

# Connections



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## Leaders see COL as “ideal instrument” to meet their needs

Commonwealth Heads of Government, at their biennial summit (CHOGM, Durban, November 1999) recognised The Commonwealth of Learning in their final Communiqué:

*Heads of Government reaffirmed their commitment to education and training as essential foundations of human development and emphasised their central importance in equipping people with the knowledge and skills to meet the challenges of development and to take advantage of the opportunities presented by globalisation. They recognised the contribution of the Commonwealth of Learning in supporting the efforts of Commonwealth developing countries to benefit fully from the new information and communication technologies in developing their human potential through distance education.*

Heads of Government also approved the report of their Committee of the Whole, which includes notes on COL:

*The Committee received with satisfaction the Report of the Board of Governors of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and noted COL's success in fulfilling the objectives set out in its Three-year Plan, 1997-2000, approved by Ministers of Education at their meeting in Botswana and endorsed by Heads of Government during their Meeting in Edinburgh. The Committee appreciated that COL constitutes an ideal instrument through which the Commonwealth can extend access to education and training to meet its human resource development needs and to prepare Commonwealth citizens for the challenges of a global knowledge-based society. It encouraged COL to form partnerships as appropriate to enhance its capacity to pursue the full breadth of the goals and mission envisaged for COL in the Board's Report.*

*The Committee endorsed the direction sketched out for the next Three-year Plan, 2000-2003, given the critical importance of education and training to every aspect of human, social and economic development, as well as the opportunities presented by the new information and communication technologies. The Committee encouraged Commonwealth Ministers of Education to make pledges sufficient to provide COL with a minimum of \$9 million annually to carry out this Plan.*

### COL's report

Addressing the theme of the Heads of Government Meeting, *Globalisation: The Commonwealth and People-Centred Development*, COL reported on its activities since the last CHOGM and outlined its plans being formulated for the next three years.

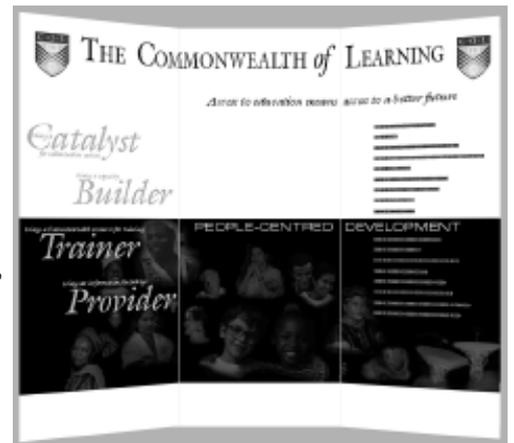
The report noted that leaders from all walks of life, the world over, recognise that all citizens must have access to education and training if

they are to be equipped to shape their own destiny and meet the social, economic, and personal challenges of the global knowledge-based economy. To achieve this objective, governments will need to look

beyond the conventional model for providing education. They will need to draw on the opportunities afforded by distance and open learning, which in turn must capitalise on the potential offered by the information and communications technologies (ICTs).

These instruments can economically extend access to quality education, even to the remotest regions. They also provide flexible learning options capable of addressing not only the formal educational needs but also the expanding needs for non-formal education in areas such as literacy, numeracy, public health and hygiene, as well as labour-market training and lifelong learning – not to mention special human challenges like refugee education.

COL is located at the point of convergence between the demands of a global knowledge-based economy, the pertinence of open and distance learning, and the opportunities afforded by ICTs.



COL's display booth at CHOGM

### Three-year Plan

Against a high record of achievement, COL's Board of Governors confidently asked Heads of Government to reaffirm their faith in COL as an effective instrument of public policy by endorsing a more ambitious *Three-year Plan, 2000-2003*.

That *Three-year Plan* will be submitted to Commonwealth Education Ministers when they meet in Halifax, Canada, in November 2000. At that time COL will also seek pledges sufficient to support a core budget of \$9 million. While significantly less than the \$20 million envisaged by Lord Briggs in his report leading to the establishment of COL, it would enable COL to fulfil in greater measure the mandate accorded it by Heads of Government.

The *Three-year Plan* now in preparation, in further consultation with Commonwealth Ministries of Education and other stakeholders,



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envisages having COL focus on four roles:

- being a *catalyst* for collaborative action,
- being a capacity *builder*,
- being a Commonwealth resource for *training*, and
- being an information/knowledge *provider*.

The CHOGM report sketched the dimensions of these different roles, emphasising that they are interrelated and each must be informed by the rapid developments with respect to ICTs. COL will also continue to be sensitive to issues of poverty alleviation, gender, good governance, human rights and civil society.

COL is grateful to member governments for largely adhering to the pledges made during the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) in Botswana in 1997. We are especially appreciative of those governments, notably Britain and Canada, which have provided additional funds for special projects. Many governments and institutions also made contributions, direct and in kind, to specific projects in which they were directly engaged.

The complete COL report to CHOGM is available on COL's web site ([www.col.org/CHOGM99.htm](http://www.col.org/CHOGM99.htm)). Comments on future plans are welcome.

## Fancourt Declaration

Commonwealth Heads of Government emerged from their CHOGM retreat having agreed upon the *Fancourt Commonwealth Declaration on Globalisation and People-Centred Development*. COL is pleased that it is in a position to play a central role in achieving the goals outlined in the document. Some excerpts.

*The revolution in communications technologies is shrinking the distance between nations, providing new opportunities for the transfer of knowledge and the development of skills-based industries. And technological advance globally offers great potential for the eradication of poverty.*

*If the poor and the vulnerable are to be at the centre of development, the process must be participatory, in which they have a voice. We believe that the spread of democratic freedom and good governance, and access to education, training and health care are key to the expansion of human capabilities, and to the banishment of ignorance and prejudice.*

The entire Fancourt Declaration is available on the CHOGM '99 web site ([www.chogm99.org](http://www.chogm99.org)).

## Education ministers to meet in Halifax

The 14th triennial Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, from 26 November – 1 December 2000. CCEM's theme is *Education in a Global Era: Challenges to Equity, Opportunities for Diversity*.

*Commonwealth Knowledge Solutions* is the theme of the parallel symposium and trade fair, which are being organised by the Nova Scotia Department of Education, the

Council of Education Ministers (Canada), the Government of Canada, the British Council, the Commonwealth Secretariat and The Commonwealth of Learning.

The symposium's plenary sessions and workshops will focus on three themes:

- the changing educational environment and the pressures facing member governments, including providing universal access to basic education, literacy, numeracy, labour-market training and re-skilling, and the impact of technology;
- identifying the challenges on local and regional levels; and
- exploring solutions.

The parallel events will conclude with an opportunity to engage ministers and senior officials in a discussion on the challenges and solutions posed during the first two days of the symposium.

Further information will be distributed by COL to recipients of *Connections* and is also available through COL's web site.

## COL and knowledge management



*Roundtable participants*

Knowledge management can have a significant impact on the need for mass education, access and equity, cost-effectiveness and efficient systems of delivery of instruction. This has tremendous potential for enhancing the quality of education and training for all citizens of the Commonwealth.

In November 1999, experts in developing

## McKinnon to lead Commonwealth

COL welcomes incoming Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Right Honourable Donald C. McKinnon, who was the unanimous choice by Heads of Government to succeed HE Chief Emeka Anyaoku when he retires in April. Mr. McKinnon is a former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in New Zealand and has served as deputy chairperson of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration since its inception in 1995. As Secretary-General, he will also join COL's Board of Governors. *COL pays tribute to Chief Anyaoku on page 6.*



and managing distance education libraries and information databases met at COL's Vancouver headquarters to discuss the changing nature of knowledge management. They examined how COL and its Information Resource Centre can best meet the needs of stakeholders around the Commonwealth capitalising on the opportunities afforded by newer technologies. Participants were connected in an electronic forum for several weeks prior to physically meeting and continued formulating their recommendations through this means after they left Vancouver. Dr. Keith Harry, former Director, International Centre for Distance Learning, facilitated the Knowledge Management Roundtable.

Among several action items, the group drafted a mission statement for a new COL initiative:

*The [proposed] Commonwealth Open Learning Interactive Network for Knowledge Sharing (COLINKS) is committed to taking forward the information/knowledge provisions of COL's mission with a view to increasing the opportunities for rapid access to knowledge through the fostering of co-operative and collaborative alliances of knowledge management organisations (including libraries, database providers and specialist centres) using appropriate and emerging information communications technologies across the Commonwealth.*

As co-ordinator of the proposed network, COL would host a network web site, help identify material for inclusion and provide advice, assistance and training for contributing partners.

COLINKS would require additional staffing and funds to support and facilitate network partner participation.

Full details of the proposal and roundtable report are available on COL's web site ([www.col.org/KMR](http://www.col.org/KMR)). Other stakeholders and interested parties are invited to send comments, suggestions and arguments to COL.

## Pacific Ministers to discuss skills development

Together with their senior advisers, Ministers of education from Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu will meet in Kuala Lumpur in early March 2000. The meeting is being organised and sponsored by The Commonwealth of Learning and will be hosted by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia. The British Department for International Development, New Zealand Official Development Assistance, the Asian Development Bank, UNESCO and the International Labour Organization will also be represented.

The ministers will discuss needs throughout the region and will consider and help shape two proposals from COL:

- participation in a project of regional co-operation in the development of open and distance learning materials targeting important areas of skills development for the work force; and

- adoption of a regional strategy which will improve credit mobility and articulation and result in greater efficiency through shared delivery of training programmes and, ultimately, improved mobility of labour.

It is very difficult, if not impossible, for small states to provide the range of skills-training programmes required for their economic and social development using traditional methods of delivery. However, using the principles of open and distance learning together with flexible delivery approaches, materials can be developed and delivered on a regional basis and costs can be shared. COL is offering to facilitate this process.

Background papers and the outcomes of the meeting will be available on COL's web site.

## DFID funds COL initiative in Mozambique



*Planning Mozambique out-of-school secondary education project, left to right: Rod Tyrer (DFID), Anisio Matangala (Ministry of Education, Mozambique), John Bartram (COL), Patrick Guiton (COL).*

Mozambique is embarking upon a major programme to provide secondary education through open and distance learning options to students who have graduated from primary school. Current statistics show that there are two million students enrolled in primary schools, while 80,000 are enrolled in years 8–12. The demand for enrolment in secondary schools is enormous but limited space is the problem. The only way that the Ministry of Education would be able to provide access for these young people and adults is through the development of an open and distance learning delivery system.

The British Department for International Development (DFID) has agreed to a COL proposal that was developed in close co-operation and extensive consultation with the Mozambique Ministry of Education. DFID will invest UK£800,000 in a five-year project which will see materials written and delivered for students in five designated areas



*Primary school in Namipa, Mozambique*



*In Georgetown, Guyana: participants at a September 1999 international workshop considering "Case Studies in the Uses of Educational Technology" as part of the British DFID-funded project, "Technology Supported Open and Distance Learning Study" being implemented by COL. The Institute for Distance and Continuing Education (IDCE) at the University of Guyana facilitated the workshop. Guyana Prime Minister, The Honourable Samuel Hinds, opens the National Guyana Distance Education Conference, which followed the workshop. IDCE organised and hosted the conference.*

within Nampula province. Some of the sites are very remote and few currently have infrastructure such as electricity and a reliable telephone connection. The challenge will be to deliver the material using appropriate technology — which will be mainly print, supported by community radio — and provide adequate student support.

The Commonwealth of Learning has appointed Mr. Anisio Matangala as the Project Manager in Mozambique. Mr. Matangala was seconded from the Ministry of Education in Mozambique for this position. Mr. John Bartram is the COL project officer.

## COL in Action

### COL provides staff training and advice to UNHCR, WHO

After a rigorous selection process, the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has selected COL to develop and deliver a self-learning, "Written Communication Skills" professional development programme for UNHCR employees based both at headquarters in Geneva and regional offices throughout the world.

COL's implementation team includes Dr. David Murphy, Associate Professor in Flexible Learning, Centre for Higher Development, Monash University, Australia (course designer), Ms. Maree Bentley of Bentley International consultants, Australia (course developer), and COL project officers, Mrs. Angela Kwan and Ms. Helena Fehr.

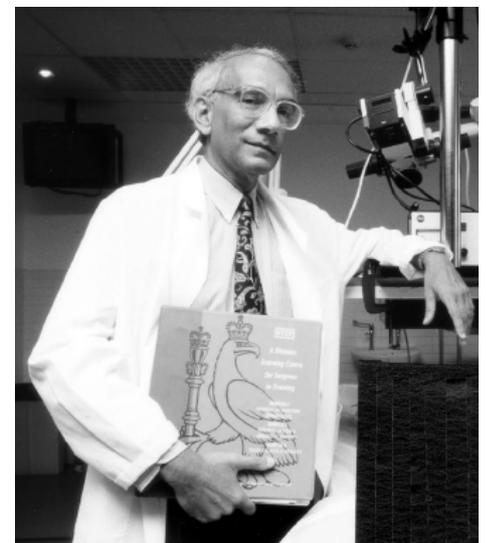
The 30-hour competency-based training will cover a range of written communication skills required by UNHCR staff. It focuses on the principles and strategies that underpin successful workplace communication: clarity of purpose and appropriateness for audience and context. These principles and strategies will be explored with reference to UNHCR-written communication needs, applied through a series of self-marking exercises, and assessed through a number of practical work-based tasks. Assignments will be submitted via e-mail. The participants will receive feedback from locally based tutors who will also provide any learning support that may be

required by staff members.

In exploring the use of distance learning via technology in reaching their staff and clients world-wide, the World Health Organization (WHO) has commissioned COL to carry out a feasibility study on developing a distance learning strategy for WHO. The study is being conducted by Dr. Glen Farrell, former President of British Columbia's Open Learning Agency, and Mr. David Walker, COL's Educational Technology Specialist.

### Training surgeons

A project designed to enhance the training of young surgeons was launched in December at eight medical schools around the Commonwealth, including the Christian Medical College in India, UCH Ibadan in



*Professor Arjuna Aluwibare, author of the new tropical surgery module supplementing the STEP materials*

Nigeria, the medical schools of MEDUNSA & the University of Transkei in South Africa, the Postgraduate Medical Institute in Sri Lanka, Makerere University in Uganda and the University of Zimbabwe. Others in Mozambique and Maldives are set to join in the second phase.

In addition to the recipient institutions, five international and professional organisations are

collaborating to ensure successful implementation:

The *Royal College of Surgeons of England* is donating to each of the institutions sample print and video teaching materials associated with its nine-month distance learning course (Surgeons-in-Training Education Programme, or "STEP"), covering the basics of the clinical surgery needed by junior surgeons.

The *Hamilton Bailey Memorial Trust*, which is a UK-based organisation committed to assisting medical school libraries in Africa and other parts of the developing world to acquire learning materials, is supporting the cost of shipping the materials and the purchase of accompanying textbooks.

The *British Council*, as part of its promotion of links between the medical communities in the Commonwealth, and the *Pan African Association of Surgeons* are helping to co-ordinate the project by acting as liaisons between the College and the participating university hospitals.

The *Commonwealth of Learning* has commissioned a supplementary module on undertaking surgery in tropical conditions which has been prepared by Professor Arjuna Aluwihare, of the University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka, and will be provided by COL in

electronic format to all the participants. COL has also offered to facilitate an Internet forum for recipient institutions to exchange views on the use and adaptation of the course materials and other training issues.

Although the STEP materials are designed in distance learning form, they are flexible enough to be used for small group teaching as well, and they can be used to support local training systems and syllabuses.

## Managing change

The Commonwealth of Learning, the University of Abertay Dundee, the Association of Commonwealth Universities and the Association of African Universities are collaborating in hosting a professional development programme for leaders of universities in Africa. "Managing Change – Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education" aims to help participants to prepare for the challenges of providing leadership in times of change. Peer networks will also be facilitated. The first in a series of five, limited enrolment, annual offerings will be held in August 2000 at Dudhope Castle in Dundee, Scotland.

## From COL's partners

### Indian educational channel launched

India's dedicated free-to-air educational television channel, Gyan Darshan, was inaugurated on 26 January 2000 by The Honourable M.M. Joshi, Minister for Human Resource Development. Thrilled Indian educators say that this is a realisation of a dream that they have been working toward for several years.

The channel is targeted to serve the educational needs of students and other audiences throughout the country, and also throughout the region where the INSAT's footprint reaches. The national television service, Doordarshan, has made one transponder available free-of-charge and several institutions such as the University Grants Commission, the Central Institute for Educational Technology, India's open universities, and other ministries have collaborated in providing software and programming. The Indira Gandhi National Open University will serve as the nodal agency for the channel, providing co-ordination and uplink services from its Electronic Media Production Centre.

Left to right: Roger Roy, Julia Foders, Patrick Julien, Marjorie Brown-Watts.



# COL international

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY

COL International is now helping The Commonwealth of Learning to offer its resources on a broader scale by marketing and executing fee-for-service consultative services to external agencies and institutions. It was registered last year in Canada as a not-for-profit corporation and functions as an affiliate of COL.

COL International offers clients the benefits of a network of contacts, consultants, resources and knowledge generated through the direct management of hundreds of varied programmes world-wide. The range of services includes the creation and management of traditional education programmes, in addition to open learning and distance education, community development and information-based communications systems, materials development, training of administrative and course development staff, and the application of appropriate technologies to such programmes.

In December 1999, COL International launched a World Bank/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)-funded study on distance education for primary teacher training in Nigeria. Information is being collected on the tradi-

tional teacher education system and major stakeholders throughout Nigeria are being interviewed to assist in the development of a functional distance education programme that complements the current formal school-based teacher education. The project team leader is Professor Olugbemiro Jegede, Director of the Open University of Hong Kong's Centre for Research in Distance and Adult Learning.

The agency also has a number of proposals under development in Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, Thailand, Indonesia, India, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Nepal, The Maldives and Canada.

Ms. Marjorie Brown-Watts and Mr. Roger F. Roy joined COL International in December 1999 as Principals, International Partnerships. They track opportunities world-wide to provide services in project management and the most appropriate applications of training and technology and seek to build proposals in partnership with international financial institutions (IFIs) and other international organisations.

Ms. Brown-Watts brings a wealth of experience from the senior positions she held with the Government of Canada in international research and development, trade,

information technology and strategic planning. Before joining COL International, she was president of a consultancy working with governments, the private sector, learning institutions, and international research and development establishments.

Mr. Roy has been involved in the field of international development for over 25 years and has extensive experience in project management, marketing, planning and evaluation in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors. Prior to joining COL International, he was an adviser to a number of UN agencies and acted as a team leader for projects in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.

Mr. Patrick Julien is COL International's Chief Operating Officer and Ms. Julia Foders is Administrative Assistant.

COL is grateful to Industry Canada for its support and is delighted to confirm that it has also secured a two-year seed-funding arrangement from an international donor agency which provides a major degree of sustainability for COL International's basic operations for 2000-2001.

Further information on COL International is available on COL's web site at: [www.col.org/colint](http://www.col.org/colint)

Until now, IGNOU has had limited access to Doordarshan's national broadcasting schedule during early morning periods. IGNOU has also been the lead agency in developing plans for national educational broadcasting.

Also in January, Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University began broadcasting throughout Maharashtra on Doordarshan and will soon be able to contribute to the new national service as well.

Daily programming on Gyan Darshan will include school and college curriculum as well as general enrichment.

## CEMCA news

The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia in collaboration with the Electronic Media Production Centre at the Indira Gandhi National Open University in New Delhi and INFOTEL India have developed a software package for electronic media library management. "MEDLIB" is a fully Y2K compliant, Windows database programme that automates cataloguing, classifying, storage and retrieval of audio and video programmes including stock shots. The software is available for purchase from INFOTEL Software Corner, A-133 Shivalik, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi 110 017. E-mail: infoisoft@nda.vsnl.net.in

## A profile of the Zimbabwe Open University

by Professor K.P. Dzvimbo, Vice Chancellor

With 14,330 students, the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) is already the largest university in the country. By the end of the year, enrolment is expected to reach 21,000. Although the ZOU has only been in existence for one year – created in March 1999 through an Act of Parliament – it did inherit some of its student base from its predecessor, the University College of Distance Education (UCDE).

UCDE was established in 1993, under the umbrella of the University of Zimbabwe, with a mandate to offer undergraduate degree programmes through distance teaching and open learning to school headmasters who did not have the opportunity to enrol in the conventional university programmes. It was also established to spearhead the operation of a "dual-mode" of teaching and learning at the University of Zimbabwe.

Converted to an open university, the focus of the institution has now expanded from education to include a wide variety of disciplines, including public administration, agriculture management, accounting, banking, financing, psychology, mathematics and science, geography and environmental studies, industrial and labour studies, law and special education. COL has provided assistance at various levels throughout the conversion process.

ZOU's students are located throughout the country. Ten regional centres play a critical role in student support and tutoring.

Each regional centre is headed by a regional co-ordinator who is both an academic and an administrator. Each regional co-ordinator is assisted by an average of ten full-time and 40 part-time tutors. Combined with an academic staff compliment of 77, staff salaries total 35% of recurrent expenditure for ZOU.

The size and growth of ZOU's student base is creating challenges in terms of funding, teaching and learning methodologies and organisational structure.

Although the university is currently funded by Government, it is now relying very heavily on student fees and income generation to help finance its core business. Diminishing Government funding is also forcing ZOU to move from being a cost-centre toward being a profit-centre. Therefore, faculties, departments and regional centres are now required to justify their existence on the basis of their contribution to overhead costs.

ZOU relies very heavily on the print media, augmented occasionally by radio broadcasting. A face-to-face component is central to the delivery of teaching and learning materials to students who are located in the regions. Plans are underway to introduce a multi-media approach using the VSAT system. Phase One will be asynchronous learning but, once the system is fully operational, students will be able to receive teaching and learning materials synchronously.

Rapid growth also means that more time and resources will have to be invested in quality assurance activities. Toward this end, the university has now established a Research and Evaluation Unit in the Vice Chancellor's office.

The mandate of ZOU is to provide accessible, flexible, relevant and cost-effective tertiary education and training. With implementation of the above measures, the university is confident that it will continue to expand its offering of such programmes to Zimbabweans and students located throughout the SADC region.

## Technikon SA launches Africa education portal

Technikon SA's Centre for Lifelong Learning (TSA-CLL) is now providing an African education portal to support educators, institutions and learners.

*AfricaEducation.org*

"The establishment of this web site had arisen from the need to create information technology links in the field of education in Africa," says Paul West, Director of CLL. "The web site provides a 'central exchange' to already existing curriculum content, an education 'who's who' directory, listing of African education institutions, and guidance on available Internet-based infrastructure."

The site also includes access to the new African Digital Library for users throughout Africa. The library has been established by TSA and the Association of African Universities in collaboration with netLibrary, a private American company. It provides Internet access to full textbooks at no cost. Encryption ensures that only one user can

access a book at any one time and loan periods will be restricted to a few hours. Over 60 publishers are providing the textbooks and book-specific advertisers are also being sought to help defray costs.

## People

**Ms. Tina Sartoretto**, Registrar and Director of Student Affairs at Cambrian College, was appointed last year as Canada's representative on COL's Board of Governors. She is serving the second year of a two-year term previously held by the late Dr. Glenn Crombie, former President of Cambrian College.

COL's President and Chief Executive Officer, **Dato' Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan**, has had conferred on him two more honorary degrees in recognition of his contribution to distance and open learning: a Doctor of Philosophy from Allama Iqbal Open University in Pakistan and a Doctor of Social Science from the Open University of Hong Kong.

In 1998, COL designed and launched a new internship programme to enhance the professional growth of distance educators from developing Commonwealth countries through exchanges, attachments and sharing of experiences. With financial assistance from COL, opportunities are available for both early and mid-career practitioners, while retired professionals can volunteer their expertise and technical advice. Interested parties may obtain further information from COL's web site or by contacting COL directly. The following internships were awarded and conducted during 1999:

**Md. Shafiqul Alam**, Deputy Director (Training & Consultancy), Bangladesh Open University – hosted by The Commonwealth of Learning in Vancouver, Canada

**Tarataake Angiraoi**, Assistant Producer, Radio Kiribati – hosted by Radio Australia in Melbourne

**Stevie Chagunda**, Visual Designer, Malawi College of Distance Education – hosted by the University of South Africa

**L.N. Donge**, Head, Distance Learning Department, Co-operative College, Moshi, Tanzania – hosted by the Co-operative College of Kenya in Nairobi, Kenya

**Felicita Jirrie**, Deputy Head, Government Correspondence School, Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, Zimbabwe – hosted by The Correspondence School in Wellington, New Zealand

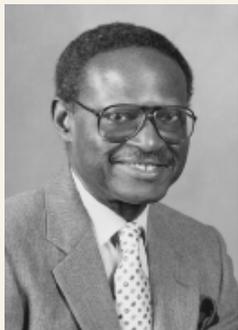
**Joseph Kituma**, Chief Planning Officer, The Open University of Tanzania – hosted by the University of South Africa in Pretoria

**Elisha Kujeke**, Writer-cum-Teacher, Government Correspondence School, Zimbabwe – hosted by the Open Learning Agency in Vancouver, Canada

**Hetty London**, Head, Readers' Services Division, University of Guyana – hosted by the University of Regina in Canada

## Emeka Anyaoku

*A tribute by  
Ian Macdonald, Chairman,  
The Commonwealth of Learning*



*His Excellency  
Chief Emeka  
Anyaku,  
Commonwealth  
Secretary-General  
from 1990 to 1999.*

The members of the Commonwealth belong to a unique association, united by a common tradition and shared values, possessed of a unifying language combined with respect for cultural diversity, and fortified by the friendship of countless individuals. The true wealth of the Commonwealth is to be found in the people of the member nations, and no one has represented that better than Chief Emeka Anyaoku.

The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth is responsible for a vast array of functional responsibilities, must be possessed of a complex set of talents—diplomatic, political, administrative and inter-personal—and is required to deal even-handedly with fifty-four member nations.

It was in the spring of 1993, when chairing the Progress Review Committee, established to review the first five years of The Commonwealth of Learning, that I first met Emeka Anyaoku. Since January 1, 1994, I have enjoyed the privilege of working with him in my capacity as Chairman of the Board of Governors. Remarkably, in the face of all the calls on his time, Emeka was always available for consultation and advice, for support in our dealings with member nations, and for his contribution to our Board meetings.

In the early years of our relationship, COL was engaged in a battle for its very survival. Our task would have been immensely more complicated without his confidence in our role and his quiet determination that we should succeed. That we have moved so far ahead is in no small measure the result of that confidence and determination.

On a more personal note, I have rarely enjoyed a more congenial collegial relationship which, for the volunteer Chair of a novel intergovernmental agency, has been a source of great joy in my work. I shall miss that greatly, as will our President, Raj Dhanarajan and all of COL's staff. Together, we have marvelled at his skills and been privileged to share in his friendship.

**Md. Kabir Mia**, Chief Publications Officer, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies – hosted by Indira Gandhi National Open University in Delhi, India

**Placida Misiga**, Administrative Officer, Distance Education Centre, Solomon Islands College of Higher Education – hosted by The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand in Lower Hutt

**Hilmah Mollomb**, Materials Development Co-ordinator, Solomon Islands College of Higher Education – hosted by Central Queensland University in Rockhampton, Australia

**Jenipher Owuor**, Head, Department of Distance Learning, Eldoret Polytechnic, Kenya – hosted by the University of Nairobi in Kenya

**Chandrakant Puri**, Assistant Director, Social Sciences, Centre for Distance Education, SNDT Women's University, India – hosted by Indira Gandhi National Open University in Delhi, India

with *Basic Education through Open and Distance Learning*, to be co-published early this year with Taylor & Francis Ltd./Routledge, as the second annual title in the *World Review of Distance Education and Open Learning* series. COL will also be a participant, and demonstrate its portable community radio broadcast station, at the Forum.

The World Education Forum is being sponsored by several international organisations and development agencies, hosted by the Government of Senegal and organised by the International Consultative Forum on Education for All (EFA Forum). The EFA Forum is an international consortium set up to guide follow-up action to the 1990 World Conference on Education for All, to provide a forum for continuous consultation, and to promote co-operation between governments and their partners.

[www2.unesco.org/wef](http://www2.unesco.org/wef)

## COL Board to meet in London

COL's Board of Governors will meet in London on 4 – 5 May 2000. Commonwealth Secretary-General designate, the Rt. Hon. Donald C. McKinnon, who will have taken office in April, will be attending his first meeting as a member of COL's Board at this time.

## Education on show in Vancouver

The Reed Midem Organisation says that its World Education Market, is on course to become the first truly international, multi-sectoral, education forum. Over 4000 participants, from both public and private sectors, representing the international who's who of education, training and lifelong learning are expected to converge on Vancouver, Canada, from 24 – 27 May 2000. 135 companies/organisations from 24 countries have already confirmed their presence at WEM.

COL is a member of WEM's "Founders Club" and COE's President, Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan, is a member of WEM's Advisory Committee. [www.wemex.com](http://www.wemex.com)

## DE in small states

The University of the West Indies Distance Education Centre (UWIDEC) is organising an international conference on Distance Education in Small States to be held on 27 – 28 July 2000 in Ocho Rios, Jamaica. The meeting will address both in-country programmes as well as collaboration among states. Further information can be obtained from the conference manager, Ms. Christine Marrett, at UWI's Mona Campus, Kingston 7, Jamaica.

tel: 876.927.2831, fax: 876.977.3494

e-mail: [deconf@uwimona.edu.jm](mailto:deconf@uwimona.edu.jm)

web: [www.uwicentre.edu.jm/~uwidec/de\\_conf](http://www.uwicentre.edu.jm/~uwidec/de_conf)

## Events

### Gender barriers to ICTs

The third in a series of four regional "expert group meetings" convened by COL to identify barriers to information and communications technologies based on gender differences will be held in Zanzibar, Tanzania, 13 – 17 March 2000. Representatives from throughout Commonwealth Africa will be attending. Funding assistance for this meeting has been provided by Canada's International Development Research Centre through its Acacia Initiative.

### EFA in the new millennium

"Every person – child, youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs." So begins Article 1 of the *World Declaration on Education for All*, the touchstone for all education development, which is as pertinent today as when it was adopted in Jomtien in 1990 where 155 countries pledged to provide basic education for all and reduce illiteracy.

Ten years later, in late April 2000, the World Education Forum will be held in Dakar, Senegal, to examine how close the international community is to achieving its goals of Education for All. It will discuss the findings of the EFA 2000 Assessment, an unprecedented exercise conducted in more than 180 countries, and forge plans to meet the basic learning needs of all in the new century.

The aim of the Forum is to help turn the vision of the Declaration into reality by consolidating partnerships and by demonstrating clear commitments. One way in which COL is contributing to this effort is

## TEL-isphere 99

Over 300 delegates attended TEL-isphere 99, The Caribbean & Technology Enhanced Learning, held in Barbados in November. COL and the Caribbean Broadcasting Union were very pleased with the success of this first-time event, thanks to the delegates, presenters, exhibitors, sponsors and hosts.

The Caribbean Development Bank, the British Department for International Development (DFID) and InfoDev ensured delegate participation from within the region, while Microsoft Corporation, Cable and Wireless, and KPMG participated as corporate sponsors and the Ministry of Education and Culture, Barbados, and the University of the West Indies Distance Education Centre were local hosts.

With the assistance of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, four Canada Caribbean Distance Education Scholarship Programme (CCDESP) students and an in-country programme facilitator were able to attend TEL-isphere 99 and participate in a roundtable discussion on the rewards and challenges of administering, and participating in, the DFAIT-funded, COL-administered, skills-training programme. DFID funding allowed the participation of the other two in-country facilitators. Representatives

from the University of the West Indies, the three Canadian partner institutions, and COL also participated in the roundtable. [www.col.org/models/skillstrain.htm](http://www.col.org/models/skillstrain.htm)

Papers presented at the conference and other details are available on COL's web site ([www.col.org/tel99](http://www.col.org/tel99)).

Six TEL-isphere 99 papers were selected by the editors and publishers of the *Journal of Educational Media* to appear in volume 25, number 1, to be published in early 2000:

- "Towards an Internet-Based Education Model for the Caribbean," by **Robert B. France**, **S. Emanuel Grant**, and **Sam C. Hsu**, Colorado State University/Florida Atlantic University, USA
- "OWL (On-Line Webstories for Learning): A Unique Web-based Literacy Resource for Primary/Elementary Children," by **Moira Juliebö** and **Carol Durnford**, University of Alberta/Oz New Media, Canada



- "The Use of Public Broadcasting in the Service of Educational Reconstruction and Development: A South African Perspective," by **Mashala Kwape**, National Department of Education, South Africa
- "Choosing Technologies for Education," by **Hilary Perraton**, International Research Foundation for Open Learning, United Kingdom
- "Global Online Learning Among Asia-Pacific Economies: Lessons Learned," by **Jack Treuhart**, Algonquin College of Applied Arts and Technology, Canada
- "Technology in the Hands of the Extension Officers – Agricultural Extension in Jamaica and Ghana," by **David Walker**, The Commonwealth of Learning

JEM provides an international refereed forum for issues focussing on research, policy and practice in the effective use of media in education and so shares many of the motivations and concerns of the TEL-isphere 99 conference. The Journal is edited by Samantha Hobbs and Adrian Kirkwood of the Institute of Educational Technology at the UK Open University. It is published by Taylor & Francis Ltd./Carfax, UK.



## Employment opportunities

The Commonwealth of Learning invites applications for up to three senior positions.

The positions will serve to facilitate within a team environment an exchange of skills, knowledge and technological know-how required to develop, deliver, manage and evaluate open and distance learning activities in the Commonwealth.

Incumbents will design and manage related programmes and projects, including appropriate training programmes to address needs identified by Commonwealth governments, their institutions and agencies.

Applicants will have experience in managing open and distance learning systems and applying new learning technologies in one or more of the following areas:

- Distance and open learning practices in continuing education and professional development fields, including quality assurance and credit recognition,
- Managing a knowledge/information unit to be available to the Commonwealth to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education materials, expertise, technologies and incorporating public relations and communications, and
- Designing, implementing, and evaluating sustainable initiatives drawing upon

suitable educational technologies and corresponding pedagogy for extending access to education, including web-based course delivery.

Further details on the positions may be obtained from COL's web site at: [www.col.org/staffing](http://www.col.org/staffing)

Applicants must be citizens of a Commonwealth country with a minimum of ten years of relevant international experience in open and distance learning at a senior level. The posts will be situated at COL's headquarters in Vancouver.

Initial appointments will be made on a fixed-term contract basis and will be filled between 1 July and 31 December 2000.

Applications will be accepted until 14 April 2000 and may be faxed or mailed to:

*Manager, Finance & Administration*  
*The Commonwealth of Learning*  
*1285 West Broadway, Suite 600*  
*Vancouver, BC, Canada V6H 3X8*  
*Fax: +1 604 775 8210*

Applications should consist of a full curriculum vitae, names and contact details of three referees, a cover letter outlining how past experience will service the needs of COL and an indication of availability. Only short-listed candidates will be notified. Appointments will be announced on COL's web site.

COL is committed to an equal opportunities employment policy.

## Connections

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*Connections* and *EdTech News* are edited by Mr. Dave Wilson.

# EdTech News



## Education: Sunny-side up

*This issue of EdTech News looks at alternative methods of powering systems for educational delivery in areas where electrical distribution infrastructure does not exist or is not reliable.*

### A community FM radio station driven by the sun

Community leaders in Apac (located in northern Uganda), COL and the Ugandan Minister of State for Tourism, Trade and Industry and Member of Parliament for Maruzi county in Apac District, the Honourable Jovino Akaki, recently collaborated in a project to provide the community with an FM radio station.

The feasibility study revealed several limitations with the electrical infrastructure resulting from load sharing throughout the country. Apac can be without power for several days at a time and, when it is available, dramatic voltage fluctuations render it unusable for sensitive electronic equipment.

In order to maintain a reliable broadcasting schedule and develop the station as a centre-point for community activities by different groups, it was agreed that Radio Apac would be operated entirely by solar power. Not using the power from the national grid would also mean that the project would be free of the associated tariffs.

In consultation with a solar distributor in Kampala, a configuration was determined that would allow the station to stay in operation continuously throughout its 18-hour broadcast day. The eight solar panels and seven deep-cycle batteries provide the station with lighting and all operating requirements.

The normal life of a solar installations spans more than 10 years and maintenance costs are low.

Further information concerning solar solutions can be found at:  
[www.siemenssolar.com](http://www.siemenssolar.com)

There are retailers in many countries that can provide customised solar-power solutions for a variety of applications:  
[www.independent-power.com/links1.html](http://www.independent-power.com/links1.html)  
[www.serve.com/commonpurpose/contacts.html](http://www.serve.com/commonpurpose/contacts.html)



Receiving the solar panels at the radio station site



Installing the panels



Radio Apac, on air at 92.9FM, powered by the sun

### Education in a box

Solar/battery-operated *Learn-o-Vision* systems are being used in rural areas of South Africa. The complete, self-powered unit is housed in a secure steel box on wheels. The unit houses a video machine, video monitor/TV, audio cassette decks, computer workstation and printer. The front doors open out and act as a writing board.

Two solar panels provide power to two batteries. When fully charged, each of these batteries has enough power to last a full school day. The unit can also be powered by house-current. The computer was rebuilt to work with battery power.

Source: *Edutech Puisano*, South Africa, October 1999.  
[www.teacher.co.za/edutech.html](http://www.teacher.co.za/edutech.html)



PHOTO CREDIT: JACQUI PILE

### Wind-up power

“Wind-up” portable radios and other wind-up battery appliances are powered by hand-crank generators. The radios in particular have proven to be a convenient alternative for all types of lifestyles around the world but are especially useful for receiving non-formal education broadcasts in rural and remote situations. Some manufacturers combine a solar power source with the wind-up generator as well as battery and house-current options all in one unit.

Freeplay Energy (formerly BayGen Power):  
[www.freeplay.net](http://www.freeplay.net)

### “Fuel-cell” batteries

Ballard Power Systems is the world-leader in developing; manufacturing and marketing zero-emission proton exchange

membrane (PEM) fuel cells for use in transportation, electricity generation, portable power and other products. Ballard’s proprietary fuel cell technology is enabling automobile, electrical equipment and portable power product manufacturers to develop and sell competitive environmentally clean and efficient products.

The fundamental component of these end-user products is the Ballard fuel cell that combines hydrogen (which can be obtained from methanol, natural gas or petroleum) and oxygen (from air) without combustion to generate electricity.

Up until recently Ballard has produced fuel cells that power automobiles but now the company is aiming at emergency backup and supplementary power systems for the home market. Ballard plans to produce a one-kilowatt generator that uses natural gas as fuel. It will provide enough electricity to supply the average home or school with power, heat and hot water during off peak hours or during power outages. During peak hours, when many applications and lights are turned on at the same time, the generator could provide a cost-effective supplement to conventional electricity.

Ballard Power Systems: [www.ballard.com](http://www.ballard.com)

### Wind power

Power from the wind can also be harnessed to provide electricity to communities.

Case studies dealing with the use of wind power to drive education can be found at [www.windpower.dk/links.htm](http://www.windpower.dk/links.htm)



*EdTech News* is written and compiled by Mr. David Walker (Educational Specialist, Educational Technologies).

Descriptions of products are provided for information only and do not constitute endorsement by COL.