

Connections



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Addressing technical/vocational education and training challenges

COL's Education Specialist, Technical/Vocational Education and Training, John Bartram, reviews current challenges in the field and describes some approaches in addressing them.

The acquisition of appropriate skills – both technical and social – is required to cope with the challenges presented by the evolving needs of the workplace. Education and training systems that respond adequately to these demands will contribute to the efforts to overcome the growing unemployment and marginalisation of young people and adults in the industrialised as well as the developing world.

UNESCO: Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education, Seoul, Korea

By the year 2020, teenagers will make up the single largest age group in the world – more than two billion individuals. Most of these will live in the Asia-Pacific region, Latin America and Africa. Most countries in these regions already have a large population of teenagers who are marginalised, disaffected and are not prepared for work.

The major challenge facing technical/vocational education and training (TVET) is in meeting the demand, particularly from the exploding population of young people.

Half the world's workers are self-employed or work in small family enterprises in the informal sector. Many are barely subsistent. By providing access to learning experiences designed to broaden skills, TVET programmes can increase productivity and significantly improve the fortunes of this large group of people. The social consequences of not meeting this demand are enormous.

TVET aims

TVET programmes aim to provide wide access to means for developing and upgrading skills, knowledge and aptitudes. They can prepare participants to engage in productive work and, in doing so, to be faster, more effective, more efficient and, in many cases, help employers to be less environmentally damaging. TVET is a necessary investment for those countries seeking to operate successfully in the highly competitive global market economy. Those countries who have invested most heavily in TVET tend to be the most productive.

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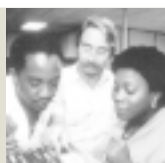
Women in a small Bangladeshi village on the flood plain south of Dhaka, sitting on the straw mat, discuss the Entrepreneurial Business Skills Programme with a visiting support team comprising representatives from the Bangladesh Open University, the Proshika Training Centre (an NGO) and COL. They talked about their small enterprises, including poultry rearing, dairy farming, vegetable and rice production and retailing. These industries were devastated during the 1998 floods. Some then entered the marine transport industry by purchasing boats and offering water-taxi services. Of the twelve women, four are widowed.

COL and "Education for All"

Over one billion people will begin the new millennium lacking the ability to sign their name or to read a book. Among them will be over one million children who will not have access to primary education. A large proportion of them will be girls and women.

Of the children with access to primary education, a large percentage will be in crowded classrooms that are in a very sad state of repair and some will be in situations where there may not be any classrooms at all. Many will be taught by untrained or poorly trained teachers, located in ill-equipped schools with no learning materials, laboratories, libraries or connections to the outside world. A good proportion of these children will not complete their primary school education.

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ADDRESSING
TVET CHALLENGES

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Teenagers and young men (left) at work on a roadside stall, selling bananas, chickens and head scarves, in Nampula Province, Mozambique. They are a small part of the very large informal sector of the economy that encompasses an estimated 50% of the global workforce. They are also part of a very large group for whom there is currently little access to education and training. They are probably illiterate.



TVET encompasses many levels. It includes:

- basic training for manual trades through to technical and para-professional occupations;
- any or all areas of the labour market, from agriculture to management and from plumbing to tourism;
- delivery in schools, polytechnics and colleges, as well as on-the-job and on-the-farm; and
- formal (relatively long term and accredited), non-formal (short term) or informal (incidental, unstructured and unplanned) programming.

Meeting needs

The changing demands of the labour market require imaginative and innovative responses. Public, private and third-sector (not-for-profit and non-governmental) enterprises have to respond to and sometimes embrace many external forces, notably new technologies, e-commerce, globalisation, multi-national expansion and shifting demographics of the labour supply market.



Photo Credit: IDRC

Some countries have established sophisticated systems within labour or employment ministries to

predict the future labour needs of the country. These inform the TVET providers so that their output meets the demand — a demand-driven system as opposed to a supply-driven system that is controlled by existing physical resources and tenured staff.

Should TVET be teaching broad generic skills that are relevant to a suite of employment situations or should it be teaching narrow job-specific skills that apply to a much smaller range of occupations? The former is more expensive and will take longer; the latter might be learnt in a shorter time period. In most cases, the former is in the best interest of the individual, while those funding the training might prefer the latter.

Is TVET respectable?

While it is commonly accepted that education will help people to “get on,” to “improve themselves” and to get “better” jobs, many parents believe that only a university education will offer their children the opportunity to win a “good” job. As a result, many countries find that the number of graduates from universities far exceeds the capacity of the labour market to provide appropriate employment. At the same time they are unable to attract enough people to train for those positions of greater need, which might be “blue collar,” may involve manual labour and may be dangerous, dirty or difficult. Quality TVET programmes and improved workplace standards can help to address this problem.

Recognising qualifications

Systems are also needed to capture skills, knowledge and abilities acquired through formal programmes, non-formal training and on-the-job or informal experience. Accredited awards must be provided that are accepted by employers and other education institutions — a “skills passport” which facilitates mobility and flexibility of labour.

Increasing access to TVET

Governments must adopt better ways of delivering programmes given the size and urgency of the demand for TVET. Open

learning, distance education and flexible learning in all their various guises offer part of the solution. Providers must ensure that TVET learning materials are appropriate to the target group and that the skills and competencies learned are those required by occupational groups and appreciated by employers. There must be sufficient potential in the labour market for graduates to become employed, self-employed and/or employed at higher levels. The programmes must be “sold” to the community as being worthwhile and not second-rate simply because they are delivered in a non-traditional way. The courses must have an accreditation that is accepted by both enterprises and other educational institutions.

Small states

Within the Commonwealth, there are 24 countries with populations of less than one million. Ten of these are small island states in the Caribbean, eight in the Pacific, two in the Indian Ocean and two in the Mediterranean. There are an additional seven countries with under five million people. To provide a sufficient range of high-quality training to meet the needs of local employers is a challenge that these small states, particularly small island states, cannot address alone. Through regional and/or international co-operation, however, they can develop or obtain learning materials that will meet the increasingly complex needs of the local labour market and be of a standard sufficient to be recognised by employers and educational institutions throughout the region.



At the official opening of the COL-convened meeting of Pacific Education Ministers, left to right: The Honourable Remy G. Namaduk, Minister for Education, Nauru; Y.B. Tan Sri Dato' Musa Mohamad, Minister of Education, Malaysia (host); and The Honourable Dr. S. Langi Kavaliku, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education, Civil Aviation and Works, Tonga (Chair)



Rt. Hon. Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, UK: "In every developing country that I have visited in my two and a half years in this job, I have been struck by the desperate shortage of skills that poor countries face and quite often by the unemployed graduates that subsist alongside the skill shortages... But skills cannot be provided without some kind of policy framework or institutional base, whether it be a distance education system, open learning, access to a virtual database of course material or existing technical institutions."

COL is responding

- The Commonwealth of Learning seeks to improve the standard and status of TVET teachers with the development of its *TVET Teacher Training* course. This course was initially developed to assist Commonwealth member countries in the Caribbean by providing improved access to teaching qualification through open and distance education methodology. These materials are now being made available to all Commonwealth member countries.
- In the Pacific, COL is working with member states on two regional TVET projects. One will develop learning materials suitable for use throughout the region to support skills development in key areas of economic expansion. The second will focus on the development of policies and procedures that will facilitate the transfer of credit across institutional, national and even regional boundaries. This will make it easier for people, particularly in small island states, to acquire a suite of accredited skills that will then enable them to contribute to the national economy through employment.
- Working with the Bangladesh Open University, COL has developed a programme to provide the largely illiterate population of rural women in Bangladesh with business skills that will encourage them to become more entrepreneurial. This project has incredible potential to channel the energy and creativity of the economy's informal

sector into more productive formal economic activity.

- COL will be publishing a collection of exemplary case studies that provide a guide for best practise in the use of open and distance learning to increase access to TVET.
- COL is working with several international agencies that are embarking on skills development programmes, including the British Department for International Development (DFID). Its Minister, the Right Honourable Clare Short, has announced that DFID has committed £25 million over the next three years to a new Skills for Development initiative to "facilitate the stimulation of entrepreneurial skills required by the poorest of countries if their economies are to grow."

Comments on the foregoing are welcome. Further information on COL's TVET activities is available on the COL web site (www.col.org/TVET)



John Bartram joined COL's headquarters staff in June 1998, coming from the Adelaide TAFE Institute in South Australia, where he was responsible for many international programmes, fellowships and consultancies conducted in and for the Asia-Pacific region. He also managed the Australian UNEVOC Centre located in Adelaide TAFE.



Pehin Dato Abu Bakar Apong, Permanent Secretary (Professional and Higher Education), Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam, through His Majesty's Government, has accepted an invitation from the Commonwealth Secretary-General and the Chairman of COL to complete the term of office as regional representative for Asia on COL's Board of Governors. The position was formerly held by Haji Mohd. Denis Roslee, who retired recently as the Ministry's Director General. Pehin Abu Bakar was Vice Chancellor of Universiti Brunei Darussalam until last year.



Mr. Brian Long, who joined COL as Director in September 1998, has been promoted to Vice President. Prior to joining COL, he was with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, most recently as Director of the Department's International Academic Relations Division.



Ms. Patricia McWilliams, COL's Education Specialist (Training) has left COL's staff and relocated to Southern Africa to pursue her career there. Her many contributions to COL since her employment in August 1993 were principally related to her work in the area of staff training and interchange initiatives throughout the Commonwealth. Prior to joining COL, she was Co-ordinator, Distance Education with the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), Canada.

Education for All, *continued from page 1*

Most of these under-provided learners will be living in Commonwealth member states located in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. These countries will also suffer educational deprivation at other levels on the educational ladder.

These young people, and the billion or so other adults who never received or benefited from education when they were young, will find themselves attempting to function in a global environment where:

- there is acceptance that long-term job success necessitates a focus on continuous learning regardless of profession, geographic location or age;
- developing a strong human resource base is being recognised as essential for economic and social development: training and the upgrading of skills and knowledge necessary to improve the productive capacity of a labour force and economic growth;
- relevant education and training have been accepted as potential solutions to address key issues such as environmental degradation, high population and domestic violence; and
- the impact of technology and increased levels of education on governance issues is being recognised, assessed and appreciated.

How can they assist developing democracies in their transition? How can they be employed by development agencies as tools for economic, social and political development? How can one capitalise on the potential of technology to reshape civil society and its role within, and as part of, the larger context of governance?

Shifting paradigms

It is under these circumstances that the design and delivery of education is being



WE RE-AFFIRM the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien 1990), supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, that every child, youth and adult has the human rights to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be. It is an education geared to tapping each person's talents and potential, and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies.

From The Dakar Framework for Action on Education For All, "Meeting our Collective Commitments," adopted by 181 countries and numerous organisations, agencies and associations (including COL) represented at the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000

considered by nations rich and poor alike. A consensus is emerging that opportunities for, and provisions of, life-long learning will require a reconsideration of the ways in which the educational environment is constructed, organised, structured, governed and financed. It is increasingly acknowledged that there is a shift in instructional paradigms where the instructor or teacher need no longer be the sole source of knowledge but rather a facilitator, supporting student learning.

Distance education is being incorporated into mainstream education and training efforts; it is reshaping the new educational landscape, including to whom and how education is delivered. Educational designs are being developed as rapid increases in technology continue to collapse spatial boundaries. Within the *Dakar Framework for Action* there are commitments to "harness

new information and communication technologies to help achieve EFA goals."

Commonwealth countries continue to lead the world in the imaginative ways in which they have applied distance and open learning. However, that capability is neither distributed equally among all Commonwealth countries nor in all sectors of education in those countries where open and distance learning has found success in one form or another.

Looking ahead for COL

"In addressing these challenges," COL President and CEO, Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan says, "The Commonwealth of Learning can take pride in the fact that over a period of eleven years of work in and for the Commonwealth it has not only brought attention to the opportunities presented by open and distance learning but also trained people, built partnerships, developed models and built modest capabilities."

"But," he adds, "much still needs to be done especially since the arrival of the new technologies that are reshaping the ways in which the world operates."

With support from staff and members of COL's Board of Governors, and in consultation with member governments and strategic partners throughout the Commonwealth, Dhanarajan is currently developing COL's next Three-year Plan, which will be presented to Commonwealth Education Ministers when they meet in Halifax, Canada, in November.

Responding to priorities identified by member states, the Plan will focus on the application of distance, open and technology-mediated education in a broad range of sectors including basic and primary education, skills development and professional upgrading, teacher training and retraining, as well as the upgrading of skills in areas critical to poverty reduction and elimination.



COL's President and Chief Executive Officer, Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan, speaking at the Education for All Forum in Dakar. With David Walker (Education Specialist, Educational Technology), he delivered a presentation concerning distance education and the use of radio. Community radio is an immensely powerful low-cost technology for the delivery of education – and its potential reach, globally, is enormous. Creating opportunities for communities to utilise this delivery system will enable disadvantaged groups to engage in a development agenda, sensitive to their needs.

COL in Action

Youth internships

Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has selected COL as an implementation partner in its Youth Internship Program. DEAIT is providing funds for COL to enable five young Canadians to obtain international experience and gain skills while working on COL projects. Further information is available on COL's web site (www.col.org/internship).



Networking schools

COL has re-designed its CENSE web pages. The Commonwealth Electronic Network for Schools and Education is an initiative of COL, the Commonwealth Secretariat and COMNET-IT to facilitate contact between national learning grids, schools and institutions throughout the Commonwealth. The CENSE web site hosts Commonwealth information; provides support for teachers, learners and education administrators; and promotes the awareness and practice of local cultures.

The CENSE web site also helps users to keep abreast of information and advances in communications technology, which is a vital task for school administrators and policy makers facing decisions regarding allocation of education budgets.

As "school nets" evolve and grow throughout the Commonwealth, this site will capture successes and challenges in information technology development, lessons learned and where we're going. Links to existing school nets and other resources are also provided. Comments and suggestions are welcome. www.col.org/cense

Gender training resources

COL, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), with COL as the implementing agency, have developed a prototype database of training resources and capacity building materials for gender mainstreaming. At the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), gender mainstreaming was identified as a priority for governments and other bodies.

The concept includes promoting the role of women in the field of development and integrating women's values into development work.

The gender training resources database is endorsed by the United Nations Inter-agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality and currently includes materials from the United Nations and Commonwealth systems. The database was demonstrated at the UN's General Assembly Special Session on "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century" ("Beijing +5"), in June in New York, and consultation on further development was held with those attending the session. Further participation in the development of the database is invited. www.col.org/GenderResources



Gender and development

Challenges continue to face girls and women in many parts of the Commonwealth whether in the lack of educational and economic opportunities or in the contravention of human rights. By making learning available at times and places suitable to the particular needs of the student, distance education can help overcome many of the obstacles faced by girls and women. Therefore, equitable access to quality education and training, continue to feature prominently on The Commonwealth of Learning's (COL) agenda.

Distance learning methodologies incorporating relevant and effective self-instructional materials offer powerful means to address the critical and emerging gender-related issues such as single-parent households, "male marginalisation" in the Caribbean and health concerns like the HIV/AIDS epidemic at both the policy level and in public education programmes.

As a part of its report to the Sixth Meeting of Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs, in New Delhi in April 2000, COL was invited to demonstrate how Ministers could engage the agency to address such concerns. Examples of innovative formal and non-formal distance education delivery presented by COL included adapting human rights education materials for use by teachers and educators, applying new approaches in educating street children through non-governmental organisations, using radio broadcasts as a training medium to reach women agricultural workers in remote villages and developing models for educating AIDS orphans and the workers who support them. The report is available on COL's web site.



LEAD International

COL was contracted by LEAD International to help develop training material for use by its "Associates" worldwide.

LEAD (Leadership for Environment and Development) International is a non-government organisation based in New York. It works to strengthen decision making in the world's seven most populous countries by promoting policies and practices that integrate environmentally sustainable development and improve the quality of life.

LEAD brings together cohorts of Associates, who are mainly middle-level professionals, and its concern is to explore ways of reinforcing this work by maintaining ongoing communication, information and training with these people when they return as "LEAD Fellows" to their occupations around the world.

Working with a Canadian consultant, Ms. Jennifer O'Rourke, COL planned and developed a learning module on "Writing Project Proposals" designed to guide professionals in securing resources from funding agencies to implement environmentally focussed development projects.

The module takes students through the stages of defining and securing support for a development project idea; identifying potential funding sources; preparing, assembling and testing the proposal and, where appropriate, finalising a submission to meet a potential sponsor's guidelines.

It has been well received by LEAD field office staff and its Curriculum Advisory Committee. Integration into the organisation's revised training process is expected by the end of the year.

Other news

New association for open schools

With support from COL, an association to serve open schools in the Commonwealth has been established with headquarters at the National Open School in New Delhi, India.

The Open Schooling Association of the Commonwealth (OSAC) will foster consultation, information exchange and sharing of resources among members. It also plans to promote research and development activities and take steps to ensure the quality of standards.

Individuals, institutions and organisations in the Commonwealth directly involved in providing education at the school level through open and distance learning are eligible for membership. For further information contact: Chairman, National Open School, B-31 B, Kailash Colony, New Delhi, India 110048 (fax: +91.11.621.1453) or visit the NOS web site (www.nos.org).

University consortium joins Murdoch media empire

International media conglomerate, News Corporation, and a consortium of leading universities, Universitas 21, is forming a joint venture company, through which they intend to secure a substantial share of the global higher education market.

Rupert Murdoch, Chairman and Chief Executive of News Corporation, and Professor Alan Gilbert, Chairman of Universitas 21 and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, made the announcement in May.

The new venture will provide premium higher education programmes throughout the world using new information technologies and learning methods. These programmes will lead directly or indirectly to the awarding of degrees and diplomas. The joint venture company will use the global quality assurance structure that is being developed by Universitas 21. It expects to offer its first courses in 2001.

In statements reported by The Chronicle of Higher Education, Professor Gilbert said: "My colleagues and I in Universitas 21 welcome the prospect of working with News Corporation to provide innovative, high quality educational choices to people around the world for whom e-education is either becoming the preferred option or remaining the only opportunity for access to the knowledge age and the information economy."

He also noted that the aim is to generate income that can be applied to members' conventional operations. "What we want to do is to preserve our universities as the best campus-based institutions in the world where we can continue to offer philosophy and classics and things like that which are hard to pay for in commercial terms, but which you can do if you are well-resourced."

How this might or might not benefit lower-income students and those living in developing countries is yet to be seen.

The venture will be formed by News Corporation's wholly owned subsidiary, TSL Education Ltd, and the commercial arm of Universitas 21.

News Corporation's diversified global operations in the United States, Canada, continental Europe, the United Kingdom, Australia, Latin America and the Pacific include the production and distribution of motion pictures and television programming; television, satellite and cable broadcasting; the publication of newspapers, magazines, books; the production and distribution of promotional and advertising products and services; the development of digital broadcasting; the development of conditional access and subscriber management systems; and the creation and distribution of online programming.

Universitas 21 is a company incorporated in the United Kingdom with a growing membership network of currently 18 universities in 10 countries. The members are prominent institutions in Australia, Canada, China, Singapore, Japan, Europe, the United States and the United Kingdom.
www.universitas.edu.au

Online course databases

Distance education is a booming field, with the number of courses offered through remote delivery increasing daily. At the same time, progress in the areas of accessibility and support for learners wanting to pursue education and training at a distance has not always kept pace. Individuals interested in taking a particular course, or in simply finding out what is available, may find themselves forced to locate and then plough through many unwieldy online course listings for individual institutions. The

process of locating the right course or programme may itself discourage many from pursuing the distance learning option.

In recent years, a number of distance education course databases have been developed and made available through the Internet. These online databases are intended to both provide a central repository of up-to-date information on the many courses and programmes that are available remotely and to make it easy for users to locate information about courses meeting their specific needs.

TeleEducation NB, in New Brunswick, Canada, has conducted an evaluation of 20 distance education databases that are currently available online. Using a standard set of criteria, each database was assessed in terms of its utility in the course selection process, from the perspective of learners or potential learners with basic computer proficiency. Based upon these evaluations, the report concludes with several recommendations for TeleEducation NB's TeleCampus Course Directory. teleeducation.nb.ca/media/reports.shtml

Education projects in Africa

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), in collaboration with Bellanet, has launched an online database of education projects in Africa. The PRISME database currently includes descriptions of 850 projects and is up-to-date, bilingual (English and French) and fully searchable by region, subject area, funding institution and keyword. prisme.adeanet.org

Restructuring education in Nigeria

At the invitation of the new Nigerian Government, COL was represented at a Donor Agencies Coordination Meeting that was held in Abuja in April. Nigeria seeks to transform and modernise an education system that has been set back by years of political instability. The meeting was designed by the Government of Nigeria to help mobilise and co-ordinate resources. It laid foundations for collaboration among donors and between Nigeria and the donors.

The presence of COL ensured that open and distance education figured prominently on the agenda. COL was able to signal that, while it cannot be considered a major donor of cash, it can provide a significant contribution through ideas, knowledge and expertise. Nigerian officials were enthusiastic about COL's potential role.

Railway web

The search for cheaper ways of bringing telephones and Internet access to the world's most populous countries has researchers turning to India's famous 19th-century communications network: its railway system. Under construction since British colonial



Dr. H. Ian Macdonald, Chairman of COL's Board of Governors, meets with the Honourable Murli Manohar Joshi, Indian Minister for Human Resource Development, in New Delhi (April 2000). Photo credit: G.P. Sharma, PIB, Government of India

times, it is one of the world's most widespread and dense rail networks. It stretches across the country's poorest and most remote regions with 8,000 stations sitting at an average distance of eight kilometres from one another and bundles of underemployed communications cable running along side the track between them.

A pilot project will begin to route telephone calls and Internet data along a 60-kilometre section of railroad in south-central India. Employing Internet-style "packet switching" on modified digital subscriber lines, researchers estimate that the railway cables can support a bandwidth of one million bits per second, allowing the hundreds of people near each station to be connected to telephone and the Internet for the first time.

Networked cyber-café kiosks at each station will be connected to the railway cable. The system would join the national telephone network and Internet through high-speed digital links at major towns.

Source: *International Herald Tribune*

Tuvalu cashes in on .tv

Tuvalu's 10,600 citizens, who live on nine tiny atolls in the South Pacific, have embraced e-commerce, which has become the nation's single-largest source of income – simply through the sale of the Internet domain name .tv .

In turn, DotTV, the US-based firm that won the bidding war, expects to make a sizable profit selling web site and e-mail rights for use of the domain.

"We were very, very, very poor, but now we are getting some money from the marketing of assets like [the domain name] dot-tv," said Koloa Talake, a member of Tuvalu's parliament who helped negotiate the deal and now has a seat on the DotTV board.

Islanders are receiving a minimum quarterly payment of US\$1 million, totalling \$50 million over ten years.

Source: *The Independent*

Events

Networking education in the Caribbean

At the request of The Honourable Mia Mottley, Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, Barbados, The Commonwealth of Learning organised a meeting to examine how improved networking among educational policy makers, institutions and students at all levels could enhance and strengthen regional collaboration and facilitate the sharing of expertise and resources. The meeting was held in Barbados in February 2000.

Participants included representatives from Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago and from the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean

Participants at the third in a series of regional symposiums to "Examine the Barriers Encountered by Women to the Use of Information and Communication Technologies for Open and Distance Learning," held in Zanzibar, Tanzania, in March 2000. Reports were received from each of the 15 Commonwealth countries that were represented and several strategies were developed for overcoming the identified barriers. The meeting was hosted by the Open University of Tanzania and sponsored in part by the International Development Research Centre's Acacia Initiative.



States, as well as from the University of the West Indies, the University of Technology (Jamaica), the Jamaica Computer Society Education Foundation and the Caribbean Development Bank.

Several presentations helped to clarify and define the project, including one by Minister Mottley. A task force was established to draft a proposal, based on the suggestions and recommendations, to be presented at the next regional Ministers' meeting.

Educating street children

COL is convening a regional conference to explore open schooling methodologies and other innovative models for educating street children. It will be held in July in Mussoorie and is being organised by India's National Open School.

Themes for the conference include the provision of basic education, technical/vocational education and training, preventive health education, educating girls and reaching disabled children.

Conference participants will represent national and international agencies, as well as institutions and NGOs that offer non-conventional educational programmes to working and homeless children.

Further information can be obtained from the National Open School or from The Commonwealth of Learning.

DE researchers meet

The First Conference on Research in Distance and Adult Learning in Asia (CRIDALA 2000) was hosted by the Open University of Hong Kong's Centre for Research in Distance and Adult Learning (CRIDAL) in June 2000. The conference theme was "Research as professional development."

In bringing written greetings, COL President and CEO, Dato' Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan noted that, "The Commonwealth of Learning is keen to see research networks concerned with open and distance learning grow. In developing Commonwealth

countries especially there is a need for institutions to know as much as they can about their clients, the quality of services offered, the efficiencies of systems, the market place, the impact of self-learning provisions on the societies in which they function and how best the technologies that are there and emerging can be fitted into our traditions of independent learning and interactive teaching." COL sponsored some participation from Commonwealth Asia.

Keynote addresses and summaries of related electronic discussions are available on the conference web site. www.oubk.edu.bk/cridal/cridala

World Education Market

Over 2,200 participants from the public and private sectors attended the first World Education Market in Vancouver in May. While representation from developing countries was light, there were over 1,000 participating companies and institutions from 64 countries. The large exhibit showcased almost 500 vendors from 35 countries.

Plenary sessions were broadcast live on the Internet, produced by netcasters INSINC and British Columbia's educational television service, the Knowledge Network. The video coverage remains available on the WEM web site. www.wemex.com

The event also attracted demonstrations and an unofficial parallel conference protesting the commercialisation of education.

Reed Midem, organisers of the conference, are making this an annual event and will hold WEM 2001 in Vancouver next May.

DE and the Olympics

The University of South Australia, in conjunction with the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE), is hosting a major internationally supported distance education and open learning conference in Adelaide, 11–13 September 2000 – immediately prior to the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. Several corporations, associations and agencies, including The

Commonwealth of Learning, are participating in support roles and as sponsors. The event is entitled "Distance education – an open question?" www.com.unisa.edu.au/cccc; e-mail: karen.english@unisa.edu.au

Now available

Training in copyright issues



Copyright & Distance Education: Trainer's toolkit.

Prepared by Christine Swales, The Commonwealth of Learning, 2000 (79 pages). This toolkit provides a variety of resources designed to assist

trainers in preparing and offering workshops that introduce participants to copyright as it relates to distance education. It describes the basic features of copyright, identifies institutional issues and concerns and outlines ways to deal with them. It is appropriate for academic staff involved in writing and presenting course materials; administrative staff involved in publishing, purchasing, selling and presenting courses and course materials; and institutional staff involved in setting up procedures and policies on courses and course materials through central administration, the library or a learning resources centre. The entire toolkit is available online for non-commercial use (www.col.org/copyrightTK.htm).

Human rights materials for schools

The Commonwealth Secretariat has recently published two booklets for use by secondary teachers of human rights and citizenship courses in Commonwealth countries. *Curricular Framework* describes twelve basic human rights concepts related to different articles in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the *Companion Guide for Teachers* provides assistance in leading classroom discussions.

The materials were prepared by the London Institute of Education and are available free of charge from the Commonwealth Secretariat. The booklets are a product of a decade-long "Commonwealth Values in Education" project conducted by the Institute's International Centre for Intercultural Studies. The Centre conducted surveys of human rights teaching and teenagers' understanding of human rights, which revealed wide variations in different Commonwealth countries.

The twelve concepts include education, gender, religion, interculturalism, violence, law and the administration of justice, together with associated responsibilities and duties.

Financial support for the project was provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the British Department for International Development, the Northern Ireland Department of Education and The Commonwealth of Learning.

CONTACT:

Copies of the booklet: Human Rights Unit, Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, London SW1Y 5HX United Kingdom; fax: +44.207.839.9081; e-mail: info@commonwealth.int

Further details on the project: Mr. Richard Bourne, Head, Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit, International Centre for Intercultural Studies, University of London Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London, WC1H 0AL United Kingdom; fax: +44.207.612.6177; e-mail: brsrccp@mentor.ie.ac.uk

Public broadcasting in the Caribbean

The Use of Public Broadcasting in the Caribbean for Open/Distance Learning: Feasibility study report. Conducted by Betty Mitchell and Dr. Krishnapillai Murugan, May 2000. This study found broadcasters in the Caribbean to be very supportive of educational broadcasting. Many television stations are well equipped to undertake local production of programmes and have time available in their schedules to accommodate educational programming. The study also found that educational broadcasting has strong support within the region and is viewed as having the potential to be an important feature of the growth of open and distance education in the Caribbean.

Based on the information collected and feedback from survey participants, the study identifies three educational broadcasting models for consideration. A discussion seminar based on the results was conducted at COL's *TEL-isphere '99* conference in Barbados. The study was commissioned by The Commonwealth of Learning with funding assistance from the Caribbean Development Bank. It is available on COL's web site. www.col.org/consultancies

Education Specialist positions

COL wishes to take this opportunity to extend its appreciation to the many applicants who expressed interest in the distance education specialist positions that were advertised.

Interviews have been initiated with those who were short-listed and as positions are filled announcements will be made.

Thank you for your interest in COL and its goals.

Learning technologies resource books

An integrated series of resource books and learning materials has been developed in Canada that introduces compressed video, computer and audio/audiographic conferencing technologies as learning tools.

The *Lifelong Learning on the Information Highway* series is designed for use by educators working in schools, colleges, universities and business. The print materials are based on case studies and are supported by computer disks, videotapes and other materials as appropriate. The series also includes a learner's guide and resources for workshop facilitators. The writing is "jargon-free" and is available in both English and French.

The resource book series is a joint project of Judy Roberts & Associates/Associés Inc., Knowledge Connection Corporation, the Office of Learning Technologies at Human Resources Development Canada and Chenelière/McGraw-Hill. The books are available for purchase or licensed reproduction outside of Canada. www.RobertsAssoc.on.ca

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