

Environmental Audit Committee

Oral evidence: The Sustainable Development Goals in the UK, HC 596

Tuesday 24 January 2017

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Members present: Mary Creagh (Chair); Peter Heaton-Jones; John Mc Nally; Dr Matthew Offord; Joan Ryan.

Questions 253-292

Witnesses

Richard Curtis and Kate Garvey, co-founders of Project Everyone.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Richard Curtis and Kate Garvey.

Q253 **Chair:** Can I begin with an apology to our guests? We obviously have a small constitutional announcement happening across the road and several of our Committee members are out doing media on that. Another couple of members are on a visit to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, so we have been quite depleted, and we have had the challenges of London's transportation network to deal with as well. Thank you very much indeed for coming.

This is the final session in our Committee's inquiry into the sustainable development goals in the UK. We are delighted to have with us today Richard Curtis and Kate Garvey to talk to us about the work that they have been doing on Project Everyone. Thank you very much for coming and for the briefing pack that you sent out to us. In the interim we have been going through the full range of interesting audio-visual materials that you made.

We have found that very few people in the UK know about this, although I see from some of your films that you did stuff on it across St Paul's Bridge, the Millennium Bridge, so somebody somewhere knows about it. Is this a problem just in the UK or is it a problem in other countries as well?

Richard Curtis: I would say we are beginning on the process. According to the latest figures, I think from the UN, we are—

Kate Garvey: Yes, 7% of the population of the world know a lot about the goals—that was from a GlobeScan report that was done between December 2015 and March 2016—and on top of that 22% know something. In the UK they say 6% know a lot about the goals and 27% overall know something about the goals.

Richard Curtis: Yes, we are just a tiny bit aware of it. Wasn't it a statistic like the awareness of where the MDGs were after seven years or some such thing?

Kate Garvey: No, it is greater than that.

Richard Curtis: There is more awareness of it than there was of the last one. It is a strange thing to be communicating, an exciting thing to be communicating, and what we have been trying to do is make it as simple and attractive and accessible as it can be. I think the SDGs are doing better than the last ones did and you can only hope, and our determination is to try to make that awareness grow.

I am always reminded of the fact that after she had been in power for eight years, only 96% of people in the UK knew who Margaret Thatcher was, which is always slightly surprising, so I think there is always those spots of awareness.



Chair: There will always be the 4% rump.

Joan Ryan: That is a great stat, isn't it?

Q254 **Chair:** It is, yes. Do you think there is a problem with the goals? Are they too big, too abstract for people to understand?

Richard Curtis: I don't know. This is what we have been wrestling with and thinking about. The clearest phrasing of them that we thought of is this idea that they will make us the first generation to end extreme poverty, the last generation to be threatened by climate change, and the most determined generation to fight injustice and inequality, so there is a way of summing them up.

A friend of mine, John McCarthy, who looks into these things, said he had been talking to his mother and saying how odd it was there were 17 and she said that the world is a complicated place. One of the charms of these, rather than the millennium development goals, is the fact that no matter what people feel passionate about and are campaigning about, whether it is gender equality, climate or hunger, they find that they fit into them. I think their charm is that they are comprehensive, interlocking and representative of both developed and developing nations.

With the qualities that they have obviously come communication difficulties, but we have found it very interesting when you talk to young people about them that they love picking which one is the one they care about. Everybody finds something in them that they are passionate about. Someone will say, "I believe in education," and then say, "Well, you can't get education without gender equality," so they instantly spot the link. I was hoping originally there would be 10 or 12 but now that there are 17, I think you have to look at the virtues of that.

Q255 **Chair:** Thank you. It is interesting, you have a clear framework in your head: the first generation to end poverty, the last generation to have climate change and the most determined. Have you ever heard a UK Government Minister say that? Do you think they have a phrase in their head when they talk about these things?

Kate Garvey: I was reading Theresa May's speech at the UN and what people are doing, it seems, is using them to support their agenda, and that is great, so she used it to support modern day slavery and her campaign on that. I think people are using it to adapt to some of the things they are doing, which is good. I am just trying to think—that actually developed from something Paul Polman said.

Chair: Can you say where he is from? I know but—

Kate Garvey: Paul Polman from Unilever. I have heard significant figures talking in those terms.



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Richard Curtis: The UK was very prominent in trying to develop the goals in the first place. David Cameron was part of the penultimate group who developed the goals, the high level panel.

Q256 **Chair:** To what extent do you think their universal nature has been lost? People still seem to think that they are for developing countries only and not really applicable to the UK. How do you think we overcome this universality gap?

Richard Curtis: We are just beginning. They were only introduced in January 2016. I think it is a journey. One of the things I am interested in, and it is very useful and exciting, is the way that business has started to engage with the goals. There is no doubt that the moment you do start to engage with them thoroughly, you start to see how relevant they are. In preparing a little for this, and looking at, let's say, health, I thought, "Is health all going to be malaria and AIDS and TB?" No, it also refers to cancer, smoking, car accidents—it refers to all the things that would concern people here in the UK. The traction the MDGs got was so much about extreme poverty and countries where there weren't girls in education and there was malaria, HIV/AIDS, all of those things, so I think there is a change of heart.

Look at how swiftly people who are engaged with them notice and see their relevance. We hope the British Government and people who we talk to about it in the UK will very swiftly see that the double agenda is important. Then there are areas such as environmental issues, renewable energy, tax avoidance that are more relevant to us than they are to developing countries.

Q257 **John Mc Nally:** Can I follow on from what the Chair is already on about, pursuing the train of thought about making the global goals famous around the world? Why do you think communicating the goals is so important? You touched on it a little bit earlier.

Richard Curtis: I have a general dream about them that we have found them an extraordinary, urgent and optimistic plan for a new generation. I do think it is very hard in the day-to-day thinking about politics for people not to find it hard to understand the arguments that are happening in their country and feel that there isn't huge progress going on, things are going forward or they are going backwards.

As somebody who is passionate about the MDGs, I have listened to Bill Gates who said the years between 1990 and 2015 were the greatest 25 years in the history of human civilisation because they succeeded in halving the number of children who died before the age of five, did enormous damage to some of the diseases that have taken so many lives, doubled education, all of those things. I feel as though these goals give a framework for young people—all people—to think about possible progress and about how the world could move forward on all these issues. To be able to say there is a plan, and also that what I feel



passionate about fits into that plan, is a very inspiring and exciting thought. We are finding young people, particularly, reacting well to it.

Kate Garvey: We made a film, “No Point Going Halfway” which in a sense is going from the MDGs to the SDGs, the first six are there and have the possibility of finishing the job, so this time it is possible that we can end extreme poverty by 2030. Usain Bolt would not stop at the 50 metre line, so why would we? It is finding ways to encourage people to finish the job but then understanding that now the world is a more complicated place and that developed countries have a role to play in climate change inequalities. We have found it easier to communicate that and the fact that it is a universal agenda by being able to show our film. One of our most successful films was responded well to because it talked about issues like equal pay for equal work, along with ending child marriage. That resonated with girls around the world. We couldn’t be more surprised and pleased at the response of people around the world who have taken that up.

Q258 **John Mc Nally:** These are the main messages that you put out and I like to hear. You spoke earlier on here about people looking at the 17 sustainable development goals and how they connect in with one another. I think that is probably the best way for people to connect them when they identify with things for themselves and they make that connection.

Richard Curtis: It is a complicated thing to say. I feel it is like a political Ten Commandments—just a feeling that the world makes sense when you put it all together. I could not name the Ten Commandments and I doubt whether most people would be able to name the 17 goals, but they know they mean very well.

Q259 **John Mc Nally:** It is a good way of looking at life, with respect, whether you believe in them or not. I think that is probably similar here.

I would like to move on a bit to the particular groups that you think should be targeted and why. For example, as you will know, the global elite are meeting in Davos at the moment to hear about the issues to do with the goals. Do you think they should be more important than the children around the world? For example, we have heard very recent things about the success of the Daily Mile—I don’t know if you are aware of that initiative but it is going all across the world. It started just next door in my own constituency, where they have got children involved in the Daily Mile to address obesity levels. It is a phenomenally successful thing, and Barak Obama has addressed it as well. Where do you place these people in your own mind? Is it good companies, businesses that have a good, ethical corporate management style? Is it the local groups that you think are more important or whatever?

Richard Curtis: All of them. I remember in 2005, when we did the Make Poverty History campaign, we could not have any conversations with business. They simply disengaged. I remember they were fundamentally



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hostile and assumed that we were dangerous left-wing idealists, and the contrast here is extraordinary.

I would recommend to you—I am sure you have seen it—*Better Business, Better World*, about business and the sustainable goals, which has just come out. It is a really interesting document that talks about the profitability potential in the goals of \$13 trillion of extra money that could be made in all sorts of areas: medicine, energy, food. It is an incredibly good starting point for businesses. We hope that the business argument will not only be moral—we should never forget nor not be passionate about the moral thing—but also work out financially. That is one whole area.

Another whole area is, of course, all the campaigners who fight passionately for these issues. It is very interesting how eagerly people fought to have their issue included in the goals, so they obviously feel that there is great importance in being part of a UN package. Somebody who is arguing about the drains in Rio de Janeiro or about not having good transport in Hartlepool now knows that the UN supports them and the Government have signed on to say that they should do something about it.

I also feel passionate about schoolchildren having a coherent political idea that they can grow up with and hope works. We are eager to see who picks it up, where it gains most traction and to whom it is most useful. Obviously we hope that the UK Government will be a very enthusiastic endorsement.

Q260 John Mc Nally: On that point, there is a concern that the UK Government are not doing enough to ensure that the letter and the spirit of the goals are met. We have heard phrases like “Insufficient progress is being made” and “There is the lack of engagement with communities.” How do you think a greater awareness of the goals in the UK could ensure that the Government should do everything they can to achieve the global goals? As MPs, what can we do within our own constituencies? We have a high profile and I try but maybe I am not doing enough. I could do more, as someone was saying, and I would like to know what we can do that would make it better in your opinion. Feel free to raise some of this.

Kate Garvey: That is great. We think there is the national level and then there is the local level, and we found focusing on one period of time is helpful because there is a lot going on. Every September we have the global goals week, which we started last year in New York but we would like to take to cities, constituencies around the world. It is one week for people to focus on the goals, particularly with children.

We have a programme called the World’s Largest Lesson; Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales have supported this and it was kicked off in the UK—David Cameron did a message in 2015. The idea is that there is a set of tools for teachers to share with kids about the goals in



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assemblies, classes, and we have had great support in Britain from people like Sir Ken Robinson and Emma Watson; Malala has also supported this. It would be brilliant for all MPs to take a lesson. I think in Argentina 10 Government Ministers take part now every year. That raises the profile for sure and kids are responding brilliantly to it. That would be fantastic.

If the Department for Education could write to every school that would be brilliant because that could be the pickup. We had to do it ourselves with organisations like TES and Comic Relief help as well to reach teachers. That would be one.

Richard Curtis: You would also expect and hope that the Government would take part in the HLPF, which is the reporting mechanism that the UN have, and will say how they are doing on each of the goals. You would expect that, having been great leaders in this. The British Government were so extraordinary in the MDGs; they were so important to their success. The G8 in Gleneagles in 2005 was such an important forum for accelerating that agenda. Even though it is a more complicated and different agenda, I would certainly hope that the United Kingdom would take the lead in the sustainable development goals as well, in as many areas as they can.

Q261 **Chair:** Can I clarify one point? You mentioned the Scottish Government, the Welsh Assembly and the Northern Irish Government. Was there anything done with these lessons in English schools?

Kate Garvey: Yes. In 2015, the Department for Education promoted it on their website and David Cameron filmed a message to encourage schools, which was reasonably well on Facebook and distributed to schools. What we would like is more help from the Department for Education and others to maybe write a letter this year round. It has happened in 2015 and 2016; there will be another one this year and getting that support early would be amazing.

Richard Curtis: It will be interesting to see how the UK does. I was at a meeting in Davos with the Prime Minister of Sweden, the President of Rwanda and the Presidents of Ethiopia and Guinea and the Vice President of South Africa and they were all talking personally and passionately about the engagement of their countries with the goals. There definitely is a framework in which governments are starting to find it very useful. It will be very interesting to see how the British Government decide to play their level of engagement. Obviously, we would encourage them to do so.

One of the exciting things is that in many of these instances there are cross-party passions, and also it is a very interesting and exciting deadline. We intend to push quite hard in 2020 for a 2020 vision to try to say, "How far have we got on these things? Are we a third of the way through?" No business would dream of not having a 15-year plan and it is those sorts of deadlines that are another useful thing about the SDGs. I remember in the MDGs getting messages that said, "It is 500 days until



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the end of the MDGs. Let's get 500,000 more girls into schools around the world." Those things are useful and I hope that the Government will look into how they can be useful, how they can inspire people to accelerate change.

Q262 Joan Ryan: Good morning. I love your words about extraordinary, urgent and optimistic and that young people have a sense of things moving forward. Most of us go into all of our schools and I think there is a sense among young people at the moment that life is difficult and they are concerned about the future, so this is a brilliant way to lift that and empower young people. I watched your short films and I think they are brilliant as well, as is your campaign. It is very difficult to make something complicated simple and reach people. I think your films do that and they give a choice as well of which ones you want to use.

Richard Curtis: Thank you very much for that.

Joan Ryan: I know Project Everyone has done an awful lot to promote these global goals. Which of your campaigns would you say has been the most effective in raising the profile of the goals and why has it been the most effective?

Richard Curtis: That is very interesting. One of the most important things we did was to visualise them and simplify them. I think that was a very important piece of work. I am sorry to have brought so many props, but this is what we have started to do. This is one on quality education and what we started to try to do is represent them as something where progress is being made. This was about taking things from 2000 to 2030, so that is where the number of kids out of school is and that is where you hope it will be. I hope that we will be able to continue to use graphics and charts to show where things are going well, where they are disappointing, where they will be. I mean to actually turn the icons into outcomes.

I feel just the visualisation was something important that we did. I am very glad that we made as much noise as we could at the UN when they were launched. This year we had a half-hour event in front of all the world leaders before the UNGA started, in what I think they call "the Pope's slot" because he is the person who spoke there last time. We spoke about progress that had happened already under the SDGs and we showed some of our "Leave No One Behind" film that we worked on with DfID. In the first year we had a huge projection on the UN.

I think one of the things we succeeded in doing was to make the UN aware that what it was launching was something noisy, of which they should be proud, which was publicly communicable—every single seat had a badge. That was quite an important job doing that within the UN. We are very proud of the spread of the World's Largest Lesson. We are very pleased that our television show, which was a mixture between us and the Global Citizens concert, which we worked on with the UN, was shown. A million people watched it on BBC One here. I don't know how many countries it was shown in.



Kate Garvey: It was distributed in 150.

Richard Curtis: Yes. It was a mainstream TV show. We are pleased with all of these things. It is light touch and it has to be, but even that is helpful. I remember when we did Make Poverty History the shock that we had to reduce the complexity of the millennium development goals to six words—make poverty history: debt, aid, trade—yet I think the common interest document was 450 pages long. One of the things we are trying to do is like an advert for a movie, like the first time you see a poster, and then you will learn more when you see the trailer and then we hope you are fully engaged with the film.

It is interesting, just as I have talked to you and what Kate was saying about September, it would be great to find a moment for the British Government to present, celebrate, think about and challenge on these issues. It is interesting whether it could be done at a city level because in sustainable cities the mayors are a very important power force in the world, very interested in the sustainable development goals and very relevant to them. That might be something, if we could do things in various cities.

I am a great believer that it is worth selling things. I don't think any company would launch a new product with a zero marketing budget. I think it is worth talking to them and finding a moment in the busy Government calendar to really focus on them. I remember in the election—when was the election, was it 2005?—there was a development day in the election cycle, and you would hope that there would be a sustainable development day in which parties discussed those things and the election process.

Q263 **Joan Ryan:** Yes, having some focus is really important. I think you said, Richard, you can't fight for your rights if you don't know what they are, so effective communication is crucial. I suppose, for obvious reasons, a lot of your campaigning is film-oriented as a means of communication. Of all the campaigning means and mechanisms you have used, which do you think is the most innovative?

Richard Curtis: You should talk about the Spice Girls, how often that is said in Government policies. You should perhaps talk about that as an example of something.

Kate Garvey: Yes. There is no doubt these days that viral videos are important and the one that has been the most successful was when we remade the Spice Girls "Wannabe" film. Part of the reason why it was so successful is not only because it was a young director, MJ Delaney, who was a brilliant addition to all of this, but because it was a universal agenda. We worked with women from South Africa, a Bollywood star from Sri Lanka, Kenya and then UK, US, Canada. They all had their own constituencies and their own social media reach, so that really gave us a lift. Of course, it was Victoria Beckham who really gave it the boost. It



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immediately reached 60 million shared views and now it is 190, so it has definitely been our biggest.

We just recently looked at gaming and partnership with Pokémon GO, which we will be developing. It has helped—

Chair: In churches and interesting places near you.

Kate Garvey: Yes, exactly, and then hopefully they will turn into T-shirts. I am now learning what it means, but their avatars will become gold T-shirts in the spring and that is helpful. The other innovation—I mean it is not an innovation—we have really tried is to make all our assets as shareable and widely available as possible, whether it be in different languages or downloadable. As long as it is not for commercial use they are freely available. Businesses have used them. We have had Global Goals M&Ms, people have made T-shirts, hats, everything. The icons do spread if you let people use them and that has helped a lot.

Richard Curtis: The communication ones do spread.

Kate Garvey: Mobile has been crucially important as well.

Richard Curtis: On the other side, I do think it is very interesting the way people are able to juxtapose their work with the goals. This really is big. This is longer than “Oliver Twist” but this is the GSMA. The GSMA is the body that takes care of all mobile operators and the way they—

Chair: Can you spell out the acronym and say what you are holding for the purposes of Hansard transcribing?

Richard Curtis: It is the “2016 Mobile Industry Impact Report: Sustainable Development Goals”. What is so interesting is to see them using each of the goals and measuring—trying to analyse—where they affect people with regard to that goal and how they are doing: whether or not they feel they are encouraging quality education, encouraging gender equality, where they have things to do with employment, all of these areas. I think this thought of watching yourself is very useful to be able to judge policies, activities, companies’ behaviour, all of that, next to the goals. I hope the idea of that becoming a way of people analysing their behaviour and their decisions will be a very useful part of what we have done and what we hope to do in the future.

The Swedish Government have just put 1 million—I don't know if it is krone or dollars—into a sort of part 2 of our Global Goals graphics, trying to allow us to illustrate each of the different bullet points in each of the 169 targets. Again, that will be a way of people holding themselves accountable to each of those.

Q264 **Chair:** Did you invent the colours and the graphics? Is that your thing?

Richard Curtis: It was a man called Jakob Trollbäck who in fact is a Swede, which is perhaps why the Swedish Government are supporting him. A design consultancy who we were—



Q265 **Chair:** Under your Project Everyone banner?

Richard Curtis: Yes, that is right.

Chair: We were not aware of that. Thank you.

Q266 **Joan Ryan:** Do you measure your effectiveness by the number of people who watch, the number of hits on anything? What is your main means of assessing effectiveness, because it can be quite difficult with a campaign? For us, in an election campaign, you either win or you lose and we find that out about 2.00 in the morning. It is not quite the same for you.

Richard Curtis: Yes. We will all know how we did in 2030.

Q267 **Joan Ryan:** True but, like you say, you want interim measurements as well. There is no point in saying in 2029, "Did you meet the deadline? Are you there yet?" or however it is going to be communicated. How do you measure your effectiveness now?

Kate Garvey: Obviously we do look at how many people we reach. This latest poll from the UN is useful to see how many people have understood what we have reached them with. That is helpful, but it is the bigger picture, isn't it? We cannot claim the success of it but we look at progress since 2016. There has been progress around the world but we want to help more. Whether it is Tanzania and Zimbabwe ending child marriage or the signing of the climate agreement, all these things ladder up to what we are trying to help with in people's lives and with Government action.

I think annually it is useful to have some kind of assessment at a true level. There is the High Level Political Forum in July. We think in September there should be, at a head of state, head of government level, a reporting back process when people meet for UNGA, which is why our 30 minutes at the beginning of the opening was useful but we want to build on that. We think it is focusing on certain goals each year. We found themes helpful. It is hard to assess everything all the time, so we focused on women and girls last year. We are focusing on the health and hunger goals this year. We do that partly because there is a sort of public appetite for it. That is great, but there are also political processes—whether it be G7s, G20s—where we want to help them do the most they can at these—

Q268 **Joan Ryan:** Is that why you chose the three that you are focusing on: gender, health, climate change?

Kate Garvey: Yes, because we understood from the NGOs, we knew from looking at the political landscape and feeling that zeitgeist, that women and girls were doing a lot already, that we could help that. So, yes, it is. The same with health and hunger this year, whether it be obesity or stunting. By 2020 I think 20 million more kids could be prevented from being stunted, but you have to make those decisions now for that to happen.



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Q269 **Joan Ryan:** I think you are looking at gaming. It is really interesting as well. I don't know if it is just anecdotal in my head, which is quite possible, but it sounds like there are mechanisms and materials now to engage women and girls, and that if you do it right they are ready to be engaged, but I feel it is less so with boys and young men. The bit I don't know if it is anecdotal or not, but it seems to me they seem much more engaged with gaming—I could be wrong—than girls and that is just my own personal experience. Maybe I just don't know the girls who are massively engaged with it. But I do come across lots of boys, including my own grandchildren, who are massively engaged with it. I think it is quite an interesting way to communicate something like this.

Richard Curtis: Yes, I think it will be and in that case it will not be a deep analysis of what political change they want. It will be an awareness but then, when they do have a discussion that is something to do with politics, they will know it is there.

What we have started to notice is that we are optimistic that word about the goals is spreading. I hear from people that when they wear this their kids know what it is. I got a bizarre photograph the other day from someone who was at a spa in Mexico that had dedicated itself to the sustainable development goals. I am not quite sure how they managed to apply it. But then the Pokémon thing came without us pushing it. It actually happened from someone we had spoken to, so that happened without us knowing.

There is a girl called Tanya Burr, who is a very popular YouTuber, who is now saying she is going to dedicate herself to the global goals and this will be the issue that she pushes on. We do find, by the way, that the goals have certain advantages in being so comprehensive. Google has helped us by linking to our films on its front page. You can see that for people who are asked by every single charity every single day of the year to do something for them, something which deals with all charitable purposes and is very comprehensive is a useful place for people's support to go to and we think that might be one of their advantages.

Q270 **Joan Ryan:** Yes. That really struck home with me, because there were debates about too many goals, too many targets, too many indicators, and I found myself saying that as well. But I think what you said is something we need to remember, particularly in politics and in Government, that we are where we are. They are what we have and there are advantages to having them, whether we thought there should be fewer or not, and we should go from there because they are not going to be changed, so let's get on with it.

Richard Curtis: Yes.

Q271 **Chair:** I certainly think we are going to need a Committee visit to the sustainable development spa in Mexico. I am sure *The Daily Mail* coverage of that would do more to raise awareness of the global goals than perhaps anything else we could do.



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Q272 Just on this, I was very struck when you were talking about health and hunger, because the British problem with health and hunger is 1.3 million elderly people over 75 not having adequate nutrition. Everything that you do is aimed at the young, so how would you tackle the UK issue of hidden hunger among older people? You can chew on that and we will maybe come back at the end of the session. It will be one of those tests, won't it? It is like: can I remember I have asked the question? But I just wanted you to reflect on that because I think that would be helpful for us as a Committee. We are going to move on now to Matthew's questions.

Q273 **Dr Matthew Offord:** Good morning. One of the principles that I believe is very important as well is that no one should actually be left behind. We understand the British Government said that this was an important principle that they pushed for when the goals were being developed. The Committee has not seen much evidence of that so far, so I want to explore that with you to find out if you think that is an important priority, from a communication point of view, and to ask what initiatives you have developed and promoted in order to achieve that.

Kate Garvey: Yes, it is an important part and it is another unique part compared to the MDGs for the SDGs and, yes, the British Government have pushed this agenda. Through DfID's support, we have worked with CIVICUS and development initiatives to try to communicate and find out more about what is a complex issue at a global level, national level and local level. We are in the middle of a 10-month trial as to how to communicate the "Leave no one behind" pledge and positioning of the goals: how to find out who is left behind through data and how to empower people who are left behind to be able to tell their stories and campaign on it. It is complex.

Some of the things we have done are more the data visualisation to explain the people and the issues behind being left behind, whether it is women and girls, electricity, poverty. We have also made a film. I don't know whether you saw that one.

Dr Matthew Offord: I haven't yet.

Kate Garvey: Have a look because it is about telling stories.

Richard Curtis: It is 33 minutes long. It is all right.

Kate Garvey: I think we realised that one of the best ways to communicate it was individual people's stories. You were more involved in making it.

Richard Curtis: Yes. It is a film that in fact is extrapolated from an extraordinary piece of work by a man called Yann Arthus-Bertrand, a film called "HUMAN" where he interviewed 2,000 people for an hour each around the world. You hear these very strong individual voices of people whose lives are very hard, all edited together and pointing out the agenda.



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One of the things about the work that we are doing is that I think we will come across various ways of communicating as time goes by. We certainly think "Leave no one behind" is a very strong slogan and a very important one. The interesting thing is to see it in both ways. It really refers to the bottom billion people whose lives are hardest but also refers to people who might feel marginalised by old age, disability, things such as that.

Q274 Dr Matthew Offord: You mentioned the "Leave no one behind" partnership. How do you feel you have done there in achieving progress?

Kate Garvey: Definitely. We have had outreach in 30 countries, mainly in the developing world, and we are reporting back on that now. People really do want to engage. I think Kenya has particularly taken up the mantle and wants to use it as a campaigning tool in the next election. The data visualisations are helping and we need more of them; we need more data. We have always found that every time we want to explain the numbers, finding where to get that data from is a concern, but it is getting better.

I think films help to communicate. The film that Richard was talking about was shown at the opening of the General Assembly and at the World Economic Forum. It has been viewed 20,000-odd times online. It is complicated but it is important. It does distinguish from the previous 15 years, so we really do want to keep pushing that agenda.

Q275 Dr Matthew Offord: How do you think that we could apply some of the overseas initiatives of leaving no one behind in the United Kingdom? How do we get that message across in this country?

Richard Curtis: It is very interesting. I was just thinking about I remember many years ago Comic Relief decided to look into the issue of elder abuse, and we went to see the Minister and we said, "What is the most useful thing that we could do?" He said, "We would most like you to find out how many people this refers to—we don't know if it is 30,000 or 300,000—and then we could frame our attitudes to the issue". At Comic Relief we helped pay for the research that found out that it was indeed much closer to 300,000. It is a very interesting question, who you would find are the most marginalised, the most left behind. Being in the frame of mind we are in, we would juxtapose those with the SDGs and with the SDGs' comprehensive agenda to try to find those who are most left behind and cater for them.

Q276 Dr Matthew Offord: Could I just clarify something you said earlier to a previous question? I recall that you said you were in Dallas and you were speaking to representatives from the Zimbabwe Government.

Richard Curtis: No. It was Ethiopia, Guinea, South Africa and Rwanda.

Dr Matthew Offord: Okay. I misheard.

Richard Curtis: I think Zimbabwe was a child marriage question.



Kate Garvey: Yes.

Dr Matthew Offord: It was just I was amazed if Zimbabwe was involved in this. Thank you for that.

Q277 **Peter Heaton-Jones:** First of all, apologies to you and our guests that I could not be here at the beginning. I hope this is not going over ground that I might have missed, but I want to explore a little bit more about how we make the SDGs real and tangible for ordinary people, by which I mean people not within a quarter of a mile of where we are sitting now—everyone outside the Westminster political bubble. The Office for National Statistics is the organisation that has been given responsibility for collecting the data on how well we are doing in achieving the goals. Do you think it needs to be given a nudge in a certain direction, and if so, which direction, to try to make the way it collects the data and then publicises it or makes it available relevant to ordinary people, so that the goals are tangible to people as they go about their everyday lives?

Kate Garvey: I certainly think that local authorities could play a role in this. When we start to look at the indicators and the targets, they do bring to life what is behind each goal—you recognise the relevance. So the number of homicides. Yes, it is about recycling, about responsible consumption. Health and wellbeing is not just about malaria, as you said. I think if we could engage with NHS employees, maybe with local authorities, and I was even thinking about tourist boards—wouldn't it be amazing if that was one of the ways that you promoted a city or a country with these branding and badging goals to say, "We are really good"? Rwanda might be able to promote gender equality because of some of the things they have done there, and there may be others, but equally so could Sunderland, essentially.

Peter Heaton-Jones: North Devon.

Kate Garvey: North Devon exactly. That requires us and lots of people to make them appealing so that the Office of National Statistics and the local authorities, MPs, want to use that because their constituents understand their needs, and it probably does start in schools.

Richard Curtis: It does occur to me—and this is not an issue I have thought about very much—that the danger always with such a complex agenda is that in trying to deal with all of it you make none of it communicable. I remember when someone at Comic Relief—because I work on Red Nose Day—said, "We must have a page online about every single one of our grants", and that stopped the Department dead in being able to communicate our best, most interesting, most exciting, most relevant grants, because there was so much work to be done in actually being comprehensive. I suppose there is this thing of a balance between trying to be comprehensive and trying to honour the goals in their detail but also, when you are communicating it, saying, "What are the most interesting things? What are the most relevant things?"



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If you were talking about north Devon, it would be interesting to know which bit of your community. I don't know much about north Devon but you would know those areas where it could make the most difference, where it is most relevant, most germane, and to pick those things out. I am not sure which comes first, finding the highlights or making sure that you have been comprehensive. It would be an interesting thing for Members of Parliament, and Parliament and the British Government, to refer to these things because they will infiltrate people's sense of progress.

Q278 Peter Heaton-Jones: I wonder what the role of Project Everywhere could be in doing this. The relevance for me is the key and we talked about tourism. I think that is a fantastic idea. Areas like north Devon using its communications, its promotion of it as a tourist area to, at the same time, piggyback and say, "We care about sustainable development goals" I think is a good one. My worry is that when you go beyond that level, when you have Mr and Mrs Smith in Barnstaple running a small business—building websites for SMEs or something—how do you make them realise that the SDGs are things that they should even give a second thought to let alone care about?

Richard Curtis: I keep hoping that the SDGs will be like the way that at the bottom of every communication now there is a Twitter address and a Facebook address. I hope that there will be a little sustainable development mark. The sustainable development goals are very interesting to small businesses.

We don't know the answers to some of these questions, but it is very exciting for us that we are here and that you are asking these questions because this is part of the business of getting engaged. We have been dealing with the UN. We have been trying to think about questions like: can we get it out to lots of countries? Can we get it out to young people? But it is a really interesting moment when the British Government and Parliament starts to say, "How can we relate it to what is going on in the UK?" That would be an important thing to work out quickly, where the sustainable development goals can be most encouraging, most helpful, something that people would be interested in and engaged with.

It is not a piece of work we expected but it is interesting that our biggest engagement with the Government, "Leave No One Behind", has been with DfID and has probably focused more on the billion poorest people in the world. It is one's natural instinct when you hit the SDGs to think about it in those international terms. I am as passionate as ever I was that malaria should be brought to an end, that electricity should reach everybody, that child mortality should be brought to nothing, but this is a really interesting moment in the history of these goals and in thinking about how they might be applied to work out how Government in the UK should think about and engage with them.

Q279 Peter Heaton-Jones: Has Project Everyone had direct or indirect communication with the ONS about any involvement you might have in



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helping to communicate this data?

Kate Garvey: No, but—

Peter Heaton-Jones: Is it something you would welcome?

Kate Garvey: Yes, we would love to.

Q280 **Peter Heaton-Jones:** If we were to put you in touch you would say, “Yes, let’s work together on this”?

Kate Garvey: Yes, definitely.

Q281 **Chair:** Thank you. It is very interesting talking about data. When we had the ONS in they said they had data for about 70% of the indicators and for 30% they were going to need to have NGO partners scrape it from the web. But what we are also interested in is the presentation of this data because it is no good having hundreds of indicators that are totally unusable by the ordinary person in the street. We also want to see data poets, people who can translate boring numbers into the visualisations and the storytellers. I think telling the story is going to be really important on this. On your “Leave no one behind” project, which is funded by DfID and you are working with 30 countries, am I right in thinking that one of them is not the UK?

Kate Garvey: Correct.

Q282 **Chair:** It is focused on outward DfID-funded countries?

Kate Garvey: Yes.

Q283 **Chair:** Are you undertaking any work in the UK with civil society on the domestic application of the goals?

Kate Garvey: We have had successes with outreach and communication within the UK. Richard mentioned the TV show and radio launch. The BBC World Service and Bower all partnered with us and distributed it. On British companies, we have mentioned Unilever but Virgin, Pearce and many others have done it not just to help us promote the goals but also through their employee network. That has been really successful. HSBC even put it on their ATMs for the week of the launch, which did help with awareness. We have had cinema ads and mobile companies have also helped, so we have had good support.

In terms of working with organisations on the ground, we are finding out more in preparation for this. Restless Development has done some really good work with young people.

Q284 **Chair:** Who are they?

Kate Garvey: It is a youth group that works internationally but it has had work actually in the UK. As I say, we discovered that in research for this, so I think there is more. I listened to last week’s sitting and there is a Bristol SDG group; I didn’t know that. We don’t know everything, but it



is really great to find out where they are and we will absolutely work more with them.

Richard Curtis: It is true to say—and you revealed the fact—that our thing has been to spread the existence of the goals, the breadth of them, but we haven't focused on the best UK applications. I kept thinking before I came here: what would be the 10 most exciting things that one could say about how it could be applied in the UK? I think that is interesting.

Interestingly, Comic Relief/Red Nose Day have this year decided to align or try to understand all the grants that we make in terms of the SDGs. Of course, we give 60:40 UK:abroad on Red Nose Day and 50:50 on Sport Relief, and so we will be exactly starting the process of seeing how our UK grants align with the SDGs.

Q285 **Chair:** Will that be talked about on the fundraising day to educate the public?

Richard Curtis: It is interesting to see whether or not it will eventually be integrated into that. I would be pretty confident that at some point in the next year or two it will be something that we decide to mention more and more, because it will be something that people would know more about, would feel passionate and comfortable about and would have had some kind of engagement with.

Q286 **Chair:** We read about the ad agencies giving you free space, which is great. Who owns the data now from the billion texts that the mobile organisations did?

Kate Garvey: In the first year it was 30 telecoms companies from around the world and in the second year 20. They were from Vodafone, EE, but also Ooredoo in the Middle East, Vimplecom, so it is not just the UK. They were global networks. They texted out and then they pointed people in the second year to an SDG action app that we helped develop, but they weren't asking for responses back. It is something that we are looking into.

Q287 **Chair:** Did they text all of their users or did they segment by age?

Kate Garvey: It is complicated. Each one had different rules and regulations depending on territory. Vodafone would be different in different territories within their organisations, so I couldn't speak for all of them but they would apply the rules within the territory that they were in.

Q288 **Chair:** I had a specific question about this crowd sourced pop song. I am not sure if that is the one you meant with the Spice Girls.

Kate Garvey: No, it is different.

Chair: Can you tell us a bit about that?



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Kate Garvey: Sure. That was the first ever crowd sourced song in the continent of Africa, so it was across the continent. It was an amazing experience of about six different bands that sang together and then invited, through their networks, people to help join in, write the lyrics, and tell everybody. They did really quite well in promoting it, and it is a great video if you haven't seen it.

Q289 **Chair:** Is one of them Girl Effect? Is that Ethiopian? Was one of them from Ethiopia?

Kate Garvey: No.

Chair: There was no Ethiopian involved?

Kate Garvey: No, I know there were not.

Q290 **Chair:** It is a huge challenge, isn't it? It is amazing that the visualisation speaks instantly in every language, because all you have to do is translate it into your language and you can see the goals. That is a really good start. To come back to my original question about the elderly people, how do you think you could tailor the message to the needs of different groups of people in different countries and with particular focus on the UK? How would you raise awareness of perhaps not the frail elderly population but the elderly population around this very big risk? The group most at risk of malnutrition in our country is the elderly. How would you go around talking about that?

Kate Garvey: I was thinking about one thing I forgot, which was Liverpool Football Club. Through the Standard Charter partnership Liverpool Football Club changed their shirts in 2015 to the global goals logo, and I think they played Aston Villa that weekend. I don't have the reach but I know they claim that one match can be watched by 200 million people around the world but in the UK as well. That is one small example. Using the power of sport definitely helps reach people.

Richard Curtis: I think that is it. It is such an interesting thought how it is used. My expectation would be that those people who are arguing for, fighting for, campaigning for older people inside this country would start to apply the goals to those. I think that what we will see is all campaigners—and one would hope all lawmakers—seeing the usefulness of and the interests of the goals in those things.

It is a kind of exciting and interesting moment when you suddenly think about hunger in terms of the UK. On Red Nose Day we made a programme called "Famous, Rich and Hungry" and it was not in Kigali. It was just around the UK and it was a very revealing and extraordinary programme. Rachel Johnson took someone to a health food store to try to buy what she thought was a healthy meal, and I think it turned out that one aubergine cost their entire food budget for that week, so she had to go somewhere else. I am hoping that the goals will prove something comprehensive, reinforcing an emotional duty that we owe to our citizens.



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Can I say something about the points that Joan raised about young people and pessimism?

Chair: Yes.

Richard Curtis: Just to say that as a father of four, and getting to know a lot of YouTubers and a lot of young people, I do feel that there is also another story happening now that I think is very relevant to these goals. We have a younger generation that is becoming possibly slightly less interested in charity and more interested in activism. They actually want to see change, be part of change, be involved in it because they are used to an exchange of geography, opinions and everything online. I remember the first time my son, despite Red Nose Day, individually did something charitable. He charged downstairs and told me he had just lent £200 to a woman in Uganda for a farming project. I said to him, "Well really I've just lent this woman £200," but he said, "Don't worry, Dad, because it is coming back. I am going to get the money back."

I do think that there are really interesting online things, such as DonorsChoose in America, where you actually see the school where you are giving money and you get told when they have the money, or Kiva, which is a loan system. Last year at Christmas my daughter launched an activist calendar, so instead of a chocolate every day of December she recommended one thing that people could do. There is the growth of Global Citizen, AVAAZ, change.org.

Whereas 10 years ago it used to be that a celebrity launched a charity and hoped that lots of people would follow them, it is increasingly happening that a young person—like the FGM campaign—launches something and the celebrities come up behind them. I feel that this sense of rights and justice rather than charity is going to be the way that young people think about these issues in the decade to come and I think that will happen all around the world. The goals are very much in tune with that, and their comprehensive nature is in tune with that, and I hope they will be a useful tool for young people.

Q291 **John Mc Nally:** Can I say that I think both of you, and those you speak on behalf of, are an absolutely fabulous example of how, if you want to change the world, you get busy in your own little corner. Everything you have told us today is quite exciting. It seems to be done in a calm, thoughtful way. It probably does not feel like that behind the scenes but it comes across to us like that today. You have certainly given us a lot of information. Could you reiterate for us what your plans are? You have given us a lot of creative ideas, especially your health and hunger objective. I also wanted to go back on something that Mary said, which I think is quite pertinent.

In my own area—and I am not getting parochial—we have a sensory centre for visually impaired and blind people, and I have some relatives who work with Penguin Books. I don't want to name drop, but I think there are quite a lot of people who would like to see more interactive



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books. Could you give us some information on how we get this message out? If you could start that ball rolling into third world countries, and for the older people and for younger people, I would like to see if that has been discovered. You might well have that in your better business book, I don't know, but I would quite like it if you could tell us maybe a bit more about any ideas on that line.

Kate Garvey: Yes. Well, we did not bring that one. We did do a Post-it book with Penguin. The point was that you could rip off each page, which was in Post-it size, and stick it somewhere. You curated it.

Richard Curtis: It was a book of Post-it notes and each one of them was a sort of activist slogan or fact or statistic or inspiring quotation or something like that. I was very interested, looking at the footage of the march in Washington on Saturday, to see that even the version that I was watching had a sign language thing in the corner, and I thought how right and interesting it is now that people are becoming more aware of the need to communicate with everybody. You are pointing out to us that we should make sure that the visually impaired have access to that, and I think that is well pointed out.

Q292 **John Mc Nally:** Is that something you would focus on?

Richard Curtis: It is something we will now think of and do.

Kate Garvey: Yes. We have talked about it, and it is an ambition to make it as successful as possible. We have done quite well on translations but we need to do more on reaching as many people as possible.

Richard Curtis: You asked us to sum up the future. This is a sort of rolling thing and one of the things that was worrying about the MDGs is that after the passion of the Make Poverty History project, certainly in the UK, there was a loss of focus and direction until about 2012 when suddenly we got close to it. One of the things that we are all trying to think about—and we have lots of plans, very little money, an increasing number of interesting partners who I hope will take over the job—is to absolutely embed it in New York and in the United Nations as something that they are noisy about, proud of and aggressively promote. You have made us think about what we should be doing in the UK, as UK citizens here, and I think that is an interesting thought.

We have to work on data and communicability and keep thinking about that. I think the Swedish initiative is good. We would love the World's Largest Lesson to become part of the world's largest curriculum item. I do think that we should try to get it more embedded in children's education. I have noticed that my children know less about the Ten Commandments now—I don't know how many of them they are abiding by—and if they have to know about something I think this would be an interesting thing to think about more educationally. We want to involve as many famous people as we can and as many not famous people as we



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can. I hope our progress will be slow but sure and we will find a new way of talking about them with every year that goes by.

Chair: Thank you very much indeed for coming. We have lots of food for thought. We would love to see your Post-it book. That sounds fantastic. We will be reflecting and talking about your contribution to the Committee and it will be reflected in the final report that we make to Government, so let's hope that some of the change is started here in this room today. Thank you very much indeed for being with us. Can we do any selfie/photo in order to get the Committee's message out and to help publicise the work that we are doing?

Kate Garvey: Will you wear the badges?

Chair: Oh, absolutely. We definitely want the badge as well.

Richard Curtis: Thank you, by the way. It is a great honour and a pleasure. We have been thinking hard in advance and there are lots of things we haven't cracked yet, but it is wonderful to be part of this process.

Chair: Thank you for coming. Thank you very much.