Mission Statement

Recognising knowledge as key to cultural, social and economic development, the Commonwealth of Learning is committed to assisting Commonwealth member governments to take full advantage of open, distance and technology-mediated learning strategies to provide increased and equitable access to education and training for all their citizens.
# Table of Contents

Message from the Chairman 1  
Message from the President 3  
Introduction 7  
Chapter One: COL as a Catalyst for Collaborative Action 11  
Chapter Two: COL as a Resource for Training 21  
Chapter Three: COL as a Capacity-Builder 27  
Chapter Four: COL as an Information and Knowledge Provider 39  
Funding 49  
The Way Forward 51  
Publications 52  
Board of Governors 54  
Senior Staff 56  
Excellence in Distance Education Awards 57  
Summary Financial Information 59  
Last word: Message from the former Chairman (1994 – 2003) 62

## CLIPPINGS

- Affordable advantage: A Commonwealth Executive MBA/MPA 8  
  - Find information faster: COL’s “info-mining” tools 18  
  - Knowledge Series now includes 15 titles 24  
  - COL’s “how to” programme for NGOs 34  
  - Work the world with a Canadian Government COL Youth Internship 36  
  - Realise the virtual with COL’s virtual conferences 42  
  - Gender-proofing the digital divide 46

Cover: Heldur Netocny / Panos Pictures
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Achieving Results

This report manifests the progress that COL has made in the past three years as a productive instrument of Commonwealth co-operation. More importantly, it shows how COL is harnessing the enormous potential of new techniques and communications technologies for the benefit of Commonwealth governments and their peoples.

Our world faces new and formidable challenges. Conventional and traditional approaches are no longer adequate in dealing with them. New approaches, new attitudes and new techniques are necessary. This is where COL enters the picture. The extraordinary range of endeavours described in this report bears testimony to COL’s ability to respond to the demands made on it in practical and innovative ways. In doing so it is strengthening the institutional as well as the human foundations of the countries that seek its services. It is developing indigenous capabilities and equipping Commonwealth countries with the skills to solve their problems and make them a model for others.

I invite you to peruse this report and catch a glimpse of COL in action – how a small multilateral agency with slender financial and human resources is reaching communities, connecting them with others and helping them to become self-reliant. It reveals that the investment made by Commonwealth governments in COL is bringing impressive results and that COL should be a source of pride to them.

Lewis Perinbam, O.C.
Chairman of the Board of Governors
Commonwealth of Learning

Lewis Perinbam, O.C., became the third Chairman of COL’s Board of Governors on 28 April 2003. He is a former Vice President of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), has represented the World Bank at the United Nations and was Secretary General of the Canadian National Commission for UNESCO and the World University Service of Canada. He was also Chair of the 2000 Canadian federal government Task Force on the Participation of Visible Minorities in the Federal Public Service and was recently appointed by Canada’s Prime Minister as a Governor of the Canadian Centre for Management Development.

Until he assumed this position, Mr. Perinbam was Senior Adviser (External Relations) at COL. Succeeding Dr. H. Ian Macdonald, O.C., President Emeritus of York University, Toronto. Mr. Perinbam is the second Canadian to hold this post.
When the Ministers of Education met in Halifax in November 2000, they gave their overwhelming endorsement to the proposals that we, at the Commonwealth of Learning, made for the 2000 – 2003 triennium. In that plan, we undertook to continue our efforts of adding value to the work of member states in the field of open and distance learning. Our proposals, a result of extensive discussions with as many of our partners as possible, defined four ways by which COL can assist, support, inform and enrich open and distance learning in the Commonwealth. We categorised these into four roles, namely:

• catalyst for collaborative action, resource for training,
• capacity-builder, and
• information and knowledge provider.

In our presentation of the plan in 2000, we requested that member states contribute CDN$27 million to resource the programmes. The Honourable Ministers agreed, and many, in fact, pledged their government’s willingness to contribute at the meeting. In all, some CDN$19.3 million was received as core contribution and a further CDN$6.2 million was generated by COL through its fee-for-service and other bilateral arrangements, thereby enabling the agency to meet the expenses of most of the planned activities.

We were also fortunate in receiving enormous “in kind” support from our partners. This often matched dollar for dollar what COL was able to contribute to these activities.

This report captures the work of the agency over the past three years, and in it we take pride in bringing to the attention of Ministers and their governments our record of service in fulfilment of the undertakings we gave in November 2000.

Distance education and variations of it continue to interest Commonwealth governments and their institutions now even more than during the first decade of COL’s existence. It is estimated by various scholars that some three million individuals are engaged in one or another form of self-learning covering a variety of fields and all sectors of the educational and training spectrum.

COL’s services, expertise and assets have been put to use in about 40 Commonwealth countries as well as a few outside the Commonwealth during this plan period. We have executed, partnered with or participated in almost 100 programmes, activities and initiatives in support of the roles that we set out to play during the 2000 – 2003 period. We have for example:

• Completed the development of materials for in-service teacher training in Southern Africa for the upper primary and lower secondary sector in science, maths and technology in association with the eight ministries of education of the SADC region. These materials have been made available both in print and on CD-ROM to all participating countries as well as to others in Commonwealth Africa and further afield. The materials are also available through the WorldSpace network for pan-African access. We would like to see these materials put to use and are currently exploring with member states for piloting them in a few environments.
• Organised and conducted training workshops for Principals and Directors of Colleges of Education from sub-Saharan Africa in managing teacher training as they are confronted with problems of demand, technology, resources and curriculum. Up to the time of reporting, 55 individual leaders
from 16 countries have attended these workshops in both Singapore and India.

- In association with UNESCO-BREDa, undertook joint projects in Africa to promote and build capacity in distance education in areas of management, materials development, quality assurance, accreditation and teacher training. We expect these initiatives to continue and we hope to work towards the establishment of a regional centre for the development of distance education in West Africa in the next plan period.

- Launched a second intake for the Masters in Distance Education programme in collaboration with IGNOU. About 45 candidates from eight Commonwealth small states are currently enrolled in this staff development activity.

- In Nigeria, embarked on a series of staff development work in open and distance learning with the National Commission for Colleges of Education, the National Teachers’ Institute and the newly established National Open University of Nigeria. Altogether up to 300 individuals have been undergoing training in materials development, technology application and students support systems.

- In partnership with the Government of Botswana, SchoolNet Africa and other multilateral agencies, organised the first in a series of meetings to discuss policy issues relating to the development of digital communities in the school sector in Africa. Results of these discussions are expected to lead to connecting teachers and colleges of education in the next plan period.

- In partnership with UNHCR, UNAIDS, WHO and Red Cross/Red Crescent, developed and delivered training programmes for their field staff in effective writing techniques. To date, 1300 individuals in 70 countries have participated in these programmes.

- In partnership with the four national open universities of South Asia, developed and delivered a Commonwealth Master of Business Administration and Public Administration. In the next plan period this programme is expected to migrate to sub-Saharan Africa.

- In association with the Government of South Africa and the National Association of Distance Education Organisations of South Africa, organised the successful second Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in South Africa. Some 600 delegates took part in this five-day event, the first of its kind in open and distance education in Commonwealth Africa.

- Continued to build networks to support the education of out-of-school youth, street children and other young people in jeopardy through collaboration with the National Institute of Open School in India as well as the many NGOs engaged in the rehabilitation of such children.

- Strengthened the Pacific TVET network in association with The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. This network is expected to organise and coordinate educational and training programmes in the technical/vocational area including the training of technical/vocational teachers.

- With financial grants from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and other bilateral agencies, undertook both feasibility and other investigative studies in education in Bangladesh, Lesotho, Maldives, Mozambique, Nigeria, the South Pacific and Sri Lanka.

- Supported the work of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Working Group on Distance Education and Open Learning by designing and carrying out studies on their behalf on matters relating to distance education.

- Supported the work of the World Bank’s Global Distance Education Network and the Development Gateway by contributing expertise as well as knowledge management expertise.

- Continued to build our information and knowledge resources as well as develop mechanisms to effectively disseminate them right across the Commonwealth. Our web site gets over 1000 unique visits every day, probably making it the most visited site in the field.

- Completed, on the request of Commonwealth Ministers of Education, a feasibility study on the establishment of a Commonwealth virtual university for small states.
As has been the case over the last eight years of my presidency, the work we are reporting on could not have been accomplished but for the enthusiasm of colleagues with whom we have had the good fortune to work. Ministers of Education as well key officials have also been enthusiastic about engaging COL in the many dialogues that were necessary to promote distance and open learning in the Commonwealth. We are grateful for the privilege of working with them these past three years and look forward to building on these associations as we look to the future. This report is as much a reflection of the enormous effort and energy that Commonwealth colleagues put into making the plan work – we are privileged to be associated with it.

As COL enters into the second half of its second decade, the challenges in terms of increasing access to learning and training in member states of the Commonwealth seem to be on the rise. Provisions for the universal participation at all levels of the educational and training spectrum continue to challenge developing member states of the Commonwealth. Paucity of human, financial and physical resources makes it even more difficult to create sufficient supply to meet current and emerging demands. Innovations in the educational and delivery systems using open and distance learning methods and the use of clever learning technologies are an imperative, not an option. This report describes ways in which the Commonwealth of Learning has been and can continue to be of some value in these efforts.

Dato' Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan
President and Chief Executive Officer
In the three years covered by this Summary Report (1 July 2000 to 30 June 2003), the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), along with its partners in the international development community, has been a part of unprecedented change and radical reconfiguring of the world as we once knew it. The interdependent nature of this global community, of which the Commonwealth – and the Commonwealth of Learning – is part, is now stronger than ever.

Access to education and training is one of the imperatives of our time. Yet, around the globe, more than 135 million developing world children still have no access to basic primary education. Of those who do, many are taught by poorly trained teachers in ill-equipped schools with no learning materials, laboratories or libraries. Most will not complete primary school, while only three per cent will go on to post-secondary education. Added to their numbers are the more than one billion adults, most illiterate, who as children never received or benefited from education. Many now require new skills necessary to compete in an increasingly competitive job market.

Education remains the most effective strategy in the struggle against poverty, misery and violence. Conventional means alone, however, are insufficient to meet the challenges of poor access, economic deprivation and the decimation of an entire generation of African teachers infected with HIV/AIDS. Commonwealth governments are increasingly accepting the notion that non-traditional open and distance learning (ODL) methodologies and technologies offer a unique opportunity to bridge the educational divide separating the haves and the have-nots. Stated more simply: the flexible nature of open and distance education offers the possibility of delivering quality education to all people – regardless of race, gender, socio-economic status or geographical location – thereby providing to both them and their communities a brighter, more hopeful future.

In this context, the Commonwealth of Learning continues to play a critical role as a catalyst for empowerment through ODL. Be it technical/vocational education, teacher training, institutional development and training for the next generation of ODL practitioners or raising awareness of HIV/AIDS stigma through innovative uses of low-cost media, COL remains dedicated to its mandate of fostering the provision of high-quality, flexible learning in partnership with governments, institutions and organisations throughout the Commonwealth.

Cross-cutting COL’s work are themes of cultural sensitivity and local adaptation, the appropriate application of technology, environmental considerations and gender mainstreaming.*

A COL-commissioned external panel reviewing all activities at the mid-point of the 2000 – 2003 Three-Year Plan found that the organisation has achieved a great deal and has consistently improved on previous roles.
The programme prepares its graduates for international-level performance.

**Affordable advantage: A Commonwealth Executive MBA/MPA**

Demand is growing for post-graduate human resource training to increase the number of highly trained professionals required to maintain economic momentum and good governance. COL is playing a catalytic role in addressing this need in South Asia, directly benefiting individuals and the organisations in which they work, and thereby indirectly benefiting their societies. Upwardly mobile South Asian executives can now enrol in the Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration/Master of Public Administration programme (CEMBA/CEMPA, [www.col.org/cemba](http://www.col.org/cemba)), taking the distance education courses wherever they live or work.

The Commonwealth Executive MBA/MPA has been offered since mid-2002 through four premier South Asian open universities: Bangladesh Open University (BOU), Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU, India), Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), and Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU, Pakistan), although the last, AIOU, long part of the planning process, didn’t begin offering courses until early 2003. The CEMBA/CEMPA was designed, developed and implemented as a result of collaboration between the four universities and brokered by COL with funding assistance from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC).

The CEMBA/CEMPA prepares its graduates for international-level performance, yet focuses on optimising local productivity. Even better are the affordable fees, flexible study pace and seamless credit transfer between partner institutions offered to potential students. Courses feature relevant local learning materials and case studies, and cover everything from managing information and public systems to development planning and quality assurance. English is the *lingua franca*.

How long does it take to complete? Almost as long as learners want or have the time for. Designed for part-time study by busy working professionals, the programme can be completed by students at their own pace. As well, they don’t have to take the full degree to benefit from the courses offered. Diploma and graduate diploma options are available. The full graduate degree requires a minimum of two years study up to a maximum of five years (although re-registration is possible after the expiry of five years). The diploma option can be obtained in as little as one year.

Learners receive certification from the institution they are accepted into. Admission requirements are streamlined across the four partner institutions. The programme provides an opportunity to acquire both accreditation and valuable training for candidates who are resident of a participating country, possess any sort of undergraduate degree (or have worked in a related field for at least two years) and can pass a test of professional experience and English fluency.

The CEMBA/CEMPA began its first semester in late 2002 with a combined total of 480 students enrolled at IGNOU, BOU and OUSL. Unforeseen circumstances delayed the programme’s launch at AIOU until early 2003. End-of-semester course evaluations are ongoing and an overall programme evaluation will take place in 2004 after the first graduates have completed their studies.

Projections for the CEMBA/CEMPA promise a significant short- and long-term human and economic development pay-off for the South Asian Commonwealth region. As a working example of close regional collaboration, the CEMBA/CEMPA provides a template for the development of similar programmes elsewhere. To that end, COL is now discussing the development and promotion of a CEMBA/CEMPA programme with the National Open University of Nigeria, targeting learners in Commonwealth Africa.
as a resource for training, a partner in capacity-building, a catalyst for collaboration and an information/knowledge provider. However, it also identified a number of areas that will allow COL to further improve its performance throughout the next planning cycle.

COL is completing the last year of its Three-Year Plan 2000 – 2003 that was approved by Commonwealth Ministers of Education at their meeting in Halifax in November 2000. That Plan, having benefited from 18 months of consultations with governments, non-governmental organisations, educational institutions and individuals, as well as from the endorsement of the Commonwealth Heads of Government, was predicated on four key roles for COL:

- as a catalyst for collaborative action,
- as a resource for training,
- as a capacity-builder, and
- as an information and knowledge provider.

This report refers to the programmes related to these four different roles. But it also depicts information in keeping with the “performance management” or “results-based management” (RBM) programme-based framework that COL has been implementing for its planning and evaluation methodology over the past three years. This framework integrates the UN Millennium Development Goals and global Education for All priorities (www.developmentgoals.org and www.unesco.org/education/efa) into its programme that has previously been shaped primarily by Commonwealth priorities (such as good governance and the needs of small states) and in-country and in-region assessments. COL’s next Three-Year Plan will embrace RBM to the fullest possible extent.

*Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself, but a strategy, an approach, a means to achieving the goal of gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities – policy development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects.


DEFINING OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

Commonwealth Heads of Government established the Commonwealth of Learning to advocate and promote the use of open and distance learning (ODL) in the Commonwealth to enhance access to learning and training among member states. Since then, both the definition and application of ODL have been evolving parallel to the arrival of newer and intelligent technologies. Today and in the foreseeable future, open and distance education embraces any or all of the following:

- **Open learning** – policies and practices that permit entry to learning with no or minimum barriers with respect to age, gender or time constraints and with recognition of prior learning. These policies need not be part of a distance education system but are complementary to it.

- **Distance education** – the delivery of learning or training to those who are separated mostly by time and space from those who are teaching or training. The teaching is done with a variety of “mediating processes”* used to transmit content, provide tuition and conduct assessment or measure outcomes.

- **Flexible learning** – the provision of learning opportunities that can be accessed at any place and time. Flexible learning relates more to the scheduling of activities than to any particular delivery mode.*

- **Online learning and e-learning** – terms that have emerged to describe the application of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to enhance distance education, implement open learning policies, make learning activities more flexible and enable those learning activities to be distributed among many learning venues.*

- **Virtual education** – includes aspects of both online and e-learning but goes somewhat further. While it is largely web-centric it does not necessarily limit itself to learners outside a conventional classroom. It uses multimedia and, besides delivering content, also enables a high level of interaction among learners, content, teachers, peers and administration both synchronously and asynchronously.

The Commonwealth of Learning is mindful of these evolving variations as it designs its response to Commonwealth needs and demands.

COL AS A CATALYST FOR COLLABORATIVE ACTION

The role of catalyst for collaborative action means marshalling the available wealth of experience, talent and resources for the benefit of the Commonwealth by developing partnerships and alliances with international, intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies and institutions in the promotion and application of open and distance learning (ODL).

Impact:
Through collaboration, COL’s influence is strengthened, focus is better defined and supported, south-south co-operation is enhanced, programme economies are improved and duplications are reduced.

TEACHER EDUCATION/STAMP 2000+

Teachers represent the most critical component of any strategy aimed at meeting the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education and the global Education for All priorities. Despite this, shortages of teachers remain a chronic problem throughout much of the developing world, particularly in Africa where HIV/AIDS continues to decimate an entire generation of trained professionals.

Recognising that innovative training methods are necessary to bridge this gap, and that participating countries can ill afford to remove untrained teachers from classrooms, Ministers of Education from eight Southern African countries (Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) collaborated with COL to develop distance education training materials aimed at upgrading teachers working in the areas of upper primary and junior secondary science, technology, mathematics and general education (STAMP 2000+).

As well, in partnership with Domasi College and the Malawi Ministry of Education, COL is assisting in the development of distance learning materials aimed at upgrading 3500 teachers currently practising without requisite training.

Outputs
Between 2000 – 2003, COL oversaw the development of 28 modules targeting three subject areas, as well as 18 general education modules, each produced by teams within partner countries. These were released at COL’s Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in Durban, July 2002, and made available to the ministries of education in all eight participating countries of the South African Development Community (SADC) and other Commonwealth African countries. During the course of the programme, more than 300 schoolteachers and curriculum designers received training in writing self-instructional materials.

As part of the initial inter-ministerial agreement, these materials will form the basis of continuing professional development. Programme developers estimate that as many as 600,000 primary and lower secondary school teachers will benefit as a result.

SKILLS TRAINING IN THE CARIBBEAN

An initiative involving COL, three Canadian universities and four Caribbean nations, the Caribbean Distance Education Scholarship Programme (CCDESPP) is funded by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) as an extension of their Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP). The programme provides undergraduate scholarships for Caribbean students using distance education technologies to obtain skills-based degrees through Canadian post-secondary institutions. Initiated in 1998, the five-year pilot programme:

- provides distance education institutions with more international experience,
- maintains the number of scholarship learners despite declining budgets,
- makes scholarship programmes more relevant to local needs,
- strengthens collaboration between governments...
engaging foreign universities in programme development,
• decreases “brain drain” and
• effectively markets Canadian education abroad by highlighting advances in the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in order to strengthen education in tourism, teacher training and computer literacy.

CCDESP was offered in Dominica, Jamaica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent & the Grenadines in collaboration with the University of the West Indies, Athabasca University, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Mount Saint Vincent University.

Outputs

Owing to the success and relative cost-effectiveness of the CCDESP pilot programme, organisers agree that this model can, with appropriate modifications, be applied to other sectors and Commonwealth regions. To date, 66 out of the initial 77 individuals are graduating, or have already graduated, from the programme – a retention rate of 86 per cent. Moreover, CCDESP has proven to be very affordable with cost-per-student being reduced from an estimated CDN$20,000 to $6338 per year. This figure includes COL’s administrative and management costs. Despite early successes, however, some problems were identified:

• Technical support systems within the Caribbean need to be improved to enable telecommunication technologies to be fully utilised.
• The quality and availability of local tutorial help needs to be improved.
• Each programme represents unique challenges with respect to telecommunications, programme delivery format, content and cultural differences. A system of evaluation and feedback needs to be implemented to address these issues on an ongoing basis,
• Attrition and retention is an ongoing problem and needs to be dealt with both structurally and programmatically.
• Being multicultural in nature, the CCDESP needs to stress the value of ongoing co-ordination and participation of all parties involved. COL should continue to take the lead to ensure that all participants are heard and play a relevant role.

Materials for Learners at the Junior Secondary School Level

An ongoing collaborative project involving eight sub-Saharan countries (Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe), the Materials for Learners programme has an objective to develop a suite of learning materials to enable local institutions to produce and deliver school-level distance education courses.

Developed with the input of local writers and programme designers, course materials cover three core subject areas: English, mathematics and science. Thirty newly trained tutors are now pilot testing materials. Organisers hope to finalise materials by June 2004.

Federation of Commonwealth Open and Distance Learning Associations

The aim of the Federation of Commonwealth Open and Distance Learning Associations (FOCODLA) is to foster ties and promote mutual development and collaboration among regional/national associations of open and distance learning (ODL) professionals.

FOCODLA was established through COL’s brokerage in 1999 to encourage the transfer of information and experience to members throughout the Commonwealth. It was also set up as a vehicle to help set the agenda for COL’s biennial Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCT).
Outputs
A series of six pre-PCF virtual conferences were held from February to July 2002. Results proved to be outstanding. The evidence lies in the large numbers of participants who signed up for the online discussion and the high quality of moderation provided by each host association.

Presidents and other executives of the 17 member associations met under the FOCODLA banner in Durban, South Africa, in August 2002, during the second PCF. A major achievement was the drafting of a Memorandum of Agreement for the Federation in which member associations agreed to communicate and collaborate in a number of areas, including project funding, facilitating the exchange of information on good practice and assisting new and emerging associations to become viable and effective.

REGIONAL CO-OPERATION IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING
Regional Programme for the Pacific
The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Programme for the Pacific originated at a 2000 Kuala Lumpur inter-ministerial regional meeting. COL was mandated to facilitate collaboration designed to increase TVET access throughout the Pacific Islands through the use of open and distance learning.

With support from the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID), COL held two management seminars for senior TVET managers in Pacific Island member countries. The aim of these seminars was threefold:
• to increase the knowledge and skill base of senior managers in order to better facilitate the introduction of open and distance learning,
• to improve effectiveness of regional networking
• to provide direction and advice to the larger COL/Pacific Regional project.

Outputs
The years spanning 2000 – 2003 saw:
• The formation of the Pacific Association of Technical Vocational Education and Training (PATVET), a formally constituted organisation with elected officers and paid-up membership.
• The enrolment of 30 staff in ODL diploma-level courses offered by The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand and five students in the Masters Degree in Distance Education offered by the Indira Gandhi Open University through COL’s Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship scheme.
• The decision to make the Fiji Institute of Technology a dual-mode institution, with the appointment of a Director of Distance Education and the provision of additional office space for the newly created Office of Distance Education.
• The negotiation of a number of member countries with distance education providers in other countries to supply open and distance learning (ODL) courses for adaptation in their communities. Tonga, for example, is negotiating with The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand to deliver accounting and information technology courses.
• The establishment of Media Centres in Samoa and Kiribati complete with equipment and trained staff. The aim is to produce affordable and effective educational videos. A third centre is being planned for Fiji.
• The piloting of the COL/UNESCO Entrepreneurial Skills for Small Business programme in Samoa. To date, 1000 students have enrolled.

COLLABORATION WITH UNESCO IN AFRICA
In sub-Saharan Africa, COL and UNESCO’s Regional Office for Education in Africa – otherwise known by its French acronym BREDAG – are conducting an innovative programme that targets open and distance learning initiatives. The programme focuses on advocacy for open learning, in-service teacher training for West Africa, transferability of higher education qualifications, non-formal health education through community radio and institutional staff training and development in open and distance learning (ODL). COL is also assisting UNESCO with the development of a regional strategy in distance education.

Outputs
The years spanning 2000 – 2003 were productive ones for the COL-BREDA programme. Highlights include:
WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS TRAINING FOR STAFF OF UN AGENCIES

COL course wins two awards

From 2000 – 2003, COL embarked on the creation and delivery of a series of professional development courses under contract to agencies in the UN system – and in 2001 and 2003 won awards for doing so. Delivered through open and distance learning methodologies, the courses focus on the enhancement of written communications skills and are designed specifically for employees with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

In 2001, COL’s Writing Effectively for UNHCR course materials won the Award for Excellence in the Development and Delivery of Distance Education from the Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia. In 2003, the course won another Award for Excellence in the category of international collaboration from the Canadian Association for Distance Education.

Initially, UNHCR requested COL’s assistance in preparing a paper-based, electronically tutored course and delivering it to their employees spread around the world, some with limited Internet access. COL worked with an Australian writing and design team to develop the course. Following a positive assessment of the UNHCR programme, COL was asked to develop and deliver a similar course, under a similar partnership, with UNAIDS and WHO. Both organisations requested an online course be made available through the UNAIDS and WHO intranet, in addition to the development of a CD-ROM supplement for those unable to access the Internet. COL developed both in partnership with the South Africa Institute for Distance Education. Word is still spreading in Geneva: COL’s most recent client is the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Although not a UN agency, IFRC has similar needs for their international staff.

By the end of 2003, 1300 UNHCR staff members in 70 countries will have been trained. Ninety per cent of students enrolled in the English language course, Writing Effectively for UNHCR, while 10 per cent enrolled in its French language equivalent, Communication écrite pour le personnel du HCR. The completion rate is around 80 per cent.

WHO and UNAIDS trainees total 220 to date and over 100 IFRC staff are now enrolled for the first offering of their course. Offering these courses is a fee-for-service opportunity for COL that contributes to its ability to provide other programming. The growth of this service has been more that COL originally expected.

Open and distance learning has proved to be an effective and efficient way of delivering training to the global workforce of these international organisations. COL has showcased the best practices of ODL in terms of creating culturally and gender-sensitive learning materials that are customised for workplace training. The strong network of learner support and personalised e-tutoring has been highly commended by learners. From UNHCR’s Staff Training Unit: “UNHCR, with its staff dispersed so widely in so many locations, needs to develop more distance learning opportunities for its staff, and this module establishes an excellent example of the democratisation of learning in our organisation.”
• The formulation of a strategic plan for ODL in sub-Saharan Africa in the areas of teacher training and secondary education.
• The revision of the Arusha Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in Africa, with printed copies distributed at the 2002 UNESCO Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States (MINEDAF VIII).
• The printing and distribution of a booklet focussing on successful community radio projects in South Africa, Niger and Uganda.
• The organisation of an advocacy meeting for open schooling in Africa, hosted by the National Institute of Open Schooling New Delhi.
• Teacher training through ODL pilot programmes.
• The signing of a Statement of Intent on collaboration in teacher training through ODL in West Africa by Ministers of Education for The Gambia, Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. This led to the formation of the West African Teacher Training Consortium, the adoption of selected STAMP 2000+ materials (see page 11) and the design of appropriate learner support systems.
• The organisation of a workshop on Capacity-Building in the Planning and Managing of ODL systems in Cape Town aimed at senior administrators is making the transition to dual mode. Twenty participants from 14 countries benefited. An add-on workshop, held in collaboration with the World Bank, also provided an opportunity to disseminate key messages of the World Bank publication Enhancing Learning Opportunities in Africa: Distance education and information and communication technologies for learning.

UNESCO-BREDAs was also the co-lead agency for the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Working Group on Distance Education and Open Learning.

The Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration/Master of Public Administration programme (CEMBA/CEMPA). Developed and piloted by a COL-led consortium of South Asian open universities, the CEMBA/CEMPA began accepting students in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka in January 2002, and in Pakistan in 2003. The programme was developed to boost private sector development and to emphasise the importance of good governance by providing affordable training through distance education. Once the programme is successfully piloted in Asia, it will be made available to students living in other regions throughout the Commonwealth and in partnership with other institutions.

Outputs
• To date, over 600 students in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have enrolled in the CEMBA/CEMPA programme with another 1000 expected to sign up by the end of this year. As well, eight courses have been acquired and adapted, while four more are being prepared and another 10 are in the early stages of development. Already, discussions are underway to extend the reach of this innovative and cost-effective programme to Africa. A number of African universities have expressed interest in establishing a consortium to deliver the programme, including the National Open University of Nigeria, the Open University of Tanzania and Kenyatta University, Kenya.
• As joint sponsor of the CEMBA/CEMPA programme, the Commonwealth Secretariat provided CDN$60,000 to enable course development. To keep the programme affordable, established providers contributed off-the-shelf courses at little or no cost. For these materials, COL helped to produce both generic and local supplements. Where appropriate courses were not available, COL contracted academics from around the Commonwealth to develop them. To date, courses have been written in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, and Hong Kong (in partnership with the Open University of Hong Kong).
• The official launch of the CEMBA/CEMPA programme in three of the four partner countries in-
volved in the project since its inception in 1998 took place at COL’s second Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in Durban, July 2002. Between them, India’s Indira Gandhi National Open University, the Bangladesh Open University and the Open University of Sri Lanka recruited 480 students for the first offering of four first-stage courses in the programme. The Allama Iqbal Open University of Pakistan’s launch was delayed for internal reasons until spring 2003.

**Gender mainstreaming toolkit**

COL and the Gender Affairs Department of the Commonwealth Secretariat are working together to promote the use of the Secretariat’s Gender Management System (GMS) and broaden its audience and use through more flexible training materials. GMS is a holistic and system-wide approach to gender mainstreaming (see page 9) developed for use by governments in partnership with other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector.

The GMS Toolkit is designed for use by trainers working within an institutional range that includes government, universities, public service training institutions, non-governmental organisations and intergovernmental organisations. These distance learning materials target trainers working in organisations and institutions seeking to implement GMS principles, and would include gender specialists who may know little regarding gender issues in other fields, such as agriculture, science and technology.

**Outputs**

COL and the Secretariat are jointly:

- developing and publishing a CD-ROM version of the GMS Training Kit,
- commissioning a companion manual on change management,
- developing a learner-centred set of GMS wrap-around materials and
- developing a modular training pack based on the GMS manuals for face-to-face instruction by a trainer.

The new GMS materials are slated for production by late 2003.

**The Commonwealth Electronic Network for Schools and Education (CENSE)**

Facilitating interaction between national learning grids, schools and institutions throughout the Commonwealth is the aim of the Commonwealth Electronic Network for Schools and Education (CENSE), a joint initiative pioneered by COL, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Network of Information Technology for Development (COM- NET-IT). Hosted by COL, the web site provides support to teachers, students and education administrators while, at the same time, raising awareness of the critical roles played by other cultures and nationalities. Because the Internet has enabled such a broad reach, CENSE has the potential of linking these users with other schools, institutions and policy-makers throughout the world, and assisting in developing alternative delivery methods for school education. This expanded function could contribute substantially not only to national school networks, but to the eventual realisation of the Millennium Development Goal aimed at providing universal access to basic educational.

**Outputs**

So far, evaluations of the CENSE site have been positive with users reporting ease of access and appreciation for an information base that is updated weekly. Although the CENSE web site showcases Commonwealth “schoolnets” (school networking agencies), it nevertheless remains international in scope.

In 2003, the CENSE web site will develop an interactive component targeting visitors and key organisations within the schoolnet community, featuring issues and topic areas provided by online services and COL. The development and implementation of informal surveys and questionnaires will provide programme managers with a more authentic portrait of the online classroom.

The CENSE web site receives an average of 40 visitors a day.

**Quality standards for online learning**

COL has partnered with the Canadian Association for Community Education (CACE), FuturEd Inc. and
other Canadian associations and government bodies to develop a set of quality standards for online learning products and services. The aim of the project is to diminish consumer risk when it comes to accessing e-learning services. While a Canadian initiative, the project includes disseminating these much-needed guidelines to a broader Commonwealth audience.

**A virtual university for small states**
While not envisioned in COL’s Three-Year Plan, 2000–2003, COL has responded to a request by Commonwealth Ministers of Education to explore the creation of a virtual university to support higher education in small states. Following technical collaboration and wide consultation, COL will be presenting a report on the purpose, design and economics of establishing such a virtual university to Commonwealth Ministers of Education when they meet in Edinburgh in October 2003. The proposed university would be based on collaboration through a consortium of existing educational providers.

**Food security, environmental sustainability and poverty reduction**

With globalisation and the ongoing shift to a market economy, the agricultural context in which resource-poor developing world subsistence farmers toil is rapidly changing. Indigenous knowledge and skills that so effectively served previous generations no longer suffice. Subsistence farmers now require opportunities to continually upgrade their knowledge and skills in order to practise new agricultural technologies to better meet the challenge of sustaining and increasing agricultural productivity. Today, new information and communications technologies (ICTs) and open and distance learning (ODL) methods offer the means to facilitate information exchange among all members of a given population (policy-makers, researchers, educators, extension officials and farmers). Effective and cost-efficient ICT learning models promote lifelong skills development among resource-poor farmers, thus enabling them to improve their economic prospects and the quality of life of their households and communities.

COL’s approach to poverty alleviation focuses on advocacy and support for use of ODL and ICT for educational and training programmes related to food and nutritional security, improved livelihoods, environmental sustainability and, in general, rural development. COL partners with national and international agricultural research, education and training institutions and organisations, including non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations, to achieve these goals.

COL’s work is focussed regionally, based on educational and training needs, and is designed to address the problem of rural poverty. The targets, therefore, are Commonwealth countries with poverty “hot spots” located in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and in Commonwealth small states such as in the Caribbean and the South Pacific Islands that largely practise subsistence farming and now require new skills to maintain food security and sustainable livelihoods.

Partnership with the Consortium Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has resulted in the development of models promoting ODL and ICT in their training programmes. In collaboration with the International Service for National Agricultural Research in The Hague, Netherlands; the National Academy of Agricultural Research Management in India; and the Imperial College in Wye, UK; COL has developed, delivered and revised a distance training module aimed at scientists working in agricultural research management that targets resource-poor farmers in India. The initiative has shown the value of incorporating group-learning approaches and hands-on practical work into agricultural distance education programmes.

COL has also successfully developed collaborative programmes with several national agricultural research, education and training institutions in India (Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University and Maharashtra Fisheries and Animal Sciences University) and in Africa (In-Service Training Trust and other training institutions in Namibia, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, and the Crops Research Institute, Ghana) that build capacity for ICT use in ODL for agricultural and rural development.
FIND INFORMATION FASTER: COL’s “INFO-MINING” TOOLS

Obfuscating. Overwhelming. And enough, already. With the plethora of legitimate as well as questionable information sources on the Internet today, “info-mining” is both easier and more difficult than ever before – especially if you care about the credibility of your source and results.

For a little clarity on the subject, info-miners in the distance education community can use one or more of COL’s info-mining tools. First, COL’s online Knowledge Finder offers a high-quality open and distance learning (ODL) information retrieval and search service. Two other tools reflect COL’s consistent ability to advance Commonwealth educational development through strategic co-operation. Significant management and content partnerships between COL and the World Bank has resulted in the online Global Distance Education Network (GDENet, www.col.org/disted), and The Development Gateway Foundation for the Development Gateway (www.developmentgateway.com/e-learning).

These initiatives are part of a long-term plan to augment COL’s existing info-mining services, which include COL’s online Information Resource Centre (www.col.org/irc) and a Gender Training Resources database (www.col.org/GenderResources) developed in collaboration with UNDP, UNIFEM, UNICEF and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

In addition, COL’s future ICT-based info-mining services will likely include producing digital libraries such as e-books, journals, reports and databases on DVD and similar high-density information storage media. These offline formats are commonly PC-accessible, and store considerably more information per unit than a CD-ROM.

COL’s Knowledge Finder

Launched in mid-2002, the Knowledge Finder provides one-stop access to approximately one million quality documents from pre-filtered online sources. Links include educational and development sites, with sub-indexes that focus on issues such as poverty alleviation, gender equity and health. With limited marketing, the Finder is now logging over 1000 page impressions per week. Encouraged by these numbers, COL has initiated an Internet-based promotional campaign that is expected to increase regular usage to 3000 times per week by the end of 2003.
The Knowledge Finder provides one-step access to quality online sources.

Aware of the time constraints under which policy-makers, educators, developers, trainers, researchers and learners labour, the Finder provides starter “access pages” customised to specific topics or interest groups, such as open and distance learning (ODL, colfinder.org/odl), schoolnets (colfinder.org/sn) and development (colfinder.org/dev). Based on Convera’s proprietary RetrievalWare data-mining software (www.convera.com), the Finder indexes about 200 document types, including popular formats such as .doc, pdf and html. It executes everything from pattern and concept to Boolean searches, and compensates for alternative spellings (“cheque” or “check”), meanings (“banking” or “finance”) and typos (e.g., “colur”). Concept searching (the default), automatically uses its built-in dictionaries in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish to provide cross-lingual results and expand the search based on synonyms. Pattern searching also allows users to search for documents in additional languages such as Malaysian or Danish. The site also provides links to Babelfish (www/babelfish.org) for on-the-fly translation.

Users can download the freeware pakXpress reader – developed by 3waynet Inc. (www.3waynet.com) – to edit, catalogue, meta-tag and store search results. Advanced features, such as e-mailable custom “information packs,” detailed note-taking and wider file-saving options, are available if required, for a fee, through an optional downloadable programme. (Speaking technically, this option allows the user to store IMS/SCORM compatible meta-tagging to tag content as learning objects!)

**COL and GDENet**

Invited by the World Bank to host GDENet’s Island States regional site and manage the global site, and with funding from infoDev, COL works with other implementing and content partners to provide ODL policy-makers, decision-makers and practitioners access to public domain and copyright-secured quality resources covering setting up, implementing and maintaining national, regional or institutional programming. Registering approximately 3000 hits per month in mid-2003, the COL-managed site interfaces with GDENet’s five other regional sites in addition to a central resource site. GDENet offers access to information in five languages, covering ODL as well as the educational use of information and communication technology (ICT). COL also contributes to GDENet’s global content management and editorial team.

**COL and the Development Gateway**

COL is also one of several partners from both the public and private sectors in the Development Gateway, an Internet portal aimed at showcasing practical information on sustainable development and poverty reduction. The Gateway’s interactive, user-friendly format and broad emphasis on the significant contribution of education to development make this an ideal collaboration for COL.

A content partner in the portal’s e-learning section since early 2002, COL co-manages the section with World Links (www.world-links.org). COL also works closely with an international group of independent specialist guides and advisers as well as a content editor to filter and categorise site content contributions from stakeholder governments, non-governmental organisations, corporations and interested individuals.

E-learning’s more than 1796 resources are now available in five languages. Approximately half of the section’s 2779 registered members hail from developing countries, with hundreds of new members signing up each month. Aside from feedback and member contributions, COL has provided the Gateway with 633 resource links to the portal’s ever-increasing inventory of resource listings. These links are chiefly in the areas of e-learning, ICT for development and the knowledge economy.
During 2000 – 2003, COL lived up to its reputation as a leader in the field of training for open and distance education professionals. From the development of policies and methodology, to the actual practice of open, distance and technology-mediated learning, COL continues to respond to the educational and training needs of thousands of individuals engaged in the field of open and distance learning throughout the Commonwealth.

As well as carrying out an integrated strategy comprised of workshops, seminars, study visits, web-based tools, distance learning courses and print-based training materials, COL emphasises the importance of training those responsible for training others. During the last three years, COL has supported numerous seminars and workshops involving scores of participants who have in turn trained many others.

**Impact**

There is an educational “domino effect” of quality and access improvements that contribute to the efficiency, effectiveness, professionalism and self-esteem not only of individuals and institutions, but the community and nation at large.

COL’s training programmes continue to play a significant role in advancing access to education for Commonwealth citizens and societies in which they live.

**Commonwealth Masters Degree in Distance Education**

The Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme, initiated in 1993 and piloted in 1995 with 100 students from 15 countries, is a two-year, distance-delivered Masters of Distance Education programme for education administrators. It is delivered in collaboration with the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), on-site tutors and the ministries of education of participating countries. Sixty-five of the first 100 students, from 15 countries, graduated in 1998. The Scheme’s original rationale was to help create a Commonwealth-wide group of trained distance education professionals to join the vanguard of development in the ministries and schools of their respective nations.

Students are usually employed in publicly funded institutions offering distance-learning options or in governmental policy functions, and local tutors are contracted to provide learner support. A level of sponsorship from the nominating government is required.

**Outputs**

The need for trained professionals remains relevant today, and favourable participant feedback from the first Scheme has encouraged COL to offer the programme for a second time, after an evaluation, update and internationalisation of course materials. Invitations to participate were extended to ministries of education in 19 Commonwealth countries that were not included in the first round. Fellowships were subsequently awarded to 45 students from eight countries who are now enrolled and have commenced studies.

**Youth internships**

Looking for work in these times of globalisation and rapid technological change can be daunting for young people fresh out of post-secondary school. Obtaining their first paying career-related job is often one of the most difficult steps in what promises, for most, to be a future filled with continual upgrading and lifelong learning.

In recognition of this fact, COL, with generous funding from the Government of Canada’s Youth Employment Strategy (YES), through the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and Canada’s Youth International Internship Programme (YIIP), has embarked on an ambitious endeavour to offer young Canadians an opportunity to gain international development work experience through a nine- to 12-month international internship programme.
The programme aims to provide interns with an opportunity to gain a strong foundation of transferable skills and knowledge. Internship activities focus largely on areas related to the development and sharing of open learning/distance education resources to assist developing nations improve access to quality education and training. The host organisations, in turn, have an opportunity to complete special projects.

**Outputs**

To date, 28 women and nine men have participated over the three years that the programme has operated. Applications have leapt from 30 in the first year to just over 90 in 2002 – 2003. Upon their return, the interns are better prepared to enter the Canadian or international workforce full-time. An unforeseen spin-off has been the appreciable increase in COL’s profile within Canada in addition to enhancing mutually beneficial partnerships between COL and host organisations – many of which have participated in the programme for at least two years.

### ODL and Policy-Makers in the Southern African Development Community

**Online training for policy-makers**

In order to provide effective open and distance education programmes, it is imperative that policy-makers be familiar with the unique set of opportunities and obstacles inherent in technology-based learning. In Southern Africa, for the Southern African Development Community (SADC), COL has worked in partnership with the South African Institute of Distance Education (SAIDE) to produce a web-based/CD-ROM training opportunity for policy-makers, augmented by face-to-face tutorials.

**Outputs**

The online course for SADC distance education policy-makers is designed to deepen the knowledge and skill base of managers responsible for open and distance learning programmes. So far, participants from Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, the Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe have taken part in the programme.

**Online training in education policy, planning and management for education officials**

COL, SAIDE and the SADC Education Policy Support Initiative (EPSI) have produced an online/CD-ROM course to support the use of open and distance learning in the training of education officials within the SADC region. This online programme focuses on education management information systems and includes staff training at identified regional “centres of excellence” to develop and deliver the course.

**Outputs**

The online/CD-ROM course is designed to test this method of supporting professional development of education ministry officials. Course development is still in the testing stage.

### The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia

Established by COL and hosted by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in New Delhi, the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), is COL’s regional office for Commonwealth Asia, serving Bangladesh, Brunei, India, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

Its mission is to “promote the meaningful, relevant and appropriate use of information and communication technologies to serve the educational and training needs of the Commonwealth member states of Asia.” To that end, CEMCA provides consultancy, promotes capacity-building and provides information resource and exchange throughout the region. It does so by managing a database of over 10,000 educational radio and television programmes that are available for use by institutions and broadcasters, by conducting training programmes and by publishing a quarterly newsletter for the region’s institutions.

As part of its three-year plan, CEMCA will continue to work at the operational level, primarily target-
ing the human and knowledge resources that help transform policy into action.

Outputs
Some of the achievements and programmes of CEMCA include:
- Training 500 participants at various workshops on a range of themes
- Providing continuing commitment to the ongoing development and maintenance of the educational media database
- Publishing and widely distributing EduComm Asia, a regional quarterly newsletter highlighting information and experiences in ICTs in open and distance learning
- Offering capacity-building programmes in multimedia courseware for regional distance and dual-mode institutions

Forums and Regional Workshops
Forums, regional workshops and seminars provide opportunities for open and distance learning trainers, managers and policy-makers to network, share information, develop and test new methodologies and products. Here are just two examples of COL-facilitated professional development programmes.

Leadership Training for Higher Education Administrators in Africa
The programme, Managing Change – Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education, is designed to equip heads of African academic institutions to meet the demands of providing effective leadership through times of rapid change. Organisers and participants hope that this programme will increase equitable access and remove barriers to higher education. A planned outcome is to strengthen the strategic planning skills of academic leaders and to sensitise them to the uses of ODL and educational technology in managing and delivering quality education.

Managing Change is a five-year programme – one session per year – offered and sponsored collaboratively by The University of Abertay Dundee, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the Association of African Universities and COL. Registration is limited to 20 per session to ensure maximum educational value in the participatory workshops. Over the five years, the programme is designed to provide much-needed experience for at least one senior academic/administrative leader from each sub-Saharan higher education institution.

Outputs
Fifty-eight senior administrators (47 male, 11 female) from 46 institutions based in 17 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have now benefited from the three sessions held to date.

Management Development Workshops for Heads of Teacher Training Colleges in Africa
Aimed at developing the management capacity of heads and administrators of sub-Saharan teacher educational institutions, and at encouraging the use of open and distance learning in teacher training, two of a series of five annual management development workshops were jointly organised by COL and Singapore’s National Institute of Education in 2001 and 2002. These were hosted and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Singapore.

Outputs
Improved teacher-training systems is an important vehicle towards building educational capacity in meeting Millennium Development Goals.

Thirty-six teacher education administrators from 15 African countries have participated in the two workshops to date. The National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi, came forward to collaborate with COL in organising and hosting similar workshops. Eleven heads of teacher educational institutions from Africa, together with eight from India, participated in this 10-day workshop in February 2003.

Developing a Core Open and Distance Learning Skills Handbook
In order to provide effective open and distance learning services (ODL), instructor and programme designers need to understand the special requirements of instructional planning and design. COL has commissioned Planning and Implementing ODL: A
handbook for decision makers, and Tutoring ODL: a handbook for tutors, the first two of a series of handbooks to facilitate the design and implementation of effective ODL best practices around the world. The handbooks will be self-instructional, interactive and reflect best practices in ODL design, drawing primarily on Commonwealth experience.

**Outputs**
The handbooks will be promoted and made available in print and electronic formats beginning in 2003. They will also contain a teaching CD exploring costing and modelling of ODL systems.

---

**Knowledge Series now includes 15 titles**

Setting up and maintaining a distance education (DE) programme can be a protracted exercise in trial and error. COL’s Knowledge Series ([www.col.org/knowledge](http://www.col.org/knowledge)) is designed to help educators, administrators and just about anyone involved with DE minimise the trial and lessen the error as much as possible.

The expert-authored series is a topical overview of DE theory and practice. Each title is a reader-friendly six pages that include a representative list of additional resources and bibliography. The content is just detailed enough for introductory use by, and for, trainers – whether educational, vocational or corporate.

Each guide tackles topical developments in distance learning and is selected by COL’s Publications Standing Committee from an annually revised “most wanted” short list of DE-related queries from field workers. About five titles are published at a time. Fifteen titles are currently available, profiling a wide variety of topics including support groups, library services and online learning.

The Series is free and may be copied for non-commercial use provided users acknowledge both the author and COL. Electronic versions are downloadable from the COL web site or available as a set on CD-ROM. Print copies can be ordered individually through COL or obtained through COL-affiliated projects and institutions.

The Series remains a popular online destination, registering several thousand downloads from the COL web site. Individuals, educational institutions, non-governmental organisations and e-publications (such as the International Distance Learning Course Finder, [dlcoursefinder.com](http://dlcoursefinder.com) and NETWORKING, [theNode.org](http://theNode.org)) have requested print versions and notification of upcoming titles or have featured the Series as a news and current affairs item. Institutions that have used the Series for staff training or orientation programmes include Mount Saint Vincent University in Nova Scotia, Canada, and the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning.

A member of the University of New Brunswick’s Faculty of Education remarked in correspondence with COL that “I’ve just seen the Knowledge Series ‘up close.’ I’ll be recommending it to folk here, there and everywhere.”

A little Knowledge goes a long way.
Thobile Ndawonde was only 23 years old when doctors diagnosed her with HIV/AIDS. Her family, uneducated as to how the disease is contracted and fearful for their own health, isolated her in a small hut away from the family house and village and left her to die – unattended, alone and stigmatised by an illness that few in the region understood.

Today, Thobile’s sad story is being used to educate others on the pain and unnecessary suffering caused by fear and lack of awareness. The aim of the media empowerment and HIV/AIDS stigma initiative – a joint venture between COL, the South African-based NGO Valley Trust and the World Health Organization (WHO) – is to raise awareness concerning HIV/AIDS and stigma, the most serious symptom associated with a disease that has claimed the lives of more than 30 million people worldwide.

Although extremely weak and near death, Thobile wanted her story told. Thanks to the intervention of WHO, COL and Valley Trust, Thobile did not die alone. Workers with Valley Trust took her to a hospital in Durban where she spent her last days speaking to project organisers and trainees about the painful events that brought her there.

Following an orientation training session on production and video camcorder techniques, Valley Trust trainees travelled to Thobile’s rural village to interview her aunt, uncle and grandmother who confirmed that fear of contracting HIV/AIDS had goaded family and villagers to drive the young woman into isolation. Even after her admission to hospital, her clothes, mattress and blankets remained on the ground near the hut. The family refused to go near them.

Trainees then interviewed Thobile at McCord Hospital in Durban where, despite her rapidly deteriorating condition, she was able explain her plight and how villagers and her own father had disowned her, the latter telling her that he wanted her to die.

Trainees then located and interviewed the father on camera, who stated unequivocally that he did not want his daughter back nor would he attempt to see her owing to her condition. He appeared to possess no understanding of the disease or how it is transmitted. His daughter died soon after.

Unfortunately, Thobile’s story is not unique. The number of new HIV/AIDS cases continues to skyrocket in Africa, in part owing to the ignorance and fear that cause far too many to refuse the HIV testing that could protect their loved ones. For those thousands who know they have the illness, far too many hide their condition fearing that their families and communities will reject them the way Thobile’s nearest and dearest rejected her.

The initiative is designed to demonstrate the use of low-cost video production to:
- aid health workers isolated in rural areas with little access to information,
- lobby policy-makers and ensure that persons living with HIV/AIDS be treated the same as any other group facing health problems,
- share information and raise awareness regarding the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS in South Africa and
- change existing legislation and regulations to ensure that people living with HIV/AIDS be treated equally and with dignity.

Organisers believe this activity (part of COL’s Media Empowerment programme (see page 32) will enhance the valuable work undertaken by Valley Trust to fight HIV/AIDS stigma by effectively harnessing the power of mass media. It will enable Valley Trust to record, edit and disseminate information at the town and village level and both nationally and internationally at conferences and workshops. In addition, organisers hope it will provide a valuable model that can be adopted by other communities and governments struggling to combat the scourge of HIV/AIDS stigma.

Following production, trainees were instructed in script development, filming, editing and the communication skills necessary to facilitate publicity, advocacy and outreach. The video was initially presented to a training group workshop for health workers. Other possible venues for delivery include the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and the Internet.
COL AS A CAPACITY-BUILDER

Institutional, community and human capacity-building is a huge task calling for a range of initiatives that include training, materials and curriculum development transformed into learning models, quality assurance, developing best practices and piloting innovations designed to build human resource, educational access and other capacities. As outlined in its Three-Year Plan, 2000 – 2003, COL, in partnership with other international agencies and local authorities, has developed programmes and created and tested models designed to incorporate a variety of technologies and learning media to meet specific goals.

**Impact**

COL is contributing to this intended broad impact on socio-economic priorities by helping to strengthen the ability of societies to provide opportunities through open, distance and technology-mediated learning. This effort has empowered and enabled member states to use open and distance learning methods and technologies to find faster and more economical ways of delivering training and retraining to their citizens in a range of sectors.

**Institutional capacity-building**

At the request of individual institutions, COL provides consultancy services to identify how best practice in open, distance and technology-mediated learning can provide solutions to inadequate access or ineffective programme delivery. Decisions concerning which institutions to help are guided by analyses of the potential impact on the individual institution and on the transferability of the advice or model to other institutions, sectors or countries. A good example is the University of Delhi consultancy that developed a strategic plan for the establishment of an Open Learning Campus for the delivery of external degrees. The results of this project and another with the University Grants Commission in Sri Lanka will be analysed and written up to guide other institutions in Commonwealth jurisdictions.

In Nigeria, where there is great need for institutional capacity-building, COL awarded 50 scholarships to educators to enable them to pursue Masters of Distance Education studies through India’s Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). It has also provided hands-on training in materials development, technology application and student support systems to up to 300 staff members through the National Commission for Colleges of Education, the National Teachers’ Institute and the newly established National Open University of Nigeria.

COL has also provided technical assistance and advice in establishing or restructuring several African institutions.

**Training of legislative drafters**

In a meeting held in Harare in 1991, Commonwealth Heads of Government stressed the paramount importance of “good governance” and at the same time established a rationale for the provision of Commonwealth-wide training in legislative drafting, which was subsequently called for by Commonwealth Law Ministers when they met in 1992. As executive legislators, governments are only too aware that good governance depends on good legislation, that good laws must be carefully, consistently and rigorously drafted and that such high-quality legislation demands well-trained professional drafters.

CDN$472,000 (including CDN$200,000 from the Commonwealth Secretariat) has been spent on the development of the Distance Education Programme for Legislative Drafters since it was instigated 10 years ago. The first completion certificates were issued in 1998.

**Outputs**

- Several learners have enrolled and completed the programme in more than 20 Commonwealth ju-
risdictions, student numbers have been disappointing. One of the licensees, Vista University in South Africa, has enrolled a total of 115 students over two years, only 39 of whom graduated in 2002. The University of the South Pacific launch was delayed until 2001 owing to political unrest in Fiji – to date only 29 students have enrolled. In Papua New Guinea, numbers remain disappointingly low with only 20 students enrolled. In some jurisdictions, there have also been the expected difficulties with Law Faculties in attempts to gain recognition for the programme’s outcomes.

Income generated from licence fees is earmarked for course updating and revision. The materials are revised on a rolling four-year schedule with the third revision to take place during 2003, following an external programme evaluation that commenced in February 2003.

National Policy Support

COL has sponsored national forums on developing and/or revising national distance education policies in several countries and is an active member of regional policy bodies such as the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) working groups on teacher training and distance education.

Most recently in Nigeria, government and education officials have consulted with COL to identify areas of support for the country’s ailing education system. Teacher training through open and distance learning, upgrading of distance education professionals and the re-establishment of the national open university have been identified as first priorities and work has begun. In 2000, COL contributed to the organisation and provision of expertise for national forums on the development of distance/open learning and technical/vocational education and training systems in Nigeria.

Management Training for the Garment Industry in Bangladesh

Poor management and an unhealthy work environment too often characterise the work place for women toiling in Bangladesh’s booming export garment industry. To alleviate this problem, COL has been involved in the development of a self-instructional learning package to improve the management skills of shopfloor managers in the export garment industry. The impetus behind this innovative programme arose out of discussions with OXFAM and the Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum (PWBLF), UK, both of whom have collaborated with Bengali NGOs and COL. The learning package has been subsequently translated into Bengali and adapted to local circumstances and piloted in five factories in Dhaka.

Outputs

The project was developed in three stages: a pilot stage, a rolled-out and expanded pilot and a self-funded and expanded programme made available across the export garment industry. In the pilot 18 learners from four factories (initially five) participated. The evaluation of the pilot was very positive and negotiations are currently underway to find local partners to conduct the next stage.

COL Literacy Project

In 1998, COL requested and received support from the UK Government, through the Department for International Development (DFID), to undertake a pilot project in literacy in selected Commonwealth countries. The aim was to explore ways in which literacy programmes might be enhanced through the use of appropriate technologies. Three countries, India, Zambia and Bangladesh, were initially selected on the basis of their diversity and difficulty in raising and maintaining literacy levels. They also provided a variety of contexts from which to test project efficacy. The Bangladesh portion of the project was subsequently discontinued when it became evident that the implementing partner, the Bangladesh Open University, was not in a position to carry the project forward.

The three-year project was officially launched on 1 July 1999 and concluded on 31 December 2002.

Outputs

Eight learning centres in India, and three primary and 20 sub-centres in Zambia, were established where learners could access a variety of information tools and technologies. At least two staff at each centre
were trained to develop teaching materials and teach literacy skills using state-of-the-art equipment, while hundreds of adult learners enhanced their reading, writing, numeric and computer skills. The Literacy Project successfully demonstrated how ICTs can be employed in community-based literacy development. The final evaluation report is being prepared. The project is, however, being sustained by implementing partners in India, and the minister responsible for literacy development in Zambia has already declared that she wants the model expanded to all provinces in the country. In a speech delivered in April 2003, the Honourable Marina Singo, Zambia’s Minister of Community Development and Social Services, commended COL and DFID for their efforts and pledged to take the results forward:

“The importance of ICTs in the development of literacy to the nation cannot be over emphasised… The Ministry will continue to run the programme which is now wholly part of our literacy programmes. Further, as a Ministry we are committed to have the programme extended to all other provinces and in connection to this we are inviting cooperating partners and other stakeholders gathered here today to come to our aid. We recognise the potential that the three centres have in terms of production of literacy materials and capacity for training community workers in the use and in teaching of literacy.”

**ALTERNATIVE SECONDARY SCHOOLING THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION IN MOZAMBIQUE**

Mozambique’s out-of-school education programme is a CDN$1.8 million Department for International Development (DFID) funded project that is now in its third year. Its aim is to develop Mozambique’s human resource capacity by providing education to the more-than two million individuals that would otherwise be unable to access secondary education. Supported learning – with tutors available in key learning centres – is the educational model on which the programme is based.

**Outputs**

Located in the Department of Distance Education within the Ministry of Education, the project has resulted in the training of 18 writers, the establishment of five learning centres within Nampula province and the production of learning materials for all year-eight subject areas. Perhaps more significantly, the project has focussed the Government of Mozambique’s attention on the potential for ODL to improve access to education in regions that would otherwise do without.
To that end, the government is now supporting the development of a World Bank-funded National Centre for Distance Education.

**TRAINING TECHNICAL TEACHERS IN THE CARIBBEAN AND GHANA**

In the last 10 years, the Caribbean has experienced rapid growth in the employment of technical and vocational education teachers. In response to requests to develop a better training system, COL and other institutions in the region have collaboratively developed a learning package to train teachers in technical pedagogy. The aim is to encourage countries to extend education and vocational training to individuals living in the outer islands. Owing to a variety of factors, it was necessary for the course to be modular, available through distance learning and conducive to vocational education. Upon completion, delegates from Caribbean member countries determined that the course should be piloted throughout the region with Jamaica’s University of Technology designated as regional co-ordinator.

In Ghana, the University of Education (UE) re-tailored the Technical Teacher Training programme and piloted it through its Kimasi campus. Relying on the modules produced for the Caribbean, together with material designed and written in Ghana, UE has developed a curriculum designed for three four-year Bachelor of Education programmes. Other technical course includes accounting, management and office studies. Courses will commence in October 2003.

**Outputs**

In the Caribbean, the technical teacher training programme has been implemented throughout the Bahamas and St. Kitts & Nevis and is about to be piloted in Guyana and Grenada. Governments with little experience with open and distance learning (ODL) have embraced innovative uses of ICT.

In Ghana, the introduction of technical teacher training has spawned an active interest in the use of ODL as a delivery tool for skills-based training. Programme managers believe initial enthusiasm will generate substantial interest once the course is offered throughout the country.

**TEACHER EDUCATION IN LESOTHO**

Supported by World Bank funding, COL has worked to increase access and improve the quality of primary education in Lesotho. Phase I of the programme targeted the training of Lesotho College of Education (LCE) academics in the development of instructional design and self-instructional material, year-one course material, designing the learner-support system and formulating the administrative arrangements.

**Outputs**

The activity was completed in March 2002. About 30 faculty members of LCE received training, while 18 modules of year-one course material were developed. Also completed was a detailed learner-support system design for LCE as well as the formulation of programme administrative and organisational arrangements.

**CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

In 2000, COL joined forces with the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) to enable the Council to develop and maintain open and distance learning (ODL) materials for the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE). Efforts were later expanded to include the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC). The objective is to improve access for students preparing for CAPE and thereby increase numbers qualifying for university entrance— a projected increase of 15 per cent by 2005. A secondary objective is to provide training to instructors implementing and tutoring ODL.

Two author workshops (in March and June 2002) and two provider workshops (in February 2003 in Grenada and Jamaica) have been held and, based on post-workshop evaluations, they generated more enthusiasm than was originally anticipated. The next stage of the project involves piloting materials to community colleges in Jamaica and Grenada. The latter will focus on how to manage large classroom sizes.

**WOMEN AND THE DIGITAL DIVIDE**

In the late 1990s, COL worked with a number of agencies to organise a series of regional meetings exploring and identifying barriers to ICTs in education based on gender differences— particularly in regards
to education and training – and possible strategies to overcome them.

Anticipated outcomes include a paper to be submitted to the World Summit on the Information Society and a publication/web site featuring best practices, exemplary projects and strategies designed to improve access. Organisers hope these meetings, leading into a planned international forum, will contribute significantly to enabling women to equitably access ICTs necessary to improve health, establish small businesses and gain equal access to education and training opportunities aimed at improving their own well-being as well as that of their children and the community at large.

**Outputs**

Following an invitational meeting of regional representatives held in Ottawa in June 2002, in partnership with Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC), regional findings were synthesised and further insight was gained.

Interest continues to grow. An international forum hosted by the Government of Malaysia and organised by COL and the Global Knowledge Partnership will take place in Kuala Lumpur in August 2003. Three hundred delegates are expected to take part.

**Open schooling**

In regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, where the teacher population has been decimated and many children orphaned due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, open schooling may be one of the few practical ways in which to provide basic schooling to adult citizens who deserve a second chance. Open schooling uses distance education methodologies and flexible learning principles to overcome the many obstacles inherent in remedial education.

In an effort to help achieve the Millennium Development Goal of universal access to basic education, COL has mounted a series of international institutes and meetings on open schooling. The purpose of these activities is to increase awareness of the benefits of open schooling, provide an overview of the components involved in successful open schools and demonstrate how school-level education can be delivered by ODL methodologies.
COL’s Media Empowerment Programme (COLME)

Establishing community-based radio stations and low-cost video production

Building community and human capacity and contributing to poverty alleviation includes raising awareness of current community and cultural events, news and health information. Mass media is a powerful tool that can be used to inform and educate those who would otherwise remain unaware of issues that directly affect them. Until now, such capacity has been too expensive for people living in rural conditions throughout much of the developing world. COL’s Media Empowerment programme, however, is demonstrating how communities can benefit from low-cost media applications.

The programme has developed media models that stress both local participation and transfer of knowledge and skills. It has also created a core of skilled personnel that COL and other development organisations can draw upon for in-country training, and it has provided opportunities for disadvantaged groups to participate and benefit from new technology and media-based initiatives. The main areas of focus have been on gender and HIV/AIDS (The Gambia, South Africa), teacher education (Cameroon, India, Nigeria), agriculture (Dominica, Ghana, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis) forestry/environment (Trinidad & Tobago), vocational skills development (Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa) and empowering rural communities to address gender, poverty alleviation, and food security (Papua New Guinea, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda).

Examples include:

- **Community radio – Papua New Guinea:** In partnership with the PNG Ministry of Education, COL has established a solar-powered community radio station in Mountain Brown, a remote village high up in the mountains in a largely inaccessible region of Papua New Guinea. The community-run radio station broadcasts national and local news, development information, community education and topical issues to 2000 citizens living in 10 neighbouring villages. For the very first time, these people are being exposed to mass media production facilities that enable them to communicate among themselves in their own language. Models such as this throughout the Commonwealth demonstrate to policy-makers within government and international donors how local communities can empower themselves through radio.

  The PNG Ministry of Education views this initiative as especially appropriate in their country, which is home to roughly one-fifth of the world’s languages. An initiative examining the feasibility of replicating the programme throughout the country is being discussed with the Government of Australia.

- **Addressing agricultural training through media models in the Caribbean:** The activities in the Caribbean have addressed agribusiness opportunities and environmental sustainability issues by employing mass media 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 of the United Nations (FAO). This focus in agribusiness opportunities and environment has been to aid governments in the region in their efforts to move towards crop diversification among farmers who have been sidelined by mass-produced food products from developed countries. COL has added value to agricultural/environmental training by employing distance education methods to reach farmers using locally produced digital video and audio productions distributed via radio, television, workshops and field days. Agricultural officers who have been taught camera and video editing skills are able to record and train farmers on new techniques and issues that consider the climatic, soil and growing conditions of the specific region.
The establishment of open schools will not only increase opportunities for disadvantaged children, but will also provide opportunities for youth and adults to acquire basic education without the stigma of having to go back to school with children much younger than themselves. Women, in particular, may find the open schooling system preferable because they can study at home at their own pace, when their limited free time allows them.

To date, the Open Access College in Australia has hosted one institute for people from the South Pacific, while a second institute, hosted by the National Institute of Open Schooling in India, has targeted decision-makers from African Ministries of Education.

Outputs
It is anticipated that through these institutes, heightened awareness will encourage more ministries to implement policies that will support the establishment of new open schools. It is also anticipated that where open schools do exist, success stories and best practices promoted at meetings and institutes will encourage educators to adopt innovative practices with a view to improving educational quality and reach.

Training materials for NGOs
Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) represent the backbone of many development/humanitarian efforts. It is therefore vital that their staff be well-trained, professional and effective communicators. To facilitate increased capacity at the NGO level, COL is working with the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation and the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) to develop a certificate programme for persons working in NGOs. Initially, organisers will focus on NGOs that provide support, advocacy and assistance to street children. Organisers anticipate that the programme will eventually expand to include NGOs working with other disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

Outputs
In consultation with NGO staff, COL has developed and is piloting a course on Writing Business English. A second course, Developing Business Skills, has also been developed and is about to be piloted. NGO staff wrote the course material with instructional design provided by IGNOU.

These courses, together with other IGNOU courses, have been packaged into a certificate programme aimed at enhancing the skills of NGO staff. If successful, the project will be adapted and expanded to accommodate a diploma programme in addition to being offered to NGO staff working in other Commonwealth countries.

Supporting school networking
Educational technology represents an important strategy for achieving UN Millennium Development Goals. Over the last three years, COL has actively promoted and supported the development of “schoolnets” aimed at providing teacher training and idea exchange between students and teachers, thereby building school capacity in regions that would otherwise remain beyond the reach of traditional educational methods and contributing to achieving the goal of universal primary education.

COL is currently working in three Commonwealth regions: Africa, the Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia. COL’s work to promote the use of schoolnet models in these regions has an additional anticipated outcome of encouraging education ministries to support the use of educational technology in schools.

COL is working with SchoolNet Africa (SNA) to support a pan-African effort to promote schoolnetworking. COL has supported three studies, two pan-African workshops and the launch of one national schoolnet.

Outputs
The study on open and distance learning models of management training focussed on how to construct a training scheme for the managers of schoolnets. This study was presented to a pan-African workshop (held in Egypt from 10 – 14 March 2002) on professional and management development for schoolnet managers.

The second study included research into educational portals. This study analysed various educational portals in both developing and developed countries and, based on its findings, identified the key characteristics of an efficient educational portal. The report outlined which services and type of support the SNA portal should offer to its member national
COL’s “how to” programme for NGOs

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and their usually very committed, but often under-trained staff already perform a critical role in development throughout the Commonwealth and elsewhere. For these front-line workers in the battle to heal, train and educate, the burning question is not just “How can we do this?” but “How can we do this better?” One way to is to offer NGO staff every opportunity to obtain relevant, high-quality training through open and distance learning (ODL). One such opportunity is now being offered with COL’s assistance to NGO staff who work with street children in South Asia.

The initiative was proposed by India’s Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF) in 2000, and subsequently developed by COL in partnership with RGF, the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and several South Asian NGOs working in the areas of poverty alleviation and children’s issues. The certificate programme focuses on building the business, communications, training and administrative skills of NGO staff.

The programme is an ideal one for COL, which is mandated to advance Commonwealth-wide development through collaboration, advocacy and ODL – the last enabling NGO staff to continue essential work in the field, while at the same time gaining information and honing skills that increase productivity and effectiveness on the job.

Since materials development began in 2002, two courses are now available: Writing Business English and Business Skills. Both were piloted in 2003. The English writing course is targeted at administrators wishing to improve the quality of their communications while the business skills course includes job seeking, and entrepreneurship best practice and basic skills for addressing poverty and unemployment.

IGNOU provided instructional design for the business skills course, while RGF organised course draft reviews and course piloting. Actual course writing and content was pilot tested with the NGO staff currently working with street children throughout India, including Butterflies, Salaam Balaak Trust, Prayas Institute for Juvenile Justice, Ratna Nidhi Charitable Trust and Samarth.

As the certificate courses are expected to prove popular, COL is looking into funding the development of additional courses and possibly a diploma-level programme. COL is also exploring the feasibility of adapting the certificate programme, along with some other IGNOU courses, for use with other partners in other Commonwealth regions.

Through ODL programmes such as this, NGOs and their staff can become better equipped to provide their clientele with opportunities to become productive, contributing citizens through their vital work as a part of the international humanitarian effort.
schoolnets. On the basis of this report, and with continuing assistance offered by COL, SNA has developed their educational portal.

The third report concerns the potential value of refurbished computers. This report has enabled SNA and COL to advise governments and schoolnet providers on what to expect when purchasing refurbished computers and how best to develop policy guidelines.

The second pan-African workshop took place in Gaborone, Botswana, in April 2003. More than 200 policy-makers from ministries of education, schoolnet organisations and development agencies attended “ICTs in African Schools – A workshop for schoolnet practitioners and policy-makers.”

Participants discussed ICT-related issues, including the necessary policy environments, funding models that encourage sustainability, training teachers, refurbished computers and content/language development. Seven action items, covering policy development, building human capacity, information sharing, gender mainstreaming, technology development, advocacy and research, were identified for follow-up.

With support from COL, SchoolNet Kenya was launched in February 2003.

In the Pacific Island nations, COL supported a study on the potential of school networking in five island nations: Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. Based on this study, COL made recommendations to the regional Forum of Education Ministers and is currently supporting a regional effort to further school networking.

At the request of Brunei’s Ministry of Education, COL undertook a study to assess the potential of establishing a schoolnet organisation in that country. The ministry is now conducting discussions with COL regarding the possible implementation of report recommendations.

**QUALITY ASSURANCE**

ODL is increasingly being adopted and applied as a means of improving access both through the creation of single-mode “open” institutions, and through the development of a dual-mode capacity in conventional institutions. To ensure that quality standards are maintained and improved, it is necessary to establish best-practice guidelines to underpin courses and programme offerings.

As part of its capacity-building initiatives during 2001–2003, COL earmarked CDN$40,000 for activities designed to raise consciousness about improving the quality of open and distance learning throughout the Commonwealth. Expected outcomes included increased stakeholder confidence in COL-sponsored projects resulting from improvements to learner retention rates. Key areas targeted were poorly designed materials, inadequate student support mechanisms and underutilisation of available technology designed to improve student access.

**Outputs**

- Workshops conducted during 2001–2003 include “Best Practice in Higher Education” for the State Commission of Higher Education of Andhra Pradesh, India, and “Quality Framework for ODL,” through the auspices of the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU), New Delhi.
- At the request of the Chairman of the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh, COL provided expert input to a sector-wide seminar on quality assurance in universities in Bangladesh in February 2002. The seminar attracted 200 participants from all sectors of university education in Bangladesh and identified significant problems and possible solutions to which COL could contribute.
- In 2001, COL published *The Changing Faces of Virtual Education*. This document included a chapter on Quality Assurance in E-learning. COL and its associates have promoted ODL best practices in various conference presentations and seminars.
- In collaboration with UNESCO and the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), COL has commissioned the University of Surrey in the UK to conduct research into transnational education (e.g., franchised off-shore education and virtual universities) throughout the Commonwealth. The aim is to develop quality-assurance guidelines that can be used by countries in the developing world.
**Work the world with a Canadian Government COL Youth Internship**

Want to travel and learn? Want to get paid at the same time? The Youth International Intern Programme (YIIP, [www.col.org/internship/YIIP_info.htm](http://www.col.org/internship/YIIP_info.htm)), administered by the Commonwealth of Learning offers young, first-time Canadian graduates exactly that: a posting with a Commonwealth organisation for six to 12 months, as well as return airfare and a living expense allowance. Funded by the Government of Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), the programme is part of the Government of Canada’s Youth Employment Strategy (YES).

The YIIP is a working example of effective Commonwealth networking. Interns get hands-on, international work experience and hone marketable skills that will net them jobs at home and throughout the Commonwealth. Mandated to foster development through collaboration, the programme fits well with COL’s other internship initiatives ([www.col.org/internship](http://www.col.org/internship)). Through the YIIP, COL offers talented graduates an opportunity to apply their initiative and ability and enhance their skills at some of the Commonwealth’s premier organisations, strengthening COL’s ties with its partners in the process. Often the interns work on special projects either directly related to open and distance learning or on programmes which are being jointly developed by COL and the host organisation.

Since COL’s programme was initiated in 2000, the YIIP has grown from providing eight interns with placement in 2001 – 2002, to 14 now funded for 2003 – 2004. Among first-time organisations offering to host interns each year are several that have participated since the programme’s inception. These include the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the Commonwealth Secretariat’s Youth Programme and The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.

Successful internship candidates must meet DFAIT’s requirements, satisfy COL’s emphasis on a multidisciplinary background and an interest in education, and be a good fit with the particular needs of a host organisation. Short-listed candidates are interviewed both by COL and by the host organisation, which COL matches to the candidates’ skills and training. To date, interns have found placement everywhere from Britain to Guyana, and India to New Zealand.

Although the interns’ most obvious challenge is to channel talents into a productive experience, the steepest learning curve remains cultural adjustment. So far, interns agree that the greatest obstacles are related to thinking and speaking in a completely different social and linguistic context, coping with personal and property security concerns, applying their studies to a new work situation and remaining constantly vigilant against unfamiliar and potentially harmful flora or fauna.

Interns also report successful completion of the YIIP’s other, equally important objective: to undergo a cultural crash course and emerge able to “have your mango and eat it too”! Jana Duncan, who interned in 2000 – 2001 at the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre, found it a “small but personally significant triumph” to peel and eat one with the teeth alone, without squirting sweet, sticky juice in all directions. “If I could just have that kind of success with my baking stone and roti,” she recalls, “I’d be laughing.”
Throughout the Commonwealth, individuals and their communities continue to rely on subsistence farming for their livelihoods. Unfortunately, all too many farmers remain unaware of scientific and technological breakthroughs that could result in enhanced crop yields, sustainable farming practices and more prosperity for themselves, their families and the community at large.

COL’s HAM radio project aims at demonstrating how the livelihoods of farmers can be improved by providing them with an opportunity to exchange scientific and agricultural information, learning and local wisdom between themselves, extension officials, researchers and managers. To facilitate this process, low-cost communication technologies such as amateur radio (or HAM radio, licensed, two-way wireless communication) and audiocassette recorders are being mobilised to provide a wide range of knowledge/skill transfer. HAM radio is the communication technology of choice because it is simple, accessible and affordable and the most appropriate technology for economically, educationally and spatially disadvantaged rural, resource-poor, farming communities. With HAM equipment established in five villages and two research institutes in India, farmers and researchers are able to communicate with one another on a daily basis. As a result, farmers are able to obtain timely technical advice from participating agricultural workers and researchers. Likewise, the researchers are able to draw from the traditional wisdom of farmers.

Unlike broadcast radio, an audio-based technology, two-way HAM radio facilitates interactive communication – especially during states of emergency and natural disasters (cyclones, floods or earthquakes) when all other forms of communication fail. To further enhance the value of HAM radio, the project supplements wireless communications with edited audiocassette tape recordings with the intent of disseminating information to farming communities beyond the project area. Project sites are also being provided with whiteboards to inform villagers of agricultural issues pertaining to the HAM radio discussions. This initiative has successfully demonstrated how HAM radio could be employed to benefit subsistence farmers living in other developing countries.
Overarching the other roles outlined in the Three-Year Plan 2000 – 2003 is “COL as an information and knowledge provider,” which recognises the importance of up-to-date and comprehensive information and knowledge to any successful endeavour, especially one in a state of rapid and continuous change. COL continues to expand its knowledge base and information provision and exchange service for member states, not only through investments in newer technologies and software, but also by increasing information-sharing between stakeholders. To that end COL continues to extend its partnership arrangements with both Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth institutions in gathering, segregating, storing, distributing and generating information and knowledge. COL’s knowledge resources and publications are in demand, appreciated by users and favourably reviewed.

**Impact**

Policy-makers throughout the Commonwealth and beyond are able to make informed decisions and set about strategic directions on the basis of global knowledge and experience, leading to successful, cost-effective applications of open and distance learning methodologies.

**The COL Web Site**

Over the last few years, COL has significantly expanded its web site and electronic publishing programme. It is now recognised as one of the world’s foremost sources of knowledge on open, distance and technology-mediated learning and application in developing countries. Many of COL’s most recent publications are also available on a CD-ROM.

**Outputs**

Between 2000 – 2003, COL’s web site registered an ever-increasing number of hits. Today, it boasts more than 1000 unique visits per day and contains over 2000 pages of continually updated information, documentation and resources. The CD-ROM has been updated regularly since it was first produced in December 2000 and thousands of copies have been distributed, a large percentage of which have been in response to direct requests.

**News and Information**

COL disseminates news about its work and other developments throughout the world to over 9500 government and education leaders through its newsletters, **Connections** and **EdTech News** (also available online). It also issues regular electronic bulletins to about 5000 e-mail addresses and news services that are routinely forwarded to much larger audiences through list membership and organisational distribution.

**Information Resource Centre**

As an in-house clearinghouse and open and distance learning (ODL) information provider for COL staff and across the Commonwealth (online catalogue at [www.col.org/irc](http://www.col.org/irc)), the COL Information Resource Centre (IRC) continues to expand to meet the challenges and expectations of the new millennium.

In response to increasing use on the part of learners in remote regions of Canada, the IRC became a member of Canadian Union Catalogue/Canadian Library System in 2001.

The IRC was also a founding member of the Online Computer Library Center Cooperative Online Resource Catalog ([www.oclc.org](http://www.oclc.org)), which has 43,559 participating libraries in more than 117 countries worldwide.

**Outputs**

- The IRC produces a daily bulletin on ODL and education for development gleaned from Internet and subscription news services. During 2000 – 2003, 30,000 items were added to the database collection.
• Also during 2000 – 2003, the IRC acquired 1870 items for inclusion in its online catalogue.
• The IRC currently has over 6000 fully catalogued and accessible items in its online system with an additional 36,000 items in its full-text system.

Perspectives on Distance Education
COL regularly publishes, in print and online, new titles in the Perspectives on Distance Education series.

Outputs
In 2001, COL published a comprehensive reference on community and information technology-based telecentres. Telecentres: Case studies and key issues provides how-to information on topics such as management, operations, applications and evaluation and is the first book of its kind to offer a global outlook on this particular topic. The second title in the Perspectives series, Skills Development through Distance Education, was published in 2002. Its aim is to enable users to develop skills necessary for economic development and poverty eradication.

Both are available online at www.col.org/telecentres and www.col.org/skills.

Titles under production during 2003 include School Networking and Educational Media in Asia.

The Changing Faces of Virtual Education
In July 2001, COL released a study entitled The Changing Faces of Virtual Education as a follow-up to a previous landmark study examining current trends in the “virtual” delivery of higher education (The Development of Virtual Education: A global perspective, 1999). The newer study focuses on several emerging trends likely to radically alter traditional concepts of campus, curriculum, courses, teaching/learning processes, credentials/awards and the way that information and communications technologies can be used to enable and support learning. The British Department for International Development funded both studies. See www.col.org/virtualed.

The Global Distance Education Network
During the last three years the COL-managed Global Distance Education Network (GDENet), expanded to include 1500 approved documents in five languages. The network expects to expand to 12 sites over the next three years with the number of key documents published in the public domain growing to about 2000. Today, the infoDev-funded initiative has expanded to six web sites:
• Core (Global) site (English Language), World Bank
• Central America (Spanish language), Costa Rica
• Southern Africa (English language), South Africa
• East Asia (English, Chinese, Korean and Japanese), Hong Kong, China
• Southeast Asia (English), Indonesia
• Island States of Pacific and Caribbean (English), Commonwealth of Learning

These sites may be accessed at www.col.org/disted and may be individually browsed or searched using a combined index of all documents.

The COL Knowledge Finder
Locating information on open and distance learning can be daunting for policy-makers and practitioners unfamiliar with the area. To make the task easier, COL created the COL Knowledge Finder in 2002 – a global index of documents designed to enable users anywhere to find ODL documents with speed and ease. Selected web sites and repositories of publicly accessible documents have been indexed on a server and made available via a number of specialised search engines. These are:

General search page: www.colfinder.org/odl
Health: www.colfinder.org/health
Schoolnet: www.colfinder.org/sn
Governance: www.colfinder.org/gov
GDENet: www.colfinder.org/gdenet

Two companies (Convera and ThoughtShare) have provided software, and a third, 3waynet, contributes programming expertise to create the user interface, set up and operate the system. Partner organisations can download and customise a direct Knowledge Finder search plug-in for inclusion on their web sites.

The Knowledge Series
The Knowledge Series is a set of easy-to-use introductory guides aimed at those new to the practice of dis-
tance education and open learning. From 2000 – 2003, COL published 15 titles in the series. At least 2000 copies of each guide are in circulation in addition to hundreds of downloads from COL’s web site – evidence of the growing popularity of these guides as training resources. See www.col.org/knowledge.

Research in Open, Distance and Technology-Mediated Learning

Providing education using new technologies requires that methodologies be tested among the very people who will later rely on them to enhance educational and vocational skill sets. By encouraging open and distance learning (ODL), policy-makers have a unique opportunity to overcome traditional gender barriers and increase equitable access by providing educational opportunities in the home.

A unique research agreement co-signed by COL and the International Research Foundation on Open Learning (IRFOL) is examining how best to enable governments and educational institutes to improve their understanding of different aspects of ODL.

Also, in 2001, COL embarked on a research project aimed at examining the efficacy of television as an educational tool. An international roundtable on educational TV was held in New Delhi, India, drawing participants from Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom, Zambia and Zimbabwe. As a result of this meeting, COL embarked on three research projects:

• A scan of educational broadcasting in the Commonwealth
• A research of methods aimed at determining educational programme viewer patterns
• A framework for the initiation of an educational technology (educational radio, TV and computers – including the Internet) awards system

The Development Gateway

A collaboration agreement with the World Bank, signed in 2001, resulted in COL taking primary responsibility for content in the Development Gateway’s E-Learning database. There are now over 1550 entries in the E-
Anyone in any time zone with a computer and e-mail can participate.

**Realise the Virtual with COL's Virtual Conferences**

COL's online virtual conferences are designed, in part, to help “realise the virtual,” in keeping with its mandate to foster affordable, Commonwealth-wide open and distance learning (ODL) development through collaboration. Topics covered are timely, have broad appeal and focus on issues affecting developing countries. Web access is not required as the conferences are entirely e-mail based. Participation is global, representing a wide range of sectors and interests.

Virtual conferences are reliable and cost-effective for ODL communities because of rapid advances in information and communication technology (ICT) and corresponding economies of scale. A face-to-face conference costing $250,000 benefits maybe 200 people, while the same amount invested in Internet technology can benefit 200,000 people.

COL has sponsored several virtual conferences, with a series of monthly topics leading up to both its first (1999) and second (2002) Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning. The six-month series in 2002 was co-sponsored by the Federation of Commonwealth Open and Distance Learning Associations (FOCODLA), with a representative selected from six different member associations moderating different topics.

Early in 2003, COL organised a very active and hotly debated three-week conference on Copyright and the Web, relating to educational use of web-posted documents ([www.col.org/copyright](http://www.col.org/copyright)), and in early 2004 another suite of virtual conferences will lead into COL’s third Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning to be held in Dunedin, New Zealand.

COL provides technical support, and the asynchronous, e-mail conferencing format means anyone in any time zone with a computer and e-mail can participate. Some participants find the occasional heavy daily message volume onerous, but very few opt out. Indeed, the usual 50 per cent participation rate (those who actually post messages) is high compared with most large group face-to-face meetings.

The 2002 conferences drew 125 to 300 participants each, with 100 to 300 postings per topic. A common element was acknowledgement of the need for broader recognition and acceptance of ICT as an integrated part of ODL. In addition, participants emphasised the importance of effective collaboration and implementation of quality standards and pedagogical best practice regardless of medium, while identifying obstacles to greater ICT implementation.

The 550 participants in the 2003 copyright virtual conference managed some 600 postings in three weeks. There was some consensus that current copyright legislation can restrict educational use of freely available (non-password protected) Internet materials, and that something needs to be done about it. Some participants advocated open source software and materials; most considered international and inter-institutional collaboration, especially between developed and developing countries, crucial to establishing equitable Internet copyright standards and legislation. The closing comments of several participants posed a series of questions that can be used to focus future work on educational use of copyright material on the Internet.

Bob Schad and Wanda Noel, moderators of the 2003 conference, said the discussions “clarified some issues, raised others, and provided a wealth of commentary and information.” And a 2002 conference participant noted in closing that the discussions “set the stage for us to plan long-term on how to produce a learning society. Many thanks.”
Learning database, in the following categories:

- Data and statistics (82)
- Documents and reports (659)
- Events and discussion forums (47)
- Get involved (14)
- How to/Tools (281)
- Organizations, networks, people (569)
- Programmes and projects (196)
- Publications and s(183)

Nineteen advisers and seven co-operating organisations from around the world assist in the selection and to ensure quality of the listed resources.

**The Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning**

COL’s second Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning was co-hosted with the National Association of Distance Education Organisation of South Africa (NADEOSA) and the South African Department of Education in Durban, 29 July – 2 August 2002. The purpose of the forum was to enhance the ability of Commonwealth citizens to make effective use of open and distance learning (ODL) to meet the growing educational and training needs of their countries and to take advantage of the experience and expertise of ODL practitioners residing in the Commonwealth.

The five-day programme was designed to address ODL through widening educational access, bridging the digital divide and by advancing the social and economic development of communities and the nation at large.

**Outputs**

Six pre-forum virtual conferences were organised under the banner of the Federation of Commonwealth Open and Distance Learning Associations (FOCODLA). About a 1000 registrants in total subscribed to one or more virtual conferences. The topics covered were:

- Bridging the Digital Divide, hosted by the Distance Education Association of New Zealand
- Technology and Lifelong Learning, hosted by the Open Distance Learning Association of Australia
- The Future of Technology, hosted by the Canadian Association of Distance Education
- Distance Learning in the Small and Island States of the Commonwealth, hosted by the Jamaica Association of Distance and Open Learning
- Quality Assurance in Open and Distance Educa-
tion, hosted by the Asian Association of Open Universities

• Open and Distance Learning for Community and Social Development, hosted by the National Association of Distance Education Organisations of South Africa

The conference itself was attended by 652 delegates representing 55 countries and helped to foster Commonwealth-wide co-operation, consulting and networking on issues related to open and distance learning. Statistically, 49 Commonwealth countries were represented by 402 men and 226 women, and 18 African countries were represented by 153 men and 155 women. The third Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning will be held in Dunedin, New Zealand, from 5 – 8 July 2004, hosted by the Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ).

**World Review of Distance Education and Open Learning**

As a part of its continuing encouragement for research and publication in open and distance learning, COL established the series *World Review of Distance Education and Open Learning* to fill gaps in the existing literature with current thinking and practice on major themes of interest to policy-makers and practitioners. Titles are published in association with Taylor & Francis/Routledge.

**Outputs**

The first volume in the series, *Higher Education through Open and Distance Learning*, was published in 1999 and released at the first Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in Brunei Darussalam. The second volume, *Basic Education at a Distance*, was launched in Halifax at the November 2000 Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers. The third volume, *Teacher Education through Open and Distance Learning*, was launched during the second Pan-Commonwealth Forum in Durban, South Africa, 29 July – 2 August 2002. The fourth volume, *Policy for Open and Distance Learning*, is now in production.

**Copyright and the Web Virtual Conference**

Many countries in the Commonwealth have similar copyright legislation and practices – and similar debates regarding this often-confusing legal minefield. The increasing use of the Internet and the World Wide Web has added a new and international dimension to what continues to be a perplexing dilemma for educators and students alike.

In educational institutions, learning is fostered and sustained by Internet use. However, some argue that existing copyright laws impede technology-enhanced learning. In early 2003, COL hosted a virtual conference aimed at clarifying, raising and discussing issues relating to copyright law and the Internet.

**Outputs**

More than 600 individuals participated in the virtual conference, clarifying some issues, raising others and providing a wealth of commentary and information. More questions were asked than answered. The closing comments of several participants posed a series of questions that can be used to focus future work on educational use of copyright material on the Internet. What kind of society do we want to live in? How do participants, and their governments, see the society they live in? What value do they place on education and sharing of information and resources to support education around the world? Should they permit copyright to continue to act as a barrier to access?

COL will continue to work on these issues with its international constituency.
GENDER-PROOFING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

In the 21st century, more than half the world’s population remains disenfranchised from benefits that developed nations take for granted – including the learning and training available through information and communications technologies (ICTs). Problems run deeper than a simple lack of access: using a community centre’s computer to view a government information web page on HIV/AIDS is useless if you can barely read. And in developing countries, women face many cultural and logistical barriers to their use of ICTs that are often more readily accessible to men.

These disenfranchised women live and work in poverty and poor health conditions, and with minimal basic education and skills. More than ever, the international community and individual national governments are realising the full human cost of this disparity through its negative impact on the economic and social bottom line.

Mandated to foster Commonwealth development through open and distance learning (ODL), the Commonwealth of Learning has been making a difference to women in developing countries for more than a decade. COL is currently focussing on identifying and dissolving gender barriers to ICT – helping to bridge the digital divide for women.

Many women in developing regions remain marginalised or excluded from basic education and life skills training. Many more are completely illiterate. The few that do enjoy access to basic education are increasingly finding themselves on the wrong side of a gender-based digital divide. More disturbingly, initial studies commissioned by COL found very little research that could help governments and development organisations deal with the issues.

Spurred by a clear need for more relevant information, COL hosted a series of regional expert symposiums in Barbados, India, New Zealand and Tanzania on gender barriers to ICT use, from 1998 – 2001, in collaboration with the British Council, Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the New Zealand Official Development Assistance (NZODA) programme (now the New Zealand Agency for International Development, NZAID).

At a final summary meeting on Gender Issues and Barriers to Information and Communications Technologies, held in Ottawa in June 2002 in partnership with Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC), consultants and delegates from previous symposiums consolidated their findings and case studies into a synthesis report, **Women and ICTs for Open and Distance Learning: Some experiences and strategies from the Commonwealth**.

This definitive document is a guide for individuals in governments and organisations working to ensure women have equal access to ODL and ICT education and training, including COL and its worldwide network of development and education partners. The report’s comprehensive study of gender barriers to ICT covers Commonwealth Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific, and includes suggestions and case studies on how to resolve the issues.

Although specifics are varied by region, some shared threads were low general literacy and ICT literacy levels; irrelevance of learning material available through ICT and ODL to women’s livelihoods; socio-cultural barriers to women’s education; and lack of female policy-makers, trainers and designers of ODL courses. Suggestion for corrective action include using audiovisual ICTs to circumvent illiteracy, introducing training relevant to women’s traditional fields, conducting ICT awareness and promotional campaigns, collaboration with local or regional women’s organisations and leaders, and lobbying for clear national policies on gender and development.

The synthesis report will also help inform specific discussion topics at an invitational Forum on ICTs & Gender: Optimising Opportunities, to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in August 2003.
COL and its partners are offering women better ways to use technology.

(www.globalknowledge.org/gender2003). The forum’s many co-organisers include COL, the Global Knowledge Partnership, the International Telecommunications Union and the Government of Malaysia’s Ministry of Energy, Communications and Multimedia, Ministry of Women and Family Development and the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission. Specific topics will include Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs, Health and Education, and Entrepreneurship.

Among other gender-related initiatives, COL has trained, and placed digital video cameras in the hands of, female agricultural extension officers in Ghana; helped develop Women in Development distance education course modules for non-governmental organisations and developed a Gender Training Resources Collection (www.col.org/GenderResources) – a web database of gender mainstreaming support material – in collaboration with several United Nations organisations and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Perhaps “men own all the technology,” as a report at the Ottawa meeting from Zambian and Kenyan delegates suggests, but COL and its partners are working at means of offering women better ways to use ICT for the development of all.

The synthesis report, regional meeting reports and country presentations are all available on COL’s web site at www.col.org/wdd.
The 14th triennial Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM), held in Halifax in November 2000, gave COL a 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 CDN$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.”

Ministers and ministerial representatives from 26 of the 45 participating Commonwealth countries spoke in support of COL. Many pledged significantly increased funding with Britain leading the way – it announced that it would triple its contribution to £1 million annually over the next three years – while continuing to provide additional support for specific programmes. Nigeria also pledged significant contribution over three years, resuming its place as a major financial donor to COL – a position it held for a time when Commonwealth Heads of Government created COL in 1987. After four years of suspension, Nigeria returned to full membership status within the Commonwealth in May 1999.

In their final communiqué, the Ministers commended COL on its achievements of the last few 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 recognition as well as quality assurance. Ministers recognised the efficacy of distance education systems, and reiterated 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.”

In early 2002, Canada announced that it would increase its annual contribution to the agency from CDN$1.1 million to $2.2 million to “enable COL to maintain the vitality of its services to the Commonwealth, especially for the vast majority of Commonwealth citizens who live in developing countries.”

Details on funding from member governments appear on page 61. Thirty-seven governments contributed over the period covered by this report. Overall, COL’s core funding is leveraged to the extent of at least two-to-one through partnerships with international agencies and in-kind contributions from recipient governments, institutions and organisations. COL also raises revenue, while contributing to its mandated objectives in promoting ODL, through consultancies that it undertakes for development agencies and governments.
The years spanning 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2003 were ones of unprecedented change and growth for COL. The years ahead will pose even greater challenges as what started as a small, Vancouver-based international organisation continues to grow and extend its reach and influence, while better focussing its efforts and better integrating and incorporating the UN Millennium Development Goals and global Education for All priorities (www.developmentgoals.org and www.unesco.org/education/efa) through its primary role as a capacity-builder.

A “performance management,” or “results-based management” (RBM), programme-based framework is being used for COL’s next Three-Year Plan (2003 – 2006), which has been developed through far-ranging consultations with governments and other stakeholders. The new Three-Year Plan is being published at the same time as this report and, therefore, readers are referred to that document for further details. Commonwealth Ministers of Education will consider this plan, and their financial commitments, when they meet in Edinburgh in October 2003.

The core functions of COL – advocacy, brokering, networking, facilitating and model-building – remain as the fundamental support to its strategic goals:

• Facilitating access to affordable high-quality training materials
• Proving access to training in open and distance learning
• Supplying information and advice on open and distance learning
• Promoting the utilisation of information and communications technologies in education

As an instrument of 54 Commonwealth states – many of which face enormous obstacles in educating their frequently impoverished populations – COL will continue to exercise innovation, commitment and flexibility in encouraging the adoption and application of open and distance learning to serve the needs of individuals, communities and nations around the world.
**Publications (July 2000 - June 2003)**

**Newsletters**


*COL in Africa*, regularly updated

*COL in South and Southeast Asia*, regularly updated

*COL in the Caribbean*, regularly updated

*COL in the Pacific*, regularly updated

**Knowledge Series**

Published in 2001/2002:

- Designing Online Learning
- Audio/Audioconferencing in Support of Distance Education
- Video/Videoconferencing in Support of Distance Education
- Using Community Radio for Non-Formal Education
- Using Telecentres in Support of Distance Education
- Analysing Costs/Benefits for Distance Education Programmes

Published in 2003:

- Establishing Copyright Procedure in Distance Education
- Developing Library and Information Services for Distance Education
- Open and Distance Learning Policy Development (Particular Reference to Dual Mode Institutions)
- Institutional Collaboration in Distance Education Development and Delivery

**Detailed reporting and reports to Governments**


*Enhancing Access to Learning and Training: A Submission to the Commonwealth’s High-Level Review Group,* November 2000


*Mid-Term Evaluation: Report of the external panel,* October 2002


**Electronic**

World Wide Web information service on the Internet at: [www.col.org](http://www.col.org)

Regular mass e-mailed bulletins

CD-ROM: *Expanding Learning Horizons* (collection of publications and resources, continually updated)

**Books, research documents and consultancies**

Models for Open and Distance Learning: Globalisation and education (D. Hawkridge, International Research Foundation for Open Learning/COL, 2003)
Models for Open and Distance Learning: Teacher education and training (H. Perraton, International Research Foundation for Open Learning/COL, 2003)
World Review of Distance Education and Open Learning: Teacher education through open and distance learning
Perspectives on Distance Education: Skills development through distance education (A.K. Mishra and J. Bartram, eds., 2002)
Best Practice in Education Portals (N. Butcher, COL/SchoolNet Africa, 2002)
School Networking in the Pacific Island States: An environmental scan and plan for the establishment of schoolnets for the Pacific island states (D. Brandjes, 2002)
Evaluation Report of the Course for Distance Education Policy-Makers in Southern Africa (C. Magagula, 2002)
Identifying Barriers to ICTs in Education based on Gender Differences Women and ICTs for Open and Distance Learning: Some experiences and strategies from the Commonwealth (Reports, and associated case studies, from meetings held in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, the South Pacific and Canada, 1998 – 2002)
Reflections on Ten Years of the Commonwealth of Learning (G. Dhanarajan, 2001)
The Changing Faces of Virtual Education (G. Farrell, ed. 2001, with funding from the British Department for International Development)
Brave New Women of Asia: How distance education changed their lives (A.S. Kanwar and M Taplin, eds., 2001)
Perspectives on Distance Education: Telecentres: Case studies and key issues (Management* Operations * Applications* Evaluation) (C. Latchem and D. Walker, eds., 2001)
Audio for Distance Education and Open Learning: A practical guide for planners and producers (J. Thomas, COL/International Extension College, 2001)
A Course on Writing Effectively for UNHCR (M. Bentley and D. Murphy, COL/United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2000) and Writing Effectively for WHO/UNAIDS, 2002 – for UNHCR/WHO/UNAIDS/ COL use only
World Review of Distance Education and Open Learning: Basic education at a distance (J. Bradley and C. Yates, eds., COL/RoutledgeFalmer Press, 2000)
Diffusion of Appropriate Educational Technology in Open and Distance Learning in Developing Commonwealth Countries (R Williams, 2000)
Case Studies of Non-Formal Education by Distance and Open Learning (R. Siaciwena, ed., COL/Department for International Development, UK, 2000)
The Use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in Learning and Distance Education – selected Commonwealth counties (COL International/Intelecon Research, 2000) www.col.org/resources/publications

Papers and presentations

Keynote addresses and papers presented at the second Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, Durban, July 2002: www.col.org/pcf2
“Learning, Technology and Gender: Need, opportunity and obligation,” presented at the Regional Consultation on Rural Women in Knowledge Society, Patancheru (Hyderabad), India (December 2002) by Gajaraj Dhanarajan: www.col.org/speeches/FAO_Asia_02.htm

“Open and Flexible Learning: Commonwealth Experience and India’s Challenge,” Inaugural Remarks on flexible and open learning, presented at the 76th Annual Meeting of the Association of Indian Universities, Central University of Chandigarh, India (December 2001) by Gajaraj Dhanarajan: www.col.org/speeches/AIU_01.htm


Other speeches, presentations and papers: www.col.org/speeches

BOARD OF GOVERNORS as of 30 June 2003

CHAIRMAN
Mr. Lewis Perinbam, O.C.* (Until April 2003, Dr. H. Ian Macdonald, O.C., President Emeritus, York University, Canada)

MEMBERS
Commonwealth Secretary-General: His Excellency, the Rt. Hon. Donald C. McKinnon*

APPOINTMENTS BY MAJOR DONORS
GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRALIA
Vacant
(Until December 2000, Professor C.D. Blake, AM, Vice-Chancellor, Charles Sturt University)
(Until January 2002, Ms. Ali Gillies, Assistant Director General, Australian Agency for International Development)

GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (major donor until June 2002)
(Until June 2001, Ms. Robin Ciceri, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Advanced Education)
(Until June 2002, Mr. Gerry Armstrong, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Advanced Education)

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
Ms. Denise Chong*: Writer and author.
(Until December 2000, Ms. Tina Sartoretto, Registrar and Director of Student Affairs, Cambrian College)

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
Mr. S.K. Tripathi*: Secretary, Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development
(Until December 2001, Mr. M.K. Kaw, Education Secretary)
(From January 2002 to April 2002, Mr. B.K. Chaturvedi, Secretary, Department of Secondary and Higher Education)

GOVERNMENT OF NEW ZEALAND (major donor until December 2002)
(Until December 2002, Ms. Shona Butterfield. Ms. Butterfield subsequently became an Appointment by the Commonwealth Secretary-General – see below)

GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA
His Excellency Professor Michael Omolewa: Ambassador/Permanent Delegate, The Permanent Delegation of Nigeria to UNESCO (Paris)

GOVERNMENT OF UNITED KINGDOM
Dr. Marshall Elliott: Deputy Director, Policy Division, and Chief Education Adviser, Department for International Development
(Until June 2002, Professor Stephen Matlin, Chief Education Adviser, DFID)
(Until December 2000, Ms. Myra Harrison, Chief Education Adviser, DFID)

*denotes member of Executive Committee
REGIONAL APPOINTMENTS ON THE ADVICE OF COMMONWEALTH MINISTERS OF EDUCATION

AFRICA
Professor Penina Mlama: Executive Director, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)
(Until December 2001, Dr. Ihorn L. Rensburg, Deputy Director-General, Department of Education, South Africa)

ASIA
Dr. Tara de Mel: Adviser to Her Excellency the President of Sri Lanka (former Secretary, Ministry of Education and Higher Education and former Vice Chairperson, Policy, National Education Commission)
(Until December 2001, Pehin Dato Abu Bakar Apong, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam)

CARIBBEAN
Senator, The Honourable Burchell Whiteman: Minister of Information, Jamaica (formerly Minister of Education)
(Until December 2001, Dr. Marlene Hamilton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of the West Indies, Jamaica)

PACIFIC
The Honourable Fiamé Naomi Mata’afa*: Minister of Education, Samoa

APPOINTMENT BY THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL
Ms. Shona Butterfield: Commissioner, Tertiary Education Commission, New Zealand (formerly Chief Executive, The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand)
(Until December 2002, Mrs. Esi Sutherland-Addy, Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana)

PRESIDENT (EX-OFFICIO)
Dato’ Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan*, President and C.E.O., Commonwealth of Learning

ADVISERS
Professor Michael Gibbons, Secretary General, Association of Commonwealth Universities
(Until December 2000, Mr. John Samuel, Adviser to the Minister of Education, National Ministry of Education, South Africa)
(Until December 2001, Y.B. Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Johari bin Mat, Secretary General, Ministry of Education, Malaysia)
Senior Staff: As of 30 June 2003

Dato’ Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan, President and Chief Executive Officer

Mr. Brian G. Long, Vice President

Dr. Krishna Alluri, Project Co-ordinator

Mr. John Bartram, Education Specialist, Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Ms. Helena Fehr, Governance and Programme Officer

Mr. Nick Gao, Co-ordinator, Information Resource Centre

Mr. Patrick Guiton, Education Specialist, Higher Education (to November 2000)

Ms. Andrea Hope, Educational Specialist, Higher Education (to January 2003)

Mr. Patrick Y. Julien, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, COL International (to June 2002)

Professor Asha S. Kanwar, Education Specialist, Higher Education (from March 2003)

Dr. Abdul W. Khan, Director, Development and Training (from October 2000 to July 2001)

Ms. Angela Kwan, Development Manager (from November 2002)

(Until November 2002, Project Officer, President’s Office)

Mr. Raymond Lee, Accountant

Helen Lentell, Education Specialist, Training and Materials Development (from July 2001)

Professor Mohan B. Menon, Education Specialist, Teacher Training (from August 2001)

Ms. Doris B. McEachern, Manager, Finance and Administration

Ms. Kgomotso Motlotle, Education Specialist, Teacher Education (to July 2001)

Mr. Vis Naidoo, Education Specialist, Educational Technology (from November 2000)

Mr. Lewis Perinham, O.C., Senior Adviser, External Relations (to April 2003)

Ms. Susan E. Phillips, Education Specialist, Materials and Open Schooling

Rod Tyrer, Special Adviser, Strategy, Evaluation and Monitoring (from March 2003)

Mr. David H. Walker, Education Specialist, Educational technology

Paul G. West, Education Specialist, Knowledge Management (from August 2001)

Mr. David R. Wilson, Communications Manager

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (New Delhi)

Dr. Usha V. Reddi, Director

Mr. K. Narayanan, Head, Administration and Finance (to July 2002)

Dr. Nimal T. Fernando, Programme Officer (Broadcast Media)

Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, Programme Officer (from July 2001)
**COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING**

**Excellence in Distance Education Awards (EDEA) 2002**

COL recognizes and honours excellence in distance education through its Excellence in Distance Education Awards (EDEA) programme, which originated in 1999 in conjunction with COL’s 10th anniversary. Achievement awards have been received by 10 institutions and 21 individuals at two ceremonies, held in 1999 (Brunei) and 2002 (Durban) in conjunction with COL’s Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning.

The EDEA programme includes four categories, acknowledging excellence at the overall institutional level, in the development of learning materials, of a lifetime’s work as an educator and in student accomplishment.

The third EDEA will be conferred in July 2004 in New Zealand.

**Honorary Fellows of COL**

Recognition for lifetime contributions to the development of distance education and open learning.

**Dr. Dominique A.M.X. Abrioux**, President, Athabasca University, Canada.

Professor Clifford D. Blake, former Vice-Chancellor of Charles Sturt University, Australia, and former member of the Board of Governors of COL.

**Lord (Asa) Briggs**, founding Chairman of COL.

Ms. Shona E. Butterfield, (at the time) Chief Executive, The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, and member of the Board of Governors of COL.

**Sir John S. Daniel**, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO, and former Vice-Chancellor, UK Open University, and founding member of the Board of Governors of COL.

**Dr. Glen M. Farrell**, Senior Consultant, COL, and founding President of the Open Learning Agency of British Columbia, Canada.

**Ms. Jennifer A. Glennie**, Director, South African Institute for Distance Education, South Africa.

**Dr. Dennis H. Irvine**, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Guyana, former senior staff member, COL, and former Regional Adviser (Caribbean) to the President of COL, Jamaica.

**Dr. S. Langi Kavaliku**, former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education, Civil Aviation and Works, Tonga and former member of the Board of Governors of COL.

**Professor Geoffrey R.V. Mmari**, Vice-Chancellor, Open University of Tanzania and former Regional Adviser (Eastern Africa) to the President of COL.

**Dr. Roslyn L. Morpeth**, (at the time) Executive Director, National Extension College, UK.

**Dr. Hilary D. Perraton**, (at the time) Director, International Research Foundation for Open Learning (IRFOL), UK, and former Chief Project/Education Officer, Adult and Distance Education, Commonwealth Secretariat.

**Lord (Walter) Perry**, founding Vice-Chancellor of the UK Open University.

**Professor Ram G. Takwale**, former Vice-Chancellor of Indira Gandhi National Open University, India, and Regional Adviser (South East Asia) to the President of COL.

**Alhaji Hafiz S. Wali**, former Director, National Teachers’ Institute, Nigeria, former senior staff member, COL, and former member of the Board of Governors of COL.

**Awards of Excellence for Institutional Achievement**

Recognition for significant institutional achievements in the innovative and effective application of appropriate learning technologies to reach students who might otherwise not have participated in the learning or training experience.

**Athabasca University, Canada**

Accepted by Dr. Dominique A.M.X. Abrioux, President
Receiving Awards of Excellence for Institutional Achievement (above) and for Distance Educational Materials (left) at the Second Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in Durban, July 2002

BBC World Service, London, UK
Accepted by Mr. Andrew Thompson, Head of Americas Region (formerly the Commissioning Editor, Education)

Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, India
Accepted by Dr. B.P. Sabale, Vice-Chancellor

Awards of Excellence for Distance Education Materials
Fitness for need and purpose, educational design, coherence and integration of media in the study materials and evidence of impacts and benefits derived from evaluation are criteria for this award.

ABET Practitioner Training Programme (Certificate and Diploma) – A training programme for adult basic education tutors submitted by the Institute for Adult Basic Education and Training, University of South Africa.
Accepted by Mrs. Veronica McKay.

The Mekong e-Sim Programme – An Internet-mediated role-play simulation jointly developed by the University of Technology, Sydney, University of Adelaide, University of Sydney and University of New England (submitted by the University of Technology, Sydney and the University of Adelaide).
Accepted by Dr. Robert McLaughlan, National Centre for Groundwater Management, University of Technology, Sydney.

Learning Experience Award
This award category was developed to provide a forum for the expression of student experience in learning through distance education.

Ms. Frances J. Mensah, who earned a B.Ed. through distance education while also employed as Director of the Namibian College of Open Learning, Namibia.

Further information and citations: www.col.org/eda
COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING
SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30 JUNE 2002 AND 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Assets</td>
<td>$9,036,225</td>
<td>$7,306,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Current</td>
<td>$259,950</td>
<td>$180,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$9,296,175</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,487,265</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Liabilities</td>
<td>$2,062,223</td>
<td>$883,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,233,952</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,603,588</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$9,296,175</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,487,265</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
FOR THE YEARS ENDED 30 JUNE 2002 AND 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Net Assets</th>
<th>Invested in capital assets</th>
<th>Restricted for special projects</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance, beginning of year</strong></td>
<td>$180,511</td>
<td>$1,235,637</td>
<td>$5,187,440</td>
<td>$6,603,588</td>
<td>$5,407,917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenditures</strong></td>
<td>(87,668)</td>
<td>(516,896)</td>
<td>1,234,928</td>
<td>630,364</td>
<td>1,195,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net investment in property and equipment</strong></td>
<td>118,459</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(118,459)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance, end of year</strong></td>
<td><strong>$211,302</strong></td>
<td><strong>$718,741</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,303,909</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,233,952</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,603,588</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COMMONWEALTH of Learning

Consolidated Statement of Revenues and Expenditures

For the Years Ended 30 June 2002 and 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member governments</td>
<td>$6,765,033</td>
<td>$6,178,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracts</td>
<td>2,090,798</td>
<td>1,179,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special projects</td>
<td>226,372</td>
<td>449,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>428,866</td>
<td>367,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>9,511,069</td>
<td>8,175,446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditures</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmes and projects</td>
<td>4,789,269</td>
<td>3,803,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special projects</td>
<td>815,107</td>
<td>979,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational management</td>
<td>691,541</td>
<td>638,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract services</td>
<td>1,863,921</td>
<td>898,529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>309,337</td>
<td>222,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project development</td>
<td>323,862</td>
<td>359,939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>87,668</td>
<td>78,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>8,880,705</td>
<td>6,979,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenues in excess of expenditures</strong></td>
<td>$630,364</td>
<td>$1,195,671</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Chairman of the Commonwealth of Learning from 1 January 1994 to 28 April 2003, I have been intimately involved in an organisation that is at the forefront of change in education and that has made a substantial difference in the world. While most of the credit belongs to others, I am pleased to have played a part, through COL’s Board of Governors, in providing policy direction, advice, advocacy and mentoring.

I am extremely proud of the accomplishments of my colleagues under the leadership of our President, Raj Dhanarajan. In the last nine years, since facing a fiscal crunch that came close to causing our demise, COL, as an institution, and its staff have earned a reputation worldwide as a leading agent of open learning and distance education.

This is more remarkable in view of COL’s size: a small, highly cost-effective organisation, operating with an annual budget approaching CDN$9 million and 30 staff in Vancouver. With our limited resources, we cannot aspire to be a full operating agency or delivery system; rather, we are a catalyst that makes things happen, that provides a kick-start to activities that have been vital in so many situations as outlined in this Summary Report.

In the field of education and development, I believe that there is one overwhelming issue: the extent to which the Education for All declaration, pledging universal access to basic education by the year 2015, will be fulfilled. Can anyone contemplate with equanimity the failure to do so? Can anyone argue that there is anything more significant in the broad area of human resource development than the extension of educational opportunity for all? Basic education, secondary schooling, tertiary teaching, vocational and technical training, occupational preparation and, ultimately, the too-often perceived luxury of lifelong learning must continue to dominate our development agendas. In particular, I am pleased to report that COL’s work in the area of teacher training through distance education and open schooling is having an impact in achieving Education for All.

Finally, I want to record how much I have prized the privilege of serving the Commonwealth as Chairman of COL’s Board of Governors. For nearly 10 years, I have enjoyed the collegial and personal friendship of over 50 very committed, diverse and talented people who have provided their time and counsel as Board members or advisers. As I leave the Board, I also know that the leadership is in excellent hands following the appointment of my long-time friend, Lewis Perinbam.

Dr. H. Ian Macdonald
Chairman of the COL Board of Governors
1994 – 2003
CORPORATE INFORMATION

HEADQUARTERS
Commonwealth of Learning
1285 West Broadway, Suite 600
Vancouver, BC  V6H 3X8
Canada
Telephone: 604.775.8200
Fax: 604.775.8210
E-mail: info@col.org
World Wide Web: www.col.org

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

AUDITORS
PricewaterhouseCoopers, Chartered
Accountants (Vancouver)

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
OF GOVERNORS
Mr. Lewis Perinbam, O.C.

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF
EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Dato’ Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan
Professor Emeritus, The Open University of
Hong Kong

CREDITS
Project Co-ordination and design: Pat Leidl
Contributing writer: Grace Chin

Participants at the Management Development Workshop for Directors and Principals of Teacher Training Colleges and Institutes in Commonwealth Sub-Saharan Africa, Singapore, 28 October – 8 November 2002, jointly sponsored by the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Commonwealth of Learning