



THE COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING  
SUMMARY REPORT 1994 – 1996



*“Our long-term aim is that any learner, anywhere in the Commonwealth, shall be able to study any distance-teaching programme available from any bona fide college or university in the Commonwealth.”*

— *Towards a Commonwealth of Learning, 1987*  
Report of the Expert Group on Commonwealth  
Co-operation in Distance Education and Open Learning

Founded in 1987, The Commonwealth of Learning was inspired by the vision that the peoples of the Commonwealth must and can have access to knowledge, regardless of where they live and whether they are rich or poor.

Member Governments have given COL a mandate to encourage the development and sharing of open learning/ distance education materials, expertise, technologies, and other resources. Working with and providing services to hundreds of institutions throughout the Commonwealth, COL is helping to increase the capacities of developing nations to meet the demands for improved access to quality education and training.



# A TIME OF CHANGE

## A Message from the Chairman

The last couple of years have seen several major changes in the governance and management of The Commonwealth of Learning. After completing my assignment as Chairman of the committee which in 1993 reviewed COL's progress on behalf of member Governments, I was honoured to be asked to serve as Chairman of the Board. Believing as strongly as I do in COL and its mandate, I readily accepted, assuming the Chair on January 1, 1994.

Although struggling financially over the past few years, COL is still a very strong and vibrant organisation, thanks to a dedicated staff and the strength of the entire Commonwealth behind it. I am proud of our achievements. In this spirit, I wish to record my appreciation to COL's first President, Professor James A. Maraj, who left us in early 1995 after firmly establishing COL's international influence and leaving an impressive legacy of accomplishments. I offer my sincere thanks and admiration also to Mr. Richard Simpson, who, at my request, stepped in – and continued to move the organisation forward – for several months as Acting President, enabling the Board to conduct a thorough search for a new President.

That search resulted in the exciting and universally applauded appointment of Dato' Professor Gajaraj (Raj) Dhanarajan in September 1995. We were very fortunate to inherit Raj from the Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong, at the conclusion of his remarkably successful five-year term as Director. We have already benefited substantially from his insights, leadership, and vision.



A parallel external review also focused on the size, representation, and function of COL's Board of Governors. In January 1996, the Board was re-constituted. While smaller in number, it is no less powerful or influential. I look forward to a strong working relationship with each and every member.

Finally, I want to assure all of COL's constituents that the financial stability of this organisation is at the top of our agenda. While we have benefited from an initial contribution from Brunei Darussalam and sustaining support from our major donors (Canada, the Province of British Columbia, India, Britain, and Australia) – and have been greatly encouraged by enthusiastic financial commitments received from the developing economies of several other countries – we still have some way to go before we can confidently provide the full range of service that is expected of us. Emerging project partnerships with major international funding agencies will be developed further and, with the weight of agreement from Commonwealth Heads of Government when they met in New Zealand last year, we are looking forward to announcements of other long-term commitments from Commonwealth Education Ministers when they meet in 1997.

In the meantime, COL continues to be committed to harnessing the vast resources of the Commonwealth and using the tremendous potential of distance education, open learning, and communications technologies, for the betterment of the world around us. Education and human resource development are synonymous with the future of the Commonwealth, and COL is central to that mission.

Dr. H. Ian Macdonald  
*Chairman of the Board of Governors*

# A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT DIRECTION?

## A Message from the President

From Hong Kong to Vancouver is a giant step in more than one sense. Leaving behind an institution with courses, students and tutors in a dynamic city state, that itself is in transition, and moving to another equally dynamic city, so full of sophistication and beauty, and an organisation, that is better known for promoting distance education internationally than for practising it, has been a challenge for me. The Commonwealth of Learning has done much more to promote the cause of distance education over the last seven years than any other comparable international agency of its size. My travels to a number of Commonwealth countries in the last few months, and my discussions with political and academic leaders as well as senior civil servants of member nations, have confirmed, at least for me, our usefulness and a continuing role, in the knowledge century ahead, for this small and relatively young organisation.

In less than five years, the planet will usher in a new millennium. The Commonwealth will go into this new age with lots of achievements behind it but equally important to note is that this group of nations will also be entering the next century with a significant portion of the world's 900 million illiterate teenagers and adults (two-thirds of them women) and 110 million out-of-school children; with women and girls still far behind the educational ladder in comparison to boys and men; with more teachers poorly trained than fully trained; with many countries still lacking adequate knowledge, supply of skills and resources to manage and compete in the new world order; and with the gap between those who have and those who do not getting even wider.

Education is seen as the indispensable agent to bring about the change between what we are and what we want to be. In this context a role for distance education is not an option but an unavoidable imperative for many of us. Through its advocacy, training, advice



and facilitation, The Commonwealth of Learning has done much over the last few years to sensitise and help member governments use this cost effective tool. This report describes our activities and financial position over the 1994 – 1996 period. Readers will note that despite resource constraints the organisation has continued to be active and helpful in a variety of ways.

The increasing demand for education, the changing nature of the world of work and the global expectations of good governance, social justice, ideals of peace and freedom will mean more demand for *education throughout life*. Many of the smaller nations of the Commonwealth will find it increasingly difficult to meet such demands and expectations, not because they do not want to but because they cannot afford to for one reason or another.

It is possible for The Commonwealth of Learning to come to their assistance in this venture. To be even more helpful than we have been, COL may have to move in a slightly different direction from the one we have been pursuing. Through partnerships and networks, the organisation may want to become a major player in *delivering* education, especially in selected niches, using all of the advantages of the new technologies as well as the investments in training and infrastructure development that we have put in place in some forty Commonwealth countries over the past seven years. In the next three years, with the support of our eminent members of the Board, my colleagues and I will work on plans to position the organisation to fulfil the aspirations of 1987 when COL was established – i.e., “Our long-term aim is that any learner, anywhere in the Commonwealth, shall be able to study any distance-teaching programme available from any bona fide college or university in the Commonwealth.”

I look forward to the challenging years ahead with optimism and confidence.

Dato' Dr. Gajaraj Dhanarajan  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Professor Emeritus, Open Learning Institute of  
Hong Kong

# PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

## Learning Materials

*Print-based materials and study guides will continue to be a critical component in distance education, despite the rapid increase in the use of communications technologies and non-traditional delivery methods.*

Under favourable financial arrangements, COL has acquired the rights to distribute resource materials that can be used or adapted in a wide variety of settings by institutions in developing Commonwealth countries. Examples include:

- *The Blueprint Series* for use in training distance educators (UK Open College);
- 32 computer applications courses, comprising workbooks and computer diskettes (BC Telephone Education);
- ten publications containing research articles and studies in the field of distance education and open learning (Monash University, Australia);
- *The Learning Game*, a self-taught course in study skills for distance learners (Massey University, with assistance from the New Zealand Overseas Development Administration); and

- a series of sports training material and coaching videos from several Canadian sporting organisations.

Feedback data indicates that these materials are being well used. In one institution alone, the Allama Iqbal Open University in Pakistan, over 2000 students are

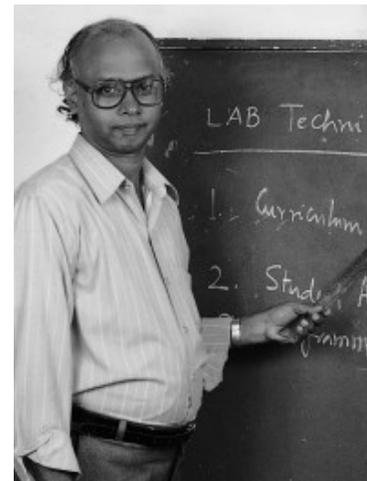
using the BC Telephone computer materials through a variety of courses. In India, more than 1000 students at one institution are currently using *The Learning Game* resource material.

Consulting widely throughout the Commonwealth, COL is also developing a set of protocols which will enable the transfer of materials between and among institutions in member countries.

*Having acquired the rights to use SciTech DIOL (UK) laboratory technician training materials, COL immediately provided copies to India's Indira Gandhi National Open University. In turn, with support from both COL and the Commonwealth Secretariat, the University hosted a workshop on the use and adaptation of the materials for participants from six open universities located in the four South Asian Commonwealth countries – all of which plan to develop courses based on the material. The Nepal National Commission for UNESCO also took part. The workshop took place in May 1996.*

*"I once again thank COL and the Commonwealth Secretariat for the material and financial support which was pivotal in the successful conduct of the workshop and has opened the threshold for a series of activities that could result in many academic programmes."*

Dr. S. Kannan  
*Reader in Chemistry, Office of the  
Pro Vice-Chancellor,  
Indira Gandhi  
National Open University,  
India  
June 1996*



Dr. S. Kannan  
*Indira Gandhi National Open University,  
India*

*"(The BC Tel) materials are very good for teaching purposes, whether this be for secondary school age children or adults, in an in-service learning situation."*

Mr. Siakimotu Atapana  
*Director, Department of Education,  
Nine  
April 1995*



## Communication and Information Technologies

*“Existing educational institutions were created to meet the needs of a society that is fast disappearing. We need new educational organisations that can exploit the new technologies to meet the needs of the twenty-first century. Economic development will depend as much on the success of creating and supporting such organisations, as on establishing the technological infrastructure. It is critical to get this right because those countries that harness the power of multimedia communications for education and training purposes will be the economic powerhouses of the twenty-first century.”*

– Dr. Tony Bates (*Technology, Open Learning and Distance Education*: Routledge, 1995)

*The deployment of modern communications and information technologies is becoming a major instrument for widening access to education and training on a cost-effective basis while also enhancing its quality.*

COL provides technical assistance to member countries in the development and use of the entire spectrum of communication and information technologies in order to expand learning opportunities. This has been done through enhancing **access to technologies**, facilitating **communication networking, training** in the development and use of technologies, **technical advisory services, technology partnerships** and maintaining advanced high quality **information systems**. Examples from COL’s work over the past two years include:

**Access to Technologies:** About 7,000 educational radio and television programmes are now included in the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) database, and the first edition of the CEMCA newsletter, *EDUCOM-ASIA*, has been published. COL established CEMCA at India’s Indira Gandhi

National Open University in July 1994. Steps toward a similar Centre for Africa have been initiated. Also, in partnership with a Canadian manufacturer, COL is testing and installing community radio broadcasting stations in Jamaica and Belize, as well as in Canada’s north.

**Networking Support:** COL provides technical advice and network services to developing Commonwealth countries, principally in the area of computer networks and teleconferencing systems, to enable the distance learning community within the Commonwealth to communicate more effectively. A daily, dial-up service to COL’s Internet facilities in Vancouver connects the Eastern Caribbean with the world – and provides an inter-island messaging and file transfer service.

### **Technology Training:**

Throughout the Commonwealth, COL has provided and sponsored training in the use of technology and media in education. A set of audio/audiographic teleconferencing training manuals, *Training System for Educational Audio Teleconferencing in Distance Education*, has been produced to assist with teleconference installations and operation. In August 1996, COL and the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre will host *Educational Technology 2000* in Singapore. This unique conference and trade show will address the potential of emerging technologies to deal with the challenges

of mass education.

**Technology Advisory Services:** Almost every day, COL provides information and technology advisory services to Commonwealth institutions and organisations. COL gathers insights on the application of modern communications and information technologies, in educational delivery and administration, and advises on equipment, facilities and networking options.

*In Guyana, COL provided assistance in developing a distance education programme for more effective delivery of the pre-university courses offered by the University’s Institute of Adult and Continuing Education. COL provided a desk-top publishing centre, including the required training of staff; the development of learning materials and the provision of financial, professional and technical assistance in the installation of an audio-teleconferencing network between Georgetown and seven regional study centres.*

*“I thank you sincerely also for your contribution and support. These have enabled us to expand the work of the University across the country. I will certainly count on your continued support as we build on the achievements on the work of the last two decades.”*

Mr. Samuel A. Small, A.A.  
Director, Institute of Adult & Continuing Education  
University of Guyana  
January 1995



**Technology Partnerships:** COL continues to forge strategic alliances with major international agencies and technology industries for the deployment of advanced communications and information technologies. As a member of its Steering Committee, COL is continuing its alliance with *WETV – The Global Access Television Service* and providing technical assistance in defining the nature and scope of educational components. COL contributed two television programmes for WETV’s launch at the UN Conference on the Status of Women in Beijing, September 1995. COL’s participation in the African Global Consortium, the *Educational Technology 2000* conference, and project partnerships with the International Telecommunications Union, UNESCO and Telemalta Corporation are direct results of its efforts to forge alliances with the major players in the communications sector.



**COL Information Systems:** COL has systematically upgraded its computing and networking capabilities to stay current with advances in communications and management of information. COL’s electronic information service is available world-wide through the Internet. The COL World Wide Web (www) site has expanded to include over 100 documents containing hundreds of “hyperlinks” to various COL documentation as well as to related organisations, institutions, and government departments throughout the globe. The site averages over 300 “hits” daily from all corners of the globe. COL has also maintained electronic discussion lists for initiatives in collaboration with the International Council for Distance Education (ICDE), the Commonwealth Secretariat’s Commonwealth Universities Study Abroad Consortium (CUSAC) and others.

## Training

*Training is about strengthening the capacity of institutions to promote economic and social development and assisting them to create an in-house and an in-country capability to maintain and enhance this empowerment.*

COL’s programmes directed at training for distance educators focus on the evolution of training resource materials and on trainer development. Strengthening

the capacity of client institutions to undertake professional development and training for their faculty and staff is of prime importance. Highlights include:

- a consultation with representatives from key distance education institutions in the Asian region, convened by COL and the Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education at India’s Indira Gandhi National Open University (STRIDE/IGNOU) in July 1994, that discussed issues related to human resource development planning and formulated a five-year regional training plan;
- an expert group meeting convened in 1995 at the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development, in Kuala Lumpur, to develop three course blueprints for training materials in the integration and use of media in distance education;
- a project to produce a series of train-the-trainer modules, for use by COL-commissioned trainers, in conjunction with Training Development Canada;
- the publication in late 1995 of a revised, fourth edition of COL’s *Directory of Materials and Courses for Training in Distance Education*; and
- the publication of a collection of articles on professional development and training.

A study, commissioned by COL in 1995, showed a critical need and strong demand for training in instructional design and media applications. In the past two years, over 20 training workshops covering these skills, have been conducted through COL for educators in all regions of the Commonwealth. Eight were carried out by Canadian distance educators under the auspices of the COL/BC Government Fellowship Programme.

In May 1996, COL was chosen by the Asian Development Bank in Manila as the successful bidder on a proposal to conduct research and training in support of a regional “distance education for primary teacher training” project.

At the request of the Commonwealth Youth Programme, COL is also collaborating on the delivery of a series of workshops, in the various CYP regions, to assist in the development of distance education for the delivery of CYP curriculum.

## Technical/Vocational Education and Training

*By merging workplace training programmes with proven distance education methods and national standards, it is now possible to overcome traditional barriers to obtaining useful vocational skills.*

COL is active in demonstrating that distance education concepts can be of significant use when adapted for technical/vocational education and training. Current examples include:

- development of a technical teacher training system in the Caribbean (40 students in four different countries will participate in a pilot, beginning in late 1996);
- use of distance education materials to enhance access and flexibility for students taking plumbing courses in Tonga;
- modification of competency-based automotive mechanics courseware (from Australia) for use in auto industry in Jamaica;
- introduction of computerised control of curriculum, administration, testing, and access to training materials for vehicle manufacturing, production-line workers in South Africa;
- development of training materials in water- and food-handling safety in a format that can be easily adapted to local, and especially rural, cultures (*FoodSafe/WaterSafe*); and
- establishment of a computer awareness programme and computer centre at the National Correspondence College (Luanshya, Zambia).

The programme, which is now close to being self-sustaining, was developed with assistance from COL and the Open University of Sri Lanka and uses distance education methods to teach computer skills.

*The computer awareness programme at the National Correspondence College in Zambia offers a significant opportunity to train women to gain employable skills that will enable them to enter the local mining-related industries workforce on an equal basis to men. Seven of the ten graduates in the first class were women and the majority of the now 233 graduates continue to be women. For many, the newly acquired skills have helped them to find employment. For others, they have found enrichment within their current work places.*

*"The computer centre at the National Correspondence College has become the pride of the Ministry of Education, and in particular, my Department. In view of that we should endeavour at all costs to maintain it because it is a flag carrier of vocational training through distance education."*

Mr. Chabwe Chisunka  
*Director, Department for Continuing Education, Zambia*  
September 1995



*The Commonwealth of Learning has been instrumental in facilitating the development of the Malaysian Health Network and the use of Canadian technology to provide training in family medicine to health professionals located throughout the country.*

*The initial family medicine programme has been so successful that the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia launched a major expansion of the network in early 1996 – adding 40 remote sites to the original four and including all other postgraduate medical education programmes.*

*By enlisting COL's technical assistance and buying power, Malaysia was able to obtain the audio-teleconferencing equipment from a Canadian manufacturer, DETAC Corporation, at considerable cost savings. The arrangement also contributed to boosting COL's purchasing position on behalf of all Commonwealth countries.*

## Continuing Education and Professional Development

*"Today's ambition – essential need – is to make the acquisition of knowledge a lifelong activity in which the school becomes the laboratory for making individuals mature learners, with an autonomous capacity to self-learn outside school walls throughout their lives. The pursuit of life-long learning and distance education structures are ideal partners."*

– Dato' Dr. Gajaraj Dhanarajan

COL has worked with the Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth professional associations on a number of projects, with two significant achievements:

- 200 students from 16 Commonwealth countries are now obtaining professional development, through the Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association, using the recently completed training package, *The Management of Drug Supplies*.
- the first 30 students, from legal departments of 14 Commonwealth Governments, were enrolled in February 1996 for the pilot year of the COL/Commonwealth Secretariat Legislative Drafting programme.

## Open Schooling

*“... there are at least 25 million children of school age in South Asia and West Africa who do not get to school at all”*

– Commonwealth Secretariat  
Education Programme Annual  
Report, 1992 – 1993

COL has identified existing open schooling systems, especially in Asia, as models that hold significant potential for application throughout the Commonwealth. Alliances with other agencies are developing with a concentration on access for women and girls.

In 1994, COL produced *Open Schooling: Selected Experiences*, a document containing ten case studies on the experiences – and lessons learned – of those involved during the establishment of open schools in various countries, both developed and developing.

COL has also worked with various producers of learning materials at the basic education level to provide samples to, and encourage the use of these resources in, developing countries for the delivery of literacy and numeracy education.



Ms. Cynthia Thompson  
Belize Teacher's College

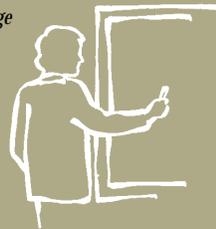
*“... allow me to thank you for the assistance you have given to my Ministry and continued concern about the different methods and strategies we can use to achieve education and training for all by the year 2000.”*

Dr. Sichalwe M. Kasanda  
Permanent Secretary,  
Ministry of Education, Zambia  
June 1996



*“We have found The Learning Game to be an excellent resource for teachers in our full-time and part-time programmes. We have decided to reproduce again for use with 150 more teachers and 100 primary school principals who will be studying by distance through the college during the 1996/97 school year.”*

Ms. Cynthia Thompson  
Principal  
Belize Teachers' College  
May 1996



## Teacher Education

*The quality of education largely depends on the quality of available teachers.*

*“... one estimate suggests that by the end of the century low income countries will still lack 1.8 million teachers”*

– Dr. Hilary Perraton  
(Distance Education  
for Teacher Training:  
Routledge, 1993)

Distance education and communications technologies have proven to be effective in training widely dispersed under-qualified and unqualified teachers and have the potential to vastly improve teacher supply. Consulting with an expert group, COL is developing design guidelines and a funding proposal to produce and pilot model teacher training programmes for use in developing Commonwealth countries. Specialised teacher training resources and materials are also available through COL.

## The Environment

*Education to prepare people to assume a more responsive and responsible attitude toward the environment can clearly make a significant contribution to redressing the neglect of the past. Issues concerning economic development can no longer be separated from those of the environment.*

COL has partnered with UNESCO on the development of multimedia postgraduate learning materials in environmental engineering. Independent field tests have provided input for final revisions of modules on *Environmental Management, Municipal Water and Wastewater Treatment, Soil and Groundwater Pollution from Agricultural Activities* and *Solid Waste Management*.

In 1995, COL completed the development of a set of instructional materials for the in-service training of primary teachers in environmental education. The next stage will be field tests.

*Women: Key Partners in Sustainable and Equitable Development* was published by COL in 1994. This collection of “success stories” of Commonwealth women and the environment was prepared for use as learning resource material.

COL has a continuing research collaboration with the Commonwealth Science Council and the European Research and Training Centre in Environmental Education at the University of Bradford in the UK.

## Gender and Development

*“Poverty is the most pervasive barrier to the education of South Asian girls and women. Other cultural factors such as early marriage and concern for girls moral and physical welfare present limitations; and in some regions the practices of the segregation and seclusion of women restrict education. Labour market discrimination aggravates the situation; women are hired less often and in lower postings and often receive lower pay for equal work.” “Distance education can play an important role in facilitating women’s participation in technology and technological education.”*

– Dr. Karen Evans (*Distance Education: Helping Overcome Barriers To Women’s Technological Education*: COL, 1995)

COL ensures that gender and development issues are given serious consideration in all of its programmes and projects. For example, programme offerings at the COL/NCC Computer Centre (Zambia) and COL’s *WaterSafe/FoodSafe* materials are both designed primarily for participation by women.

Over the past two years, COL has produced or sponsored co-publication of several works which have contributed to the field of study and action:

- *Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development*: This is a core module focusing on the theoretical justification for examining the specific roles and contributions of women to development initiatives.
- *Producing Gender Sensitive Learning Materials: A Handbook for Educators*. This unique resource book is designed to be used by those developing distance learning materials to assist in identifying gender bias concerns and improving capacity for addressing them.
- *Barriers to Participation of Women in Technological Education – The Role of Distance Education* (Occasional paper) and *Distance Education: Helping Overcome Barriers To Women’s Technological Education* (abridged version).
- *Barriers faced by Pacific Women in Distance Education* (The University of the South Pacific).

*Evaluation reports for use of COL-supplied course materials in developing countries regularly show a significantly greater percentage of women participants than men.*

*“I appreciate receiving (a copy of Producing Gender Sensitive Learning Materials: A Handbook for Educators), which sets out clearly and concisely the principles and issues surrounding the needs of women learners . . . Thank you for sending the publication and for your excellent work in mobilising concerned groups and individuals around these important issues.”*

The Honourable Dr. Hedy Fry  
*Secretary of State (Status of Women), Canada*  
March 1996

*“I wish to convey the thanks and congratulations of The Honourable Dr. Louis Galea, Minister for Social Development, for the excellent publication you have sent entitled Producing Gender Sensitive Learning Materials . . . The efforts of The Commonwealth of Learning in order to improve women’s accessibility to educational materials and resources for distance learning are indeed commendable.”*

Ms. Angela Callus  
*Director, Equal Status for Women,  
Ministry for Social Development, Malta*  
February 1996



The Honourable Dr. Hedy Fry  
*Secretary of State (Status of Women),  
Canada*

## Research, Evaluation and Review

*In November 1992, COL and the International Council for Distance Education signed a co-operation agreement to encourage research in distance education and to facilitate the exchange of information on studies and results world-wide.*

Two working groups are functioning under the auspices of the joint COL/International Council for Distance Education (ICDE) research agreement:

- Funding and costing of distance education: following a symposium in 1993 and the publishing of *Perspectives on Distance Education: The Funding of Open Universities*, by COL in 1994, the research working group has now developed a set of research proposals for which funding is being sought.
- Quality assurance: a workshop held in 1994 resulted in another COL publication, *Perspectives on Distance Education: Quality Assurance in Higher Education*. As a follow-up, the working group has commissioned a series of case studies of quality assurance practices in Commonwealth distance teaching universities, with publication scheduled for August 1996.

Another contribution to the study of distance education practice is the research bulletin board, established by COL to facilitate the flow of information about planned and continuing research. This was set up toward the end of 1994 and now has over 200 electronic subscribers.

In December 1995, COL submitted a proposal to the UK Overseas Development Administration for a three-year study on the diffusion of educational technology in developing countries. Funding for this has been approved and phase one of the project is in progress. With this project, COL has begun working with the recently formed International Research Foundation for Open Learning (IRFOL), based in Cambridge, UK.

Research was also conducted by COL on the scope and breadth of distance education activities in the college sector in Canada. The results were published by COL in 1994: *Colleges Reaching Out: Report on the Status of Distance Education in Canadian Colleges and Technical Institutes*.

## Non-Formal Education

*“(Non-formal educators) have developed approaches and media combinations that work; they are catering for an educational need which at least the participants recognise in growing numbers; they offer a very varied tool-box of techniques to help repair the serious lack of basic and practical life-related education for adults in most developing countries; this is a lack which is increasingly recognised as a serious blockage to increased productivity and economic self-sufficiency in today’s ever-more market oriented society.”*

– Dr. Tony Dodds (*The Use of Distance Learning in Non-Formal Education*: COL/IEC, 1996)

COL is leading a consortium of development agencies to promote open and distance learning approaches in non-formal education.

In early 1996, COL and the International Extension College (UK) jointly published, *The Use of Distance*

*Learning in Non-Formal Education* (Tony Dodds).

As a follow-up, COL convened an inter-agency meeting in Washington, DC (April 1996) where 28 participants considered the findings, conclusions and recommendations contained in the survey report. They agreed on the significant potential of non-formal education in reaching the large number of adults who have been left out of the educational systems in developing countries – and emphasised the need for development agencies to share their experiences in order to formulate effective strategies.

The group also noted that there was a need for further in-depth case studies and projects in the field, and were fully supportive of COL’s proposal to form a collaborative working group.

COL is also working with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (Canada) and the Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults, on the development and production of an anthology of adult education for countries in the Commonwealth.

*Biannually, at International Council for Distance Education (ICDE) World Conferences, COL and ICDE jointly present Awards of Excellence to recognise individual and institutional achievement in distance education. The first recipients of the awards were announced in June 1995: Sir John Daniel (UK Open University), Professor G. Ram Reddy (Government of India), Professor Sharifah H. Shahabudin (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia), and the Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (Thailand). The individual awards have now been renamed the **G. Ram Reddy Memorial Awards** in memory of Professor Reddy, who died only days after receiving the Award.*



## Quality Assurance

*“Distance education and open learning, as practised world-wide in the 1990s, are a far cry from that of a mere twenty years ago . . . In the process, norms and standards have been established in the international field, against which distance teaching institutions can measure the quality of their own programmes.”*

– Dr. Louise Moran (*Perspectives on Distance Education: Quality Assurance in Higher Education*: COL, 1994)

In addition to the research and publications noted above, COL has been actively pursuing quality assurance initiatives within the Asian region. COL has contributed to the exchange of ideas by organising study visits, seminars and workshops. Quality assurance concerns have now been projected prominently and an agenda for further action is in place. A major development in India has been the establishment of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council by the University Grants Commission.

In response to an identified need for the provision of quality assurance materials for distance teaching institutions in Asia, COL was able to secure the right to use existing material from the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) of the UK for this purpose. HEQC has agreed in principle to a joint adaptation of its materials and the process has begun. Proposals have also been developed for funding to enable pilot testing of the adapted materials in Asia, with a view to later application in other regions as well.

## Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme

Under COL’s Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme, 100 students, from 15 different Commonwealth countries, are studying for the Masters in Distance Education offered through distance by the Indira Gandhi National Open University. Seventy will write the first year final examinations by the end of August 1996 and can expect to complete their degree in early 1997 – without ever having left home. The students are themselves educators who can apply their newly acquired skills directly to their work on behalf of their communities. Also, through the Scheme, senior educational administrators in those countries have received training in the curriculum contents, student support services and distance education methodologies related to the programme, and are being remunerated for the tutoring services that they are providing.

### Credit Assessment and Accumulation

*Earlier work by The Commonwealth of Learning identified the advantages of developing credit transfer arrangements between Commonwealth distance education programmes. Recent developments have lent new weight to the general conclusion that credit transfer should be developed and supported.*

– Report by The Open University (UK) Project Team on the Commonwealth of Learning “Credit Bank Project,” 1995

With funding provided by the UK Overseas Development Administration, COL has initiated a major feasibility study for the establishment and operation of

a Commonwealth credit bank. The first phase of the study was conducted in 1995 by the UK Open University, on behalf of COL. The report notes that the question of credit accumulation and validation is becoming an issue of major importance for distance teaching institutions both within and outside of the Commonwealth, and that there is universal concurrence

*“Our Ministry has established close links with The Commonwealth of Learning and we look forward to strengthening those ties that bind us in a common enterprise to make learning available and affordable through distance education . . . Please accept our sincerest gratitude for your organisation’s consideration in granting us ten Rajiv Gandhi Fellowships and choosing Trinidad as the workshop location centre for the tutors in that programme for this part of the world.”*

Trinidad & Tobago Ministry of Education  
October 1995

*“I am most grateful for this incredible learning opportunity – one that until now I thought could never be possible.”*

Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme student in  
Tonga  
October 1995

*“I enjoyed working with (the students) and found the course in distance education interesting, thereby increasing my knowledge. I wish to thank The Commonwealth of Learning for giving me the opportunity to be a tutor/counsellor for these students.*

Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship  
Scheme tutor  
June 1996



on the need for a Commonwealth credit bank. The authors also present a proposed structure for a Commonwealth data-base of credit-ratings and conclude that their proposal is "both practicable and timely." They recommend that a formal consultation be undertaken with a view to establishing such a credit bank. Funding for this next phase has now also been approved by the UK ODA and work will begin toward the end of 1996.

COL is also consulting widely on the establishment of guidelines for the remote delivery of courses and programmes.

## Regional Initiatives

Regional initiatives take the form of institutional support and project management, in the various programme areas noted above, and liaison with administrative and professional bodies.

Much of COL's work in Africa and the Pacific is accomplished through regional distance education associations, most of which were established under joint COL/Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) programmes. By 1996, with AIDAB (now AusAID) funding for COL no longer tied to specific projects, COL has been working directly with the regional associations and other agencies in advancing current projects and in integrating others.

In Asia, COL is also developing working relationships with distance education associations and regional aid agencies.

In the Caribbean, COL is rapidly advancing technological capacity with teleconferencing, Internet access, and community broadcasting initiatives and has worked co-operatively on projects with CARICOM, the OECS, and UNESCO.

*The Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA), has been expanded and strengthened under the joint COL/AusAID Programme for Southern Africa. Membership is now drawn from 20 institutions in six countries within the sub-region. Through DEASA, over 200 educators – half of them women – have participated in and led regional training workshops. The Association's newsletter has a circulation of over 500.*



*"I can't tell you how thankful (we) are for all your wonderful help over the last few months! All those quick and informative answers have earned you yet another question . . ."*

Ms. Denise Lauritano  
*International Credential Evaluation Service  
The Open Learning Agency of British Columbia  
April 1996*



## Information Services

COL's Information Resources Centre contains reference and research material, periodicals, and sample courses as well as on-line, electronic access to hundreds of information sources world-wide. Due to COL's growth in prominence and visibility – especially through the World Wide Web – there has been a marked increase in requests for reference service by distance educators and other agencies.

# PUBLICATIONS

## Communications Documents

### Newsletters

*COMLEARN* (November 1994, June 1995 and November 1995)

*Connections* (March 1996 and June 1996)

*COL in the Caribbean* (February 1995)

*EDUCOM-ASIA* (Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia, December 1995)

### Detailed Reporting

*A Compendium of Activities* (September 1994)

*Report on Programmes* (September 95 and May 96)

### Reports to Governments

*Summary Report 1994 – 1996*

*Report to the 12th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers* (November 1994)

*Report to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting* (November 1995)

*Strategic Outlook 1995 – 1998*

### Electronic

World Wide Web information service on the Internet at: <http://www.col.org>

## Selected COL Publications

*Perspectives on Distance Education: The Funding of Open Universities* (1994)

*Perspectives on Distance Education: Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (1994)

*Open Schooling: Selected Experiences* (1994)

*Environmental Education in Small Island Developing States* (The University of Bradford, 1994)

*Regional Co-operation in Distance Education Media Resources* (1994)

*Women: Key Partners in Sustainable and Equitable Development* (1994)

*Colleges Reaching Out: Report on the Status of Distance Education in Canadian Colleges and Technical Institutes* (1994)

*European Distance Education: A handbook of current European programmes and networks* (1994)

*Training System for Educational Audio Teleconferencing in Distance Education* (DETAC Corporation, Canada; revised, 1994)

*A Directory of Experts: Open Universities in South Asia* (1994)

*Producing Gender Sensitive Learning Materials: A Handbook for Educators* (1995)

*Barriers faced by Pacific Women in Distance Education* (The University of the South Pacific, 1995).

*Barriers to Participation of Women in Technological Education – The Role of Distance Education* (Occasional paper, 1995)

*Education for the Future: A Generic Version of the Report of a Caribbean Task Force on Education* (CARICOM, 1995)

*FoodSafe/WaterSafe – An Introduction to Water Quality Issues and Food Handling Procedures* (courseware, 1995)

*Technical and Vocational Teacher Training Core Curriculum* (1995)

*Directory of Materials and Courses for Training in Distance Education* (fourth edition, 1995)

*Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development* (1996)

*The Use of Distance Learning in Non-Formal Education* (International Extension College, 1996)

“The November 1995 issue (Vol. 6, No. 2) of COMLEARN (the publication of The Commonwealth of Learning) has an excellent article by Karen Evans titled “Distance Education: Helping Overcome Barriers to Women’s Technological Education. The full text, complete with references and bibliography, is available upon request from COL ...”

Distance Education NEWSLETTER  
December 1995





## CORPORATE INFORMATION

### **HEADQUARTERS**

The Commonwealth of Learning  
1700 - 777 Dunsmuir Street  
Box 10428, Pacific Centre  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
Canada V7Y 1K4

Telephone: 604.775.8200  
Telex: 04507508 COMLEARN  
Fax: 604.775.8210  
E-mail: [info@col.org](mailto:info@col.org)  
World Wide Web: <http://www.col.org>

### **BANKERS**

The Royal Bank of Canada (Vancouver)  
Barclays Bank (London)

### **AUDITORS**

Price Waterhouse, Chartered Accountants (Vancouver)

### **CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Dr. H. Ian Macdonald  
President Emeritus, York University (Canada)

### **PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Dato' Dr. Gajaraj Dhanarajan  
Professor Emeritus,  
Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong



## SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Years ending  
June 30, 1996, 1995 and 1994

**Balance Sheet**

	1996	As at June 30, 1995 Canadian \$ thousands	1994
<b>Assets</b>			
Current	\$1,716	\$2,111	\$1,815
Fixed	304	348	423
	<b>\$2,020</b>	<b>\$2,459</b>	<b>\$2,238</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Current	\$ 635	\$ 851	\$ 904
Accumulated Revenues in Excess of Expenditures	1,385	1,608	1,334
	<b>\$2,020</b>	<b>\$2,459</b>	<b>\$2,238</b>

**Statement of Accumulated Revenues in Excess of Expenditures**

	1996	Years Ended June 30, 1995 Canadian \$ thousands	1994
Accumulated Revenues in Excess of Expenditures, beginning of year	\$1,608	\$1,334	\$4,251
Revenues in Excess of Expenditures (Expenditures in Excess of Revenues)	(223)	274	(2,917)
Accumulated Revenues in Excess of Expenditures, end of year	<b>\$1,385</b>	<b>\$1,608</b>	<b>\$1,334</b>

**Statements of Revenues and Expenditures**

	1996	Years Ended June 30, 1995 Canadian \$ thousands	1994
<b>Revenues</b>			
Member Governments	\$3,698	\$4,271	\$ 3,086
Other	517	239	416
	<b>4,215</b>	<b>4,510</b>	<b>3,502</b>
Programme and Administrative Expenditures	<b>4,438</b>	<b>4,236</b>	<b>6,419</b>
Revenues in Excess of Expenditures (Expenditures in Excess of Revenues)	<b>\$ (223)</b>	<b>\$ 274</b>	<b>\$(2,917)</b>

## Schedule of Funding from Member Governments

	Years Ended June 30,		
	1996	1995	1994
	Canadian \$ thousands		
Australia	\$ 431	\$ 77	\$ 57
Bangladesh	8	-	8
Barbados	5	6	5
Belize	5	-	-
Botswana	-	35	20
Canada			
- Canadian International Development Agency	1,100	1,100	1,150
- Department of Communications	-	-	177
- Heritage Canada	-	223	-
- Province of British Columbia	1,000	1,000	1,000
Dominica	-	-	9
The Gambia	-	22	-
Ghana	13	-	-
Guyana	13	-	27
India	382	433	-
Jamaica	8	9	13
Kenya	47	-	-
Maldives	-	-	7
Malta	2	2	-
Mauritius	-	29	-
Namibia	34	-	21
New Zealand	90	42	33
Pakistan	-	21	-
Sri Lanka	-	14	13
St. Lucia	10	-	5
Tonga	-	8	6
Trinidad & Tobago	21	22	40
United Kingdom	376	1,228	495
Zimbabwe	153	-	-
	\$3,698	\$4,271	\$3,086

## Schedule of Other Revenues

	Years Ended June 30,		
	1996	1995	1994
	Canadian \$ thousands		
Special Projects			
Australian Agency for International Development	\$ 46	\$ -	\$ -
Bermuda	-	7	-
Canadian International Development Agency	-	-	40
Canadian Training Awards Project	7	6	-
Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation	-	-	18
Commonwealth Secretariat	145	84	-
International Development Research Centre (Canada)	-	11	-
International Extension College	-	13	-
Overseas Development Administration (UK)	229	-	26
Province of British Columbia	-	15	73
Interest	105	76	124
Miscellaneous	15	15	20
Foreign exchange gain (loss)	(30)	12	115
	\$517	\$239	\$416

Special project revenues are recognised as revenues as expenditures are incurred.



## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

As at June 30, 1996

### CHAIRMAN

*Dr. H. Ian Macdonald\**  
President Emeritus,  
York University (Canada)

### MEMBERS

***Commonwealth Secretary General***  
*His Excellency Chief Emeka Anyaoku\**

#### ***Appointments by Donor Organisations***

GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
*Professor C.D. Blake*  
Vice Chancellor,  
Charles Sturt University

GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
*Mr. Shell Harvey*  
Assistant Deputy Minister,  
Post-Secondary Education Division,  
Ministry of Education, Skills and Training

GOVERNMENT OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM  
*Dato' Paduka Haji Ali Hashim bin Haji Daud*  
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA  
*The Honourable Iona Campagnolo\**  
Chancellor, University of Northern British Columbia

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
*Mr. P.R. Dasgupta\**  
Education Secretary, Department of Education,  
Ministry of Human Resource Development

GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM  
*Ms. Myra Harrison\**  
Chief Education Adviser,  
Overseas Development Administration

#### ***Regional Appointments on the Advice of Commonwealth Ministers of Education***

##### AFRICA

*Mr. John Samuel*  
Deputy Director-General, Education & Training  
Systems & Resources, National Ministry of Education,  
South Africa

##### ASIA

*Ms. Shahnaz Wazir Ali*  
Special Assistant for Social Sector,  
Prime Minister's Secretariat, Pakistan

##### CARIBBEAN

*Dr. Marlene Hamilton\**  
Pro-Vice Chancellor,  
Student and Alumni Relations,  
University of the West Indies, Jamaica

##### PACIFIC

*The Honourable Dr. S. Langi Kavaliku*  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education,  
Works and Civil Aviation, Tonga

#### ***Appointment by the Commonwealth Secretary General***

*Mrs. Esi Sutherland-Addy*  
Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana

#### ***President (Ex-Officio)***

*Dato' Dr. Gajaraj Dhanarajan\**  
President & C.E.O.,  
The Commonwealth of Learning

### ADVISERS

*Ms. Fay Chung*  
Chief, Education Cluster,  
United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)

*Datuk Dr. Johari Bin Mat*  
Secretary General, Ministry of Education  
Government of Malaysia

\*denotes member of Executive Committee

# SENIOR STAFF

## 1994 – 1996

Dato' Dr. Gajaraj Dhanarajan,  
*President and Chief Executive Officer*  
(from September 1995)

Prof. James A. Maraj,  
*President and Chief Executive Officer*  
(to February 1995)

Mr. Richard Simpson,  
*Director, Communications and Information Technologies* (to October 1995) and *Acting President* (from February 1995 to August 1995)

Mr. Peter McMechan,  
*Director, Pacific Programmes and Continuing Professional Education*

Dr. Ian Mugridge,  
*Senior Consultant (Higher Education)*

Mr. Lewis Perinbam,  
*Senior Adviser*  
(External Relations)

Prof. R.V.R.  
Chandrasekhara Rao,  
*Director, Asian Programmes, Materials and Education for All*

Prof. Peter Kinyanjui,  
*Head, African Programmes and Training*

Mr. John Steward,  
*Head,*  
*Administration and Finance*

Dr. Abdul Khan,  
*Acting Head, Communications and Information Technologies*

Ms. Mavis Bird,  
*Senior Programme Officer*  
(Technical/Vocational Education and Training)

Mr. Patrick Guiton,  
*Senior Programme Officer*  
(Continuing Professional Education) (to April 1994)

Ms. Susan Phillips,  
*Senior Programme Officer*  
(Materials and Education for All)

Ms. Doris McEachern,  
*Accounting Officer*

Ms. Patricia McWilliams,  
*Programme Officer (Training of Distance Educators)*

Mr. Al Trask,  
*Programme Officer (Engineering Services)*

Mr. David Walker,  
*Programme Officer (Educational Technology)*

Mr. David Wilson,  
*Public Affairs Officer*

## Regional Co-ordinators

Dr. Dennis Irvine, *Caribbean*

Mr. Naran Kala,  
*East and Southern Africa*

## Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (New Delhi)

Mr. K. Narayanan,  
*Head, Administration and Finance*

Dr. Ravi Kanth,  
*Programme Officer*  
(Media Exchange)

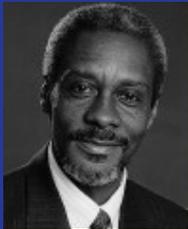
Dr. Purnima Vyas,  
*Programme Officer*  
(Media Library)

*"Your co-operation and sheer willingness at assisting is a demonstration of the inculcating standards and values you set. You are indeed instrumental in helping us to realise our commitment to excellence, to not only our nation's children and all other recipients of educational programmes but to our educators as well."*

Mr. Kenrick Seepersad  
*Chief Education Officer, Trinidad & Tobago*  
May 1996



In establishing The Commonwealth of Learning in Vancouver, Canada, in 1987, Commonwealth Heads of Government created an international agency with a unique mission and mandate. Their decision not only recognised the growing importance of all forms of learning within the overall process of social and economic development, but also anticipated the revolutionary potential of communications and information technologies for enhancing peoples' access to quality education and training.



*“We value greatly the work being performed by The Commonwealth of Learning which has already made a significant impact on the educational needs of small developing countries like Jamaica.”*

The Honourable P.J. Patterson  
*Prime Minister of Jamaica (1995)*



*“The Commonwealth of Learning has forged an important and unique role in the international education sector and has established itself as a cost-effective implementation agency.”*

The Honourable Alexander Downer  
*Minister for Foreign Affairs, Australia (1996)*



*“Britain endorses the valuable work of The Commonwealth of Learning in expanding access to education. The demand for distance learning in developing countries is increasing and COL is well placed to provide much needed educational opportunities.”*

The Honourable Baroness Chalker  
*Overseas Development Minister,  
United Kingdom (1996)*



*“Ghana attaches great importance to the work entrusted to The Commonwealth of Learning and the dedication and professionalism with which the mandate is being pursued.”*

His Excellency Annan A. Cato  
*High Commissioner for Ghana in Canada (1996)*