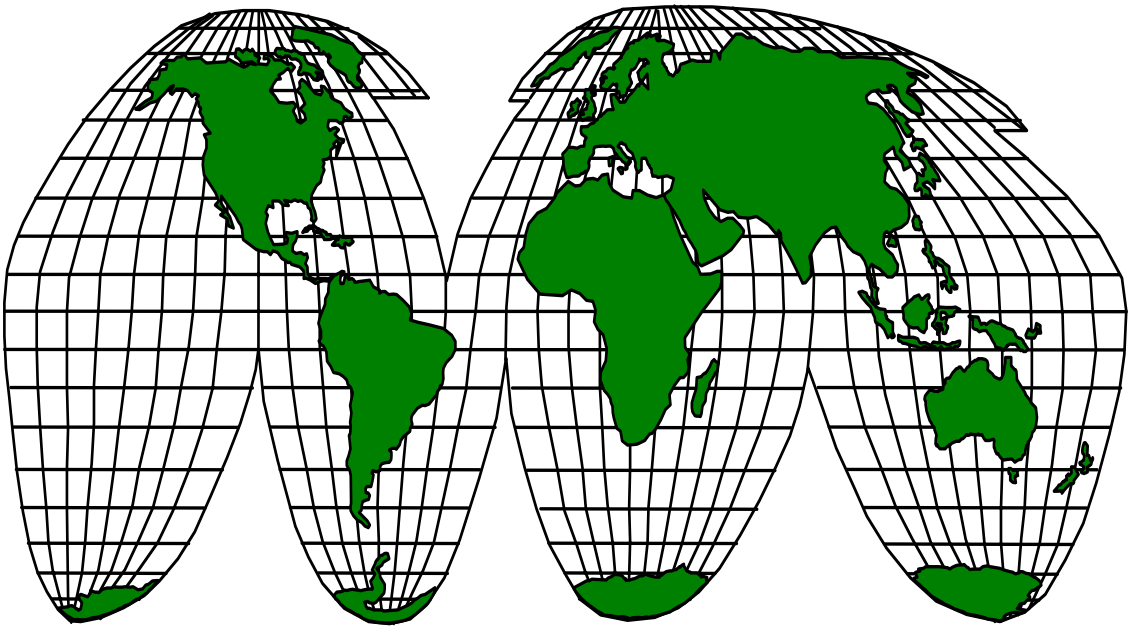
COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING TRAINING IMPACT STUDY

FINAL REPORT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has always held training to be one of its main functions. This was confirmed in the 1988 Memorandum of Understanding and COL's Three-year Plan, currently in preparation, which continues to envisage the organisation as a capacity builder and Commonwealth resource for training. Furthermore, 'Priorities for the Future' on the COL web site declares that the organisation intends to become more prominent as a training services provider.

Over the period 1990-2000, COL has expended considerable resources on various capacity-building initiatives including 114 training events and the development of six Training Toolkits. The purpose of this Training Impact Study was to assess the contribution that the COL training program has made to the achievement of the overall mandate of the organisation and specifically, according to the Terms of Reference for the Study:

- the effectiveness of the training methods and approach;
- the extent to which the objectives of the trainers and the participants were met;
- the extent to which the training was reflected in improved practice;
- the evidence of impact at the organisational level; and
- the extent to which the training was achieved at acceptable cost.

The Study was required to take into account both the intended beneficiaries (the participants) and the secondary beneficiaries (peers, supervisors, policy-makers, etc). To this end, the lead researchers and six Research Associates in various regions of the Commonwealth surveyed open and distance education practitioners in six representative Case Study Sites, previous participants in the training events, the Workshop Co-ordinators and specially-selected Key Informants. A process of triangulation was used to establish patterns and correlations in the many hundreds of responses received.

The researchers established that overall, there is widespread appreciation of, and satisfaction with, the COL-provided training events, the funding and professional support provided by COL and the more recently developed Training Toolkits. There are clear indications of these events improving the understanding, skills and performance of individuals and indications they are having a major impact upon at least some of the distance teaching institutions. The participants observe that the events serve to strengthen regional, national and international understandings, foster the development of groups with shared interests and encourage rapport and collaboration between the participants, all of which they value highly. The Workshop Co-ordinators feel that the training events have met most of the intended goals and comment favourably on the dedication and participation of the participants. It is evident that training was seen as an important part of COL's mission by both Key Informants and other respondents. They were of the opinion that it must continue to receive a high profile, high priority and as high a level of support as COL can muster from its own and its partners' resources.

The training events have taken many different forms and have been provided in many very different contexts, often with extremely heterogeneous groups. Respondents note various strengths and weaknesses in current training provision and after ten years of operation, it is understandable that they might suggest some changes and new initiatives. There follows a summary of the main issues revealed in these responses and the lead researchers' recommendations to address these.

Main observations

There was found to be great diversity in the standard of the evidence and analysis in the Workshop Co-ordinators' reports. In terms of performance indicators, the researchers found

weaknesses and omissions in the design of, and feedback from, the Standard Training Evaluation Form. The researchers find also that the training events could gain from a greater use of formative evaluation.

While there was overall satisfaction with venues, logistics and administrative arrangements, there were a number shortcomings, most of which could be anticipated and planned for. Some training events held at, or close to, the host institutions suffered from constant interruptions with participants being called away to attend to normal duties. Difficulties arose at some training events through inadequate lead-times for informing and funding the participants and sending them workshop material in advance.

There was extensive evidence of an enormous need for training ranging from basic orientation programs in distance and open education to advanced programs in new information technologies and institutional management. The scale of need and the various local factors likely to facilitate or constrain successful implementation suggest the need for more focus on 'training the trainers'.

Not only was there shown to be great variation in the participants' backgrounds, experience, knowledge and skill, but some indication that the most appropriate persons are not always selected to attend the training events due to nepotism and other factors. There is evidence of great variation in the participant's motivations for attending the training events and expectations of the outcomes. It is important that the Co-ordinators and presenters are aware of, and can measure, the success of the events against these. It is also important that they fully appreciate the barriers to change and innovation which may confront the participants on returning to their institutions.

The vast majority of training events have been at the operational level, concerned with course or material design and educational technology. Very few courses have been targeted at managers and yet many respondents express concern over the continuing lack of awareness and commitment among politicians, senior government officers and institutional managers. Many respondents decry lack of follow-up to the training events. The lack of subsequent evaluation of the outcomes and impact come across as another major weakness in the current training strategy. The impression is therefore gained of a series of 'one-off' events and piecemeal and ad hoc provision, which accords with the concern by McWilliams and Mugridge (1998) that COL has not yet been able to respond to needs in a consistent, comprehensive or cohesive fashion.

The researchers believe that a more systematic and innovative approach is called for, one which accords with COL's revised mission, the extent of the need, the call for follow-up, the great potential for collaboration, uses of technology and mixed-mode delivery. The researchers conclude that while it is important for COL to continue to be responsive to institutional and individual needs, to achieve maximum impact and returns on outlay, it is also important that the training events should match COL's strategic goals. Training events need to target strategically/politically important topics, focus on specific target groups, and be designed with specific outcomes in mind. These events might be provided centrally by COL or by COL sponsoring, or co-funding, programs proposed by regional or local providers in response to the stated strategic goals. The latter approach may create a greater sense of ownership and help institutions to also think holistically and strategically. It is also suggested that COL should do more to target managers, train trainers, provide training in advanced forms, using the widest possible range of delivery strategies, encourage and support more certified training provision and work toward the establishment of a collaborative 'virtual training institution'. Such is the scale and strategic thrust needed to accelerate change and enhance professionalism in distance education that COL also needs to take every advantage of strategic alliances and collaborative initiatives in sharing resources, networks and expertise.

Many respondents to this survey have suggested using a mix of mediated and face-to-face training. It is entirely appropriate the COL should itself make greater use of distance education

strategies and technologies to support change and enhance performance and there is great potential in assembling or creating material that:

- builds upon the excellent beginnings represented by the Training Toolkits;
- encourages and supports innovation, change and performance improvement;
- embodies the best principles of instructional design for self-instruction by individuals and groups;
- empowers and skills the trainers or practitioners so that they can then implement the new ideas with the help of local support groups and mentoring, face-to-face on online.

Much of this material already exists around the world and it may well be a question of negotiating terms and adapting existing guides, reports, etc. rather than COL starting from scratch and bearing the full cost. Delivery may need to be in print and electronic. The forms of delivery are not the major issue; what will finally count is the quality of the content and self-instructional strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Workshop Co-ordinators' reports and the COL Standard Training Evaluation Form

Recommendation 1:
COL should review its expectations of the Workshop Co-ordinators' reports and require all Co-ordinators to submit their reports to a common format and with the level of detail and analysis necessary to monitor trends, issues and future training needs.

Recommendation 2:
COL should review and re-design its Standard Training Activity Evaluation instrument to ensure that it yields the necessary data and analysis and should require all Co-ordinators to submit completed forms, a summary and their findings and conclusions, to a standard format.

Recommendation 3:
COL should strongly recommend that Co-ordinators apply day-by-day formative evaluation to help ensure that the training events are constantly in accord with the participants' needs and wishes.

Venues, logistics and administrative arrangements

Recommendation 4:
Workshop Co-ordinators or their representatives should be enabled to make preliminary visits to the workshop venues to check the accommodation, technical and logistical support and to subsequently arrive at these venues at least one day before the actual events to ensure that all preparations are in place.

Recommendation 5:
COL should always ensure that training events are off-campus and residential, away from the resource persons' and participants' places of work and outside teaching and examination periods to avoid any possible distractions for the participants and to ensure optimum time-on-task and continuity.

Recommendation 6:
COL should institute a standard checklist to ensure that all arrangements under its control are planned, confirmed and known to all parties, and that all foreseeable contingencies have been anticipated and planned for.

Recommendation 7:
COL should ensure that there is sufficient lead-time to facilitate participants' travel and other arrangements and for them to study the pre-workshop material, and even undertake pre-workshop assignments, so that they are fully prepared for, and able to take full benefit from, the training events.

Training the trainers

Recommendation 8:
COL should ensure that every training event provides 'train the trainers' opportunities, with locally-recruited resource persons and other potential trainers 'paired with' and 'shadowing' the Co-ordinators or other presenters throughout the planning, workshop presentation and evaluation.

Recommendation 9:
COL should ensure maximum opportunities for 'train the trainers' workshops, using the Training Toolkits as appropriate, to expose potential workshop presenters to, and rehearse them in and advise them on, the various training strategies and techniques open to them.

Workshop participants

Recommendation 10:
COL should take a more active role in setting the criteria for selecting the participants to ensure that they can not only benefit from the training but have the capacity, status and resources to implement the new ideas and practices. There should be early and careful selection of the participants, and the Co-ordinators should be provided with participant profiles including their motivations and expectations (see also ***Recommendation 11****).*

Recommendation 11:
In revising the Standard Training Evaluation form, care should be taken to so frame and link the question(s) eliciting the participants' specific motivations for attending the training events, specific expectations of the outcomes and their satisfaction levels in these regards as to yield useful information about objectives met and unmet. There should also be an item asking participants to identify the institutional barriers to implementing the ideas and practices promoted in the training events.

Follow-up

Recommendation 12:
COL should ensure that the training provided is more than a series of one-off events. The Co-ordinators should be contracted to provide or organise follow-up or reinforcement activities and self-help groups or networks to encourage and support implementation of the ideas and practices promulgated in the workshops.

Recommendation 13:
Impact studies should be conducted by COL and/or the Co-ordinators six months after the training events to gauge the extent of individual and institutional change and the barriers to change.

Developing understanding and changing attitudes in those holding influence

Recommendation 14:
COL should initiate a series of regional think tanks or seminars at which senior persons can consider the role, costs and benefits of open and distance education, the global trends and local needs, how they can support the identified needs for change, collaboration, and address funding and other resource constraints.

Future training strategies

Recommendation 15:
While it is important that COL remains responsive to its customers' needs, it is also important that the training provided should accord with COL's strategic goals, achieve maximum impact, returns on investment and be available on the widest possible scale. COL should therefore explore new topics and forms of delivery, including the internet/web and a collaborative 'virtual training institution' to accelerate change and enhance performance (see ***also Recommendation 20****).*

Recommendation 16:
COL should explore where there is still need and potential for further formal programs in open and distance education and articulation, collaboration and innovation in delivery in such programs throughout the Commonwealth.

Recommendation 17
COL should explore mixed-mode training delivery, combining face-to-face presentations and demonstrations with on- and off-campus applications of the Training Toolkits in print and electronic form, follow-up assignments, projects, impact studies and mentoring to facilitate implementation.

Recommendation 18
COL should further develop and extend the Training Toolkits, dealing with more advanced topics and in particular, by commissioning a Training Toolkit on staff development techniques in support of a 'train the trainers' strategy.

Recommendation 19
COL should organise a Commonwealth-wide (possibly in conjunction with the next Pan-Commonwealth Forum) and/or a series of regional forum(s) on training needs, strategies and networks in order to develop mutual support systems.

Recommendation 20
COL should seek more strategic alliances with other organisations such as the IEC and UNESCO to achieve the scale and strategic thrust needed to enhance professionalism in distance education, maximise available resources, networks and expertise and work towards a collaborative 'virtual training institution'.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Identifying the training needs and activities

One of the main functions of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), defined in the 1988 Memorandum of Understanding and confirmed by an initial review of requirements in 1989, is to undertake and support staff training in the techniques and management of distance education.

Early in 1990, COL organised a Round Table with the following objectives:

- to identify the training needs of distance education institutions in the Commonwealth countries;
- to discuss and recommend strategies to meet these training needs;
- to examine the efficacy of the various types and levels of training;
- to evolve an approach for effective co-operation among various institutions, agencies and countries and COL's role in it.

(Commonwealth of Learning, 1990)

The participants in this Round Table identified the following priority training needs:

- basic orientation to distance education;
- planning, management and administration;
- instructional design and course development, including course adaptation;
- use of technology, including computers;
- research and evaluation;
- student support services.

Four delivery strategies were identified for adoption on a case-by-case basis:

- the provision of workshops (the assumption being that institutions would prefer in-house, on-the-job training);
- the development of self-instructional training materials;
- the establishment of training fellowships (especially for managers or administrators of distance education institutions or programs);
- the development of special training institutions or units.

(McWilliams & Mugridge, 1998)

The Round Table identified the major constraints on training as insufficient funds, staff shortages, limited release time, a shortage of trainers and a lack of local resource materials, and recommended that COL:

- organise, or assist other agencies to organise, training workshops on a regional or sub-regional basis;
- collect and evaluate existing training materials, and make such materials available;
- commission training materials to support institutionally based workshops;
- commission case studies of planning and administration;
- develop a register of experts who could assist with training; and
- build up regional pools of expertise by identifying experts and training them as trainers

(Commonwealth of Learning, op cit.)

COL's first Strategic Plan (1990-1993) re-iterated that training was a key function. The draft 1993-1996 Strategic Plan: Training noted that many of the specific indicators of success in the

first Strategic Plan had been met. It recorded that 14 regional and 17 national training workshops had been held, approximately 600 distance educators from all regions of the Commonwealth had attended these events, training modules on audio-conferencing and audio-graphics had been developed, and two print/video training packages had been produced (Bates, 1993; Foks, 1993).

Three reasons were cited for still regarding training as an essential activity:

- the implementation of open learning and distance education was dependent on the appropriate application of sound educational principles and innovative educational techniques and technologies. These techniques are changing and evolving;
- many of the personnel in distance education institutions come from other educational and professional sectors and require training to adapt their skills to the contexts of distance education and open learning; and
- the on-going global process of educational reform was breaking down the artificial and counter-productive distinction between 'distance education' and more traditional educational activities. This process will continue and will necessitate a supporting process of skills development in all types of educational institutions.

(Commonwealth of Learning, 1993)

This draft Strategic Plan: Training articulated the principles underpinning COL training. These were later subsumed in the general principles in the overall Strategic Plan and may be summarised thus:

- the overall impact on the individuals and institutions involved shall be considered in the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases of any activity;
- training activities shall reinforce principles of social equity, gender equity, and human rights;
- training activities shall be planned and carried out in a context appropriate to the particular region, society or culture;
- COL will continue to place a priority on the development of partnership and collaborative relationships with other institutions during the development and implementation of its training activities (a principle strengthened by fiscal necessity);
- training activities will be rationalised at all levels, with related training activities developed into articulated streams, synchronised to make efficient use of training teams, and using standardised evaluation techniques;
- databases on COL training activities, trainers, training participants, training materials, etc., will be developed and used in planning and evaluating COL training;
- COL will facilitate the development of training plans in the institutions with which it works and increase the ability of regions and institutions to meet their own training needs.

The draft Strategic Plan also suggested performance indicators, general and specific, for measuring success. The general indicators focused on the extent to which educational institutions in the various regions of the Commonwealth improved and developed their abilities in distance and open education and their capacities to provide training in these. Specific indicators included the development of a standard evaluation/reporting procedure, the production, adaptation and acquisition of distance education training materials, and the establishment of a regional training centre at Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).

Subsequently, a Standard Training Evaluation Form was developed for summative evaluation of the training events and IGNOU undertook the envisaged regional training role. The quality and wider applicability of IGNOU's expertise and postgraduate diploma in distance education had been acknowledged four years before, at the 1989 regional conference held in Islambad, Pakistan and COL subsequently provided a development grant, matched by IGNOU, to establish IGNOU's Staff Training and Research in Education or STRIDE. STRIDE now provides

for the region's training needs and offers postgraduate and masters degrees in distance education to students across the Commonwealth, many of whom have been supported by the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme instituted by COL in 1993 (Koul, 1998). Further training in educational technology for the region is provided through the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia.

Forster (1994) observed that regional centres such as STRIDE and The University of the West Indies Distance Teaching Experiment (UWIDITE) were invaluable clearing houses for information and training transfer and that COL had a key role in supporting such multi-lateral co-operation for services and training.

In 1994, COL and STRIDE convened an Asian Regional Workshop on Training at IGNOU. Representatives from Maldives, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Malaysia (and observers from Nepal and Bhutan) considered the priority training needs, appropriate forms of training intervention, potential sources of training, and a regional training plan for 1994-1997 (Commonwealth of Learning, 1994). In 1997, an African Regional Consultation on Training was held in Accra, Ghana. This provided the first-ever opportunity for the regional and national distance education associations in Ghana, South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia to meet with representatives of COL and develop recommendations for regional collaboration and value-adding by COL (Commonwealth of Learning, 1997a). In the same year, an Asian Regional Consultation on Training was convened in New Delhi to review the outcomes arising from the 1994 Asian Regional Workshop and identify regional needs and potential in training, research, development and collaboration. Both of these meetings noted the need for COL to develop a series of training toolkits.

In 1994, COL commissioned a report (Forster, 1994) on how the techniques of distance and open learning could themselves be applied to training distance educators. This report provided a framework for developing generic training materials, partly adapted from existing materials, and a training manual through regional reference groups and local trials.

The impetus and financial support that enabled COL to embark on this undertaking came from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Under the terms and conditions of the ADB Regional Technical Assistance Project for Capacity Building in Distance Education for Primary Teacher Training, COL was commissioned to prepare training materials for use in three training workshops in the Asian region. In addition, COL decided to concurrently develop a further three sets of materials. The resultant Training Toolkits covered the following topics:

- Overview of open and distance learning
- Designing open and distance learning materials
- Planning and management of open and distance learning
- Use and integration of media in open and distance learning
- Quality assurance in open and distance learning
- Learner support in open and distance learning

Each of these Training Toolkits comprises:

- a trainer's guide including training strategies, exercises and activities;
- masters of overhead transparencies;
- a recommended reading list; and
- case studies of best practice.

The Training Toolkits are designed to stand alone but it is also assumed that where the trainers have extensive experience and knowledge in these areas, they will augment and embellish these materials as required.

The preliminary blueprints for the Toolkits were developed by COL staff but the Toolkits themselves were commissioned from the International Extension College (IEC). There was close consultation between IEC and COL staff and trainers in the field throughout the development process. As draft materials were developed, they were sent out for external review by distance educators and then field- tested, all six in Africa and three in Asian countries, for academic/ and professional credibility, appropriateness of language and presentation methods and capacity for customisation. This feedback was again analysed and commented on by the external reviewers before the final revision. The Training Toolkits are currently being printed in India. It is not clear what plans there are to make these available online or to link them systemically with other training strategies.

Ten years after the 1990 Round Table, distance education institutions throughout the Commonwealth are at various stages of developing their strengths and capacities in training and COL's training initiatives are still seen as needed and in accord with the goals set by the Round Table. But McWilliams and Mugridge (1998, p. 56) observe:

> Unfortunately, frequent difficulties, some of them anticipated in the original Round Table discussions, have resulted in the organisation being unable to respond to these needs in a consistent, comprehensive or cohesive fashion.

COL's Report to the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Durban, November 1999, and the final CHOGM Communiqué record that COL's Three-year Plan (currently in preparation) envisages the organisation being a catalyst for collaborative action, a capacity builder, a Commonwealth resource for training, and an information/knowledge provider. In 'Priorities for the Future' on its web site, COL declares that it intends to become more prominent as a training services provider, covering a wide spectrum of emphasis and delivering just-in-time training for small and large groups. In planning for the new millennium, COL has invited input on this issue.

1.2 Responding to the training needs

COL responds to the training needs through three strategies which are broadly in line with the 1990 Round Table's recommendations:

- organising, or assisting other agencies to organise, training workshops on a regional or sub-regional basis;
- collecting, evaluating and disseminating existing training materials; commissioning training materials to support institutionally based workshops; and commissioning case studies of planning and administration;
- developing a register of experts to assist with training and building up regional pools of expertise by identifying experts and training them as trainers.

These three strategies are discussed below.

1.2.1 Organising, or assisting other agencies to organise, training workshops on a regional or sub-regional basis.

According to records provided by COL, between 1990 and 2000, 114 training events have been organised or co-organised by COL in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, the Pacific and Europe (Table 1. below). Forty-seven of these events (41%) have been held in Africa, 35 (31%) in Asia, 20 (18%) in the Caribbean, 10 (9%) in the Pacific and 2 in Malta.

The majority of the training events have focused on the operational aspects of distance and open learning. Fifty-one (45%) have focused on course writing or instructional design, 16 (14%) on computing, desktop publishing, multimedia or the internet and 11 (10%) on radio, audio or

audio-conferencing. There have also been a few workshops on educational television, video or videoconferencing, librarianship and non-book materials management, tutoring and learner support, assessment, quality assurance, and record keeping. Seven of the training events can be identified as focusing on managing open and distance education at the institutional or centre level and a further 7 have taken the form of general forums or introductions to open and distance education.

Table 1 Summary of COL training activities 1990-2000

Year	Region	Host organisation(s)/country	Title/topic of training event
1990	**Africa**	Distance learning Association of South Africa, Swaziland (with AIDAB support)	Regional workshop on course writing and and editing
	Asia	India	Course development
	Caribbean	Barbados	Adaptation of course materials
		Guyana	Course design and development
		St Lucia	Computers in distance education
	Pacific	Vanuatu	Course development
1991	**Africa**	Various (regional)	Writing teaching manuals
		Various (regional)	Record keeping
		Various (regional)	Management and leadership training
		Various (regional)	Radio script writing
		Makerere University, Uganda	Tutor orientation
	Asia	Allama Iqbal Open University, Pakistan	Instructional design and media
		Trivandrum, Kerala, India	Distance education and self-instructional packages for senior officers of the Indian public service
	Caribbean	Jamaica	Course design and development
		Jamaica	Regional workshop on management of student support services
		Guyana	Desktop publishing
	Pacific	University of Papua New Guinea/ University of the South Pacific	Regional workshop on management skills for UPNG and USP extension centre directors
		Papua New Guinea	Course development
		Papua New Guinea	Course development
		Papua New Guinea	Desktop publishing
		Papua New Guinea	Library skills
		Australia	General management skills

1992	**Africa**	Makerere University, Uganda	Course writing/editing
		ZADE, Zambia	Course writing
		Namibia, various (national)	Basic radio production
		Various (regional)	Literacy training
	Asia	India	Design/delivery of Secondary English language
		Mysore, India	Design/delivery of Secondary English language
		Hyderabad, India	Tutor counselling
		Allama Iqbal Open University, Pakistan	Instructional design, pre-planning and script-writing for video
	Caribbean	Trinidad and Tobago	Course design for interactive audio conferencing
		St Lucia	Use of computers in management
	Pacific	COMSEC, Tonga	Legal literacy for women through radio
1993	**Africa**	Open University of Tanzania	Course writers' workshop
		National Correspondence College, Zambia	Basic operational maintenance of computers and centre
		National Correspondence College, Zambia	DOS, Lotus and Word for Windows
		Non-Formal Education Division,	Field-based radio production
		Ministry of Education, Botswana/ University of Zimbabwe	The role of regional co-ordinators and tutors in distance education
		Makerere University, Uganda	Editing and audio workshop
	Asia	Open University of Sri Lanka	Multiple assessment techniques in legal Education
		Bangladesh Open University	Instructional design and media planning
	Caribbean	Various (regional)	Computer awareness
			Regional workshop on the use of low cost video and teleconferencing for continuing engineering education
	Pacific	Papua New Guinea	Workshop for university centre directors and co-ordinators
1994	**Africa**	Makerere University, Uganda	Writers' and editors' workshop
		Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education, Botswana	Writing and editing distance learning materials
		Ministry of Education and Culture/ Ministry of Public Service, Zimbabwe	Translating literacy materials from Portuguese to mother tongues for Mozambican refugees in Southern Africa
		Ministry of Higher Education, Zimbabwe	Land surveying course writing

		Administrative Staff College, Nigeria	Workshop in planning and management
		University of Nairobi, Kenya	Evaluation and training of audio conferencing
		Ministry of Education and Sports/ ERTV, Uganda	Radio production skills
		Makerere University, Uganda	Audio production
		Makerere University, Uganda	Audio production
	Asia	Bangladesh Open University	Designing and editing open learning Course books
		Educational Development Centre, Maldives	Script development and educational television workshop
		STRIDE, Indira Gandhi National Open University, India	Asian regional workshop on training
	Caribbean	St Lucia	Use of computers in management
1995	**Africa**	Ministry of Education, Seychelles	Curriculum development
		Department of Non-Formal Education, Botswana	Record keeping and information management
		National Correspondence College, Zambia	Advanced computer software/applications
	Asia	Bangladesh Open University	Media planning and production
		Bangladesh Open University	Educational television and audio-vision screenwriting and management
		Educational Development Centre, Maldives	Advanced desktop video editing
		CEMCA/IGNOU, India	Media librarianship
	Caribbean	Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, St Lucia	Instructional design in distance learning
		St Vincent	Instructional design in distance learning
	Pacific	Government of Papua New Guinea	Automotive instructional design
1996	**Africa**	Ministry of Education, Botswana	Enhancing the computer competency of staff
	Asia	CEMCA, India	Use of audio-visual media in distance education (Orientation for Directors of Correspondence Course institutes and Open Schools)
		CEMCA, India	National workshop on the management of non-print resources
	Caribbean	Belize Teachers' College	Instructional design
		University of Guyana	Instructional design
	Europe	University of Malta	Instructional design
		University of Malta	Integration of media in distance education

1997	**Africa**	International Conference on Technology and Distance Education, Ghana	African regional consultation on training
	Asia	STRIDE/IGNOU/	Asian regional consultation on training
		CEMCA, India	International workshop on developing multimedia courseware
		CEMCA, India	National workshop on presentational techniques for educational broadcasters
		CEMCA, India	National orientation programme on educational applications of multimedia
		CEMCA/IGNOU, India	Use and integration of media in primary teacher training by distance education (ADB-sponsored)
		COMSEC, India	International workshop on instructional design (Commonwealth Youth Development Programme)
		Bangladesh Open University	Designing distance education materials for primary teacher training (ADB-sponsored)
		Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia	Planning and managing open and distance learning for primary teacher training (ADB-sponsored)
Caribbean		Continuing Engineering Education/ University of the West Indies	Regional workshop on use of low-cost video and teleconferencing for continuing engineering education
1998	**Africa**	University College of Education of Winneba, Ghana	Regional workshop on learner support systems in open and distance education
		Ministry of Education, Botswana	Regional workshop on the use and integration of media in distance education
		University of Zambia	Regional workshop on quality assurance in distance education and open learning
		University of Fort Hare/ Eastern Cape, South Africa	Regional workshop in instructional design and course writing for learner support for study centres' co-ordinators
		Malawi Ministry of Education/ Malawi College of Distance Education	Regional workshop on instructional design for open and distance learning
		National College for Management and Development Studies, Zambia	Orientation seminar on open and distance learning
		National College for Management and Development Studies, Zambia	Instructional design and course writing
		Makerere University, Uganda	Regional workshop/evaluation of COL training toolkit on 'Planning and Management of Distance Education'
		Distance Education Association of Tanzania	Inaugural regional meeting of the Open Learning and Distance Education Association of Eastern Africa (OLDEA-EA)

		Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, Kenya	National seminar on open learning and distance education towards the 21st century
	Asia	CEMCA/IGNOU, India	National workshop on the Internet and Education
		CEMCA/Osmania University/ IGNOU, India	National workshop on the Internet and education
	Caribbean	CARICOM/COMSEC, Trinidad and Tobago	Regional workshop on multi-grade teaching: Review of teacher education modules
		CARICOM/COMSEC, Belize	Regional workshop on multi-grade teaching: Review of teacher education modules
		IDCE/University of Guyana	National conference on distance education
		Regional Education Programme For Animal Health Assistants/ DCE/University of Guyana	Developing and producing course materials for distance education for REPAHA staff
1999	**Africa**	Ministry of Education, Mozambique	Use and integration of media in open and distance learning
		UNESCO, Zimbabwe	Designing and writing teaching and learning material for distance education
		UNESCO/Open University of Tanzania	Management of distance higher education in Africa
		Freetown Teachers College, Sierra Leone	Instructional design and course writing
	Asia	CEMCA, India	Developing multimedia courseware for life sciences
		CEMCA/CIEFL/IGNOU, India	Methods of educational media research
		Open University of Sri Lanka/ CEMCA	Instructional design
		CEMCA/BRAOU, India	National workshop on planning and instructional design for interactive television
		CEMCA, India	National workshop on the management of non-print (audio and video) resources
2000	**Africa**	Freetown Teachers College, Sierra Leone	Government of Sierra Leone distance education course writers and editors workshop on instructional design and course writing
		COL/UNESCO/Makerere University, Uganda	Workshop on designing and writing learning materials for distance higher education
	Asia	CEMCA/Osmania University, India	Workshop on multimedia courseware for distance education
		CEMCA, India	Workshop on scripting and production techniques for educational television

1.2.2. Collecting, evaluating and disseminating existing training materials; commissioning training materials to support institutionally based workshops; and commissioning case studies of planning and administration.

The development of the Training Toolkits has already been described in 1.1 above. Over the past ten years, other COL publications have been developed to provide guidance for decision-makers on the organisational structures, management, roles and competencies needed for distance education and to provide resources for training. Titles currently available are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Titles of materials focused on or supportive of training (source: COL Web site, April, 2000)

Publications

(Full text versions of some of these publications are also available in MS-Word for Windows, Rich Text Format and Acrobat (.PDF) and can be downloaded from the COL web site and used for non-commercial purposes at no cost to the end-user)

COL (1990; 1993; 1995) *Directory of Courses and Materials in Distance Education.*

Perraton, H. (1991), *Administrative Structures for Distance Education,* (in conjunction with The Commonwealth Secretariat).

Mugridge, I. (ed.) (1992) *Perspectives on Distance Education: Distance Teaching in Single and Dual-Mode Universities.*

COL (1992) *Perspectives on Teacher Education: Teacher Education in Science, Mathematics and Technical/Vocational Subjects: Eighteen Case Studies* (Report of a COL Round Table on Teacher Education).

Singh, A. (1992) *Perspectives on Distance Education: Distance Education in India*.

Sweet, R. (ed.) (1993) *Perspectives on Distance Education: Student Support Services: Towards More Responsive Systems.*

O'Rourke, J. (1993) *Roles and Competencies in Distance Education.*

Mugridge, I. (1993) *Perspectives on Distance Education: The Funding of Open Universities.* (Case studies, based on papers prepared for the COL/International Council for Distance Education (ICDE) symposium on the funding and costing of open universities at the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) conference in Hong Kong, November, 1993).

Deshpande, P. M. & and Mugridge, I., (eds.) (1994) *Perspectives on Distance Education: Quality Assurance in Higher Education*.

Phillips, S. & Mukhopadhyay, M. (eds.) (1994) *Open Schooling: Selected Experiences*.

Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies/International Women's Tribune Centre, New York/Summer Institute for Gender and Development/ COL (1996) *Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development. A Core Module* (With funding from Canada's International Development Research Centre, 1996).

Jenkins, J. (1994) *European Distance Education: A Handbook of Current European Institutions and Networks*.

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

Ofosu-Amaah, W. (1994) *Women: Key Partners in Sustainable and Equitable Development. Resource materials on women and sustainable development*.

Jenkins, J. (1995) *Producing Gender Sensitive Learning Materials: A Handbook for Educators*.

Evens, K. (1995) *Barriers to Participation of Women in Technological Education and the Role of Distance Education*. (in collaboration with the University of Surrey Centre for Commonwealth and European Education and Development (SUCCEED).

COL/CARICOM (1995) *Education for the Future — A Generic Version of the Report of a Caribbean Task Force on Education.*

COL (1996) ET2000 *Conference Papers. Educational Technology 2000: A Global Vision for Open and Distance Learning.*

Dodds, T. (1996) *The Use of Distance Learning in Non-Formal Education.*

Tait, A. (ed.) (1997) *Perspectives on Distance Education: Quality Assurance in Higher Education – Selected Case Studies.*

Watson, E. & Jagannathan, N. (ed.) (1997) *Library Services to Distance Learners in the Commonwealth.*

COL (1997) *Guidelines for Remote Delivery of Courses* (Guide for Students; Guide to Institutional Responsibilities; Developing Inter-Institutional Partnerships).

COL/International Centre for Distance Learning, (1997) *Training and professional development of distance educators: A Resource Book of Articles* (With the financial assistance of the UK Department for International Development).

Swales, C. (1999) The *Facilitation of the Transfer of Learning Materials*.

COL (1999) *Pan-Commonwealth Forum, 1999 - presentations and papers*

COL (1999) TEL-isphere 99 - papers

Harry, K. (ed.) (1999) *Higher Education through Open and Distance Learning*, co-published with Routledge.

Farrell, G. (1999) *The Development of Virtual Education: A Global Perspective* (funded by the Department for International Development, UK).

The Commonwealth SchoolNet Resource Site, linking and facilitating the information needs of Commonwealth teachers

'Models for Success', including:

- The COL Literacy Project in Bangladesh, India and Zambia
- The Canada Caribbean Distance Education Scholarship
- Training Technical/Vocational Skills Teachers: Core curriculum — TVET Net
- The COL Media Empowerment (COLME)
- Teacher training of upper primary and junior secondary science, technology and mathematics teachers in southern Africa by distance education
- Commonwealth Electronic Network for Schools and Education (CENSE), an Internet-based network for Commonwealth countries jointly established by The Commonwealth of Learning, the Commonwealth Secretariat and COMNET-IT
- Desk-top video production: a low-cost, high-tech alternative for Maldives
- Training Distance Educators: The Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme (in collaboration with Indira Gandhi National Open University)
- Containing costs in the provision of continuing education for Commonwealth professionals
- Introducing distance education in the training of legislative drafters
- Educational technology and the Malaysian Medical Education Network
- Planning for the development of regional telecommunications networks
- Upgrading the skills of technical and vocational instructors in the Caribbean
- Establishing a computer training centre in the northern Zambia Copperbelt
- The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA)
- Facilitating the transfer and adaptation of high quality materials.

The COL Publications Standing Committee now plans to publish one new title per year in the *Perspectives in Distance Education* series; the first will provide the case for and case studies of, community-based telecentres. A series of single-subject, quick reference, monographs covering distance education management topics are also envisaged. The *Connections* and *EdTech News* newsletters may also be seen as further resources for informing and training distance and open educators.

1.2.3 Developing a register of experts to assist with training and building up regional pools of expertise by identifying experts and training them as trainers.

COL maintains a database of experts for training and consultancy work and this is currently being developed as a web-based resource. COL draws on this to provide international and in-country specialists for the training events in 1.2.1 above. It also provides professional services on contract to the Asian Development Bank, based on train-the-trainer concepts, the Training Toolkits being developed as part of this work. And COL International provides fee-for-service consultation and turnkey project implementation for development agencies, foreign governments, private sector interests and institutions.

In February 1998, COL announced three new schemes to enhance the professional growth of Commonwealth distance educators:

- 'Internship' – providing financial support for individuals who are at an early stage or mid-point in their careers and would benefit from a short-term attachment to another institution within their geographic region;
- 'Sharing our Services' – assisting developing or evolving distance education institutions/organisations by providing the voluntary services of senior distance education professionals to share their knowledge, expertise and experience during an attachment period; and
- 'Young Professionals at COL' – providing financial support for individuals at an early stage or mid-point in their careers to enable them to enhance their knowledge of distance education and international co-operation through a work assignment at COL.

These three programs are to operate for a period of three years and are linked to the current priorities in COL's Three-year Plan:

- the use of appropriate technologies;
- instructional design;
- non-formal education;
- copyright;
- learner support systems; and
- training.

2. EVALUATION STRATEGY AND INSTRUMENT DESIGN

2.1 The purpose of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Training Impact Study

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Training Impact Study was required to assess the contribution of COL's training program to the achievement of the organisation's overall mandate and provide feedback to COL and its stakeholders on:

- The effectiveness of the training methods and approach
- The extent to which the objectives of the trainers and the participants were met
- The extent to which the training was reflected in improved practice
- The evidence of impact at the organisational level
- The extent to which the training was provided at an acceptable cost

The Study was to use a results- or outcomes-based evaluation model and consider both the short- and the long-term changes in behaviour, attitudes, actions and performance resulting from COL's training interventions. It was to take into account the intended direct beneficiaries (participants) and secondary beneficiaries (peers, supervisors, policy-makers, etc.) and include a sample tracer study of participants (career progression since training). In-depth case studies were to be conducted to assess the organisational impact of training on institutions most frequently participating in COL training activities and most representative of the geographical regions, types of program (institutional, national and regional) and training topics. The study was to acknowledge the complexity and fluidity of program implementation and decision-making and that impacts are often dependent on a wide variety of stakeholders and factors over time and beyond the control or influence of COL and/or its partners, and recommend ways of alleviating any negative impacts resulting from these.

2.2 Evaluating training

The strategic plans for COL's training have stressed the key role of evaluation in these events and COL has developed the Standard Training Evaluation Form for the participants, the findings from which are examined later in this report. However, Robinson (1998) stresses the importance of not only measuring participant satisfaction with particular training interventions but individual or group performance in 'real-work' settings and/or their contributions to organisations' goals. She notes however, that such outcomes may also be influenced by factors outside the training event, for example, by institutional reward systems, inter-personal and power relationships, or the values, norms and focus of the group or organisation hosting the event.

Drawing upon Warr et al. (1970) who suggest a Contexts-Inputs-Reactions-Outcomes (CIRO) evaluative model and Hamblin (1974) who proposes five levels of outcomes for evaluation, ranging from individual/short-term to organisational/long-term, Robinson proposes an evaluation model focused on five levels of outcome (see Figure 1 below). These observations influenced the methodology and instruments described in 2.3 below.

2.3 The methodology and instruments used

The Training Impact Study was undertaken by two lead researchers and six specially-contracted Research Associates in institutions across the Commonwealth. To gain the necessary Contexts-Inputs-Reactions-Outcomes data, four groups of stakeholders in COL training events were targeted:

Figure 1 Five levels of evaluation outcome (Robinson, 1998)

Outcomes	What to measure
Level 1 Reactions	• Satisfaction with the event or course, tutors, materials, etc. • Perceptions of the training's relevance and value
Level 2 Learning	• Changes in specific knowledge, skills and attitudes
Level 3 Change in work performance	• Key aspects and improvements in the individual's work behaviour and job performance
Level 4 Change in the department or work group	• Key aspects and improvement in achievements at the work group, team or departmental level
Level 5 Effects on the achievement of the organisational goals	• Achievements of some overall organisational goal or explicit changes (including changing an organisation's culture or values)

- staff at six Case Study Sites (see 2.4 below)
- former participants in COL training events held between 1997-2000
- Workshop Co-ordinators of these events; and
- Key Informants (senior distance educators familiar with the aims and work of COL and its training provision).

In addition, the COL Standard Evaluation Reports were made available for analysis.

As well as drawing on Robinson (1998), Warr *et al.* (1970) and Hamblin (1974), the lead researchers also employed an eclectic 'illuminative evaluation' approach (Parlett and Hamilton, 1977) to data collection which involved a progressive focusing on emergent issues important to those directly involved rather than imposed by the researchers. To this end, the researchers progressively assembled and analysed data to:

- plot the origins, goals, development and implementation of COL's training strategies and events
- shape the Training Impact Study methodologies and instruments and ensure that the range of institutions, contact persons, contextual factors and focus questions were representative, inclusive and capable of yielding the information required by COL
- match the perceived outcomes of the training events by the stakeholders against their needs and COL's intended outcomes
- develop recommendations in the light of these findings.

The Study sought input from the various stakeholders though a variety of sources and instruments as shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3 Stakeholders and instruments used in the Training Impact Study

Stakeholders	Instrument
Case study site representatives interviewed by the Research Associates	*Interview Proforma*
Former participants in COL training events	*COL Standard Training Evaluation FORM findings supplied by COL*
Former participants in COL training events 1997-2000	*Self-Completion Questionnaire I*
Co-ordinators of COL training events	*Self-Completion Questionnaire II*
Key Informants with knowledge and experience of open and distance learning, training needs, and the work of COL	*Self- Completion Questionnaire III*

The questions in the Interview Proforma (Appendix B), and the Self-Completion Questionnaire (Appendix C), were designed to elicit identical information:

- how the institutions and individual respondents rated the importance of training in the various aspects of distance and open learning (not necessarily limited to the topics covered by COL's current training events);
- how these needs had changed over ten years of COL training provision;
- the main barriers or constraints to the training in these areas;
- how the institutions and individual respondents rated alternative forms of training provision, e.g., by overseas or in-country/in-house experts, by self-instructional/guided learning packages or by online delivery;
- how the institutions and individual respondents rated their training events in retrospect in terms of content, delivery, location, cost, target audience, improved practice and organisational impact;
- how and why these COL training events had succeeded or failed;
- the main benefits and outcomes of the COL training events and in particular, changes in the participants' behaviours, attitudes, actions and performance levels and in those of the policy-makers and managers;
- the types of event and delivery mode expected of COL's future training initiatives and why these were needed and likely to succeed;
- the potential pitfalls and how these might be avoided in providing such training events; and
- other issues that needed to be taken into account by COL and the stakeholder institutions to achieve maximum impact and benefit from such training.

The Workshop Co-ordinators' Questionnaire (Appendix D) and Key Informants' Questionnaire (Appendix E) invited answers to the same eight questions:

- the effectiveness of COL's training methods and approach;
- the extent to which training methods and approaches meet the needs of COL's clients;
- the extent to which COL training has resulted in improved practice;
- the extent to which COL training has impacted at the organisational level;
- the extent to which the training was provided at an acceptable cost to COL's clients;
- problems encountered and ways of avoiding these in future training events;
- future and emerging needs for training; and
- the priority and focus that COL should give to its future training initiatives.

2.4 The Case Study Sites

Cost and time prohibited on-site data collection by the researchers. This task was therefore delegated to specially-contracted Research Associates at the six Case Study Sites. Identifying appropriate Case Study Sites and Research Associates was critically important to this study. Reports provided by COL revealed the following regional distribution of training events (Table 4 below).

Table 4 The regional distribution of COL training events 1990-2000

Region	Number of training events
Africa	47
Asia	35
Caribbean	20
Pacific	10
Europe	2
	114

Further examination of the training reports enabled those Case Study Sites that reflected the required pattern of provision and likely to yield the desired data (Table 5 below). This selection was informed and supported by senior COL staff. A case study site in the Pacific was not identified since the last training event in this region was in 1995; this was deemed too long ago to warrant its inclusion in the Study.

2 Table 5 Case Study Sites

Region	Case Study Site
Africa	University College of Education of Winneba, Ghana Makerere University, Uganda National College of Management and Development Studies, Zambia
Asia	Bangladesh Open University, Bangladesh Indira Gandhi National Open University, India
Caribbean	University of Guyana

2.5 The Research Associates

The training event reports, the advice provided by the COL Education Specialist and the lead researchers' own network of contacts led to the identification of contact persons at each of the six Case Study Sites (Appendix F). These persons were familiar with the aims and work of COL and well-positioned to identify, recruit and support the Research Associates. Letters were sent out, requesting the assistance of these contact persons (Appendix G) The nominated Research Associates were then sent Letters of Agreement (Appendix H) and letters defining their tasks (Appendix I).

2.6 Former participants in COL training events

A review of the training event reports provided by COL revealed that these were incomplete and that not all included the Standard Training Evaluation Forms or any reports based on these. Some did not include lists of participants and others only listed names without addresses

or institutional affiliations. Some events were institutional, some national, some regional and some international and this made the identification of nodal training points and participants problematic. Furthermore, it was assumed that over the years, participants could have, retired, changed their jobs or institutions or even deceased. It was therefore decided to review all the Standard Training Evaluation Forms provided by COL for the years 1993-2000 and to send the more detailed Self-Completion Questionnaires only to the participants in the training events in the years 1997-2000 for whom there were complete contact details (Table 6).

Table 6 Numbers of participants in 1997-2000 COL training events surveyed in the Training Impact Study (* denotes Case Study Sites)

Region/country	Number of former participants
TOTAL FOR AFRICA	187
Ghana*	20
Sierra Leone	42
Uganda*	14
Tanzania	16
Kenya	42
Zambia*	39
(Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Senegal, South Africa Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Seychelles, Namibia, Mozambique)	14
TOTAL FOR ASIA	130
Sir Lanka	15
Bagladesh*	14
Pakistan	7
India*	89
(China, Indonesia)	5
TOTAL FOR CARIBBEAN	29
Guyana*	
TOTAL FOR THE THREE REGIONS	**346**

2.7 Evaluation phases and milestones

The phases and milestones for the Training Impact Study were planned as follows.

Phase 1. Evidence from existing documents/evaluations held by COL (13-24 March 2000)

- review of documentation regarding the goals, establishment and history of the COL training events and the training reports and evaluations provided by COL;
- identification of the client institutions, achievements and emergent issues and how these mapped onto the concerns of COL as reflected in the Terms of Reference of the Training Impact Study; and
- liaison with Ms Patricia McWilliams, COL Education Specialist, to ensure that the questions, Case Study Sites, Research Associates, Workshop Co-ordinators and Key Informants were representative and in accord with COL's requirements.

Milestone 1. Approval of evaluation strategy and instrument design (27 March 2000)

Phase 2. Initiation of data collection (27 March – 7 April 2000)

- with the support of COL, contact made with the contact persons and through them, Research Associates at the six Case Study Sites and agreement reached on the methodology, assistance, time and commitment needed and Research Associates' roles and tasks; and
- finalisation of the design of the Interview Proforma, Self-Completion Questionnaire, Workshop Co-ordinators' Questionnaire and Key Informants' Questionnaire and the scheduling for data collection from these.

Phase 3. Data collection (4 April 4 – 19 May 2000)

- data collected by the Research Associates from senior managers, staff trainers, teaching or training staff at the Case Study Sites and from former participants in COL training events;
- data collected by the researchers from former participants in COL training events, former Workshop Co-ordinators, and Key Informants; and
- progressive focusing on emergent issues and mapping these onto COL's Terms of Reference for the Training Impact Study.

Phase 4. Analysis and interpretation (22 May – 2 June 2000)

- review of all evidence and assessment of the extent to which the focal questions and emergent issues had been addressed; and
- collection of additional data and illustrative case study material.

Milestone II Review of preliminary findings (19 June 2000)

Phase 5. Preparation of the Final Report and initial validation (5 – 30 June 2000)

- assembly of the Final Report in accord with the Terms of Reference; and
- follow-up interviews as necessary to supplement the above data, clarify outstanding issues and ensure validation by those contributing to the Final Report.

Milestone III Submission of Final Report (14 July 2000)

2.8 The Final Report

The Final Report was required to:

- compare the goals and principles of the COL training programs with the previously-collected and retrospective evidence of client satisfaction;
- compare the demonstrated outcomes of the training programs in the Case Study Sites with the expectations of COL and these institutions;
- diagnose emerging needs, trends and expectations in training; and
- provide COL with reliable and valid data that will help guide and shape its training strategies and programmes, and in particular, for the period of its Three-Year Plan, 2000-2003.

3. CONDUCTING THE SURVEYS

The interview schedules and questionnaires were air-mailed to the six Research Associates and other respondents between 10 – 12 April 2000 with covering letters on COL-headed stationery over the signature of the President/CEO of COL and requests to respond by 4 May 2000.

The six Research Associates identified and interviewed five individuals as requested and returned all the transcripts by the deadline, thus providing the lead researchers with 30 sets of feedback from senior and mid-level staff involved in distance education and with experience of COL training events.

The three postal surveys, involving several hundred respondents across the Commonwealth, presented a greater challenge. The response rate was clearly going to be a vital factor. If it was 70% or more, some confidence might be placed in the findings in the individual survey instruments, the assumption being that the pattern of replies by non-respondents would have been the same as of those of the respondents. However, as the response rate declines so must confidence in any such assumption. Reminders and even repeat reminders can be sent out, but the validity of the data thus prompted may be suspect because respondents may provide only brief and cryptic comments and tick boxes at random to avoid any further pressure from the researchers. With a low response rate, typically 30% or less, little confidence may be placed in any trends indicated.

The initial response rates to the Self-Completion Questionnaires I, II and III were extremely poor and reminders were mailed out to non-respondents on 8 May 2000 (Appendix J). The deadline for the return of the Questionnaires was extended to May 31. However, by June 5, relatively few questionnaires had still been received. The lead researchers reported this to COL and sought and gained approval for a revised timeline. Phase 4 – Analysis and interpretation, originally scheduled for May 22 - June 2, was re-scheduled for completion by June 17; the submission of Milestone II – Review of Preliminary Findings, originally scheduled for June 19 was set back until July 3.

The final response rates to the various surveys are given in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Percentage response rates

Instrument	Response rate
Standard Training Evaluation Format (former participants in COL training events)	46%
Self-Completion Questionnaire I (former participants in COL training events 1997-2000)	26%
Self-Completion Questionnaire II (Workshop Co-ordinators of COL training events)	41%
Self-Completion Questionnaire III (Key Informants)	44%

A poor response rate had always been anticipated for Questionnaire I because of the logistical problems of contacting participants in training events up to three years ago. It had always been considered likely that some of these would have changed their institutions or positions, left employment or retired, moved on from their last known address, or were even deceased. What was not anticipated was a number of respondents reporting that they had neither experience of

distance education nor a COL workshop and therefore found it impossible to answer the questions. This raised questions about the lists of participants supplied to the researchers and suggested that one cause of the low response rate might have been the inclusion of people with a limited interest in the field or the survey.

The poor response rates to Questionnaires II and III were both surprising and disappointing, given that most of those contacted had been recommended by, and could be classified as key stakeholders in, COL. However, the study was never intended to depend upon any one instrument or group of stakeholders. It was planned to draw upon the findings of the four separate survey instruments plus the Workshop Co-ordinators' reports and the Standard Training Activity Evaluation forms supplied by COL. The intention was to illuminate the issues and perceptions surrounding the training events and, through a process of 'triangulation', establish correlations across the various instruments and groups of respondents. The lead researchers were also to work independently through the data sets, only sharing and integrating these in the final stages, in order to ensure objectivity in correlating the trends and observations within the various sets of responses. There were many recurrent observations in these responses, some positive and some negative, and on the basis of these data, the researchers were able report with confidence on their findings.

4 DATA FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 COL Standard Training Evaluation Forms

4.1.1 Co-ordinators' reports

From the 114 training events recorded between 1990-2000, the researchers could only access 61 co-ordinators' reports. The best of these provided valuable insights into the workshops, distance teaching institutions and participants. However, a number were sketchy, incomplete, or mere summaries of the events (***Recommendation 1***).

The 1993 draft COL Strategic Plan: Training recommended the development and application of a Standard Training Activity Evaluation instrument. This was subsequently developed (Appendix A) but only 30 of the post-1993 workshop reports included completed questionnaires, few summarised the findings and fewer still provided in-depth analysis of these data. Some co-ordinators had applied their own instruments, a practice which might be justifiable where specific feedback was required e.g., on courses on multimedia and internet-based learning, had the Standard Training Evaluation instrument also been used. As a consequence of these variations from required practice, findings could only be based on the rankings and comments of 578 of the 1253 participants in these training events.

The researchers noted that the COL Standard Training Activity Evaluation questionnaire provides only basic information. Also, only two of the thirteen questions provide a 'no opinion', so in most cases, any lack of response may be due to oversight or having nowhere to indicate 'no opinion'. Several co-ordinators observed that this instrument neither discriminates nor yields data of consequence regarding participant motivations for attending these events which makes it difficult to gauge, and gauge the reasons for, participant satisfaction with these events. (***Recommendation 2***)

It would appear that only a small minority of co-ordinators used formative evaluation – seeking feedback at the start and/or finish of each day and adjusting the proceedings accordingly. (***Recommendation 3***)

4.1.2 The aims and purposes of the training events

Table 7 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Question 1 (n=578)

Q. 1 The objectives of the workshop were clearly stated:				
Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
44	49	4	2	1

Ninety-three percent of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that the workshop objectives were clearly stated. The co-ordinators' reports suggested that COL's role was largely reactive in this regard, a consequence of institutions organising or identifying needs for events and then seeking support from COL, memorandums of understanding as, for example, between COL and UNESCO, or contractual arrangements as, for example between COL and ADB.

4.1.3 Planning

The Workshop Co-ordinators reported that planning could be improved by arriving well before events or making preliminary visits to familiarise themselves with the issues and needs. They also noted that on-site post-workshop de-briefing and follow-up were important and that time should be allowed for this. (***Recommendation 4****)*

Employing local presenters and resource persons meets COL's objective of developing local expertise and having more than one presenter/resource person gives greater diversity in ideas, practice and presentational style. However, in some contexts, it proved difficult to identify resource persons with the necessary expertise and experience. *(**Recommendation 8**)*

There tended to be a 'halo effect', with out-of-country co-ordinators or presenters receiving higher evaluations than their local counterparts. This, and the fact that international co-ordinators tended also to submit more informative workshop reports than the locals suggests a need for more on-going training of the latter. *(**Recommendation 9**)*

4.1.4 Physical and logistical arrangements

Table 8 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Question 3 (n=578)

Q. 3. The workshop's physical and logistical arrangements were:

Poor	Mediocre	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
4	7	39	41	9

Eight-nine percent of the participants rated the venue and logistics as 'satisfactory', 'good' or 'excellent'. A few individuals complained about lack of air-conditioning, poor acoustics, and venues being non-conducive to sustained work or being changed at the last moment. There were also occasional technical/operational/logistical problems and contingencies – for example, two training events coincided with staff strikes at the host institutions. The venue preparations/logistics went more smoothly when the trainers and organisers were able to meet before the event.

Several respondents recorded that participants were called away on institutional matters. One Co-ordinator estimated that such interruptions and intermittent attendance affected 18 hours of the 60-hour workshop. *(**Recommendation 5**)*

Participants had mixed views on local dignitaries attending the events. While this might accord with local protocol or publicity needs, their short attendance was construed as indicating the true significance of these events.

The *per diems*, travel allowances and other privileges provided by COL were greatly appreciated. Participants reported occasional communications and organisational problems between the host/collaborating agency and COL. Late selection of some participants caused problems with travel arrangements and some participants failed to turn up for certain training events, either because of sluggish local handling of correspondence, invitations and registrations or because or work or family commitments. *(**Recommendation 6**)*

It was noted that there should be a generous lead-time – possibly one month – in issuing invitations and familiarising participants with the event's aims. There were also suggestions in the Standard Training Activity Evaluation forms for workshop material to be sent out beforehand, for participants to engage in some preparatory work, or for pre-workshop sessions, but there is little evidence of these being acted on. Sending out pre-workshop information can present logistical problems – at one event, 11% of the participants failed to receive their material and at another, postal delays meant that 50% of the participants only received their

material on arriving at the workshop. However, it was also noted that at one event only 25% of the participants had studied the material beforehand. *(**Recommendation 7**)*

4.1.5 Participant expectations of the workshops

Table 9 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Question 6 (n=578)

Q. 6. I participated in this course to:		
Improve my performance my present position	Prepare myself for new tasks or responsibilities	Gain general information and knowledge
66	73	73

As noted in 4.1.1, this question is not discriminating and the responses show only that participants had mixed motivations for attending the events.

Table 10 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Question 2 (n=578)

Q. 2. My expectations of the workshop have been:			
Fully met	Not met at all	Partially met	No response
55	4	38	3

Q. 2 does not link to Q. 6. So there is no way of gauging whether specific expectations had been met. There is a danger of post-workshop euphoria in such evaluations but 55% of the respondents rated their expectations as 'fully met'. Well over a third of the participants indicated that their needs had been only 'partially met' – but this may reflect the limitations of the 'one-off' workshop rather than any criticism of the event itself. *(**Recommendations 10 and 11**)*

4.1.6 Participant satisfaction

Table 11 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Questions 4, 7 and 8 (n=578)

Q. 4 The course content and its presentations were:						
	Poor	Mediocre	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent	No response
	1	2	21	49	26	1
Q. 7 The course materials, i.e. handouts, were:						
	Poor	Mediocre	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent	No response
	1	4	23	45	22	5
Q. 8 Audio-visual materials were:						
	Poor	Mediocre	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent	No response
	4	7	33	40	9	7

Many participants reported high levels of satisfaction with the workshops and the attitudes and skills of the co-ordinators and resource persons. The events used a mix of exposition, demonstration, plenary and group sessions and group and individual activities and 75% of the participants rated the content and presentations as 'good' or 'excellent', 67% rated the course materials as 'good' or 'excellent' and 73% the audio-visual materials as 'satisfactory' or 'good'.

4.1.7 Pace, structure, workload and duration

Table 12 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Questions 9 and 10 (n=578)

Q. 9	Pace of the course was:					
	Too Fast	Satisfactory			Too Slow	
	14	84			2	
Q. 10	Workload was:					
	Very light	Light	OK	Heavy	Very Heavy	No response
	1	10	58	23	4	4

Eight-four percent of the participants rated the pace of their workshop as 'satisfactory'. However, 14% ranked the pace as 'too fast' and 27% the workload as 'heavy' or 'too heavy'. This may confirm the view expressed by some of the Co-ordinators that participants could be of high calibre but heterogeneous in background, experience and discipline. Some Co-ordinators reported difficulty in gaining prior information on the educational levels, experience and expectations of the participants. In one case, the Co-ordinator had no knowledge of the identities or affiliations of the participants until he arrived at the venue. In another, several participants had no direct involvement in distance education and did not know why they had been selected. Co-ordinators clearly need to be well-advised in advance about the participants so that they can plan for the varying needs. There is also need to select the participants with care. Several co-ordinators suggested that COL should control this process but this may prove difficult, politically and logistically. Co-ordinators also suggested that while it is time-consuming to diagnose, negotiate and accommodate the participants' expectations, it is important to give participants the opportunity to contribute to the schedule, objectives and content at the start of the workshop *(**Recommendation 7**)*. Formative evaluation can also be beneficial in these regards *(**Recommendation 3**)*.

Table 13 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Questions 4, 11, 12 and 13 (n=578)

Q.4	There was adequate time provided for various activities:					
	Sometimes	Always	No opinion	Seldom	Never	No response
	42	44	7	4	1	2
Q.11	Occasions to discuss and actively participate were:					
	Insufficient		Satisfactory		Excessive	No response
	7		84		2	7
Q.12	The number of practical activities, i.e. demonstrations/hands-on, was					
	Insufficient		Satisfactory		Excessive	No response
	18		65		3	14
Q.13	The length of the course/workshop was:					
	Insufficient		Satisfactory		Excessive	No response
	31		60		4	5

Participants' ratings of the time allocated to the various activities were evenly divided, with 42% responding 'sometimes' and 44% 'always'. The 84% 'satisfactory' rating for Q.11 indicates that the workshops are highly participatory. Participants particularly appreciate the practical exercises and the data show that 18% would have liked more time for these. However, a number of Co-ordinators, noting this favouring of practical over theoretical, expressed concern that the participants may not always fully appreciate the principles underpinning the work.

The workshop duration's ranged from 2 days to 2-3 weeks. The fact that the responses to Q. 13. show that almost one third of the participants rated their workshop's duration as 'insufficient'

may be a further indicator of the varying abilities and expectations of the participants or, again, that 'one-off' workshops cannot completely satisfy the needs of all participants. In the longer events, some participants lost concentration during the final days.

Participants observed that the events served to strengthen regional, national and international understandings, foster the development of groups with shared interests, and encouraged rapport and collaboration between the participants, all of which they valued highly. The Co-ordinators felt that the workshops met most of the intended goals and commented favourably on the dedication and participation of the participants. However, this still leaves the fundamental question unanswered – did the experience lead to long-term changes in attitudes and practices in the participants and in those they subsequently worked with, and at the organisational or systemic level?

4.1.8 Outcomes and follow-up

The majority of participants appeared to leave the events highly motivated and equipped with plans and materials to implement the new ideas. However, several suggested that more on-going support was needed to maintain the momentum of these events. Some were concerned about their capacity to cope with institutional inertia, colleagues' conservatism and lack of skills in support personnel. Others noted the lack of systemic training and support in their institutions. Yet others observed that work in distance education rarely counts for tenure or promotion and that, in African contexts, it is unclear whether this should constitute part of normal university work or qualify for special remuneration. A number of participants observed that there were few senior managers with a clear vision, a strong grasp of distance education agendas and a willingness to demonstrate commitment in practical ways. Strategies suggested to address these issues were:

- involving more CEOs/senior managers in the workshops/courses;
- organising follow-up training events in institutions;
- post-workshop assignments reviewed by co-ordinators, resource persons or local mentors; and
- evaluating the impact of the training on the participants or institutions six months after the event. *(**Recommendations 12 and 13**)*

4.1.9 Training for senior managers

A recurrent theme in the feedback was the need to inform and educate politicians, government officers, senior administrators and senior academics about open and distance education. The COL/UNESCO workshop held in Uganda in March-April 2000 suggested the need for:

- sensitisation workshops for university vice-chancellors, academic registrars and council members to strengthen understandings of and regional collaboration in distance education;
- strategies to sensitise ministers, permanent secretaries and commissioners for education; and
- on-going professional development for managers of distance education. *(**Recommendation 14**)*

4.1.10 Further training initiatives

Suggestions for further training initiatives included:

- courses on financial management of distance education;
- more extended workshops for training trainers *(**Recommendation 9**)*;
- courses on research, evaluation and quality assurance in distance education; and
- the development of case studies of successful distance education institutions. *(**Recommendation 15**).*

4.1.11 Formal programs

Several participants suggested the need for certificated or postgraduate programs in distance education. IGNOU offers such programs in distance mode, the online UKOU MA (Distance Education) is being taken in several Commonwealth countries and it was reported that an MA and PhD in Distance Education are shortly to be established in Harare. *(**Recommendation 16**)*

4.2 Self-Completion Questionnaires from former participants in COL training events

4.2.1 Conduct of survey

A Self-Completion Questionnaire (Appendix C) was designed to elicit information from participants in COL training events between 1997-2000. The sample was drawn from institutions in the six geographical regions identified in Table 14. The size of the sub-samples was intended to reflect the proportion of COL training events conducted within this three-year period.

Table 14 Constitution of the sample receiving the Self-Completion Questionnaire

	Number in sample	%	Number of COL Training Events	%
Africa	187	54	15	44
Asia	130	38	14	41
Caribbean	29	8	5	15

In designing this Questionnaire, the intention was to compare the findings between the different regions and years and, if there were significant differences in these, to analyse the data sets separately. If there were no significant differences it was considered legitimate to combine these data and identify trends that may apply globally.

As shown in Figure 2, Section 3, the survey only attracted a response rate of 26%. In isolation, these responses would have had to be treated with great caution but triangulating these with data from the other surveys revealed common trends, perceptions and needs.

4.2.2 Issues facing the institutions and the training needs

Responses to Q. 1 on the issues facing the universities revealed that the institutions were widening and expanding provision, but under difficult conditions. The impression was given of serious inadequacies in funding, staffing, the provision of books, periodicals, knowledge media and even quite basic equipment. Student record systems and monitoring of assignments was regarded as poor. Some respondents reported that they lacked any sort of centre or permanent office for their work. Several indicated that they would welcome advice on income generation and how to maximise the available resources. There were also adverse comments on government policies on fees for distance courses; when these were too low, there was insufficient income to sustain the programs and when they too high, or higher than for on-campus programs, there was a reduction in enrolments with subsequent loss of income. It was evident that there is a great need for COL, through training events and other means, to inform those in positions of influence and directly responsible for distance education about the cost effectiveness and cost benefits of this form of provision (Rumble, 1997). This could include strategies for generating additional income, maximising existing resources, sharing costs and achieving economies of scale *(**Recommendation 14**).*

The institutions and individuals surveyed were heterogeneous in their levels of development, sophistication and training needs. The respondents confirmed two clusters of training needs:

- those for which governments or institutions should accept responsibility; and
- those where COL could and should continue to make a significant training contribution.

In regard to the first bullet point, several respondents referred to the need to increase awareness among politicians, educators, the general public and potential learners of how distance and open learning is used around the world and can be applied in various contexts. Many people still do not distinguish between distance education and the former, lowly-regarded correspondence courses and this adversely affects public perceptions. It was noted that there was need for COL, in collaboration with governments and institutions to mount national publicity campaigns for open and distance education and that there were many prominent national figures who have graduated through distance learning who could provide testimonies for such events. *(**Recommendation 14**).*

In regard to the second bullet point, the respondents referred to the inadequate training in dual-mode institutions. One respondent observed: 'New staff are informed that they have to offer their course to distance students without an induction course in distance techniques'. Another commented: 'Most faculty, students and professors are ignorant of the meaning and context of distance and open learning'. Yet another wrote: 'Most of the senior academics, who are policymakers, are not clear about open and distance learning'. It was noted that training was needed, not only for the full-time academic staff but for part-time and non-academic staff and that staff often not only lacked ability but commitment, due to their heavy workloads and the little or no remuneration for their efforts. Others indicated that financial managers often had insufficient training and skill to manage the budgets. Implicit in these comments was the need to change attitudes within the institutions *(**Recommendation 13** and **Recommendation 14**).* There are still many holding negative attitudes towards distance education. Several respondents reported that their colleagues were at best non-supportive and at worst opposed to distance education, arguing that the money spent on it would be better spent on increasing access by providing more residential and academic facilities on-campus.

Several respondents, whilst commenting favourably on the COL-provided training, indicated that training was needed over a range of topics and over a wide range of levels (***Recommendation 15***.). Others noted that training was needed to address the poor interaction between teachers and learners and learners and learners. This was partly attributable, as one respondent expressed it, to: 'Poor understanding about procedures for student support . . . commenting on assignments. . conducting examinations . . a poor student support system'. This called for training of both academic and support staff (Simpson, 2000). Other respondents suggested that courses were needed that led to formal qualifications (***Recommendation 16***). Some respondents were looking for sponsorship for full- or part-time study. Others suggested that attachments to other Distance Education Centres would help share expertise and improve quality, confirming that COL is correct in proposing this in its future operations.

4.2.3 Training topics

Q. 2 investigated how highly 22 possible training topics were rated. The frequency distributions are given in Table 15. The total of returned questionnaires was N = 91 and this base figure was converted into percentages. Where this fails to add up to 100%, this is because some respondents failed to answer this question.

Table 15 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Question 2 (N = 91)

Q. 2 How highly do you rate the importance of training in each of the following areas?

	Very High	High	Av.	Low	Very Low
Understanding open and distance learning	65	18	12	3	-
Diagnosing learners' needs and circumstances.	68	23	7	-	-
Setting course objectives.	55	33	9	1	-
Curriculum / course development	64	25	5	2	-
Instructional design/ writing for in print material	65	25	7	1	1
Instructional design/scripting for AV material	51	32	11	3	1
Instructional design in computer based learning.	49	24	15	5	4
Instructional design in Internet/Web instruction.	49	19	16	8	8
Basic radio/audio production	29	38	21	9	2
Basic TV production	26	42	22	5	3
Basic computer skills	36	38	19	2	3
Desktop publishing	32	38	22	2	3
Tutoring/counselling	52	30	11	4	-
Library/information management	26	41	26	3	2
Student support services	57	30	9	1	-
Assessing learner performance.	57	32	9	1	-
Costing open and distance learning.	57	27	13	-	-
Evaluating open and distance learning systems.	62	29	8	1	-
Evaluating open and distance learning outcomes.	64	22	9	2	-
Managing open and distance learning systems.	56	32	9	1	-
Researching open and distance education.	62	24	11	1	-
Establishing Quality Assurance procedures	65	27	5	-	-

All of the topics rated highly. The total number of respondents rating these training topics as 'very high ' and high' may be placed in three groups (Table 16).

Table 16 Grouping of frequency distributions in Table 15

Highest ratings

Setting course objectives
Curriculum / course development
Instructional design/ writing for in print material
Assessing learner performance
Establishing Quality Assurance procedures
Student support services
Managing open and distance learning systems
Diagnosing learners' needs and circumstances

Mid level ratings

Costing open and distance learning
Understanding open and distance learning
Instructional design/scripting for AV material
Evaluating open and distance learning systems
Tutoring/counselling
Evaluating open and distance learning outcomes
Researching open and distance education

Low level ratings

Instructional design in computer based learning
Instructional design in Internet/Web instruction
Basic radio/audio production
Basic TV production
Basic computer skills
Desktop publishing
Library/information management

The developed countries' pre-occupation with delivering materials digitally (Inglis, Ling and Joosten, 1999), internet/web-based education and information management (Eisenstadt and Vincent, 1998, Freeman et al , 2000) is not apparent here; such items rated less than other topics. Whether this is due to a lack of access to these tools or because these particular needs have already been met can only be a matter for speculation. The most highly rated topics were those associated with basic course design and development (Lockwood, 1998), learner needs, course objectives (Melton, 1997), learner assessment (Morgan and O'Reilly, 1999, quality assurance (Freeman, 1993) and course evaluation (Calder, 1994). However, the difference between these and the topics in the mid level rating group is small and any conclusions can only be speculative.

Q. 2 also invited respondents to list and rate other training topics and the following suggestions were made:

- policy-making and planning for open and distance education;
- marketing open and distance learning;
- evaluating collaborative arrangements within a region; and
- student databases and record-keeping.

4.2.4 Changing needs

Q. 3 asked respondents to describe in what ways and why the training needs have changed over the past ten years. The points to emerge from this were:

- the increased demand for education from school to postgraduate level, and the growing awareness, albeit still poorly developed, of the potential of distance education;
- the changing commitment from long distance education courses, with little or no choice in options, to short courses with substantial choice;
- the opportunity and need to apply distance education methodologies and technologies to literacy, basic education and school-level, continuing education and enrichment programs Galbraith, 2001);
- the cost effectiveness of distance education and economies of scale may be recognised and the number of learners may have increased, but the financial, human and physical resources have remained stagnant;
- changing technology has contributed to changing needs and practices – but not all learners in developing countries have access to these media;
- the increased competition in higher education and presence of new/global providers providing quality products albeit at relatively high costs, representing challenges to existing institutions;
- poor political leadership and management limiting distance education development (Latchem and Hanna, 2001);
- academic and financial rewards insufficient to attract and retain quality staff;
- COL's training interventions have been invaluable but have been carried out in a piecemeal way and have overlooked some important areas *(**Recommendations 12, 14** and **16***);
- the need for more national and regional evidence of the benefits of, and best practice in, distance education to inform decision-makers. Most evidence provided in the workshops had been drawn from developed rather than developing countries; and
- the need for more research into distance education systems, course design and development.

4.2.5 Barriers or constraints in providing training

Q. 4 asked the respondents to describe the main barriers or constraints in providing training. Several respondents were from regions that had suffered civil wars or political unrest which had clearly had a major impact upon infrastructure and institutions and a severely demoralising effect. Many referred to the low political priority given to distance education. One respondent

observed: ' There is no national distance education policy . . .which retards the approval of funds either by government or donors'. As in 4.1, many concerns were expressed about the lack of resources and poor administration of distance education. It was noted that it was very difficult to change colleagues' attitudes and behaviour. There was widespread belief that distance education was an inferior methodology, a view conveyed to junior staff who could make a contribution but were dissuaded from doing so. Evidence and good examples were needed to help persuade colleagues to embrace the new methodologies. (SEE Abdullah, 1995, Mar and Mak, 1995)

There was concern about the nature of existing training provision. One respondent wrote: 'There is no training program . . . ad hoc and non-sustained training programs. . a lack of proper co-ordination, planning and support. . and evaluation'. The lack of national experts to train the trainers was often commented on and the fact that international experts were expensive and while highly professional, unable to relate to local situations. *(**Recommendations 8** and **9**)* It was also noted that often the most appropriate people were not selected for the training events, which adversely affected staff moral. One respondent said: 'Nepotism is another barrier or constraint'.

Several respondents noted the severe pressure they were working under, exacerbated by the lack of qualified support personnel and essential resources. Respondents were aware of the potential of the new communication media but realistic in noting the low levels of computer literacy, access and infrastructure provision in their countries. *(**Recommendations 11** and **13**)*

4.2.6 Forms of training provision

Q. 5 asked respondents to rate the importance of different forms of provision and identify other forms. The frequency of responses is given in Table 16.

Table 17 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Question 5 (N = 91)

Q. 5 How highly do you rate the importance of each of the following forms of training provision?

	Very High	High	Av.	Low	Very Low
Workshops by experts from overseas.	42	37	16	-	-
Workshops by experts from your own country/region.	62	27	8	2	-
Workshops by experts from your own institution.	23	41	29	4	2
Self or guided learning using print study materials.	27	44	23	3	1
Self or guided learning using computer courseware.	25	37	25	8	2
Self or guided instruction using Internet/Web.	22	35	25	11	2

These findings suggest that experts from the same region or country may be rated as highly or more so than overseas experts, but that experts from within the respondents' own institutions may be rated less highly. Whilst self-instructional or guided training materials in the forms identified all rated relatively highly, computer- and web-based training rated less well than traditional print-based material. This may support the tentative findings in 4.2.3 above about training in the new media. Other strategies suggested by respondents were:

- developing audio-visual media training materials;
- seconding experts to institutions for short periods;
- exchange programs/visits to successful centres;
- professionally-focused study in one's own or other institutions;
- regional seminars and conferences; and
- networks of peer, self-help and mutual support groups.

4.2.7 COL training events and outcomes

Q. 7 asked: 'Were there any particular factors that contributed to, or detracted from, this training event?' There was broad agreement that the quality of the COL experts was instrumental in the success of the workshops and that the breadth and depth of their experience impressed the participants. It was noted that where only one resource person was available it put that person under considerable pressure and that 'team teaching' was necessary to develop the skills of local co-presenters *(**Recommendations 8** and **9**).* The COL Training Toolkits were seen to as another invaluable resource.

Participants valued the opportunities to discuss issues of mutual interest with colleagues from other institutions, regions or countries. However, such participant diversity can come at a cost; where the range of experience and skill is too wide, it can lead to organisational and methodological problems.

There was great appreciation of the financial support from COL and the support of the host institutions in mounting the training events. There was some criticism of administrative procedures such as late registrations or releases of funds. There were calls for training events to be held away from the participants' workplaces to avoid being called from sessions to attend to workaday matters (***Recommendations 5*** and ***7**).*

Many respondents thought that the time was too little for the work expectations. Lack of follow-up to see how participants fared in implementing the new ideas and practices was a common cause of complaint *(**Recommendation 12**).*

Q. 8 asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with statements about the training events they attended. It should be noted that a significant proportion failed to respond to the question.

Table 18 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Question 8 (N = 91)

Q. 8 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements with regard to this COL training event? (Rate from Strongly Agree [S.A] to Strongly Disagree [S.DA]	SA	A	Av.	DA	S DA
The training was provided where and when most needed	48	25	3	2	1
The training was affordable.	34	25	10	4	-
The training attracted a wide and representative cross-section of staff.	31	31	11	2	3
The training resulted in improved practice.	23	35	15	2	-
The training had a major impact at the organisational level	17	30	15	2	-

There was general agreement with these statements. The events appear to have been well targeted, affordable, and attended by a wide and representative cross-section of staff. However, the 58% 'strongly agree' or ' agree' response rate on the question of improved practice and 47% response rate to the question on institutional impact may indicate that the longer-term outcomes may have been less than expected. Indeed, some respondents indicated that they were subsequently unable to practice the skills and techniques presented in the training events.

Q. 9 asked the respondents to provide examples of ways in which the COL training events had improved practice and had an institutional impact. The respondents tended to offer generalisations rather than specific illustrations but the general tone was positive and indicated a significant impact on practice. At the individual level, respondents referred to their greater confidence, understanding of what was involved and orientation towards better practice. At the institutional level, they cited administrators gaining a better understanding of distance education, improvements in course development, material design, assignment handling, examination procedures and quality assurance, increased concern for student-centred and active learning and improved performance in central and regional support staff. One respondent wrote: ' (The) Distance education program is receiving overwhelming response from students and are asking for more'. Another stated: 'Students pass

examinations set by National Education Board in competition with students from various institutions. Our students do well and as a result of systematically following the methods highlighted by COL'.

Again, several respondents referred to the value of the COL Training Toolkit. One respondent wrote: 'It has widened and deepened understanding of QA in distance education (and) provided a permanent source of reference'. Some respondents were able to report that particular training events had led to the establishment of Distance Education Centres or Departments of Extension Studies or the establishment or extension of distance education programs. Others indicated that the COL workshops had led to regional and international collaboration and sharing expertise and materials.

Q. 10 asked: 'In your experience, how and why have COL training programs succeeded or failed over the past ten years? There was general agreement as to the main reasons for success – the skills, professionalism, enthusiasm and experience of the co-ordinators/resource persons and to quote two participants, 'Well developed instructional materials . . . well delivered by a dedicated expert' and a 'Toolkit written in clear and easy to understand format'. However, many believed that the emphasis should be changed from training practitioners to training the trainers as this would bring greater benefits *(**Recommendations 8** and **9).***

Several participants noted the need to develop clear criteria to judge whether training events had been successful and to collect and analyse these data *(**Recommendation 1***). As noted earlier, there was a clear perception amongst respondents that the training events were isolated events with no follow-up. One respondent judged COL's training as having: 'failed over last ten years because there have been no follow-up exercises'. Another suggested that they had: 'failed to establish a continuous relationship *(**Recommendations 12** and **13**).*

Again, there were some who believed the planning/administration of these events could be improved and cast doubts on whether the most appropriate people were selected for the training *(**Recommendations 6** and **10).***

Q. 11 asked: 'In your experience, what have been the main benefits of the COL training program?'. The main benefits may be summarised as:

- providing a significant amount of training at the points needed and in accord with COL's mission;
- raising awareness of open and distance learning;
- developing the necessary skills and techniques;
- changing attitudes;
- acting as a spur to further in-house training and capacity-building;
- improving the quality of teaching materials and systems;
- expanding access and increasing learner opportunities; and
- bringing people together, some committed to distance education and others more ambivalent.

One respondent saw the main benefit as encouraging: 'Commonwealth leaders to expand and support distance education world-wide . . . and provide access and equally of education' (***Recommendation 14).*** Another respondent referred to 'An unequalled zeal by the management and staff to implement distance learning programs'.

While the respondents clearly valued the contributions of international experts they noted that it was local teachers and trainers who must take open and distance learning forward and that they should not rely on on-going outside help but rather aim to develop their own expertise. There was evidence that some COL events had stimulated joint training programs and a sharing of ideas, materials and expertise (***Recommendation 8***).

Q. 12 asked: 'Do you know of any persons whose careers have progressed partly as a result of COL training?'. Respondents made the point that attendance at COL training events does not receive any professional recognition (***Recommendation 16***) but does provide the stimulus and opportunity to acquire new skills and techniques by which a person can demonstrate their ability and potential. Many respondents stated that they had benefited professionally as well as receiving promotion. Others noted that colleagues who had attended COL workshops had been promoted or appointed to more senior positions in distance education. One respondent wrote: 'I know three people from my

department of Distance Education . . . who have tremendously improved because of COL training', while another stated: 'Management at my institution have confidently placed one member of staff to co-ordinate/spearhead distance learning . . .basically on account of COL training' and several individuals were identified who had attended these events and subsequently risen to the position of Director of Distance Education in their universities. Some partly attributed their scholarships to pursue MA and PhD degrees or senior positions to their attending COL training events and continuing involvement with COL. Others reported leading Task Groups or making significant contributions to their institutions and distance education in general (***Recommendation 9***).

4.2.8 Future needs

Q. 13 asked: 'Are there any other points that you would like to make about COL training programs?' It was evident from the responses that there was still high demand for such events. There were requests for more training sessions, more resources, more support to persuade governments and donor agencies to fund distance education and more time-release for course attendance. There were also suggestions that the courses be more strategic in terms of audience, level and type of capacity building. Respondents also commented that the selection of participants may sometimes be unsound. They noted that some teachers were being thrust into workshops for which they were ill-prepared and from which they were unlikely to benefit and on the other hand, some others were too experienced and knowledgeable for the programs offered. It is thus critical that the content and level of the courses be appropriate to the targeted groups. Every attempt should be made to specify the prerequisites of the participants and ensure that they are aware of the content and focus of the events (***Recommendations 10*** *and* ***11****).*

Respondents referred to the need to target such agents of change as government officials, senior and middle managers as well as practitioners and noted that one-off events had limited impact and that follow-through was needed for major and long-term impact. They also noted the benefits of evaluating the short and longer-term outcomes of the training and on-going activities *(**Recommendations 12** and **13**).*

Residential courses involving international experts and groups of staff were seen as expensive to mount and it was suggested that COL should employ more distance learning methods in its training, to reduce costs, to benefit more trainees, and to provide 'just-in-time' and customised training.

Respondents also recognised the need to balance the immediate and specific needs of institutions and individuals with COL's longer-term goals of investing in key individuals who would become the next generation of leaders, change agents and trainers and in self-sufficient centres of excellence which could provide assistance to others.

4.3 Future COL Activities

4.3.1 Identification of Activities

Q. 14 asked respondents to rate the importance of future activities by COL. The frequency distribution is presented in Table 19.

Table 19 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Question 14 (N = 91)

Q. 14 How highly do you rate the importance of the following possible future activities by COL?

	Very High	High	Av.	Low	Very Low
The same level of training support provided by COL.	21	27	26	7	2
An increased level of training support provided by COL.	82	10	2		-
A greater focus on training the policymakers or managers	54	25	16	2	-
A greater use of a 'train-the-trainers approach' supporting in-house training.	70	19	7	1	-

The provision of training kits to support in-house training	66	26	4	-	1
A greater use of in-country collaboration in training.	56	33	7	-	1
The provision of formal qualifications or accreditation for training.	55	31	8	2	-
Increasing use of the Internet/Web for training.	35	34	19	7	-

There was an extremely positive rating for all the activities listed and particularly those relating to future training support by COL. The training of policy-makers and planners and through the internet/web were marginally less highly rated.

Several respondents suggested that scholarships or sponsorships to study open and distance learning could bring worthwhile returns as could support for short-term attachments, visits to other countries or distance education providers, conferences or seminars.

4.3.2 Success and failure

Q. 15 asked the respondents to comment on how and why these activities might succeed or fail. The majority of comments reinforced the need for:

- governmental support and the support of key gatekeepers in the institutions themselves;
- efficient administration, planning and evaluation of courses, follow-up and monitoring of subsequent outcomes; (***Recommendations 5*** through to ***13***)
- 'training the trainers' and thus developing local expertise; (***Recommendations 8*** and ***9***)
- course provision at different levels, leading to accreditation; (***Recommendation 16****.)*
- alternative forms of training delivery; (***Recommendation 15***)
- greater collaboration between institutions and countries; (***Recommendation 14***) and
- more regular information from COL on developments in the field.

Q. 16 asked respondents to rate the importance of several common pitfalls or problems that COL might experience in using the strategies listed in Question 14 and to suggest others. The frequency distribution of replies are given in Table 20.

Table 20 Percentage frequency distribution of responses to Question 16 (N = 91)

Q. 16 How would you rate the importance of the following pitfalls or problems that COL might experience in using the strategies listed in Question 14 ? (Very Important [VP] to Not Important At All [NIAA])

	VP	I	Av.	NI	NIAA
Opposition or apathy in senior staff.	38	19	9	16	12
Simply training those few individuals who volunteer.	16	27	16	22	10
Staff resistance to change.	31	23	11	20	11
Inadequate resources for change.	57	23	8	4	2
Inappropriate timetabling or time allowance for training.	35	32	15	8	1
Training being too theoretical/remote from the realities of the workplace or the organisational culture.	43	24	10	12	5
The time-lag between training and implementation.	47	35	5	7	1
A lack of follow-up by COL.	48	30	7	7	1
A lack of follow-up by the institution's managers.	60	19	10	3	1

Several of the issues noted here may be outside the immediate control of COL, for example 'Inadequate resources for change'. However, while COL may be unable to provide the resources needed it could advise on how scarce resources might be re-targeted. Again, respondents identified time lag between training and implementation and lack of follow-up by COL and institutional managers as major problems *(**Recommendation 12**)* and the opposition and apathy of senior staff, staff resistance to change, and inadequate time allowance for training. *(**Recommendations 11** and **13**)*

Q. 17 presented a list of 18 issues in training for distance education and asked respondents to rate them in importance. The frequency distributions are given in Table 21.

Table 21 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Question 17 (N = 91)

Q. 17 How important do you see the following issues in training for distance education generally?	VP	I	Av.	NI	NIAA
Providing orientation programs for all staff new to open and distance learning	88	8			
Helping the 15% of staff who are the 'early adopters' of new techniques and technology	48	24	15	7	-
Helping the 45 % of staff who are likely to become 'late adopters' of new techniques and technology.	33	34	24	5	-
Helping staff combine face-to-face methods and Embrace new technologies of teaching and learning.	71	20	4	-	-
Helping staff change their role from that of 'instructor' to that of 'support person'; from *expository teaching* to *facilitating learning*.	73	20	2	2	-
Helping staff to appreciate all the problems faced by their learners.	65	27	2	-	-
Reducing teacher-dependency in the learners and encouraging them in self-directed, resource-based learning	67	26	1	-	-
Helping managers and staff adapt models of teaching and learning to the traditional values and practices in their own countries.	54	26	9	4	-
Helping politicians, planners and senior managers to appreciate the professionalism required for work in distance education.	69	19	4	2	-
Persuading institutions that staff development is critical to quality in open and distance education and should be looked on as an investment rather than a cost	81	11	2	-	-
Providing more funds and technical support for training.	85	9	-	-	-
Providing more time release for work in distance education	53	35	4	2	-
Conducting research studies to demonstrate the cost benefits or cost-effectiveness of staff development.	53	34	7	1	-
Providing study visits, conference attendance and other opportunities to broaden professional perspectives.	74	20	1	-	-
Providing staff development for policy-makers, Planners and educational administrators.	60	32	-	2	-
Providing staff development for non-academic and technical staff to help them dovetail their expertise with the requirements of distance learning.	53	29	13	-	-
Providing staff development for off-campus and regional staff	55	30	9	2	-
Establishing staff development centres or networks within institutions.	60	29	2	-	-

All of the issues rated extremely highly – suggesting that each of these is worthy of further consideration by COL *(**Recommendations 15** and **19**)*.

Respondents also suggested the need for:

- extending applications of open and distance learning into the schools sector;
- raising general public awareness of open and distance education and training; and
- regular contact and information exchange with COL (despite the COL web-site and regular mailings it would appear that not all have sight of COL's work and dissemination of developments in open and distance learning).

4.3.3 Training needs identified within case Study Sites

As described in section 2.4, Research Associates were contracted at six Case Study Sites, institutions with recent experience of COL training events. These selected were: University College of Education of Winneba, Ghana; Makerere University, Uganda; the National College of Management and Development Studies, Zambia; Bangladesh Open University; Indira Gandhi National Open University; and the University of Guyana. Each of the Research Associates conducted interviews with five senior or middle managers with experience of

distance education and COL training events. Summaries of the findings from these 30 interviewees follow, expressed as percentages.
In response to Q.1 on the issues confronting their institutions, all groups reported an ever-growing demand for distance education and expectation that the numbers of courses and students would grow while resources remained static. There was clearly enthusiasm and commitment among those interviewed but concerns about growth at the expense of quality. There were reports of inadequacies in government and institutional policies, management procedures, funding, staffing, equipment, infrastructure, understanding by central administration, support for students at outlying centres, and turnaround in materials production. Staff in dual-mode institutions found difficulty in combining their work in distance education with their responsibilities towards full-time on-campus students and there was reportedly little recognition, remuneration or reward for the additional workload. As in 4.2, there were reports of programs launched without clear development procedures, guidelines, duty descriptions or adequate staff training. There were concerns about differences between academics and non-academics and the lack of co-ordination between these two groups. There was also concern over the lack of rigorous quality assurance.

IGNOU could report on its centralised training systems (STRIDE and CEMCA) and BOU its plans for a Training and Research Centre under the auspices of COL and the People's Republic of Bangladesh, but overall, there appeared to be a lack of policy and systemic provision for training. The point was made that as institutions and staff become ever more dependent upon distance education as a source of income, it was important to continually upgrade skills and levels of professionalism and accountability. It was also argued that it was important to evidence whether training improved the efficiency or motivation of staff. Heavy demands upon and constant migration of skilled persons were seen as problems as were the limited number of trainers in the field *(**Recommendations 8** and **9**)*.

4.3.4 Training Topics

Table 14 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Question 2 (N=30)

Q. 2 How highly do you rate the importance of training in the following areas?

	Very High	High	Av.	Low	Very Low
Understanding open and distance learning	66	21	10	3	-
Diagnosing learners' needs and circumstances	48	42	7	-	-
Setting course objectives	48	38	14	-	-
Curriculum / course development	52	45	3	-	-
Instructional design/ writing for in print material	59	31	7	3	-
Instructional design/scripting for AV material	63	34	3	-	-
Instructional design in computer based learning	62	24	14	-	-
Instructional design in Internet/Web instruction	56	31	10	-	3
Basic radio/audio production	31	52	14	3	-
Basic TV production	34	45	21	-	-
Basic computer skills	41	38	21	-	-
Desktop publishing	38	45	17	-	-
Tutoring/counselling	48	42	10	-	-
Library/information management	41	28	31	-	-
Student support services	59	28	13	-	-
Assessing learner performance	41	52	7	-	-
Costing open and distance learning	52	42	3	3	-
Evaluating open and distance learning systems	53	34	10	3	-
Evaluating open and distance learning outcomes	62	28	10	-	-
Managing open and distance learning systems	72	25	3	-	-
Researching open and distance education	18	10	1	-	-
Establishing Quality Assurance procedures	62	35	3	-	-

These responses suggest a high demand for a full range of training topics. Those attracting 97% 'very high' or 'high' response rates were curriculum and course development, instructional design/scripting for audiovisual material, managing open and distance learning systems, and

establishing quality assurance procedures. Other topics receiving 90% or over were: costing open and distance learning (94%), assessing learner performance (93%), diagnosing learners' needs and circumstances (90%), instructional design/scripting for print (90%), tutoring/counselling (90%), and evaluating open and distance outcomes (90%). The lowest demand was for researching open and distance education (28%). These ratings confirm that the topics covered by the COL Training Kits are top priority but that there may be need to provide these in further topics *(**Recommendations 17** and **18**).*

4.3.5 Changing needs

Q. 3. asked 'In your experience, in what ways and why have these needs for training changed over the past ten years?'. Interviewees cited changes in the socio-economic and political environments, the pressure to provide more distance education and in new areas of training, the enormous increase in student numbers and range of courses, the entry of new competitors, technology change, changing expectations in the students and other stakeholders and the reduction in resources and consequent need for better resource management. As a consequence of these changes, there was need for greater professionalism in program planning, management, delivery and review and for staff to acquire higher levels of knowledge and skill. It was noted that there had been little opportunity for personal growth in staff and that distance education providers must keep pace with the changing human resource needs within as well as outside the institutions.

4.3.5 Barriers or constraints in providing training

Q. 4. asked 'In your experience, what have been the main barriers or constraints in providing training in these areas?' Again, as in their responses in 4.2, interviewees instanced the lack of finance, training policies and skilled resource persons within the institutions. They noted that despite the great need for training, institutions failed to earmark funding for training, that government funding was hard to come and that other external sources were equally restricted. They also cited the lack of equipment and infrastructure for training and staff constrained by busy schedules and understaffing. There was also a lack of interest among some academics and the fact that some training was charged for was a further disincentive. It was noted that there was a considerable division of labour in distance education and that this can give rise to a lack of vision, ownership, flexibility and co-ordination among the sub-systems. There was also concern that the rapid development of technology was outpacing the existing capacity of the personnel in the institutions.

4.3.6 Forms of training provision

Table 15 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Question 5 (N=30)

Q. 5 How highly do you rate the importance of each of the following forms of training provision?

	Very High	High	Av.	Low	Very Low
Workshops by experts from overseas	55	31	14	-	-
Workshops by experts from your own country/region	59	28	10	3	-
Workshops by experts from your own institution	17	38	31	14	-
Self or guided learning using print study materials	24	42	31	3	-
Self or guided learning using computer courseware	34	42	14	10	-
Self or guided instruction using Internet/Web	41	38	14	-	7

These findings suggest a strong preference for workshops provided by overseas and/or regional/national experts in distance education (86% and 87% respectively). In regard to mediated or distance training, using print attracted a 66% 'very high' or 'high' response, computers 76% and the internet/web 79%. This is at variance with the findings in 4.2. Other strategies advocated by respondents were however in line with those in 4.2 – training leading to formal qualifications, longer courses (1-3 months' duration) and secondments, attachments and exchange programs with other distance education organisations, in-country or overseas.

4.3.7 COL training events and outcomes

Table 16 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Question 8 (N=30)

Q. 8 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements with regard to this COL training event? (Rated from Strongly Agree [SA] to Strongly Disagree [SDA])

	SA	A	Av	DA	SDA
The training was provided where and when most needed	52	48	-	-	-
The training was affordable	55	35	7	3	-
The training attracted a wide and representative cross-section of staff	42	38	17	3	-
The training resulted in improved practice	44	37	19	-	-
The training had a major impact at the organisational level	30	41	26	3	-

These findings show that all of the respondents felt that that the training events' location and timing were appropriate and that 90% felt that the training was affordable. Eighty percent answered 'strongly agree' or 'agree' in regard to the breadth and appropriateness of the participants. Only one person dissented from this, arguing that the participants were too diverse in positions, backgrounds, experience, etc. and should be selected as, i.e., middle managers, academics from particular disciplines, or according to their level of knowledge and skills.

Eighty-one percent strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that the training resulted in improved practice but fewer (71%) concurred that it had an impact institutionally. In one case it was felt that the workshop had been premature with the target institution not sufficiently aware of, or prepared for, distance education and that as a consequence, the knowledge and skills were not immediately implemented.

In their answers to Q. 7. 'Were there any particular factors that helped or hindered this training event?'. the interviewees cited the following positives:

- the professional and monetary support from COL;
- the access to high calibre trainers;
- the active and participatory methodologies;
- the exchange of experiences between people from different countries and institutions;
- the use of the Training Toolkits and handouts; and
- the longer-term links for capacity-building with COL.

The negative factors were seen as:

- time constraints;
- too few opportunities for hands-on learning;
- local participants being non-residents;
- interruptions due to workshops being conducted within participants' institutions; and
- funds being released late.

The responses to Q. 9. 'Can you provide any examples or illustrations of ways in which a COL training event has improved practice and had a major impact at the institutional level' and to Q. 11. 'In your experience, what have been the main benefits of the COL training programs' revealed the following outcomes:

- greater awareness of open and distance learning and development of a body of expertise;
- two institutions allocating funding for distance education and creating departments of distance education;
- improvements in co-ordinating distance education activities;
- distance education adding 25% to the student numbers in one institution;

- attitudinal change in senior academics in several institutions;
- tutors/teachers encouraged to think more of the learners and their needs;
- greater priority given to materials production;
- preparation of new courses or modules in several subject areas in several institutions;
- improvements in curriculum design and courseware;
- improvements in tutoring and counselling students by subject tutors;
- improved confidence and performance in study centre co-ordinators in two institutions;
- improved ability to incorporate technology in delivery systems;
- improvements in examination questions and student feedback;
- improved management and record-keeping systems;
- improved storage and retrieval of audio-visual material in one institution and a computerised audio-visual library system in another;
- improved laboratory safety procedures;
- improved marketing of distance education programs;
- networking with other institutions to develop curriculum material and exchange reference materials;
- exposure to and performance comparisons with other institutions;
- sharing limitations and shortcomings between different groups from different institutions and from different countries;
- the availability of the COL training toolkit as reference material;
- the promotion of professionalism and international understanding; and
- international recognition for the participating institutions.

One of the respondents had an attachment to COL and cited the collaborative projects and closer links that arose through this as well as his own professional development. Another respondent observed: 'COL's staff have been unable to visit institutions that have in the past received assistance in the form of training. Because of this, they have been unable to see how more efficiently their resources can be utilised. A lot of people who would not have been educated are now accessing education through distance education. Zambia has very few experts in this field and COL's provision of training experts has benefited the College and the country. COL training programs succeed because they allow recipients to use as much local resources as possible'.

Q. 10 asked 'In your experience, how and why have COL training programs succeeded or failed over the past ten years?' The interviewees attributed their success to:

- programs being in-situ and needs-based;
- the commitment of the trainees and facilitators;
- the beneficiaries being involved in the planning and implementation of the events;
- the programs being adequately funded, well-facilitated and well-timed and using participatory methods; and
- the training material provided.

Any failures were attributed to:

- too short a timeline for pre-planning;
- too much material in too short a period;
- the Training Toolkits presenting challenges to some of the participants;
- the lack of a regional office to co-ordinate and monitor COL programs;
- training objectives being unfulfilled because of institutional resistance to change and bureaucracy in the larger institutions; and
- the lack of follow-up by COL to see how its training programs fared.

4.3.8 Future needs

Table 17 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Question 14 (N=30)

Q. 14 How highly do you rate the importance of the following possible future activities by COL?

	Very High	High	Av.	Low	Very Low
The same level of training support provided by COL	14	48	38	-	-
An increased level of training support provided by COL	86	14	-	-	-
A greater focus on training the policymakers or managers	59	24	14	3	-
A greater use of a 'train-the-trainers approach' supporting in-house training	66	31	3	-	-
The provision of training kits to support in-house training	66	28	3	-	3
A greater use of in-country collaboration in training	69	24	7	-	-
The provision of formal qualifications or accreditation for training	62	38	-	-	-
Increasing use of the Internet/Web for training	52	38	7	3	-

In response to Q. 14, there was 100% support for an increase in training provision by COL. Eight-three percent rated the need for training policy-makers and managers as 'very high' or 'high' *(**Recommendation 14**)*. With regard to strategies, 97% gave high ranking to a greater use of a 'train-the-trainers approach' *(**Recommendations 8** and **9**)*, 94% to the provision of training kits to support in-house training *(**Recommendation 18**),* 93% to greater in-country collaboration in training and 90% to the use of the internet/web for training. Open-ended answers to Q. 13. suggested that COL training events should be:

- conducted in association with peer supervision, mentoring, in-house and on-the-job training, exchanges, attachments, etc;
- related or leading to specific projects which are subsequently reviewed and critiqued;
- repeated to take account of staff and role changes;
- provided to higher levels;
- offered in new areas such as student support, costing distance education and face-to-face tutoring; and
- certificated and longer-term. There was an overwhelming response to the idea of programs leading into work at masters or doctoral levels *(**Recommendations 15,16** and **17**)*.

Other recommendations were for:

- modularised independent or mentored training followed by workshops and leading to certification;
- a Commonwealth consortium of professional development in distance education; *(**Recommendation 20**)*
- a Commonwealth forum on training needs and staff development; *(**Recommendation 19**)* and
- training for young researchers, recognising that research is an important component of distance education.

Table 18 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Question 16 (N=30)

Q. 16 How would you rate the importance of the following pitfalls or problems that COL might experience in using The strategies listed in Question 14? (Very Important [VI] to Not Important At All [NIAA])

	VI	I	AV	NI	NIAA
Opposition or apathy in senior staff	28	31	14	17	10
Simply training those few individuals who volunteer	17	21	18	34	10
Staff resistance to change	45	17	28	10	-
Inadequate resources for change	52	31	17	-	-

Inappropriate time-tabling or time allowance for training	28	41	17	14	-
Training being too theoretical or remote from the realities of the workplace or organisational culture	35	42	14	6	3
The time-lag between training and implementation	41	52	7	-	-
A lack of follow-up by COL	21	45	14	-	-
A lack of follow-up by the institution's managers	55	25	17	3	-

In 2.2, reference was made to Robinson's (1998) observations that performance in real-work settings may be influenced by factors outside the training event, for example, by institutional reward systems, inter-personal and power relationships, or the values, norms and focus of the organisation. Q.16 focused on the interviewees' perceptions of factors that might influence the training outcomes. Those ranking most highly in the 'very important' and 'important' columns were time-lag between training and implementation (93%), inadequate resources for change (83%), lack of follow-up by institutional managers (80%) and training being too remote from the realities of the workplace and the organisational culture (77%). These findings again suggest that 'one-off' workshops may have their limitations and that more may be gained by providing follow-up, monitoring and supporting the innovation or change (***Recommendation 12***).

Table 19 Percentage frequency distribution of ratings for Question 17 (N=30)

Table Q. 17 How important do you see the following issues in training for distance education generally? (Very Important [VI] to Not Important At All [NIAA])

	VI	I	Av	NI	NIAA
Providing orientation programs for all staff new to open and distance learning	93	7			
Helping the 15% of staff who are the 'early adopters' of new techniques and technology	52	24	18	3	3
Helping the 45 % of staff who are likely to become 'late adopters' of new techniques and technology	28	48	18	3	3
Helping staff combine face-to-face methods and new technologies of teaching and learning	59	38	3	-	-
Helping staff change their role from that of 'instructor' to that of 'support person'; from expository teaching to facilitating learning	79	21	-	-	-
Helping staff to appreciate all the problems faced by their learners	52	45	3	-	-
Reducing teacher-dependency in the learners and encouraging them in self-directed, resource-based learning	62	38	-	-	-
Helping managers and staff adapt models of teaching and learning to the traditional values and practices in their own countries	41	35	17	7	-
Helping politicians, planners and senior managers to appreciate the professionalism required for work in distance education	59	34	7	-	-
Persuading institutions that staff development is critical to quality in open and distance education and should be looked upon as an investment rather than a cost	72	22	3	3	-
Providing more funds and technical support for training	90	7	-	3	-
Providing more time release for work in distance Education	55	35	7	-	3
Conducting research studies to demonstrate the cost benefits or cost-effectiveness of staff development	59	36	10	-	-
Providing study visits, conference attendance and other opportunities to broaden professional perspectives	72	21	7	-	-
Providing staff development for policy-makers, planners and educational administrators	79	21	-	-	-
Providing staff development for non-academic and technical staff to help them dovetail their expertise with the requirements of distance learning	52	45	3	-	-
Providing staff development for off-campus and regional staff	52	41	7	-	-
Establishing staff development centres or networks within institutions	48	48	4	-	-

Q. 17 was designed to help gain an idea of future possibilities and priorities for COL. In terms of who should receive training, 100% of the interviewees rated orientation programs for staff new to open and distance learning and helping staff change their role from that of instructor to that of support person as 'very important' or important. And 97% rated helping staff combine face-

to-face methods and new technologies of teaching and learning and appreciate the problems faced by their learners, and staff development for non-academic and technical staff, as 'very important' or 'important'. Staff development for off-campus and regional staff were rated 'very important' or 'important' by 93% of the interviewees.

There was very strong support for targeting the higher echelons with 100% rating staff development for policy-makers, planners and educational administrators as 'very important' or 'important' *(**Recommendation 14**).*

In terms of strategies, 96% gave 'very important' or 'important' ratings to establishing staff development centres or networks within institutions; 95% to conducting research to demonstrate the cost benefits or cost effectiveness of staff development and providing study visits, etc., to broaden professional perspectives; 94% to persuading institutions that staff development is critical to quality in open and distance education; and 93% to helping politicians, planners and senior managers appreciate the professionalism required in distance education; and 90% to providing more time release for work in distance education.

4.4 Workshop Co-ordinators' observations

4.4.1 Background

An eight-item Self-Completion Questionnaire (Appendix D) was sent to 37 former Workshop Co-ordinators – international experts and in-country experts such as those providing training through IGNOU's STRIDE and CEMCA and the Distance Education Council of India. As shown in Figure 2, Section 3, this survey achieved a response rate of 41%, but the open-ended responses correlated closely with those of the Key Informants in 4.5.

4.4.2 The effectiveness of COL's training methods and approaches

It was anticipated that being commissioned and briefed by COL, the former Workshop Co-ordinators would be sympathetic to COL's mission and give general endorsement to the methods and approaches employed, and this proved to be the case. A typical response was: 'The training methods and overall approach were devised by COL with prior consultation with the two workshop presenters . . . were very effective, tailored and customised for the target audiences and represented best practice in facilitated learning.' The respondents were aware that their training methods, ranging from 'classroom sessions and lectures' to 'participatory methodologies', should provide models for the participants to apply in their own contexts.

It was again observed that the workshop groups were heterogeneous in background, experience and needs *(**Recommendation 10**).* Some saw this as a major strength in the workshops, providing an opportunity for a sharing of regional and international experiences and ideas. It was suggested that COL could capitalise on this by setting up a system of liaison and information exchange across the Commonwealth on training matters *(**Recommendation 19**).*

The workshops aimed to marry theory and practice. However, it was noted that: 'Practical and activity based components have been more effective than theoretical components . . . Individual, group and hands-on activities are more effective than those which are highly dependent on lecture methods'.

Numerous respondents noted the value of using teams of international or regional experts and local personnel to provide the training. However, as one respondent observed: 'For many courses, local experts who are not trainers are invited without adequate briefing regarding the participant's requirements. Often, they are not effective trainers.' Such observations confirm that further investment is needed in briefing and training local personnel involved in co-presenting workshops *(**Recommendations 8** and **9**).*

As in the other survey groups, there was concern that after the workshops, there was no more contact by COL and that this was detrimental to the effectiveness of the training. There were suggestions for follow-up strategies, including short-term attachments to help implement the training provided *(**Recommendations 12** and **15**).*

4.4.3 The extent to which training methods and approaches meet the needs of COL's clients

Workshop Co-ordinators noted the importance of pre-planning and liaison with organisers and client groups and many reported that they had been able to do this. For example, one respondent wrote: 'We have organised training programmes only after undertaking extensive research to determine client needs . . . In most cases the workshop was planned in conjunction with the clients themselves.' However, other respondents cast doubts on this, one respondent writing: 'I am not sure if a needs analysis was done . . . As far as I know, no follow-up was done to see if clients were using or benefiting from what they had been taught *(**Recommendations 12** and **13**).*

It was observed that evaluation was usually summative and limited to the use of the COL Standard Training Activity Evaluation form and that formative evaluation would be invaluable, enabling workshops to be modified in the light of on-going feedback *(**Recommendations 2** and **3**).*

Whilst English is a common language within the Commonwealth, some of the workshops had been conducted in a local language, which can obviously benefit some participants but also raise problems in translating teaching material and for Co-ordinators and presenters lacking proficiency in this language (as, for example, in Mozambique). Again the problem of mixed groups arises and one respondent reported that: ' The workshop was conducted in English since there were different language groups presented. One participant appeared to speak almost no English so it was hard to work out whether he gained anything from the workshop.'

A number of Co-ordinators commented on the selection of participants. One wrote 'COL did not have control over who attended the workshop. This was left to the participating institutions.' It was noted that often institutions did not send the most appropriate participants to particular courses and that, to reduce the cost of training per participant, the numbers were often increased, making it difficult to organise workshop activities and pay adequate attention to individual skill development *(**Recommendations 10** and **11**).*

There was confirmation that many participants felt that the workshops were too short or the demands were too great. One respondent observed: 'A consultant giving a one-off workshop, who wants to give value for money, naturally tends to overextend the participants' and that this could be counter-productive *(**Recommendation 3**).*

4.4.4 The extent to which COL training has resulted in improved practice

Several Co-ordinators were of the opinion that the training had resulted in greater awareness of the potential of distance education, the challenges it posed, the need for effective user-friendly materials, student support and improved practice. Several cited examples of improved practice - 'an audio-tape plus its script of an audio-vision package', 'a large percentage of the institutions actually set up their web-sites soon after the training was over', 'the teleconferencing facility became operational' and 'the computerisation of (the) media library also took place as a direct result of (the) training programme.'

4.4.5 The extent to which COL training has impacted at the organisational level

Comments in response to this question varied from: 'Very little impact. Those at the managerial levels and key positions need to take the initiative.' To: 'At the organisational level, COL training has played a pivotal role in building capacity to conduct distance education programmes.' But no evidence was provided *(**Recommendation 13**).*

4.4.6 The extent to which the training was provided at an acceptable cost to COL's clients

Typical comments in response to this question were: 'The costs seem to be very acceptable' and 'The costing of COL's programmes is usually affordable'. However, it is questionable whether the respondents always knew the distribution or magnitude of these costs. Several made comments as: 'I understood that the total cost to the host institution was borne by COL', 'I think it was free', and, 'I was not a direct party to the financial arrangements, but I believe that they were favourable to, and appreciated by, the clients.' It was acknowledged that it would be unrealistic to expect all costs to be met from workshop fees or by the host institution. One respondent suggested that the travel costs might be cut drastically by making greater use of local experts and resource persons *(**Recommendations 8** and **9**)*, provided that the numbers of participants did not rise to inappropriate levels.

It was also argued that the costs of such provision had to be set against the costs of not providing such training or providing it outside the country. It was argued that cost should not be a major problem if the sponsoring agencies were convinced of the long-term benefits of the events *(**Recommendation 14**).*

4.4.7 Problems encountered and ways of avoiding these in future training events

The problems encountered by Workshop Co-ordinators mirrored those by the participants. The following suggestions were made for what should be in place well in advance of the event:

- a comprehensive account of the training requirements;
- a detailed plan for all the training and organisational requirements;
- an administrative assistant or other person with responsibility for co-ordinating the administrative arrangements, venue, logistics and technical support;
- careful selection of participants (with COL exercising its privilege to say 'no' if the participants lack entry level skills/knowledge);
- a profile of, and thorough briefing on, the participants and their work environment(s) for the Workshop Co-ordinators and other presenters;
- participating institutions encouraged to draw up a coherent strategy for implementation and on-going staff development after the event;
- checks that the event does not clash with public holidays, festivals, other training events, key periods in the work cycle etc;
- checks that the participants do not have ongoing duties or other causes for absenteeism from parts of the workshop. (it was suggested that host institutions should be informed by COL that a condition of funding is full-time attendance by the participants or if absence is unavoidable, advance notification required well beforehand)
- checks that rooms, power supplies, equipment and facilities are in good working order; and
- assembly and dispatch of course material (***Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 7, 10** and **11***)

4.4.8 Future and emerging needs for training

The Workshop Co-ordinators identified many of the topics that others had rated as important, confirming that these are worthy of consideration by COL as new, extended or more advanced programs:

Educational topics

- shifting from teacher-focused to learner-focused approaches to teaching and learning;
- diagnosing learner's needs and circumstances;
- developing self-guided study skills in learners; and
- tutoring and counselling distance learners;

Management topics

- understanding and designing open and distance learning systems;
- developing cross-institutional and national policies for open and distance education;
- encouraging partnerships in delivering distance education in small states
- costing and financial management in distance learning institutions;
- intellectual property rights; and
- institutional planning for the integration of educational technology.

'Low tech' topics

- production of low cost teaching and learning materials;
- instructional design and script-writing for audio-visual material;
- integration of print and audio-visual materials; and
- integration of new media with face-to-face methods;

'High tech' topics

- design and production of education interactive multimedia;
- computer graphics;
- computer-based learning;
- internet-based open and distance learning techniques;
- internet telephony (e.g. WAP and WML) applications;
- e-commerce fundamentals;
- portal design and construction; and
- maintenance of state-of-the art technologies.

*(**Recommendation 15**)*

4.4.9 The priority and focus that COL should give to its future training initiatives.

Many of the Workshop Co-ordinators' comments echo those of the other persons surveyed. It was observed that the training needs continued to exist and that was vitally important to take account of the varying needs of different countries, localities, institutions and the factors that supported or hindered distance education development. This could only be achieved if there were comprehensive briefings for those presenting the training events and the aims, topics, profile of participants and follow-up plans were clearly defined. It was suggested that the training programs should do more to enable the new knowledge and skills to be put into practice (***Recommendation 12***). It was suggested that COL and any partners in training events should insist that the effects of the training is measured and the trainers and the participating institutions should be made jointly accountable for the outcomes (**Recommendation 13**). It was also noted that COL might make greater use of print- or web-based self-instructional or support material. One respondent suggested there was need and potential for a 'virtual training institution' on the internet and to make training programs and materials more widely available for sale or for hire *(**Recommendation 15**)*.

4.5 Key Informants' observations

4.5.1 Background

With the help of COL, the researchers identified 16 Key Informants from the three regions surveyed, Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. These were sent an eight-item Self-Completion Questionnaire similar to that sent to the Workshop Co-ordinators. There was a response rate of 41% and the responses accorded closely with those of the Workshop Co-ordinators.

4.5.2 The effectiveness of COL's training methods and approach

The Key Informants had not necessarily had direct experience of the COL training events but their observations, based on conversations with colleagues who had been involved and from other sources, were in the main positive. The majority of the respondents suggested that COL's training interventions had been successful in reaching large numbers of teachers and enabling some of these to become major figures in the field. It was felt that such sustained and widespread training had created a positive image for COL as a major provider of education and training within the Commonwealth. One respondent observed: 'COL's record of achievement is such that Commonwealth Governments . . . endorsed a more ambitious three-year plan 2000-2003 for supporting it. This is ample evidence that COL is now poised to play a pivotal role in providing human resource development for its clients'.

It was generally acknowledged that COL had striven to meet local and regional needs, to employ both regional and international experts in the running of the workshops, and to collaborate with other international agencies in mounting these. To maximise capacity-building it was observed that COL could make the greatest contribution by involving as many local personnel as possible in training delivery. To this end it was suggested that COL should improve on its selection of trainers and train and develop a pool of local trainers for specific tasks *(**Recommendations 8** and **9**).*

Several respondents spoke positively about the effectiveness of the training methods employed, the high levels of participant satisfaction and the participants' subsequent performance. Others were more critical, lending support to comments elsewhere in this report about the need to explore other forms of training including print- and web-based training *(**Recommendations 15** and **17**).*

It was observed that benefits may not automatically flow on from training events because of environmental and resource constraints in the training and the institutions where change was to occur. In this context, mention was made of the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme. One respondent stated: 'The constraints on training were numerous, including lack of resources and other internal and external difficulties. The effectiveness of these initiatives will to a large extent depend on the removal of the existing constraints, inefficient mail systems, expensive telecommunications, lack of funds, freeing up trainees from work related responsibilities and a commitment to organisational change.' *(**Recommendations 11** and **13**).*

It was also noted that it was difficult to assess the effectiveness of the training workshops due to their being typically short, 'one-off' sessions. It was further noted that the practice of, and performance improvement in, distance education requires time for skills transfer and consolidation. There was again much support for the idea of follow-up and monitoring of implementation *(**Recommendation 12**).*

4.5.3 The extent to which training methods and approaches meet the needs of COL's clients

It was noted that the pool from which COL's training event participants are drawn is extremely heterogeneous. It was observed that where these programs have been less effective, the composition of the groups may have been a contributory factor and that a precise knowledge of the different client groups is a vital prerequisite in planning these events *(**Recommendations 10** and **11**).* However, it was acknowledged that COL faces a daunting task in trying to satisfy the various needs of the different client groups and that circumstances often mean that a programs have to be of general relevance rather than tailored to individuals.
Respondents noted that methods and approaches adopted in one context might be inappropriate in another. There were suggestions that COL should more closely match the training activities to intended outcomes. It was suggested that an assessment of institutional and regional needs, the development of specific training materials (perhaps adapted from the Training Toolkits) and the involvement local experts in these processes may give greater

benefit. Again respondents remarked on the need for on-going support and monitoring *(**Recommendation 12**).*

4.5.4 The extent to which COL training has resulted in improved practice

While respondents remarked that their comments were largely based on hearsay or second-hand reports, they felt that improvements in teaching systems, course and materials and systems could be partly attributed to COL training events. One respondent observed: 'The products after training have been observable and verifiable indicators of results of training received'. Another wrote 'COL training has helped to bring people from very little knowledge to ones who could be relied upon a lot . . . there does seem to be improved practice resulting from COL's support/intervention . . . COL's training has led to perceptible changes in institutional and individual functioning . . . distance education practice has improved significantly throughout the university and the credit for this, in part, goes to the personnel who have at one time or the other occasion been trained through the efforts of COL.'

However, there were again strong indications that COL needed to consolidate these gains with on-going and follow-up activities, one respondent commenting: 'What is needed is follow-up of these events and activities, and to see to what extent this has been built into the institutional strategic initiatives to internalise this in the entire institutional operation.' (**Recommendation 12**).

4.5.5 The extent to which COL training has impacted at the organisational level

There was general agreement amongst respondents that there had been an increase in awareness of COL training provision and the potential of distance education and that COL's training had impacted at the institutional level – one indicator of this being that staff have actually requested to be nominated for COL training. It was also noted that COL training has had a significant impact in non-formal, vocational education and teacher education and in educational technology applications and upgrading. It was also suggested by one respondent that: 'COL's training initiatives have had a tremendous impact on various regional and government institutions and organisations' *(**Recommendation 20**.* However, there are still major challenges; several respondents commented that the institutional barriers to change. One respondent wrote: 'In some cases organisational culture and values resist change although the policy agenda reflect a commitment to organisational change . . . Organisational culture needs to be examined and integrated into such initiatives in future' *(**Recommendations 12,13** and **14**).*

4.5.6 The extent to which the training was provided at an acceptable cost to COL's clients

As in the other surveys, concerns about funding permeated the Key Informants' responses. It was felt important that COL should provide 'adequate funding' for training. However, it was also recognised that COL's resources are limited, that it cannot simply act as a funding agency and that it in fact provides good value. The usual practice was for COL to fund the consultants and leave the host institutions to bear local costs. This sharing of the costs was considered an acceptable model. It was noted that in some cases, additional funding had been sought from other sources to reduce the burden on the host institutions. With regard to the financial contribution from the institutions themselves, one Key Informant wrote 'Contributions have been modest (but) they have generally been reasonably acceptable to COL's clients'.

4.5.7 Problems encountered and ways of avoiding these in future training events

The problems instanced by the Key Informants were the same as those identified in 4.1, 4.2 4.3. and 4.4. Concerns were expressed over the administration of the financing of the

programs; late transfer of funds, coupled with exchange control problems often caused difficulties that detracted from the main task of providing the training. It was suggested that early planning and expenditure of funds would eliminate such problems *(**Recommendations 6** and **7**).*

The Training Toolkits again received much positive comment. However, respondents suggested these could be developed further in collaboration with regional institutions and local experts to be tailored to local needs, made available via the web and complemented by audio-visual materials and used in both face-to-face and distance mode with follow-up and mentoring by electronic means. There were again many calls for regular and on-going follow-up to the COL training events to consolidate the training outcomes. One Key Informant wrote: 'COL should work out a program with an institution which is supported over a given period of time . . . if COL wishes to support a satisfactory exercise, it should do so from start to end. Current piecemeal approaches do not lead to sustainability of initiatives'. *(**Recommendations 12, 13** and **19**).*

It was again noted here that those in any future operation, such as the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme, would need greater support. One Key Informant indicated that the attrition rate amongst these Fellows had been 40- 60%, a disturbing outcome for such a selected, motivated and talented group. A list of factors contributing to this were provided:

- a high percentage of trainees were not able to submit assignments on a regular basis due to heavy work-related commitments;
- initial difficulty with the course material;
- inability of trainees to complete their training because of family commitments;
- inadequate student support;
- administrative inefficiencies;
- weak communication networks; and
- inadequate resources *(**Recommendations 11** and **13**).*

4.5.8 Future and emerging needs for training

It was noted that staff development needs should be linked to the strategic priorities and goals for open and distance education within organisations as a whole and that training should be based on observable gaps between current competencies and standards and those identified as necessary or desirable. However, it was also observed that gaps in performance may be due to other factors, such as organisational structures, systems, culture, or reward systems, and that these needed to be addressed in parallel. Furthermore, the respondents argued that such training should not be defined solely by individual or group preferences but rather the needs of the institution. To this end, it was suggested that COL should conduct an analysis of needs and that further training programs might be needed in:

- participatory decision-making and strategies for organising meetings/conferences;
- planning and costing economical, cost-effective distance education programs;
- testing and assessment in distance education;
- quality assurance in open and distance education;
- research and development or action research as an integral part of professional development;
- senior management issues in planning and operating distance education;
- the technical/vocational area;
- administrative leadership and management in the schools sector;
- learner support systems; and
- computerised information management systems' particularly in the maintenance of student's records.

4.5.9 The priority and focus that COL should give to its future training initiatives

There was a high degree of agreement on the importance of COL maintaining its training programs, but emphasising their regional focus and involving more local experts. Respondents believed there were substantial training needs to be fulfilled in:

- policy-making and planning in distance and open learning;
- managing and marketing distance education organisations;
- the commercialisation or partial commercialisation of distance education programs;
- management of change within distance teaching institutions;
- the new technology;
- media and technology for administrators, planners and policy makers; and
- training of trainers at regional levels *(**Recommendation 15**).*

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview

There is evidence that over the last ten years COL has generally succeeded in addressing the objectives that were identified in 1990 and which are listed in Section 1.1. It has identified the training needs of distance education institutions in Commonwealth countries, formulated strategies to meet these needs, examined the efficacy of the various types and levels of training and has evolved an approach for effective co-operation among institutions, agencies and countries.

The comments from several independent surveys indicates that overall, there is widespread appreciation of, and satisfaction with, the COL-provided training events, the funding and professional support provided by COL and the more recently-developed Training Toolkits. There are many indications that these events are improving the understanding, skills and performance of individuals and some indications of their having a major impact upon certain distance teaching institutions. The participants observe that the events serve to strengthen regional, national and international understandings, foster the development of groups with shared interests and encourage rapport and collaboration between the participants, all of which outcomes they value highly. It is also clear that COL has made a significant contribution to capacity building in general and to the skills of local experts in particular. The provision of published texts will further contribute to this goal. The Co-ordinators felt that the workshops met most of the intended goals and commented favourably on the dedication and participation of the participants. It was evident that Key Informants and other respondents perceive the provision of training as an important part of COL's mission. It is also evident that they believe it must continue to receive a high profile, high priority and as high a level of financial and professional support as COL can muster from its own and its partners' resources.

At the commencement of its training mission in 1990 COL identified several training priorities:

- basic orientation to distance education;
- planning, management and administration;
- instructional design and course development, including course adaptation;
- use of technology, including computers;
- research and evaluation;
- student support services;

and different delivery strategies:

- the provision of workshops;
- the development of self-instructional training materials;
- the establishment of training fellowships ;
- the development of special training institutions or units.

The training events have taken many different forms and been provided in very different contexts, often with extremely heterogeneous groups. The various stakeholders note various strengths and weaknesses in current training provision and after ten years of operation, it is understandable that they see some changes and new initiatives as necessary. However, it is evident that despite the numerous training activities that have been conducted these priorities and methods of delivery, (with some modification) remain valid.

There follows a summary of the main issues revealed in their responses and the lead researchers' recommendations.

5.2 Workshop Co-ordinators' reports and the COL Standard Training Evaluation Form

There was great diversity in the standard of the evidence and analysis in the Workshop Co-ordinators' reports:

Recommendation 1:
COL should review its expectations of the Workshop Co-ordinators' reports and require all Co-ordinators to submit their reports to a common format and with the level of detail and analysis necessary to monitor trends, issues and future training needs.

The researchers found weaknesses and omissions in the design of, and feedback from, the Standard Training Evaluation Form:

Recommendation 2:
COL should review and re-design its Standard Training Activity Evaluation instrument to ensure that it yields the necessary data and analysis and should require all Co-ordinators to submit completed forms, a summary and their findings and conclusions, to a standard format.

The lead researchers found also that the training events could gain from the greater use of formative evaluation:

Recommendation 3:
COL should strongly recommend that Co-ordinators apply day-by-day formative evaluation to help ensure that the training events are constantly in accord with the participants' needs and wishes.

5.3 Venues, logistics and administrative arrangements

While there was overall satisfaction with venues, logistics and administrative arrangements, there were a number of shortcomings, most of which could be anticipated and planned for:

Recommendation 4:
Workshop Co-ordinators or their representatives should be enabled to make preliminary visits to the workshop venues to check the accommodation, technical and logistical support and to subsequently arrive at these venues at least one day before the actual events to ensure that all preparations are in place.

Some training events held at, or close to, the host institutions suffered from constant interruptions with participants being called away to attend to normal duties:

Recommendation 5:
COL should always ensure that training events are off-campus and residential, away from the resource persons' and participants' places of work and outside teaching and examination periods to avoid any possible distractions for the participants and to ensure optimum time-on-task and continuity.

Recommendation 6:
COL should institute a standard checklist to ensure that all arrangements under its control are planned, confirmed and known to all parties, and that all foreseeable contingencies have been anticipated and planned for.

Difficulties arose at some training events through inadequate lead-times for informing and funding the participants and sending them workshop material in advance of the event:

Recommendation 7:

It should always be ensured that there is sufficient lead-time to facilitate participants' travel and other arrangements and for them to study the pre-workshop material, and even undertake pre-workshop assignments, so that they are fully prepared for, and able to take full benefit from, the training events.

5.4 Training the trainers

There was extensive evidence of an enormous need for training ranging from basic orientation programs in distance and open education to advanced programs in new information technologies and institutional management. The scale of need and the various local factors likely to facilitate or constrain successful implementation suggest the need for more focus on 'training the trainers':

Recommendation 8:
COL should ensure that every training event provides 'train the trainers' opportunities, with locally-recruited resource persons and other potential trainers 'paired with' and 'shadowing' the Co-ordinators or other presenters throughout the planning, workshop presentation and evaluation.

Recommendation 9:
COL should ensure maximum opportunities for 'train the trainers' workshops, using the Training Toolkits as appropriate, to expose potential workshop presenters to, and rehearse them in and advise them on, the various training strategies and techniques open to them.

5.5 Workshop participants

Not only is there shown to be great variation in the participants' backgrounds, experience, knowledge and skill, but indication that in some cases, the most appropriate persons have not been selected to attend the training events because of nepotism and other factors:

Recommendation 10:
COL should take a more active role in setting the criteria for selecting the participants to ensure that they can not only benefit from the training but have the capacity, status and resources to implement the new ideas and practices. There should be early and careful selection of the participants, and the Co-ordinators should be provided with participant profiles including their motivations and expectations (see also ***Recommendation 11****).*

There is evidence of great variation in the participant's motivations for attending the training events and expectations of the outcomes. It is important that the Co-ordinators and presenters are aware of these and can measure the success of the events against them. It is also important that they can fully appreciate the barriers to change and innovation which may confront the participants on returning to their institutions:

Recommendation 11:
In revising the Standard Training Evaluation form, care should be taken to so frame and link the question(s) eliciting the participants' specific motivations for attending the training events and specific expectations of the outcomes and those gauging their satisfaction levels in these regards as to yield useful information about objectives met and unmet. There should also be an item asking participants to identify the institutional barriers to implementing the ideas and practices promoted in the training events.

5.6 Follow-up

Many respondents decried the lack of follow-up by COL. Lack of subsequent evaluation of the outcomes and impact came across as another major weakness in the current training strategy:

Recommendation 12:
COL should ensure that the training provided is more than a series of one-off events. The Co-ordinators should be contracted to provide or organise follow-up or reinforcement activities and self-help groups or networks to encourage and support implementation of the ideas and practices promulgated in the workshops.

Recommendation 13:
Impact studies should be conducted by COL and/or the Co-ordinators six months after the training events to gauge the extent of individual and institutional change and the barriers to change.

5.7 Developing understanding and changing attitudes in those holding influence

The vast majority of training events have been at the operational level, and predominately concerned with course or material design and uses of educational technology. There have been very few courses aimed at managers and yet many respondents have expressed concern about the continuing lack of awareness and commitment among politicians, senior government officers and institutional managers.

Recommendation 14:
COL should initiate a series of regional think tanks or seminars at which senior persons can consider the role, costs and benefits of open and distance education, the global trends and local needs, and how they can support change, collaboration as well as addressing funding and other resource constraints.

5.8 Future training strategies

The impression is given of a series of 'one-off' events and piecemeal and ad hoc provision in COL's training activities. This accords with the concern by McWilliams and Mugridge (1998) that the organisation has not yet been able to respond to needs in a consistent, comprehensive or cohesive fashion.

The researchers believe that a more systematic and innovative approach is called for, one which accords with COL's revised mission, the extent of the need, the call for follow-up, and the great potential for collaboration, uses of technology and mixed-mode delivery. The researchers conclude that while it is important for COL to continue to be responsive to institutional and individual needs, to achieve maximum impact and returns on outlay, it is also important that the training events should match COL's strategic goals. The training activities must target strategically/politically important topics, focus on specific target groups, and be designed with specific outcomes in mind. These events might be provided centrally by COL or via co-funded programs proposed by regional or local providers in response to the stated strategic goals. The latter approach may create a greater sense of ownership and help institutions to also think holistically and strategically. It is also suggested that COL should do more to target managers, train trainers, provide training in advanced forms, using the widest possible range of delivery strategies, encourage and support more certified training provision and work toward the establishment of a collaborative 'virtual training institution'. Such is the scale and strategic thrust needed to accelerate change and enhance professionalism in distance education that COL also needs to take every advantage of strategic alliances and collaborative initiatives in sharing resources, networks and expertise.

Many respondents to this survey have suggested using a mix of mediated and face-to-face training. It is entirely appropriate the COL should itself make greater use of distance education strategies and technologies to support change and enhance performance and there is great potential in assembling or creating material that:

- builds upon the excellent beginnings represented by the Training Toolkits;
- encourages and supports innovation, change and performance improvement;

- embodies the best principles of instructional design for self-instruction by individuals and groups;
- empowers and skills the trainers or practitioners so that they can then implement the new ideas with the help of local support groups and mentoring, face-to-face on online.

Much of this material already exists around the world and it may well be a question of negotiating terms and adapting existing guides, reports, etc. rather than COL starting from scratch and bearing the full cost. Delivery may need to be in print and electronic. The forms of delivery are not the major issue; what will finally count is the quality of the content and self-instructional strategies.

Recommendation 15:
While it is important that COL remains responsive to its customers' needs, it is also important that the training provided should accord with COL's strategic goals, achieve maximum impact and returns on investment and be available on the widest possible scale. COL should therefore explore new topics and forms of delivery, including the internet/web and a collaborative 'virtual training institution' to accelerate change and enhance performance (see ***also Recommendation 20****).*

Recommendation 16:
COL should explore where there is still need and potential for further formal programs in open and distance education and articulation, collaboration and innovation in delivery in such programs throughout the Commonwealth

Recommendation 17
COL should explore mixed-mode training delivery, combining face-to-face presentations and demonstrations with on- and off-campus applications of the Training Toolkits in print and electronic form and follow-up assignments, projects, impact studies and mentoring to facilitate implementation.

Recommendation 18
COL should further develop and extend the Training Toolkits, dealing with more advanced topics and in particular, by commissioning a Training Toolkit on staff development techniques in support of a 'train the trainers' strategy.

Recommendation 19
COL should organise a Commonwealth-wide (possibly in conjunction with the next Pan-Commonwealth Forum) and/or a series of regional forum(s) on training needs, strategies and networks in order to develop mutual support systems.

Recommendation 20
COL should seek more strategic alliances with other organisations such as the IEC and UNESCO to achieve the scale and strategic thrust needed to enhance professionalism in distance education, maximise available resources, networks and expertise and work towards a collaborative 'virtual training institution'.

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Appendix A: COL Standard Training Activity Evaluation Format

STANDARD TRAINING ACTIVITY EVALUATION FORMAT

Workshop/course title: _____

Instructor/Workshop leader: _____

Dates: _____

Location: _____

Thank you taking a few moments during or at the conclusion of your training session to answer the following questions. Your responses will help The Commonwealth of Learning to improve future training activities in this area. Please put a checkmark [✔] in the appropriate box from questions 1 to 13.

1. The objectives of the workshop were clearly stated

   Strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ no opinion ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree ☐

2. My expectations of the workshop have been

   Fully met ☐ not met at all ☐ partially met

3. The workshop's physical/logistical arrangements were

   Poor ☐ mediocre ☐ satisfactory ☐ good ☐ excellent ☐

4. The course content and its presentations were

   Poor ☐ mediocre ☐ satisfactory ☐ good ☐ excellent ☐

5. There was adequate time provided for various activities

   Sometime ☐ always ☐ no opinion ☐ seldom ☐ never ☐

6. I participated in this course to:

Improve my performance in my present position	Yes ☐	No ☐
Prepare myself for new tasks or responsibilities	Yes ☐	No ☐
Gain general information and knowledge	Yes ☐	No ☐

7. Course materials i.e. handouts were

Poor ☐ mediocre ☐ satisfactory ☐ good ☐ excellent ☐

8. Audiovisual materials were

Poor ☐ mediocre ☐ satisfactory ☐ good ☐ excellent ☐

9. Pace of the course was

Too fast ☐ satisfactory ☐ too slow ☐

10. Workload was

Very light ☐ light ☐ okay ☐ heavy ☐ very heavy ☐

11. Occasions to discuss and activity participate were

Insufficient ☐ satisfactory ☐ excessive ☐

12. The number of practical activities i.e. demonstrations/hands-on was

Insufficient ☐ satisfactory ☐ excessive ☐

13. The length of the course/workshop was

Insufficient ☐ satisfactory ☐ excessive ☐

14. Which components of the workshop did you find most valuable?

15. If some components were less valuable please tell us and why

16. Suggestions for improvement

17. Other comments

Appendix B: Interview Proforma

COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING (COL)
TRAINING IMPACT STUDY: INTERVIEW PROFORMA

Please give your interviewee a copy of this Interview Proforma so they can refer to it during the interview. Conduct this interview by reading out the introductory statements and questions and recording all the interviewee's answers.

The answers to the short questions require a tick [✔] in the appropriate box (e.g. Very High to Very Low) in accordance with the interviewee's ratings. The interviewee's answers to the open-ended questions need to be recorded clearly in the spaces provided or on attached sheets You may find it useful to tape record these and check or enter the answers after the interview.

THE INSTITUTION'S NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

1. What do you see as the main distance education issues confronting the institution and what you see to be the main staff training needs and expectations?

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2. How highly do you rate the importance of training in each of the following areas?

	Very High	High	Av.	Low	Very Low
Understanding open and distance learning					
Diagnosing learners' needs and circumstances.					
Setting course objectives.					
Curriculum / course development					
Instructional design/ writing for in print material					
Instructional design/scripting for AV material					
Instructional design in computer based learning.					
Instructional design in Internet/Web instruction.					
Basic radio/audio production					
Basic TV production					
Basic computer skills					
Desktop publishing					
Tutoring/counselling					
Library/information management					
Student support services					

Assessing learner performance.
Costing open and distance learning.
Evaluating open and distance learning systems.
Evaluating open and distance learning outcomes.
Managing open and distance learning systems.
Researching open and distance education.
Establishing Quality Assurance procedures
Other (specify)

3. In your experience, in what ways and why have these needs changed over the past ten years?
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4. In your experience, what have been the main barriers or constraints in providing training in these areas?
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5. How highly do you rate the importance of each of the following forms of training provision?

	Very High	High	Av.	Low	Very Low
Workshops by experts from overseas.					
Workshops by experts from your own country/region.					
Workshops by experts from your own institution.					
Self or guided learning using print study materials.					
Self or guided learning using computer courseware.					
Self or guided instruction using Internet/Web.					
Other means (specify)					

COL TRAINING WORKSHOPS

6. Have you participated in a COL training event ? If so, when, where and on what topic ?
a) When .....
b) Where .....
c) What topic .....

7. Were there any particular factors that helped or hindered **this** training event ?

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8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements with regard to **this** COL training event ? (Rate from Strongly Agree [S.A] to Strongly Disagree [S.DA]

	S. A.	A.	Av.	DA	S. DA
The training was provided where and when most needed					
The training was affordable.					
The training attracted a wide and representative cross-section of staff.					
The training resulted in improved practice.					
The training had a major impact at the organisational level.					

9. Can you provide any examples or illustrations of ways in which a COL training event has:

a) Improved practice

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b) Had a major impact at the institutional level

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10. In your experience, how and why have COL training programs succeeded or failed over the past ten years?

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11. In your experience, what have been the main benefits of the COL training programs?

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12. Do you know of any persons whose careers have progressed partly as a result of COL training ?

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13. Are there any other points that you would like to make about COL training programs?

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FUTURE NEEDS

14. How highly do you rate the importance of the following possible future activities by COL?

	Very High	High	Av.	Low	Very Low
The same level of training support provided by COL.					
An increased level of training support provided by COL.					

A greater focus on training the policymakers or managers.

A greater use of a 'train-the-trainers approach' supporting in-house training.

The provision of training kits to support in-house training.

A greater use of in-country collaboration in training.

The provision of formal qualifications or accreditation for training.

Increasing use of the Internet/Web for training.

A greater emphasis on regional collaboration in training provision

Other (specify)

15. In your view, how and why might these succeed or fail ?

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16. How would you rate the importance of the following pitfalls or problems that COL might experience in using the strategies listed in Question 14 ? (Very Important [VP] to Not Important At All [NIAA])

	VP	I	Av.	NI	NIAA
Opposition or apathy in senior staff.					
Simply training those few individuals who volunteer.					
Staff resistance to change.					
Inadequate resources for change.					
Inappropriate timetabling or time allowance for training.					
Training being too theoretical or remote from the realities of the workplace or the organisational culture.					
The time-lag between training and implementation.					
A lack of follow up by COL.					
A lack of follow up by the institution's managers.					
Other (specify)					

17. How important do you see the following issues in training for distance education generally?

	VP	I	Av.	NI	NIAA
Providing orientation programs for all staff new to open and distance learning.					
Helping the 15% of staff who are the 'early adopters' of new techniques and technology.					
Helping the 45 % of staff who are likely to become 'late adopters' of new techniques and technology.					
Helping staff move from an 'elitist' to a 'mass' education system.					
Helping staff combine face-to-face methods and embrace new technologies of teaching and learning.					
Helping staff change their role from that of 'instructor' to that of 'support person'; from *expository teaching* to					

facilitating learning.

Helping staff to appreciate all the problems faced by their learners.

Reducing teacher-dependency in the learners and encouraging them in self-directed, resource-based learning.

Helping managers and staff adapt models of teaching and learning to the traditional values and practices in their own countries.

Helping politicians, planners and senior managers to appreciate the professionalism required for work in distance education.

Persuading institutions that staff development is critical to quality in open and distance education and should be looked on as an investment rather than a cost.

Providing more funds and technical support for training.

Providing more time release for work in distance education.

Conducting research studies to demonstrate the cost benefits or cost-effectiveness of staff development.

Providing study visits, conference attendance and other opportunities to broaden professional perspectives.

Providing staff development for policy-makers, planners and educational administrators.

Providing staff development for non-academic and technical staff to help them dovetail their expertise with the requirements of distance learning.

Providing staff development for off-campus and regional staff

Establishing staff development centres or networks within institutions.

Other (specify)

Thank you for taking the time to give your views and suggestions.

Appendix C: Self-Completion Questionnaire

COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING (COL)
TRAINING IMPACT STUDY:
SELF-COMPLETION QUESTIONNAIRE

The answers to the short questions require a tick [✔] in the appropriate box (eg. Very High to Very Low) in accordance with your ratings. The answers to the open-ended questions need to be recorded clearly in the spaces provided or on attached sheets

THE INSTITUTION'S NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

1. What do you see as the main distance education issues confronting the institution and what you see to be the main staff training needs and expectations?

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2. How highly do you rate the importance of training in each of the following areas?

	Very High	High	Av.	Low	Very Low
Understanding open and distance learning					
Diagnosing learners' needs and circumstances.					
Setting course objectives.					
Curriculum / course development					
Instructional design/ writing for in print material					
Instructional design/scripting for AV material					
Instructional design in computer based learning.					
Instructional design in Internet/Web instruction.					
Basic radio/audio production					
Basic TV production					
Basic computer skills					
Desktop publishing					
Tutoring/counselling					
Library/information management					
Student support services					
Assessing learner performance.					
Costing open and distance learning.					

Evaluating open and distance learning systems.
Evaluating open and distance learning outcomes.
Managing open and distance learning systems.
Researching open and distance education.
Establishing Quality Assurance procedures
Other (specify)

3. In your experience, in what ways and why have these needs changed over the past ten years?
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4. In your experience, what have been the main barriers or constraints in providing training in these areas?
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7. How highly do you rate the importance of each of the following forms of training provision?

	Very High	High	Av.	Low	Very Low
Workshops by experts from overseas.					
Workshops by experts from your own country/region.					
Workshops by experts from your own institution.					
Self or guided learning using print study materials.					
Self or guided learning using computer courseware.					
Self or guided instruction using Internet/Web.					
Other means (specify)					

COL TRAINING WORKSHOPS

8. Have you participated in a COL training event ? If so, when, where and on what topic ?
d) When .....
e) Where .....
f) What topic .....

7. Were there any particular factors that helped or hindered **this** training event ?

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8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements with regard to **this** COL training event ? (Rate from Strongly Agree [S.A] to Strongly Disagree [S.DA]

	S. A.	A.	Av.	DA	S. DA
The training was provided where and when most needed					
The training was affordable.					
The training attracted a wide and representative cross-section of staff.					
The training resulted in improved practice.					
The training had a major impact at the organisational level.					

9. Can you provide any examples or illustrations of ways in which a COL training event has:

a) Improved practice

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b) Had a major impact at the institutional level

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10. In your experience, how and why have COL training programs succeeded or failed over the past ten years?

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10. In your experience, what have been the main benefits of the COL training programs?

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12. Do you know of any persons whose careers have progressed partly as a result of COL training ?

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13. Are there any other points that you would like to make about COL training programs?

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FUTURE NEEDS

14. How highly do you rate the importance of the following possible future activities by COL?

	Very High	High	Av.	Low	Very Low
The same level of training support provided by COL.					
An increased level of training support provided by COL.					
A greater focus on training the policymakers or managers.					
A greater use of a 'train-the-trainers approach' supporting in-house training.					
The provision of training kits to support in-house training.					
A greater use of in-country collaboration in training.					
The provision of formal qualifications or accreditation for training.					
Increasing use of the Internet/Web for training.					
A greater emphasis on regional collaboration in training provision					
Other (specify)					

15. In your view, how and why might these succeed or fail ?

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16. How would you rate the importance of the following pitfalls or problems that COL might experience in using the strategies listed in Question 14 ? (Very Important [VP] to Not Important At All [NIAA])

	VP	I	Av.	NI	NIAA
Opposition or apathy in senior staff.					
Simply training those few individuals who volunteer.					
Staff resistance to change.					
Inadequate resources for change.					
Inappropriate timetabling or time allowance for training.					
Training being too theoretical or remote from the realities of the workplace or the organisational culture.					
The time-lag between training and implementation.					
A lack of follow up by COL.					
A lack of follow up by the institution's managers.					
Other (specify)					

17. How important do you see the following issues in training for distance education generally?

	VP	I	Av.	NI	NIAA
Providing orientation programs for all staff new to open and distance learning.					
Helping the 15% of staff who are the 'early adopters' of new techniques and technology.					
Helping the 45 % of staff who are likely to become 'late adopters' of new techniques and technology.					
Helping staff move from an 'elitist' to a 'mass' education system.					
Helping staff combine face-to-face methods and embrace new technologies of teaching and learning.					
Helping staff change their role from that of 'instructor' to that of 'support person'; from *expository teaching* to *facilitating learning*.					
Helping staff to appreciate all the problems faced by their learners.					
Reducing teacher-dependency in the learners and encouraging them in self-directed, resource-based learning.					
Helping managers and staff adapt models of teaching and learning to the traditional values and practices in their own countries.					
Helping politicians, planners and senior managers to appreciate the professionalism required for work in distance education.					
Persuading institutions that staff development is critical					

to quality in open and distance education and should be looked on as an investment rather than a cost.

Providing more funds and technical support for training.

Providing more time release for work in distance education.

Conducting research studies to demonstrate the cost benefits or cost-effectiveness of staff development.

Providing study visits, conference attendance and other opportunities to broaden professional perspectives.

Providing staff development for policy-makers, planners and educational administrators.

Providing staff development for non-academic and technical staff to help them dovetail their expertise with the requirements of distance learning.

Providing staff development for off-campus and regional staff

Establishing staff development centres or networks within Institutions.

Other (specify)

Thank you for taking the time to give your views and suggestions.

Appendix D: Workshop Co-ordinators' Questionnaire

April 2000

Commonwealth of Learning Training Impact Study

Dear [Name],

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has engaged us as consultants to undertake a study to explore the impact of the training programmes COL has conducted over the last ten years. Given your experience of conducting one or more workshops for COL, and your knowledge of developments and needs in Open and Distance Learning, we would be extremely grateful for your help.

In our examination of the numerous reports on COL training events a number of issues have emerged that we have phrased into eight questions. We attached these questions and wonder if you would spend a few minutes giving us the benefit of your experience by responding to them.

At the top of the sheet you will see that we have asked you to indicate whether you would like your comments, if used in the Report, to be anonymous or attributed to you.

You may have additional insights, comments and advice that you feel would be useful to us. If so, we would welcome these.

We provide an addressed envelope for the return of the survey by airmail. However, if you prefer, you may fax your comments to the Open University UK number given below, or email them to the two email addresses below.

Many thanks for your help. We shall ask COL to send you a copy of the Final Report.

Yours,

Dr Fred Lockwood & Colin Latchem

Open University,
Institute of Educational Technology Fax Number + 1908 654173
Dr Fred Lockwood: email address F.G.Lockwood@open.ac.uk
Colin Latchem: email address clatchem@iinet.net.au

Commonwealth of Learning Training Impact Study

Comments from Key Informant: [Name of Workshop Coordinator]

NOTE
If any of my comments are incorporated into your Report I would prefer them to be

Please tick [✔]
Anonymous [ ]
Attributed to me [ ]

1. The effectiveness of COL's training methods and approach.

2. The extent to which training methods and approaches meet the needs of COL's clients.

3. The extent to which COL training has resulted in improved practice.

4. The extent to which COL training has impacted at the organisational level.

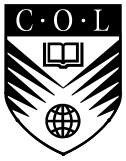
5. The extent to which the training was provided at an acceptable cost to COL's clients.

6. Problems encountered and ways of avoiding these in future training events.

7. Future and emerging needs for training.

8. The priority and focus that COL should give to its future training initiatives.

Many thanks for your help



Appendix E: Key Informants' Questionnaire

Commonwealth of Learning Training Impact Study

April 2000

Dear [Name],

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has engaged us as consultants to undertake a study to explore the impact of the training programmes COL has conducted over the last ten years. Given your experience as well as your knowledge of developments and needs in open and distance learning, we would be extremely grateful for your help.

In our examination of the numerous reports on COL training events, a number of issues have emerged that we have phrased into eight questions. We attach these questions and wonder if you would spend a few minutes giving us the benefit of your experience by responding to them.

At the top of the sheet you will see that we have asked you to indicate whether you would like your comments, if used in the Report, to be anonymous or attributed to you.

It is possible that you may have additional insights, comments and advice that you feel would be useful to us. If so, we would very much welcome these.

We provide an addressed envelope for the return of the survey by airmail. However, if you prefer, you may fax your comments to the Open University UK number given below, or email them to the two email addresses below.

Many thanks for your help. We shall ask COL to send you a copy of the Final Report.

Yours,

Dr Fred Lockwood & Colin Latchem

Open University,
Institute of Educational Technology Fax Number + 1908 654173
Dr Fred Lockwood: email address F.G.Lockwood@open.ac.uk
Colin Latchem: email address clatchem@iinet.net.au

Commonwealth of Learning Training Impact Study

Comments from Key Informant [Name]]

NOTE

	Please tick [✔]
If any of my comments are incorporated into your Report I would prefer them to be	Anonymous [ ] Attributed to me [ ]

1. The effectiveness of COL's training methods and approach.

2. The extent to which training methods and approaches meet the needs of COL's clients.

3. The extent to which COL training has resulted in improved practice.

4. The extent to which COL training has impacted at the organisational level.

5. The extent to which the training was provided at an acceptable cost to COL's clients.

6. Problems encountered and ways of avoiding these in future training events.

7. Future and emerging needs for training.

8. The priority and focus that COL should give to its future training initiatives.

Many thanks for your help

Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Training Impact Study: Contacts to identify the Research Associates

Mr. Stephen Mensah
Director, Institute for Educational Development and Extension
University College of Education of Winneba
PO Box 25
Winneba
GHANA

Mrs. Juliana R.B. Bbuye
Acting Head, Department of Distance Education
Institute of Adult & Continuing Education
Makerere University
P.O. Box 7062
Kampala
UGANDA

Professor Richard Siaciwena
Directorate of Distance Education
The University of Zambia
P.O. Box 32379
Lusaka
ZAMBIA

Md. Shafiqul Alam
Deputy Director (Training & Consultancy)
Bangladesh Open University
Gazipur 1704
BANGLADESH

Professor Santosh K. Panda
Professor of Distance Education and Director
Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education - STRIDE
Indira Gandhi National Open University
Maidan Garhi
New Delhi, 110 068
INDIA

Mr. Samuel A. Small
Director, Institute of Distance and Continuing Education
University of Guyana
Flat 5, Queen's College Compound
Camp Road
Georgetown
GUYANA

Mr. J.M. Bwalya
Principal, The National College for Management and Development Studies
P.O. Box 80415
Kabwe
ZAMBIA

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Appendix G; Covering letter from the President/CEO of COL

April 2000

Commonwealth of Learning Training Impact Study: Request for Assistance in Identifying Research Associates

Dear Colleague,

The Commonwealth of Learning is assessing the impact of the numerous training programmes in open and distance Learning that its representatives have conducted within the Commonwealth in the last ten years, and needs your help in doing so. The findings will be shared with you and will have a direct influence on our training plans for the future.

We have asked two experienced and highly respected colleagues to conduct this Training Impact Study:

Associate Professor Colin Latchem, former Head of the Teaching Learnin Group, Curtin University of Technology and former President of the Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia, and Dr Fred Lockwood, Head of the Professional Development in Educational Technology programme within the Institute of Educational Technology, Open University, United Kingdom.

They have made a preliminary review of the relevant COL documentation, including the training reports and evaluations, and have assembled an interview schedule and questionnaire which they would like to use to collect data from key persons in your institution and former workshop participants in your institution or elsewhere in the region.

We would be grateful if you could assist us by identifying an appropriate person within your institution who could act as a Research Associate for this Training Impact Study. The Research Associate would be required to conduct a number of interviews within your institution using an Interview Proforma and assist in identifying former participants in COL training events within the region who can complete the Self-Completion Questionnaire. It is estimated that these tasks will take 2 - 3 days, spread over several weeks, and COL will pay the Research Associate a fee of US$300 plus US$ 50 towards any expenses. The contribution of the Research Associate will also be acknowledged in the Final Report.

I would be extremely grateful if you could help us with this important Training Impact Study by identifying a colleague whom you feel would have the authority, experience, time and resources to fulfil this Research Associate role and forwarding their name and contact details (mail address, telephone and fax number, email address) to:

Dr Fred Lockwood, IET,
Open University,
Walton Hall,
Milton Keynes,
MK6 7AA,

Telephone No.+44 1908 653575
Fax No.+44 1908 654173

email F.G.Lockwood@open.ac.uk

ENGLAND.

It would be appreciated if you could nominate this person and provide these details by 7 April 2000.

Yours sincerely,

Dato' Professor Raj Dhanarajan
President and Chief Executive Officer
Commonwealth of Learning

Appendix H: Research Associate's Letter of Agreement

Date

Ref No

Name and address of Research Associate
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Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Training Impact Study:
Research Associate Letter of Agreement

Please accept this letter of agreement between The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and .....(the Research Associate)

COL engages the Research Associate to assist the Lead Researchers - Dr Fred Lockwood (OU) and Colin Latchem (consultant) - in the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Training Impact Study: An Evaluation of the Impact of Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Training and in particular, to record and assess the circumstances, experiences and views of key persons in his/her institution.

Nature of Task

The Associate Researcher's task will be to:

1. Advise the Lead Researchers on what s/he sees to be the main opportunities and challenges in distance and open education facing her/his institution and the associated training implications.

2. Help the Lead Researchers by assisting in identifying and locating former participants in COL training events. Where these persons are within the immediate vicinity of the Research Associate encouraging them to complete the Self-Completion Questionnaire, collecting and forwarding the completed questionnaires to the Lead Researchers.

3. Identify **five** persons within his/her institution who are willing and able to be interviewed for the training Impact Study, as follows:

- A senior administrator (vice-chancellor, president, rector, director or the deputy to one of these);
- A senior academic manager (head of school, division, department, professor, etc., who has responsibility for distance education programs);
- A person responsible for leading and managing the distance education development/delivery support services;
- Two lecturers, teachers or trainers involved in distance education development/delivery

4. Using the attached Interview Proforma, conduct an interview with each of these persons, face-to-face or by telephone, email, or fax and make a complete and accurate record of their comments. It is estimated that each interview should take approximately one hour.

5. Provide the Lead Researchers with copies of the five completed Interview Proformas.

6. Provide the Lead Researchers with any additional material relevant to this study.

7. Provide the Lead Researchers with such other information/advice as may be requested.

8. To provide the Lead Researchers with these findings and this material by **27 April, 2000**.

Terms and Conditions

1. COL will pay the Research Associate a fee of US$300 to carry out the tasks outlined above. The fee will be paid as follows:
   - US$100 on receipt of the signed agreement;
   - US$ 200 on receipt and acceptance of the data requested.

2. COL will reimburse the Research Associate US$50 maximum towards communications, travel and materials involved in this work. (Receipts will not be required.)

3. In consideration of the fee paid, the Research Associate agrees to assign to COL any copyright arising from the interviews, while executing the contract. Similarly, the Research Associate hereby agrees to waive in favour of COL any moral rights that may be associated with such works.

4. COL does not assume any liability for any injuries or damage to the Research Associate incurred during the assignment. COL assumes no responsibility whatsoever for insuring the Research Associate.

5. The persons with whom you should liaise on all matters related to these tasks are the Lead Researchers, Dr Fred Lockwood and Mr Colin Latchem.

To indicate your acceptance of these terms and conditions, please sign both copies of this letter, returning one copy to COL and retaining the second for your records.

Sincerely,

Doris McEachern
Manager, Finance & Administration

_____ _____

Signature of Research Associate Date

Appendix I: Covering letter to the Research Associates

Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Training Impact Study

Dear (colleague April 2000

The purpose of the COLTraining Impact Study is to diagnose:

1. The effectiveness of COL's training methods and approach.
2. The extent to which training methods and approaches meet the needs of COL's clients.
3. The extent to which COL training has resulted in improved practice.
4. The extent to which COL training has impacted at the organisational level.
5. The extent to which the training was provided at an accepFigure cost to COL's clients.
6. Problems encountered and ways of avoiding these in future training events.
7. Future and emerging needs for training.
8. The priority and focus that COL should give to its future training initiatives.

To help us to understand the circumstances and experiences in your institution, and evaluate the impact of the COL training programs, we invite you to join the COL Training Impact Study as a Research Associate and to undertake the following tasks, which we estimate will take you 2-3 days. A contract is attached as are copies of the Interview Proforma and the Self-Completion Questionnaire for use in this work.

TASK 1.

Provide a short statement about what **you** see as the main opportunities and challenges facing your institution in regard to distance and open learning and the associated training implications.

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TASK 2.

Identify **five** persons in your institution who are willing and able to be interviewed for this Training Impact Study. (See attached contract for the required interviewees.)

	Name	Position
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

TASK 3.

Set up appointments, and using the attached Interview Proforma, interview each of these individuals face-to-face, by telephone or email ensuring an accurate record of their comments and return two copies of the completed Interview Proforma to us by **May 1, 2000**. We estimate that each interview should take less than one hour.

TASK 4.

Help the Lead Researchers identify and locate former participants in COL training events, invite them to complete the attached Self-Completion Questionnaire, and collect and forward the completed questionnaires to the Lead Researchers.

TASK 5.

Provide such other reports, evaluations, material and advice as may inform the Lead Researchers and any further information that will help to ensure that this Training Impact Study is comprehensive and accurate in its findings and recommendations.

TASK 6.

Please mail two separate sets of completed Interview Proformas the addresses below.

Associate Professor Colin Latchem
11 Reeve Street,
Swanbourne,
Perth,
6010,
Western Australia
Tel: 61 08 9384 7384
Fax: 61 08 9384 7384
Email: clatchem@iinet.net.au

Dr Fred Lockwood
IET,
Open University,
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Thank you for performing these tasks**.**

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Commonwealth of Learning Training Impact Study

Dear Colleague

We recently sent you a questionnaire as part of the above study, but to date we have not received a reply from you. If you have already completed and posted the questionnaire, please ignore this card.

If you have not already completed and posted the questionnaire, we would be extremely grateful if you would do so ***by 31st May 2000***. Your comments will help the COL improve its training courses.

Yours sincerely

Fred Lockwood & Colin Latchem