

Connections



Learning for Development



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WOMEN AND ICT IN OPEN SCHOOLS

A COL workshop in November 2008 provided female leaders of open schools with skills and information about using information and communication technology (ICT) more effectively. Open school administrators from 11 developing countries attended the week-long meeting in Vancouver, Canada, which featured presentations, discussions and site visits to educational institutions.

“As a former open school manager, I know how important it is to understand and use the full potential of ICT,” said Mrs. Frances Ferreira, COL Education Specialist, Basic Education and Open Schooling. “In addition to making them more efficient, knowledge about ICT enables managers to advise their staff, make informed decisions and know what to ask for.”

The meeting addressed the question: How can ICT enhance the position of women in leadership roles in open schools? While some participants previously thought of technology as a burden, they learned how it can make their life easier. Although many open schools still rely primarily on print-based learning materials, ICT can be used to support learners, streamline administration and enhance communication among staff.

One of the highlights of the workshop was a series of presentations from COL staff members who shared stories about how ICT enhance their capacity. Programme Assistant Ms. Ruvani Ameresekere explained how her technology skills were largely self-taught before she earned a two-year Diploma in Information Technology. She urged workshop participants to not let anything – including technology – stand in the way of achieving their goals.

The workshop participants visited the Vancouver Learning Network, a successful local open school run by Ms. Cindy Gauthier who shared her thoughts about the effective use of technology. A visit to the British Columbia Institute of Technology provided women with details about its IT support system, which is an important area for improvement in many developing countries.

The women who attended the workshop will continue to network and collaborate through an online Base Camp network. The workshop’s recommendations and findings inform the development of self-instructional materials that can be used to help women in leadership positions in open schools to embrace the potential of ICT.

UNICEF AND COL PARTNER FOR CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

UNICEF (the United Nations Children’s Fund) is collaborating with COL to help promote its Child-Friendly Schools programme. Child-Friendly Schools models are now the major means through which UNICEF advocates for and promotes quality in education. Child-Friendly Schools go beyond good teaching methods and learning outcomes to also consider issues such as:

- Health and nutrition status of learners;
- Adequacy of available facilities, services and supplies; and
- Safety and protection afforded by the learning environment.

NEW COL-PROTEIN PROJECTS COMBAT POVERTY

COL has funded two new projects under its Poverty Reduction Outcomes through Education Innovations and Networks (COL-PROTEIN) programme. The projects use open and distance learning (ODL) to address poverty in developing countries. COL provides support in the form of ODL expertise and funding up to CDN \$18,000 per project. To date, COL has supported 19 COL-PROTEIN projects around the world.



LEARNING FOR LIVELIHOODS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

MAKING COTTAGE INDUSTRIES MORE PROFITABLE

The South Pacific Institute for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SPISARD) is a branch of the Agriculture Department of the Papua New Guinea University of Technology that works to improve livelihoods in rural areas by co-ordinating teaching, research and extension services.

Many women in Papua New Guinea work in cottage industries. However, their ability to succeed is hampered by low levels of literacy and inadequate opportunities to learn. SPISARD has created the "model village approach" for rural development. These villages become conduit points where teaching, training, research and technology transfer can take place.

The COL-PROTEIN project, "Training of Women and Youth at Selected Model Villages in Papua New Guinea", is using open and distance learning to help women and

youth build their knowledge and skills. Some of the training needs identified include vegetable farming, cooking and nutrition, sewing, fish farming, soap and dishwashing paste making, and rice production.

SPISARD plans to provide training to more than 725 women and youth by June 2009. Using various learning methods, including lectures, videos, posters, discussions, visits, workshops and mobile phones, SPISARD will help people in rural areas improve their ability to run sustainable cottage industries, which in turn will help alleviate poverty.

IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS IN RURAL INDIA

The communities in the coastal Praksam District of Andhra Pradesh have been described as "the most disadvantaged segment

of the population". In addition to their low socio-economic situation and vulnerability to disaster caused by cyclones and floods, people are restricted by lack of access to information, resources and opportunities.

The Society for the Development of the Rural Women and children (SDRWC-INDIA) is a voluntary relief and development voluntary organisation that works in Andhra Pradesh. Their COL-PROTEIN project involves establishing a Livelihood Resource Centre and five community knowledge centres to provide information and support to local communities. The centres will focus on helping people improve their skills and techniques in salt farming, fishing and other coastal industries by:

- Introducing people to viable livelihoods options;
- Providing training and information about post-harvest technologies, how to obtain fair market prices and other relevant issues;
- Establishing effective market linkages;
- Facilitating access to financing and insurance;
- Documenting and sharing stories about local best practices; and
- Conducting advocacy activities to ensure adequate services are available for marginalised populations.

By building their skills and accessing useful information, people in these communities will be able to make significant improvements in their productivity and income. The project will specifically support the empowerment of women by implementing gender equity, equal wages and participation of women in planning and implementation.

www.col.org/protein

COL'S NEW THREE-YEAR PLAN, 2009-2012

Following an extensive Commonwealth-wide consultation process including meetings of its country Focal Points and COL's Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (London 2008), COL has drafted a new Three-year Plan for 2009-2012. Following approval by the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors, the plan will be presented to the Commonwealth Ministers of Education for endorsement at their 17th triennial Conference (CEM) to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in June 2009.

As part of its monitoring and evaluation strategy and the planning process for its upcoming Three-year Plan 2009-2012, COL commissioned an evaluation report that examined activities in its current plan. Conducted by an external consultant, Dr. Patrick Spaven, who interviewed a large variety of stakeholders, the extensive report provides valuable insight into the effectiveness of COL's various activities. A summary of Dr. Spaven's report and the draft Three-year Plan 2009-2012 are available on the COL website.



www.col.org/3yp

COL INTRODUCES "CIVIL PATHS TO PEACE" BLOG

"Civil Paths to Peace", the report of the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding, was released in 2007. Chaired by Professor Amartya Sen, the Commission explored how to promote mutual respect and understanding among all faiths and communities in the Commonwealth. COL is working with a consortium of Commonwealth universities to create materials and programs to address some of the themes raised in the Commission's report. The first step is the creation of a new blog to encourage public dialogue, debate and discussion. Visit the site and share the link.

<http://rucol.blogspot.com>

For more insight into "Civil Paths to Peace", watch an interview of Professor Sen by COL Vice President Professor Asha Kanwar. It is freely available on the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) website at www.cemca.org/amartyasen.



MALAYSIA HOSTS ASIA-PACIFIC FOCAL POINTS

COL hosted a meeting of its Focal Points from 17 Commonwealth countries in the Asia and Pacific regions in Malaysia in October. The Malaysia Ministry of Higher Education co-hosted the meeting, which was formally inaugurated by the Minister of Higher Education, Dato' Seri Mohamed Khaled bin Nordin.

COL staff presented a draft of COL's Three-year Plan for 2009-2012 for discussion, and the Focal Points made country presentations. There were also presentations about key programmes such as the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) and COL's regional agency, the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA). For more details about CEMCA's work, see "In Focus" on page 8.

COL's Focal Points are individuals who act as COL's primary contact for programme matters. Nominated by Ministers of Education in Commonwealth countries, the Focal Points interact with COL, co-ordinate with other government ministries, share information within their countries and keep the Minister of Education briefed about COL and its work. COL's Focal Point network greatly facilitates dialogue between COL and stakeholders in Commonwealth countries as well as among countries themselves.

Along with previous meetings of Focal Points in Africa and the Caribbean, held earlier in 2008, this meeting provided COL with an excellent opportunity to gain input for its upcoming Three-year Plan 2009-2012. Among the findings from the Focal Points meetings:

- In the *Caribbean*, teacher development is the top priority, with technical and vocational education and training (TVET) being identified as another key area. They flagged gender as a crucial area of intervention, requested capacity building in all areas of technology-mediated learning and sought course materials in professional fields. The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth has a prominent profile in the region.
- The *African* meeting reinforced COL's focus on higher education, teacher development, Open Schooling, eLearning and open learning resources. Seven countries sought help with establishing open universities. COL should continue developing materials, and give greater support to research, capacity building and closer south-south linkages.
- The *Pacific* Focal Points asked for more capacity building in TVET and community media.
- Focal Points from *Asia* identified increasing access to higher education and more support for eLearning and Web 2.0 technologies as high priorities.
- Both the *Asia* and *Pacific* regions stressed the importance of training more teachers, bridging the growing digital divide, increasing quality assurance capacity and capitalising on open educational resources.

www.col.org/FocalPoints

CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS CONTINUED FROM COVER

Based on the promising success with the Child-Friendly Schools model in over 60 countries, UNICEF now seeks to mainstream Child-Friendly Schools or similar models throughout the education systems in all 154 countries in which it operates. Rather than investing sequentially in single factors such as teacher training or textbook provision, UNICEF advocates the comprehensive Child-Friendly Schools approach.

COL will work with partner institutions in 10 countries – Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Swaziland, Sri Lanka, South Africa and Zambia – to develop and organise 50 "train the trainer" workshops that will introduce the Child-Friendly Schools model to teacher training institutions and teacher resource centres in these countries.

UNICEF is providing funding of \$US 1.8 million to COL to carry out this work over the next two years.



VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY EXPANDS TRAINING, COURSE DEVELOPMENT

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is moving forward with a new online training programme, another content development workshop and progress with an international accreditations framework.

ONLINE TRAINING

The University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus has launched "Managing and Facilitating Online Instruction", a five-unit online course on how to motivate and manage online students. Funded by COL in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, the course was offered to 23 educators from VUSSC member states.

The UWI course helps academics manage courses with multiple tutors, customise online courses and supervise online student activities and assessments. Participants will earn the UWI Open Campus Certified Online Instructor Certificate of Completion.

BAHAMAS WORKSHOP

Twenty-three educators from 19 countries took part in the VUSSC training workshop in Exuma, Bahamas from 27 October to 12 November 2008. The workshop was co-hosted by the Bahamas Ministry of Education and the College of the Bahamas.

Primarily technical and vocational education and training (TVET) educators, the participants gained computer literacy skills and began to collaboratively develop learning materials for the building and construction industry. This was a particularly hard-working group who often had to be urged by hotel staff late at night to exit the meeting room and go to bed!

Workshop participants are continuing to



(L TO R) MARIYAM NADHIRA (MALDIVES), DAVE F. PONDE (ANTIGUA & BARBUDA) AND RODNEY S. JOLICOEUR (SEYCHELLES) AT THE VUSSC WORKSHOP IN EXUMA, BAHAMAS

collaborate on the development of course materials related to building and construction. The materials will be available on the COL website at www.col.org/vussc.

TRANSNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

An important VUSSC priority is developing a widely recognised system of accreditation. The Transnational Qualifications Framework Management Committee, comprised of Mr. Kaylash Allgoo (Mauritius), Mr. Michael Bradshaw (Trinidad & Tobago), Mr. Franz Gertz (Namibia), Dr. Yvonne Marshall (Jamaica), Dr. Richard Wah (Fiji Islands) and Mr. Abdul Hannan Waheed (Maldives), held its first meeting in Singapore from 6-10 October 2008. The Management Committee developed a consultative document for the implementation of the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) for VUSSC. The TQF will be available for application in any of the VUSSC member small states of the Commonwealth.

After being made available to VUSSC member states for their input, the document will be presented to the 17th triennial Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in June 2009.

You may find other references to "Transnational Qualifications Frameworks" or similar sounding initiatives. Please ensure that you are dealing with reputable governmental institutions and not privately created projects that have no official credibility. Accurate information on the TQF is posted on COL's website at www.col.org/vussc.

NEXT STEPS FOR VUSSC

The sixth VUSSC training workshop scheduled for Samoa in April 2009, will focus on creating course materials related to the maritime industry. VUSSC training is beginning to shift from these face-to-face workshops to online learning. As the cadre of VUSSC workshop graduates grows, there will be a need to expand their training with courses such as the UWI online instruction course. Online courses from accredited institutions in more participating VUSSC countries are expected to start in 2009.

As work continues with developing the Transnational Qualifications Framework, educational institutions in small states of the Commonwealth will begin to offer VUSSC courses through open and distance learning. This will include non-formal courses from a recognised national institution and formal courses leading to a diploma that will have approval from the country's qualifications authority. All VUSSC courses will be approved by the national institutions and where appropriate, the national qualifications authority of the country offering the programme.

www.col.org/vussc

EXPANDING eLEARNING FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

COL's eLearning for International Organisations programme provides training and skills development to thousands of people around the globe through open and distance learning (ODL). COL helps international agencies solve training challenges with highly customised courses, usually supported by online one-on-one tutors.

This year more than 1,300 learners will take part in eLearning courses developed by COL. Meanwhile, COL is expanding its suite of eLearning courses and clients.

OPERATIONAL DATA MANAGEMENT

Sixty-five staff members from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are taking part in this programme, which provides training in effective practices for collecting, organising, presenting and storing data for management information and results-based management. A blended learning initiative, "Operational Data Management for UNHCR" involves distance learning, a workshop and project work. The current cohort will finish the programme in mid-2009.

COL has also been commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat to develop a debt management eLearning programme.

WRITING SKILLS

Seeing the success of the "Writing Effectively for UNICEF" course customised for the India country office, the Bangladesh country office of UNICEF requested that a version be adapted for their country staff. The UNICEF course, which has reached 94 learners based in India and 30 in Bangladesh, is the first to serve the distinctive needs of country offices.



COL'S "WRITING EFFECTIVELY FOR UNICEF BANGLADESH" COURSE TEAM.

Following the positive launch of "The Online Writing Programme" developed for World Bank staff, COL has been contracted by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) to create a similar writing skills course for their staff. COL is tailoring the course for the IADB context; course delivery will begin in mid-2009.

"Our experience with the Writing Effectively programme over the past nine years has shown how customised courses with strong learner support can help solve training challenges of organisations with far-flung operations," explained Ms. Angela Kwan, COL's Learning Manager, International Organisations. "Now we're expanding to other subject areas, with positive results."

www.col.org/COLELIO

LETTERS TO THE NEXT PRESIDENT FROM THE LEADERS

For their September-October 2008 issue, just prior to the U.S. election, *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, invited seven higher education leaders, including the US Secretary of Education, the President of the American Council on Education and the President of COL, Sir John Daniel, to address an open letter to the next President of the United

States. Sir John's letter offers suggestions to strengthen higher education including leading the development of international rules of interaction, avoiding a federal government takeover of the accreditation system, taking "robust action" to suppress degree mills and helping to strengthen universities in the developing world.



www.col.org/NextPresidentUS
www.changemag.org

BUILDING LEGISLATIVE DRAFTING CAPACITY IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

The University of the South Pacific (USP) School of Law had a record enrolment of 28 students in its Professional Diploma in Legislative Drafting programme in 2008. Developed by COL and the Commonwealth Secretariat, the programme is helping to address the shortage of expertise in legislative drafting in many Commonwealth countries. The distance education course serves as an introduction to drafting and an upgrade for practising professionals.

The USP students were located in eight South Pacific countries; 15 of them (eight men and seven women) were sponsored by COL. They received self-instructional reading materials and exercises on a CD, which was supplemented by regular online tutorials and a one-day tutorial at the USP Suva campus. There is growing interest in the importance of legislative drafting as a tool for strengthening governance in the region.

The Diploma in Legislative Drafting Programme is also offered by Athabasca University in Canada and the National Open University of Nigeria.

www.col.org/LegislativeDrafting



The Honourable Steven L. Point, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia visited with COL staff in Vancouver, Canada in 2008

SUPPORTING ODL IN MALAYSIA

COL has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Open University Malaysia (OUM) that enables OUM to tap COL's expertise for the delivery of its online Master of Instruction Design and Technology (MIDT) programme. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by COL President Sir John Daniel and OUM's President and Vice Chancellor Tan Sri Anuar Ali, who was named an Honorary Fellow of COL in 2008. COL and OUM will collab-

orate on developing instructional resources, teaching MIDT courses, adopt technological advancements made by either party and collaborate on research.

"OUM is a leader in Asia in the introduction of eLearning to open university activities," said COL President Sir John Daniel. "Integrating eLearning across education is a priority for COL so this is a natural partnership."

www.oum.edu.my

NEWS FROM WIKIEDUCATOR

COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTED

Fifteen people have been elected to the first Wiki-Educator Open Community Council for two-year terms. The Council, which also includes 10 nominated members, will implement a community governance model for the WikiEducator project.

www.WikiEducator.org/
WikiEducator:Community_Council

INDIA CHAPTER LAUNCHED

Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, father of the Green Revolution in India and named one of the most influential Asians of the century by Time magazine, officiated at the launch of the Indian Chapter of WikiEducator in November 2008.

“This pioneering initiative of the Commonwealth of Learning based on the principle of open and free access will mark the beginning of a new chapter in integrated eLearning with the traditional Indian educational value of considering knowledge as a common heritage,” Dr. Swaminathan said. “I am confident that the launch of WikiEducator in India will accelerate the progress of a literacy and knowledge revolution in the country.”

Dr. Swaminathan and Shri Jainder Singh IAS, Secretary, Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology formally launched the India Chapter at a function at the India International Centre in New Delhi. The event was organised by the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) in association with Global Knowledge Partnership, OneWorld South Asia and Acharya Narendra Dev College.

WikiEducator has been providing educators with a platform to develop and share open educational resources since 2006. India has a committed community of WikiEducators; the India country page is one of the most visited country pages in WikiEducator. The India chapter will work collaboratively to put information in the Indian context and to make progress towards the goal of developing free teaching materials in support of all national curricula by 2015.

“The India chapter of WikiEducator serves as both an inspiration and a model for other countries to follow,” said Dr. Wayne Mackintosh, COL Education Specialist, eLearning and ICT Policy. “We are especially pleased that they have a strong focus on multilingualism to ensure that open educational resources are truly accessible.”

www.WikiEducator.org/India

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS EXPANDS IN SRI LANKA



COL PRESIDENT SIR JOHN DANIEL ATTENDED THE LAUNCH OF THE SECOND L3 FARMERS PROGRAMME IN SRI LANKA WHERE THE FOCUS IS VEGETABLE FARMING

COL's Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3 Farmers) programme has expanded to a second region in Sri Lanka. Following the success of the launch in Weligatte in 2007, L3 Farmers was launched in Batticaloa in September 2008.

The primary aim of L3 Farmers is to help rural communities improve their livelihoods through self-directed learning by creating a partnership among farmers, information and communication technology (ICT) providers, educational institutions and banks. In India, where L3 Farmers was first introduced, the programme is community-based and driven by local self-help groups. The thrust in Sri Lanka is for national universities to implement L3 Farmers in villages of their choice. The former Vice-Chancellor of the Open University of Sri Lanka and recently named COL Fellow, Professor Uma Coomaraswamy,

is playing an important co-ordinating role at the national level.

The Sri Lankan pilot project will involve five universities in five rural communities. The first pilot is being implemented by the University of Colombo in Weligatte where the livelihood source is based on tissue culture banana cultivation. A consortium including the University of Colombo, the Distance Education Modernisation Project, Eastern University, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Ruhuna University and the Open University of Sri Lanka has created a Certificate programme for farmers. The open and distance learning (ODL) programme, which focuses on improving knowledge and skills in agro-technology, is being offered to 70 farmers. It will be delivered in all three national languages (English, Sinhala and Tamil).

www.col.org/L3Farmers

ODL FOR GOVERNANCE

COL is working with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other local groups in developing countries around the world to strengthen the skills and knowledge of elected government officials. Here's an update from two regions:

- **Bangladesh:** COL is supporting local NGO Rupantar in the development of training modules for local government representatives. The materials, which include print materials supplemented by folk songs and drama on DVD, are

being piloted in government offices in southwest Bangladesh.

- **Papua New Guinea:** In partnership with the University of Papua New Guinea, COL has begun to implement training to district, local and village government officials as well as civil society. The aim is to encourage greater transparency and accountability in an environment where roles and responsibilities have been increased in the movement toward greater decentralisation.

GENDER IN SCHOOLS



“Action Gender in Schools” is a new pilot project initiated by the Commonwealth Secretariat's Education Section that is working on making teaching, learning and management in schools more gender responsive. One of the objectives of the project is to question stereotypes that prevent boys and girls from achieving at school.

“Action Gender in Schools” is operational in a small number of secondary schools on a pilot basis in India, Malaysia, Seychelles, and Trinidad & Tobago. The schools are introducing school-based gender training, conducting action research and exploring new ways of developing school environments that promote positive gender relations and self-image among both boys and girls. An Action Guide is being developed based on the experiences of the pilot projects, a trial in Mozambique and feedback from other Sub-Saharan African and Pacific countries.

www.thecommonwealth.org/gender

MOBILE BANKING PROJECT



The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has awarded a US \$1.7 million grant to Paris-based PlaNet Finance to support a project to provide the poor in Africa and the Middle East with access to banking services via their mobile phones. While three billion people worldwide have a mobile phone, only one billion have a bank account, according to PlaNet Finance. The Mobile Banking Project will allow rural and remote populations to use their mobile phones to save money, pay bills and apply for microloans while reducing the cost of these transactions for microfinance institutions.

www.planetfinancegroup.org/EN/communiquespresse.php

COUNSELLING DIPLOMA FOR EDUCATORS



India's National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is offering a one-year Diploma Course for training of professionals in guidance and counselling. Combining distance/online and face-to-face modes, the International Diploma in Guidance and Counselling programme is open to teachers, teacher educators, educational administrators and untrained guidance personnel in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. The Diploma Course was developed by NCERT in collaboration with COL.

www.ncert.nic.in

NOUN'S FIRST CONVOCATION



The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) held its first convocation ceremony in January 2009, awarding a post-graduate diploma in Theology to former President Olusegun Obasanjo and an honorary degree to the Director General of UNESCO, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura. NOUN is now the largest university in Nigeria, with more than 100,000 students, more than 140 eLearning courses available to students online and Study Centres across the country. In collaboration with COL, NOUN also hosts the Regional Training and Development Institute for Distance and Open Learning (RETRIDOL), which is helping to develop capacity in open and distance learning in Africa.

www.nou.edu.ng

FASTEST GROWING SECTOR OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Across the Pacific region, in Indonesia, Japan, Korea and the Philippines, over 70 per cent of students are in private universities. In Latin America, 45 per cent of students are in private institutions. Worldwide, they account for one-third of all students.

The private sector is the fastest growing sector of higher education and will likely account for most of the enrolment growth in developing countries in the coming years. Sometime in this century, the majority of all students in higher education worldwide may well be in private institutions, with most of them operating for profit.

This may come as a shock to those who believe that because higher education is a public good it must be a public-sector monopoly. But that is a misguided view. Most countries will never achieve the expansion of higher education that they desire without encouraging the growth of the private sector. Just as importantly, private institutions offer particular advantages to students.

First, in order to be a successful business – and to stay in business – a for-profit university has to be efficient. This is not to say that public universities are inefficient. The majority can be proud of their performance. However, private universities can be more tightly focussed on success in a narrower mission.

Second, the core mission of for-profit universities is overwhelmingly concerned with teaching students rather than on conducting research. This means that they relate their programmes more closely to what they perceive as market demand. It is, of course, easy to misjudge market demand. For example, a Hong Kong accounting firm recently announced that it would no longer hire people who had studied accounting at university but would look instead for physicists and arts graduates.

Nevertheless, an institution that makes the market demand for its graduates a key element in programme design is more likely to assess this demand correctly than one which determines its programmes on the basis of what subjects its faculty like to teach.

Third, private universities tend to be more determined to see their students succeed since this is a key performance indicator for both the institutions and their regulators. This leads them to invest in making teaching effective rather than in fancy infrastructure.

There are, of course, bad private institutions as well as good ones, just as there are good and bad public institutions. We must judge each institution on its merits and recognise that for-profit universities can operate very successfully and offer students particular advantages.

Most countries will never achieve the expansion of higher education that they desire without encouraging the growth of the private sector.

CEMCA: ODL FOR DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA

The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) is a regional service of COL based in New Delhi, India. CEMCA's purpose is to promote the meaningful, relevant and appropriate use of information and communication technology (ICT) to serve the educational and training needs of Commonwealth member states in Asia.

Working in partnership with COL, other international agencies, educational institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), CEMCA is effectively expanding the use of open and distance learning (ODL) for development through a number of innovative initiatives.

EASYNOW EMPOWERS TEACHERS FOR ODL

The proliferation of ICT means that education can be provided in multiple modes – written, oral and visual. This offers the potential to improve the quality of education, address various learning styles and reach drop-out or remote learners.

CEMCA's EasyNow is a platform that brings together easy-to-use technologies that enable teachers to create learning materials in an array of delivery modes. What makes EasyNow special is that it allows multiple deliverables from a single electronic source.

For instance, a classroom lecture captured on video can be re-packaged and delivered in multiple forms including:

- A video lesson,
- An enriched video incorporating graphics,
- An audio lesson,
- A print-based output using text-to-speech tools,
- A slide show using PowerPoint or other presentation packages, and
- A print-based format.

EasyNow also integrates into formats for learners with visual impairments.

EasyNow offers fast downloads, which is particularly important for those with low bandwidth Internet connections.

Unlike many other proprietary technology packages that require users to invest in expensive hardware and software, EasyNow uses free and open source software that is readily downloadable from the Internet.

CEMCA has successfully demonstrated the efficacy of EasyNow in several ODL institutions in India, Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka. In five-day training workshops, participants working in groups master the simple technologies, record their lessons and deliver them in web-enabled ODL and other formats.

Since EasyNow is based on a basket of open source technologies, CEMCA can easily add on features to meet the institution's need, demand and thrust area. Currently, CEMCA is adding value to the EasyNow package by integrating free IP-based teleconferencing (see below) and collaborative content development tools like WikiEducator.

www.cemca.org/easynow



EASYNOW WORKSHOP AT THE OPEN UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

ENSURING QUALITY IN MULTIMEDIA MATERIALS

With the rapid proliferation of multimedia-based learning materials in the education sector, quality assurance has become an important concern. CEMCA is spearheading an initiative to develop a framework for quality assurance in multimedia learning materials (QAMLM) with support from the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia.

In November 2007, CEMCA held a regional consultation of stakeholders from Malaysia and Sri Lanka. Since then, two groups in India and Malaysia comprising academics, practitioners and industry have been working on a framework for QAMLM. Wider consultations have also been held in both countries.

CEMCA is now seeking input from across the Commonwealth on a draft version of the framework. It is available on CEMCA's website and on WikiEducator for review. Meanwhile, educational institutions such as Indira Gandhi National Open University and industry partners are field testing the framework. After incorporating feedback, CEMCA will profile the result at the Commonwealth Conference of Educational Ministers in Malaysia in June 2009. CEMCA then plans to hold regional workshops to introduce the framework to partner institutions for voluntary adoption.

www.wikieducator.org/Quality_Assurance_in_Multimedia_Learning_Materials

EXPANDING COMMUNITY RADIO

The Government of India recently expanded its Community Radio Policy and is now granting licenses to operate low-power transmitters to educational institutions and civil society organisations. Appointed by the Government of India's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as the nodal agency, CEMCA is helping communities appropriate radio as a development tool in several ways, including holding periodic awareness-building and outreach activities in different regions of India. Four such consultations were held between November 2007 and December 2008.

Each meeting drew more than 100 participants and focused on creating greater awareness of the potential of community radio as a tool for development. Delegates learned about all aspects of community radio including technology, how to set up a community radio station, building linkages with partners and participatory learning.

These meetings resulted in the completion of several license applications for community radio stations and helped build capacity among both new and existing community radio projects.



"SCIENCE FOR WOMEN" PARTICIPANTS TAKE PART IN A BASELINE SURVEY IN PONDICHERRY

COMMUNITY RADIO IN BANGLADESH

CEMCA is also playing a catalysing role in Bangladesh, where the Government has recently begun to grant community radio licenses. CEMCA's activities include:

- Conducting the first community radio awareness workshop in Bangladesh in March 2008, in collaboration with local agencies,
- Facilitating a study tour of community radio in India so individuals from Bangladesh can learn best practices, and
- Conducting a series of capacity building exercises for community radio applicants.

"Community radio has tremendous potential to disseminate information and help people improve their livelihoods, especially those

who live in remote areas," says Dr. R. Sreedher, Director of CEMCA. "We are pleased to see that these regional consultations have sparked a lot of interest and activity in community radio across the country."

COMMUNITY RADIO HELP DESK

CEMCA has set up a Help Desk to provide information and guidance at no cost to groups applying for community radio licenses. The service helps groups complete their online applications and provides technical advice about setting up a community radio station. To date, the Help Desk has assisted more than 30 institutions and civil society organisations.

www.cemca.org/crconsult.htm

"SCIENCE FOR WOMEN"

"Science for Women: Health and Nutrition" is a programme that provides illiterate women in resource-poor settings with access to learning about important health issues through community radio.

Initiated by the Indian Department of Science and Technology and implemented by CEMCA, Science for Women is an interactive radio series currently involving 12 community radio stations. This is a participatory process that includes the students and listening communities – the women learn radio production skills and create relevant content using information provided by university partners.

The focus is on health and nutrition, which addresses a significant challenge. While women traditionally bear primary responsibility for the well-being of their families, they are often denied access to education, health care services, job training, and the freedom to use health and family planning services. Women are also often discriminated against as consumers of services, which can lead to neglect of their own health and well being. The overarching goal of "Science for Women" is behavioural change; an increase in the knowledge, awareness and practice of women towards health and nutrition for themselves and their families.

Every day a 15- to 30-minute "Science for Women" programme is broadcast on the community radio stations with a reach estimated at 12,000 women (and inevitably many men as well) across India. CEMCA is

A RISING STAR OF COMMUNITY RADIO

For Ms. Geetha Lakshmi a 35-year-old homemaker living in modest low-income housing in Jeeva Nagar, Thiruchinapally, until recently a day's work consisted mainly of looking after the house and family, and writing occasional letters to the municipal commissioner to complain about poor civic amenities. All that changed, once the Community Radio Station was set up at the Holy Cross College.



An enthusiastic participant in the Science for Women Project, Ms. Geetha Lakshmi took part in the baseline survey of her community and the capacity building workshop for content creation. There was no looking back for her.

Today, she is Assistant Station Manager of Holy Cross Community Radio, looking after content development and production including recording, editing and transmission. She produces programmes about health and hygiene, and has gained enough experience and confidence to do "live" shows, where she interacts with doctors and nutrition experts, addressing listener queries. She is especially happy to be associated with the programme because she is able to bring information to her community, where women (many of them Muslim) are shy and hesitant to talk about their health concerns or seek information even from doctors on issues such as reproductive health. Ms. Geetha Lakshmi's Science for Women programme brings information into their homes, providing both anonymity and familiarity.

Ms. Geetha Lakshmi feels independent and empowered. She is earning income of her own, which she has put in a bank account in her own name. This new status has not only earned her the respect and admiration of her children and her husband, but has accorded her a "celebrity" status in her community as well, she says. She is undoubtedly the rising star of Holy Cross CR 90.4.

www.cemca.org/sciencewomen.htm

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



BOARD NEWS

STAFF NEWS

SOWING THE SEEDS
OF LEARNING FOR DEVELOPMENT

SANKAT

His Excellency, the Honourable Burchell Whiteman, O.J., Chair of COL's Board of Governors announces the appointment of **Professor Clement Sankat** to the Board as the representative for the Caribbean. Professor Sankat has been involved with the University of the West Indies (UWI) for the past 30 years and is currently Pro Vice Chancellor, Principal of the St. Augustine Campus and a member of the university's Executive Management team. A registered Mechanical/Agricultural Engineer, he holds Bachelors and Masters degrees from UWI and a Doctorate from the University of Guelph's School of Engineering (Canada). Professor Sankat received UWI's Vice Chancellor's Award of Excellence in 2001 in recognition of his efforts in public service, university service and research.

www.col.org/board



KAVALIKU

COL extends its condolences to the people of Tonga and the family of **Dr. S. Langi Kavaliku**, who died in a traffic accident in Tonga in December 2008. Dr. Kavaliku was a respected scholar, former Deputy Prime Minister and long time Minister of Education in Tonga (over 30 years). He was a member of COL's Board of Governors from 1992-98 and was named an Honorary Fellow of COL in 2002.

www.col.org/lkavaliku

Dr. K. Balasubramanian has been appointed as COL's Education Specialist, Food Security and Environment. Most recently an independent consultant to international agencies including UNDP, NR International UK and COL, he was instrumental in designing and implementing COL's Lifelong Learning for Farmers programme. Dr. Bala has more than 20 years of experience in development, including initiating information and communication technology for development (ICT4D) activities and sustainable natural resource management. His past roles have also included capacity building and human resource development using ICT in the rural sector, agriculture and animal husbandry. Dr. Bala holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from Bangalore University.



BALASUBRAMANIAN

Mr. John Lesperance has been appointed as COL's Education Specialist, VUSSC. Formerly the Director of Further Education Development, Ministry of Education, Seychelles, Mr. Lesperance has worked in the field of curriculum development for open and distance learning institutes for several years. He has been involved with the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) as a team leader and interlocutor, and is a member of the Seychelles Qualification Authority



LESPERANCE

Board. Mr. Lesperance holds a Masters degree in Technical and Vocational Education from Bolton Institute, UK.

COL President Sir John Daniel was awarded the Association of Commonwealth Universities' (ACU) 2008 Symons Medal at the ACU Conference of Executive Heads in Hyderabad, India. The Symons Medal, which honours individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the ACU and/or to Commonwealth universities, was established in 1973 by Professor T.H.B. Symons, then Chairman of the ACU and President of Trent University, Canada. The 2008 Symons Medal was also awarded to **Professor Brenda Gourley**, whose many distinctions include outgoing chair of the ACU, Vice Chancellor of the U.K. Open University and Honorary Fellow of COL.

University Canada West, Canada's first for-profit university, conferred a Doctorate of Laws, *honoris causa*, on COL President **Sir John Daniel** at the university's third convocation in Victoria, Canada in November 2008.

Mr. Ian Pringle, COL Education Specialist, Media, has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Community Radio Fund of Canada. The purpose of the fund is to support the development and sustainability of community-oriented radio in Canada.

www.col.org/staff

SIR JOHN DANIEL (LEFT) AT COL'S VANCOUVER OFFICE WITH **MARTIN BEAN**, VISITING FROM MICROSOFT'S HEADQUARTERS IN NEARBY REDMOND, WASHINGTON IN FEBRUARY 2009



Mr. Martin Bean has been appointed Vice Chancellor of the U.K. Open University upon the retirement later this year of Professor Brenda Gourley. Currently General Manager responsible for product management, marketing and business development for the Worldwide Education Products Group at Microsoft, Mr. Bean, a native of Australia, has held senior executive positions in North America, Asia Pacific and Europe, and brings to the role more than 20 years experience in global business training and education.

www.open.ac.uk/platform/news/ou-news

Dr. Krishma Alluri



Dr. Krishma Alluri has retired from COL after almost a decade as Education Specialist, Food Security and Environment. His many accomplishments include the creation of the Lifelong Learning for Farmers programme, Poverty Reduction Outcomes Through Education Innovations and Networks (COL-PROTEIN) programme, contextualising Environment Engineering modules for India and developing a large network of international partners committed to the use of open and distance learning (ODL) for agricultural education. Dr. Alluri shares some reflections on his work with COL.

It's surprising how one comment can have a tremendous impact on us. In my case, it was my first meeting with Ms. Carol Walker (who was soon to be my Programme Assistant) when I came to COL in 1999. It's easy to get caught up in organising workshops, she said. But she wondered if the workshops added much value to COL's programmes other than a workshop report.

That comment has influenced my work at COL over the past nine years. I opted to "walk the talk" by promoting ODL and information and communication technology (ICT) instead of face-to-face meetings unless such options could be justified. I chose to hold meetings preceding or just after conferences organised by partners. The aim is to ensure tangible results of COL events. In the area of agriculture, that often means focussing on local farmers. What do they need? How can we reach them and help improve their livelihoods through ODL?

The beauty of COL is that we're not tied to one way of doing things. Working here has helped me realise that there are often many different ways of solving problems. Management supports creativity and innovation; it's left up to our imaginations to meet challenges in our particular area. COL's core strength is that flexibility coupled with accountability.

I believed that while we could innovate it's also important to invite innovation from the outside. This emphasis on fresh thinking is extended to grassroots efforts through COL-PROTEIN. We capture the innovation capaci-

ty of people from developing countries around the world and provide start-up funding to help them seize opportunities.

The important lesson I have learned from COL's Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3 Farmers) programme is that the solutions to our world's development challenges are not always driven by money. In this case, the solution is knowledge-driven. L3 Farmers is succeeding and expanding because we bring together communities, linking partners and enabling them to agree on a collective common vision and commit their resources to their full potential.

My vision for L3 Farmers was like the Olympic rings, all overlapping but none superseding another. We have managed to influence the partners to be open to co-operation. The key is not asking too much from anyone and showing the opportunities that can be gained by sharing and pooling resources.

I have learned that even the best information and knowledge is of limited value if it's not placed in the right context. We were able to revitalise an excellent COL-UNESCO programme on Environmental Engineering by tailoring it to suit particular target regions and groups. The materials are being well used in India now, and I believe there is tremendous potential for expanding their use.

COL is also distinguished by a high degree of collegiality. The success of programmes such as L3 Farmers is due in large part to the support and the buy-in from my colleagues, particularly Sir John Daniel. I am proud to have been part of such a capable, committed and hard-working group.

I believe our work in agriculture has helped to lead COL to its present mission of "Learning for Development". COL has a unique role to play, unlike any other organisation. By applying our expertise in ODL to other challenges such as climate change and water resource management, we will continue to develop practical approaches to learning that help people improve their livelihoods.

www.col.org/kalluri

ODL FOR DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA CONTINUED

launching a second phase with participation being expanded to 20 community radio stations.

In addition to providing valuable health information, "Science for Women" is creating a bank of content that can be re-used. It is helping women gain skills as announcers, interviewers, writers and programme contributors, while also providing alternate means of livelihood for the community. And it is helping community radio stations gain an identity, an audience and a purpose.

IP-BASED TELECONFERENCING

CEMCA demonstrated the use of inexpensive interactive technology to reach out to learners in an experiment at Wawasan Open University in Malaysia. The IP-based teleconferencing system is useful for learners at small and mid-sized educational institutions in both face-to-face and ODL environments.

The approach involves webcasting of lectures and interaction from learners. A lecture

is presented through the Internet using a webcam and microphone (a professional camera and audio-video mixer will improve quality). The remote learner can listen, observe and ask questions using a webcam and Skype. The learner is projected on the screen so that other learners watching can see them and also share their queries. The audio and video quality is that of a CD/DVD and webcasting counters time lags. Learners are not aware of the time lag as they watch the webcast, however those who interact with the teacher may find the time lag irritating, a problem presently solved by closing the webcasting window and using the Skype window for the brief period of intervention. The problem may be solved as the bandwidth availability increases. A major advantage is that lectures and interaction with learners happen in real time and in a synchronous mode. The system currently makes use of only the free Skype service and not paid phone calls.

CEMCA
DEMONSTRATION
OF IP-BASED
TELECONFERENCING
AT WAWASAN OPEN
UNIVERSITY



The benefits of IP-based teleconferencing are significant and include:

- Wider outreach: students can access learning anywhere there is a computer rather than travelling to a study centre.
- Cost-effective: this approach avoids the use of expensive proprietary software and costly telecommunications links.
- Greater learner engagement: students can interact, ask questions and share information.

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STRENGTHENING TEACHER EDUCATION

Improving the quality of teachers is a necessary element for developing countries to attain Education for All and the UN Millennium Development Goals. COL is helping to build capacity in teacher education through initiatives in several countries, including these recent workshops:

LEARNER SUPPORT IN NIGERIA

In partnership with Nigeria's National Teachers' Institute (NTI), COL hosted a "train the trainers" workshop to build capacity in tutoring in open and distance learning (ODL). The aim of the one-week workshop at NTI in Kaduna in December 2008 was to develop the skills of trainers who will subsequently train NTI's course tutors across the country. This workshop follows up on recommendations from a study of NTI's learner support services commissioned by COL in 2004.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN NIGERIA

COL and Nigeria's National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) held a quality assurance workshop for teacher educators in Abuja in December 2008. Delegates from four teacher training institutes focussed on adapting COL's Quality Assurance Toolkit for their specific needs. The institutes will use the Toolkit to assess the quality of their teacher education programmes.



INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN IN SIERRA LEONE AND THE GAMBIA

COL hosted one-week workshops in Sierra Leone and The Gambia in December 2008. The main objective of the workshops was to disseminate practical skills on instructional design and development in ODL. Workshop participants reviewed best practices in creating effective learning materials for ODL.

CONSTRUCTIVIST PEDAGOGY IN INDIA

In collaboration with the Regional Institute of Education (National Council of Educational Research and Training, NCERT), Mysore, India, COL held a three-day workshop in October 2008 to introduce teacher educators to constructivist pedagogy. This approach highlights the centrality of the learner as a constructor of knowledge rather than a receiver or reproducer of information. COL brought together international and national experts in constructivist teacher education who shared their knowledge about how to re-orient teacher education programmes.

BUILDING CAPACITY IN OPEN SCHOOLS



PARTICIPANTS AT THE QUALITY ASSURANCE WORKSHOP IN SEPTEMBER 2008

COL is undertaking a range of activities to strengthen the capacity and sustainability of open schools in developing countries. This includes practical handbooks (including publications to support open school managers and policymakers, see New Resources, page 14) and several workshops on various aspects of open schooling.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

A workshop in Johannesburg hosted by COL and the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) involved 22 delegates from 16 countries in Africa and Asia. Delegates from open schools, open universities and quality assurance groups shared their knowledge and experiences. They also contributed to the framework for a Quality Assurance Toolkit for open schools. The Toolkit will be available later in 2009.

LEARNER SUPPORT

Twenty-three people from 16 countries took part in a Learner Support in Open Schooling workshop in Johannesburg in October 2008. Over one week, they learned about the fundamentals of open and distance learning, best practices in learner support, quality assurance, developing a comprehensive learner support system, and training and supporting tutors. By bringing together representatives

from established open schools such as India's National Institute of Open Schooling with countries that are establishing open schools, the workshop enabled information sharing and networking.

An important outcome of the workshop was the framework for a Learner Support Guide for Open Schools, which will be available later in 2009. This guide will help to create a common approach to learner support among open schools in the Commonwealth.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Thirty educators from Lesotho took part in a two-week instructional design workshop sponsored by COL and administered by the Lesotho Distance Training Centre. The aim of the workshop was to build the capacity of open and distance learning (ODL) practitioners in the design, development and management of study materials. Delegates learned about best practices and used COL's Instructional Design template to produce 14 units of self-instructional materials in subjects such as English, chemistry, geography and math.

Open Schooling research reports and training resources related to finances, tutoring and course development are available on COL's website.

www.col.org/OpenSchooling

UPCOMING EVENTS

17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (17CCEM)
15 - 19 June 2009,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
"Making Connections and Partnerships: Towards and beyond global goals and targets"
www.17ccem.com

The Second m-libraries Conference
23-25 June 2009,
Vancouver, Canada
Hosted by the University of British Columbia.
www.library.open.ac.uk/mlibraries/

The Cambridge International Conference on Open and Distance Learning
22-25 September 2009,
St. Edmund's College, Cambridge, UK
www2.open.ac.uk/r06/conference/

The Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF6)
November 2010
Kochi, India
Organised by COL and Indira Gandhi National Open University
www.col.org/pcf6

EXPANDING COMMUNITY MEDIA



MANG'ELETE COMMUNITY RADIO WORKSHOP IN KENYA

Community media offer powerful opportunities to contribute to local development, education and governance by providing information, communication and educational services at the local level. COL is working with a number of government, non-governmental and community groups throughout the Commonwealth to expand capacity of community media. COL's focus is on the role of community media in open and distance learning; strong, efficient organisations in which community members are fully represented are critical if these groups are to realise their long-term potential.

BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION IN KENYA

Mang'etele Community Radio is rooted in the work of 33 rural women's groups from the semi-arid Makueni District in Kenya. The women's groups identified information about reproductive health, agriculture and other livelihood issues as key to local development. Each group has many members, making this truly a grassroots initiative. The challenge is to ensure the radio station is both democratic and effectively able to serve the needs of these many varied groups.

COL is helping Mang'etele review its organisational structure and develop a strategic plan in a participatory way. Working in partnership with EcoNews Africa and the Kenya Community Media Network, COL supported two workshops in November 2008. The first session, which involved 66 representatives from more than 30 women's groups, began the process of rethinking the station's structure; the second workshop focussed on strategic planning with educational programming in mind.

The materials developed in these workshops are available as open educational resources on the Community Media space of WikiEducator.

www.WikiEducator.org/Community_Media

ENHANCING CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY MEDIA

COL sponsored a three-day workshop on Learning Media in the Caribbean in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The workshop brought together media units from government ministries along with community, prison, school and university-based radio stations from seven Caribbean countries.

Participants explored what makes for effective learning programmes, identified good practices from the Caribbean and internationally, and designed a series of programmes addressing community development priorities in



DELEGATES AT THE NOVEMBER 2008 LEARNING MEDIA WORKSHOP

the region, for example teaching effective parenting and mitigating violence among youth. Day 1 of the workshop was streamed on the Caribbean Internet Radio Portal, demonstrating how community media can extend the reach of meetings such as this. Participants also visited an FM radio facility located inside a community school on the island of Bequia, which was established with support from UNESCO.

LEARNING4CONTENT TEACHES WIKI SKILLS

Participants from 19 countries took part in the Caribbean Regional Learning4Content workshop in Barbados in November 2008. The Rt. Hon. Ronald Jones, Minister of Education and Human Resource Development, welcomed participants and officially opened the five-day workshop. All participants achieved the Wiki Apprentice certification. More than 20 Learning4Content workshops are planned for the Caribbean region in the first half of 2009.

COL's Learning4Content initiative provided free wiki skills training for more than 1,600 people, roughly 50 per cent women/men, in 2008. Face-to-face and on-line workshops have been provided to educators from more than 200 countries, helping to build capacity in online skills. In return for the free training, participants are asked to contribute one learning resource to COL's library of free learning materials.

Learning4Content is supported by COL and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. For more information about facilitating or organising a workshop, participating as a learner or contributing funding, contact Dr. Wayne Mackintosh, COL Education Specialist, eLearning and ICT Policy at wmackintosh@col.org or visit the WikiEducator website.

www.WikiEducator.org/Learning4Content



EXPANDING eLEARNING IN EAST AFRICA

COL recently supported workshops in Africa that provided educators with training in content development skills to enable them to offer more courses by eLearning. The first workshop, hosted in partnership with the National Open University of Nigeria's (and COL-supported) Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning (RETRIDOL), was held at the Open University of Tanzania. This marked RETRIDOL's first activity in East Africa and signals growth in south-south partnerships.

A similar capacity building workshop in Kenya was held at Maseno University and facilitated by a COL consultant. Over several days, the Kenyan participants learned to use COL's Instructional Design template and began converting courses.





THE OPEN SCHOOLS HANDBOOK

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR MANAGERS

By Ed Du Vivier

The latest in a developing series of COL handbooks about open schooling, this book has been developed for practitioners who seek to provide primary, secondary and vocational education for out-of-school learners using open and distance learning (ODL). It will be of particular interest to chief executive officers, managers and other senior staff who work in existing open schools or colleges, are establishing an ODL institution or are transforming

a unit in a government structure into an autonomous open school. Touching on all the important issues – from strategic planning and staffing to supporting learners and study materials – it provides practical advice, insight and examples of best practices to guide the management of open schools.

www.col.org/OpenSchoolsHandbook
www.col.org/OpenSchooling



OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES HANDBOOK FOR EDUCATORS 1.0

Seth Gurell, author

David Wiley, Ph.D., editor

Printed by the Center for Open and Sustainable Learning August 2008

This handbook is designed to help educators, find, use, develop and share open educational resources (OERs). Supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and COL and authored by multiple contributors, it is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution/Share-Alike License and is freely available for download at the WikiEducator website. It can also be purchased in printed form at lulu.com

www.wikieducator.org/OER_Handbook/educator_version_one



THE ROUTLEDGE INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF LIFELONG LEARNING

COL President Sir John Daniel is one of the contributors to this book, which provides a comprehensive look at lifelong learning internationally. Aimed at academics in the field, the handbook examines the subject and places it in its socio-historic context. It can be purchased through the Routledge website.

www.routledgeeducation.com/books



USING MOBILE TECHNOLOGY FOR LEARNER SUPPORT IN OPEN SCHOOLING

By Dr. Alice Barlow-Zambodla and Ms. Fatima Adams

Commissioned by COL and carried out by the South Africa Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE), this report explores the use of mobile technologies such as hand-held PCs, PDAs, mobile phones and iPods to support learners in open schools in the developing world.

The report investigates educational mobile technology initiatives to determine lessons learnt that might be of relevance in the process of developing quality student support systems especially in Africa. Evidence is also presented about the impact of the use of such technologies on student performance and their experience of learning in the open schooling system.

www.col.org/consultancies

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL (WELL)

A Study Undertaken in the State of Uttarakhand

By Dr. Anita Dighe

Commissioned by COL, this study explores women empowerment programmes offered by government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in India. This environmental scan in the state of Uttarakhand is the first phase of research that will extend more broadly across India and inform the development of a model that will enable women to access learning opportunities and participate in activities that will improve their lives and their children's lives.

www.col.org/consultancies



LOW-COST PRIVATE EDUCATION: IMPACTS ON ACHIEVING UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

Edited by Bob Phillipson

Using independent first-hand research, this study from the Commonwealth Secretariat investigates the low-cost private education sector in India, Nigeria and Uganda. The contributors explain the proliferation of these schools and the impact on access to education for the poor. They

argue that with proper regulation, supervision and government support, private schools can help to achieve Education for All by filling gaps in public education.

<http://publications.thecommonwealth.org/low-cost-private-education-577-p.aspx>

INEXPENSIVE VIDEOCONFERENCING ALTERNATIVES

The IP-based teleconferencing system developed by the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), described in "CEMCA: ODL for Development in Asia" on page 8 is an example of how educators and business are using the Internet for live video links at little or no cost. Here are a few other alternatives:

- **Skype:** With more than 276 million users and name that is becoming a verb ("Let's Skype later in the week"), Skype is a leader in live video communications. Skype offers software at no cost and free calls over the Internet among Skype users, as well as competitive rates for long distance and international calls to phones and mobiles. Available in 28 languages, Skype is used in almost every country in the world.
- **Gmail Video and Voice:** Introduced by Google in November 2008, the video and voice capabilities are embedded in the Gmail interface. Some users can make voice or video calls to other Gmail users for free. Gmail video quality is expected to be more consistent than Skype because all video traffic runs through Google servers.
- **Dimdim:** Billed as "the world's easiest web conference", Dimdim enables users to deliver synchronised live presentations,



white boards and web pages accompanied by voice and video over the Internet. With no software to download or install, Dimdim is a free service that runs on open source software. The enhanced featured Dimdim Virtual Classroom Pack is available only to education customers and enables educators to create their own customised web-based classroom.

There are also dozens of commercial, fee-for-service, voice-over-IP (VOIP) network providers worldwide, with functionality constantly improving.

www.skype.com
<http://mail.google.com/videochat>
www.dimdim.com



CREATE VIDEOS ONLINE

A new generation of online services that transform slide shows, images and audio into slick videos offers interesting possibilities for education.

Animoto is a website that will take your PowerPoint slides, photos and other images, and mix them with music provided by Animoto, or with your own recorded audio or music, to create a video. A special service that caters to schools, Animoto for Education, offers password-protected access to groups of learners to ensure privacy. The site offers

examples on the website of videos that have been created for science fair projects, bullying prevention videos and podcasts. Short videos (under 30 seconds) are free; full-length videos are \$3 and annual subscriptions are also available. Similar online services include Jumpcut, Toufee and Digital Films.

<http://animoto.com>
www.jumpcut.com
www.toufee.com
www.digitalfilms.com

SOCIAL BACKUP

Hard drive failure, laptop theft and viruses can instantly remove valuable data from your computer. A web-based service is offering a free back-up facility that sends a secure copy to a friend or family member of your choice. The service automates daily back-up and encryption (so the backup partner can't read them).

www.cucku.com

IS BLOGGING PASSÉ?

The blogosphere has been "flooded by a tsunami of paid bilge", according to an essay in Wired Magazine in October 2008. With professional blogs outmuscling personal blogs, the magazine suggests that your time is better spent on social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook or Flickr.

Read more at www.wired.com/entertainment/theweb/magazine/16-11/st_essay



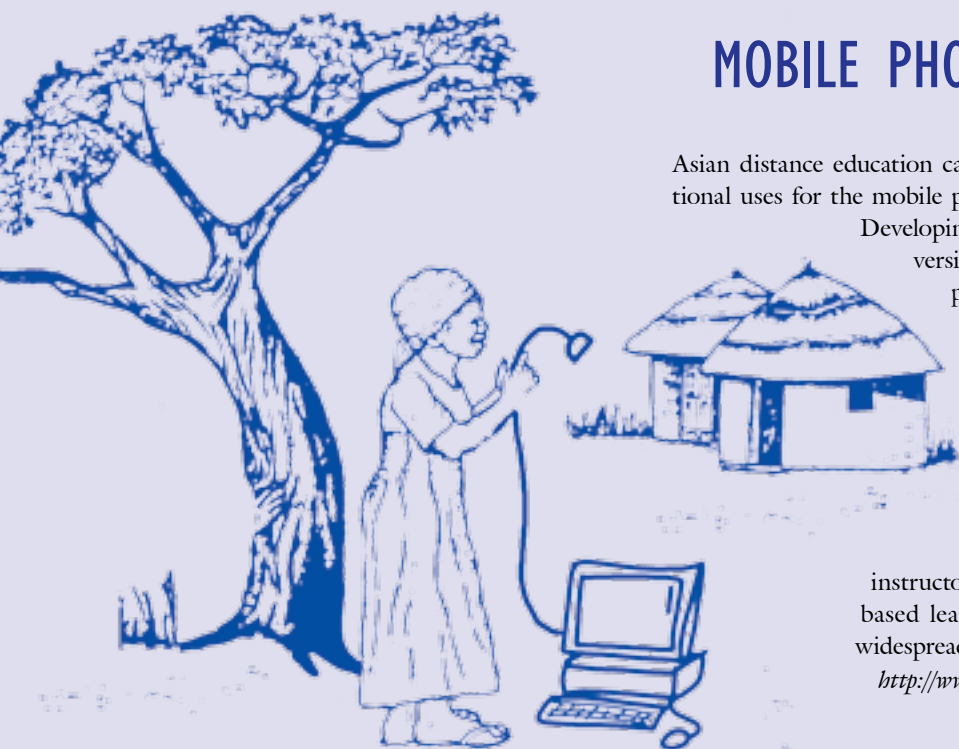
MOBILE PHONES FOR LEARNING

Asian distance education can be the global leader in the development of educational uses for the mobile phone. This is the conclusion of “Mobile Learning in Developing Nations” a paper by Scott Motlik at Athabasca University. Distance education in Asia is at a crossroads, the paper explains. It has to choose whether it wishes to follow Western practices of investing in eLearning methods, or whether it wishes to find its own path and explore new delivery methods that are more suitable for learners in the region.

The paper explains why reliance on Western eLearning initiatives does not appear to be the best path for distance education in Asia at present.

“It would be a serious disservice to learners and instructors if Asia and Africa were to cast their lot with Web-based learning. By comparison, mobile phone technology is widespread, easy to use and familiar to learners and instructors.”

<http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/564/1039>



HOW TO COMBAT ONLINE TIME BANDITS

It used to be chatting at the water cooler or coffee room that diverted people from their work. Today, most of the distractions are online: heavy volumes of emails, instant messaging, social networking, surfing the Internet, and reading or writing blogs. A typical office worker checks email more than 50 times a day, instant messages 77 times a day and visits more than 40 websites a day, according to RescueTime, a tracking-software maker.

Here are a few ways to ensure online time is used effectively:

- **Control when you check email.** If you have a visual or audio notifier that signals every time a new email arrives, chances are your email is controlling your priorities. Instead, check your email at regular intervals throughout the day (first thing in the morning, a couple of times mid-day and the end of the day). Keep focussed on what's important, not what's urgent.
- **Empty your Inbox.** If you deal immediately with emails that can be handled in a minute or less, file other emails in folders

and delete the junk, you should be able to clear your Inbox on a regular basis – thus ensuring that you don't get bogged down in email clutter.

- **Have more than one email account.** By maintaining one account strictly for work-related emails, you can cut the clutter. Let the social messages go to a separate email account.
- **Establish/follow blogging guidelines.** This is important in both business and academe. Blogging guidelines should outline acceptable and unacceptable blogging practices including responsibility for information uploaded, use of copyright, protecting confidential information and avoiding inappropriate behaviour such as “flaming” (insulting someone).
- **Limit your surfing.** It's easy to while away the hours moving from one website to another. Be conscious of the time you spend surfing during work hours and whether it is truly work-related.

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President & CEO: Sir John Daniel

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