

Connections



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Ministers pledge increased funding for COL

Britain leads the way, triples annual contribution

The 14th triennial Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) in Halifax gave COL renewed mandate and pledges of increased funding over the next three years.

“While buoyed by major increases by some of the developed countries, we are also heartened by the increases made by small countries such as Cameroon, Dominica, Samoa, and Tonga and large but developing countries like India and Nigeria,” said COL’s President and Chief Executive Officer, Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan. “It is a fine testament of appreciation to the work of this small agency – our ambitious \$9 million target seems to be largely met and we accept now the responsibility to ensure that our work continues to merit the confidence that has been expressed.”

The Commonwealth of Learning was created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies. International headquarters were established in Vancouver in 1989, hosted by Canada and the Province of British Columbia whose combined support has been critical to the viability and growth of the organisation over the years.

Ministers and ministerial representatives from 26 of the 45 participating Commonwealth countries took the opportunity to speak in support of COL. Many pledged significantly increased funding with Britain leading the way – it announced that it will triple its contribution to £1 million annually over the next three years while continuing to provide additional support for specific projects such as community radio broadcasting in Africa.

In their final communiqué, Ministers commended COL on its achievements over the last three years. “They also endorsed COL’s Three-year Plan 2000-2003 and “confirmed their desire to give effect to the decision of Heads of Government to endorse an annual core budget of CDN\$9 million.”

The communiqué also noted that:

Many delegations recorded their gratitude for the assistance provided them by COL and encouraged COL to be bold in its interpretation of its mandate in the face of the rapid transformation in education and training as a consequence of the information and communications revolution. They expressed appreciation for the



analysis COL had provided of the trends in virtual education and encouraged it to look for innovative ways in which it could help local institutions strengthen their presence in this environment, perhaps by responding more positively to appeals for COL to become directly engaged in the process for accreditation and credit recognitions as well as quality assurance. Ministers recognised the efficacy of distance education systems, and re-iterated their keen desire to see these deployed in the interests of teacher training, basic education for all, skills development and improved access, especially for girl children and women.

High Level Review Group

Education Ministers “strongly endorsed” COL’s submission to the Commonwealth’s High Level Review Group. It recognises that education and training are assuming greater rather than lesser importance in the new millennium; that cost constraints, demographic trends, and rapidly expanding requirements from formal education to professional upgrading, skills development, and life-long learning outstrip the capacity of conventional approaches to respond; that the technological and communications revolution is affording increasingly attractive alternatives to address these needs; that these technologies integrated with the methodologies of open and distance learning can offer practical and cost effective solutions; and finally that the Commonwealth has in COL an ideal instrument to help members re-engineer their education systems to take full advantage of these new opportunities. www.col.org/highlevel00.htm

In their own submission to the High Level Group, Ministers of Education recommended urgent efforts to increase education

continued on page 2



OPEN
SCHOOLING

2



YOUTH
INTERNS

4



PAN-COMMONWEALTH
FORUM 2

6



ED-TECH
NEWS

8

COL IN ACTION... 4

COL PARTNERS... 4

PEOPLE... 5

EVENTS... 6

NOW AVAILABLE... 6

programmes to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and mitigate its impact on education. Their *Halifax Statement on Education in the Commonwealth* also calls for the Commonwealth to strengthen education programmes to prevent conflict and to mitigate the impact of conflict and natural disasters on education.

A new virtual university?

The *Halifax Statement on Education in the Commonwealth* specifically requests COL to pursue the establishment of a virtual university to serve small states. This idea was identified during the meeting of the Ministerial Committee on “priorities for small states.”

Largest Commonwealth education meeting

Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia hosted over 300 delegates from 45 countries, three UK overseas territories and 21 observer organisations, attending the ministerial conference, and a further 400 attending a parallel symposium and trade fair organised by the Nova Scotia Department of Education in partnership with the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, the Government of Canada, the British Council, the Commonwealth Secretariat and COL. It was the largest CCEM ever and the second such event held in Canada. COL joins Commonwealth Ministers of Education in expressing “deep gratitude to the Government and people of Canada, and in particular the Province of Nova Scotia, for the excellent arrangements made for the conference and for the warmth of hospitality.”

COL's Three-year Plan

COL's Three-year Plan 2000–2003, which, after wide consultation, was presented to Commonwealth Ministers of Education in Halifax, focuses on four key roles for COL:

As a catalyst for collaboration, COL seeks to marshal the wealth of experience, talent and resources available for the Commonwealth's benefit.

As a resource for training, COL will focus on developing national capabilities in distance and open learning.

As a capacity builder, COL will assist countries to capitalise on distance and open learning to develop capacity in other areas.

As an information/knowledge provider, COL will enhance its ability to gather, store and disseminate information and co-ordinate a new Commonwealth-wide network of knowledge providers in distance and open learning.

The Plan outlines COL's efforts to diversify and increase funding sources. COL International plays a major role in this strategy through contracts with international development agencies and with countries outside of the Commonwealth.

Exploring the potential of open schooling

There are currently an estimated 100 million street children in the developing countries of the Commonwealth, living and working in the thoroughfares of major urban centres. Open schooling methods are now reaching some of these children.

Filmmaker Mira Nair opened a window onto the street life of Bombay (now called Mumbai) seen through the eyes of Chaipau, a young boy abandoned by his family at an early age. Unable to read or write and lacking the means to return home, he is forced to eke out an existence on the streets, a microcosm of sweatshops, prostitution and drug-dealing which threatens to engulf him. Nair's 1988 award-winning film *Salaam Bombay!* is still considered a remarkable work, not least because it called the world's attention, however briefly, to the plight of street children, but it also helped to launch some major efforts to address the problem.

Some of the proceeds from the Indian premiere of the film helped form the Salaam Balaak Trust (SBT) in 1988, a non-government organisation (NGO) for the social and emotional rehabilitation of street children and working children through non-formal and open schooling methods. The SBT also runs drop-in and full care night shelters. Based in New Delhi, the organisation is run by a board of trustees which includes Praveen Nair, the filmmaker's mother; it now operates eight educational centres and four shelters in Delhi, Mumbai and Bhubaneswar.

The SBT focuses on runaway and working children between the ages of three to 18, and currently helps about 5,000 children through its centres. Basic literacy and primary level courses are offered, incorporating non-conventional learning techniques such as music and theatre and puppet workshops. The centres also provide vocational training, job placement and opportunities for education beyond the

The Plan positions the Commonwealth to embrace flexible learning options to address formal educational needs as well as the expanding needs for non-formal education in areas such as literacy, numeracy, public health and hygiene, HIV/AIDS, life-long learning, labour market training, and the plight of children at risk: orphans, refugees and those living in the streets.

www.col.org/3yearplan00

Documents

COL's reports to Ministers of Education, including the Three-year Plan 2000–2003, and CCEM's Communiqué and Halifax Statement are available on COL's web site.

www.col.org/ccem00



primary level, as well as medical treatment and counselling. The SBT continues to operate on donations from individuals and from local government and donor agency grants. In 1999, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) pledged US\$25,000 per year for three years in support of an SBT shelter for girl children.

Chaipau is a fictional character but his experiences, and those of others in similar circumstances, are all too real. Many agencies like the SBT now exist to provide what aid they can to these children, with varying degrees of success; but in each case their task is monumental and their resources are limited.

Children at risk

There are currently an estimated 100 million street children in the developing countries of the Commonwealth, living and working in the thoroughfares of major urban centres. Further estimates indicate an additional 40 million working children who may have a home to return to, but who spend their days toiling in factories, farms or industrial areas instead of studying at school. Add to these the recently orphaned, particularly in Africa where the estimate is upwards from 10 million, who have been left without one or both parents because of AIDS and AIDS-related diseases, civil conflicts or violent uprisings. A conservative tally of all children at risk is 150 million or more in the Commonwealth alone. And most live in poverty, with little or no opportunity for even the most basic level of education and training.

Beyond the basics

In order to have an opportunity to develop into healthy, happy, contributing members of society these children must be given the education, life-skills and knowledge those of us with secure homes and access to public education may take for granted. Acquiring basic education, however, must not be seen as an end in itself but rather a means for children to acquire more practical skills. The basics of reading, writing and arithmetic need to be supplemented with vocational skills for producing income, and with life-skills training, such as basic first aid, simple nutrition and the importance of maintaining personal and environmental cleanliness.

The open schooling alternative

Part of the challenge to educating street children is that they often have behavioural or other psycho-emotional problems resulting from their transient existence, a lack of direction or discipline and exposure to undesirable influences. These problems include a short attention span, poor cognitive ability and negative social attitudes that affect the children's ability to learn, especially in a more formal setting. How can education and training be provided to these children, who are hard to reach in so many ways and who do not have ready access to conventional schools? Children who, additionally, must often work to support themselves or their families?

One possible way is through alternatives to conventional schools, such as non-formal education and open schooling. Open schooling uses open and distance learning methods and information and communication technologies to provide and increase access to school-level education. It can also provide skills training for children and young adults otherwise without access to opportunities through conventional means.

Coping with the challenge

The social challenge of reaching out and providing learning opportunities to these children at risk confronts politicians, development agencies like COL, and NGOs in their efforts to provide education for all. The *World Declaration on Education for All*, first proposed at the 1990 Jomtien Conference, was recently re-affirmed by *The Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All* at the UNESCO's World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000. The Jomtien declaration emphasises the right of every person to basic education. Many countries and agencies have taken action, recognising that education and training are the keys to social and economic development. However, the sheer magnitude of the task of providing education for all and the financial and physical constraints facing most governments today has meant the increasing use of alternatives to traditional schooling methods, especially to reach marginalised groups such as women and girls, people with disabilities and street children.

COL's role

Open schooling has been an area of focus for COL since the mid-'90s, as part of its commitment to support the growth of basic education and vocational and skills training. The focal shift is in response to feedback and experience gathered over the past decade, and is reflected in COL's proposed plan for the next three years (2000–2003). Open schooling can be a cost-effective, viable alternative to formal education particularly for marginalised groups, but wider awareness

of the possibilities and issues involved in its implementation needs to be generated to maximise its potential. COL directs its experience, knowledge and expertise in this effort through helping to identify areas of need and organising workshops, disseminating information and collaborating with governments and local agencies in specific projects.

COL's initiatives

During 1995–1998 COL organised informational workshops in Africa, Asia and in the Caribbean, in collaboration with local hosts, to advocate the use of open schooling.

In 1998 COL initiated a collaborative project, involving nine countries in sub-Saharan Africa, to develop distance-learning materials in common core subjects at the junior secondary level.

COL contracted with SchoolNet India to conduct a feasibility study, at the request of Jamaica's Ministry of Education, on open schooling options for their High School Equivalency Programme. A report on the study will be completed by the end of this year.

With support from COL, the Open Schooling Association of the Commonwealth (OSAC) is being established in India. The association will be the first in the Commonwealth to cater specifically to open



SALAM BALAAK TRUST

schooling issues; feedback generated from informal discussion at educational forums indicated the need for, and an interest in, forming an open schooling association. Through workshops, meetings and programme development, the OSAC intends to foster consultation, information exchange, resource sharing, research and development and quality control in open schooling. Any Commonwealth individual, institution or organisation directly involved in providing school level courses through open and distance learning methods can join. The NOS is providing office space and administrative support for the OSAC; COL has provided some support for start-up costs.

An International Conference on Models for Educating Street Children using open Schooling Methodologies, co-organised by COL and the NOS, was held earlier this year in Mussoorie, India. The conference brought together representatives from South Asian agencies and institutions involved in the non-formal education and aid of street children to raise issues, discuss future

directions and present possible models for educational delivery. Resulting recommendations included strengthening the networking between the NOS and NGOs in the areas of accreditation and curriculum, increasing vocational and life-skills training, especially to address the needs of street and working children, and promoting the establishment of community educational centres. NOS and COL can develop training materials for NGOs, distribute information throughout the Commonwealth on successful programmes and case studies, and help define criteria for providing quality basic education.

Looking further

To examine quality-control issues in providing basic education by non-formal means, COL and the NOS are convening an International Conference on Quality Issues in the Delivery of Education for All in Hyderabad in 2001. *The Dakar Framework for Action* re-emphasises the need to provide universal access to quality basic education, but did not identify specific criteria to determine the quality of education being delivered. Sometimes educational outcomes are not of the expected calibre because the educational delivery may be lacking in one or more of the aspects that contribute to quality, such as the content of learning materials, support for learners and the training of instructors. At the conference, COL plans to work with institutions and other providers of basic education in South Asia and the Commonwealth to define quality education and to outline a code of best practice, focussing on the underpinning themes that determine the quality of basic education delivery. It is hoped that the meeting's participants will voluntarily subscribe to the resulting code's recommendations. A report on the conference will be produced to heighten awareness of the issues discussed.

COL is also organising a regional meeting in Africa to explore the development of a training curriculum for persons who are working with orphans and other children at risk. The event will invite participation from orphanage administrators and managers of similar institutions, as well as persons involved with corresponding areas of social work. Outcomes will be made available for use throughout the developing Commonwealth.

Further information about COL's activities relating to basic education and open schooling can be accessed on COL's web site or by contacting Ms. Susan Phillips, education specialist at COL (sphillips@col.org).



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COL in Action

Executive MBA/MPA

The Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration/Master of Public Administration Programme should be available to students in South Asia by July 2001. The programme is the outcome of close collaboration between COL and the national open universities of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Designed for part-time study by busy working professionals, the programme can be completed by students at their own pace. Attainment of different levels of academic awards (diploma, graduate diploma and MBA or MPA) will depend on the successful completion of each stage of study. Affordable fees and credit transfer among participating institutions are features of the programme. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation has provided some funding assistance. Further information and contact details within each country are available through COL. www.col.org/cemba

Managing change

Twenty vice chancellors and other senior administrators from as many higher education institutions in 14 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa attended the first of five annual strategic development conferences in Scotland in August. The University of Abertay Dundee, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the Association of African Universities and COL are collaborating in hosting the programme series.

Managing Change – Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education aims to help heads of academic institutions in Africa prepare for the challenges of providing leadership in times of change that arise from developments in global markets and the increased scrutiny of ways in which higher education is organised and delivers its output. The programme revolves around two inter-linking themes: strategic change and leadership development. This year's participants were selected from over 60

TVET case studies wanted

COL is researching and publishing a set of case studies that will look at "distance education for economic production" through technical/vocational education and training (TVET). Of particular interest are experiences in the area of credit transfer between distance-taught TVET programmes and formal educational institutions and among different labour jurisdictions. Interested authors should contact John Bartram at COL (jbartram@col.org).

applicants. A detailed report on the conference is available on COL's web site. www.col.org/abertay00.htm

The second conference will be held in August 2001. Application details will be available early in the year.

Training distance educators

In collaboration with India's Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), COL is offering a second presentation of the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme commencing in 2001.

The Fellowships were initially awarded in 1996, enabling students from 15 Commonwealth developing countries to follow a Master of Distance Education programme offered through IGNOU. Sixty of the original 100 enrollees graduated in 1998. Following the recommendations of an external evaluation, and with COL's support, the course materials have been substantially updated and adapted to be more appropriate for an international audience.

Ministries of Education in selected developing Commonwealth countries have been invited to nominate qualified candidates and provide local support for the programme.



COL's youth interns. Back row, left to right: Kim Brearley, Carmen Dyck, Elisé Saraceni, Jana Duncan. Front row, left to right: Jason Lewis, Susan Chapman, Emily Wong, Kim Latimer

Youth interns posted

Eight young Canadians are gaining international development work experience through a six-month internship programme offered by COL and Canada's International Trade Youth International Internship Program (YIIP), with funding from Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

The interns are recent graduates, having studied in areas such as international development, gender issues, geography, international relations and journalism. While they also have volunteer and student work experience, this internship is providing them with their first paid work in their career and, in most cases, their first overseas travel. Working with a variety of education-related organisations in, or on behalf of, developing Commonwealth countries, the interns are

learning about the challenges facing the developing world, how education is a broad-based and multi-faceted discipline and how the skills that they will develop during their internship can be transferable to other employment. The host organisations, in turn, have an opportunity to complete special projects. Upon their return, the interns will be better prepared to enter the Canadian workforce full-time. www.col.org/internship

Resources for parliamentarians

With technical assistance from COL, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is developing a distance-education delivery system for its professional development programmes.

The first module, dealing with the basis of parliamentary democracy, has now been prepared in Canada by the University of Alberta (content) and Athabasca University (conversion to distance education format) in a project co-ordinated by Dr. David McNeil, Clerk to the Alberta Legislative Assembly – also with input from COL staff.

With materials to be made available in different formats – as text, on CD-ROM and perhaps as a web-administered course – Arthur Donahoe, Secretary-General of the CPA, thanked COL and its staff member, Mr. Patrick Guiton, and noted that this was truly ground-breaking work which would serve parliamentarians for a long time to come.

The British Department for International Development is funding the preparation of the first set of modules.

The CPA's membership includes elected members of national parliaments and state/provincial legislatures throughout the Commonwealth. It has a history dating back to 1911. www.comparlhq.org.uk

From COL's partners

UK PM's Imfundo project

The British Government has launched a major initiative to enhance the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) for education in developing countries, starting with teacher training programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa. The UK Prime Minister's "Imfundo project" is an ambitious public/private sector partnership which includes large international corporations, such as Cisco, Marconi and Virgin, and recipient national governments. COL has been consulted during stages of the planning process.

Imfundo means "the acquisition of knowledge; the process of becoming educated" in the language of the Ndebele people of Southern Africa. www.imfundo.org

Canadian Virtual University

The Canadian Virtual University- Université virtuelle canadienne (CVU-UVC) opened its doors (virtually) on 29 September 2000 to provide students with a portal for distance education in Canada. CVU-UVC is a new partnership of seven chartered Canadian universities that have aligned their resources and considerable online and distance education expertise to offer Canadians and international students more options when choosing what, where, when, and how to complete a recognised university degree, certificate, or diploma through distance education and the Internet, in English and in French.

Global Development Learning Network

The World Bank launched its Global Development Learning Network (GDLN) earlier this year. As a telecommunications network, GDLN's purpose is to connect distance learning centres in cities across the globe in order to serve the developing world. GDLN partner organisations from the public, private, and non-governmental sectors work together to "take advantage of the most modern of technology, for building local capacity, sharing learning and knowledge, and building a global community dedicated to reducing poverty." www.worldbank.org/gdln

Malaysian Journal of DE

The School of Distance Education at the Universiti Sains Malaysia has launched a new internationally refereed *Malaysian Journal of Distance Education*. It will be issuing semi-annual calls for papers. Contact: Professor Dr. Rozhan Mohammed Idrus, Chief Editor (rozhan@usm.my). www.usm.my/journal/jpjjm/english/bipage2.html

YCMOU science kits

Professor Manoj Killedar, Director, School of Science and Technology at India's Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, reports that 4,500 students have used the 300 experiment kits, located at regional centres, for course work leading to a diploma in applied electronics. The compact and portable units were designed in 1992 by Siemens India, with assistance from COL, for the new distance education programme. They were initially provided to students on loan, but with explosive demand for the course in recent years, they are now available for student use at regional centres. More than 2800 students are expected to use the kits next year. www.ycmou.com

People

COL Board

Recognising the long-standing working relationship between The Commonwealth of Learning and the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), the two international organisations have now initiated mutual representation as advisers on each other's governing boards. ACU's Secretary General, **Professor Michael Gibbons**, attended his first meeting of COL's Board of Governors in Halifax, in conjunction with the 14th triennial Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, and COL's President and CEO, **Dato' Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan**, will attend the next ACU Council meeting in the new year. www.acu.ac.uk

Two of COL's longest serving Board members are stepping down at the end of the year. **Professor Cliff Blake** was appointed to the Board in 1992, representing Australia as a major donor, and **Ms. Myra Harrison** joined the Board in 1993, representing, the United Kingdom, also as a major donor. Both are retiring from their employment positions – Professor Blake as Vice Chancellor of Charles Sturt University and Ms. Harrison as Chief Education Adviser with the Department for International Development. Finishing his term as an "Adviser" to COL's Board is **Mr. John Samuel** of South Africa, who has also been a member of the Board in the past. All three are thanked for their many years of dedicated service to COL and the Commonwealth. www.col.org/board

The longest serving Education Minister in the Pacific Region (possibly the world), **The Honourable Dr. S. Langi Kavaliku**, is retiring for health reasons, at the end of 2000, after over thirty years of public service. He is also Tonga's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister responsible for Youth, Sports & Culture. Dr. Kavaliku is known internationally for his work in education and was the first Tongan to earn a doctorate in philosophy. He served on COL's Board of Governors from 1992 – 1998.



Dr. S. Langi Kavaliku (right) exploring the concept of a virtual university in Tonga with COL staff members in Vancouver during his pre-retirement fact-finding mission to North America in November 2000



Samoa Minister of Education donates art objects to COL

On the occasion of a COL-convened meeting of Pacific Island education ministers earlier this year, Samoa's Minister for Education and COL Board member, The Honourable Fiamé Naomi Mata'afa, generously presented COL's President with two art objects native to her country. They are now proudly displayed in COL's headquarters in Vancouver. COL is delighted to be able to reflect in its premises some examples of the rich diversity and vitality of Commonwealth cultures.

The Chairman of The Commonwealth of Learning, **Dr. H. Ian Macdonald, O.C.** of Toronto, has received Canada's most prestigious award for public service and public administration. The Vanier Medal for Public Service (named after former Canadian Governor General, military commander and diplomat, the Right Honourable Georges Vanier) is awarded annually by the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) to recognise exceptional achievement in the field of public administration. Dr. Macdonald has had a distinguished career in academia and government complemented by significant volunteer work on behalf of a number of organisations. www.col.org/imacdonald

COL staff

COL welcomed **Dr. Abdul Khan** back to Vancouver in October. He fills the newly created post of Director, Development and Training. Dr. Khan left COL staff in May of 1998 to take up the post of Vice Chancellor of India's Indira Gandhi



Abdul Khan

National Open University (IGNOU). While at COL from 1992 to 1998, Dr. Khan was Principal Communications Specialist, Educational Media and Non-formal Education. His earlier professional career included senior positions and adviser roles with several international agencies, and national educational institutions. www.col.org/akhan

Mr. Vis Naidoo joined COL in November 2000 as an Educational Specialist, Educational Technology. Prior to joining COL, Mr. Naidoo was the Director of the Centre for

Educational Technology and Distance Education, Department of Education, South Africa. During his five years as Director, Mr. Naidoo was instrumental in shaping policy in the area of distance education and technology-enhanced learning. With an academic background in adult education, he has also lectured at the Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, and co-ordinated a community-based non-governmental organisation. www.col.org/vnaidoo



Vis Naidoo

Ms. Andrea Hope will join COL in January 2001 as Education Specialist, Higher Education. Ms. Hope was a university administrator for 20 years before becoming a higher education consultant in 1999. She held posts at the University of Loughborough and the Open University in the UK and then moved to Hong Kong in 1990 as Registrar of the newly established Open Learning Institute (now the Open University) of Hong Kong. From 1995 to 1999, she was Associate Vice-President of Lingnan College of Hong Kong. Ms. Hope's higher education portfolio also includes continuing professional education, quality assurance, credit accumulation and the Commonwealth Executive MBA/MPA Programme. www.col.org/ahope



Andrea Hope

Ms. Hope succeeds Mr. Patrick Guiton, who retired from COL staff in November 2000. Mr. Guiton has worked in distance education for over 25 years, initially at the UK Open University and then as foundation Director of External Studies at Murdoch University, Western Australia, where he established a distance education programme for higher education. He was at COL on secondment from 1991 to 1994 and joined COL staff again in May 1998. He has managed COL's higher education initiatives and continuing professional education projects designed to serve lawyers, judges, medical practitioners and pharmacists. As he left Vancouver for his home Perth, Australia, he presented COL with a lithograph of Victoria Falls by 19th century explorer and artist, Thomas Baines, to add to its Commonwealth art collection. In wishing him well in his retirement, COL's President, Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan, said, "Patrick joined COL with an outstanding record of achievements in the field of distance and open learning in many parts of the Commonwealth. At COL he brought a passion and commitment to see distance education applied in the wider field of human development. Always a great colleague and thoughtful adviser, we will miss having Patrick around." www.col.org/pguiton

CEMCA

Mr. Nimal T. Fernando joined the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) in July as Programme Officer, Broadcast Media. Mr. Fernando comes to CEMCA from the Educational Technology Division of the Open University of Sri Lanka and is the regional agency's first international staff member. CEMCA was established by COL as a regional agency and now has full international organisation status. It is housed in New Delhi by the Indira Gandhi National Open University. www.cemca.org

Events

2nd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning

As co-hosts, COL, National Association of Distance Education Organisations of South Africa (NADEOSA) and the South African Department of Education are pleased to announce that the second *Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning* will be held in Durban from 27 July to 2 August 2002. The conference theme will be "Open Learning: Transforming Education for Development." Five sub-themes have also been identified. Further information and a call for papers is enclosed with the initial distribution of this issue of *Connections*. www.col.org/forum2

Gender barriers to ICTs

The final in a series of four regional "expert group meetings" convened by COL to identify barriers to information and communications technologies based on gender differences will be held in Wellington, New Zealand, in April/May 2001. Representatives from throughout the Commonwealth's Pacific Region will be attending. New Zealand's Official Development Assistance programme will provide funding assistance and The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand will co-host the event with COL.

Quality in open basic education

COL and India's National Open School are organising an *International Conference on Quality Issues in the Delivery of Education For All, particularly with reference to Open Basic Education* in Hyderabad, India, from 16 to 19 January 2001. The purpose of the meeting is to develop guidelines for best practice. Presentations and discussion will cover various issues that have an impact on

the quality of the basic education that is delivered through non-conventional means. www.nos.org/conference.htm

Australian forum

The 15th Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia (ODLAA) Biennial Forum will be held on 24–27 September 2001 at the Australian Technology Park in Redfern, Sydney. The theme is "2001 Education Odyssey: Continuing the journey through adaptation and innovation." www.odlaa.org/odlaa/forum.htm



Now available

The following reports and distance education resources have been recently published by COL and are available on the COL web site or upon request.

- COL's Three-year Plan 2000–2003: www.col.org/3yearplan00
- Expanding Learning Horizons, COL's Summary Report 1998–2000: www.col.org/summary98-00
- COL's work in Commonwealth regions: www.col.org/regional
- "COL Clippings", news stories on COL projects available for reprint: www.col.org/clippings
- Introduction to open and distance learning and glossary of open and distance learning terms: www.col.org/ODLIntro
- *Knowledge Series*, distance education start-up guides for practitioners, in six-panel, fold-out format. Five titles have been published to launch the series, all written by internationally recognised experts: www.col.org/knowledge
 - Editing distance education materials (Christine Swales)
 - Support groups in distance education (Michael Robertshaw)

- Instructional design for self-learning for distance education (David Murphy)
- The use of multi media in distance education (Terry Tooth)
- Managing for electronic networking (Margaret Haughey)
- COL has also produced a CD-ROM, available upon request, that contains all of the above publications, plus a video and other distance education resources.

- Use and Integration of Media in Open and Distance Learning (Kit 04: 396 pages)*
- Quality Assurance in Open and Distance Learning (Kit 05: 290 pages)
- Learner Support in Open and Distance Learning (Kit 06: 294 pages)

*published with funding from the Asian Development Bank's *Training for Capacity Building in Distance Education for Primary Teacher Training* programme.

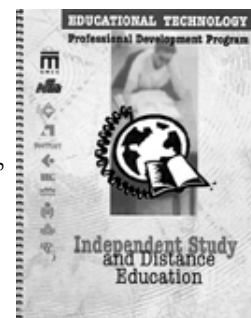
The toolkits are available for a nominal \$12.00 each, plus shipping, for non-commercial use. COL can also provide complete training services on a fee-for-service basis.



COL has also produced a training toolkit on Copyright & Distance Education, which is available on COL's web site (see *Connections*, June 2000). www.col.org/newpub.htm

Training teachers in educational technology

Grant MacEwan College and the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology offer an *Educational Technology Professional Development Program* which was developed to address faculty needs identified at various post-secondary institutions in the province of Alberta, Canada. In co-operation with these institutions, nine of the self-instructional modules are available from COL as print masters for use by publicly funded educational institutions in developing Commonwealth countries.



Training toolkits

In co-operation with the Asian Development Bank and the International Extension College in the UK, COL has produced six comprehensive manuals for use in training distance educators. The training "toolkits" include a set of case studies that are used for all six topics:

- An Overview of Open and Distance Learning (Kit 01: 278 pages)
- Designing Materials for Open and Distance Learning (Kit 02: 360 pages)*
- Planning & Management of Open and Distance Learning (Kit 03: 408 pages)*

Basic Education at a Distance

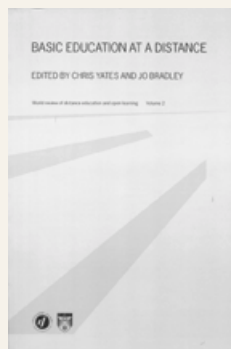
The second volume in the annual *World review of distance and open learning* series, *Basic Education at a Distance*, was jointly published by COL and Routledge/Falmer Press in November 2000 (J. Bradley and C. Yates, eds.; ISBN: 0 415 23773 4; 256 pages, paperback).

How can open and distance learning help the world's illiterate population? At the beginning of the 21st century, nearly one-fifth of humanity is functionally illiterate. This means that they cannot participate fully in their societies or protect their basic rights. As most of these people live in the rural areas of the developing world, the task of helping them to gain access to basic education is formidable.

Basic Education at a Distance reviews world experience in both policy and practice. It assesses the impact of a wide variety of forms of basic education at a distance and associated use of technologies. The book is the first major overview of this critical form of education for twenty years. Chris Yates is Education Co-ordinator and Jo Bradley is Publications Co-ordinator at the International Extension College, Cambridge.

A book launch was held in conjunction with the 14th triennial Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Halifax where COL noted that a complimentary copy would be sent to Ministries of Education in all developing Commonwealth countries.

The *World review of distance and open learning* was launched in 1999 with *Higher Education through Open and Distance Learning*. Hilary Perraton, Director of the International Research Foundation for Open Learning, is the managing editor of the series. Each book in the series concentrates on a single theme so that the volumes build up into a major series of works of record. www.col.org/worldreview



25% discount

Basic Education at a Distance can be ordered from booksellers world-wide. It is also available, while quantities last, from The Commonwealth of Learning at a 25% discount for readers of *Connections*. For orders from developing Commonwealth countries, shipping charges will be waived. Orders must be accompanied by a pre-payment of CDN \$30.00 (or equivalent US funds), plus shipping if applicable, or charged to VISA or MasterCard accounts. Orders should be sent to The Open Learning Agency, Attn. COL Customer Service, 4355 Mathissi Place, Burnaby BC V5G 4S8 Canada; tel: 604.431.3210; fax: 604.431.3381; e-mail: catalogue@ola.bc.ca.

Connections

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EdTech News



Some computer users will remember the days when the mainframe computer and terminals were the dominant force in computing. This changed during the 1980s as computing demands increased and personal computers (PCs), with all their resources contained within them, became the focus for efficient and cost-effective corporate and institutional computing. It could be, however, that mainframe or main server(s)-to-terminal systems will be returning in force. This issue of *EdTech News* looks at how one software developer, Citrix Systems, Inc., provides a way to once again store resources, including programme applications, on one central computer and efficiently access them through simple desk-top monitors, thereby providing greater economy in serving both in-house and remote access needs.



One alternative is a return to the mainframe computer as an “application service provider” (ASP). ASP technology enables organisations to provide access to server-based applications from a wide variety of client devices and platforms. Since these applications are installed, updated and maintained on central servers instead of each client, the cost and complexity of administration can be significantly reduced; the model also facilitates rapid application additions and upgrades. Applications are housed and execute on the server, and only keystrokes, mouse clicks and screen updates are transmitted over the network between the server and client. ASP software enables high application performance, even over limited bandwidth connections (as little as 20 Kbps), as well as greater data security.

With an ASP system, an institution can be running the latest applications off of one or a number of central servers to any type of workstation and operating platform (Windows, Macintosh OS, Unix, Linux, etc.), without requiring premium processing power. It can also be used via a web site interface so students or staff can access their applications from any Internet-linked workstation.

COL is currently working in this rapidly growing area with Citrix Systems, Inc., a global leader in the field. www.citrix.com



Personal video recorders

Personal video recorders (PVRs) give television a brain. They allow you to perform the trick of pausing and rewinding a live TV broadcast and let you record another TV show while playing back a

previously recorded one. The devices digitise video and use an internal computer-like hard drive to store and easily access the recordings. By June 2000, machines will be available that will be able to record on DVD (digital video disks). DVDs look exactly like a computer or music CDs but can hold over four times as much information.

DVD players have been available for several years with prices rapidly decreasing as the technology begins to replace video cassette recorders (VCRs) for playing movies.

Japanese manufacturers have agreed to pay royalties to organisations that represent the broadcasters and film producers. A one percent surcharge, with an upper limited of US\$9.50 is to be added to the wholesale price of all blank DVDs to provide some compensation for the loss of copyright control.

With educational broadcasting, a student or institution will be easily able to record, access, and search a programme or set of programmes and, unlike with videotape, repeated playback will not deteriorate the quality.

Unfortunately, there are currently two competing designs for DVD recorders. DVD-RAM (Matshita, Toshiba, Hitachi) and DVD-RW (Sony, Phillips). While DVD-RAM recordings can be edited on a computer, and DVD-RAM drives can be attached to computers and used for computer data as well, they are stored in special cartridges that are not compatible with standard DVD players. DVD-RW disks have a higher capacity (six vs. four hours) and can be played back on any DVD player, but are designed solely as a replacement for the VCR.

www.sony.com

www.replaytv.com

www.panasonic.com



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

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