like to make is that you cannot have strong equal representation in your parliaments and in your decision-making bodies without a strong, robust women’s rights civil society sector, and of course, civil society is there to hold power holders, like representatives in parliament, to account. There is evidence to suggest that the single most important factor in advancing gender equality is a strong and robust women’s rights sector. That means funding for women’s rights organisations and grass roots activism, that can continue to
hold parliamentarians and parliaments to account, because, unfortunately, the records show that while parliamentarians can be very good-willed and want to progress, without having that safety valve of a strong civil society, that will not happen.

**Dr Stefano Moncada:** All very interesting questions and I am trying to be selective here.

In terms of whether inclusion is easier in small jurisdictions or not, the answer is yes. Why is that? Probably because of proximity and the idea that, for example, if you fall into any type of uncomfortable situation there is always your family. Then there are different layers of protection: there is your family, there is the state which has a proportionally higher presence than in bigger countries, and then there are other organisations of civil society at large. So, it is relatively more difficult for a person in general to fall behind the lines than in other big countries.

So it is easier, but going back to my first point, it depends a lot on the role of governance. How able and willing is the parliament at times to intervene to assist in that net of welfare or support that the person or part of the community need? Very few usually are left behind in smaller jurisdictions and if this happens, of course there are exceptions, there is also a way for these people or parts of the community to be very vociferous. We know from evidence that it is more difficult, or it is taken care of a bit better.

Then it was asked: what type of actions could be undertaken to tackle the possible options? I strongly believe that the role of parliament is crucial in this case, because you can scrutinise. You can scrutinise in the annual budget: is it mainstreaming some of the SDGs? Is it taking into account the measures that should take us to more inclusion from all points of view, from any type of taxation, for example. Where is it going? I think you have a very important role in this and probably most of you are doing it – promoting enquiries, gathering evidence, trying to assess the effectiveness of reach of certain measures through the eyes of your constituencies. Is it going to harm or support that part of the community?

I am very aware – I know everybody is – that talking about taxation is a very contentious problem. However, when we do not tax wealth proportionally or in any type of measure you deem appropriate, that is where we create inequalities and that is where the gap starts and the flood starts to open and we know that that is a landmark when we are not able to tax progressively the wealth which is positively happening in many countries, in many small jurisdictions. That is where the diversions and the problems start to happen within society.

Then it is more difficult to justify not cutting welfare, because we have to take resources from somewhere and unfortunately welfare seems to be the easier way out, when we have to reduce the budget or cut spending. Again, evidence tells us that if we cut welfare programmes while not taxing wealth proportionally, it is always very difficult to then catch up to the original situation. So it is very bad overall.

**Q28. Hon. David Agius:** Madam Chair, did I understand you correctly that in your jurisdiction you are more female-oriented than male-oriented?

**The Chairperson:** In the 2016 election, we returned 52% women to our Parliament.

**Q29. Hon. David Agius:** And did you have quotas?

**The Chairperson:** No quotas. The community knew best.

**Q30. Hon. David Agius:** So my next question is this: do quotas really work? I am a man; how does a woman feel when she has quotas and she is elected to parliament via a quota and not because she was elected on her own steam?

I am saying this because the next legislation soon in Malta would be if we should introduce quotas. I am still not so sure about it. We have our European elections because we are part of
the European Union, as an island, as Malta, and we have six Members of Parliament to be elected: three are women and three are men, 50:50. But in this Parliament we have 8 out of 67.

So I still need to decide, I still need to think but I would like to have your views: how does a woman feel if she is elected to parliament via quota? And do really quotas work?

That is my question.

The Chairperson: A brave question.

Ms Katie Gallogly-Swan: Unfortunately, I never been elected to parliament ever, even on quota system, so I would not be able to answer you about how I would feel. I am sure actually that there is a huge diversity of feeling. I am sure that those people who are elected on quotas feel different things. So I do not know if there is a catch-all answer for that. I would say that there is very strong evidence to suggest that they do work.

But I also think it is important to recognise, too, that just because a woman is in a leadership position does not mean necessarily that the outcomes will be better for women. For example, the UK has had two female heads of state and they had mixed backgrounds when it come to their advancement of women’s rights in the UK. So just because there is a woman in a leadership position does not mean ... So I think it is important that we do not essentialise women and say that they will solve all the issues, because that is also not fair and unfair burden of responsibility.

But I think it is important that the reason that quotas exist is because we do not have the time to wait for the current rate of change. If we wait with the current rate of change on all of the different indicators of gender equality – whether that is gender pay, whether that is representation in parliament, whether that is in ending violence against women and girls – then we will not get there. So I suppose, it is not my specialism and so I would not be able to quote definitively the different academic literature on this, but I know there is evidence to suggest that quotas do work.

I think it is if you are willing to wait for that gap, which is targeted to be more than, I think, 200 years at the current rate ...

The Chairperson: A comment from Corinda; and then a supplementary from me, Stefano, whether there is evidence across small branches in relation to a quota measure for increasing women participation.

Hon. Dr Corinda Essex MLC: Just on the question from my colleague from Malta, on St Helena we have varied the composition of the legislature over the years. There have been times when we have come close to the Australian goal mark of around 50% females. In the last general election, we had 25% females.

Certainly I would not want to be elected on the basis of a quota. In fact, if I felt I was going to be elected on the basis of a quota, I probably would not stand, because I would wish to stand on my own merit, in direct competition with all other candidates. I think most of the people on St Helena who are female members of the legislature would find it demeaning, if there was a quota imposed. Thank you.

Dr Stefano Moncada: It is not exactly my area of expertise in terms of participation of women in parliaments of small branches, but I do concur with Katie: quotas do help. We have enough evidence, anywhere, not just for participation of women in politics and getting elected into parliament, but in any type of areas where there is a big mismatch, and this mismatch is not due to the unwillingness of women to participate but other evidence of all sorts, that creating an incentive and pushing that incentive with any type of legislation or any measure does work.

This is the same thing, if you allow me the comparison, on climate change. If we were to wait for things to happen, we will just be there and sitting still. But we do know that we have to intervene, otherwise things will first of all become extremely more violent in the future, but also
will cost much more. So, if we do nothing, the cost now and in the future will be tremendously higher. So we must do something about it. We know that if we do something about it, it will be not only beneficial but also cheaper in terms of investing – if you want to put it on a cost type of comparison.

So definitely, measures to promote the participation of women in any type of society where it is lacking, it does help. We have evidence that it works.

Q31. Ms Sandra Nelson MLA: I promise, it is a very quick comment.

Needless to say, it is very obvious that I am huge supporter of affirmative action, which is another term for quota. I am in the Australian Labour Party and we do have quotas within our party. We have to have quotas within the Party.

I did not choose to be born a woman. I also did not choose to be born with brown skin. I did not choose to be born gay. It is just how was I born. I am a woman. Black people did not choose to be black. If you do not have affirmative action, there is less likely chance of me actually being selected because of unconscious bias in our society. That is why we have to continue to have affirmative action or quotas. It is just the way it is.

In a utopian world, I would be selected or preselected by my party based on my merit – my intellect, my educational qualifications, whatever it is. But we do not live in a utopian world! We need affirmative action and we need quotas. We need it because you have six women in your parliament. That is not representative of 50% of your population.

Thank you.

Q32. Hon. Josephine Connolly MHA: Thank you.

I would like, with your indulgence, to make one comment about this women thing. We do stand on our own in Turks and Caicos. I would like to proudly say that 45% of our parliamentarians are women. Our Deputy Governor is a woman. Our Attorney General is a woman. Our Premier is a woman. We have this lady, Sonia Bien-Aime, who sits on the executive of FIFA, making decisions. Also, we have two women who run the Methodist church. So our women in Turks and Caicos play a very important role in our society.

My question is to Dr Corinda Essex. I am very concerned about your situation in terms of your budget and everything depends on the British. What do you mean when you say the British are saying this and the island is saying another thing?

And then I want to find out from you, what lessons did the legislature of St Helena learn from its work on education with the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Centre for International Development and Training (CIDT)?

Hon. Dr Corinda Essex MLC: The project that was supported by DFID and CIDT was basically one that was designed to address additional expenditure needs to develop the education sector. If we want additional funding for a particular sector from Britain, we basically have to projectise it, and that was what we did, because at that point in time we wanted to raise educational attainment levels, particularly the professional development of teachers, linking back to what I said earlier about the credentialisation, enabling practising teachers who in many cases are excellent classroom practitioners to gain internationally recognised qualifications. That was one of the outputs from the intervention.

As a result of that, we were able to establish a ‘card’ system for teachers, which enabled them to progress up the remuneration scale when they demonstrate that they had achieved particular competencies. As a result of that, we were able to reduce staff attrition substantially, because prior to the introduction of the ‘card’ system, we were losing teachers almost as quickly as we trained them. It was just a constant churn of staff because qualified staff are able to earn a very, very great deal more offshore than they are at home. So outmigration is one of our key problems and one of the aims of the intervention was to try and both retain teachers and also
encourage already trained teachers who had gone offshore to return to the island and then to
the profession again. So basically that is the answer to the second part of your question.

Which regard to the first part of the question, basically because approximately two thirds of
our budget comes from the UK, we have to negotiate agreed priorities with Britain, and we have
to do that on an annual basis. We have had successive one-year budgets, although we have got
three-year strategic plans, which has not helped planning and has impeded progress. We hoped
very much this year that we would have had a three-year package, but when the Financial Aid
Mission came from DFID a few weeks ago, they told us that that was most unlikely and that we
had better prepare ourselves for a one-year budget yet again.

Obviously because it is Britain’s funding, all we can try and do as parliamentarians is to raise
their awareness about the situation on the island, the needs on the island and just try and
persuade them to actually come round to agreeing that the work that we have done is
appropriate and suitable going forward. In the past we have reached complete loggerheads. In
the 1990s we rejected the budget on a number of occasions because the budget settlement was
not adequate for our reasonable needs. We had a Governor who supported us on that and he
got a social impact assessment undertaken and as a result of that, the British government upped
the budget line and gave us a settlement that was acceptable, although still not really in line
with our immediate needs.

So it is an iterative, consultative process that takes place on an annual basis and to some
extent it appears to rely on personalities. There are employees of the British government who
are much more amenable to suggestion and much more co-operative than sometimes others
are. So we do reasonably well in some years and in other years we do not do so well. But as
parliamentarians, all we can do is try and put the strongest case forward as much as we can, be
as persuasive as we can, and try and move forward in the spirit of partnership and co-operation.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Now I have two supplementary questions from the floor, but I
have also got two supplementaries from Committee Members, so I will go to the Committee
Members first.

Q33. Sen. Dr Lynette P Holder: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Dr Corinda you mention – and rightly so, I agree with you – that education really is the key
driver for us to realise the SDGs, but in your presentation you used a rather interesting phrase,
and I quote, ‘credentialising’ everything – which I think also in your presentation you mentioned
your efforts at NVQs, so I want for you to share with us what has been the success. For the
benefit of those who may not know the term of the National Vocational Qualification. This
definitely will help to ‘uncredentialise’, so what has been the success with your NVQs?

Hon. Dr Corinda Essex MLC: We have had considerable success with NVQs. In fact St Helena
has been recognised as a centre of excellence for the delivery of NVQs, and that has been
primarily in areas such as customer care, business administration, some of the health and social
services-related areas and some of the vocational training; masonry, carpentry and those types
of construction type areas. So we have had considerable success with that.

Q34. Sen. Dr Lynette P Holder: So would that not address then this issue that you
referenced? If it is that you have considered NVQs and you have embraced that now as a model
to create the competencies that you wish for your people, then would that not address the issue
mentioned earlier, relative to ...?

Hon. Dr Corinda Essex MLC: Yes, but in those subject areas. You cannot get an NVQ in
statistics or an NVQ in surveying, so the NVQ route does not solve our problem in those areas.

Even in accounting, you have to get a Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA)
qualification, which is a different route to the NVQ route.
Q35. Deputy Inna Gardiner: I would have two supplementary questions which follow your statement, which I really loved. It is about the valuable resource of our people, and I do believe this a really valuable resource.

How do you address the issue to provide educational opportunities and the restriction of number of students that you actually can send to the UK to get this higher education? So there is a general approach. We need to provide opportunities for all and at the same time you have this restriction. This is the first part of the question.

The second part of the question is: do you have a programme, a policy or some engagement with your students who have gone to the UK coming actually back and contributing back to the island?

Thank you.

Hon. Dr Corinda Essex MLC: The students that undertake university courses are bonded, so there is a financial penalty if they do not return to the island. The majority of them do return to the island anyway.

We have been working towards trying to encourage them to get some work experience in some instances immediately after they gain a qualification, so that when they come back to the island they are better prepared to undertake more responsible roles. But the issue is retention further down the line, when they want to progress further and, to be quite frank, they get tired of working for what is a pittance, given their level of qualifications.

I am not ashamed or embarrassed to state that when I retired from St Helena Government as a Director, having been a Director for 14 years, I retired on a salary of £18,000 per annum. Although the situation has improved a bit since then, although that is not many years ago, we have still got a long way to go if we are going to successfully retain our young people who get qualified.

If we had been able to retain our young people, we would not have to have about a 100 expatriate technical co-operation officers. Obviously we would always need to have some because in a population of within 4,500, you are never going to be able to achieve a full complement of qualified doctors, dentists, lawyers, etc. But if we had been able to retain a number of individuals who have received training and fully qualified overseas, we would be able to reduce the number of technical co-operation officers by at least 75%.

The Chairperson: Thank you. I know there are still two questions from the floor, but I have Committee Members in front with two questions and I will go to them first.

Q36. Hon. Jean-Claude Micallef: Thank you Madam Chair.

I would like to address my question to Dr Corinda Essex with whom, first of all, I show my empathy for the situation in St Helena. It is like being cursed when it comes to education there.

Obviously I fully agree that education is key to everything and should be a key handed over to everyone. In this regard, Malta has done giant leaps and if we speak about scholarships, we have a full system, including as well two scholarships a year by the Commonwealth, but the rest, apart from having free education and free university, we also subsidise and even give free grants for overseas scholarships. I suggest all my colleagues check even our model, when it comes to education.

But most of us focus on education from an academic point of view and despite the great academic record that Malta has and the list of high achievers, I am still concerned on how we can educate our societies in becoming more cultural, sports and health aware, in the sense that we have loads of professors and other tertiary category education, but yet again they do not follow when it comes to health issues and enjoying a healthy lifestyle.

Any suggestions in this regard, even in terms of SDGs 1 and 2, which I think should apply to the rest of the small states?
Hon. Dr Corinda Essex MLC: Thank you for that question.

In terms of scholarships, the maximum that we can hope to aspire to in any year is six or seven, and that depends on how many students are still away studying for courses that have a long duration. So in most years, we can only afford to fund two or three new placements and those, as I said, are funded primarily by DFID. So we are not getting swamped by graduates who we cannot employ.

When it comes to other forms of training and upskilling, that is done on island and has to be done within our recurrent budget, unless, as in the case of the project to which I alluded earlier, we get a projectised additional expenditure package approved by the British Government for a specific objective.

So, what we can offer in terms of sporting activities, health-linked activities and so on is again constrained by our budget. We have had a potential pipeline project for a second sports field, in the pipeline for about the last five years, and up to now we have not had the budget to even start to do the preliminary work to design it, let alone implement it. So again, financial limitations prevent us from taking on activities that we know would be beneficial to the people of our island.

The Chairperson: Josephine, and please do forgive my comfort in using people’s first names.

Q37. Hon. Josephine Connolly MHA: I have one more question for you, Dr Corinda.
You said that you depend on the British for everything; you did not mention the private sector. Do you have a private sector you reach out to and do you have any non-profit organisations?

Hon. Dr Corinda Essex MLC: We do have a private sector.

The non-profit organisations that we have on the island primarily look to St Helena Government to give them subsidy to help with their operations, so they are not in a financial position to help with the sort of issues that I am addressing today.

With regard to the private sector, we do have a private sector but because of the current very depressed economic climate, the private sector does not have the funding available to be able to, for example, offer scholarships, although in some instances, if there is a student who has a particular interest in say telecommunications and wants to qualify in that, the telecommunications provider on the island will provide an element of sponsorship which eases the situation a little. One of the initiatives that we are working on at the moment is trying to encourage that kind of collaborative approach so that we do not have to actually turn round to anybody who has achieved phenomenally at A-level and say, ‘Sorry, we haven’t got a place for you this year,’ because that would be sending out a very detrimental message, not only to that individual but also to younger pupils in the school system.

The Chairperson: Thank you. I will go to Rob and then Bill. I was going to come back and say to Katie and Stefano, do not be shy – if you have something to add to the discussion in response to a question, please speak up. Did you want to add something? (Interjections)

Q38. Deputy Robert Ward: Thank you.
The question is really for Ms Gallogly-Swan – I hope I have said you name correctly.

The Chairperson: That is why I am calling her Katie! (Laughter)

Deputy Robert Ward: It was really interesting to get the information and the data on unpaid labour and how valuable it is to our economies. Perhaps I can suggest this, in terms of quotas and linked to that: perhaps what we have, could I say that your opinion on the notion that we have a subliminal male quota system that is skewed towards men and therefore the quota
system in terms of number of women is simply needed in order to become a sustainable and more equitable society more quickly, so that we can achieve genuinely sustainable societies sometime in the future that is not just a distant future.

Ms Katie Gallogly-Swan: Thank you to the Hon. Member.

I do not think I have much more to add to that. I think that that, to me, captures the importance of quotas, affirmative action, both for gender equity and equality, but across a range of other differences that we see in our diverse societies.

I do not need to say any more than that. Thank you.

Q39. Deputy Robert Ward: In terms of the data on that unpaid labour, is that split down into small islands? Can we get that precise? I would be very interested to see that – that would be a very interesting thing to find out about.

Ms Katie Gallogly-Swan: Thank you, Hon. Member.

That is really a good point because I think that as this increases in the agenda of not only organisations like Oxfam, who actually is taking that call from gender economists who have been doing this work for a lot longer than Oxfam has, so we have to pay our dues where they are, but to national governments who are recognising this and also multilateral agencies.

The ILO is now recognising that they have to begin to measure unpaid care as part of their economic analyses and indeed the new IMF Director, Ms Georgieva, has just said that this is a huge challenge to overcome. When we have an institution like the IMF recognising the importance of unpaid care in sustaining our economies and the need to tackle wealth and equality, and how that entrenched ... It is not that wealth inequality in itself just exists; it is the fact that it recreates and re-emphasises existing inequalities and exacerbates them.

We have an economy that allows some people to accumulate wealth while women subsidise that accumulation with their free labour disproportionally on women who bear that responsibility. The data is yet to be there because we do not have the sustained investment in disaggregated data, so as parliamentarians I would challenge all of you, when you go back to your parliaments, to think about the data that you are collecting on your citizens and how you are disaggregating that data, not only for different genders but also across other lines because unless we capture those inequities and those inequalities, then they are invisible to us.

The more that we do, for example, time use surveys on how people use their time ... What we have captured in our Oxfam analysis is purely from the evidence collected that we have been able to do, but they are not based on national level surveys uniformly because not all nations collect that data. So that is a very important point.

The Chairperson: Stefano, would that be something that the Small States Institute could look at?

Dr Stefano Moncada: Thank you, Chair.

I am going to start from a general point and go down to answer some of the observations, including your question.

We have understood that size does matter and makes a difference, especially in terms of the cost. Small constitutions, small states tend to have a small market economy, so the size of the market is small and therefore it offers fewer opportunities. There is a lack of critical mass, which at times restricts the capacity of islands to exploit the economies of scale; then we have relatively lower choice in human resources, like we heard in the case of St Helena; the remoteness from certain urban centres and not having the capacity to access international markets; and they are prone to natural disasters.

Most of the activities in islands and small states – those that are islands – are concentrated on the coast. You have visited the reverse osmosis here and of course the geography of the
island is a bit different, therefore not as low-lying as in other places, but if there are, as in recent years, disasters, they will hit the coast and they will damage the small state much more than any larger ones.

So, there are more of these vulnerabilities, including the last one, which is probably the most important as far as the parliament goes: there is a higher cost to run the country. If you divide the cost among the citizens, the per capita cost to run anything in a country which is small is much higher. We call this the ‘indivisibility of the overheads costs’, because if you divide the cost to have a prime minister or a functioning government, it is much higher in a small state.

I believe, as many others scholars have been advancing, this concept of nothing wrong with asking either international institutions or higher level of governments for either concessions or a different set of arrangements because there are these natural inherent vulnerabilities — like probably the example you gave before for women or other minorities — that you are born with and there is very little you can do to change, because you cannot change the geographical position or a low-lying area of your country or the small market that you have. So there are these natural constraints which make your life more difficult and more expensive.

Notwithstanding this, many small states have managed to succeed but at higher costs, and the cost to maintain this success is much higher than in other bigger countries. Some way this has to be managed, so I believe there is nothing wrong in, for example, supporting this argument with many less developed countries or smaller developing states in asking for better concessions when it comes to agreeing loans with international institutions or any type of concession that is made, even when a country ... Recently I had the pleasure and the honour to be invited by the Government of the Cook Islands: they have recently graduated to achieve a higher income status, but the inherent vulnerabilities and the higher costs to sustain that level are still there. So, they have to be managed and the degree of vulnerability, if there is a decrease in tourism or a storm, for example, will be much higher for small countries. So there is nothing wrong, even if you graduate to a higher income status, to still ask for concessional rates for your loans or for the type of concessions that there are for international institutions. This is not begging; it is recognising that there is a structural inherent problem that cannot just dissolve by the simple fact that you are graduating and being a high income.

The Chairperson: One more quick supplementary from Inna, then I will go to Bill and then to Kye.

Q40. Deputy Inna Gardiner: We have concentrated on the quotas for women in the parliaments, for example, and minorities were mentioned. I am thinking about my parliament: the representation for minorities is even much worse than representation for women at ours. If we are thinking about the quotas for gender would be good, maybe we need to address minorities, maybe disabilities, to see really full representation and mirroring the society. What are your thoughts about it?

Ms Katie Gallogly-Swan: Thank you. It just strikes me as Dr Moncada was sharing in his evidence that what he is talking about is equity for islands and small states, and being treated for the specific needs of those states. So that word comes up again in considering differences.

And it is relevant too to your question, Hon. Member, in that I suppose the way Oxfam are increasingly trying to consider these questions as through the lens of intersectionality — ‘intersectionality’ being a term that was defined by an academic called Kimberlé Crenshaw in recognising that we are not single-issue people, as Audre Lorde would say; we are complex and each person is a range of intersecting identities.

While I might be a woman, I might have other differences which make my experience of the world very different from yours, while we both might be women. I think that that has to be starting point in understanding not only policy questions, but how we achieve equity in our parliaments. Yes, I do think it is worthwhile considering the range of intersectional identities that
our societies are made up of and how they can be fully expressed and represented in our
democratic systems – whether that is in our parliamentary system at that higher level, or
whether that is through other mechanisms too that make politics and democratic engagement
something that is not reserved for a chamber, but it is actually a living and breathing thing -
what we might call at Oxfam ‘active citizenship’.

That might look like citizens’ assemblies that are randomly selected populations of people to
support as a safety valve or in consultation on policy development. That might look like
participatory budgeting: again, engaging with local communities on how decisions are made,
finding ambitious ways to engage people differently in politics, both in the parliament and in the
chamber, but outside of that too. I think it is the sort of active citizenship that can begin to level
up those historic inequities.

Q41. Mr Bill Shimmins, MHK: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I was very interested in Dr Essex’s evidence about how St Helena had used education as a key
enabler to upskill the young people and others there; but then also I was struck by the salary
differential and the issue that that was causing, not just in terms of some of those issues of
people flying in, but also in terms of a brain-drain for some of your talent. I guess that is an issue
for many small states because you cannot really put bars on the windows and it is helpful
sometimes for people to have experience in larger places. But it is very difficult to break that
cycle when you have got such an enormous salary differential; it must be very tempting.

So, the question I have really is for Dr Moncada, in that many small states actually have
higher median earnings than their neighbouring larger states. We are probably in one here, in
Malta, and there are other examples in Europe and Asia and Africa. Do you think that should be
a priority for parliamentarians in terms of increasing earnings for small states and how does that
interact with competitiveness in the global environment?

Dr Stefano Moncada: Thank you for the question.

Whenever there is an increase, and usually when it is fast, of income per capita for small
states there is always the danger that inequalities will also increase as well. In fact, like Katie has
just explained, we do have this data that this is happening more and more.

Many solutions are in place to try to address this possible negative aspect of growing and
increasing your income, but I believe that the role of parliaments is crucial in this. You probably
have contact with the constituencies and that can allow you to see, as the country evolves and
develops and achieves higher income per capita, if these inequalities are really happening on the
ground and perhaps even the way to fix them, because the specific aspects of many small states
are that although they are very different geographically, even in terms of the way the population
is formed, they share a lot of experiences and many commonalities which can be used to then
apply some of the solutions to address inequalities, for example.

I think the role of communities here is central. As Katie was mentioning before, trying to have
the role of associations, the people who work on the ground flagging and perhaps even leading
some of the social programmes to address the increasing inequalities is very important because
they can be directed towards measures that are effective on the ground.

In terms of losing competitiveness yes, it does happen. We have experienced it here in Malta,
although we have not reached the tipping point, but salaries have started to increase, and the
cost of living as well, so although salaries are relatively lower than then neighbouring countries,
so it is still very competitive for investors to come and invest here, the rising costs of living are a
concern and many people have left or have decided not to pursue the ‘Maltese Dream’ because
the costs of living are getting very high. This must be, in my opinion, looked after.

There could be policies which can support this so again, the role of governments and
parliaments, in this case, is very crucial. To assess continuously what is going on and try to find
interventions without being afraid of touching the sacred grail called profit. We must tax wealth!
It is as simple as that. Taxation can help to solve problems of social inequalities. It is very easy on paper.

Thank you.

**Q42. Sen. Dr Lynette Holder:** I have a question for Dr Stefano Moncada.

I listened with intrigue to Katie’s comments earlier and some of the data shared that shows the disparity we have, and we all know, relative to women in leadership positions across the various institutions in our society.

You mentioned that you believe governance is a strong catalyst for the survival of SIDS and the fact that we have not maybe paid attention to the issue of governance. Since the Second World War, the data is there to show that inclusion of women in the workforce has significantly allowed our economies to grow. We have quantifiable data relative to economic growth of the middle class across several small states, etc. Having done all that, and we have seen all that, 75 years later, we are still struggling with women being included in leadership positions as they rightly should be.

What would you say relative to our governance model? Is it working? Clearly it would suggest it is not. But what do we need to do? What really in your view, Stefano, is the issue from a governance perspective?

**Dr Stefano Moncada:** Thank you, Senator.

There has been a lot of evidence and gathering of information as you say about this. There is no doubt that excluding part of the population from economic development is very detrimental, not just to the social economic development of the country, but even broadly to the personal development of people who are excluded. So, it is really bad and it does not help the country to develop fully.

There are many measures, on many dimensions: education; awareness. Probably because of my formation and background, I would tend to say that economic instruments do help. Taxation incentives, subsidies towards promoting the inclusion of women or minorities into the labour or social or political sphere usually work. Starting from quotas, but also, in recent years, all the countries that have operated actions to support the role of families and women in raising kids, by providing free child care or other type of actions that remunerate or help those families with incentives, have worked very well.

I am sure that here, if we start to share experiences from your own parliaments, we can gather enough evidence to perhaps share very good experiences in practices that can be used in all the instances. Perhaps this could be a very good point that we have gathered so far: that many small states and jurisdictions tend to have the solutions perhaps not shared, but on their own turf. This can be applied without having the constraints of having passed a layer of trial already, because small jurisdictions tend to share a lot of common characteristics. I do not know if there was any inquiry done by the CPA, or perhaps it could be on the floor, to collect best practice where things have worked in the face of this type of social inequalities or any type of issues that come up and were addressed properly. Perhaps this could be shared in other instances.

But yes, I think economic instruments can work very well, including taxing, which you should not be afraid of using.

Thank you

**The Chairperson:** Thank you. Katie.

**Ms Katie Gallogly-Swan:** Thank you, Hon. Member, for that question.

It is true that particularly in industrialised states the inclusion of women into the labour force in the aftermath of World War II did mean that was an increase of economic agency for a lot of populations of women, but not all women. That is the first point I would like to make.
Second: that did not mean that the care went away; it just meant that someone else had to pick it up. We still need to care for our children, feed our children, look after our elderly and sick. We still need to collect water; we still need to buy the groceries. Those things are work that needs to be done. So we see in some states that were able to extract the sufficient taxation from their populations the growth of incredibly strong and robust social services.

For example in the UK where I come from, the NHS: the founding of a wraparound, universal, free and comprehensive health service. That was fundamental in increasing the rights of women, because suddenly those care services and that responsibility was redistributed to the state via taxation. I would argue that one of the single most important things for tackling the inequalities that we continue to see, despite that progress, is redistribution. What Dr Moncada was saying about economic instruments in terms of taxation, at the end of the day, however, different states are in different positions to be able to do that.

I would like to emphasise that economic growth in itself is not an indicator of equality or indeed of happiness. We see for example that the three states at the top of the GDP per capita are Qatar, Luxembourg and Singapore; and yet on the happiness scale, Qatar comes 35, Luxembourg comes 18 and Singapore comes 26. So that, as a consequence of economic policies that are not about redistribution, not about considering how to uphold those strong social services which can be the foundation for inclusion for all people in society.

I think that another point to mention is obviously also that care question: yes, there has been redistribution to states in many instances, but in those countries where we see the beginnings of pull back of some of those social services, that care work again does not go away, and those gender expectations are still there. In this instance, we see the outsourcing of that care work normally to more marginalised women, for example migrants and women of colour, in particularly the most industrialised states, because their labour is cheaper, and so what is freedom for one woman in this instance is not freedom for those women. I think that we need to consider who is picking up those responsibilities and what is the parliament’s role and the state’s role in being able to legislate such that all people are given the opportunity to thrive.

Q43. Hon. Kye Rymer MHA: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I must say I appreciate this form a bit better than this morning. It is quite interactive and informative.

I have a quick question based on my territory, the BVI, in terms of education. I know Dr Essex said that education is key basically for everything and I do agree with her.

We went through a trilogy of catastrophic events in 2017. In our territory we import a lot of our labour. In terms of education, though, we have a lot of persons within the territory who have the bachelor’s, the master’s and are basically unemployed or those who are working there within entry-level positions. What we notice at that point is we have to still import a lot of labour in terms of construction, vocational training, etc. What would or what should the role of parliament be to encourage that sort of training, that sort of education so that it correlates with that aspect of the labour force?

Q44. The Chairperson: Witnesses, this is an important question about so many of the small nations have skills deficits, so how do we create that skill capacity, which goes to income and a whole range of other things as well?

Over to any one of the witnesses.

Dr Stefano Moncada: Yes, I think this is a crucial point. It goes again to probably the size of the market and the capacity of people to move freely perhaps from one place to another, because we are talking about skills and job opportunities. For example, we have coming from the European Union, the creation of the free market, in terms of the exchange and the free circulation of people especially has helped tremendously in filling up does gaps that there are, in terms of specialisation but also to offer opportunities for those small states that specialise in
certain areas, to specialise even more or even to open up and specialise in areas where they were not so specialised before.

I think that probably opening up, removing certain barriers that there are in terms of circulation of people, especially for training and for education, could be an interesting opportunity to explore, if there are such barriers in place, of course. I know this is a very contentious problem, and perhaps it touches some hot political issues that are being debated now, but in terms of circulation and free movement of people and skills, adding barriers does not help.

**Hon. Dr Corinda Essex MLC:** I think it is important that the focus is not too narrowly academic. I made reference previously to vocational courses and so on, and I think they are equally important. I think when one is advising young people about career options and about potential opportunities post-school, they need to be aware that there is a range. It does not have to be narrowly bachelors’ degrees and masters’ degrees. Indeed not all of them are going to be able to aspire to those anyway, because there are other types of qualifications and career paths that are just as important and in some cases involve remuneration which is as high or even higher and which, if youngsters are encouraged to aspire towards at an early stage, helps to prevent the situation that my colleague from BVI has actually indicated.

Also, I think those who have gained qualifications and are living in jurisdictions where job opportunities are limited need to be encouraged to be flexible with regard to their expectations and not necessarily to think that the job opportunities that are going to be available to them are necessarily always going to be their first choice job opportunities. As someone said earlier, we are not living in an utopian world. I think part of education is education of the whole person in the widest sense, so as to encourage that whole person to have realistic expectations; to be aware of the options that are likely to come his or her way; to be prepared to be a little bit adaptable; to be prepared to take advantage of the opportunities that may come in his or her direction; and indeed not to become despondent, resentful and depressed if at times they find that they cannot achieve what they would like to be doing at that particular point in time in their lives.

I think young people need to be taught to embrace life in a positive way, but at the same time to recognise that there are going to be moments in which things are not going to go as they hoped or planned, and they need to be strong enough to face those issues and move on.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you, Corinda.

Hon. Chairperson, you had a question, I understand.

**Q45. Hon. Niki Rattle:** Thank you very much.

All of a sudden I have a lot to say! It is very interesting, if I can just refer to the last response to the question.

Right now in my country there is a social media discussion going on about exactly that topic on vocational training. I think sometimes we probably concentrate so much on the academics, that we forget that we need all levels of education in a country for it to function. So, what is going on at the moment is that some mechanics want to get their certificates, and while people are very willing, there are not the tutors to complete the training, which has started and they have come to point that there is no tutor available. So people are really desperate to get that, so they can provide the service that is needed.

So they are talking on social media and people are saying, ‘I do not want to offend anybody’, so I wrote in and I said, ‘You are certainly not going to offend anybody, but instead, use your energy to go and knock on politicians’ doors or the Ministry of Education or the providers at the moment, if there is enough of you ...’ It sounds like there are enough people who are sitting waiting for that missing part of their education to be completed and becoming trained in the role that is needed. So the community – this is the people – the people have got to speak up and
go and see the relevant people for something to happen. Otherwise, to say, ‘I do not want to offend anybody’, well I do not think that is their intention. Their intention is to complete your education. People have to speak up.

My question – and this also refers back to you, Dr Essex, earlier – I would like to ask a question to Katie. Maybe it is an opinion I am looking for, because it is an area that nobody seems to have an answer for. You may not have an answer but maybe you can have an opinion. Earlier, Dr Essex said very strongly that she wants to be in parliament as a woman on her own merits, and there are women in the Cook Islands who say the same and around the Pacific Region. But this is what comes out. I do not believe that women who stand to become a member do not have any merits. We have barriers which are things like families. If you have a lot of families, you are going to get the votes. Nothing to do with merits often, because my father was a member, my uncle was a member, and stuff like that. There are no qualifications required. When you go to apply for a job, you have to have qualifications to get a job; but it is not the case with members of parliament.

So what women say is that once a woman gets into parliament, they have a foot in the door, they should keep the door open, and they have a role of making legislation to allow more women to get into parliament – and I am talking about the quotas. But that does not seem to happen if once women get in, ‘I’m in, I’m okay’, but they do not bring people along with them. I just wondered what is your view was on that, please.

Ms Katie Gallogly-Swan: Thank you, Hon. Member.

I think it comes back to that point about not essentialising women or men as the solution to all of society’s ills. I think that it is true that when women support other women, we can do incredible things. That is in the interests of all women, particularly perhaps those women who have not had to face as much adversity or as many barriers in their lives, or hurdles. Maybe that is not something that ...

The specificity of each individual’s case as well as the collective opportunity, if we did all hold the door open, I think is something that is very complex. I think just because we have a woman in power or a woman in a leadership role does not mean that they will prioritise women’s rights. In fact there are some cases in some studies into women in leadership positions in business, for example, where in fact women are proceed to be even more harsh as managers. Whether that is because of sexist attitudes towards women in leadership positions which assume that any exertion of their power is not nice and not very polite, versus maybe the reality that they want to be successful in a patriarchal world, they want to express they can fit that macho mould that I do not think all men even feel comfortable with.

So I think that it is really complex. I would not want to judge any individual’s situation, but I think that when we do hold the door open for each other and for all marginalised groups and have the generosity to understand the positions of people who might be in more privileged positions and being able to dialogue with them and hold them to account when we need to.

Again, that is not an Oxfam position; that is my own personal view.

Q46. Hon. Jean-Claude Micallef: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Now that we are focusing on inclusion, most of us are experiencing the immigration phenomenon. So far we have seen parliaments playing tug-of-war policies in this sector. Rightly so, while we all recognise the humanitarian side of the situation, small countries complain about overpopulation, change of culture and lack of integration. Our constituents expect solutions and answers from us parliamentarians. How can small states contribute and show solidarity without suffering burdens that lead to xenophobia, unrest and lack of security within one’s own country?

I direct the question to either of our witnesses.

The Chairperson: I will ask Stefano to kick off
**Dr Stefano Moncada:** Thank you, Madam Chair, for that hot potato! *(Laughter)* I am very glad to answer to this.

Let’s start from some evidence that we have been hearing and collecting over the years about the migration in general and answering the question of whether it is beneficial to society and the economy of a country or not. So all the answers are point towards a yes. Many modern democracies have been built by migrants and by the flow of migration that has built really the different values and also skills that have helped to solidify even democracy.

Going to more recent years, there have been a lot of studies, especially in terms of the social economics of migration that tell us three things. There are false myths, in terms of migrants stealing our jobs, migrants being a burden on the welfare and in terms of … These are the most important ones.

All the evidence that we have gathered – of course bar a few exceptions – tell us that migration is beneficial to the economy of a country and migrants are not a burden to the welfare of a country. Actually the other way round, they add on to the welfare and therefore there is less need for taxing citizens. So overall we see that this is of course a benefit to society.

However, there is a problem of integration, which must happen and usually it should happen gradually and through the help and guidance of institutions and communities alike. So, I am sure this is not the case for many of the countries you come from but there is always the danger of fuelling anger in order to gain consensus and this must be, I believe, reprimanded in terms of this overall gain.

I guess there isn’t a magic solution in this argument. The countries that have managed to integrate the most and have the least problems in terms of integration are those that have, for example, tried to start with the language, with the culture of the country where the migrants are coming in, but also to have two ways – trying to open up to the culture of the migrants who come to the country.

This has worked very well. I can mention a couple of examples. If you remember during the 1990s, many Albanians fled the country and went mostly to Italy. The people who have now been residing in many of the regions are fully integrated and are helping and supporting the work of many other Albanians in their own countries and there is a continuous flow of ideas and integration has worked very well. Now, of course, there were communities and institutions that have helped to facilitate that process. I think the role of the state and all the departments and the layers is very important here and to integrate with civil society societies. It is not easy, it is a process, of course, but I strongly believe that a society can become much stronger if this is done in a concerned manner.

**Q47. Hon. Jean-Claude Micallef:** Thank you for that but yet again, we are looking at a problem from the migrants’ point of view, on how to integrate them and how to make our country beneficial for the newcomers. As I am an avid football lover and as any top teams – let’s mention a team which you definitely know coming from Italy, Juventus – they recently signed Cristiano Ronaldo. The coach made sure that Cristiano Ronaldo fits the team; not the team fits Cristiano Ronaldo. Don’t you think that so far we are tackling illegal immigration and migration in general by trying to get our societies fitting the newcomer, without addressing all the concerns that our societies, our people are facing? That is definitely changing our society, affecting not only social change but even sustainability and debt.

**Dr Stefano Moncada:** It is of course very challenging and I think you have a very strong point that this should be addressed both ways.

However, sometimes we forget that we cannot have all the cake and eat it. We have to recognise that if we do address … if we want the benefits of having cheaper labour or people are willing to do jobs that nobody wants to do or contribute to the welfare system, there is also a process that must be encouraged. As far as Malta is concerned, I think that there are many things that have been done correctly. For example, the integration of children within schools is
going relatively well. I think there are very good examples. There was a migration unit being created and it has been very active – of course understaffed, like probably all public service offices – but things are going relatively well.

Of course, this goes both ways but I see fewer problems of migrants wanting to integrate, rather than communities or maybe some public figures not wanting to accept that migration is an ongoing phenomenon which has to be accepted and dealt with and perhaps by only looking at integration can be tackled in the proper manner.

It is not easy. This is an ongoing issue that must be governed well from both sides. I believe that creating dialogue, and not necessarily pointing at only the differences but also the process of integrating and succeeding, could be the best way forward. There are corners, it is not a smooth process, we should not bury them under the sand.

**The Chairperson:** We might leave it there, Stefano, and we are down to the last 10 minutes. We have Tamaiva, Tim and Sandra. So very quick questions and very quick responses. We still have three questions, the same rules apply. Quick question; quick response.

**Q48. Hon. Tamaiva Tuavera MP:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Because my Speaker has spoken, she has more or less taken a lot out of it but I want to talk about the Cook Islands because in the Cook Islands we have a culture and the culture means that females have not been accepted as leaders in our society. But now it has changed since Christianity came to the Cook Islands. In Rarotonga we have six high chiefs, four of them are females. So from that, it has started.

The word ‘disparity’ was mentioned before and I am not sure if Katie is talking about this just for parliamentarians or parliaments or for the rest right across the board. In the Cook Islands a lot of our State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) are run by female CEOs and that is a big plus for us in the Cook Islands. We have seven women in our Parliament of 24, including our Speaker. So we are working to let more women into Parliament and, as was said before, a lot of them do not want a free ticket into Parliament. They want to be elected and win their seats.

So, for a start, there was a seat in Titikaveka that was contested by three women. Three women stood for the same seat and of course only one came out on the top. So, this is something that we are looking at, that women in our country are starting to come out on top of the men.

I disagree with what was said before about women, about children. All these women have got children. There is one MP in Rarotonga now whose husband passed away. He was only an MP for three months and because of love she was elected to take her husband’s seat. She is the seventh person in our ...

My question is: is this disparity about parliament only, or is it right across the board? It is starting to look like we are being head-hunted over here, to agree that there should be more women in parliament.

**The Chairperson:** I think there is a general, how does society increase ... I will just bring it to a conclusion. Society as a whole should increase and improve women’s participation and reflection of that ultimately would be across parliaments, other institutions of authority and decision-making as well.

**Q49. Mr Tim Baker MHK:** My question is quite straightforward to both Katie and Stefano separately. What would be the two top things that you would want each of us as parliamentarians to take away from this discussion and focus on in our jurisdictions to improve the prospects for sustainable economic development?

**The Chairperson:** Quick response, Katie.
Ms Katie Gallogly-Swan: Thank you for that question; very much put on the spot by the Hon. Member.

So, I will go with my gut instinct. The first one is on civil society and the importance of civil society in being in balance with civil society. Representatives are in parliament because they are representing the people and that goes back to the question about the global challenge that we are seeing in terms of the rise of extreme politics and particularly xenophobia. It is not only a feminist and women’s rights issue, but it is an all of society issue, to be able to have a strong, robust, well-funded civil society that can hold you to account. I think that is very important and you should welcome being held to account.

The second thing would be on my point on equity and re-distribution. Something that has been cross cutting across some of the questions I have not been able to answer is on: how do we fund this? This is all very nice and ambitious but how do we pay for this? I think that the strength in this room is from having many small states coming together. That is what this image on the banner represents. We face these global challenges because we are a global community and so you should be working together.

So, for example, when it comes to inclusion and that question of ‘how do we pay for that? That sounds very expensive,’ if we had to tax an additional 0.5% of the wealth of the richest 1% – which I am assuming is no one in this room, no offence – over the next 10 years that would be equal to investments needed to create a 117 million jobs in education, health, elderly care and other sectors to close these deficits and tackle this inequality.

The solutions are there, we just need to be ambitious enough to hold the most powerful to account on our globe.

Q50. Mr David Earl: Madam Chair, fellow parliamentarians, as probably a number of you know, the British Government spent something like £350 million building an airport in St Helena. My question is to Dr Essex and her fellow Saints. Dr Essex, in your opinion would the £350 million have been better spent on improving education and dealing with some of the other equalities that you mentioned during your inaugural speech?

Hon. Dr Corinda Essex MLC: Thank you for your question.

The investment in the airport was very valuable. Unfortunately, it was then found that the airport could not accommodate the size aircraft that had originally been envisaged and as a result of that, we had to go out through another tender process and we now have a much smaller aircraft which can only carry a maximum of approximately 90 passengers. That has done some substantial damage to the economic case that was originally presented to justify the investment in the airport, but having said that, we do have faster communications with the rest of the world, which is a major plus. We do have opportunities to medevac patients by air, a number of who would have probably passed away if they had to wait on the ship to take them to South Africa for medical treatment.

We are very slowly building a tourism industry but as I mentioned earlier, progress is not as robust as we would have liked. We have no problem actually attracting interest, but converting interest into actual occupancy of seats is a major issue that we have got to try and address. We need to analyse why we are not getting a bigger take-up of seats and my own gut feeling is that price has a lot to do with it, because once again, we have not got a comparative advantage or a competitive edge. That is one of the issues that we are in constant debate with Her Majesty’s Government about.

The Chairperson: We might leave it there, Corinda.

Our final question ...

Q51. Sen. Dr Lynette P Holder: Thank you, Madam Chair.
Dr Stefano, Katie, either of you can answer: which comes first, the chicken or the egg? This has been asked against what I consider to be a very unfortunate situation with our politics now; this populist ideology. Our industrialised economies were built on the backs of immigrants and yet we are seeing this behaviour now. These people are being elected. We are seeing our parliaments being filled now with this populist ideology, but they had to be elected; someone put them there, as you said, so which comes first really; the chicken or the egg?

The Chairperson: Feel free, Stefano!

Dr Stefano Moncada: Well, I guess that is not a research question! That is a very serious issue. Of course, there are different interpretations one can give to an answer like this, but in august education, the usual things raise awareness on the real issues, but I think we are now engaging with both the people as well as the individuals who raise such populist questions. Everything is happening very fast and it is difficult to control, especially with the social media, so we do not have the capacity to understand the extent to which and how to reply to such ways of populism. But I think engaging, starting from the work you probably do in your constituencies, and giving examples of what is really happening, how it is working. Sometimes it is very easy to speak to the guts of the people and to have that hatred coming out, rather than taking a bit more time, rather than just a very quick tweet, to explain that things are not really as they are portrayed and the reality might be different.

I ran a little survey among the oldest students and people who I teach and interact with and there is almost no understanding about how migrants contribute to the economy of a country, for example. They are still perceived as being a burden when they are not because data shows exactly this. This is not an academic talking; this is the Central Bank, the financial institutions, the World Bank or even very hard neoclassical economists, who now have realised that the trends are completely different.

These are stories that are being fabricated to get consensus but it is also true that the other way round can happen as well. So, I think pushing on the real arguments and presenting facts and changing the narrative can be very important. Then the how: I leave it completely up to you because I am sure you will be delivering it much better than an academic like me.

If possible, I would like to answer the million-dollar question of what are the three things that we could perhaps do. Issues like inequalities or poverty can be interpreted as being a consequence of the market economy – a by-product of economic growth or GDP. We have intervened in many areas to fix this, but not enough in terms of inequalities. So, I think there should not be any fear of intervening and taxing what is bad while incentivising what is good, redistribute the resources and think that the cost of the welfare system is an investment for those minorities or groups of vulnerable people who tomorrow will be an active part of an engine which can produce resources. This is a burden now if you look at the budget of that year, but it is an investment if you look at the longer period. There is ample of evidence for this, so it is just the narrative that has to change.

Perhaps something that I already pointed out before is to share good practices among small states and much small jurisdictions, replicate what resonates amongst small states because there is a wealth of evidence that points towards things working well in small states that can be replicated and because of the size and the understanding, especially within the Commonwealth sphere, this can be applied better within institutions that work or are very similar, including creating alliances at regional-international level to push on those arguments I argued before.

Sometimes small countries have higher costs and there is nothing you can do about it, rather than paying them themselves or asked for this to be fixed, like with quotas.

Thank you.
The Chairperson: Thank you indeed. Thank you Committee Members and other Members in this; but a particular very large and heartfelt thank you to our witnesses Stefano, Katie and Corinda – two hours of questions. Gee, it felt like we were in a parliament! (Laughter)

So thank you for that. Your contribution really has been informative and generated lots of thinking for us and I could see people taking notes. There are recommendations coming out of this. For me what has jumped out is doubt around unpaid labour for example; how do we benefit as a network and share our best practices so we can build on the collective knowledge that we have, the brains trust in this room is really quite extraordinary, and we should use that. Thank you for your participation, to all Members.

So with that, we will call this session to a close. There is afternoon tea for 15 minutes, so we will come back at 4.10 p.m. and we will go to the de-brief and wrap-up session as a Committee. So thank you again.

The Committee adjourned.