



**COL IN THE COMMONWEALTH
2003-2006**

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INTRODUCTION

Intended as a companion text to *Learning for Development*, the Commonwealth of Learning's Three-Year Plan for 2006-2009, this compendium *COL in the Commonwealth 2003-2006* reviews COL's work over the last triennium country by country. These two documents provide the starting point for the *Country Action Plans* that will guide COL's future activities in each country and ensure their consistency with the national priorities of governments. It has been more than a decade since COL has attempted such a detailed report on its work in each Member State. I apologise for any inconsistencies of presentation in this first version and invite feedback from readers so that we may make it even more useful in future.

These country reviews, which cover all Commonwealth countries except Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, are grouped under four regions: Africa (and the Mediterranean), Asia, Caribbean and Pacific.

An important function for COL is to create synergy within regions and across the Commonwealth by bringing countries and institutions together in common endeavours. For this reason each grouping of countries begins with a short account of the regional activities which COL has promoted in 2003-2006.

COL's Pan-Commonwealth work is also much appreciated by the Member States. It takes full advantage of the features that unite the Commonwealth such as a common language, similar constitutional and legal frameworks, and a shared commitment to the values of peace, democracy, equality and good government. Some of the Pan-Commonwealth activities and facilities that underpin COL's work in the regions and countries are listed in the next section.

The production of *COL in the Commonwealth 2003-2006* has been an intense collective effort. It would not have been possible without the advanced knowledge management systems that enable COL to exploit fully the information contained in the numerous reports prepared by staff as they travel. I offer special thanks to Jasmine Lee, for diligently maintaining the country profiles that were the raw material for these reviews, and to Helen Pennant, who brought this volume together in an impressively efficient and expeditious manner.



Sir John Daniel
President & CEO
Commonwealth of Learning

PAN-COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES



KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

COL is recognised as a foremost source of knowledge on open, distance and technology-mediated learning (ODL). As a leader in the fast-evolving field of knowledge management, COL also continues to develop its internal systems to organise information from its own work and support partners. COL captures information from online sources to maintain an active virtual library of about one million documents on topics related to learning and development. This supports COL's work by maintaining resource collections that can be accessed through the Internet in any Commonwealth country. COL also maintains a physical resource centre in Vancouver and publishes ODL resources on its website, in its newsletter (*Connections/EdTech News*) and on CD-ROM.

COL works with international experts and agencies to provide suggestions and information on copyright so that Commonwealth Governments may take action to implement education-friendly legislation that makes access to learning content affordable for more people. It is also supporting the use of free and open source software (FOSS) and has established a learning object repository (LOR) which, when searched, automatically includes a number of learning content databases from around the world.

THE VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH

The idea of a Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) was conceived by Commonwealth Education Ministers at their 14th conference in Halifax, Canada. They commissioned a

proposal from COL which they endorsed at the 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (15CCEM) in Edinburgh. The aim is for small states to work collaboratively to harness the potential of eLearning and information and communications technologies (ICTs) to expand quality education and training for their people. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation are providing funds.

Twenty-four small states from all regions of the Commonwealth are formally involved. The participating countries held planning meetings in Singapore in September 2005 and April 2006. In August 2006, 12 states worked together in Mauritius and produced course material in Tourism and Small Business Management. Similar course development events are planned for other subjects.

VUSSC is not a university in the conventional sense but rather a network through which states can work together to develop learning opportunities in skills-related areas identified as priorities by governments. These learning opportunities will be at the post-basic level in the sense that they are addressed to adults, including those who may not have completed secondary school.

All materials will be prepared initially in electronic formats as open educational resources licensed as share and share alike with attribution using the Creative Commons model. This facilitates adaptation by participating states and ongoing collaboration will give them access to comprehensive collections of open content. Courses will be delivered through local institutions in appropriate formats starting in 2007.

TRANSNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

COL gives help to institutions that wish to develop programmes for use across the Commonwealth. Important examples are the Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration and Master of Public Administration programmes (CEMBA/CEMPA) that were developed jointly by the national open universities of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Designed for part-time study by busy working professionals, the programmes can be completed by students at their own pace. The programmes have been offered in these countries for some years and are now being adopted in Malaysia and Nigeria.

Other examples include a course in Legislative Drafting, now offered in a number of countries, and a Diploma Programme for Technical and Vocational Teachers developed in and for the Caribbean that is now being adapted for use in Ghana and Pakistan.

OPEN SCHOOLING

Many Commonwealth countries are under great pressure to expand secondary schooling and to provide a second chance to young adults who did not complete their education. COL is fostering south-south cooperation across the Commonwealth in order to share more widely the expertise and experience in open schooling of countries such as India, Botswana and Namibia. As an example of this work COL convened an international symposium on the application of multimedia to the schooling sector. It brought together institutions from Africa and Asia that are using new ICTs to support the school system. In addition to

Commonwealth countries, other African countries participating in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) eSchools Demonstrator Project also took part.

RAJIV GANDHI FELLOWSHIP SCHEME

COL developed the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme in collaboration with the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation. The scheme makes it possible for Ministry-designated individuals from Commonwealth countries to obtain postgraduate qualifications in Distance Education from IGNOU and continue to a Master's degree.

GENDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TOOLKIT

COL and the Commonwealth Secretariat have developed a Gender Management System (GMS) Toolkit, designed to help Commonwealth governments ensure that an awareness of gender issues informs their decision-making in all areas and at all levels. A co-publication of COL and the Secretariat, the aim of the Toolkit is to enhance the access to and usability of the Secretariat's series of GMS manuals by integrating principles of open and distance learning. The Toolkit transforms the manuals into a user-friendly, learner-centred, trainer-oriented package.

CONFERENCES

COL organises and/or co-hosts pan-Commonwealth, regional and virtual (online) conferences to share experience, knowledge and new developments. COL's Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning is held biennially, co-hosted with different partners in different regions of the Commonwealth each time. COL's Excellence in Distance Education Awards are also presented at the Forum.



Africa and the Mediterranean

**Botswana | Cameroon | Cyprus (Mediterranean) | The Gambia | Ghana | Kenya |
Lesotho | Malawi | Malta (Mediterranean) | Mauritius | Mozambique | Namibia |
Nigeria | Seychelles | Sierra Leone | South Africa | Swaziland | Tanzania | Uganda |
Zambia**



REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD) E-SCHOOL INITIATIVE

COL, together with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, South Africa, Development Bank of Southern Africa, World Bank Group, Swiss Development Agency, Department of Communications, Government of South Africa, Commonwealth Business Council, Medical Research Council of South Africa, State Information and Technology Agency, South Africa and UNESCO, is working with the NEPAD e-Africa Commission to develop the NEPAD e-School Initiative. The initiative aims to impart ICT skills to young Africans in primary and secondary schools, to use information and communications technologies (ICT) to improve the provision of education in African schools and to use ICT to improve the health of young Africans. The e-School Demonstrator Project is intended to accrue a body of knowledge, based on real-life experiences of the implementation of ICT in schools across the African continent that will serve to inform the rollout of the broader e-Schools Initiative. The demonstration project has established and is monitoring six e-Schools each in Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda.

STAMP 2000+ (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MATHEMATICS PROGRAMME)

COL led a five-year distance education programme, STAMP 2000+, to train upper primary and junior secondary teachers and administrators in Science, Technology and Mathematics (STM). The programme provides in-service skills training and upgrading for STM teachers. In addition to the STM subject areas, the modular courses in STAMP 2000+ also focus on general education and multi-grade teaching topics such as special educational needs, educational management and curriculum design. The modules are self-instructional teacher materials and are designed to be sufficiently generic to adapt to the specific needs of each participating country. The programme is user-friendly as the modules contain very little jargon. It is also cost effective, being a distance education programme teachers can study while on the job with minimal disruption to the human resource base. A total of 46 modules have been prepared and throughout the writing of the materials, a series of workshops were conducted. Approximately 300 educational professionals received hands-on training on materials writing, desktop publishing and instructional design, etc.

REGIONAL TRAINING AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (RETRIDAL)

COL helped to establish and partially funds the Regional Training and Research Institute for Open and Distance Learning, housed at the National Open University of Nigeria to serve the West African sub-region.

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY – CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION (SADC-CDE)

COL and the Minister of Education (Botswana) agreed to the establishment of a regional centre to support Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries in developing their open and distance learning (ODL) systems. The Centre is called the Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE). The first Board Meeting of the Centre was held in Botswana in November 2005. The meeting was attended by representatives from Swaziland, Zambia, Lesotho and Botswana. At this meeting developing a regional protocol for quality assurance and building ODL research capacity in the region were identified as important themes for regional development. The possibility of holding workshops on these themes is being considered.

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTES

These institutes, organised by COL in partnership with the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs (October 2003) and the Indian National Council for Educational Research and Training (February 2004), were designed to benefit teacher training college principals and senior administrators from Sub-Saharan Africa.

INCREASING ACCESS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL EDUCATION THROUGH THE PRODUCTION OF QUALITY LEARNING MATERIALS

This project was initiated at a meeting organised by COL, which was attended by senior Ministry of Education officials and heads of distance education institutions from a number of Sub-Saharan countries in the Commonwealth. Through the project, ODL materials on English, Mathematics and Science at the junior secondary school level were produced. Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Swaziland, Malawi and Mozambique are partners in this initiative.

AFRICA COPYRIGHT FORUM CONFERENCE

COL co-sponsored the Africa Copyright Forum Conference which was held in Kampala in November 2005. This was attended by 120 delegates from 23 countries including several Commonwealth countries, namely, Uganda, South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Cameroon, Zambia, Namibia, Malawi, Tanzania, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Canada, India and the UK. The “Africa Copyright and Access to Information Alliance” was established at the conference and an Interim Board was elected to start the process of addressing copyright and related issues in Africa, with particular reference to education, libraries and people with disabilities.

COL-POVERTY REDUCTION OUTCOMES THROUGH EDUCATION INNOVATIONS AND NETWORKS (PROTEIN)

This programme facilitates the implementation of innovative projects that adopt ODL and ICT for poverty reduction in the developing Commonwealth (www.col.org/protein). COL offers expertise in ODL and start-up, limited-term financial support to qualifying projects that help build human capacity to gain knowledge and skills in contributing to food security, environmental protection, rural development, nutritional education and micro-enterprise. Successful projects have a high level of inter-institutional collaboration, significant and innovative ODL and ICT use, and well-researched content and learning design to support contextually relevant rural and peri-urban capacity building for poverty reduction.

Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia, working in partnership with Canada, will benefit from an award under this programme. The Developing Countries Farm Radio Network (DCFRN) (Canada) and the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) (The Hague), that received the award, implemented “Tuned in to Farmers: Linking Agricultural Research and Rural Radio in Three African Commonwealth Nations,” in partnership with the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Subsequently, the University of Guelph, Ontario, and the DCFRN pursued their efforts in partnership and facilitated the implementation of “Rocks for Crops: A Partnership initiative in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Canada” to promote environmentally friendly technology to use locally available rock phosphates to restore the fertility of tropical soils and improve their crop production.

DEASA REGIONAL ASSOCIATION

COL has supported DEASA, the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa, for many years. At a regional advocacy roundtable in 2005 permanent secretaries and senior officials from nine countries were briefed on the uses of ODL and regional mechanisms to support it. COL funds 40 learners per year (75% of fees) in DEASA member countries on the UNISA Certificate Course for Distance Education Practitioners.

BOTSWANA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Botswana has been an active member country and partner with COL in the promotion of open and distance learning (ODL). A small state of the Commonwealth, Botswana has one of the most dynamic economies in the region but one of the highest rates of HIV/AIDS infection in the world.

SUMMARY

The period 2003-2006 has been one of significant activity. Being a member of the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) initiative, Botswana is positioning itself as a provider of learning content amongst Commonwealth countries. The country has been active in supporting the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA). Following an agreement between the Government of Botswana and COL, the Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE) was established and hosted by the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL). Delegates from Botswana have participated in a number of capacity-building activities within Africa and in other parts of the world in support of the expansion of ODL and eLearning in the country.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Botswana is participating in the development of open educational resources for VUSSC (see Pan-Commonwealth initiatives section for more details of VUSSC). This work started with a three week “boot camp” in Mauritius in August 2006, during which four teams created learning materials, using existing open educational resources as inputs. Approximately thirty notional learning hours in each of the subject areas of tourism and entrepreneurship were produced in Mauritius and the work will now be continued online. All materials will be made available online via a website.

Working in Partnership with COL and regional partners

Botswana delegates participated in an East African Consultation for COL's Three-Year Plan (2006-2009), which was held in September 2004. Recommendations from this consultation were used in the development of the COL's Three-year Plan for 2006-2009.

Botswana hosted the Forum on Open Schooling for Secondary Education in October 2004 to raise awareness and to advocate for the establishment of open schools in the Sub-Saharan region. Ten African countries were represented at the meeting. International experts were also invited to be resource persons.

This was followed in July 2006 by an Open School Consortium for Southern Africa also held in Botswana.

Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE)

COL and the Minister of Education, Botswana, agreed to the establishment of a regional centre to support SADC countries develop their ODL systems. Originally set up as the Southern African Regional Distance Education Centre (SARDEC) it was later brought into the ambit of the Southern African Development Community and has changed its name to SADC-Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE). A Memorandum of Agreement between COL and the Ministry of Education Botswana was signed in June 2004. The SADC Ministers are being informed of the development of the Centre.

A COL specialist met with groups of management and staff at BOCODOL in May 2005 to investigate, advise and provide orientation to help the Centre set up their knowledge management platform and get their knowledge resources established. The Centre is now beginning to function and is planning to host seminars.

Following SADC-CDE's establishment in June 2005, it embarked on a project identification process that culminated in its work plan for the next twelve months. SADC-CDE visited 25 distance education institutions in seven countries. The information collected is adequate to inform implementation of some projects and the remaining six countries will be visited at a later date.

The first Board Meeting of SADC-CDE was held in Botswana on 29 November 2005. The meeting was attended by representatives from Swaziland, Zambia, Lesotho and Botswana. Two of the activities that SADC-CDE have identified as being important and in which they would like to facilitate workshops are:

- Quality distance education – to develop a regional protocol in quality assurance, and
- Build ODL research capacity in the region.

Preparation and use of learning materials

COL and University of South Africa organised a BA in ODL Writers Workshop from 28 November to 5 December 2004. Two participants from Botswana attended the workshop. The workshop aims were to:

- Finalise course outlines of second year modules;
- Reflect on challenges experienced with the development of first-year courses;

- Workshop difficult aspects of the development process, such as designing activities and introducing audio, etc. as a supportive medium;
- Agree to a timeline; and
- Write, review and finalise unit frameworks.

Botswana participated in a Quality Assurance in Teacher Education Roundtable that was held in India in March 2003. The document and proceedings of the roundtable have been published. The publication entitled “Innovations in Teacher Education: International Practices of Quality Assurance” was released. Also in November, a Workshop on Quality Indicators in Teacher Education was organised from 5-7 November. International participants included one from Botswana.

Botswana is one of the eight Southern African countries who have agreed to collaborate with COL on a five-year distance education project to train upper primary and junior secondary teachers and administrators in Science, Technology and Mathematics (STM). The programme, STAMP 2000+, provides in-service skills training and upgrading for STM teachers. In addition to the STM subject areas, the modular courses in STAMP 2000+ also focus on general education and multi-grade teaching topics such as special educational needs, educational management and curriculum design. The modules are self-instructional teacher materials and are designed to be sufficiently generic to adapt to the specific needs of each participating country.

The Increasing Access to Secondary School Level Education through the production of Quality Learning Materials was initiated at a meeting organised by COL, which was attended by senior Ministry of Education officials and heads of distance education institutions from a number of Sub-Saharan countries in the Commonwealth. Through the project, ODL materials on English, Mathematics and Science at the junior secondary school level were produced. Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Swaziland, Malawi and Mozambique are partners in this initiative. The materials on English and Science are completed and the materials on Mathematics are at the piloting stage.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL co-sponsored the Africa Copyright Conference attended by delegates from Botswana, which was held in Kampala from 28-30 November 2005.

Delegates from Botswana attended the “International Literacy and Livelihoods Experts Meeting: Learning for Life in a Changing World”, which was held in Vancouver on 15-17 November 2004. Approximately 30 international experts participated in the meeting.

Senior administrators from the University of Botswana and the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning attended the fourth and fifth “Managing Change, Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education – a strategic development programme for leaders of Commonwealth Universities in Africa” Conference in Scotland from 17-22 August 2003 and from 8-13 August 2004.

One delegate from Botswana participated in the workshop on eLearning in July 2004, organised by the University of Melbourne for Science and Mathematics teacher educators from sub-Saharan Africa. The three-day workshop gave an exposure to various eLearning possibilities to the participants.

COL sponsored four delegates from Botswana to participate in COL's 3rd Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in Dunedin, New Zealand from 4-8 July 2004.

Two participants from Botswana attended the Management Development Institute in Singapore (October 2003). These institutes, organised by COL in partnership with the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs (October 2003) and the Indian National Council for Educational Research and Training (February 2004), were designed to benefit teacher training college principals and senior administrators from Sub-Saharan Africa.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2003-2006 Botswana has made considerable progress in enhancing its domestic ODL systems as well as acting as a leader in the Sub-Saharan region. In 2006-2009 it will build on this work to extend existing initiatives. For example, SADC-CDE, hosted by BOCODOL will continue to develop capacity in ODL and help to establish new open schools in the sub-region.

CAMEROON

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

A contributor to COL's budget since 2006, Cameroon has been an active participant in programmes to develop open and distance learning (ODL) in the West African region.

SUMMARY

In the 2003-2006 period, COL has worked in partnership with Cameroon to review existing systems and plan for the future. It has developed systems to improve farmers' prosperity and support AIDS awareness and prevention with the University of Dschang and the Ministry of Education. COL has also supported a number of professional development events and sponsored delegates from Cameroon.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Media Empowerment to address health issues

COL worked in partnership with the University of Dschang and the Ministry of Education to develop systems that will address training for farmers and extension officers and disseminate information concerning HIV/AIDS prevention in rural communities.

COL-POVERTY REDUCTION OUTCOMES THROUGH EDUCATION INNOVATIONS AND NETWORKS (PROTEIN)

This programme facilitates the implementation of innovative projects that adopt ODL and ICT for poverty reduction in the developing Commonwealth (www.col.org/protein). COL offers expertise in ODL and start-up, limited-term financial support to qualifying projects that help build human capacity to gain knowledge and skills in contributing to food security, environmental protection, rural development,

nutritional education and micro-enterprise. Successful projects have a high level of inter-institutional collaboration, significant and innovative ODL and ICT use, and well-researched content and learning design to support contextually relevant rural and peri-urban capacity building for poverty reduction.

Protégé QV, an NGO in Upper Nkam Division, received the award to help rural women use radio and cell phones for short message service (SMS/text messaging) for their communications for further learning, developing new skills and starting viable micro-enterprises.

Working in Partnership to Strengthen National Systems

COL established a Media Unit and installed a Campus FM radio station at the University of Dschang.

Strategic Planning

COL, in conjunction with the government of Cameroon and various Cameroonian institutions, ran a national forum on reviewing and establishing distance education policies in Cameroon in September 2003.

COL organised a stakeholders meeting in Lagos in 2004 where the participants mapped out the needs of the member states of the West African sub-region which identified their training and research needs in education. They also developed action plans and established partnerships among their member countries.

A Cameroonian scholar, Professor Ajaga Nji, was appointed Regional Consultant by COL to conduct a scan within Western Africa to ascertain potential roles for COL in the provision of ODL within the Education, Health, Agriculture and Governance Sectors. The scan informed COL's new Three Year Plan 2006-2009.

Open schooling

COL convened an international symposium on the application of multimedia to the school system. The symposium was designed to bring together institutions from Africa and South/Southeast Asia that are using satellite broadcasting to support the school system. Cameroon also participated in this symposium.

COL is working with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) e-Africa Commission to develop the NEPAD e-School Initiative which will provide young Africans with skills to participate in the knowledge society. Cameroon is a participant in this initiative.

Preparation and use of learning materials

In May 2005, Cameroon participated in two workshops on Instructional Design held at the National Open University of Nigeria (Lagos) and National Teachers' Institute (Kaduna) for 30 participants from West Africa. The objective of the first workshop was to build local capacities for revising existing print based study materials. The second was to train a group of potential trainers who would then impart similar training to colleagues in their own institutions.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL co-sponsored the Africa Copyright Forum Conference which was held in Kampala from 28-30 November 2005, for 23 countries including Cameroon.

One senior university administrator from Cameroon attended the 5th “Managing Change, Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education – a strategic development programme for leaders of Commonwealth Universities in Africa” Conference in Scotland from 8-13 August 2004.

LOOKING FORWARD

The work COL and Cameroon did in 2003-2006 to map out future needs is an excellent basis for moving forward into 2006-2009. In this period, higher education, health media empowerment and environment education will continue to be important themes.

CYPRUS

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

A small state of the Commonwealth, Cyprus joined the European Union in 2004. It has been a contributor to COL since 2006.

SUMMARY

Cyprus' participation in the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) has been the main focus of its relationship with COL.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Cyprus is participating in the VUSSC (see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives for more details of VUSSC). Cyprus is providing expert input for the development of open educational resources for VUSSC. Representatives attended a 3-week "boot camp" in Mauritius during which four teams created learning materials, using existing open educational resources as inputs. Approximately thirty notional learning hours in each of the subject areas of tourism and entrepreneurship were produced in Mauritius and the work is now being continued online. All materials will be made available online via a website.

LOOKING FORWARD

Cyprus played an important role in the meetings of the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth. There is scope for it to position itself as a provider of learning materials amongst Commonwealth countries.

THE GAMBIA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

The Gambia is a small state of the Commonwealth with limited history of open and distance learning.

SUMMARY

During the period 2003-2006 The Gambia has worked in partnership with COL to design and implement new policies for open and distance learning (ODL) in its education system. In 2005, Sir John Daniel, paid a visit to the country as part of his first tour of West Africa following his appointment as COL's President. The Gambia also plans to be actively involved in the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in partnership with COL, UNESCO and regional partners

In 2003 COL provided The Gambia with policy support for setting up an ODL Centre for the education, health and agriculture sectors.

The Gambia attended an eLearning workshop hosted in Nairobi, Kenya in August 2004 during which the decision-makers created a statement of intent and a draft policy framework. Practitioners engaged in learning the hands-on skills of creating online study material, supporting and facilitating learners.

As a follow up to the President of COL's visit in early 2005, a National Forum on ODL was held in Banjul in April 2005, at the request of The Gambian government.

In January 2006, COL and the Economic Community of West African States signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the use of ODL in education. As part of that MOU, an initiative to offer training in

literacy and skills through the use of appropriate technology has been launched for Anglophone West Africa.

COL has also commissioned a UNESCO consultant to develop a policy document for higher education in The Gambia.

Working in Partnership with Nova Scotia, Canada for media empowerment on health

COL worked with the staff of the Nova Scotia Gambia Association (NSGA), an NGO based in both Canada and The Gambia. COL aided NSGA with both the technology and training to document NSGA's work in peer health education in The Gambia. NSGA is now using both radio and video to reach villages throughout the country. With a gas generator and a data projector, video productions produced locally by NSGA are taken upriver and shown in villages in the evening. Organised health events have large audiences view videos of skits and dramas on HIV/AIDS prevention and stigma produced by the NSGA in The Gambia. In many cases the videos are created in the regions where they are shown during village cinema events. Since 2003 village cinema events have reached over half a million people. Due to the success of the NSGA work, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has provided funding to replicate the peer health education project in Sierra Leone.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

The Gambia is a participating country in the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Seven countries in Africa (including The Gambia) and Asia attended the Roundtable held in Abuja, Nigeria from 19-22 April 2005. Experiences of institutions including NGOs in the use of a range of technologies for pre-service and in-service teacher training were presented focussing on the quality issues related to their application.

The Gambia participated in the Learner Support Workshop organised by the West African Regional Consortium which took place at the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana from 14-16 July 2004.

The Gambia participated in the Management Development Institute in India in February 2004. The institutes were organised by COL, the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs (October 2003) and the Indian National Council of Educational Research and Training to provide teacher training to college principals and administrators from Sub-Saharan Africa. It is hoped that the skills they acquired at the institutes would enable them to improve the quality and quantity of teacher training, which in turn helps to achieve "Education for All" in their own countries.

In October 2004, COL and Singapore hosted the fourth out of a series of five Management Development Institutes with participants from The Gambia attending.

Two workshops on Instructional Design were conducted in Nigeria in May 2005 for West African countries to build local capacities for revising existing print based study materials.

Preparation and use of learning materials

COL paid a Ghanaian consultant to facilitate a workshop at the Maths Science Technology Centre at The Gambia College to train local trainees to use ICT in entrepreneurship and to train in the production of poultry feed using ODL materials.

LOOKING FORWARD

The period 2003-2006 was a very successful one in terms of laying the foundations for future ODL development in The Gambia's education system. Working in partnership with COL and regional partners, The Gambia has introduced some important policies for ODL and these will continue to produce positive results in the period 2006-2009 as systems are enhanced and expanded.

GHANA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Ghana has a long history of interest in open and distance learning (ODL) and support for COL. Professor Alex Kwapong held the position of Director at COL in the early 1990s and Dr. (Mrs.) Esi Sutherland-Addy became the first Ghanaian member of the Board of Governors. COL has regularly engaged the services of Mr. Reuben Aggor as a consultant in West Africa to facilitate ODL related projects. Ghana is a contributor to COL's budget.

SUMMARY

In the period 2003-2006 COL worked in partnership with Ghana on a number of levels. Joint projects for materials development and capacity building were undertaken. This work was carried out in association with the universities; the Ministry of Education and Sports; technical and vocational education and training institutes; community radio stations; and agricultural extension officers.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in Partnership to Strengthen National Systems

When the President of COL, Sir John Daniel, visited Ghana in September 2005 he called on the Ghanaian President John Kufuor. The President has, on a number of occasions, stressed the need to improve on the delivery of technical/vocational education and training (TVET) and the need to train young people so that they can take advantage of opportunities to improve their livelihoods. To fulfil these objectives, COL is working with the President's Special Initiative on Distance Learning (PSI-DL) to develop an open schooling programme in TVET for Ghana.

COL contributed towards the costs of a national meeting of policymakers, practitioners and stakeholders held in Ghana on the theme of the development of ODL resources for open technical/vocational schooling. The meeting was organised in partnership with the PSI-DL in Accra.

Working with regional partners

Two senior administrators from the National Council for Tertiary Education and the University for Development Studies in Ghana attended the 4th “Managing Change, Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education – a strategic development programme for leaders of Commonwealth Universities in Africa” Conference in Scotland in August 2003. Ghanaians also attended the 5th “Managing Change, Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education – a strategic development programme for leaders of Commonwealth Universities in Africa” Conference in Scotland in 2004. Again in 2005, Ghana was at the “Abertay Conversation: Consultation on Future Developments in Higher Education in Africa” organised by COL in collaboration with the Association of African Universities, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the University of Abertay Dundee and the Scottish Executive.

Ghana attended the eLearning workshop hosted in Nairobi, Kenya in 2004 which produced a draft policy framework for eLearning.

Ghana took part in a Learner Support Workshop organised by COL for the West African Teacher Training Consortium at the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana in 2004 to build capacity in the Learner Support System (LSS) in other institutions offering distance education.

In January 2006, COL and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the use of ODL in education. As part of that MOU, an initiative to offer training in literacy and skills through the use of appropriate technology has been launched for Anglophone West Africa. Following that in May, a Consultative Meeting co-hosted by COL and ECOWAS was held in Abuja, Nigeria. The meeting was held to promote discussion of how ITC could be used for training in literacy and skills.

In 2006, a meeting was organised at the Kyambogo University (KYU) in Uganda by COL and the International Extension College for participants across Africa to review “Introduction to Distance Education” programme materials and expertise which are now available through KYU and could be offered by other countries on request from COL.

Strategic planning

Ghana attended the “International Literacy and Livelihoods Experts Meeting: Learning for Life in a Changing World” which was held in Vancouver in November 2004 to advise COL on redefining its role in improving livelihoods in Commonwealth countries.

Achieving development goals through ODL

Ghana was represented at the high level institute hosted by COL in Vancouver in May 2005 to explore the relationship between ODL and development.

Achieving better prosperity for farmers through ODL

In 2004 Ghana hosted a two-day workshop, which was organised by COL, in collaboration with the Continuous Agriculture Education Project, Ghana (CAEPG), at the University of Ghana to review the status of and plan potential projects related to ODL use for capacity building of agriculturists in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Zambia. Participants came from research institutes, universities, the agriculture ministries and farmer-based organisations.

COL supported the Centre of Distance Education at the Institute of Education, University of Ghana to hold a stakeholders meeting and translate existing print materials on healthy vegetable production into the local languages of Twi, Dangme and Dagbani and record these on audio cassettes for use by farmers.

COL supported the Institute of Adult Education, University of Ghana, Legon to implement the Continuing Agricultural Education Project in collaboration with the Crops Research Institute, Kumasi, and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Techiman. Participants acquired instructional design skills and five ODL modules were developed to enhance the professional capacity of extension agents in Ghana. They in turn enabled five farmer groups (50 farmers) to gain relevant knowledge and skills to grow healthy vegetables.

Mr. Collins K. Osei of Ghana was awarded a £5,000 grant by the Gender and Agriculture/Rural Development in the Information Society (GenARDIS) Small Grant Fund to work on a project promoting the cultivation of healthy vegetables by farmers: A gender approach to using ICTs. This is one of the three COL-supported projects that received a 2005 GenARDIS grant.

Open schooling

COL convened an international symposium on the application of multimedia in the education system in which Ghana participated. The symposium was designed to bring together institutions from Africa, South and Southeast Asia that are using satellite broadcasting to support the school system.

COL is assisting in a series of training workshops for writers, course designers, managers and production houses in open technical schools in Ghana, to allow course writers to continue writing courses in Block Laying and Concreting and Hospitality.

In 2005, COL and the National Institute for Open Schooling, India supported and organised an Institute for education/government officials from Commonwealth developing countries including Ghana for the purpose of providing them with first-hand experience of an operational open school.

COL is working with the New Partnerships for Africa's Development (NEPAD) e-Africa Commission to develop the NEPAD e-School Initiative which will provide young Africans with skills to participate in the knowledge society. Ghana is a participant in this initiative.

Preparation and use of learning materials

COL supported the University of Education, Winneba in setting up a distance education Bachelor of Education programme in Technical/Vocational Education and Training.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ghana participated in two workshops in Nigeria on Instructional Design held at the National Open University of Nigeria, Lagos and the National Teachers' Institute, Kaduna for 30 participants from West Africa in May 2005. The objective of the first workshop was to build local capacities for revising existing print based study materials. The second was to train a group of potential trainers who would then impart similar training to colleagues in their own institutions.

COL co-sponsored the Africa Copyright Forum Conference which was held in Kampala from 28-30 November 2005, for 23 countries including Ghana.

In 2004, COL and Singapore co-hosted the fourth out of a series of five Management Development Institutes. A total of 20 teacher educators from Sub-Saharan Africa participated and Ghana was one of them.

Ghana participated in COL's Third Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in Dunedin, New Zealand in 2004 and in the Management Development Institutes in Singapore (2003) and India (2004). These institutes were organised by COL in partnership with the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Indian National Council for Educational Research and Training to benefit teacher training college principals and senior administrators from Sub-Saharan Africa.

LOOKING FORWARD

COL's partnership with Ghana produced some very positive results in the period 2003-2006 and these will serve as foundations for further progress in 2006-2009. In the next planning period open schooling and vocational training for young people will be important themes.

KENYA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Kenya has a long history of distance education. Since independence, a number of commissions and reports have highlighted ODL as an alternative mode of educational provision. For example, the Ominde Commission of 1964/65 recommended the establishment of an advisory commission on ODL; the Gachathi report of 1976 identified ODL as a way of achieving greater access to education; the Mackay report of 1981 and the Kamunge report of 1988 included the use of ODL in their recommendations. The latest Government initiative as contained in Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 recommended the establishment of an open university and the use of ODL in human resource development at all levels.

Kenya has also been a leader in distance education in East Africa. Not only did it offer distance learning programmes at home, it also provided materials and expertise to institutions in Southern Africa such as the Zimbabwe Open University. The University of Nairobi alone through its distance learning B.Sc. and B.Ed. programmes has attracted over 3000 students (2004). Some of the major providers include the Kenya Institute of Education; the Kenya Institute of Special Education; Kenyatta University; Egerton University; African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF); Ministry of Health; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Education under school based teacher development; Kenya Methodist University; Strathmore University; and a number of cross-border institutions. In addition, the African Virtual University (AVU) runs programmes in Francophone and Anglophone Africa.

Professor Peter Kinyanjui, a distinguished Kenyan, was an education specialist at COL and subsequently a COL-Fellow. He continues to be a respected ODL stalwart on the continent. There is a Kenyan national on the COL staff.

SUMMARY

During the 2003-2006 period, COL interventions in Kenya relate to ODL policy development, capacity building in teacher training, open schooling/schoolnets, eLearning and poverty reduction. Capacity-building events have been organised within the country and staff from different institutions and

organisations have been supported to participate in training programmes and conferences in other countries.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Strengthening national commitment to ODL through partnership with COL and stakeholder involvement

Although Kenya already had a history of ODL, its ODL initiatives may not have made the maximum impact because they remained dispersed. In February 2004 the then Minister of Education, Professor George Saitoti, called for a coordinated approach and COL responded by supporting the organisation of a National Forum as a first step towards policy development in ODL.

The National Forum organised by COL in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) was held in Nairobi from 12-15 September 2004. Eighty stakeholders took part in the event. The aims of the Forum were to:

- create a general awareness and understanding of the different aspects of ODL.
- bring together the various stakeholders and share information on the different ODL initiatives in the country.
- identify strategies for providing affordable quality education.
- examine viable and appropriate ICT options.
- develop a framework for guiding policy development.

A report is available and a Sessional paper which includes ODL has been passed by parliament. An East African Consultation was held during this event and the recommendations made fed into the development of COL's Three Year Plan 2006-2009.

COL-Poverty Reduction Outcomes Through Education Innovations and Networks (COL-PROTEIN)

This programme facilitates the implementation of innovative projects that adopt ODL and ICT for poverty reduction in the developing Commonwealth (www.col.org/protein). COL offers expertise in ODL and start-up, limited-term financial support to qualifying projects that help build human capacity to gain knowledge and skills in contributing to food security, environmental protection, rural development, nutritional education and micro-enterprise. Successful projects have a high level of inter-institutional collaboration, significant and innovative ODL and ICT use, and well-researched content and learning design to support contextually relevant rural and peri-urban capacity building for poverty reduction.

The Women in the Fishing Industry Project Trust in Kisumu received the award to enable women and other community members in the Lake Victoria region to learn about kitchen gardens and to make use of organic compost to improve their nutrition, health and economic status.

Working with international partners

COL, ComSec, UNICEF Kenya and the MOE Kenya worked together on a “Forum on Flexible Education: Reaching Nomadic Populations in Africa” which was held in Garissa, north-east Kenya as it is an area populated by nomadic tribal communities. Seventy persons attended including some from Somalia and Ethiopia.

Preparation and use of learning materials

Three workshops were organised in partnership with AMREF to produce and pilot materials for upgrading nurses from certificate to diploma level.

COL supported Schoolnet Kenya to conduct baseline research in the use of ICTs in the school sector in partnership with the MOEST.

The Kenya Institute of Education have expressed an interest in using the ODL materials developed by Kyambogo University (KYU) Kampala, Uganda and the International Extension College (IEC) with COL collaboration. (Kenya participated in the course orientation workshop at KYU.)

STAMP 2000+ materials are being uploaded by the African Virtual University on their Learning Object Repository.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL supported the IDLELO 2 Conference held in Nairobi in February 2006 and COL President Sir John Daniel gave a keynote address. A one-day Roundtable on the Status of Learning Object Repositories (LORs) in Africa was also organised to coincide with the event in Nairobi.

A five-day workshop on technical skills development for eLearning was held in Kenya in May 2005.

COL hosted the East African Regional Conference on ICTs and Teacher Training in November 2003 at which possible models for the implementation of a regional initiative on ICTs and Teacher Training was produced.

One Kenyan was supported to attend the eLearning training workshop for Teacher Educators held in Melbourne in June-July 2004.

COL co-sponsored the Africa Copyright Forum held in Kampala from 28-30 November 2005 which was attended by delegates from Kenya.

A round table on the theme of “Quality Issues in the Use of ICTs for Teacher Education” was held in Abuja from 19-22 April 2005. Kenyan colleagues took part in the event.

COL convened a workshop for course writers in skills training for caregivers working with orphans and vulnerable children in February 2004.

Kenya participated in the Forum on Open Schooling for Secondary Education held in Botswana in October 2004.

Kenya is participating in the New Partnerships for Africa's Development (NEPAD) eSchools Initiative which involves 16-20 countries with six schools in each country. The schools are: Mumbi Girls Secondary School, Menengai Mixed Secondary, Isiolo Girls Secondary, Maranda High School, Chavakali High School and Wajir Girls Secondary. COL is working with the monitoring and evaluation of this project.

Three COL-supported Kenyan delegates participated in the 3rd Pan Commonwealth Forum held in Dunedin, New Zealand from 4-8 July 2004. Minister George Saitoti also participated with colleagues from MOEST.

There was one representative from Kenya at the ODL and Development Institute hosted by COL in Vancouver in 5-7 May 2005.

Three senior administrators from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture, the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, University of Eastern Africa, Baraton attended the 4th Managing Change Conference held at the University of Abertay Dundee from 17-22 August 2003. Two senior administrators from Kenya attended the 5th Managing Change Conference held 8-13 August 2004. One Kenyan participated in "The Abertay Conversation" from 29 June-3 July 2005.

COL organised Management Development Workshops for Senior African Teacher Educators with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore in 2003, 2004 and 2005. In 2003, Kenya was represented by the Principals of Migori Teachers College and Misoriot Teachers College. The principal and deputy principal of Egoji and Shanzu Teachers Colleges respectively participated in the 2004 Singapore Workshop. The following year, Kenya was represented by the principals of Migori and Garissa Teachers Training Colleges.

Under the Young Professionals Program, COL placed an intern at the World Agro-Forestry Centre in 2003-2004. In 2004-2005, three interns were hosted by the African Virtual University (AVU), Federation of Women Educationalist (FAWE) and the World Agro-Forestry Centre. In 2005-2006 COL interns were hosted in Kenya by the AVU and International Center for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF).

COL supported the formation of a consortium of four NGO partners in Kenya to facilitate the "Grassroots Socio-economic Underpinnings: poverty reduction, nutrition, and ODL for Women" (GRASSUP Now) in Western Kenya.

COL supported the East African Consortium on Teacher Training with Kenya as the lead country. The objective was to develop a regional course for training teachers in the use of ICTs in classrooms.

LOOKING FORWARD

The period 2003-2006 saw a high level of ODL activity in Kenya. Kenya's partnership with COL has allowed a greater degree of national buy-in for ODL initiatives and has also provided the means for a

significant amount of professional development. The period 2006-2009 calls for a greater degree of consolidation of existing initiatives. This has already been recognised by the Kenyan authorities. In late February 2006, COL was approached by the Kenya MOEST officials to provide sample ODL policy frameworks. The policy has been drafted and COL will be invited to participate in the finalisation phase.

COL has enjoyed a relationship of “social trust” with Kenya as Patrick Spaven observes:

“The Kenyans seem to see COL as their adviser of choice for implementation once they have more detailed action plans for each area. They say COL would be welcome to advise on implementation. It was COL that ‘opened Kenya’s eyes’ to the fact that they had gone off track.” Evaluation Report, May 2006.

This augurs very well for future co-operation.

LESOTHO

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

A small state of the Commonwealth, Lesotho became a contributor to COL's budget in 2006.

SUMMARY

In the 2003-2006 planning period COL's work with Lesotho has included:

- Supporting numerous representatives from Lesotho in attending professional development programmes, forums and policy development initiatives;
- Supporting active participation from Lesotho in the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) initiative; and
- Several visits by the President of COL and COL education specialists to discuss country specific needs and planning how COL can assist Lesotho in the attainment of its education and health objectives.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in Partnership to Strengthen National Systems

The President made a planning visit to Lesotho in August 2005 during which he met the Deputy Prime Minister, Archibald Lecro Lehohla, the Acting Minister of Education (and Minister of Health), Dr. M. Phooko and all the senior officials of the Ministry of Education. Teacher training and open schooling emerged as major priorities in these discussions. A visit to the Lesotho College of Education and a meeting with its Rector, Dr. Lesoetsa, identified specific needs in getting ICTs in local centres and the promotion of special needs education.

In a meeting with the Acting Vice-Chancellor of the National University of Lesotho, Professor Mafa M. Sejanamane Lesotho's participation in the VUSSC was discussed and Lesotho agreed to participate.

The Minister of Health expressed a keen interest in working with COL on health issues. In response to this request, COL's education specialist working in the Health arena visited Lesotho in December 2005. Meetings and discussion were held with the WHO Lesotho country office to explore partnership opportunities in an in-country activity.

Strategic Planning

A Senior administrator from the National University of Lesotho attended the 4th "Managing Change, Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education – a strategic development programme for leaders of Commonwealth Universities in Africa" Conference in Scotland from 17-22 August 2003.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Lesotho is an active participant in the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives).

Open Schooling

Lesotho participated in the Forum on Open Schooling for Secondary Education in Botswana in October 2004 to raise awareness and to advocate for the establishment of open schools in the Sub-Saharan region.

Lesotho is participating in the NEPAD e-Schools Initiative and the E-School Demonstrator Project (for more details see regional summary for Africa).

The President of COL visited the Lesotho High School where training of the teachers was under way for the launch of the NEPAD eSchools Initiative in Lesotho in August 2005.

Working with Regional Partners

Lesotho is a partner in the regional centre to support the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries to develop their ODL systems. The centre was the subject of a Memorandum of Agreement between COL and the Ministry of Education Botswana signed in June 2004.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Lesotho was represented at the eLearning workshop hosted in Nairobi, Kenya in August 2004 which produced a draft policy framework including ways to create online study materials and support and facilitate learners.

Two participants from Lesotho attended the Management Development Institutes in India (February 2004). These institutes, organised by COL in partnership with the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs

(October 2003) and the Indian National Council for Educational Research and Training (February 2004), were designed to benefit teacher training college principals and senior administrators from Sub-Saharan Africa.

In October 2004, Singapore hosted the fourth out of a series of five Management Development Institutes. A total of 20 teacher educators from Sub-Saharan Africa participated, including one from Lesotho. All these workshops are jointly sponsored by COL and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore.

In the second phase of the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme, five students from Lesotho successfully completed the Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). The five students are now working towards the Masters of Arts in Distance Education (MADE) by IGNOU.

LOOKING FORWARD

COL and Lesotho have had a very successful partnership in 2003-2006 which has included several face to face meetings to discuss future direction. In the next planning period COL's work with Lesotho will focus on education, learning for livelihoods and the human environment. Lesotho's commitment to VUSSC will be an important support to its efforts to strengthen the education system.

MALAWI

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Malawi has a long history of open and distance learning (ODL) and has a College of Distance Education. It is also a member of the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA).

SUMMARY

In the 2003-2006 planning period, COL worked with staff located at the Malawi College of Distance Education and made it possible for staff to take a Masters of Arts in Distance Education offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).

COL has also made it possible for ministerial and institutional staff from Malawi to attend international and regional meetings, conferences and workshops thereby participating in international debate and exchange of experience.

Malawi was also involved in two regional collaborative materials development projects supported by COL – one in the area of producing learning materials for students at the junior secondary level, and a second in the production of teacher training materials in Science, Technology and Mathematics.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working with regional partners to strengthen national systems

In March 2006, COL supported and organised, in collaboration with the Kyambogo University (KYU) in Uganda and the International Extension College, UK a meeting to provide an overview and orientation to the programme “Introduction to Distance Education: a course for managers and practitioners”, the materials for which are now available through KYU.

Malawi sent representatives to the meeting and their opinion was that the programme would be very useful for staff at the Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE). A request was subsequently received by COL for support to offer the programme to staff at MCDE.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL co-sponsored the Africa Copyright Forum Conference which was held in Kampala in November 2005. This attracted 120 delegates from 23 countries, including Malawi. The “Africa Copyright and Access to Information Alliance” was established at the conference and an Interim Board was elected to start the process of addressing copyright and related issues in Africa, with particular reference to education, libraries and people with disabilities.

Malawi attended the “International Literacy and Livelihoods Experts Meeting: Learning for Life in a Changing World” which was held in Vancouver in November, 2004. Approximately 30 international experts participated in the meeting.

Malawi participated in the “Forum on Open Schooling for Secondary Education” held in Botswana in October 2004, to raise awareness about and to advocate for the establishment of open schools in the Sub-Saharan region.

Two educators from Malawi participated in a two-week long institute in August 2004, which was hosted by the National Institute of Open Schooling, India.

COL supported the DEASA advocacy meeting held in March 2005 where Permanent Secretaries and Senior Education Officials were briefed about ODL and DEASA’s programme. Malawi sent participants to the meeting.

A Senior administrator from the Dunda College of Agriculture attended the 5th “Managing Change, Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education – a strategic development programme for leaders of Commonwealth Universities in Africa” Conference held in August 2004 in Scotland.

A delegate from Domasi College of Education, Malawi attended the workshop on “eLearning” organised at the University of Melbourne for science and mathematics teacher educators from Sub-Saharan Africa. The three-day workshop (29 June – 2 July 2004) gave a presentation on various eLearning possibilities to the participants.

COL sponsored three delegates from Malawi to attend the Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning which was held in Dunedin, New Zealand in July 2004.

Two students from Malawi were enrolled in the second presentation of the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme. One has completed the Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education and the second has successfully completed the Masters of Arts in Distance Education programme, both of which are offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University.

Two participants from Malawi attended Management Development Institutes in Singapore in October 2003 and November 2005. These institutes, organised by COL in partnership with the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were designed to benefit teacher training college principals and senior administrators from Sub-Saharan Africa. The participants represented Blantyre Teachers Training College and Domasi College of Education (October 2003) and Blantyre Teachers Training College and Karonga Teachers Training College (November 2005).

Preparation and use of learning materials

Malawi was a member of a consortium supported by COL which developed ODL learning materials for students at the Junior Secondary School Level. The materials, which cover the English, Science and Maths curricula, are being used at the MCDE.

Malawi is one of eight Southern African countries who agreed to work with COL on a five-year distance education project to develop learning materials and subsequently to train upper primary and junior secondary teachers and administrators in Science, Technology and Mathematics.

LOOKING FORWARD

The period 2003-2006 was one of fruitful co-operation between COL and Malawi. Much useful work was done with the Malawi College of Distance Education and this will serve well as a foundation for future progress.

MALTA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

The southern Mediterranean Islands of Malta joined the European Union in 2004 but their Commonwealth identity remains strong. Malta has had a close relationship with COL since its inception in 1987. At that time, the Prime Minister of Malta was personally involved in setting up COL and offered Malta as its home, acknowledging the importance of Open and Distance Learning in the islands. It also offered to host the headquarters of the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) when that initiative was first proposed.

SUMMARY

2003-2006 was a period of excellent co-operation with COL. Malta has been a solid supporter of the VUSSC). Malta has played a central role in the creation of Commonwealth Connects.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

COL's Chairman, President and the Programme Director for Malta attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) which was held in Malta in October 2005.

Both COL and Malta have been involved in the Commonwealth Connects initiative. The Foreign Minister of Malta chairs the group and attended the recent launch of the initiative in London, in August 2006.

The Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Malta is an active supporter of VUSSC (see Pan-Commonwealth initiatives section for more details of VUSSC) and has attended all three meetings held so far.

LOOKING FORWARD

The very effective working relationship COL has with Malta will be a good foundation for future work especially as VUSSC gains momentum.

MAURITIUS

COL Activities 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Mauritius has a history of close links with COL and its presidents. James Maraj, COL's first president, served as Executive Director of the Mauritius Tertiary Education Commission from 1995-1997. In 1989 Mauritius commissioned a study from COL on *Distance Education for Human Resources Development in Mauritius: The Way Forward* which was carried out by John Daniel, then president of Laurentian University, Canada and, since 2004 the third president of COL. COL's second president, Gajaraj Dhanarajan, was a regular visitor to the island.

The 1989 report led directly to the University of Mauritius' decision to embark on distance education and become a dual mode institution. Since then, in keeping with its steady economic development and diversification, Mauritius has expanded its tertiary system with the creation of the Mauritius University of Technology and COL is now involved in discussions about a third university, designated as the Open University. Mauritius is a regular contributor to COL's budget (\$50,000 annually) and is closely involved in the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Successive Ministers of Education have taken personal interest in the development of COL and more recently the Minister of Education was an active member of the Steering Committee of VUSSC. In August 2006 Mauritius hosted representatives from 14 states for VUSSC's first three-week course development session.

SUMMARY

Mauritius has worked closely with COL over the period 2003-2006 and has been active in several new initiatives as well as pursuing on-going goals. It has played an important role in developing the VUSSC and has been an active participant in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) e-schools initiative as well as contributing towards policy development with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). Notably on the professional development side, Mauritius hosted a training of trainers workshop for 12 countries of the South African Development Community sub-region.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

The Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Mauritius has supported the creation of VUSSC (see Pan-Commonwealth initiatives section for more details of VUSSC) in a number of ways. It participated in the 2nd Strategy meeting of Interlocutors and Institutional Managers in Singapore in April 2006 and in August 2006 it hosted the VUSSC Workshop on course creation. This was a very successful meeting which drew support from the highest levels of Mauritian government (three ministers attended the event). A number of new directions were agreed on by the participants which will set the foundations for VUSSC's courses and Mauritius will lead future work on the eco-tourism and environment component of these.

New Partnerships for Africa's Development (NEPAD) e-schools initiative

Mauritius has been an active participant in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) e-schools initiative from its inception (see regional summary for more details of the initiative). It took part in the international symposium convened by COL on the application of multimedia to the schooling sector of the education system. Mauritius is also helping to test the application of the theory. Six Mauritian schools (along with schools from 15 other countries) are included in the e-schools demonstrator project. The project aims to accrue a body of knowledge, based on real-life experiences of the implementation of information and communications technology (ICT) in schools across the African continent that will serve to inform the rollout of the broader e-schools initiative. COL (with INFODEv) has the responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the demonstrator project.

Policy on Distance Education in Africa

Mauritius leads the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Working Group on Distance Education.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mauritius has both attended and hosted international professional development events promoted by COL in the 2003-2006 period. This activity has been valuable in fostering international co-operation and enabling decision makers and professionals involved in delivering educational objectives to share valuable expertise and experience.

The Industrial and Vocational Training Board in Mauritius hosted a training of trainers workshop for 12 countries of the SADC Sub-Region in April 2005. The workshop was organised jointly by COL, UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre and UNESCO-BREDA. It provided a useful introduction to the benefits of using ICT in delivering technical and vocational education and training (TVET) core curricula. The workshop also looked at how using ICT for TVET could contribute to achieving Education for All.

Mauritius was represented at the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa's advocacy meeting in March 2005. At the meeting, supported by COL, Permanent Secretaries and Senior Education Officials were briefed about ODL and DEASA's programme.

Mauritius sent a representative to the BA in ODL Writers Workshop organised by COL and the University of South Africa from 28 November - 5 December 2004.

A Mauritian teacher-educator joined 19 other teacher-educators from Sub-Saharan Africa for the fourth out of a series of five Management Development Institutes which was held in Singapore in October 2004.

LOOKING FORWARD

Mauritius looks set to build upon its achievements in the period 2003-2006 by continuing to work with COL and its commonwealth partners to further education and development goals in 2006-2009.

In the period 2006-2009 it hopes to build capacity in its university sector. It will establish a third national university, designated as the Open University. COL proposes to assist in this by helping to define the mission and methods of the new university. The University of Technology Mauritius, the Mauritius Institute of Education and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute have all also expressed interest in working with COL to expand their capacity in ODL. Mauritius has expressed interest in drawing on COL's experiences in Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3 Farmers) to add value to their initiatives related to their development initiative on agro-industries that is supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Mauritius will continue its active international co-operation. It will be a major player in the creation of VUSSC and will lead course and curricula development in eco-tourism and environment. Mauritius will continue to be an active partner in the NEPAD e-schools initiative as it rolls out a more extensive programme. It will also continue to lead the ADEA Working Group on Distance Education.

MOZAMBIQUE

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Mozambique has been an active member country and partner with COL in the promotion of open and distance learning (ODL). COL has worked closely with the Mozambique government and institutional representatives in planning and building ODL capacity.

SUMMARY

In the period 2003-2006 Mozambique has made progress on a number of levels by working in partnership with COL and other countries. It has made advances in strategic planning for its ODL systems and in improving teacher training. Delegates from Mozambique have also attended a number of international events which have facilitated exchange of experience and best practice.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in Partnership to Strengthen National Systems

To help galvanise Mozambique's national ODL strategy, COL conducted a short training/orientation programme for senior managers. COL won a World Bank-funded contract to design, co-ordinate and deliver – in collaboration with Mozambique's Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and its Distance Education Task Force (CIINED) and addressing their defined needs – a nine-month, full time course in Training and Professional Development in Distance Education. Held in Maputo, it was attended by representatives from key organisations and institutions, including the two Education Ministries, Eduardo Mondlane University, Universidade Pedagogica (Pedagogical University), the Higher Polytechnic and University Institute (ISPU); the Academy of Police Sciences (ACIPOL), the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of State Administration. The programme's objective was to equip a core, supportive group of practitioners and administrators with the knowledge and skills to assess ongoing ODL needs from a broader perspective, and to implement ODL strategies and systems in the long term.

With World Bank funding, COL and the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) consortium jointly designed and delivered an ODL capacity building training programme for 50 Mozambicans selected by the task force in preparation for the establishment of Mozambique's new National Institute for Distance Education (INED).

Improving Teacher Training

A Roundtable on Quality Assurance was held in April 2005 in Abuja. The theme was "Quality Issues in the use of ICT for Teacher Education." The Roundtable was inaugurated by Hajjia Bintu Ibrahim, Minister of State for Education, Federal Government of Nigeria. More than 25 participants from seven countries, including Mozambique, attended the Roundtable. The Roundtable examined the merits of a range of technologies, from radio and interactive radio to internet, for pre-service and in-service teacher training. It also identified quality criteria in the use of different technologies. Outputs include a document on criteria for assuring quality in the application of ICT for teacher development.

Mozambique is one of the eight Southern African countries which has agreed to work with COL on a five-year distance education project to train upper primary and junior secondary teachers and administrators in Science, Technology and Mathematics (STAMP 200+) (for more details of STAMP+ see regional summary for Africa).

Police Training

ACIPOL, Mozambique's Police College, is developing distance learning courses that can be used to continue the training of police officers once they have finished their basic training. COL has conducted on the job training with the course writing teams.

Open Schooling

Mozambique is taking part in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) e-schools initiative (for more details of the initiative see Africa regional summary).

COL convened an international symposium on the application of multimedia to the schooling sector of the education system. The symposium was designed to bring together institutions from Africa, South and Southeast Asia that are using satellite broadcasting to support the school system. Participants included African countries involved with the NEPAD e-Schools Demonstrator Project of which Mozambique was one.

Mozambique participated in the Forum on Open Schooling for Secondary Education in Botswana in October 2004. The aim of the event was to raise awareness and advocate for the establishment of open schools in the Sub-Saharan region.

The Increasing Access to Secondary School Level Education through the production of Quality Learning Materials was initiated at a meeting organised by COL, which was attended by senior Ministry of Education officials and heads of distance education institutions from a number of Sub-Saharan countries

in the Commonwealth. Through the project, ODL materials on English, Mathematics and Science at the junior secondary school level were produced. Mozambique is a partner in this initiative.

With funding from the British Department for International Development, COL and the Ministry of Education, Mozambique, launched a pilot project in Secondary Education through Distance Education, providing opportunities for about 1000 teenagers in rural districts in Nampula province to resume their learning. Extension of the project is now being considered by the national authorities.

Working with Regional Partners

COL has been supporting the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA) in its work supporting ODL developments in the region. Mozambique was represented at the, COL-supported, advocacy meeting in March 2005 where Permanent Secretaries and Senior Education Officials were briefed about ODL and DEASA's programme.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mozambique was represented at the "International Literacy and Livelihoods Experts Meeting: Learning for Life in a Changing World" which was held in Vancouver in November 2004.

In October 2004, Singapore hosted the fourth out of a series of five Management Development Institutes. A total of 20 teacher educators from Sub-Saharan Africa participated. These included two teacher educators from Mozambique.

COL sponsored a delegate from Mozambique to attend the 3rd Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in partnership with Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ) in Dunedin, New Zealand in July 2004.

COL hosted Dr. Arnaldo Nhavoto, Distance Education Task Force Coordinator, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, for three months under the Executive Secondment Programme.

LOOKING FORWARD

Mozambique will continue to build on the progress it has made in 2003-2006 in partnership with COL and other countries. Strengthening national systems, improving teacher training and developing open schooling will continue to be important themes for the next planning period 2006-2009.

NAMIBIA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

A small state of the Commonwealth and a regular contributor to COL's budget, Namibia has been an active member country and partner with COL in the promotion of open and distance learning (ODL).

SUMMARY

In the period 2003-2006, Namibia was an active participant in the setting up of the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Namibia has also been active in supporting the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA). Delegates from Namibia have participated in a number of capacity-building activities within Africa and in other parts of the world in support of the expansion of ODL and eLearning in the country.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working with regional partners

COL supported the organisation of "The Abertay Conversation: Consultation on Future Developments in Higher Education in Africa" in collaboration with the Association of African Universities, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, University of Abertay Dundee and the Scottish Executive from 29 June – 3 July 2005 at Dunhope Castle, University of Abertay Dundee, Scotland. One delegate from Namibia attended the conference. The purpose of the Conversation was to:

1. Generate a high level and interactive dialogue between the leaders of Africa's higher education institutions, policy makers, agencies and key decision-makers;

2. Stimulate debate and seek consensus on a robust and comprehensive approach to renewing African higher education institutions as engines of social, economic, political and cultural developments;
3. Arrive at an agreement on the concrete steps to be taken to implement the renewal programme supported by the Commission for Africa.

COL has supported DEASA for many years. COL supported the DEASA advocacy meeting in March 2005 where Permanent Secretaries and Senior Education Officials, including representatives from Namibia, were briefed about ODL and DEASA's programme. The briefing focussed on the five goals that drive the DEASA programme.

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Namibia is an active partner in the creation of the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives). Namibia is also providing expert input for the development of open educational resources for the VUSSC. Representatives attended a three week "boot camp" in Mauritius during which four teams created learning materials using existing open educational resources as inputs. Approximately thirty notional learning hours in each of the subject areas of tourism and entrepreneurship were produced in Mauritius and the work is now continuing online. All materials will be made available online as open educational resources.

Strengthening national systems

The Vice Chancellor of the University of Namibia was invited to the COL regional consultation. He submitted written feedback which resulted in a tentative plan that included a COL specialist visiting Namibia to review their knowledge centre, including knowledge facilities in Windhoek and Oshakati. During this visit a plan of action was agreed to for COL to support eLearning capacity building being undertaken in Namibia.

Achieving development goals through ODL

COL hosted a high level institute attended by two delegates from Namibia in Vancouver from 5-7 May 2005, to explore the relationship between ODL and development. The Institute provided an excellent opportunity for the participants to dialogue across the boundaries of disciplines and functions. The dialogue was facilitated and structured to maximise participation and to ensure the outcome of producing a publication that would address the relationship between ODL and development.

Open schooling

COL and Schoolnet Africa (SNA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in April/May 2004. This current MOU replaces the previous MOU signed on 8 January 2002 and is valid until 30 June 2006. COL and SNA agree to collaborate on:

- the further development of the African Education Knowledge Warehouse of SNA;
- the development of the Schoolnet Champions Capacity Building Project;
- researching ICTs for Education in Africa;
- the plan to enable teacher training colleges to be equipped with ICT and for college lecturers to be able to use ICT and train teachers to use ICT in the classrooms;
- ICT integration into the curriculum, with special emphasis on the use of ICTs in agriculture science where this is a school subject and in the area of gender bias in the use of ICTs in the education system.

COL, together with others including the German Development Agency (GTZ), Microsoft, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) e-schools and Schoolnet, is collaborating with the Teacher Training Initiative (TTI) that will support six TTIs in Namibia. The project started with a workshop from 8 – 10 November 2004 in Johannesburg which included six countries. The purpose of the workshop was to meet with the necessary country and donor partners and to agree on the project concept and plan for working with teacher training institutions. The schoolnet toolkits were available for the international meeting on schoolnets/e-schools, which was held in Dublin, Ireland from 13 – 15 April 2005. This meeting was convened by the Global e-schools and community initiative, established by the UN ICT Task Force.

Namibia participated in the Forum on Open Schooling for Secondary Education, which was held in Botswana in October 2004, to raise awareness and to advocate for the establishment of open schools in the Sub-Saharan region.

Strengthening national networks

A COL specialist visited the Namibian Open Learning Network (NOLNet) in November 2005 and co-hosted a meeting of senior management on how bandwidth limitations were choking the efforts of institutions to deliver on national goals and MDGs. Agreement was reached that NOLNet will take on the issue and find ways to cooperate with XNet, which has already been established to procure bandwidth for schools.

Preparation and use of learning materials

Namibia participated in a quality assurance in teacher education roundtable that was held in India in March 2003. The document and proceedings of the roundtable were published. The publication entitled "Innovations in Teacher Education: International Practices of Quality Assurance" was released in November 2004. Also in November, a workshop on Quality Indicators in Teacher Education was organised from 5 – 7 November 2004. International participants included one each from Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom and two from Nigeria.

COL and the University of South Africa organised a BA in ODL Writers Workshop from 28 November to 5 December 2004. One participant from Namibia attended the workshop. The workshop aims were to:

- Finalise course outlines of second year modules;
- Reflect on challenges experienced with the development of first-year courses;
- Workshop difficult aspects of the development process, such as designing activities and introducing audio, etc. as a supportive medium;
- Agree to a timeline; and
- Write, review and finalise unit frameworks.

The Increasing Access to Secondary School Level Education through the production of Quality Learning Materials was initiated at a meeting organised by COL, which was attended by senior Ministry of Education officials and heads of distance education institutions from a number of Sub-Saharan countries in the Commonwealth. Through the project, ODL materials on English, Mathematics and Science at the junior secondary school level were produced. Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Swaziland, Malawi and Mozambique are partners in this initiative. The materials on English and Science have been completed and the materials on Mathematics are at the piloting stage.

Namibia is one of eight Southern African countries who have agreed to work with COL on a five-year distance education project to train upper primary and junior secondary teachers and administrators in Science, Technology and Mathematics (STM). The programme, STAMP 2000+, provides in-service skills training and upgrading for STM teachers. In addition to the STM subject areas, the modular courses in STAMP 2000+ also focus on general education and multi-grade teaching topics such as special educational needs, educational management and curriculum design. The modules are self-instructional teacher materials and are designed to be sufficiently generic to adapt to the specific needs of each participating country.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL co-sponsored the Africa Copyright Forum Conference attended by delegates from Namibia, which was held in Kampala from 28-30 November 2005. The sponsorship enabled one delegate from Namibia to participate.

As part of the COL Executive Secondment Programme, Ms. Frances Mensah, Director of the Namibia College of Open Learning (NAMCOL), was seconded to COL for three months from March to June 2005. Ms. Mensah focused on cost and financing of ODL institutions and programmes.

The first technical skills development workshop for eLearning was held in Kenya in May 2005. The agenda of the five-day workshop was collaboratively agreed between the technical staff at the African Virtual University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, the Polytechnic of Namibia and the Ministry of Education in the Seychelles.

Skills enhancement was provided to one policy maker and one practitioner on policy for eLearning, eLearning content development, and support of learners. Training provided in Kenya, August 2004.

Three educators from Namibia participated in the two-week long institute in August 2004, which was hosted by the National Institute of Open Schooling, India on the establishment of an open schooling system.

One delegate from Namibia attended the workshop on eLearning, organised by the University of Melbourne for Science and Mathematics teacher educators from Sub-Saharan Africa. The three-day workshop provided an exposure to various eLearning possibilities.

The 3rd Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF3) was held in partnership with the Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ) in Dunedin, New Zealand from 4-8 July 2004 and COL provided support to two delegates from Namibia.

In the second phase of the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme (RGFS), five students from Namibia have successfully completed the Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education offered by the Indira Gandhi Open University (IGNOU). The five students are now working towards their Masters of Arts in Distance Education offered by IGNOU. In addition COL sponsored a RGFS tutor to attend PCF3 and an RGFS tutors meeting.

Two participants from Namibia attended the Management Development Institute in Singapore in October 2003. These institutes, organised by COL in partnership with the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs (October 2003) and the Indian National Council for Educational Research and Training (February 2004), were designed to benefit teacher training college principals and senior administrators from Sub-Saharan Africa. We are hopeful that the skills acquired will facilitate an improvement in the quality and quantity of teacher training, thereby helping to achieve the "Education For All" goals.

Under COL's Young Professionals Attachment Programme Namibia has hosted an intern at the Polytechnic of Namibia.

LOOKING FORWARD

The triennium 2003-2006 was an active period in Namibia's partnership with COL and foundations for future progress were laid on a number of levels. Namibia's role in VUSSC will go on to expand in the future. Namibia has been a valuable partner in preparing for the next stage of COL's activity in the region. An East African Consultation for COL's Three-Year Plan (2006-2009) attended by delegates from Namibia was held in September. The recommendations from the meeting were taken into account in the development of COL Three-year Plan 2006-2009.

NIGERIA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Nigeria played an important part in the creation of COL when, along with India, it pledged a financial contribution to COL at the 1987 CHOGM. The distinguished Nigerian educator Professor Hafiz Wali held a senior position at COL in its early years. Subsequently, as democracy faltered and Nigeria's membership in the Commonwealth was suspended, its interest in open and distance learning (ODL) also withered and the infant Open University was closed. After returning to democracy and to the Commonwealth, Nigeria has committed strongly to ODL in order to make up for lost time in its educational development.

President Obasanjo, who takes a personal interest in ODL, asked COL in 2005 "to adopt Nigeria as a working model through which COL can serve Africa and the Commonwealth in the emerging global structures of open access to education". He asked COL to focus particularly on the newly reopened National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) "to enable it to grow and become a very entrenched institution in Nigeria".

Nigeria is represented on the Board of COL as a major donor and currently serves on the Executive Committee. It made its financial contribution (with arrears) in 2004-2005 but the contribution for 2005-2006 was not received within the year. Two members of COL's staff hold Nigerian nationality.

SUMMARY

As requested by President Obasanjo, COL has given particular support to the re-establishment of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) as a significant player in the higher education system. An important vehicle for this is RETRIDAL, a Regional Training and Research Institute for Open and Distance Learning housed at NOUN and partly funded by COL. NOUN is also offering programmes developed elsewhere in the Commonwealth with COL's assistance.

The National Teachers' Institute (NTI) has had links with COL for many years. It credits COL with helping it to modernise its approach to distance learning and to extend the use of ODL methods to 62 other teacher training colleges.

Teacher Training Enhancement (National Teachers' Institute) – At the request of the Minister of Education and the Office of the President, COL was asked to focus its efforts on capacity building in teacher education in Nigeria. The organisation responsible for teacher education in Nigeria is the NTI based in Kaduna. This activity has focussed on training in areas that support the development of course materials (graphic artists, desktop publishing, library and production of audio, video) used for teacher education.

Since Nigeria declared an interest in developing open schooling COL has involved Nigerian experts in international meetings on the topic and assisted in preparing a proposal for a pilot in open schooling.

COL has facilitated Nigerian participation in various collaborative networks addressing technology-mediated learning and involving bodies such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) e-schools initiative and SchoolNet Africa.

At the individual level hundreds of Nigerians have participated in training events involving COL, thereby substantially increasing the country's capacity to develop and implement ODL systems.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)

In 2003 COL committed \$400,000 over three years to establish RETRIDAL at NOUN. Stakeholders from across West Africa developed a plan for RETRIDAL in 2004 and an Advisory Committee was formed. In the same year COL sponsored two RETRIDAL staff members to visit the Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education (STRIDE), a similar unit at the Indira Gandhi National Open University, India.

In 2005 a five-day induction workshop to ODL was held for 180 NOUN staff members, back-to-back with training in Video and Audio Scriptwriting for 50 people. Later that year COL arranged two workshops on Instructional Design and a session on Research Methodology for Distance Education, all with regional participation. So far in 2006, 55 Nigerian and international participants have been trained on Quality Assurance in Distance Education and Instructional Design. NOUN installed an FM radio station with COL's help but could not finalise the licence for the station after the pilot phase.

NOUN has also made arrangements to offer some of the Pan-Commonwealth programmes that COL has helped to develop. A course in Legislative Drafting has been licensed and will be offered in 2006-2009, as will the Commonwealth Executive MBA and MPA degrees.

National Teachers Institute (NTI) and National Commission for Colleges of Education

In a major operation COL oriented the Provosts of all 62 teacher education colleges in the use of ODL and information and communications technologies (ICTs) in teacher education. It helped develop “Norms and Standards and Performance Indicators for Assessing Teacher Education Colleges/Programmes by ODL” and facilitated collaboration between the National Commission for Colleges of Education and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council of India to formulate Quality Indicators and prepare QA materials for teacher training. In this connection COL also arranged for five top Indian teacher education administrators to visit and advise Nigerian institutions.

In order to build capacity for course development and delivery at the NTI all academic staff received training in Curriculum Development, Instructional Design and the Preparation of Self-Instructional Reading Materials. Orientation to recent developments in ODL was given to academic support staff. Twenty members were trained in Video Scriptwriting and Production Processes and 20 more in Video Production and Programming, which led to three videos on teacher training. COL supports the NTI Media Centre with training and technology updates and has also supported a full review of NTI’s Learner Support System, whose recommendations will be implemented in 2006-2009. An NTI FM radio station was installed by COL as part of the teacher education pilot project and reached half a million listeners. Sadly, because of the station’s inability to secure an FM radio licence, it is not currently broadcasting.

The NTI has asked to use the Green Teacher Diploma programme developed by India’s Centre for Environmental Education. COL is facilitating this transfer of know how and materials and sponsoring the training of trainers for the programme at NTI.

Regional and International Collaboration

NEPAD

Nigeria and 16 other African countries are involved in the demonstration phase of NEPAD’s e-Schools Initiative with six Nigerian schools taking part. COL is charged with the Monitoring and Evaluation of the demonstration phase, which is giving it unrivalled experience of the implementation of ICTs in African schools. A first interim report appeared early in 2006.

COL is also working with NEPAD to construct a plan for the use of distance education for the pre-service and in-service training of teachers. The three partners are NOUN, the University of South Africa, and the African Virtual University.

SchoolNet Africa

In 2004 COL updated its 2002 Memorandum of Understanding with Schoolnet Africa. A key activity was collaboration with Teacher Training Institutions in a consortium with the German Development Agency (GTZ), Microsoft, and NEPAD e-Schools. Nigeria was one of six countries involved and took part in the planning meeting in Johannesburg in 2004. Schoolnet toolkits were developed and made available at a meeting held in Dublin in 2005 sponsored by the Global e-Schools initiative of the UN ICT Task Force.

ECOWAS

In 2006 COL signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with the aim of offering literacy and skills training using appropriate technology. The project is set within the NEPAD framework and involves India's National Institute for Information Technology (NIIT) as a partner with COL as the main implementer. Nigeria (through the Ministry of Science and Technology) is one of four West African states involved. Following a consultative meeting in May 2006 a three-year plan is being prepared.

West African Consortium for Teacher Education

COL has facilitated the creation of a West African Consortium for Teacher Education in order to build capacity in the use of ODL and ICTs in teacher development. Nigeria participated in a workshop on learner support held in Ghana.

COL-Poverty Reduction Outcomes Through Education Innovations and Networks (PROTEIN)

This programme facilitates the implementation of innovative projects that adopt ODL and ICT for poverty reduction in the developing Commonwealth (www.col.org/protein). COL offers expertise in ODL and start-up, limited-term financial support to qualifying projects that help build human capacity to gain knowledge and skills in contributing to food security, environmental protection, rural development, nutritional education and micro-enterprise. Successful projects have a high level of inter-institutional collaboration, significant and innovative ODL and ICT use, and well-researched content and learning design to support contextually relevant rural and peri-urban capacity building for poverty reduction.

The Fantsuam Foundation received the award to learn to use video for producing education and training materials and to spread knowledge on the use of solar cooking in the tropics where electricity is a constraint.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING**Open Schooling**

Nigeria has expressed strong interest in developing open schooling as a way of addressing the rapidly increasing demand for secondary education. Nigeria participated in COL's Forum on Open Schooling in Secondary Education in Botswana in 2004. In 2005 Nigeria attended an Institute on Open Schooling for education/government officials organised in India by COL and the National Institute for Open Schooling. Since then COL has been working with the Universal Basic Education Commission of the Ministry of Education to assist in the establishment of an Open School through funding a plan of action for a pilot project and beginning a dialogue with the World Bank about further funding.

Nomadic Education

COL is helping the National Commission on Nomadic Education (NCNE) to progress its work. COL organised a conference on Nomadic Education in Kenya in 2006 and supported four persons from the NCNE to attend, along with four other Nigerian educators involved in providing education to Nomadic groups. The NCNE also participated in a conference on the delivery of technical and vocational education and training through open schooling held in India in 2006.

Management Education

From 2007 the Commonwealth Executive MBA and MPA programmes, developed with COL sponsorship by the four open universities of South Asia, will be offered in Nigeria through NOUN.

Training in Distance Education

Under the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme fifty Nigerian students are taking the Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education of India's Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) through NOUN. Those who complete the Diploma successfully in 2006 will be able to begin IGNOU's Master of Arts in Distance Education in 2007.

Training in Leadership and Management in Higher Education

Over the 2003-2006 triennium COL has also organised annually, at the University of Abertay, Dundee, a strategic development programme for leaders of Commonwealth universities in Africa. Ten Nigerian delegates took part in these events in 2003 and 2004. The 2005 event, in which Nigeria also participated, took the form of a dialogue on the renewal programme for African universities proposed by the Commission for Africa. The results were available to the G8 Summit held at Gleneagles shortly afterwards.

Training in the Management of Teacher Education

In the period 2003-2006 COL has held three Management Development Institutes in India and Singapore for college principals and senior administrators from teacher training institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa. Eight delegates from Nigeria participated in events.

Quality Assurance in Teacher Education

In recent years COL has paid particular attention to quality in teacher education. In 2004 two delegates from Nigeria took part in a roundtable on quality assurance in teacher education that led to the publication of *Innovations in Teacher Education: International Practices of Quality Assurance*. This event was followed by a workshop on quality indicators in teacher education.

A second roundtable was held in Nigeria in 2005 and inaugurated by Minister of State Hajjia Bintu Ibrahim. This focused on using educational technologies in pre-service and in-service teacher education

and led to a publication on *Criteria for Assuring Quality in the Application of ICTs in Teacher Development*. Delegates from seven African and Asian countries took part.

Training eLearning: Policy and Practice

Nigeria took part in a COL workshop on eLearning for Decision Makers and Practitioners held in Kenya in 2004, and in 2005 RETRIDAL hosted a workshop on eLearning with COL in Nigeria.

Literacy and Livelihoods

His Excellency Michael Omolewa, Nigerian Ambassador to UNESCO and Member of COL's Board, took part in the *International Literacy and Livelihoods Experts Meeting: Learning for Life in a Changing World*, held in Vancouver in 2004.

Tropical Agriculture

COL supported the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Nigeria with the project "Answering Farmer's Needs in Nigeria" in Ago-Are in south-western Nigeria. This project was among the 27 finalists out of over 1,100 applicants for the 2006 Stockholm Challenge Award in the "Economic Development" category. It is a public-private-people run community demand-driven information system for life-long learning with linkages leading to improved food and livelihood security. The Ago-Are multi-purpose community information access points (resource centres) were equipped with basic ICT infrastructure. They provide training to farmers and links to the Community Help Desk and other sources of information on the internet, connecting them directly with markets for inputs and outputs. They also rent out an array of equipment that farmers are lacking. Profitable ventures such as soccer displays and entertaining film shows are contributing to financial sustainability. Capacity building among community members in computer repairs, financial management and managerial skills is creating greater community ownership.

Young Professionals

Nigeria has hosted three interns under COL's Young Professional Attachment Programme, two at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture and one at the West Africa Rice Development Association.

Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning

A large Nigerian delegation led by Minister of State Hajjia Bintu Ibrahim, and with four of its members sponsored by COL, took an active part in the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in New Zealand in 2004. This Forum was also the occasion for an excellent dialogue between COL and Nigeria. An even larger delegation from Nigeria is anticipated at the 4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning to be held in Jamaica in late 2006.

EVALUATION

Informal

Informal evaluation of the impact of COL's work in Nigeria is positive. The Vice-Chancellor of NOUN and the Director of NTI praise the contribution that COL has made to the development of their institutions. Other countries in the region such as Cameroon and Ghana are calling on RETRIDAL for help in developing ODL, an important indicator that it is seen as an effective body. Testimonials from Nigerians who have been sponsored by COL for international professional development events are overwhelmingly positive.

Formal

COL commissioned Dr. Patrick Spaven to conduct a formal and independent evaluation of its work in 2003-2006. Some of his scrutiny touched on COL's work in Nigeria. These quotations come from his report.

National Teachers' Institute

"There is a consensus among people consulted that the support COL has provided to NTI in Nigeria has been pivotal. Before COL began its partnership with NTI in 2001, the latter was languishing and its closure had been contemplated. It is now a very important institution in Nigeria – the world's only single-mode distance education institution dedicated to teacher training – with well over 100,000 teachers following courses at any one time... Several informants say that COL's interventions have been crucial to NTI's survival."

Schoolnet Africa (SNA)

"Schoolnet Africa attributes much of its success as an organisation to COL's strategic thinking and what it regards as timely and relevant interventions. Although in money terms COL has been a minor partner – just 4% of SNA's funding over the last four years – SNA assessed COL's interventions in their area very favourably compared to much more substantially resourced donor programmes, whose interventions SNA felt were not always well-timed and appropriate."

Quality of Teacher Education

"The teacher education quality indicators have been favourably received by the organisations taking part in the process. This was made more likely by the highly participatory nature of the process. It also seems to have been an efficient process that kept to its planned timetable."

eLearning Workshops

"To sum up, the market for the workshop series was well-researched, and the timing, shape and content appropriate."

LOOKING FORWARD

The period 2003-2006 has been one of renewed activity in Nigeria. The building blocks for further progress in a number of areas – higher education (via NOUN), e-schooling, teacher training and more prosperity for farmers, to name a few – are now in place. The period 2006-2009 promises well.

SEYCHELLES

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

The Seychelles has a strong commitment to open learning. At the 14th Conference of Commonwealth Ministers of Education (CCEM), held in Halifax, Canada in 2000, the Hon. Danny Faure, then Minister of Education, played a leading role in the decision to develop the concept of a Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). He subsequently served on the steering committee that helped COL prepare a proposal for the 15th CCEM in Edinburgh. The Seychelles contributed about \$20,000 to COL in 2006 following its previous contribution of nearly \$15,000 in 2000.

SUMMARY

As noted above the Seychelles were a driving force behind the decision to set up the VUSSC. Since then, the Seychelles have been actively involved in all VUSSC activities and have contributed expertise in developing learning materials related to tourism.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

The Seychelles were an active partner in planning the creation of VUSSC being a dynamic and vocal supporter of the initiative from the very start. The Ministry of Education, Seychelles, jointly hosted with COL the meeting of Ministers of Education from small states which endorsed the draft plan for VUSSC before it was presented to CCEM in Edinburgh in October 2003.

Since then the Seychelles have been active at several levels in preparing the way for VUSSC to be established. A team leader from the Seychelles (along with counterparts from Samoa, Botswana, Mauritius and Trinidad & Tobago) took part in a meeting organised by COL in July 2006 to prepare the VUSSC Course Writers' Workshop (which was held in Mauritius in August 2006). The Seychelles have

also contributed expertise in the development of VUSSC courses in tourism/hospitality and business management (both important areas for the Seychelles domestic economy).

Preparation and use of learning materials

The Seychelles participated in the first and second strategy meetings of Interlocutors and Institutional Managers held in Singapore in September 2005 and April 2006 respectively. The meetings reviewed developments in eLearning and the use of Open Educational Resources, considered funding proposals and planned the Open Content Development course materials. These materials are scheduled to be available in early 2007.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the second phase of the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme (RGFS), four students from the Seychelles successfully completed the Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University, India (IGNOU). In December 2005 the four students completed the Masters of Arts in Distance Education offered by IGNOU and should have graduated in June 2006. COL provided the necessary sponsorship to enable a group of tutors involved in RGFS to attend the 3rd Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF3).

A teacher-educator from the Seychelles joined 19 other teacher-educators from Sub-Saharan Africa for the fourth out of a series of five Management Development Institutes which was held in Singapore in October 2004.

The Seychelles sent a delegate (supported by COL) to PCF3 held in partnership with Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ) in Dunedin, New Zealand in July 2004.

The Seychelles Ministry of Education worked with the African Virtual University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology and the Polytechnic of Namibia to develop the agenda for the first technical skills development workshop for eLearning. The workshop was held in Kenya in May 2005 and, as a result, COL now has access to quality, affordable skills to take this training to other parts of Commonwealth Africa.

LOOKING FORWARD

The Seychelles will continue to play an important role in the creation of VUSSC. In particular it will provide expertise to activities related to environment, eco-tourism, and if possible, alternative ways of farming. The Seychelles Hospitality and Tourism Training College and the Seychelles Agriculture and Horticulture Training Centre are likely to be important partners in this.

SIERRA LEONE

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Eleven years of war devastated the education sector in Sierra Leone but reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts are now in place. In 1995 the government adopted the New Education Policy for Sierra Leone which set out some of the ways in which school enrolments, teacher training and participation in higher education could be increased.

More than 10 years later, school enrolments have increased by 300%, but 350,000 children are still outside government-assisted schools and the number of teachers has increased by only 20%.

In order to address this, Sierra Leone turned to COL for advice on how to increase learning opportunities and, in particular, teacher training through distance education. Distance education was not new to Sierra Leone as COL had already been active in the areas of teacher training and health but a step-up in the pace of change was needed and the Honourable Dr. Alpha T. Wurie asked COL to organise a National ODL Forum. This took place in February 2005 and provided a platform for initiating discussions on the review/revision of the New Education Policy for Sierra Leone.

The New Education Policy contained the basis for developing an ODL system in Sierra Leone. It mentioned the creation of an open university and referred to “The use of distance learning” as a low cost training strategy and a mode of realising Education for All through teacher education.

The teacher upgrading programme for untrained and unqualified primary school teachers through distance learning took off in 2001 and now covers eight out of the twelve districts in the country and there is a current enrolment of 2000 students serving mostly in remote areas of the country. The students follow the same syllabus as the conventional teacher college students for the same duration. The first batch of students for the Teachers Certificate graduated in 2004.

Before the launch of this project, there was a needs assessment survey followed by a COL-sponsored workshop on instructional design and course development including editorial skills. All the modules now in use by tutors and students on the programme were produced during the workshops funded by the Sierra Leone government, Plan Sierra Leone, COL and other donor agencies. In addition to personnel of the teacher training colleges, the University of Sierra Leone staff members also benefited from the training on materials development for distance learners.

SUMMARY

During the period 2003-06, COL has continued to work in Sierra Leone in the areas of policy development, teacher training, health and peri-urban agriculture. COL's partners have included the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST), Freetown Teachers Training College (FTTC), Njala College of Agriculture and the Nova Scotia Sierra Leone Programme (NSSLP).

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in partnership with COL and regional and Commonwealth partners

An Environmental Scan on the status of education in Sierra Leone was commissioned by COL and completed in January 2005.

An Environmental Scan of Professional Development for Extension Agents in Training Vegetable Growers in the peri-urban Western Area of Sierra Leone through ICT use in ODL in Sierra Leone was submitted to COL in May 2005.

COL President Sir John Daniel led a three-member COL delegation to Sierra Leone in November 2005 as part of the 15 CCEM Mid-Term Review.

The West African Teacher Training Consortium was formed in 2002 when Ministers from Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria and The Gambia signed a Statement of Intent to support such a forum. The Principal and a staff member of the FTTC attended several training workshops for course development and the use of STAMP 2000+ Materials at National Teachers' Institute (NTI), Kaduna (February 2003); Learner Support at Winneba, Ghana (July, 2004); and Instructional Design at NTI, Kaduna (May, 2005).

The Peer Health education project in Sierra Leone replicates the Gambian model and is a partnership with the Nova Scotia Sierra Leone Program (NSSLP). In October-November 2004, the project reached 24 schools in 12 of the 14 districts in Sierra Leone. The NSSLP will include peer health training to all districts of the country in addition to training of truck drivers concerning HIV/AIDS prevention and stigma. It will also use professional footballers as role models for young Sierra Leoneans. COL has partnered with the NSSLP to aid in reaching greater numbers of people throughout the country using the models established with the NSGA in The Gambia.

Working with the Continuous Agriculture Education Project, Ghana, COL organised a workshop at the University of Ghana on 21-22 September 2004 to examine how ODL could be harnessed to enhance the effectiveness of agricultural extension agents. Sierra Leone was represented at the event.

National Commitment to ODL through consultation and legislation

A national forum on “Increasing Access to Quality Education and Training for All through ODL” was held in Freetown from 16-18 February 2005. The objectives were to:

- Bring together all the key stakeholders from the appropriate ministries, educational institutions and representatives of civil society.
- Examine the potential of open and distance education to reach out and to reach all.
- Explore the ways in which distance education methodologies can serve to fulfil the developmental needs and priorities of Sierra Leone, not just in education but also in other social and economic sectors like health and agriculture.
- Consider and make recommendations on measures needed to induct information and communication technologies (ICT) within the country’s educational infrastructure and the methods necessary for mobilising the required resources.
- Establish a consensus on the broad framework for a national policy on Open and Distance Learning (ODL).
- Identify an Action Plan and timeline for the initiatives leading towards the policy review and development.

The Freetown Declaration on ODL was signed by the Honourable Minister of Education and an Action Plan outlined by the 80+ stakeholders who participated in the Forum. The government has since passed a Bill on ODL in November 2005.

Preparation and use of learning materials

Under the COL Media Empowerment programme, a Media Unit was set up at Freetown Teachers Training College in November 2005 to develop videos for use in teacher training programmes.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A senior administrator from the University of Sierra Leone participated in the 4th Managing Change: Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education conference at the University of Abertay Dundee from 17-22 August 2003.

COL organised Management Development Workshops for Senior African Teacher Educators with the National Council for Educational Research and Training in India in 2003 and 2004. The Principal of Port Loko Teachers College participated in the February 2003 event.

A Regional Centre of Expertise in ODL (RETRIDAL) for Western Africa was set up with COL support at the National Open University of Nigeria. A Stakeholders Consultative meeting was held in Lagos from 6-7 May 2004 to map out the ODL needs and priorities of the sub-region at which Sierra Leone was represented by the Principal and a staff member of FTTC. At the Instructional Design workshop held in Lagos from 3-7 May 2005, the Principal of FTTC and a staff member of the University of Sierra Leone

were present. A five day workshop on Research in Distance Education was organised by RETRIDAL from 24-28 May 2005 at which two colleagues from the University of Sierra Leone participated. The Principal of FTTC and a staff member of the University of Sierra Leone participated in a Training of Trainers workshop on Instructional Design held in Lagos during 19-23 June 2006.

COL and the Economic Community of West African States secretariat held a Consultative Meeting on literacy and skills development in Abuja on 15-16 May 2006, at which the Principal of FTTC and two officials from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology participated.

In partnership with the International Extension College, UK and Kyambogo University (KYU) in Uganda, COL organised a training programme (IEC) for staff from six African institutions, including Sierra Leone. Following this, FTTC expressed an interest in using the COL-IEC materials for the training programme “Introduction to Distance Education: a course for managers and practitioners” initially developed for KYU.

LOOKING FORWARD

The period 2003-06 saw important foundations laid for the development of ODL in Sierra Leone. In the period 2006-09 these will be enhanced and expanded. For example, MOEST proposes to set up an ODL Centre which may evolve into a Distance Learning College. COL is working with the Freetown Teachers College to see how production of audio and video materials might develop in the future.

SOUTH AFRICA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

South Africa has a longstanding commitment to distance education. The University of South Africa (UNISA) was the world's first large-scale distance-teaching university, pre-dating the world's other open universities by two decades. The new, post-apartheid era began a few years after the creation of COL, which has worked closely with South Africa and its institutions in bringing new approaches to education and training in support of the country's transition to democracy. The close link between COL and South Africa was symbolised by the holding of the 2nd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in Durban in 2002. At that event the Adult Basic Education and Training Practitioner Training Programme (Certificate and Diploma), a training programme for adult basic education tutors of the Institute for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), University of South Africa won the COL award for Excellence in Distance Education Materials. COL and UNESCO organised the "All-Africa Ministers" Conference on Open Learning and Distance Education" that was held in Cape Town in 2004.

Having raised its voluntary contribution to COL to the level of a major donor in 2005, South Africa is now a member of the Board of Governors where its representative chairs the Audit Committee. Three members of COL's staff have South African nationality.

SUMMARY

COL's work in South Africa in 2003-2006 reflected the diversity of the country's technology-mediated learning systems. COL has contributed to the development of radio and information and communications technologies (ICT) in the schools; to the training of teachers, particularly in Science, Technology and Mathematics; and to combating HIV/AIDS through media empowerment. Many South African specialists have benefited from the extensive professional development opportunities offered by COL – both in the country and internationally. COL has also drawn on the acknowledged expertise of institutions such as the Council on Higher Education, South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE), UNISA and other South African Universities in its work around the Commonwealth. In implementing its commitment to South-South collaboration COL frequently involves South African experts in its work in other countries.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Regional Initiatives

SADC-CDE Regional Centre

Following requests from a number of countries in Southern Africa, COL facilitated the creation of the Southern African Regional Distance Education Centre (SARDEC) to which it provides some programme funding. Ministers suggested that SARDEC be sited in one of the smaller countries of the region, hence its location in Botswana. Recently SARDEC has been brought into the ambit of the Southern African Development Community and has changed its name to SADC-Centre for Distance Education. SADC-CDE conducted a needs survey in the region in 2005 which will provide the basis for its work in 2006-2009. A member of UNISA staff helped to develop the SADC-CDE programme with SAIDE and other South Africans also contributing.

DEASA Regional Association

COL has supported DEASA, the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa, for many years. At a regional advocacy roundtable in 2005 permanent secretaries and senior officials from nine countries, including South Africa, were briefed on the uses of ODL and regional mechanisms to support it. COL funds 40 learners per year (75% of fees) in DEASA member countries on the UNISA Certificate Course for Distance Education Practitioners.

Advocacy

All-Africa Ministers' Conference

Despite its lengthening track record of success and relevance, some Commonwealth governments still need to be convinced that ODL can deliver both access and quality. To extend the use of ODL in Africa the South African Ministry of Education, COL and UNESCO hosted the All-Africa Ministers' Conference on Open Learning and Distance Education in Cape Town in 2004.

Consultation on Future Developments in Higher Education in Africa

In 2005 the Report of the UK's Commission for Africa generated momentum for the renewal of African Universities. COL, in collaboration with the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the African Association of Universities and other partners took advantage of the publication of the Report to hold a consultation just before the G8 Summit at Gleneagles. Three South African representatives joined delegates from other Commonwealth African countries at the University of Abertay, Dundee to develop agreement on the implementation of a renewal programme.

African Council for Distance Education

COL supported the inaugural conference of the African Council for Distance Education, held at UNISA in 2005, where COL President Sir John Daniel gave the closing address. In the same period COL

supported the participation of five delegates from elsewhere in Africa to the first Distance Education and Teacher Training in Africa (DETA) conference held in Pretoria in 2005.

COL's Use of South African Expertise

Evaluating the CEMBA/CEMPA Programmes

COL retained UNISA to evaluate the distance learning Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration and Master of Public Administration Programmes (CEMBA/CEMPA) that were developed with COL by the four open universities of South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka). The courses are now being revised in the light of UNISA's findings as the programmes begin to be offered in other Commonwealth regions beyond South Asia.

Quality in Teacher Education

The University of Pretoria was involved in COL's collaboration with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council of India and international partners to develop Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Teacher Education. These guidelines are suitable for teacher education through both distance learning and face-to-face teaching.

eLearning and Knowledge Management

The MindSet Network and Blue Matrix organisations are collaborating with COL in the establishment of a new learning object repository for COL's learning resources. This follows successful hosting of the GDEnet repository (www.gdenet.org) which was a joint effort by the South African Institute for Distance Education and Blue Matrix.

Staff members of the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Cape Town have been actively involved with COL in the creation of a guideline document on copyright which was circulated to all Ministers of Education (www.col.org/copyright).

Legislative Drafting

COL drew on South African expertise in developing a course on Legislative Drafting that is now in use in various Commonwealth countries.

Projects

Schoolnet Africa

In 2004 COL and Schoolnet Africa (SNA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to update a previous MOU. It led to collaboration on the further development of SNA's African Education Knowledge Warehouse, a Schoolnet Champions Capacity Building Project, and further work on the integration of ICTs into teacher training and curricula, with particular attention to gender bias.

A collaborative project between COL, SNA, the German Development Agency (GTZ), Microsoft and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), involving teacher training institutions in South Africa and five other countries, began with a workshop in Johannesburg in 2004. Schoolnet toolkits were available for a meeting on Schoolnets and e-schools convened by the Global e-Schools and Community Initiative of the UN ICT Task Force in Dublin in 2005.

NEPAD e-Schools

COL advised the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) e-Africa Commission as it developed the Demonstrator Project of the NEPAD e-Schools Initiative. This aims to impart ICT skills to young Africans in primary and secondary schools; to use ICTs to improve the provision of education in African schools; and to use ICT to improve the health of young Africans. Phase 1 is a Demonstrator Project involving six schools in each of 16 countries. South Africa's schools were: Hendrick-Makapan High School, Lomahasha Secondary School, Maripe Secondary School, Isiphosethu High School, Jamangile Secondary School and Ipetleng Secondary School.

COL has the lead role in the Monitoring and Evaluation of the e-Schools Demonstrator Project, working with InfoDev (World Bank) and Canada's International Development Research Centre. A final report is due at the end of 2006.

COL involved the African countries participating in the e-Schools Demonstrator Project in an international symposium on the application of multi-media to schooling and further meetings with country representatives were held in parallel with the eLearning conference held in Addis Ababa in 2005 (www.elearning-africa.com). The next meeting of country representatives is scheduled for September 2006 in South Africa.

NEPAD Teacher Training

COL is working with NEPAD to construct a plan for the pre-service and in-service training of teachers by distance education. Partners in implementation are the University of South Africa, the National Open University of Nigeria, and the African Virtual University.

Teacher Training in Science, Technology and Mathematics

South Africa joined seven Southern African countries and COL in a five-year distance education project to train upper primary and junior secondary teachers and administrators in Science, Technology and Mathematics (STM). The programme provides in-service skills training and upgrading. In addition to the STM subject areas, the modular courses in Science, Technology and Mathematics Programme (STAMP 2000+) also focus on general education and multi-grade teaching topics such as special educational needs, educational management and curriculum design. Forty-six modules have been prepared and, through the workshops that were part of the process, 300 educational professionals received hands-on training on materials writing, desktop publishing and instructional design. STAMP 2000+ materials are being used in Ghana and Nigeria.

Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA)

COL is one of the initial signatories to the core consortium of TESSA, which includes the University of Fort Hare, the University of Natal, the Open University of Tanzania, the UK Open University and the World Service Trust of the BBC. The focus of the project is developing a course and accompanying resources in an open source electronic environment that teacher educators can adapt and use to suit their own circumstances. The target group is unqualified and under-qualified teachers in basic education. COL's role is to promote the widening of participation in TESSA through advocacy and marketing and liaison with partner and potential partners. It will also help with the adaptation of course materials in individual institutions, particularly as regards the use of open source materials. The consortium's first meeting took place in South Africa in 2005

Fighting HIV/AIDS Stigma

In partnership with the World Health Organization, COL has focused its health work in South Africa on partnering with an NGO in KwaZulu-Natal, the Valley Trust, to combat HIV/AIDS stigma. Part of COL's Media Empowerment programme, the approach has involved equipping and training the Valley Trust to produce video and audio material on HIV/AIDS which is disseminated by a variety of means, from showings in rural communities to open air broadcasting.

Educational Radio/Media

COL has worked with the Open Learning Systems Educational Trust (OLSET) for some years. In 2003/04 OLSET was contracted to produce a radio series aimed at helping those living in poverty to gain the necessary skills to improve their standard of living. COL has also supported OLSET's broader work on radio and media in schools by equipping and training audio and video production teams. COL provides regular training updates and equipment refreshment.

Mobile Learning for Change

A South African colleague has been awarded funds from the Gender and Agriculture/Rural Development in the Information Society (GenARDIS) Small Grant Fund. This programme focuses on the innovative use of ICTs for rural women. The project which focuses on Mobile Learning for Change is one of three COL-supported projects.

Text-messaging in Distance Education

UNISA has worked with COL on a pilot study and research on the potential impact of the use of SMS (text-messaging) in improving learner retention. In South Africa few distance learners have easy access to the Internet but many can access cellular phones. Initial results are encouraging. COL is also working with UNISA on the creation of a course in online tutoring.

Lifelong Learning for Farmers

Following the success of its Lifelong Learning for Farmers initiative in India in improving rural prosperity, COL engaged the Centre for Adult Education of the University of KwaZulu Natal to conduct

an environmental scan of the agricultural development sector, in Southern Africa. The scan identified one project each in Zambia, Swaziland and South Africa for field evaluation. There was little evidence of the use of ICT or ODL in supporting small scale and subsistence farmers. The study recommended that COL could aim at developing life long learning programmes promoting the judicious use of radio for supporting agricultural extension services and farmers and linking them with well-regarded tertiary agricultural institutions and credit facilities.

In South Africa the Kgautswane Community was identified for in-depth field research where other examples of community development exist. It appears that improving agricultural extension services by the use of radio and ODL could be a valuable contribution. In partnership with OLSET, six radio programmes addressing poverty reduction have been developed. COL plans to develop a radio-based educational programme to promote the L3 farmers concept in Southern Africa.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Literacy and Livelihoods

South Africa took part in the “International Literacy and Livelihoods Experts Meeting: Learning for Life in a Changing World”, held in Vancouver in 2004. A report is available.

ODL and Development

Three South African participants joined delegates from 15 countries at a high-level Institute in Canada in 2005 to explore the relationship between open, distance and technology-related learning (ODL) and development. A publication was produced.

Training in Leadership and Management in Higher Education

Over the 2003-2006 triennium, COL and the Association of Commonwealth Universities have organised annually, at the University of Abertay, Dundee, a strategic development programme for leaders of Commonwealth universities in Africa. Seven South African delegates took part in these events in 2003 and 2004 representing Stellenbosch University, the University of Fort Hare, the University of Port Elizabeth, the University of the Free State, Rhodes University and the Council of Higher Education. The 2005 event, at which South Africa was also represented, had a different format as reported above under “Advocacy”.

Training in the Management of Teacher Education

In the period 2003-2006 COL has held Management Development Institutes in India and Singapore for college principals and senior administrators from Teacher Training Institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa. Representatives of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, the University of Fort Hare, and UNISA participated in these events in 2004 and 2005.

ICTs in Teacher Education

OLSET took part in a roundtable on quality issues in the use of ICTs in Teacher Education organised by COL in Nigeria with the National Teachers' Institute and the National Commission of Colleges of Education.

Copyright

COL co-sponsored the Africa Copyright Forum Conference in Uganda in 2005. South Africa was one of 23 countries participating. The "Africa Copyright and Access to Information Alliance" was established and an Interim Board elected to start addressing copyright and related issues in Africa with special reference to education, libraries and people with disabilities.

Course Writing

In the development of UNISA's B.A. programme in Open and Distance Learning COL has supported UNISA's Institute for Continuing Education in organising two workshops for ODL writers in 2003 and 2004. A COL staff member is one of the external academic readers of the degree modules.

Instructional Design

COL held an instructional design workshop for UNISA staff in 2005.

Open Source Software

COL co-sponsored a Free and Open Source Software Federation of Africa meeting in Kenya and enabled key open source and copyright practitioners from South Africa to attend. The meeting helped a wide range of active players in the field to engage in debate that is helping to motivate the writing of open source programme code across Africa.

Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning

A significant South African delegation, with two of its members sponsored by COL, took an active part in the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in New Zealand in 2004. A similar delegation from South Africa is anticipated at the 4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning to be held in Jamaica in late 2006.

Young Professionals

In the 2003-2006 period, South Africa has hosted eight interns under COL's Young Professionals Attachment Programme. They have worked at CIVICUS, British Council Southern Africa, World Alliance for Citizenship Participation; the British Council Governance Programme and Fahamu - Networks for Social Justice (an NGO).

EVALUATION

Informal

UNISA staff are complimentary about the quality of the support they have received from COL in developing the B.A. programme in ODL. However, UNISA's administration would like to be more involved in the coordination of the various COL activities taking place within the institution. This will be addressed at a joint COL/UNISA planning meeting in August 2006.

Formal

COL commissioned Dr. Patrick Spaven to conduct a formal and independent evaluation of its work in 2003-2006. Some of his scrutiny touched on COL's work in South Africa. These quotations come from his report.

SADC-CDE (formerly SARDEC)

"It is essential that good relations are established between SARDEC and important organisations like SADC, otherwise SARDEC could be sidelined. This is particularly important given that SADC is likely, within the next year or so, to be the hub for an important African Development Bank ODL capacity-building programme for which SARDEC could provide useful services." (Note: this has now been addressed as the change of name implies.)

Schoolnet Africa (SNA)

"Schoolnet Africa attributes much of its success as an organisation to COL's strategic thinking and what it regards as timely and relevant interventions. Although in money terms COL has been a minor partner – just 4% of SNA's funding over the last four years – SNA assessed COL's interventions in their area very favourably compared to much more substantially resourced donor programmes, whose interventions SNA felt were not always well-timed and appropriate."

Quality of Teacher Education

"The teacher education quality indicators have been favourably received by the organisations taking part in the process. This was made more likely by the highly participatory nature of the process. It also seems to have been an efficient process that kept to its planned timetable."

Fighting HIV/AIDS Stigma

"The (Valley Trust) acquired the capacity to create good quality videos which have been seen by a high proportion of their target groups."

LOOKING FORWARD

South Africa will continue to be one of COL's most important partners, particularly as it takes forward the Three-year Plan for 2006-2009 with its greater alignment with development goals. South Africa will be an important contributor to the success of the Plan working with COL and other countries to build on expertise in open, distance and technology enhanced learning.

SWAZILAND

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Swaziland is a small state of the Commonwealth and a regular contributor to COL's budget.

SUMMARY

In the 2003-2006 planning period COL's work with Swaziland has included:

- Supporting numerous representatives from Swaziland in attending professional development programmes, forums and policy development initiatives in the areas of copyright, open schooling and ODL;
- Supporting active participation from Swaziland in the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) initiative; and
- Various visits by the President of COL and COL education specialists to discuss country specific needs and planning on how COL can assist Swaziland in the attainment of its education and agriculture objectives.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in partnership to Strengthen National Systems

The President of COL, Sir John Daniel, visited the University of Swaziland in August 2005. The University faces severe capacity constraints and would like to upgrade its distance education infrastructure.

The President met the Minister of Education, Ms. Constance Simelane in August 2005. Swaziland sees an increasing role for ODL but will need help in translating this into policy and organisation. COL will explore holding an ODL policy forum including participation from Swaziland.

COL sponsored three members from the University of Swaziland to visit the British Open University to investigate the management of a distance education institution.

Working with Regional Partners

Swaziland attended the Africa Copyright Forum Conference which COL co-sponsored. The event was held in Kampala in November 2005 and was attended by 120 delegates from 23 countries. The “Africa Copyright and Access to Information Alliance” was established at the conference and an Interim Board was elected to start the process of addressing copyright and related issues in Africa, with particular reference to education, libraries and people with disabilities.

COL and the Minister of Education (Botswana) agreed to the establishment of a regional centre to support Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) countries (of which Swaziland is a part) to develop their ODL systems. A Memorandum of Agreement between COL and the Ministry of Education Botswana was signed in June 2004. The SADC Ministers are being informed of the development of the Centre.

Open Schooling

Swaziland participated in the Forum on Open Schooling for Secondary Education, which was held in Botswana in October 2004, to raise awareness and to advocate for the establishment of open schools in the Sub-Saharan region.

Strategic Planning

A Senior administrator from the University of Swaziland attended the 5th “Managing Change, Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education – a strategic development programme for leaders of Commonwealth Universities in Africa” Conference in Scotland in August 2004.

Preparation and use of learning materials

Swaziland was a partner in the initiative: “Increasing Access to Secondary School Level Education through the production of Quality Learning Materials” which was initiated at a meeting organised by COL. The meeting was attended by senior Ministry of Education officials and heads of distance education institutions from a number of Sub-Saharan countries in the Commonwealth. Through the project, ODL materials on English, Mathematics and Science at the junior secondary school level were produced. The materials on English and Science have been completed and the materials on Mathematics are being piloted.

Improving Prosperity for Farmers

The report: "Lifelong Learning for Subsistence and Small Scale Farmers" was based on the environmental scan and three case studies in Southern Africa including one on the Swaziland Agricultural Extension Service. The report found that while there are Internet services which provide a range of information and training opportunities, they are not generally within the reach of small scale farmers and that there is no evidence that they are being used by this group in Southern Africa. The report recommended that the "agriculture extension services" appears to be the most obvious point at which COL could become involved in the life long learning for farmers (L3 Farmers) in Southern Africa. Judicious use of the radio by the extension services could ensure that both extension officers and farmers receive relevant information and knowledge.

AIDS awareness and prevention

COL has helped the AIDS Support Centre (TASC) by providing video equipment and training, enabling it to produce weekly programmes that are broadcasted on national TV. The core role of TASC is testing people for HIV and counselling them and training counsellors. COL visited TASC in December 2005 to look at any technological issues/training that TASC might need, assess the situation with the national broadcaster, Swazi TV, who has been broadcasting TASC's weekly AIDS information programme.

Achieving Development Goals through ODL

Swaziland attended the high level institute hosted by COL in Vancouver in May 2005 to explore the relationship between ODL and development. The Institute provided an excellent opportunity for the participants to dialogue across the boundaries of disciplines and functions. The dialogue was facilitated and structured to maximise participation and to ensure the outcome of producing a publication that would address the relationship between ODL and development.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Swaziland is an active participant in the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL sponsored one delegate from Swaziland to attend the 3rd Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning which was held in partnership with Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ) in Dunedin, New Zealand in July 2004.

In the second phase of the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme, five students from Swaziland have successfully completed the Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). The five students are now working towards the Masters of Arts in Distance Education offered by IGNOU.

LOOKING FORWARD

Swaziland's successful partnership with COL in 2003-2006 has laid the foundations for future progress in the next planning period 2006-2009. In this period COL will work with Swaziland in three main areas: education, learning for livelihoods and the human environment. COL will also continue to work with WHO and national authorities in Swaziland to support its health media empowerment initiative. Swaziland's commitment to VUSSC was an important element in its 2003-2006 activities and this will form a key part of its future plans to strengthen its education system.

TANZANIA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Tanzania has had a long association with COL, especially through the Open University of Tanzania. The intensity of Tanzania's involvement with COL increased in 2003-2006 as it made regular voluntary contributions to the budget. A Tanzanian, Dr. Penina Mlamba of the Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE), currently represents the Africa region on COL's Board of Governors.

SUMMARY

In the 2003-2006 period, COL's assistance to Tanzania concentrated on professional development by making it possible for senior people from the education system to attend a variety of training events in other countries. Tanzania has also been involved in the collaborative development of learning materials that are now being used in the Institute for Adult Education. Recently COL has equipped the Christian Social Services Commission (CSSC) with a Health Media Unit.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Preparation and use of learning materials

Tanzania was one of eight Southern African countries working with COL on STAMP 2000+ a five year programme of learning materials creation aimed at teachers and administrators in Science, Mathematics and Technology. Forty-six modules have been prepared and 300 educators trained in their use.

Tanzania is part of the programme on Increasing Access to Secondary School Level Education through Quality Learning Materials. Materials on English and Science are complete and in use by the Institute of Adult Education.

Through the Institute for Adult Education COL has supported the review and use of materials for promoting Civic Education and Human Rights.

Two representatives of the Open University of Tanzania took part in a meeting in Mauritius in 2003 to review possible use of the Commonwealth Executive MBA and MPA programmes.

Health awareness

COL partnered with the World Health Organization and the CSSC to address the issue of HIV/AIDS in Tanzania. COL set up a Health Media Unit with CSSC so that it was able to produce video materials on HIV/AIDS. These productions are distributed across the country through “village cinema” events, radio and television.

Institutional links

COL facilitated a meeting between the Vice-Chancellors of the Open University of Tanzania and the National Open University of Nigeria in 2006 to explore future collaboration

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL facilitated staff development at the Institute for Adult Education by linking it to a Certificate Course in Distance Education developed by the International Extension College and now being run by Kyambogo University, Uganda.

COL organised Management Development Workshops for Senior African Teacher Educators in India (2) and Singapore in 2003, 2004 and 2005. There were seven participants from Tanzania representing the Ministry of Education and Culture; Ilonga Teachers College; Korogwe Teachers College; Marangu Teachers College; Monduli Teachers College; Ndala Teachers College; and Vikindu Teachers College.

A senior official from the Ministry of Education and Culture attended an International Roundtable on Innovations in Teacher Education: International Practices in Quality Assurance held in India in 2004.

There were four Tanzanian participants in the African Regional Conference on Teacher Training and the Use of ICT in the Classroom that was held in Kenya in 2003.

COL has assisted the development of open schooling through the participation of three Tanzanians in the two-week programme on establishing open schooling systems offered at the National Institute for Open Schooling in India in 2004 as well as two in the Forum on Open Schooling for Secondary Education held in Botswana in the same year.

COL and the ACU organised a professional development series: Managing Change: Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education – a Programme for Leaders of Commonwealth Universities in Africa, in Scotland in 2003 and 2004. Tanzania’s three participants represented the University of Dar es Salaam, the Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology, and the Mzumbe University.

COL has helped to train Tanzanians in eLearning through attendance at a workshop for Science and Mathematics teachers at the University of Melbourne and a workshop on policy and practice in Nairobi, Kenya in 2004.

Representatives of the Vocational Training and Education Authority (VETA) and the Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology participated in a training of trainers workshop in Mauritius in 2005 in the Use of ICTs and the Application of COL's TVET Diploma curriculum.

Two representatives from the Institute for Adult Education took part in a meeting in Uganda in 2006 to familiarise themselves with the IEC-developed programme, Introduction to Distance Education: a course for managers and practitioners.

In addition COL sponsored Tanzanian delegates to attend the biennial Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in New Zealand in 2004 and an advocacy meeting with briefing for Permanent Secretaries and Senior Education Officials organised by the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa in 2005.

EVALUATION

“COL has been playing a great role, hence becoming an enhancing tool for the achievement of Open and Distance Learning in Tanzania”.

(From “Provision of Education through Open and Distance Learning in Tanzania” presented by the Honourable Margareth Sitta, Minister for Education and Vocational Training, 12 May 2006)

LOOKING FORWARD

The period 2003-2006 was one of renewed co-operation between COL and Tanzania. The progress in this period, particularly in the area of professional development, is set to yield further positive results in 2006-2009 as Tanzania develops open schooling to expand opportunities at secondary level.

UGANDA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Uganda's higher education system is one of the oldest in East Africa with Makerere University providing education to the entire region. It also has high adult literacy and high enrolment in primary education. These are solid foundations but more development is needed in secondary and tertiary education especially in the use of open and distance learning and information and communications technology (ODL/ICT). Uganda's economy has great potential with significant natural resources but its education and vocational training systems need to focus better on preparing people to build that economy.

In the area of healthcare, Uganda has been a pioneer in showing how the pandemic HIV/AIDS can be dealt with through appropriate policies of awareness building, education and medical support.

Uganda has been regular contributor to COL's budget and has been an avid supporter of COL activities.

SUMMARY

In 2003-2006 COL's partnership with Uganda has included a number of open schooling initiatives including offering assistance to Kyambogo University (KYU) to set up an open school. Uganda is involved in the NEPAD e-School Initiative and Schoolnet Africa project which helped the country with the implementation of ICT in its schools for teacher training and other purposes. COL has empowered the KYU to deliver the IEC-developed "Introduction to Distance Education" to institutions in other countries. COL has also made it possible for senior people from the education system to attend a variety of training events in other countries where they have been able to share expertise and exchange best practices.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working with local partners

Working in partnership with the Uganda Library and Information Association, COL supported the African Copyright Forum at Makerere University in November 2005. The “African Copyright and Access to Information Alliance” was established at the conference and an Interim Board was elected to start the process of addressing copyright and related issues in Africa, with particular reference to education, libraries and people with disabilities.

Open schooling

Eighteen delegates from Uganda participated in the National Consultative Forum on policy for open and distance learning education in Kenya in September 2004 to raise awareness of and to advocate for the establishment of open schools in the Sub-Saharan region. In addition, COL has assisted in raising awareness of open schooling through supporting the participation of three Ugandans in the two-week programme on establishing open schooling systems offered at the National Institute of Open Schooling in India in August.

Uganda was involved in the NEPAD e-School Initiative which COL is evaluating. The E-School Demonstrator Project selected six schools in Uganda to be e-Schools for the implementation of ICT. The project was free to schools in the demonstration year. Through this project, teachers were trained to teach ICT skills and be able to use ICT to deliver their lessons.

COL and Schoolnet Africa worked together to support the use of ICT in teacher training institutions in Uganda. The first workshop took place in November 2004 in which in-country and donor partners came together to agree on the project concept and plan for working with teacher training institutions. The Schoolnet Toolkits were available for international meetings on schoolnets/e-schools.

COL and the International Extension College (IEC) supported the expansion of an IEC-developed training programme “Introduction to Distance Education: a course for managers and practitioners” for use at the KYU to empower its distance education personnel. KYU now has the materials and expertise to enable institutions in other countries to have access to or offer the programme.

COL offered assistance to KYU to establish an open school.

Preparation and use of Learning Materials

COL supported the participation of one Ugandan from Makerere University at the Workshop to Develop a Package of Best Practices in Quality Assurance for Teacher Education in India in February 2006.

Uganda was one of eight Southern African countries working with COL on STAMP 2000+, a five year programme of learning materials creation aimed at teachers and administrators in Science, Mathematics and Technology as well as General Education. Forty-six modules have been developed and 300 educators were trained in the process of creating the materials.

Supporting development through better public information

Through the Community Radio Project, a solar-powered FM community radio station was set up by COL reaching a target audience of one million Luo speakers in northern Uganda. Staff were trained to produce programmes on health, agriculture and gender issues to reach to the mass audiences.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL organised Management Development Workshops for Senior African Teacher Educators in India (2) and Singapore in 2003, 2004 and 2005. There were ten participants from Uganda representing: Rukungiri Primary Teachers College, National Teachers College Masindi, Loro Primary Teachers College, Kakoba National Teachers College, National Teachers College Unyama, Nakaseke Primary Teachers College, National Teachers College Nagongera, Busubizi Primary Teachers College, National Teachers College Kabale, and St. Mary's Primary Teachers College.

COL and the ACU organised a professional development series: Managing Change, Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education – a Programme for Leaders of Commonwealth Universities in Africa, in Scotland in 2004 and 2005. Uganda's two participants represented the Islamic University of Uganda and Inter-University Council for East Africa.

COL has helped to train two Ugandans in eLearning through attendance at a hands-on workshop on creating online study materials as well as supporting and facilitating learners.

One Ugandan participant attended the African Regional Conference on Teacher Training and the Use of ICT in the Classroom that was held in Kenya in November 2003.

LOOKING FORWARD

Uganda has used its partnership with COL very effectively in 2003-2006. It has used this period to consolidate systems already in place as well as to expand into key areas such as open schooling. It is now well placed to become a regional leader sharing expertise and building more networks with its neighbours. In 2006-2009 COL's work with Uganda will concentrate on formulating an ODL/ICT integrated national education policy with the focus on higher education and continuing efforts to expand open schooling and strengthen teacher training. In this period there is also scope to initiate work in the area of using media to promote better health education.

ZAMBIA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Zambia has an established history of distance education with a directorate of distance education functioning in the University of Zambia from the 1970s. While Zambia needs to increase the use of open and distance learning and information and communications technology (ODL/ICT) in all areas of education and training it also possesses ODL expertise and experience which could be used in the region. The Open University of Zambia is one of the three open universities in the Commonwealth countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. Educational needs in Zambia include adult literacy, universal primary education and increasing participation in tertiary education with a focus on vocational skill development in areas related to agriculture, mining and industries.

SUMMARY

In 2003-2006 COL worked with Zambia to develop a range of learning materials and plan a strategy for teacher education. COL President Sir John Daniel visited in September 2005 to attend a one day seminar with Zambian education ministers. COL has also sponsored senior people from the education system to attend a variety of training events in other countries. This has led to a valuable exchange of experience and best practice.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Strengthening national commitment through awareness-raising

COL organised a one day seminar on ODL during September 2005 at which Sir John Daniel, President of COL and all three Ministers of Education, Government of Zambia participated. This has led to an increased awareness of the potential of ODL for development in the country.

Strategic planning

COL undertook a review of teacher education strategy in Zambia with funding from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). An Education Specialist from COL acted as Leader of the Consultancy Team and the final consultancy report was submitted to the Ministry of Education in December 2005.

Open schooling

COL assisted the development of open schooling through supporting the participation of two Zambians in the two-week programme on establishing open schooling systems offered at the National Institute of Open Schooling in India in August 2004. It also supported the attendance of two Gambians at the Forum on Open Schooling for Secondary Education held in Botswana in the same year.

Literacy

Zambia is one of the beneficiaries of a recently concluded COL Literacy Project with special funding from the British Department for International Development. The project demonstrated the use of technology-based community learning centres to support literacy work with a focus on reading skills. The Government of Zambia has indicated that it will carry the work forward into other regions of the country.

Preparation and use of learning materials

Zambia was one of eight southern African countries working with COL on STAMP 2000+, a five-year programme of learning materials creation aimed at teachers and administrators in Science, Mathematics and Technology as well as General Education. Forty-six modules have been developed and 300 educators were trained in the process of creating the materials.

Zambia is part of the programme on Increasing Access to Secondary School Level Education through Quality Learning Materials. Materials on English and Science are complete and in use by the Directorate of Distance Education, Ministry of Education.

Writers from Zambia received training at a COL-organised workshop in Kenya in February 2004 on preparing ODL materials to provide skills training and knowledge for caregivers working with orphans and vulnerable children. COL then piloted the print-based flexible learning materials with staff working at selected NGOs in Zambia - ZINGO, the SOS Village, and two Care, Zambia sites. The piloting, which was co-ordinated locally through the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative, indicated that all learners and facilitators were pleased with the materials – as well as with the delivery method which was very new to them.

COL supported the pilot implementation of a distance learning programme in the agronomic management of cowpeas and soya beans in Eastern and Southern Africa. It was implemented by the In-Service Training Trust in collaboration with training institutions in Uganda, Tanzania, Namibia and Zambia.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL organised Management Development Workshops for Senior African Teacher Educators in India (2) and Singapore in 2003, 2004 and 2005. There were eight participants from Zambia representing: Mufulira College of Education, Zambia Institute of Special Education (2), National In-service Teachers' College (NISTCOL), Charles Lwanga College of Education, Copperbelt College of Education, Mongu College of Education, Chipata College of Education and Copperbelt Secondary Teachers College.

COL and the Association of Commonwealth Universities organised a professional development series: Managing Change, Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education – a Programme for Leaders of Commonwealth Universities in Africa, in Scotland from 2003 to 2005. Zambia's one participant represented the Copperbelt University in August 2003.

COL sponsored three Zambian delegates to attend the biennial Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in New Zealand in 2004 and an advocacy meeting with briefing for Permanent Secretaries and Senior Education Officials organised by the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa in 2005.

COL supported the participation of one Zambian at a high-level institute in Vancouver in May 2005 to explore the relationship between open, distance and technology-mediated learning and development. The Institute provided an opportunity for the participants to dialogue across the boundaries of disciplines and functions.

COL helped Zambian institutions to use ODL for capacity building of agriculturists at a two-week workshop in Ghana in September 2004. The main objective of the workshop was to share ideas to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of agricultural extension agents through the use of ODL.

Under COL's Young Professionals Attachment Programme, two interns were placed in Zambia at the In-Service Training Trust and at the Commonwealth Youth Programme Africa Centre.

Being a Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE) member, Zambia benefited from COL's activities with SADC-CDE to develop members ODL capabilities.

COL supported two Zambian academics representing Copperbelt University and University of Zambia to attend the first Distance Education and Teacher Training in Africa (DETA) Conference in Pretoria in August 2005.

LOOKING FORWARD

The period of 2003-2006 saw a number of very valuable initiatives take root in Zambia. These have laid the foundations for further progress in the 2006-2009 triennium. In this period, the focus of COL's collaboration with Zambia will be the education sector with activities planned in the areas of capacity building and quality assurance in teacher education (building on the results of the review of teacher education which COL completed in December 2005). Open schooling will be strengthened by building up the numbers of teachers and improving course material. A research study in the area of cross-border tertiary education is also planned.



Asia

**Bangladesh | Brunei Darussalam | India | Malaysia | Maldives |
Pakistan | Singapore | Sri Lanka**



REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE FOR ASIA

As India is the only region in which COL has a dedicated regional centre the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) also serves as a regional centre for COL's activities. The Centre publishes the quarterly newsletter *EduComm Asia* as well as a range of knowledge resources and manuals on topics such as: Multimedia for Teacher Developers; eLearning, Principles; Procedures and Practices; Teleconferencing Manual; and Educational Research Toolkits.

COMMONWEALTH EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION/MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Numerically, open and distance learning is dominated by the Open Universities of South Asia which have worked together to develop the Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration/Master of Public Administration (CEMBA/MPA). The programmes are the outcome of collaboration between COL and four open universities in South Asia: Allama Iqbal Open University (Pakistan), Bangladesh Open University, Indira Gandhi National Open University (India) and the Open University of Sri Lanka. Established in 2002, the CEMBA/MPA programme is now expanding through partnership with the National Open University of Nigeria and Wawasan Open University of Malaysia.

THE CHALLENGES OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL POVERTY REDUCTION

COL commissioned Dr. Scott McLean, Director, Continuing Education, University of Calgary, to conduct research to understand and improve the application of open and distance learning (ODL) strategies to the challenges of agricultural development and rural poverty reduction based on the experiences of five national institutions in Asia. The study included the University of the South Pacific, School of Agriculture and Food Technology, Samoa and one institute each in India, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand.

The study recommended that COL and other stakeholders develop further understanding of innovation and best practice related to ODL for rural poverty reduction and agricultural development around the world and to promote holistic and integrated processes of strategic planning and capacity building among institutions having a mandate to apply ODL methods to the challenges of rural poverty reduction and agricultural development.

SOUTH ASIA CONSORTIUM FOR TEACHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT (SACTED)

COL facilitated the creation of SACTED in 2004. Since then SACTED has met in India and developed close links with the National Council for Teacher Education. SACTED may become a mechanism for extending the work of the Centre for Environmental Education more widely in South Asia.

BANGLADESH

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

COL has a long history of involvement in open and distance learning (ODL) in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Open University (BOU) was established on the basis of a consultancy carried out by COL in the early 1990s. Subsequently, COL has worked with BOU to provide critical support for institutional capacity building. COL's work in Bangladesh has been varied. It ranges from providing institutional consultancies, capacity building, and support for wider exposure to Bangladesh professionals, to support for non formal poverty reduction and education initiatives.

SUMMARY

In the triennium 2003-2006, COL engaged with NGOs in Bangladesh to develop partnerships and networks and to expand the role of ODL in non formal education, in alternative schooling (through the Open School); advanced professional development and in the area of poverty reduction programmes. Some of these engagements have been showcased as examples of successful interventions in bringing together the use of ODL and technology with the needs of the development agenda of the country. COL has continued its support to professional development activities with BOU; while also working with NGOs like The Dhaka Asahiya Mission, Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), to expand open schooling success.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

COL-Poverty Reduction Outcomes Through Education Innovations and Networks (PROTEIN)

This programme facilitates the implementation of innovative projects that adopt ODL and information and communications technologies (ICT) for poverty reduction in the developing Commonwealth (www.col.org/protein). COL offers expertise in ODL and start-up, limited-term financial support to qualifying projects that help build human capacity to gain knowledge and skills in contributing to food security, environmental protection, rural development, nutritional education and micro-enterprise. Successful projects have a high level of inter-institutional collaboration, significant and innovative ODL and ICT use, and well-researched content and learning design to support contextually relevant rural and peri-urban capacity building for poverty reduction.

The Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha (SSS) (www.interconnection.org/sss), Bangladesh was awarded to implement “Mobile Internet Educational Unit in a Boat: Integrated Environmental Support to the Farmers of Atrai River Watershed”. SSS introduced Mobile Boat Schools with classrooms and Boat Libraries with computer labs that bring education and information resources to rural villages, docking at the riverside for specified times every day. The schools provide basic primary education with a focus on environment and human rights.

This COL-PROTEIN initiative has resulted in Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha receiving several International Awards and recognitions, including:

- Access to Learning Award 2005 of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for the pioneering approach to bridging the digital divide and commitment to providing free public access to computers and the Internet.
- Global Social Benefit Incubator 2005 of Santa Clara University (US) for the innovative work to humanity and possible impacts to the global community.
- Recognition Award of the World Bank’s Development Marketplace 2005 global competition for Mobile Internet Educational Unit on Boats project.
- Global Junior Challenge Award 2004 of the Municipality of Rome (Italy) for boat-based innovative distance learning initiatives.
- Tech Museum Award 2004 in the Intel Environment category of the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank Institute and Santa Clara University for using technology on boats to educate riverside communities on environment and sustainable farming.
- Nominated as a Member of the Governing Body of the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council by the Prime Minister’s Office of Bangladesh Government for the contribution in the distance learning and sustainable agricultural developments in Bangladesh.
- Runners-up prize in the “Environment” category in the information technology-focused Stockholm Challenge Award 2003/2004.

Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration/Master of Public Administration (CEMBA/MPA)

Three hundred thirty-three students from Bangladesh have enrolled in the CEMBA/MPA Programme in 2003-2004, developed by COL, in close collaboration with the national open universities of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, to complement the existing MBA/MPA programmes in meeting the growing demands for postgraduate-level education in business and public administration in Commonwealth countries.

Open Schooling

COL has been exploring ways to help Bangladesh provide education at the Grade Seven through Nine level for those now taking Grade One to Six with the help of NGOs, but unable to enrol in Grade Ten through Twelve that are available through the BOU Open School. The NGOs wish to offer these years of schooling through open and distance learning and the Open School would be prepared to develop the materials and accredit the programme so that students could move into BOU's senior secondary courses.

COL worked with the Open School located at the Bangladesh Open University and with CAMPE to develop a proposal to produce flexible, open learning materials covering the Grade Seven through Nine curriculums. The proposal has been partially funded, and once the materials have been developed, the plan is to deliver junior secondary school education to students that have completed basic education through programmes offered by NGOs but are unable to enrol in junior secondary school due to the unavailability of places, or because they are not able to attend full-time.

Preparation and use of learning materials

Bangladesh is one of the countries which CEMCA covers as the South Asia node for the Global Distance Education Network, which searches and provides knowledge resources for use by distance educators in the region and globally.

Good practices and case studies from Bangladesh are regularly highlighted in CEMCA's quarterly publication, *EduComm Asia* in its sections Spotlight, Case Studies, and Country Focus.

Bangladeshi scholars have contributed to publications that CEMCA has brought out (2003-2006), especially to a publication entitled *Educational Media in Asia*.

CEMCA has collaborated with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Bangkok office to produce a multimedia training package on Gender and Rural Development. The kit is targeted to academics, researchers and extension agencies in agriculture and rural development in South Asian countries with an objective to sensitise them to the various aspects of gender related issues, and to provide them with a resource tool kit to enable more effective research and work in the region. Bangladesh is one of the countries covered in this activity. This activity has been completed and the kit is distributed through the FAO offices in Bangkok for all countries in the region (2004).

Bangladesh took part in a consultative meeting organised by COL in Dhaka in 2005, for the South Asia Region on the promotion of literacy and skills training using ODL methods.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bangladesh has taken part in a wide range of COL organised regional and international activities, including:

- participation of the Vice Chancellor and seven academics from BOU at the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum in Dunedin, New Zealand, in 2004;
- involvement in the South Asian Consortium for Teacher Education (SACTED) in November 2004;
- the Round Table on Quality Assurance in Teacher Education, March 2003;
- participation in the International Conference on Technical and Vocational Education through Open Schooling, in India in February 2005;
- the “International Literacy and Livelihoods Experts Meeting: Learning for Life in a Changing World” which was held in Vancouver from 15-17 November 2004;
- Institute for education/government officials from Commonwealth developing countries for the purpose of providing them with a first-hand view and experience of an operational open school, National Institute of Open Schooling, New Delhi, India, September 2005.

LOOKING FORWARD

The period 2003-2006 saw some significant achievements in ODL in Bangladesh and these will form the basis of further progress in 2006-2009. Open schooling, regional partnership and expanding access to higher education will remain major themes.

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Brunei Darussalam was one of the founding members of COL and one of its largest donors in the organisation's early years. The First Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning was held in Brunei Darussalam in March 1999.

SUMMARY

COL's primary focus in Brunei Darussalam for the triennium 2003-2006 was to support the Ministry of Education in its ongoing efforts to provide quality education to its population. COL has supported activities aimed at the development of teacher education, with a focus on pedagogic design for eLearning and reusability of open educational resources.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Open schooling

COL worked in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam, to examine the current and potential use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to support all sectors of the education and training system. The possibility of developing a schoolnet system for Brunei Darussalam was also explored. With COL's support, a consultant from Schoolnet India carried out an environmental scan on ICT and its use in the education system in Brunei Darussalam and developed a plan for the establishment of a schoolnet structure.

LOOKING FORWARD

The work done in 2003-2006 to examine potential for setting up a schoolnet system in Brunei Darussalam is a valuable foundation for further progress in the next planning period 2006-2009. COL has already discussed a framework for the 2006-2009 plan with the Ministry of Education Brunei Darussalam.

Pedagogic design for eLearning and reusability of open educational resources will be a focus for activities in 2006-2009.

INDIA

COL activities in 2003-2006

Background

At the 1987 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Vancouver, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi led the drive to create the Commonwealth of Learning. The strong support from India that he pledged to COL has continued ever since, during a period when India's economy has been transformed and the country has become a technology leader and a prolific innovator in matters of development.

India is the largest Commonwealth country and COL is deeply engaged there. As well as continuing to assist with developments in the country itself, COL also promotes Indian expertise in other countries. It does this both by helping institutions extend their international reach, particularly into Africa and Asia, and by giving Indian experts a leading role in COL's initiatives – both in other countries and Commonwealth wide.

India has a seat on COL's Board of Governors as a major donor. One-fifth of COL's staff members hold Indian nationality, including the Vice-President, Professor Asha Kanwar. The last Indian to hold this post was the late and revered Indian educator Professor G. Ram Reddy, Chairman of the University Grants Commission and founding Vice-Chancellor of the Indira Gandhi National Open University.

SUMMARY

In 2003-2006 COL has helped India make significant progress in three areas of its development agenda in particular. Poverty and hunger are decreasing as COL's partnership approach to improving rural prosperity replicates itself in more villages. Secondary education is being extended by the expansion and extension of open schooling. A greener India will result from the improvements in environmental education that COL has supported at all levels.

COL has close partnerships with a wide range of Indian institutions aimed at capacity building, institutional development and the transfer of know-how. This has helped institutions such as the National Institute for Open Schooling, the Indira Gandhi National Open University and the Centre for Environmental Education to extend their reach into Africa and other parts of Asia.

The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) in New Delhi is the only component of COL not housed at its Vancouver headquarters. It publishes the quarterly newsletter *EduComm Asia* as well as a range of knowledge resources and manuals on topics such as: Multimedia for Teacher Developers; eLearning, Principles; Procedures and Practices; Teleconferencing Manual; and Educational Research Toolkits.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENT THEMES

Reduction of Poverty and Hunger

COL has implemented its Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3Farmers) programme in 15 villages in Tamil Nadu (TN) and the approach is now being copied spontaneously by other communities. It is designed to help poor rural farmers acquire relevant knowledge in a sustainable manner for economic advancement. Essentially COL mobilises farmers, through village associations, to identify how they might be more productive and what information they would need for this. To supply this information COL has facilitated the creation of a consortium of the TN Agricultural University, the TN Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, the University of Madras, Anna University, and the TN Open University. Commercial information and communications technologies (ICT) kiosks are used for exchanging information and for enabling the villagers to learn about quality control, insurance, and other topics relevant to more productive farming. The State Bank of India has increased its lending to farmers on the promise of higher productivity.

COL-Poverty Reduction Outcomes Through Education Innovations and Networks (PROTEIN)

This programme facilitates the implementation of innovative projects that adopt ODL and ICT for poverty reduction in the developing Commonwealth (www.col.org/protein). COL offers expertise in ODL and start-up, limited-term financial support to qualifying projects that help build human capacity to gain knowledge and skills in contributing to food security, environmental protection, rural development, nutritional education and micro-enterprise. Successful projects have a high level of inter-institutional collaboration, significant and innovative ODL and ICT use, and well-researched content and learning design to support contextually relevant rural and peri-urban capacity building for poverty reduction.

India won two awards under the programme:

- The Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad, received an award for implementing “Coping with Drought: A computer-based distance learning module for villagers in India,” in collaboration with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Hyderabad and other partners. The combined efforts of the partners contributed to ICRISAT’s efforts in developing a major initiative on “Virtual Academy for the Semi-Arid Tropics” (VASAT) that is receiving international recognition.

- The Constant Service in Developing Education and Rural Reconstruction (CONSIDER), Andhra Pradesh, received the award to assist women and girls, who stay on land while men are out deep-sea fishing, to learn community-based improved methods of post-harvest technologies for processing fish and to implement self-supportive women's co-operatives.

Education and Literacy

With respect to universal primary education and India's SSA (Education for All) programme, COL has focussed on helping with the implementation of technology-mediated teacher education, working with I-CONSENT (Indian CONSortium for School Education Transformation), the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, the National Council for Teacher Education, and the University of Delhi.

COL's ongoing partnership with the National Institute for Open Schooling (NIOS) has helped to widen access to basic and secondary education by strengthening NIOS' own capacity, by facilitating the development of open schools in various states, and by transferring NIOS' know-how to Africa.

With special funding from the UK's Department for International Development, COL conducted a successful project that demonstrated the use of technology-based community learning centres to support literacy work with a focus on reading skills, work that Indian partners are continuing.

Environment

COL, in partnership with the Centre for Environmental Education, the Indian Institute of Science and the Karnataka State Open University has facilitated the development of environmental education at various levels from the Green Teacher Diploma to postgraduate professional development for engineers.

INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Open Universities

COL President Sir John Daniel symbolised COL's long partnership with the Indira Gandhi National Open University by giving keynote speeches at two major conferences hosted by IGNOU in 2005. Through COL IGNOU has shared its expertise with the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) that has also adopted the Commonwealth Executive MBA and MPA programmes in which IGNOU has 212 students enrolled.

In collaboration with IGNOU and the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation COL has developed the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme which makes it possible for Ministry-designated individuals from Commonwealth countries to obtain postgraduate qualifications in Distance Education from IGNOU. Thirty-three students have completed a postgraduate diploma and a cohort of 50 students from Nigeria embarked on the programme in 2005.

In 2003-2006 COL has strengthened its links with some of the state open universities, notably YCMOU (Maharashtra) (workshop on Instructional Design of Multi-Media Materials and Dialogic Presentations

using EDUSAT, 2005); NSOU (West Bengal) (workshop/conference on A Culture of Quality, 2005); BRAOU (Andhra Pradesh) (workshop on Research Methodology in Open and Distance Learning for academic staff, 2005) and Faculty seminar by the COL President, (2006); and BAOU (Gujarat) (interactive seminar by COL staff with 60 study centres in 2006).

University Grants Commission

COL's partnership with the University Grants Commission and its Centre for Educational Communication (CEC) has developed strongly over the triennium, starting with a policy dialogue which resulted in a scheme for eContent development for university and college teachers and the organisation of two workshops on multi-media and eContent development. These in turn led to the development of 125 Learning Objects in five disciplines and a further workshop in 2005. CEC staff have been trained and a Technology Incubation Cell has been set up. COL and the CEC also organised a National Forum on the Impact of Developments in Communication Technology on Education and Social Message Communication (2005). The CEC held a workshop on Technology Education and the Learning Cube prior to the 2nd National Convention on eLearning Resources sponsored by COL and the UGC (Pune, June 2006). The UGC made a significant contribution to the consultative meeting that COL hosted in preparing its 2006-2009 Plan.

National Assessment and Accreditation Council

COL has developed an effective partnership with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). One focus has been the development of materials on quality assurance (QA) for higher education generally: a course to generate awareness about QA and a toolkit for training QA auditors. A second project has concentrated on QA in teacher education. COL and NAAC hosted a meeting of teacher educators from seven Commonwealth countries to identify good practices which were distilled into a set of Quality Indicators that were launched in 2006 and are being used around the Commonwealth.

National Institute for Open Schooling

COL's partnership with the National Institute for Open Schooling (NIOS), which also involves CEMCA, has developed strongly during the triennium with three aims.

The first is to build capacity within NIOS. This has included: conducting a training needs assessment and developing training strategies; developing staff members' ability to produce audio and video material in support of NIOS Media Enhancement Project; supporting two workshops on Instructional Design for print-based materials in 2005 and 2006; and sending staff to The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand for training in the delivery and support of technical and vocational education. COL supported a major conference (2006) on Quality Assurance in Technical/Vocational Training through Open Schooling that promoted the integration of skill training and basic education within NIOS.

A second aim is to support the development of new and existing State Open Schools within India. A 2005 conference, sponsored by COL, on the Promotion and Expansion of Open Schooling attracted 15 secretaries of state and many eminent educationalists.

The third aim is to help other Commonwealth countries benefit from India's expertise and experience in open schooling. In 2004 NIOS hosted a week-long training event for 14 educators from Africa and the Pacific and a similar event in 2005 attracted other participants from Africa and South Asia. To further the development of open schooling more widely in South Asia, COL is now supporting NIOS' links with Sri Lanka's National Institute of Education and the Open School of the Bangladesh Open University.

National Council of Educational Research and Training

COL has a Memorandum of Agreement with the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to create a distance/online version of an international diploma course in guidance and counselling and held two workshops in 2004 to train NCERT staff for this purpose. In the same year NCERT also hosted a management development institute for 12 principals of teacher-training colleges from Sub-Saharan Africa with the aim of improving the quality and quantity of teacher training in support of the goal of Education for All. CEMCA and NCERT, in collaboration with NIOS, organised an eLearning Workshop for about 30 Teacher Developers of Multimedia Content.

I-CONSENT (Indian CONSortium for School Education Transformation)

Through its links with the Maharashtra Knowledge Corporation Limited (MKCL) COL has been involved from the beginning in the development of I-CONSENT. In 2004 COL and MKCL organised a meeting on IT-enabled Teacher Education in India in order to plan courses on this topic for nationwide use. This was followed, early in 2005 by a course planning meeting convened by COL and I-CONSENT with a national workshop three months later. At a meeting in September 2005 at the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education the I-CONSENT partners agreed to finalise a proposal for in-service teacher training for submission to the Government of India and the State Government of Maharashtra.

Centre for Environmental Education

COL has had a fruitful partnership with the Centre for Environmental Education (CEE) going back to an instructional design workshop held in 2002. Further COL workshops on distance learning module design in 2004 facilitated the announcement of the CEE's decision to become a dual-mode institute at an international conference on Education for a Sustainable Future in January 2005. A Green Teacher course and Diploma in Environmental Education were launched at that time. Since then COL has continued to support the CEE with follow-up meetings and has also facilitated the use of CEE's distance learning offerings by the National Teachers' Institute, Nigeria.

Rajiv Gandhi Foundation

COL supports the work of the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation. In collaboration with IGNOU it has developed self-instructional materials intended to improve the effectiveness and productivity of staff in non-governmental organisations (NGOs). One outcome is courses that will form part of a certificate programme for those working with street children.

Agricultural institutions

COL has supported the expansion of the use of technology-mediated learning for agricultural education in India through a workshop for senior staff from agricultural universities and the Indian Council for Agricultural Research.

India is also an important node in COL's extensive network of relationships with national and international agricultural research organisations. COL has advised the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) about its outreach work and helped it to develop an "Edugrid" of learning materials and take the lead in creating the Virtual Academy for the Semi-Arid Tropics. This involves open universities, agricultural research institutions and organisations using ICTs for development in India and Sahelian Africa. The aim is sustainable rural development and food security. As an example COL has initiated collaboration between IGNOU and the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan aimed at developing a course that would help poor communities generate income through the use of bamboo and rattan.

COL has also worked in partnership with the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU). Its work with TNAU Media Unit was originally focussed on agricultural methods and training with farmers in Tamil Nadu. Since the issues of HIV/AIDS prevention and stigma in the rural areas of India is a growing problem, COL has worked with the Media Unit to update their technology and expertise to deliver health training to targeted groups. Videos produced in the rural areas of Tamil Nadu State are currently being delivered to audiences in the villages.

INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

Other countries have great interest in India's expertise in many areas. One of COL's roles is to facilitate contacts between Indian institutions and potential overseas partners and to ensure the presence of Indian specialists at regional and international meetings. This is a partial list of the work COL has done under this heading in 2003-2006.

Literacy and Livelihoods

India participated in the International Literacy and Livelihoods Experts Meeting held in Canada in 2004 and the University of Delhi is leading the creation, with CEMCA and COL, of a Literacy and Livelihoods Network linking the five Commonwealth countries of South Asia.

Literacy and Skills Training in West Africa

The National Institute for Information Technology (NIIT) is partnering with COL and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on a joint project in literacy and skills training. This is set within the framework of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) with funding from the African Development Bank.

Literacy and Skills Training in South Asia

In 2005 COL organised in Dhaka, Bangladesh, a consultative meeting for the South Asia Region on the promotion of literacy and skills training by using ODL methods to take activities to scale.

Global Distance Education Network

CEMCA is the South Asia node for the Global Distance Education Network (GDENet) which finds and provides knowledge resources for distance educators in the region.

Gender and Rural Development

CEMCA is working with the Bangkok Office of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation to produce and distribute a multi-media training package on Gender and Rural Development for academics, researchers and extension agencies in India and South Asia. The training resource is available on the FAO-RAP website. www.fao.or.th/In-depth_focus/gender/index.htm

South Asia Consortium for Teacher Education Development (SACTED)

COL facilitated the creation of SACTED in 2004. Since then SACTED has met in India and developed close links with the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). SACTED may become a mechanism for extending the work of the Centre for Environmental Education more widely in South Asia.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the 2003-2006 triennium, COL has facilitated Indian participation in a host of international events. As well as contributing to the professional development of the individuals involved, such events are an important vehicle for publicising and sharing Indian approaches to contemporary challenges.

Open, Distance and Technology-Mediated Learning and Development

Two representatives from India took part in a high-level institute on this topic in Vancouver in 2005 which has resulted in a publication on ODL and development.

Application of Multi-media in the Schooling Sector using Satellites

This international symposium, jointly organised by COL and the Indian Space Research Organisation in Ahmedabad, attracted experts from Africa, Asia and the other countries of South Asia. It served to launch the process of content development for EDUSAT and enabled Indian educators to learn from the experience of other countries.

Content Development for Community Radio:

CEMCA has supported content development workshops with the campus-community radio stations of the University of Pune and Karnataka State Open University, which have broadcast content developed by women working with two NGOs, the Foundation for Research in Community Health (FRCH) and IT for Change (ITFC).

Managing Community Radio Stations

An international workshop for managers of community radio stations was held in Chennai in 2005, bringing together expertise ranging from studio technicians to station managers, government officials, academics and NGO leaders. A manual on managing community radio stations is being developed. Those trained in the content development workshop also participated in this event to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how community radio is managed.

Research Methodology in ODL

A workshop for 30 mid-career Indian academics from eight states was held in 2005 in Hyderabad in association with the G. Ram Reddy Research Academy of Distance Education.

IT-Enabled Teacher Education in India

COL's association with I-CONSENT, noted earlier, has been an important mechanism for capacity-building in the use of ICTs and ODL in teacher education.

Young Professionals

Under COL's Young Professionals Attachment Programme India has hosted interns at the International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics, UNIFEM's Global Programme on HIV/AIDS, the Centre for Environmental Education, the Commonwealth Youth Programme's Asia Regional Office and the International Planned Parenthood Federation South Asia Regional Office.

Digital Libraries

CEMCA sponsored ten participants from India to the first International Conference on Digital Libraries held in New Delhi in 2004.

Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning

COL sponsored 35 delegates from India to the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in New Zealand in 2004.

EVALUATION

COL commissioned Dr. Patrick Spaven to conduct a formal and independent evaluation of its work in 2003-2006. Several of his case studies involved COL programmes in India. The following are some samples of quotations from his conclusions:

Reduction of Poverty and Hunger - Lifelong Learning for Farmers

“Meetings with farmers in four of the villages produced a wave of personal accounts of benefit, ranging from improvements in milk yields, to attitude change such as a determination to plan for, rather than be resigned to, the future. Some women, in particular, appear to be experiencing transformational change in their lives.”

“Driving all this is the confidence and empowerment that the learning process, the expanding access to information through ICT, the prospect of financial independence are generating.”

“Self-replication is beginning. Three neighbouring villages have formed associations for implementing the model in their villages with minimal help from the project.”

Education for All – Open Schooling

“COL is credited by its working partners with a significant increase in awareness and interest in open schooling in Asia and Africa. NIOS is an influential organisation in its field in India and in other countries; and it gives COL credit for raising its profile and increasing its credibility in both national and international arenas. It was originally not sure that its own model and experience were replicable elsewhere. COL gave it the confidence to look and reach outwards. Open school partners consulted from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan traced their current efforts back to awareness of the activities of COL and NIOS.”

“COL’s contribution is inevitably small. An important question is whether its impact is greater than could be expected given the scale of its inputs. In the case of COL’s work in partnership with NIOS the answer is certainly yes.”

Education for All – Teacher Education

“The teacher education quality indicators have been favourably received by the organisations taking part in the process. This was made more likely by the highly participatory nature of the process. It also seems to have been an efficient process which kept to its planned timetable.”

Environmental Education

“In most senses this looks like an effective project to date... The partnership has been harmonious. The Centre for Environmental Education is now very satisfied with COL’s inputs... The course concept, materials and methodology are of high quality. They encourage an interactive, multi-disciplinary, locally

relevant approach to studying the environment and sustainable development. This is unusual in Indian schools. The evaluator met a group of participants from the first pilot batch. Their enthusiasm for the course was palpable.”

LOOKING FORWARD

India will continue to have a full and fruitful partnership with COL as it extends and enhances its open, distance and technology enhanced learning systems in the future. Learning for development, improving rural prosperity and more sustainable environmental policies will be a focus of this work. The close partnerships COL has developed with Indian institutions have laid the foundations for future co-operation. India’s progress in areas such as the extension of open schooling and the implantation of the lifelong learning for farmers (L3 Farmers) will be building blocks for the period 2006-2009.

MALAYSIA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Malaysia has been a consistent supporter of COL. Its contribution to COL is most visibly reflected in that one of its eminent citizens and educators, Dato' Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan was the President and Chief Executive Officer of COL from 1996 to 2004. The current Chairman of COL's Board of Governors, Mr. Lewis Perinbam O.C., is of Malaysian origin. Malaysia is a contributor to the COL budget.

SUMMARY

In the period 2003-2006 COL's engagement with Malaysia became much more visible. This period of increased activity coincided with the establishment of the Open University of Malaysia. The increased level of partnership between COL and this rapidly growing economy and educational system has already greatly benefited other Asian Commonwealth countries as well as Malaysia itself.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Improving teacher training

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in September 2003 between Tamil Virtual University, TMI-Nusantara Consultants Sdn Bhd. (Malaysia) and COL to provide an opportunity for Tamil school teachers in Malaysia to upgrade their knowledge and qualifications in Tamil so that their quality of teaching in their mother tongue (Tamil) could be improved.

Facilitating international partnerships and debate

The Government of Malaysia hosted the ICT and Gender Forum: Optimising Opportunities in Kuala Lumpur in August 2003. This forum was organised by COL and various partners including the Global

Knowledge Partnership (GKP), UNESAP, UNESCO, IDRC, Asian Pacific Women's Information Network Centre and the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity. Over 700 delegates from around the world attended the Forum.

The Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration/Master of Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programme is set to be launched in Malaysia after the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Wawasan Open University College and COL

Supported by the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), six Indian educational administrators from the University Grants Commission, India and the Consortium for Educational Communication, India, went on a study tour to the Open University of Malaysia, the Multimedia University, the Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcast Development, and the Asia Pacific Broadcast Union in Malaysia in June 2006. The purpose of the visit was to trigger collaboration between one of India's largest treasuries of non-print content with institutions in Malaysia.

Through CEMCA, COL participated in the launch of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development, hosted by the Government of Malaysia and the United Nations System in Putrajaya, Malaysia in June 2006.

Open schooling

COL convened an international symposium on the application of multimedia to the schooling sector of the education system at Ahmedabad, India in January 2005. The symposium was designed to bring together institutions from Africa, South and Southeast Asia that are using satellite broadcasting to support the school system. The Malaysian participant from University Sains Malaysia, Penang attended the meeting.

Preparation and use of learning materials

Malaysian authors contributed to the CEMCA publication "Educational Media in Asia" by providing country and case studies that have proved valuable in understanding the state of practice of educational applications of information and communications technologies (ICT) in Asia in 2005.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Together with the GKP, COL sponsored six delegates from Malaysia to attend the third Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF3). These included participants from the Open University of Malaysia, Wawasan Educational Foundation, University of Technology, and University Putra Malaysia. COL also supported a delegate from the University Sains Malaysia, to attend the International Conference organised by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization-UNESCO (SEAMEO-UNESCO) office in Bangkok in 2004.

CEMCA worked with Wawasan Open University College to organise a regional forum on the theme of Revisiting ODL: Planning and Management in June 2006. The event was attended by senior administrators from Asian ODL institutions including the Open University of Malaysia.

Under COL's Young Professionals Attachment Programme Malaysia hosted interns at the International Plant Genetics Resource Institute's Asia Pacific Office; the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Education in Science and Mathematics; and the GKP Secretariat.

LOOKING FORWARD

In the next planning period 2006-2009 Malaysia will build on the excellent partnerships founded in 2003-2006 and will continue to be a rich resource of knowledge and experience for Commonwealth Asian countries. COL will seek to involve Malaysian expertise in international forums and conferences and will look forward to testing models in the use of ICTs for themes such as women's self employment and empowerment.

MALDIVES

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

The archipelago of the Maldives has a small population dispersed across a wide area in the Indian Ocean.

With almost universal adult literacy, a small but effective educational system, and most of the Millennium Development Goals met, the Maldives' needs are different from those of its neighbours in South Asia. It has a good IT infrastructure backbone, connecting all islands and atolls. Priorities for the Maldives are capacity building and professional development of teachers, educational administrators, and developing locally and linguistically relevant content for its system.

Badly battered by the 2004 Asian Tsunami, the Maldives government found itself having to cope with a major disaster. Hence, it focussed its attention on relief and rehabilitation for much of the time in 2005.

SUMMARY

In the triennium 2003-2006, COL provided support to the Educational Media Unit of the Ministry and sponsored professionals from the Maldives to take part in workshops in other countries. The Maldives is participating in the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in partnership with COL and regional partners to strengthen national systems

With Asian Development Bank funding, COL designed a post-secondary education and skills development plan for the Maldives. The plan addresses the Maldives' need to increase training output, accelerate training and improve on the quality of training using open and distance learning.

COL has had a long relationship with the Educational Development Centre (EDC) of the Ministry of Education. Since 1996 it has been supporting the multi-media efforts of the EDC by supplying training and technology. This has resulted in multi-media based materials being produced for primary and secondary schools throughout the atolls.

The Maldives is one of the countries in the South Asia consortium for Teacher Education Development (SACTED), created by COL, which brings together institutions using distance education as means to provide teacher education and in-service training. The Maldives was represented at the first SACTED meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 3 - 4 November 2004.

The Maldives was represented on the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) Advisory Council until 2005.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

The Maldives is participating in the VUSSC (see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives for more details of VUSSC).

Preparation and use of learning materials

The Maldives is one of the countries to have benefited from the multimedia training package on Gender and Rural Development created by the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization office in Bangkok.

CEMCA also provided the Radio and Television system of Maldives with MEDLIB, software developed by it, to archive non print media materials (audio, video, and CD) in June 2006.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Maldivian representatives took part in a COL organised consultative meeting for the South Asia Region as part of its activities to promote literacy and skills training, using open, distance and technology-mediated methods for up-scaling. The meeting took place at the BRAC Centre Inn in Dhaka from 26-28 September 2005.

A representative nominated by the Maldivian government was trained by CEMCA in multimedia production at its training programmes in November 2004.

In 2005, the Maldives attended the COL organised consultative meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh for the South Asia Region on the promotion of literacy and skills training using ODL methods to take to scale.

LOOKING FORWARD

The Maldives has made a significant amount of progress in achieving ODL priorities for teacher training and developing relevant course materials. In the 2006-2009 period its capacity building efforts will continue and in this the Maldives will be supported by its partnership with COL and other countries in South East Asia.

PAKISTAN

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Pakistan has had a long history of distance education and is home to one of the great mega-universities of the world. It is perhaps for this reason that Pakistan has included open and distance learning (ODL) in its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) which states: “Special attention is focussed on education and research infrastructure, electronic access highway, digital library programme, curriculum and distance education mechanism.” (Para 5.143: 2004). Pakistan resumed its contribution to COL in 2005-06. The last contribution Pakistan made was in 1995.

SUMMARY

During the 2003-2006 period, COL’s work in Pakistan proceeded along two dimensions: capacity-building within the country and support to senior staff to participate in training programmes and conferences in other countries. Even during the years when Pakistan was no longer in the Commonwealth (1999-2004), COL continued to engage with the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) for the development of the Commonwealth Executive master of Business Administration/Master of Public Administration (CEMBA/MPA) programme.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in partnership

COL President Sir John Daniel visited Pakistan in connection with a Best Practice Awards Ceremony for the CEMBA/MPA programme in March 2005. At that time, he met the Prime Minister Mr. Shaukat Azi; the Education Minister, General Javed Ashraf Qazi; the Minister for Special Education, Ms. Zobaida Jalal; and the Chairman of the Higher Education Commission, Professor Atta-ur-Rahman.

COL, the Association of Commonwealth Universities and the University of Abertay Dundee organised a professional development series: *Managing Change: Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education – a Programme for Leaders of Commonwealth Universities in Scotland* since 2000. The August 2006 event has been opened up to vice chancellors not just from Africa, as formerly, but from across the Commonwealth. The vice chancellors of AIOU and Fatima Jinnah University were selected for participation.

Preparation and use of learning materials

Pakistan was one of four countries on the Asian subcontinent to have participated in the development of the COL-supported CEMBA/MPA programme. This programme was first offered to students in Pakistan in 2003 and has attracted 592 students as at December 2005.

The COL-developed Teacher Training materials for technical and vocational education and training are being considered by AIOU for local use.

The COL/Open University of Sri Lanka Guidelines on Quality Assurance for Distance Education are being considered for use by the distance education system in Pakistan by the Higher Education Commission.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

COL organised a Multiple Media Content Development Workshop at the AIOU in March 2006 during which 41 staff members were trained and 14 scripts developed.

A Consultative Meeting for the South Asia Region to Promote Literacy and Skills Training was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 26-28 September 2005. A professor from AIOU and the Executive Director, Adult Basic Education Society in Pakistan participated in the event.

A senior official from Pakistan attended the first meeting of the South Asian Consortium for Teacher Education Development (SACTED) held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 3-4 November 2004. The first Advisory Meeting of SACTED was held in Delhi, India on 24-25 January 2005 at which Pakistan was represented.

There were three COL-supported Pakistani delegates at the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum held in Dunedin, New Zealand from 4-8 July 2004.

COL assisted the development of Open Schooling by sending staff from AIOU to attend an institute for education/government officials from Commonwealth developing countries organised at the National Institute of Open Schooling, New Delhi in September 2005.

Pakistan was part of the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization, Bangkok to develop a multimedia training package on Gender and Rural Development which was completed in December 2004.

Pakistan is also one of the countries covered by CEMCA as the South Asia node for the Global Distance Education Network (GDENet).

A senior professor, Department of Business Administration, AIOU spent a two month sabbatical at COL during October and November 2005 to work on specific aspects of the CEMBA/MPA programme of which he is the coordinator for his institution.

The vice chancellor and two staff members of AIOU attended the Executive Governing Board (EGB) and the Academic Board (AB) meetings of the CEMBA/MPA programme in New Delhi in March 2004. The vice chancellor and a professor of AIOU attended the CEMBA/MPA EGB and AB meetings on 4-5 April 2006 in Penang, Malaysia.

A senior professor of AIOU participated in the Open Schooling conference held in Kovalam, India in February, 2006.

At an International Workshop for Community Radio Managers organised jointly by Anna University and COL in December 2004, one participant from Pakistan was sponsored jointly by CEMCA/COL and UNESCO.

LOOKING FORWARD

The period 2003-2006 was a successful one in terms of promoting professional development for Pakistani decision makers and practitioners. Attendance at events and conferences both at home and abroad permitted a very valuable exchange of expertise and experiences. In the 2006-2009 period there will be a greater opportunity to introduce new programmes and policies. AIOU is considering developing capacity in research and thesis writing at the Masters level in Rural Development with support from COL. AIOU is also in discussion with COL regarding the possibility of starting an open school.

SINGAPORE

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

The experience of Singapore in using technologies for education has been a rich resource for COL. Endowed with institutions of excellence, including its own Open University, a range of good practices has emerged from the country. Exposure of such practices to other developing countries in the region and in the Commonwealth has enabled COL to engage with Singapore institutions in partnerships to foster south-south dialogue.

SUMMARY

In the triennium 2003-2006, COL developed long term partnerships with institutes of excellence in Singapore, such as the National Institute of Education, and the Management Development Institute at the Singapore Institute of Management. Singapore hosted a number of events for Commonwealth partners thereby making a valuable contribution to international dialogue and exchange particularly in the area of improving teacher training and launching the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Singapore provided expert input in the initial planning stage for the creation of the VUSSC. The Minister of Education of Singapore attended the meeting of a selected group of Ministers of Education, jointly hosted by COL and the Ministry of Education, Seychelles, to consider the draft plan for VUSSC which was subsequently endorsed by the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Edinburgh in October 2003.

Open schooling

COL convened an international symposium on the application of multimedia to the schooling sector of the education system in Ahmedabad, India in January 2005. The symposium was designed to bring together institutions from Africa, South and Southeast Asia that are using satellite broadcasting to support the school system. A participant from the National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore attended the meeting.

Facilitating debate and founding partnerships

Singapore hosted the Management Development Institute in October 2003. The institute provided teacher training to 19 college principals and administrators from Sub-Saharan Africa. It is hoped that the skills acquired at the institutes would enable them to improve the quality and quantity of teacher training, which in turn would help to achieve “Education for All” in their own countries. From 18-29 October 2004, Singapore hosted the 4th Management Development Institute. A total of 20 teacher educators from Sub-Saharan Africa participated. The fifth round of the COL-Singapore Management Development Institute was held in November 2005 at the NIE and 20 participants from 12 Sub-Saharan African countries took part in the workshop. All these workshops were jointly sponsored by COL and the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Singapore participated in the quality assurance in teacher education roundtable held in India in March 2003. A document entitled “Innovations in Teacher Education: International Practices of Quality Assurance” was published following the event.

A Workshop on Quality Indicators in Teacher Education was held in India in November 2004. Organised by COL, the event attracted a range of international participants including one from Singapore and 12 local Indian participants.

Singapore participated in the 2nd Roundtable on Quality Assurance at Abuja, Nigeria in April 2005. The theme of the conference was Quality issues in the use of ICT for teacher education.

Singapore Open University was represented at the forum, Revisiting ODL Planning and Management, organised by the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) in partnership with Wawasan Open University College, Penang, Malaysia in February 2006.

Supported by CEMCA, six Indian educational administrators from the University Grants Commission, India and the Consortium for Educational Communication, India, went on a study tour to NIE in June 2006. The purpose of the visit was to trigger collaboration between one of India’s largest treasuries of non-print content with an institution recognised for its excellence in pedagogy of learning and in the use of technology in education.

LOOKING FORWARD

Singapore's rich resources in education will form the backdrop of COL's engagement for the planning period 2006-2009. COL will work with an increasing number of Singapore professionals and institutions in regional and international conferences on ODL and ICT for education efforts in the region. Singapore will continue to support the emerging VUSSC and the National Institute of Education (NIE) and is very likely to be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of VUSSC.

SRI LANKA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

COL has supported Sri Lanka on a number of levels in its development of open and distance learning. This has included dual mode systems at the tertiary level as well as working with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and grassroots based organisations. Much of COL's work has been in the nature of capacity building and professional development. COL has contributed consistently to the development of the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), and also in establishing open schooling at the National Institute of Education in Sri Lanka, and with the well known NGO, Sarvodaya. Sri Lanka has also been represented on COL's Board of Governors through Dr. Tara del Mel, an educationist and policy maker. Sri Lanka is also represented on the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) Advisory Board.

SUMMARY

The triennium 2003-2006 saw Sri Lankan institutions move from being recipients of COL support to centres of expertise as OUSL became the hub for the Master of Arts in Teacher Education (MATE) international programme and a local resource centre in eLearning for the benefit of other Sri Lankan educational institutions.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working with regional partners

Sri Lanka is one of the countries in the South Asia consortium, created by COL, which brings together institutions using distance education as a means to provide teacher education and in-service training. The first meeting of the South Asian Consortium for Teacher Education Development (SACTED) was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 3-4 November 2004. International participants from Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Pakistan also attended the workshop.

Workshops on Quality Assurance in teacher education and in course materials in higher education were held in Sri Lanka in February 2006. Teacher educators from Sri Lanka, along with six other countries of the Commonwealth participated in the two-day workshop. Participants presented best practice based on teacher education programmes in their country. Following the workshops these exchanges have continued.

Sri Lankan representatives from OUSL took part in an international symposium organised by COL on the application of multimedia to the schooling sector of the education system. The symposium was designed to bring together institutions from Africa, South and Southeast Asia that are using satellite broadcasting to support the school system.

COL worked with OUSL and the University Grants Commission (UGC) to develop Quality Assurance Guidelines for the distance education system in the country as well as a Self-Assessment manual.

Sri Lanka is one of the countries which CEMCA covers as the South Asia node for the Global Distance Education Network (GDENet), which searches and provides knowledge resources for use by distance educators in the region and globally.

Media Empowerment for Health Issues

COL worked with the World Health Organization (WHO) Sri Lanka office and Sarvodaya to address issues concerning communicable diseases. COL employed its ODL expertise to aid Sarvodaya's capacity to create malaria-based information through the creation of a Health Media Unit. The information created by Sarvodaya has been delivered via radio, television and mobile units travelling to the villages with a projector and generator. This model has proven to be especially effective given the events of the December 2004 tsunami. Since the tsunami Sarvodaya has liaised with the WHO to deliver water and food safe information to the affected eastern shore including Tamil held territory.

Open Schooling

CEMCA and COL provided consultancy support by engaging two consultants from India's National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) to assist with development of an Open School at the National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka in June 2005.

Two senior faculty members from the National Institute of Education participated in a COL-CEMCA workshop on "Instructional Design" organised in collaboration with the NIOS in March 2005.

Professionals from Sri Lanka participated in COL and NIOS supported and organised an Institute for education/government officials from Commonwealth developing countries for the purpose of providing them with first-hand views and experience of an operational open school in September 2005.

Higher education

At the request of the UGC, COL commissioned a report on the status of the External Degree programme in the country and held a retreat of Vice Chancellors to discuss the recommendations.

The pilot run of the Master of Arts in Teacher Education (MATE) international programme began in February 2005 with 15 students from Sri Lanka. A review of the first three months progress of the pilot run of the programme was done in a meeting with the Dean, Faculty of Education, Coordinators of MATE and COL consultant on 19 May 2005. The review helped in identifying the areas of concern and formulating the agenda for the three-day monitoring and evaluation workshop which was held from 25-27 May 2005.

Sri Lanka is one of the partners in the Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration/Master of Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programme. One hundred forty-three students from Sri Lanka have enrolled in the CEMBA/MPA Programme. The programme was developed by COL, in close collaboration with the national open universities of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, to complement the existing MBA/MPA programmes in meeting the growing demands for postgraduate-level education in business and public administration in Commonwealth countries. Designed for part-time study by busy working professionals, the programme can be completed by students at their own pace. The minimum completion time for the MBA or MPA is two years.

Rural Communities

COL supported the rural research unit of OUSL in identifying rural community needs in technologies that are appropriate for their development and capabilities in Sri Lanka. These were recorded and broadcast over the national community radio service as a method of evoking awareness among rural people and to obtain feedback from them. The information, converted to video presentations and CD-ROMs, was made available at the centres with projection equipment purchased under the project. OUSL attracted the Norwegian Development Fund to further expand the programme in 2004 and take the technologies that were identified through COL's involvement to the rural people.

Preparation and use of learning materials

Through a series of multimedia and eLearning workshops in 2003 and 2005, 65 staff at OUSL and faculty from six different dual mode universities: Colombo, Peradaniya, Moratuwa, Kelaniya, Matara, and Eastern Sri Lanka were trained in the use and development of materials for on-line environments. As a consequence Sri Lanka has a cadre of academic faculty trained in the use of on-line environments to meet their educational outreach activities.

Sri Lanka is one of the countries whose scholars participated in the development of the multimedia package on Gender and Rural Development which CEMCA has produced in collaboration with FAO Bangkok office. The kit is targeted to academics, researchers and extension agencies in agriculture and rural development in South Asian countries with an objective to sensitise them to the various aspects of gender related issues, and to provide them with a resource tool kit to enable more effective research and work in the region.

Sri Lankan authors also contributed country and case studies to the CEMCA publications *Educational Media in Asia, 2005* and the *Teleconference Training Manual, 2005*.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL sponsored six delegates from OUSL Sri Lanka to attend the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning which was held in partnership with DEANZ in Dunedin, New Zealand from 4-8 July 2004.

Dr. Ranjan George, Senior Lecturer in Management at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, OUSL completed a two month secondment from July to August 2005, at COL under the CEMBA/CEMPA programme.

Twenty-nine mid-career academics from OUSL were trained at a COL sponsored five day workshop on Research in Distance Education in February – March 2005. The objective of the workshop was to train a cadre of mid-career academics in sound distance education research methodology in the different regions of the Commonwealth.

In 2005, Sri Lanka attended the COL organised consultative meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh, for the South Asia region on the promotion of literacy and skills training using ODL methods.

Sri Lankan academics from OUSL were represented at the CEMCA organised regional forum on Revisiting ODL; Planning and Management in collaboration with Wawasan Open University College, in Malaysia in February 2006. Papers from the forum were published by CEMCA in June 2006.

LOOKING FORWARD

The period 2003-2006 marked a new stage in Sri Lanka's ODL development. It became a regional leader and shared expertise with a number of partners. In the period 2006-2009 this trend will continue and Sri Lanka will expand initiatives on a number of levels.



Caribbean

**Antigua & Barbuda | The Bahamas | Barbados | Belize | Dominica |
Grenada | Guyana | Jamaica | St. Kitts & Nevis | St. Lucia |
St. Vincent & the Grenadines | Trinidad & Tobago**



REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

CARIBBEAN CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICERS MEETINGS

The Chief Education Officers (CEOs) of the Caribbean hold annual meetings sponsored by COL. Their meeting in 2003 focused on the use of Open and Distance Learning in Teacher Education. In 2004 it was held at the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in New Zealand, where the CEOs spent a productive day in discussion with their counterparts from the Commonwealth Pacific Island countries. In 2005 Trinidad hosted the meeting which was held just prior to the launch of the Caribbean Association for Distance and Open Learning. The meetings are a useful forum for exchange of experience and good practice between the different countries of the region. COL also sees the meetings as an opportunity to consult regional partners on new ideas and emerging policy and programmes.

MEDIA EMPOWERMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN TO SUPPORT AGRIBUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY

COL's Media Empowerment Programme has supported activities in the Caribbean to address agribusiness opportunities and environmental sustainability issues. It has promoted ODL delivery of training and information from scientist to extension officer to farmer. Countries and key players within each Ministry were selected in consultation with the regional office of the Food and Agriculture Organization. This focus in agribusiness opportunities and environment has been to aid Governments in the region in their efforts to move towards crop diversification (i.e. away from single crop dependency such as bananas in Dominica or sugar in St. Kitts & Nevis) among small plot farmers (e.g. Jamaica) who have been sidelined by mass-produced food products from developed countries. This imbalance in the traditionally agrarian economies has resulted in increased inflation, high unemployment and crime among the youth, as agriculture has become an unattractive option as a career path. COL has added value to agricultural/environmental training by employing ODL techniques using video and audio productions distributed via radio, television, workshops and field days to reach extension officers and farmers. Extension officers have been taught camera and production skills at the rural extension units. This in turn allows content to be localised in consideration of the conditions of the Parish or region of the island.

DISTANCE EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS

COL assisted in the formation of the Caribbean Association for Distance and Open Learning (CARDOL), which was launched in early 2005 in Trinidad & Tobago.

The Fourth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning is being organised jointly by COL and the University of the West Indies' Distance Education Centre (UWIDEC), in co-operation with the CARDOL; the Jamaican Association for Distance and Open Learning; the Trinidad & Tobago Distance Learning Association; and the Office of Continuing Education and Distance Learning at the University of Technology, Jamaica. It will be held in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, from 30 October to 3 November 2006.

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Since COL's inception, it has organised annual meetings for the Caribbean Chief Education Officers. The meetings are used to share information within the region on open and distance learning (ODL) activities in order to promote and support sharing of expertise and experience. Antigua & Barbuda has been an active participant in these meetings but has not contributed to COL's budget in 2003-2006.

SUMMARY

In the 2003-2006 period, COL worked with Antigua & Barbuda to promote the exchange of experience with other countries by supporting the attendance of senior officials at international events and also by sending an expert to participate in a strategic planning event in the country. In this period Antigua & Barbuda pledged to support the COL driven initiative to create a Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

COL invited the small states of the Commonwealth, through their Ministers of Education, to indicate if they wished to participate in the creation of the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives). Antigua & Barbuda has signed the agreement.

Strengthening national systems

A COL staff member attended a workshop on the Strategic Use of ICTs in The Caribbean Agricultural Sector which was held in Antigua & Barbuda in September 2003. During the workshop he facilitated discussions on Open and Distance Learning and Community Learning.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL organises and supports a meeting of Caribbean Chief Education Officers (CEOs) on an approximate annual basis. The purpose for the meeting is to discuss and share information about regional ODL initiatives, and to provide an opportunity to the CEOs for professional development.

The Chief Education Officer from Antigua & Barbuda attended the last three CEO meetings – one in March 2003, a second held in conjunction with the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum in Dunedin, New Zealand in August 2004, and a third, in Trinidad in February 2005, which was held just prior to the launch of the Caribbean Association for Distance and Open Learning.

LOOKING FORWARD

Antigua & Barbuda's commitment to VUSSC was an important feature of the 2003-2006 period. This initiative will continue to be a significant focus in 2006-2009.

THE BAHAMAS

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

A small state of the Commonwealth, The Bahamas is a regular contributor to COL's budget.

SUMMARY

In 2003-2006, COL's partnership with The Bahamas supported a number of initiatives. In this period, 24 Bahamian students graduated in the Technical/Vocation Education and Training teacher training programme jointly developed by COL and the University of Technology in Jamaica. The Bahamas was involved in the preparation of a book on "Foreign Tertiary Education Providers in the Anglophone Caribbean." At the request of the Minister of Education, COL also aided The Bahamas in jump starting the process of planning for the implementation of an educational television channel.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in Partnership to Strengthen National Systems

The Minister of Education, Science and Technology invited COL to aid in jump starting the process of planning for the implementation of an educational television channel for The Bahamas. A visit was undertaken by COL's Education Specialist, Educational Technology and the outline for an educational television channel plan was completed during his one- week visit (i.e. staffing, costs, mission, interaction with the other government players and organisations, technology, etc.) and presented to the Ministry staff and the major players. In addition, a suitcase FM radio station with a 100 watt transmitter was presented to the Ministry of Education for the purpose of communications and education. Training was provided and a test run was undertaken.

Strategic Planning

In July 2005 the President of COL, Sir John Daniel, attended the Ministers of Education for the Caribbean and Canada Mid-Term Review of the Action Plan of the 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (15CCEM) in Nassau.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

The Bahamas was invited to participate in a meeting to discuss the creation of the VUSSC in Singapore in September 2005. (For more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives).

Preparation and use of learning materials

The Bahamas was represented in a three-day meeting of the authors of the proposed book on “Foreign Tertiary Education Providers in the Anglophone Caribbean” in Trinidad & Tobago in October 2005. The book is due to be launched at the 4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum in October 2006 and it will be available in hard copy, eBook, CD-ROM, PDF and on COL and UNESCO websites.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Bahamas was represented at the Chief Education Officers (CEOs) meeting on open and distance learning as well as the meeting for small states which were held during the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in Dunedin in July 2004. The meetings provided opportunities for professional development and served as a forum for COL to receive advice and guidance from CEOs.

COL sponsored one delegate from The Bahamas to participate in the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in Dunedin, New Zealand from 4-8 July 2004.

The Bahamas is currently piloting the Technical/Vocational Education and Training (TVET) teacher diploma programme jointly developed by COL and the University of Technology, Jamaica for technical/vocational teachers in selected countries in the Caribbean. There were 24 Bahamians in the first cohort of students. The first graduates of the TVET diploma programme (from The Bahamas) received their degrees at the graduation ceremony of the University of Technology in Jamaica on 5 November 2005.

LOOKING FORWARD

COL’s successful partnership with The Bahamas in 2003-2006 will continue to yield positive results in the next planning period 2006-2009. In this period the focus of joint working will be on activities within the health and education sectors. COL will also provide advice to The Bahamas on the sustainability of the educational television channel, The Bahamas Learning Channel. There is scope for The Bahamas to become more actively involved in VUSSC.

BARBADOS

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

The eastern most of the Caribbean Islands, Barbados is a small state of the Commonwealth and a contributor to COL since 2005.

SUMMARY

Education and health have been strong themes in the work COL has done with Barbados in the 2003-2006 period. A strong strategic alliance has been forged with the Distance Education Centre of the University of the Western Indies (UWI) particularly in respect of the 4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF4). This will greatly benefit the working relationship COL has with Barbados. Also favouring a strong alliance with COL is Barbados's participation in the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

The Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Barbados is participating in VUSSC (see Pan-Commonwealth initiatives section for more details of VUSSC).

Developing capacity in the education sector

In the period 2003-2006 COL worked with the Caribbean Examinations Council to assist in building the capacity to manage the development of open and distance learning materials that support their curricula. An evaluation of the initiative has been done.

Preparation and use of learning materials

A meeting on the proposed book, "Foreign Tertiary Education Providers in the Anglophone Caribbean", was held in Trinidad & Tobago in October 2005. Barbados was represented among the 15 participants. The book will be in hard copy, eBook, CD ROM, PDF and on the COL and UNESCO websites. It will be released during PCF4.

Media Empowerment for AIDS awareness and prevention

COL worked with Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and a local humanitarian organisation, Comfort, Assist, Reach-Out, Educate (CARE), to address issues in the country and region concerning HIV/AIDS stigma and prevention. CARE is committed to being the voice of the HIV/AIDS community by educating, rehabilitating, motivating and networking with People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), thus ensuring a better quality of life, making a valuable contribution to society and minimising the impact of HIV/AIDS on the wider community. The COL activity with CARE has given the organisation both the tools and training to tailor their message through television, radio and on-going field events in the communities.

Media Empowerment for schools

In 2006 COL worked with the audio-visual department of the Ministry of Education in Barbados to implement an educational FM radio station to supplement teaching and learning for primary and secondary schools throughout the country.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At the request of UWI a meeting was held in Barbados in June 2004 on the quality of distance education in the region. Twenty-three Caribbean professionals attended the event.

Barbadian representatives also attended workshops for Caribbean Chief Education Officers.

LOOKING FORWARD

The excellent working relationship forged between COL and Barbados in the period 2003-2006, particularly the work planned with the UWI in respect of the 4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF4) will be a good foundation for further progress towards Barbados's education and development goals in the future.

Boys' underachievement at school is a major concern for the Barbadian Ministry of Education. The COL/COMSEC study on this issue includes an account of the position of boys in Barbados and there is scope for further work in this area.

AIDS awareness will continue to be an important theme which will involve UN organisations as well as COL in Barbados.

Participation in VUSSC should yield dividends for Barbados from 2007 onwards.

BELIZE

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Belize is a small state of the Commonwealth and an active partner in COL's activities although not a contributor to its budget in 2003-2006.

SUMMARY

In 2003-2006 Belize joined other small states in creating the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) and is positioning itself to be a provider of learning materials amongst Commonwealth countries. The country has also been represented at the Pan-Commonwealth Forums on Open Learning (PCF). Belize is improving the training skills of its Tech/Voc instructors through a Special Diploma which was pioneered by COL. Delegates from Belize participated in a number of capacity-building activities within the region and in other parts of the world in support of the expansion of open and distance learning and eLearning in the country.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

Belize is an active partner in the creation of the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives). Belize is also providing expert input to the development of open educational resources for VUSSC. The work started with a three-week "boot camp" in Mauritius during which four teams created learning materials, using existing open educational resources as inputs. Approximately ten notional learning hours in each of the subject areas of tourism and entrepreneurship were produced in Mauritius and the work is now being continued online. All materials will be made available online via a website.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL sponsored a delegate from Belize to attend the 3rd Pan- Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning which was held in Dunedin, New Zealand.

Belize is one of the 12 member countries of the Caribbean which participates in the annual meeting/workshop for Caribbean Chief Education Officers.

The Technical Teacher Training Programme, developed by COL through regional collaboration, is made available for Technical/vocational education and training (TVET) teachers in selected countries in the Caribbean. The programme, which is to train TVET instructors in pedagogical skills to complement their TVET knowledge, is being offered on a pilot basis as a Special Diploma by the University of Technology, Jamaica (UTECH) and may allow articulation into UTECH's Bachelor of Education degree programme. Belize is likely to adopt the programme in 2006.

Preparation and use of learning materials:

A delegate from Belize took part in the three-day meeting of the authors of the proposed book on "Foreign Tertiary Education Providers in the Anglophone Caribbean", which was held in Trinidad & Tobago from 5-7 October 2005.

LOOKING FORWARD

The period 2003-2006 was one of very positive progress for Belize and its partnership with COL. This valuable contribution is set to continue in the period 2006-2009 when Belize's participation in VUSSC will be taken to a new level as the initiative is rolled out.

DOMINICA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Since COL's inception, it has organised annual meetings for the Caribbean Chief Education Officers. The meetings are used to share information within the region on open and distance learning (ODL) activities in order to promote and support sharing of expertise and experience. Dominica has been an active participant in these meetings through sending the CEO to attend and contribute to the proceedings although it has not contributed to COL's budget in the 2003-2006 period.

SUMMARY

In the 2003-2006 planning period, COL's partnership with Dominica has allowed the country to participate actively in international debate on ODL by supporting the attendance of the Chief Education Officer at Caribbean CEOs meetings. The CEO from Dominica now also chairs the group.

Dominica is an active participant in the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

COL invited the small states of the Commonwealth, through their Ministers of Education, to indicate if they wished to participate in the creation of the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives). Dominica has signed the agreement.

Media Empowerment to achieve development and environmental goals: Agribusiness Opportunities, Fisheries and Forestry Management and Environment Sustainability.

This activity, on-going since 2000 with the Ministry of Agriculture's Extension Services, has installed digital video technology and trained extension officers to create productions that are aired by the national television broadcaster to educate farmers in new techniques and crop diversification.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Commonwealth of Learning organises and supports a meeting of Caribbean Chief Education Officers (CEOs) on an approximate annual basis. The purpose for the meeting is to discuss and share information about regional ODL initiatives, and to provide an opportunity to the CEOs for professional development.

The Chief Education Officer from Dominica has attended two of the last three CEO meetings – one in March 2003, and one in Trinidad in February 2005 which was held just prior to the launch of the Caribbean Association for Distance and Open Learning.

LOOKING FORWARD

Dominica's commitment to VUSSC was an important feature of its work with COL in 2003-2006 and will continue to be a significant focus in the next planning period of 2006-2009.

GRENADA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Since COL's inception, it has organised annual meetings for the Caribbean Chief Education Officers. The meetings are used to share information within the region on open and distance learning (ODL) activities in order to promote and support sharing of expertise and experience. Grenada has been an active participant in these meetings.

SUMMARY

In the 2003-2006 period, COL's partnership with Grenada made it possible for the Chief Education Officer to attend Caribbean CEOs meetings allowing Grenada to contribute to international debate and exchange experiences with other countries

Grenada has now enrolled students in the Technical Teacher Training programme offered by the University of Technology, Jamaica (UTECH). This programme was developed by COL through regional collaboration. Grenada has also signed up to the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) but is not yet an active participant.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

COL invited the small states of the Commonwealth, through their Ministers of Education, to indicate if they wished to participate in the creation of the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives). Grenada has signed the agreement.

Media Empowerment to Achieve development and environmental goals

Agribusiness – this activity, on-going since 2000 with the Ministry of Agriculture's Extension Services and Media Unit, has installed digital video technology and trained extension officers to create productions that are

aired weekly by the national television broadcaster to educate farmers in new techniques and crop diversification. This has resulted in a move towards organic agricultural techniques and employment opportunities have arisen from markets available for organic produce overseas. Training in crop diversification via media has also enabled the farmers to move away from single crop dependency.

Working with regional partners

Grenada has enrolled students in the Technical Teacher Training programme which was developed by COL through regional collaboration and is being offered by UTECH, Jamaica. Two representatives from Grenada recently attended a COL-sponsored workshop on the future of the programme.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL organises and supports a meeting of Caribbean Chief Education Officer (CEOs) on an approximate annual basis. The purpose for the meeting is to discuss and share information about regional ODL initiatives, and to provide an opportunity to the CEOs for professional development.

The Chief Education Officer from Grenada has attended the last two CEO meetings – one held in conjunction with the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum in Dunedin, New Zealand in August 2004, and one in Trinidad in February 2005 which was held just prior to the launch of the Caribbean Association for Distance and Open Learning.

A three-day meeting of the authors of the proposed book on “Foreign Tertiary Education Providers in the Anglophone Caribbean” was held in Trinidad & Tobago in October 2005. Grenada sent a representative to the meeting.

COL provided orientation on the use of the knowledge finder to a group of ten persons. The Caribbean Knowledge Learning Network (CKLN) invited COL to participate in its meeting to formalise the network.

LOOKING FORWARD

Through its partnership with COL, Grenada has been an active contributor to international debate and strategic planning. Its commitment to VUSSC was an important feature of the 2003-2006 period and VUSSC will continue to be a significant focus for the next planning period of 2006-2009.

GUYANA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

A small state of the Commonwealth and regular donor to the COL budget, Guyana is committed to developing open and distance learning (ODL) and attends the meetings of Caribbean Chief Education Officers.

SUMMARY

In the 2003-2006 period, Guyana has made significant progress in strategic planning and implementation of ODL at national level. The Guyanese Association for Distance and Open Learning (GADOL) was created in this period. Guyana has also signed up to the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in partnership to develop a national strategy

COL worked with Guyana to develop a national strategy for ODL. A National Forum was held on 14 February 2005 at the National Centre for Educational Resource Development where 50 educators, representatives from the defence force and other national departments were present. Following the event the Guyanese Association for Distance and Open Learning (GADOL) was created and Chief Education Officer Ed Caesar was elected the President. GADOL has worked in partnership with the Ministry of Education Guyana and COL to draw up a policy document for the use of ODL and, subsequently, a national implementation plan for ODL initiatives/actions. It has been agreed that this plan would be attached to the policy document when it is submitted for government approval.

Working with regional partners

Guyana took part in the annual meetings of Caribbean Chief Education Officers (CEOs) organised by COL. These meetings provide a useful opportunity for exchange of experience and best practice.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Guyana is an active participant in the VUSSC (see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives for more details of VUSSC).

Working with international partners to use ODL for development

COL hosted a high level institute in Vancouver in May 2005, to explore the relationship between ODL and development. The Institute was attended by 30 participants including one from Guyana. The Institute provided an excellent opportunity for the participants to dialogue across the boundaries of disciplines and functions. The dialogue was facilitated and structured to maximise participation and to ensure the outcome of producing a publication that would address the relationship between ODL and development.

Media Empowerment for health issues

COL worked with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association (GRPA) to reach both coastal and remote communities with health information with an emphasis on HIV/AIDS stigma and prevention. GRPA provides laboratory services to complement the clinical services (testing for HIV, random blood sugar, pap smear, etc). GRPA facilitates programmes for health professionals who function at maternal and child health clinics. They also have a Youth Services Centre in Georgetown where peer health and awareness sessions are undertaken. The activity with the GRPA established a health media unit to enhance the organisation's reach across the country.

Preparation and use of learning materials

COL supported the Institute of Distance and Continuing Education (IDCE) of the University of Guyana and the Regional Programme on Animal Health Assistants to develop, deliver and monitor a Certificate programme on "Broiler Production Technology". IDCE completed the course materials, study guide and tutors' manual and a course for small poultry farmers was piloted.

Improving teacher training through ODL

Guyana's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) was presented to the World Bank/IMF Boards on 17 September 2002 and a subsequent annual progress report was submitted in August 2004.

In the PRSP, ODL is included as a measure for teacher training. In the section related to teacher training, in the Education chapter, the PRSP states: "There will also be a conscious effort to reverse the growth in percentage of untrained teachers. For this reason, the Government will implement measures to reduce

student/trained teacher ratio from about 40:1 to 27:1 at primary and secondary schools. These measures will include (i) a review of the University of Guyana Diploma of Education Programme to facilitate growth in the number of graduate trained teachers; and (ii) the expansion of distance education training centres to cover the 10 administrative regions.”

In the annual progress report on PRSP which was submitted to the World Bank/IMF in August 2004, the section on Teacher Training under Chapter Three says: “In 2003, about 103 hinterland teachers completed the Foundation programme under the Guyana Basic Education Teacher Training (GBET) programme, which incorporates distance education methods. They are now eligible to do professional training leading to the award of the Teacher Certificate.” Chapter Six of the same report titled Poverty Reduction Programme for 2004-2005 states: “Learning centres will be established to facilitate training of teachers using distance education methods.”

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Under COL’s Young Professionals Attachment Programme Guyana hosted interns at the Commonwealth Youth Programme’s Caribbean Regional Office.

LOOKING FORWARD

Strategic planning and the implementation of an ODL framework with a special focus on teacher training in Guyana will continue to be important in its partnership with COL in the next planning period of 2006-2009. Guyana’s participation in VUSSC will also be a significant element in the next triennium as this initiative is expanded.

JAMAICA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

One of the larger small states of the Commonwealth and part of the Caribbean grouping of countries, Jamaica is a regular contributor to COL's budget. It has also supported COL's work by hosting international events on the theme of open and distance learning (ODL).

SUMMARY

Jamaica has participated in a range of activities in partnership with COL in the period 2003-2006. It is an active participant in the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) and has attended a range of international events including the meetings of the Caribbean Chief Education Officers (CEOs). The 4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF4) is being held in Jamaica in November 2006.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Facilitating International exchanges and debate

PCF4 will be held in Ocho Rios, Jamaica from 30 October - 3 November 2006. The five day event will address open and distance learning through widening educational access, bridging the digital divide and advancing the social and economic development of communities and nations at large. There will be a special focus on applications in developing countries and special attention will be paid to the opportunities presented by the combination of increasing connectivity and open educational resources. Sir John Daniel, President of COL, and Professor Stewart Marshall, Director of UWIDEC, will co-chair the Conference.

The 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF3) was held in partnership with the Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ) in Dunedin, New Zealand from 4-8 July 2004. COL provided support to three delegates from Jamaica to participate in PCF3.

Achieving Development Goals through ODL

COL hosted a high level institute in Vancouver in May 2005, to explore the relationship between ODL and development. One participant from Jamaica attended. The Institute provided an excellent opportunity for the participants to dialogue across the boundaries of disciplines and functions. The dialogue was facilitated and structured to maximise participation and to ensure the outcome of producing a publication that would address the relationship between ODL and development.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Jamaica has signed up to take part in the creation of the VUSSC. COL will work in close cooperation and consultation with participating countries, institutions and agencies to establish VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives).

Working with regional partners

Jamaica is one of the 12 member countries of the Caribbean which participates in the annual meetings for Caribbean Chief Education Officers (CEOs). The meetings serve as a forum for COL to receive advice and guidance from CEOs and also provide opportunities for exchange of experience and best practice among the CEOs. In July 2004, the Chief Education Officer of Jamaica participated in the CEOs Meeting on ODL and the meeting for small states which were both held in Dunedin during PCF3.

Working in Partnership to Strengthen National Systems

COL is working with Mico College in Kingston to transform it to a dual-mode institution with a view to establishing the Mico Institute for Distance Education.

Media Empowerment to Achieve Better prosperity for Farmers

COL led a capacity building exercise with the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) in the Ministry of Agriculture to enable their media unit to provide quality training for farmers throughout the country.

COL ran media workshops for extension officers across Jamaica and implemented media units to cover the western and central regions of the country (Kingston, Montego Bay and Mandeville). Forty extension workers were trained in the process of audio and video production. The video productions (in agriculture and land administration, pepper production, fertiliser, crop diversification, new technologies, pest control) are now used to facilitate extension services efforts to aid farmers in crop diversification.

The agricultural authorities in Jamaica are very pleased with the impact of the media empowerment programme for agricultural officers. This enables them to have a more widespread influence on farming practice and may even be influencing more young people to stay on the land.

Improving Teacher Training

The Technical Teacher Training Programme, developed by COL through regional collaboration, is made available for Technical/vocational education and training (TVET) teachers in selected countries in the Caribbean. The programme, which is to train TVET instructors in pedagogical skills to complement their TVET knowledge, is being offered on a pilot basis as a Special Diploma by the University of Technology, Jamaica (UTECH) and may allow articulation into UTECH's Bachelor of Education degree programme

Strategic planning

Jamaica contributed to planning COL's forward strategy by hosting a regional consultative meeting for COL's Three Year Plan in November 2004. Eighteen participants were present at the discussion.

Preparation and use of learning materials

A three day meeting of the authors of the proposed book on "Foreign Tertiary Education Providers in the Anglophone Caribbean" was held in Trinidad & Tobago in October 2005. Fifteen participants came from countries across the Caribbean including Jamaica and also from Canada. The book will be released during PCF4 and will be available in hard copy, eBook, CD ROM, PDF and on COL and UNESCO websites.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the 2nd phase of the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme, nine students from Jamaica successfully completed the Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University. The nine students are now working towards the Masters of Arts Distance Education.

Under COL's Young Professional Attachment Programme, Jamaica hosted an intern at the University of the West Indies as part of their placement with the Commonwealth Youth Programme's Caribbean Regional Office.

LOOKING FORWARD

Jamaica took part in a range of valuable activities in 2003-2006 many of which will be carried through to the next planning period 2006-2009. Its commitment to VUSSC will continue to be important as the initiative is rolled out. Improving teacher training and achieving better prosperity for farmers will continue to be a focus of Jamaica's work with COL in 2006-2009.

ST. KITTS & NEVIS

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Since COL's inception, it has organised annual meetings for the Caribbean Chief Education Officers. The meetings are used to share information within the region on open and distance learning (ODL) activities in order to promote and support sharing of expertise and experience. St. Kitts & Nevis has been an active participant in these meetings through sending the Chief Education Officer to attend and contribute to the proceedings. More recently, St. Kitts & Nevis is taking part in the initiative to establish a Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) and makes a financial contribution to COL.

SUMMARY

In the 2003-2006 period, COL's partnership with St. Kitts & Nevis has allowed the country to participate in international debate by supporting the attendance of the Chief Education Officer at CEOs meetings.

St. Kitts & Nevis is participating in the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth.

St. Kitts & Nevis is one of only two Caribbean countries that has had students complete the Technical Teacher Training Programme offered by University of Technology, Jamaica (UTECH) which was developed collaboratively in the region with assistance from COL.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

COL invited the small states of the Commonwealth, through their Ministers of Education, to indicate if they wished to participate in the creation of the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives). St. Kitts & Nevis has signed the agreement and sent representatives to planning meetings.

Media Empowerment to Achieve development and environmental goals

Agribusiness, Fisheries Management, and Environment Sustainability – Working with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture, this activity has employed both radio and video productions that are used by the national television/radio broadcaster to educate farmers and fishermen in new techniques and general information. The focus is to aid farmers in moving towards crop diversification from a dependence on cultivation of sugar.

Preparation and use of learning materials

St. Kitts & Nevis is currently piloting the Technical Teacher Training Programme, which was developed by COL through regional collaboration and is offered by UTECH in Jamaica. Two persons from St. Kitts & Nevis recently attended a COL sponsored workshop on the future of the programme.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Commonwealth of Learning organises and supports a meeting of Caribbean Chief Education Officers on an approximate annual basis. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss and share information about regional ODL initiatives, and to provide an opportunity to the CEOs for professional development.

The Chief Education Officer from St. Kitts & Nevis has attended the last three CEO meetings – one in March 2003, a second held in conjunction with PCF3 in Dunedin, New Zealand in August 2004, and a third, in Trinidad in February 2005 which was held just prior to the launch of the Caribbean Association for Distance and Open Learning.

LOOKING FORWARD

St. Kitts & Nevis commitment to VUSSC was an important feature of its work with COL in 2003-2006. VUSSC will continue to be important in the 2006-2009 planning period for St. Kitts & Nevis. St. Kitts & Nevis has led the way for other Caribbean countries in piloting the Technical Teacher Training programme developed by COL. This programme will roll out more fully in the next planning period of 2006-2009 and there will be scope for St. Kitts & Nevis to play a part in this.

ST. LUCIA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Since COL's inception, it has organised annual meetings for the Caribbean Chief Education Officers (CEOs). The meetings are used to share information within the region on open and distance learning (ODL) activities in order to promote and support sharing of expertise and experience. St. Lucia has been an active participant in these meetings and a regular contributor to COL's budget.

SUMMARY

In the 2003-2006 planning period, COL's partnership with St. Lucia has allowed the attendance of the Chief Education Officer at the CEOs meetings. These meetings are excellent opportunities for networking and exchanging information and experience.

St. Lucia is an active participant in the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

COL invited the small states of the Commonwealth, through their Ministers of Education, to indicate if they wish to participate in the creation of the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives). St. Lucia has signed the agreement and was represented at the first planning meeting held in Singapore in September 2005.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL organises and supports a meeting of Caribbean Chief Education Officers (CEOs) on an approximate annual basis. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss and share information about regional ODL initiatives and to provide an opportunity to the CEOs for professional development.

The Chief Education Officer from St. Lucia has attended the last three CEO meetings – one in March 2003, a second held in conjunction with PCF3 in Dunedin, New Zealand in August 2004, and a third, in Trinidad in February 2005 which was held just prior to the launch of the Caribbean Association for Distance and Open Learning.

A three day meeting of the authors of the proposed book on “Foreign Tertiary Education Providers in the Anglophone Caribbean” was held in Trinidad & Tobago in October 2005. St. Lucia sent a representative to the meeting.

Through the Canada-Caribbean Distance Education Scholarship Programme, which COL facilitated, four students graduated in June 2004 from the programme on Tourism and Hospitality Management offered by Mount Saint Vincent University in Nova Scotia.

LOOKING FORWARD

St. Lucia’s commitment to VUSSC was an important development in the 2003-2006 period. St. Lucia will continue to be an active participant in this initiative as it grows in the 2006-2009 planning period.

ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Since COL's inception, it has organised annual meetings for the Caribbean Chief Education Officers (CEOs). The meetings are used to share information within the region on open and distance learning (ODL) activities in order to promote and support sharing of expertise and experience. St. Vincent & the Grenadines has been an active participant in these meetings although it has not contributed to COL's budget in the 2003-2006 period.

SUMMARY

In the 2003-2006 period, COL supported the attendance of the Chief Education Officer at CEOs meetings.

St. Vincent & the Grenadines is an active participant in the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

COL invited the small states of the Commonwealth, through their Ministers of Education, to indicate if they wish to participate in the creation of the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives). St. Vincent & the Grenadines has signed the agreement and was represented at the first and second planning meetings held in Singapore in September 2005 and April 2006 respectively.

Preparation and use of learning materials

Following Dr. Veronica Marks' visit to COL a week long instructional design workshop, using a consultant from Open School BC as facilitator, was organised in March 2006 for faculty at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College. COL President Sir John Daniel was present at the event.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL organises and supports a meeting of Caribbean Chief Education Officer (CEOs) on an approximate annual basis. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss and share information about regional ODL initiatives and to provide an opportunity to the CEOs for professional development.

The Chief Education Officer from St. Vincent & the Grenadines has attended the last three CEO meetings – one in March 2003, a second held in conjunction with PCF3 in Dunedin, New Zealand in August 2004, and a third, in Trinidad in February 2005 which was held just prior to the launch of the Caribbean Association for Distance and Open Learning.

A three day meeting of the authors of the proposed book on “Foreign Tertiary Education Providers in the Anglophone Caribbean” was held in Trinidad & Tobago in October 2005. St. Vincent & the Grenadines sent a representative to the meeting.

Through the Canada-Caribbean Distance Education Scholarship Programme, which COL facilitated, nine students graduated in June 2004 from the programme on Tourism and Hospitality Management offered by Mount Saint Vincent University in Nova Scotia.

LOOKING FORWARD

The commitment of St. Vincent & the Grenadines to VUSSC was an important element of its partnership working in 2003-2006. Its support of this initiative has laid the foundation for future co-operation as VUSSC grows in the 2006-2009 planning period.

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

By taking advantage of its reserves of oil and its status as the business hub of the Caribbean, Trinidad & Tobago intends to achieve developed country status by 2020 and has policies for developing the education and training of its people in line with this ambition. Trinidad & Tobago has always been a consistent supporter of COL but the significant increase in its voluntary contribution to COL's budget in the 2003-2006 triennium and the endorsement of its link with COL by Cabinet symbolised a new phase in the relationship. The formal reporting point for COL is the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education but it also works closely with the Ministry of Education. The Honourable Hazel Manning, Minister of Education, visited COL in Vancouver in 2005 to discuss the development of a strategic plan for the implementation of open and distance learning (ODL) methodology and the President of COL, Sir John Daniel, visited Trinidad & Tobago in both 2005 and 2006.

SUMMARY

Trinidad & Tobago is emerging as a key mover in the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). This builds on its work in making some of the curricula of the Caribbean Examinations Council available in self-instructional formats. In keeping with its regional leadership role, Trinidad & Tobago hosted the foundation meeting of the Caribbean Association for Distance and Open Learning (CARADOL) in 2005 and participates regularly in the COL sponsored meetings of Caribbean Chief Education Officers (CEOs). Trinidad & Tobago hosted a regional consultation to provide input for the preparation of COL's 2006-2009 Plan.

SYSTEMS AND POLICY ENHANCEMENT (REGIONAL INITIATIVES)

Caribbean Association for Distance and Open Learning

A regional association, the Caribbean Association for Distance and Open Learning (CARADOL) held its foundation conference in Port-of-Spain in 2005 with the title *Commonwealth Cooperation in Distance Education: Potential Benefits for Small States*. CARADOL is a joint organiser of the 4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning.

4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum in Open Learning (PCF4)

PCF4, which will attract some 500 delegates from across the Commonwealth and beyond, is being held in the Caribbean for the first time in late 2006. Trinidad & Tobago has been closely involved in planning the event, where the Ministry of Education will chair the sessions on Open Schooling and share its policy on the use of ODL in this area.

Chief Education Officers

Trinidad & Tobago has been an active participant in the annual meetings of Caribbean Chief Education Officers (CEOs) of the Caribbean sponsored by COL. Their meeting in 2003 focused on the use of Open and Distance Learning in Teacher Education. In 2004 it was held at the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in New Zealand, where the CEOs spent a productive day in discussion with their counterparts from the Commonwealth Pacific Island countries.

Cross-Border Higher Education

The provision of higher education by foreign institutions is a live issue in the Caribbean. To develop the knowledge base on this issue Trinidad & Tobago hosted a three day meeting in 2005 on *Foreign Tertiary Education Providers in the Anglophone Caribbean* with participants from ten countries in the region. The resulting book (also available as an eBook, on CD-ROM and on the COL and UNESCO websites) will be launched at PCF4 in late 2006.

ICTs in Education

COL has supported the Ministry of Education in developing policy for the use of ICTs in education and in planning Schoolnet Trinidad & Tobago. In both cases COL was able to give Trinidad & Tobago the benefit of experience in similar initiatives elsewhere in the Commonwealth, including topics such as the qualities of a good education portal and teacher attitudes.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Trinidad & Tobago participated in planning meetings for the VUSSC (see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives for more details of VUSSC) in Singapore in September 2005 and April 2006, in a course team

leaders meeting in Vancouver in July 2006 and a working session on course development in Mauritius in August 2006.

The delivery of VUSSC courses and materials in the Caribbean will benefit from the parallel developments of the Caribbean Knowledge Learning Network (CKLN) and the EU-funded initiative, Caribbean Universities Project for Integrated Distance Education (CUPIDE).

Caribbean Examinations Council

With COL's help the Caribbean Examinations Council developed learning materials to accompany part of its secondary education. These were launched in Trinidad & Tobago by the Minister of Education, The Honourable Hazel Manning, at a ceremony in Port-of-Spain in February 2005. COL is working with the Distance Education Unit in the Ministry of Education to create learning resources to supplement these core materials and helping them select consultants to build capacity within the country.

Forestry and Environmental Sustainability

Since 2000 COL has supplied video equipment and intensive training so that forestry officers in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment can sensitise the population to the value of conservation and the benefits of eco-tourism. Equipment is refreshed by COL when necessary and training updates are also arranged.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ODL and Development

A representative from Trinidad & Tobago took part in a high-level institute in Vancouver in 2005 that explored the relationship between open, distance and technology-mediated learning and development. Seventeen countries took part and the conclusions of the institute have been published as a book.

Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning

Trinidad & Tobago was well represented at the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in New Zealand in 2005. Even stronger representation is expected at the 4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum in Jamaica from 31 October – 3 November, 2006.

LOOKING FORWARD

Closer working with COL in 2003-2006 has enabled Trinidad & Tobago to make considerable improvements to its own systems as well as helping it to emerge as a regional leader. The next triennium promises well and Trinidad & Tobago will take a leading role in VUSSC as it develops.



Pacific

**Fiji Islands | Kiribati | Nauru | Papua New Guinea | Samoa |
Solomon Islands | Tonga | Tuvalu | Vanuatu**



REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN THE PACIFIC

In 2005, COL organised a workshop for Regional Consultation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the Pacific – The Way Forward at the South Pacific Community Education Training Centre in Fiji. COL shared its past ten years experience on the use of media support for the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions in the region (Fiji, Samoa, Kiribati and Vanuatu) and recent work on the Millennium Development Goals in general and COL's focus on health in the region in particular.

COL has worked actively with the Pacific Association for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (PATVET) to develop activities to equip people with the right skills to enable them to work in local economies. COL attended the PATVET consultative meeting in March 2006.

COL MEDIA EMPOWERMENT

The COL Media Empowerment activities are part of a regional technical vocational initiative undertaken by COL and sanctioned by the Ministers of Education in the region in institutional capacity development with in-country Polytechnics and Technical Institutes. The activities have added value to the course development work at the Polytechnics and have enabled the institutions to advocate technical vocational training as a career choice among young people or those wishing to upgrade skill sets. Activities have included the creation of media units to enable staff at training institutions to produce TVET materials for television or radio broadcast and supporting training institutions moving to dual-mode structure of delivery of TVET.

ICT AS A TOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT IN ISLAND COUNTRIES

The Asian Development Bank requested COL to assess the existing framework and potential for information and communication technology (ICT) in twelve island countries (Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu) in terms of their ICT readiness, including physical infrastructure, financial and human resources, and regulatory framework for future development. The terms also identified bankable ICT-related projects, particularly in areas of distance education, e-commerce and e-government.

FIJI ISLANDS

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

A small state of the Commonwealth, Fiji Islands is part of the grouping of South Pacific Islands. Fiji is a member of the regional network: Pacific Association of Technical/Vocational Education and Training (PATVET). It is via this network that Fiji has benefited from many of COL's activities in the South Pacific. Fiji did not contribute to COL's budget in 2003-2006.

SUMMARY

During the 2003-2006 period COL has worked with Fiji to promote Literacy and Livelihoods (L&L) and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector. Key components of COL's activities include:

- participation in the analysis of the TVET sector focussing on needs and infrastructure;
- staff training in media development;
- supporting the PATVET regional network; and
- course development and delivery.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in Partnership to Strengthen National Systems

Staff at the Fiji Institute of Technology were trained on how to operate the COL installed media development units at the Centre, which also provided video support for the development of distance education programmers. COL established similar centres in several institutes in the Pacific Islands. COL is providing ongoing support as the Institute moves towards using dual-mode delivery.

Fiji has benefited from COL's Media Empowerment activities in the Pacific. These activities are part of a regional technical vocational initiative undertaken by COL and sanctioned by the Ministers of Education in the region in institutional capacity development with in-country Polytechnics and Technical Institutes. The activities in Fiji have added value to the course development work at the Polytechnics and have enabled the institutions to advocate technical vocational training as a career choice among young people or those wishing to upgrade skill sets.

Working with Regional Partners

Forty-one participants from the Pacific attended the Regional Consultation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the Pacific – The Way Forward at the South Pacific Community Education Training Centre in Fiji. Three COL representatives attended the consultation. COL's presentation focused on the work of media support for the TVET institutions in the region (Fiji, Samoa, Kiribati and Vanuatu) and future directions. COL expanded on its work covering the Millennium Development Goals as well as COL's focus on health in the region. This consultation enabled COL to meet and update PATVET participants whom COL has been working with for the past ten years.

Strategic Planning

A consultant was hired by COL to undertake an environmental scan with a special focus on the current Literacy and Livelihoods (L&L) infrastructure and its potential application to the education and training system in four Pacific Island countries including Fiji. The consultant's report was used as a resource input in the planning workshop held in Suva in May 2003.

The Fiji Islands attended the "International Literacy and Livelihoods Experts Meeting: Learning for Life in a Changing World" which was held in Vancouver in November 2004. As part of the consultative meeting in L&L for the Pacific, COL visited the campus of the Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT) in March 2006.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Fiji is an active participant in the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives).

Preparation and use of learning materials

A workshop to develop a model for delivering training in basic trade skills to local communities in the Pacific Islands was held in Suva from 28 April – 2 May 2003. Consultants from Australia and New Zealand provided additional insight. The area targeted was "working with timber" and "working with concrete" – for both volcanic islands and coral atolls. The materials were piloted in at least two countries. Fiji assisted this initiative by providing video support. Two basic trade courses have been completed: "Working with Timber" and "Working with Concrete". A third course "Small engines" is in development.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Under the COL's Young Professionals Attachment Programme 2003-04, Fiji hosted an intern at the Fiji Institute of Technology. In 2004-2005, another intern was placed at the Institute.

COL has supported three attachments of staff from FIT and one from Tarawa Technical Institute to The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (TOPNZ) to gain knowledge and experience of open and distance learning (ODL). Over 30 staff members at FIT have completed distance learning courses about ODL through TOPNZ.

COL sponsored two delegates from Fiji to attend the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning which was held in partnership with the Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ) in Dunedin, New Zealand in July 2004.

LOOKING FORWARD

Fiji will continue to build on its excellent partnership with COL in the next planning period 2006-2009. Activities in this period will focus on education, learning for livelihoods and the human environment. Fiji's commitment to VUSSC will be an important element in the strengthening of its education sector.

KIRIBATI

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Kiribati is a small republic made up of an island and atolls scattered over an expanse of ocean equivalent in size to the continental United States.

COL has been working in Kiribati for over a decade, centred at the Tarawa Technical Institute (TTI) in North Tarawa. The Vice President and Minister of Education, Youth and Sport, Ministry of Education is a member of COL's Board of Governors where she represents the South Pacific countries.

Kiribati became a contributor to COL's budget in 2006.

SUMMARY

In the period 2003-2006 Kiribati played an active part in international meetings such as the Pan-Commonwealth forum thereby contributing to debate and exchanging experience and best practice with other countries. It also made advances domestically with the development of video as a means of reaching its scattered population. Kiribati is also an active participant in the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in Partnership to Strengthen National Systems

COL assisted Kiribati in developing and delivering video based educational programmes in the technical vocational education sector. Video productions at TTI are now being employed as a supplement to print-based materials to be used in the outer atolls. These concentrate on retraining people living in the remote atolls of the country for new job skills. This work gave rise to a new partnership, facilitated by COL, with a small media organisation called Kiribati Video. COL enhanced Kiribati Video's facilities for the

production of videos on HIV/AIDS awareness to be distributed to the remote atoll villages and throughout the densely populated areas of North Tarawa. In recent years the population of North Tarawa has risen dramatically due to the lack of employment opportunities in the outer atolls. This increase has seen an upsurge in HIV related cases and also health issues related to sanitation.

At the request of the Asian Development Bank, COL assessed the existing and potential frameworks for information and communication technology (ICT) in twelve island countries including Kiribati. The study assessed ICT readiness, including physical infrastructure, financial and human resources, and regulatory framework for future development. The terms also identified bankable ICT-related projects, particularly in areas of distance education, e-commerce and e-government.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Kiribati is an active participant in the VUSSC (see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives for more details of VUSSC).

Preparation and use of learning materials

One participant from Kiribati attended the workshop to develop a model for delivering training in basic trade skills to local communities which was held in Suva 28 April – 2 May, 2003. The participants later successfully developed one basic trade course on “Working with Timber”, a second one on “Working with Concrete” is nearing completion and the third course “Small Engines” is in the planning stage.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL provided support to one delegate from Kiribati to participate in the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in partnership with Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ) in Dunedin, New Zealand from 4-8 July 2004 and the Vice President and Minister of Education, Youth and Sport, is expected to attend the 4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in Jamaica in 2006.

In 2005, COL organised a workshop for Regional Consultation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the Pacific – The Way Forward at the South Pacific Community Education Training Centre in Fiji. COL shared ten years past experience on the use of media support for the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions in the region (Fiji, Samoa, Kiribati and Vanuatu) and work on the Millennium Development Goals in general and COL’s focus on health in the region in particular. The meeting also gave COL an opportunity to meet and update Pacific Association of Technical, Vocational Education and Training (PATVET) participants with whom it has been working for the past ten years.

LOOKING FORWARD

Kiribati's commitment to VUSSC will be an important element in its forward planning for 2006-2009. The valuable work which was done in partnership with Kiribati Video will also continue in the next planning period to provide more resources for video based educational programmes for the Pacific region especially in the area of HIV/AIDS awareness.

Kiribati has recently signed an agreement with the European Union aimed at ensuring sustainable fishing of Pacific tuna. This could link in with 2006-2009 activities to promote Learning for Livelihoods.

NAURU

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

A very small state of the Commonwealth, Nauru is the world's smallest independent republic with a population of 10,000 and covering just 21 sq. km.

Literacy on the island is 97%, with education compulsory from six to 15 years of age. The University of the South Pacific has a campus on the island.

SUMMARY

Nauru has made good use of networking opportunities to make progress in this period. It is interested in participating in the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Nauru has expressed interest in VUSSC (see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives for more details on VUSSC) but has not yet participated in its work.

ICT as a tool for development in island countries

COL partnered the Asian Development Bank to work up a plan to assess the existing framework and potential for information and communication technology (ICT) in twelve island countries including Nauru in terms of their ICT readiness, including physical infrastructure, financial and human resources, and regulatory framework for future development. The terms also identified bankable ICT-related projects, particularly in areas of distance education, e-commerce and e-government.

Preparation and use of learning materials

Nauru is a member of the South Pacific Islands, with which COL is working in developing basic trade courses. One course on “Working with Timber” has been completed and the second one, on “Working with Concrete” is nearing completion. A third course “Small Engines” is in the planning stages.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Nauru was represented in a COL workshop to develop a model for delivering training in basic trade skills to local communities which was held in Suva 28 April – 2 May, 2003.

COL sponsored one delegate from Nauru to the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning which was held in partnership with the Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ) in Dunedin, New Zealand in July 2004.

LOOKING FORWARD

Nauru’s active engagement in open, distance and technology enhanced learning has benefited from the networks and expertise it has been able to access via COL sponsored events and projects. This productive relationship looks set to continue in 2006-2009 and this could be further enriched by Nauru working more closely with other networks such as VUSSC and collaborative initiatives in the South Pacific. Nauru is about to ship out its first load of phosphate in nearly ten years. This is a significant step forward in the island’s economic development and could link in with Learning for Livelihoods activities in 2006-2009.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is the largest of the Pacific Island countries and although its population is just over 4 million it is grouped among the small states of the Commonwealth. As a nation, it faces a number of pressing challenges. A recent report published by World Vision, Australia's biggest non-government aid organisation, assesses PNG as not likely to achieve any of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. AIDS/HIV infection is a serious problem as is access to clean water. PNG also has the lowest rate of primary school completion in the region (under 60%). PNG is heavily dependent on Australian aid and the Australian government has deemed it a priority country and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) has set up an office in Port Moresby. Most sectors in PNG would benefit from assistance and distance education is becoming an important feature.

SUMMARY

2003-2006 was a period of expansion for PNG's distance and technology enhanced learning systems. Two important projects are underway: one in environmental policy and the other in AIDS awareness and prevention. There have also been significant advances on the institutional front with PNG participating in the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), establishing the Papua New Guinea Association of Distance Education (PNGADE) and also being part of the Pacific Islands Regional Association of Distance Education (PIRADE). COL has worked closely with the PNG authorities throughout the period sending delegates to a number of meetings with the aim of furthering professional development and forging closer links with other Commonwealth countries. The President and other COL staff have visited the country recently and established important points of contact.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

The Environment

An environmental scan was completed for PNG with a special focus on the current Literacy and Livelihoods infrastructure and its potential application to the education and training system in four Pacific Island countries of which PNG is one. Following the scan COL held a meeting with representatives of the University Open College (UOC). This gave COL an understanding of the role and needs of UOC, which included aid with multi-media support for its print-based materials and training to convert print information and instruction into a multi-media platform delivered on CDs.

AIDS Awareness and Prevention

In March 2005, the Permanent Secretaries of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health were briefed on the health-based work of COL and addressed the MDGs. COL has partnered with the World Health Organization and the locally based Anglicare. As a result of this partnership the Anglicare STOP AIDS Health Media Unit was set up in March 2006. Anglicare is now better equipped to reach the remote and linguistically diverse parts of the country with customised health-based information. The drama troupe at Anglicare, which produces skits and dramas for presentation at roadsides and village events, has been trained in media production. Their work concerning HIV stigma and prevention have been produced onto video and used at village cinema events in remotes parts of the country.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

PNG is a strong supporter of the VUSSC (see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives for further details of VUSSC).

COL support for PNG Initiatives

COL supported the establishment of the Papua New Guinea Association of Distance Education (PNGADE) and the Pacific Islands Regional Association of Distance Education (PIRADE). In April 2006 the President of COL gave the inaugural keynote address on “Learning for Development: The Role of Distance Education” at the symposium of the PNGADE held to re-launch the association. He also met with the new Minister of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, the Minister of Education, and the Minister of Community Affairs to discuss COL’s role in the development of education in the Country.

COL held a meeting in March 2005 with the Data Unit, Ministry of Education to gain an understanding of the Ministry’s plan for the education content and connectivity via VSAT to remote parts of the country once the links are established.

Preparation and Use of Learning Materials

The COL/Commonwealth Secretariat distance education training programme for legislative drafters has been adapted by the University of the South Pacific for use throughout the region, and also by the University of Papua New Guinea.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A representative from PNG attended the two-week long Institute in August 2004, which was hosted by the National Institute for Open Schooling, India, on the establishment of an open schooling system.

COL provided support to a delegate from PNG to participate in the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum held in New Zealand.

The Head of the Teacher Education Unit at the Ministry of Education was briefed in March 2005 on COL's work in PNG. The discussion included the subject of a Microsoft grant that would fund teacher education in the country.

LOOKING FORWARD

A more sustainable environmental policy and better AIDS awareness will continue to be important themes as PNG develops its open, distance and technology enhanced learning systems. Following the environmental scan a review of natural resource management programmes related to food and environment is now planned. PNG's commitment to distance education will be furthered via its participation in VUSSC and in the newly established PNGADE and PIRADE. PNG is reviewing the Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration and Masters in Public Administration programmes for possible adoption.

SAMOA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

The Government of Samoa has been a steady contributor to COL since the organisation's inception in 1988. Ministry of Education Sports and Culture officials have participated in and benefited from regional consultations over the years including Pan-Commonwealth Forums and Pacific Association of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (PATVET) meetings that COL has facilitated. The former Minister of Education, Fiamé Naomi Mata'afa, joined the COL's Board of Directors in July 1998 and served until December 2004. COL has been active in assisting the technical vocational sector in Samoa through the former Samoa Polytechnic (now amalgamated with the National University of Samoa).

SUMMARY

As a result of COL's partnership with Samoa in 2003-2006, Samoans benefited from increased opportunities to learn and train. Some of these opportunities were provided through the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme and the creation of a Media Unit at the Samoa Polytechnic. Samoa has also been involved in the collaborative development of technical and vocational learning materials which are now being used by different institutions in the Pacific region. The participation of Samoa in the COL-driven Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) was an important step forward which will help the country to bring more quality education and training to its citizens.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in Partnership to Strengthen National Systems

COL has promoted technical and vocational training to improve employment opportunities in Samoa. It has held a series of workshops at Samoa Polytechnic in Apia. These have aided in the creation of a media unit and staff that are now producing video materials for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) for television broadcast across the nation. These materials are being used as a supplement to the workshop-based learning and also to promote technical vocational training among the young people in

the country. Also, through the creation of the media unit at the Polytechnic, video and audio production is being considered as a course offering to students in the coming years.

Strategic Planning

COL sponsored a delegate from Samoa to attend the International Literacy and Livelihoods Experts Meeting: Learning for Life in a Changing World which was held in Vancouver in November 2004.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Samoa is one of the countries which has signed the Singapore Statement to work together to create the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives).

Preparation and use of learning materials

COL facilitated the development of an on-line course, with a face-to-face component, designed to train senior managers of vocational education on developing policy to support open and distance learning in Samoa.

COL helped to develop three basic trade courses for the Pacific region. The first course “Working with Timber” has been completed; the second course “Working with Concrete” is about to be released and the third course “Small Engines” is in the planning stage.

COL worked with the chief executives of technical institutes and senior Ministry officials in vocational education in the Pacific island states to develop new skills-training learning modules. The modules were piloted in four Pacific countries and Samoa was one of them. More modules are in development.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL sponsored two Samoan delegates to attend the biennial Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in New Zealand in 2004.

In the second phase of the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme, three students from Samoa have successfully completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Distance Education offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). They are now working towards the Masters of Arts in Distance Education offered by IGNOU.

LOOKING FORWARD

The positive achievements of 2003-2006 set the tone for Samoa’s partnership with COL in the next planning period 2006-2009. In this period, on-going activities within the health, gender and technical and vocational education areas will be an important element. Samoa’s commitment to VUSSC will also start to yield positive benefits in this period as the initiative is rolled out. Samoa will also continue to benefit from the regional consultations concerning PATVET.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

A small state of the Commonwealth, the Solomon Islands is part of the grouping of South Pacific island nations.

SUMMARY

In 2003-2006, COL's partnership with the Solomon Islands concentrated on the COL-World Health Organisation health project at the Solomon Islands Development Trust. With the help of a consultant, provided by COL, an open and distance learning (ODL) policy for Literacy and Livelihoods and natural resource management was established for the Solomon Islands. The President visited the Solomons in 2004 for discussions with the Minister of Education and Deputy Prime Minister, Snyder Rini.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in Partnership to Strengthen National Systems

A consultant was contracted by COL to outline a plan for the establishment of an ODL Policy for Literacy and Livelihoods (L&L) and natural resource management (NRM) including an implementation strategy/plan in four Pacific Island countries. The Solomon Islands is one of the four countries.

COL-Poverty Reduction Outcomes Through Education Innovations and Networks (PROTEIN)

This programme facilitates the implementation of innovative projects that adopt ODL and information and communications technologies (ICT) for poverty reduction in the developing Commonwealth (www.col.org/protein). COL offers expertise in ODL and start-up, limited-term financial support to qualifying projects that help build human capacity to gain knowledge and skills in contributing to food security, environmental protection, rural development, nutritional education and micro-enterprise. Successful projects have a high level of inter-institutional collaboration, significant and innovative ODL

and ICT use, and well-researched content and learning design to support contextually relevant rural and peri-urban capacity building for poverty reduction.

The Rural Development Volunteer Association of Honiara received the award to expand and strengthen the Youth First Computer Centre, an existing ICT resource and learning centre for young people.

Media Empowerment for Health Issues

In partnership with the World Health Organization, COL implemented a Media Unit at Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT), an NGO based in Honiara and trained the staff there on creating and delivering health videos to disadvantaged groups on key issues such as malaria prevention. A FM radio station was also implemented with SIDT to aid with the dissemination of accurate information to the NGO sector (i.e. health, environment, agriculture, forestry, governance, etc.). The range of the station will cover the city and surrounding region of Honiara.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

The Solomon Islands was invited to participate in the creation of the VUSSC at a meeting in Singapore in September 2005. (For more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives).

Preparation and use of learning materials

With the establishment of a Media Unit by COL, SIDT staff are now able to produce their own videos and promote awareness raising programmes to the rural areas. SIDT is also seeking external funding to construct a new building to house the Media Unit. The Unit will be available for a range of development work by the NGO sector.

Ongoing support is provided to SIDT for their Media Unit to produce videos on health issues.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL sponsored one delegate from the Solomon Islands to attend the biennial Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in New Zealand in 2004.

LOOKING FORWARD

The valuable work done in 2003-2006 will serve as a foundation for further progress in the next planning period 2006-2009. In this period COL will continue to work with the Solomon Islands to develop activities in the areas of health, education, governance, literacy and technical vocational education. There is also scope for the Solomon Islands to become more actively involved in the VUSSC as the initiative is rolled out.

TONGA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

The Kingdom of Tonga has been a steady contributor to COL since the organisation's inception in 1988. Ministry of Education officials have participated and benefited from regional consultations over the years including Pan-Commonwealth Forums and Pacific Association of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (PATVET) meetings that COL has facilitated.

SUMMARY

In the 2003-2006 planning period Tonga benefited from COL's support as an active member of PATVET. This included having senior officials from the education system attend various training events and piloting the new skills-training learning modules. Tonga also signed up to the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in Partnership to Strengthen National Systems

The Minister of Education visited the offices of COL in 2004, just before taking office, for staff briefings concerning the region in general and post secondary education for Tongans in particular. He visited Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia to discuss with administrators possibilities of distance education courses and Tongans studying for advanced degrees in Canada.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Tonga is one of the countries which signed the Singapore Statement to work together in the creation of the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives).

Preparation and use of learning materials

COL worked with the chief executives of technical institutes and senior Ministry officials in vocational education in the Pacific island states to develop new skills-training learning modules. The modules were piloted in four Pacific countries and Tonga was one of them. More modules are in development.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Being an active PATVET member, representatives from Tonga participated in various meetings organised by COL in the Pacific region.

COL sponsored one delegate from Tonga to attend the biennial Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in New Zealand in 2004.

LOOKING FORWARD

The positive results yielded by COL's partnership with Tonga in 2003-2006 set the tone for further progress in the period 2006-2009. Membership of VUSSC is a cornerstone of this work and Tonga will begin to reap the rewards of being an active participant as the initiative is rolled out in 2006-2009.

TUVALU

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

The island group of nine coral atolls in the South Pacific Ocean which make up the nation of Tuvalu are one of the small states of the Commonwealth (population about 12,000). Tuvalu contributed to the COL budget in 2004 and has enjoyed an effective partnership with COL in developing the use of information and communications technology in the country. With a very high literacy of 92%, Tuvalu's educational needs are in vocational skills such as fishing, tourism and agriculture.

SUMMARY

In 2003-2006 COL's partnership with Tuvalu included the development of technical and vocational learning materials which are now being used by different institutions in the Pacific region. Recently, the participation of Tuvalu in the COL-driven Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) has opened the way for improving access to quality education and training. COL has also sponsored senior people from the education system to attend a variety of training events in other countries. This has led to much valuable exchange of expertise and best practice.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Expanding access to education

COL sponsored a pilot project for over 100 adults based on remote atolls to study introductory level courses at a distance.

Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Tuvalu is participating in the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives) and is also providing expert input for the development of open educational resources.

Representatives attended a three-week “boot camp” in Mauritius during which four teams created learning materials, using existing open educational resources as inputs. Approximately thirty notional learning hours in each of the subject areas of tourism and entrepreneurship were produced in Mauritius and the work is now being continued. Once completed, all materials will be made available online via a website.

Preparation and use of learning materials

COL helped to develop three basic trade courses for the Pacific region. The first course “Working with Timber” has been completed; the second course “Working with Concrete” is about to be released and the third course “Small Engines” is in the planning stage.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL sponsored two delegates from Tuvalu to attend the biennial Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in New Zealand in 2004.

Through COL’s Young Professionals Attachment Programme, an intern visited Tuvalu with the COL Pacific Project Manager and produced a report on “Education in Tuvalu – An Overview of Flexible and Distance Learning.”

LOOKING FORWARD

In the period 2003-2006 Tuvalu made some significant achievements in the areas of expanding access and making its education and training systems more relevant to economic needs. It also made an important contribution to the setting up of the VUSSC. In the next triennium this progress will continue as Tuvalu participates in the VUSSC activities to build and strengthen a network of educational professionals who are able to function online as competently as in a classroom.

VANUATU

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Vanuatu comprises a chain of 83 islands in the South Pacific. With a population of just over 200,000 people, it is one of the small states of the Commonwealth. It last contributed to COL in 1991 and 1992 but has been a strong moral supporter of COL's activities and has worked in partnership to develop the use of open and distance learning (ODL) and information and communications technologies (ICT) in the country. With high literacy and universal primary education, the focus of educational needs in Vanuatu are in secondary and tertiary education and particularly in vocational skills related to agriculture, tourism and small business.

SUMMARY

In 2003-2006, COL's partnership with Vanuatu included the development of skills-training learning materials and participation in the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). COL has also supported professional development by making it possible for senior people from the education sector to attend training events in other countries. This has led to valuable exchanges of expertise and best practice.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Improving Technical and Vocational Education

COL worked with the Vanuatu Institute of Technology (VIT) that is based in Port Vila to improve employment opportunities through better technical and vocational education. VIT is rebuilding the institution in a move to promote technical and vocational courses throughout the islands. COL is aiding VIT in its delivery of technical and vocational information via video, television and radio to the island groups of Vanuatu.

Achieving development and environmental goals through open and distance learning

COL contracted a consultant to outline a plan for establishing an ODL Policy for Literacy and Livelihoods (L&L) and natural resource management (NRM) including an implementation strategy/plan for Vanuatu and three other Pacific Island countries.

Preparation and use of learning materials

COL worked with the chief executives of technical institutes and senior Ministry officials in vocational education in the Pacific island states to develop new skills-training learning modules. The modules were piloted in four Pacific countries and Vanuatu was one of them. More modules are in development.

COL has provided the Vanuatu Polytechnic with video equipment and intensive training, allowing it to produce a range of teaching and learning materials.

Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Vanuatu is participating in the VUSSC and providing expert input for the development of open educational resources. Representatives attended a three week “boot camp” in Mauritius during which four teams created learning materials, using existing open educational resources as inputs. Approximately 30 notional learning hours in each of the subject areas of tourism and entrepreneurship were produced in Mauritius and the work is now being continued online. Once completed, all materials will be made available online as open educational resources.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL sponsored one delegate from Vanuatu to attend the biennial Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in New Zealand in 2004.

LOOKING FORWARD

Vanuatu’s fruitful partnership with COL in 2003-2006 is set to continue in the next triennium in a number of important areas. Vanuatu will continue to work with COL and Commonwealth partners to set up the VUSSC, in particular offering expertise to create, customise and reuse open educational resources, encouraging the cross accreditation of learning programmes and mutual support for expanding learning opportunities. Vanuatu will also be an important partner in COL’s programme to build better technical and vocational education and training for the South Pacific region.

