

EXCERPTS FROM:

COL in the Commonwealth 2006–2009 Country Reports

FOR: INDIA

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new access
freedom education
impact open and distance learning
focus diversity people regions
paradigm shift gender equality open schools
small states people strength livelihoods
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COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

Learning for Development

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FOREWORD

COL in the Commonwealth is a companion text to *Learning for Development*, the Commonwealth of Learning's Three-Year Plan for 2009-2012. This compendium reviews COL's work over the last three years (2006-2009) country by country. Together these two documents are the springboard for the *Country Action Plans* that will guide COL's future activities in each country over the 2009-2012 triennium and ensure that they are consistent with the national priorities of governments.

Ministers were enthusiastic about the previous issue of *COL in the Commonwealth* that was presented to 16CCEM in Cape Town in 2006. That report covered only developing countries whereas this one, at the request of Ministers, covers all members of the Commonwealth, showing also what COL has done in relation to the international development priorities of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. These country reviews are grouped under four regions: Africa (and the Mediterranean), Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

COL tries to create synergy within regions and across the Commonwealth by bringing countries and institutions together in common endeavours. For this reason each grouping of countries begins with a short account of the regional activities which COL has promoted in 2006-2009.

Member States also greatly value COL's Pan-Commonwealth work, which benefits from the unifying characteristics of the Commonwealth such as a common language, similar constitutional and legal frameworks, and a shared commitment to the values of peace, democracy, equality and good government. Some of the Pan-Commonwealth activities and facilities that underpin COL's work in the regions and countries are listed in the next section.

The production of *COL in the Commonwealth 2006-2009* has been an intense collective effort. COL's advanced knowledge management systems have enabled us to exploit fully the information contained in the numerous event reports prepared by staff as they work and travel. I express particular gratitude to Jasmine Lee, for diligently updating the country profiles that provided the raw material for these reviews, and to Judith Mosley, who brought this volume together in an impressively efficient and expeditious manner.



Sir John Daniel
President and Chief Executive Officer
Commonwealth of Learning

PAN-COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES



BACKGROUND

As a Commonwealth inter-governmental organisation, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has the mandate to operate in all 53 member states. Its work focuses particularly on 46 developing countries across Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. COL also seeks to align its activities with the education and training priorities and the countries of particular concern for major donor agencies such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID).

COL has developed Action Plans in consultation with Focal Points and country partners in the 46 member states, with activities specific to the individual needs of each country. However, several activities have a regional or pan-Commonwealth nature. This section looks at pan-Commonwealth activities.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION

COL provides material and capacity building support for assuring quality in higher education and teacher education in the Commonwealth. A toolkit called the *Quality Assurance for Teacher Education and Development Toolkit* includes *Quality Indicators for Teacher Education* and *Best Practices in Teacher Education*, was launched in December 2007 to be used by Ministries of Education and teacher education institutions.

COL is also developing a quality assurance toolkit for open schools. As a first step towards this, staff members from 14 countries across all Commonwealth regions have been trained in the Quality Assurance of Open Schools. A Quality Assurance Toolkit for Higher Education is nearing completion.

OPEN SCHOOLS

COL encourages the application of open and distance learning (ODL) to increase access to primary and secondary schooling. In support of this, two publications, *Perspective Series on Open Schools – Open Schools for the 21st*

Century and Handbook for Managers of Open Schools have been completed with contributions from chapter authors across the Commonwealth. Both publications will be distributed as a resource to policymakers. Other resources which have been developed include the *Evaluation Study on Open Schools* and the *Cost and Financing of Open Schools* as well as a *Learner Support Guide for Open Schools*.

In addressing the need for quality educational resources, COL has initiated the development of Open Educational Resources for Open Schools (OER4OS) in 20 subjects involving six countries. The open educational resources (OERs) will be available to all Commonwealth countries.

ELEARNING FOR EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

COL has two major and related pan-Commonwealth initiatives in this area: WikiEducator and Learning4Content (L4C).

COL's WikiEducator (www.col.org/WikiEducator) provides an online service to support online educational communities. Use of WikiEducator has grown rapidly during the past year with the number of registered users passing the 9,020 mark and number of hits per day now exceeding 247,653. A wiki is a website on which any user can edit and update pages. The best known is the Wikipedia, the biggest encyclopaedia ever produced. Wikis are a part of the emerging "Web 2.0" environment that includes user-contributed works such as YouTube and MySpace.

COL's WikiEducator creates online communities whose members participate from remote locations to create educational content collaboratively and to plan conferences and other events. It is one of the tools used by the Virtual University of Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). WikiEducator is reaching 79 % of countries around the world and COL is now supporting the installation of a French language version.

The L4C initiative aims to build capacity among educators in using WikiEducator to develop free content for education. Training is free and educators "pay" for their training by donating time to develop one free content lesson of their choice. L4C workshops have already been held in 28 Commonwealth countries and at least one face-to-face workshop will be held in each member state. In addition, 26 online workshops have been held and others are scheduled. Commonwealth teachers and educators are thus becoming WikiEducators themselves, developing and donating one free content resource back to the WikiEducator community.

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation approved a grant of USD 100,000 to COL over one year as core support for this initiative.

THE VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH (VUSSC)

VUSSC is a collaborative network of small states that create and share materials for livelihood-related post-secondary programmes. Activities during this planning period have included capacity building and the creation, customisation and reuse of OERs. Quality assurance and cross-accreditation of learning programmes has also been an area of focus.

The VUSSC is a creation of the participating countries and their existing tertiary institutions. It is a collective mechanism for people to develop expertise in online collaboration, eLearning and information and communication technologies (ICTs). It also provides an opportunity for them to produce, adapt and deploy courses and learning materials on selected subjects identified by country Interlocutors and stakeholders.

The model that has emerged is a three-week training and course development workshop at which subject specialists from a subset of the participating states strengthen their information technology (IT) skills and begin to develop course material collaboratively online. Six workshops were held during this planning period:

1. Entrepreneurship and Tourism, hosted in Mauritius in August 2006.
2. Professional Development of Educators, in Singapore in March 2007.
3. Life Skills, hosted in Trinidad & Tobago in June 2007.
4. Disaster Management, in November 2007 in Samoa.
5. The Fishing Industry, in Seychelles in March 2008.
6. The Construction Industry, in The Bahamas in November 2008.

Orientations for the selected team leaders in preparation for the workshops took place in Vancouver six weeks before each workshop.

Senior officials from VUSSC countries met in Singapore in February 2008 to consider, refine and agree mechanisms of a transnational qualifications framework (TQF), the first of its kind. This will allow the 30 participating small states to transfer course materials, qualifications and qualified learners between countries. The South African Qualifications Authority, an organisation of the South African Government with more than twelve years experience in establishing frameworks in South and Southern Africa, helped to prepare a concept document and facilitate the proceedings.

The Ministry Interlocutors for VUSSC met in London in July 2008 to discuss the implementation of the TQF, the establishment of a management committee, the logo and branding of VUSSC, monitoring and evaluation, and copyright issues.

TRANSNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

COL designs, develops and delivers distance and technology mediated learning programmes for international organisations with a global workforce. During this planning period, COL has developed and delivered a number of new programmes including: Writing Effectively for the International Labour Organization (ILO); World Bank Writing E-mails, Memos and Letters and World Bank Report Writing; and an Operational Data Management Learning Programme for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). These eLearning courses are designed to enhance the skill of staff working in field offices and in headquarters.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

COL promotes gender equality in all its programmes. Specific gender-related issues are identified during the work-planning process with country stakeholders and addressed through appropriate research, training and materials development.

COL and the Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec) are working together to develop ODL training materials aimed at promoting good governance and gender equality in the public sector. The work is based on two workshops hosted by ComSec which concluded that there was limited capacity among the majority of policy makers, senior managers and professionals to mainstream gender equality in their daily work. A critical decision was to explore the role of ICTs and ODL in delivering training on a larger scale and to support research on flexible learning opportunities. A status report on what learning materials for gender mainstreaming are currently available to the public service concluded that while there are some materials available online, the current model for accessing the materials is not adequate.

A two-day meeting was convened in July 2008 to deliberate how best COL and ComSec could develop the required content using ODL tools. Invited participants included members of administrative staff colleges and other institutions involved in training public servants such as National Women's Machineries, Commonwealth partner agencies and resource people. The focus for piloting this initiative is Africa in the first instance.

COL-PROTEIN PROGRAMME

The COL Poverty Reduction Outcomes through Education Innovations and Networks (COL-PROTEIN) programme supports innovative uses of ODL to alleviate poverty in rural areas. In particular, COL-PROTEIN supports initiatives that adapt ODL, ICTs and media to build capacities for community development, for example, in areas such as food security, environmental protection, women's empowerment, micro-enterprise and good governance. Several projects across the regions have already been recipients of a COL-PROTEIN Award.

PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUMS

More than 500 people from 64 countries and various international organisations gathered in Ocho Rios, Jamaica for COL's Fourth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF4) from 30 October to 3 November 2006. In his closing remarks, Sir John Daniel pointed to three key areas of progress since the Third Pan-Commonwealth Forum in Dunedin, New Zealand in 2004:

1. Better research
2. More participation from developing countries
3. Integration of technology.

COL was grateful to the local hosts of the Forum for ensuring the success of the event, in particular the University of the West Indies' Distance Education Centre, in co-operation with the Caribbean Association for Distance and Open Learning, the Jamaican Association for Distance and Open Learning, the Trinidad & Tobago Distance Learning Association and the Office of Continuing Education and Distance Learning at the University of Technology, Jamaica.

The Fifth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF5) took place in London, UK, in July 2008, with the theme "Access to Learning for Development". It was hosted by COL in collaboration with the University of London, as part of the University's celebration to mark the 150th anniversary of the establishment of its External Degrees Programme. PCF5 brought together practitioners, researchers, planners and policy makers in the fields of ODL and development to explore the contribution of ODL to international development goals. Over 700 participants from over 70 countries, the majority from the developing Commonwealth, took advantage of opportunities to share experience and expertise, and to contribute to future policy and provision.

COL NEWS SERVICE & NEWSLETTER

COL customises services provided by Google and Yahoo to provide a news service on ODL and specialised topics. The general news service is available from COL's homepage while the specialised services are available on the appropriate topic pages on the website. The news service is updated approximately every hour.

COL publishes a newsletter, *Connections*, and a companion publication, *EdTech News*, three times per year, designed to provide regular news and information to COL's stakeholders. The publications are distributed in print and electronically directly to 10,000 government officials, ODL and educational technology leaders and practitioners throughout the Commonwealth and beyond. The newsletter offers updates on COL and partner activities; ODL developments, resources and events; and educational technology reviews – all with a “development” focus. It also features an “In Focus” section which highlights a different COL programme in each issue, and periodic editorials as well as “Fair Comment” columns from external sources. It can be found on COL's website at www.col.org/connections.

COPYRIGHT FOR EDUCATORS AND ADMINISTRATORS

COL has worked extensively in the area of copyright in education. The focus of COL's attention is on providing information on how learning resources may be made available at low or no cost by applying the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (TRIPS). In early 2009 COL published a book on copyright for educators and administrators titled *Introducing Copyright* which is available on the COL website at no cost.



Asia

**Bangladesh | Brunei Darussalam | India | Malaysia | Maldives |
Pakistan | Singapore | Sri Lanka**



REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

BACKGROUND

The Asia region comprises eight countries, three in South-East Asia and five in South Asia. Three of them are E-9 countries, that are the most populated in the world: Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

Asia has experienced a phenomenal increase in distance education over the last three decades. India alone has 14 open universities and 14 open schools in addition to over 140 dual-mode institutions serving nearly seven million distance learners. This region has become a natural ally of COL in promoting South-South collaborations, sharing best practice and harnessing low-cost technologies to reach the unreached.

EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE FOR ASIA

The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), based in India, plans and implements activities in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Maldives, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam and acts as COL's regional office in India. CEMCA is COL's only unit outside of its Vancouver headquarters.

Its basic aim is to develop regional expertise in open and distance learning (ODL) and information and communication technologies (ICTs) as well as organising capacity building in response to identified needs, including providing support to new and emerging institutions in the region. CEMCA has initiated several activities related to the quality assurance of education, teacher education and multimedia materials, working with countries throughout the region. CEMCA is also facilitating regional activities in teacher development, open schools and higher education.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN TEACHER EDUCATION

COL and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India, co-organised a regional forum on quality assurance in teacher education for policy makers and senior administrators from Ministries of Education responsible for quality in teacher education. Held in Bangalore, India in December 2007, the forum was designed to expose participants to the various quality assurance practices and to the modalities of addressing challenges related to policies and practices for quality assurance in the professional development of teachers.

ICTs FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

CEMCA hosted a regional expert roundtable on Improving Existing Understanding of Contexts and Conditions in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for Women's Empowerment. The meeting was

held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the Centre for Women's Research in December 2006. The publication produced by the meeting is available.

SUPPORTING GENDER FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

COL is working with partners to develop a toolkit for Gender Friendly Schools, which includes indicators and guidance on how to develop them for primary and secondary schools. The initial focus of the activity is South Asia. In March 2008, COL, along with the Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec) and the Commonwealth Foundation convened a roundtable in Bangalore, India with several institutions and participants from across South Asia. The result of the workshop was a set of draft indicators for school management committees, parents, schools and students. These indicators were then field tested with groups in both Bangladesh and India. A second workshop was held in November, 2008.

REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS MEETING

The first Regional Focal Points Meeting for the Asia and Pacific regions was co-organised by COL and the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia, and was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in October 2008. These meetings are planned to take place every three years. At the 2008 meeting, each participant reviewed, on behalf of their country, the progress that had been made so far in COL's current Three-Year Plan 2006-2009, provided feedback on COL's planning processes and gave concrete inputs for developing the next Three-Year Plan 2009-2012. The meeting also provided a valuable opportunity for networking, facilitating future inter-country collaboration. As part of the event, the group visited the Open University Malaysia and Universiti Tun Abdul Razak.

REGIONAL PUBLICATIONS

CEMCA regularly highlights best practices and innovative developments in technology for development and ODL in their quarterly publication, *EduComm Asia*.

COL also has regional brochures which summarise its activities in each of the four regions of the Commonwealth. These can be found on COL's website at: www.col.org/regional.



INDIA

COL Focal Point: Smt. L. Indumathy (2006)
Dr. D.K. Paliwal, Ministry of Human Resource Development (current)

BACKGROUND

At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Vancouver in 1987, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi led the drive to create COL. This strong support has continued ever since, as India's economy has been transformed and the country has become a technology leader and a recognised innovator in matters of development.

India is the largest Commonwealth country and a major donor to COL, which has its most extensive country programme in India. This assists with developments in India but also promotes Indian expertise and facilitates knowledge transfer to other Commonwealth countries, notably in Africa.

India is also home to the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), a dedicated regional centre for COL's activities and COL's only unit outside of its Vancouver headquarters. CEMCA plans and implements activities in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Maldives, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam and acts as COL's regional office in India. Its basic aim is to develop regional expertise in open and distance learning (ODL) and information and communication technologies (ICTs) within the Asian region as well as organising capacity building in response to identified needs.

India has a seat on the COL Board of Governors that is currently held by Mr. Shri R. P. Agrawal, Secretary, Department of Higher and Secondary Education. He is also a member of the Executive Committee and the Performance Sub-Committee. COL's Vice-President, Professor Asha Kanwar, is an Indian national as is Dr. Kodhandaraman Balasubramian, Education Specialist: Food Security and Environment.

SUMMARY

COL's activities in India in this triennium have involved all three programme sectors and most programme initiatives. COL has many partnerships with Indian institutions and community bodies. In the Education sector there has been broad-based work in quality assurance, teacher development, open schooling and higher education. In the Learning for Livelihoods sector the Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) programme has demonstrated its ability to increase rural prosperity. Other livelihood-related activities are now being pursued. Work in the Human Environment sector is focussing on environmental education in India at all levels.

EDUCATION

Quality assurance

An *Assessors' Handbook for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* was completed in April 2007 in partnership with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India. It is being adopted in Sierra Leone and Nigeria and by the Higher Education Commission, Pakistan.

The first COL-NAAC Joint Forum on Quality Assurance in Teacher Education for policy makers and senior administrators from Commonwealth Asia was held in Bangalore, India, in December 2007. Eleven participants from India attended the Forum, including representatives from Kurukshetra University, the Institute of Education, Chandrashekar Agashe College of Physical Education, SNDT Women's University, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and the Regional Institute of Education, Mysore.

As part of an initiative with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India and the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM), CEMCA organised a roundtable meeting at Bangalore in August 2007 to discuss the need for and approach to certification and assessment of multimedia learning materials. Participants included those from the National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT), NASSCOM, NAAC, HP Labs, Azim Premji Foundation and CEMCA. There was a general consensus at the meeting that an initiative for developing certification and assessment standards was essential. Several action points were agreed: It should involve the major players and production agencies both government as well as private; a core group representing the interested agencies and stakeholders should meet to develop the approach to assessment and certification; a portal should be created to get feedback from students and other users. The process was viewed in a three to five year perspective. A second meeting was held in Delhi in October 2007, attended by 20 participants.

India is taking a lead role, along with Malaysia in a CEMCA/COL project to define a framework and criteria for quality assurance of multimedia learning. Two working groups have been established and several meetings held, in India and Malaysia in 2007 and 2008.

The core group for this project in India includes representatives from Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) including the Vice-Chancellor, a former President of NASSCOM, a former Director of NAAC, the Joint Director of the Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET), the Principal of the Acharya Narendra Dev College (ANDC) and the Head, Content Development at the Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Corporation (IL&FS). Two representatives from CEMCA, the Director and a Programme Officer, also participated in meetings.

The first report of the two core groups gave a framework for a generic production process and the parameters to be examined at each stage of the process. It also provided a framework for documentation required for quality assessment. The first draft of the *Guidelines for Quality Assurance of E-Content*, a collaboration of the Malaysian core group for Ministry of Higher Education and CEMCA was released in June 2008. The audience of the *Guidelines* includes teachers, instructors, trainers and facilitators as well as e-Content developers and eLearning communities and users. The draft *Guidelines* were released and circulated during the Regional Focal Points Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in October 2008.

Teacher development

COL is supporting several activities for the professional development of teachers, teacher educators and other personnel in the education system. One such initiative is facilitating the work of the Indian Consortium for Education

Transfer of Information (I-CONSENT) and Shreemati National Damodar Thackersey (SNDT) Women's University. An editing workshop of e-B.Ed materials of I-CONSENT was held in Mumbai in January 2008, supported by COL. The course was launched in March 2008. COL is also supporting course development and the delivery of teacher education materials with NCERT. Editing by a COL consultant is in progress and the 60 unit development phase is nearing completion.

About 30 school education administrators and academics from the states of Karnataka, Kerala and Orissa attended a two-day workshop in August 2007 hosted by the Education for All (EFA) office in Kerala and supported by COL. The purpose was to develop a document which would outline the action to be initiated in using school community informatics for school and teacher support at district and sub-district levels. The meeting also attracted participation from Intel, NIIT, and some other IT related organisations who might be interested in joining hands with EFA structures in India, namely District Institutes of Education and Training, Block Resource Centres and Cluster Resource Centres.

COL also supported the teacher educators' forum hosted by the Indian Association of Teacher Education (IATE) and the University of Delhi. COL has collected selected papers presented at the conference and is editing them for publication. A TeacherNet involving Delhi schools has been created and is functioning.

The Green Teacher (GT) training programme of print-based and online courses has digitised the GT course and added support for the Masters of Art in Teacher Education (MATE) course as well as extending use to other regions. Workshops for module development were held in June, July and August 2007, with participants from India and an expert author. GT online was officially launched in November 2007. A meeting was held in March 2008 to review the work carried out from 2002 to date.

Other related activities include a workshop organised by a COL consultant for training in Scenario-based Design and Course Development organised for the faculty of the Centre for Adult Continuing and Extension Education, Kerala University, organised in August 2007, attended by 19 participants. A workshop was also held in November 2007 and January 2008 at IGNOU with support from a COL consultant in designing and developing exemplar eLearning materials using scenario-based design.

COL is in the process of facilitating the development of training strategy and materials for the teachers, tutors and other personnel at the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) in Delhi. Six training modules have been developed for field functionaries have been launched. The modules are (1) Historical and Philosophical Bases of NIOS Operations, (2) Accredited Institutions and Student Support Services, (3) Instructional Strategies for Open Schooling, (4) Operational Strategies for Coordinators and Academic facilitators, (5) Life Skills for Open School Learners, and (6) Training of Trainers.

CEMCA has been extending the use of EasyNow software with teachers in developing different deliverables. Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University (YCMOU) in India was one of the first two ODL institutions, along with the Open University of Sri Lanka, to adopt and integrate EasyNow software into their basket of technologies for content creation. CEMCA held two workshops for academics, technical and media staff at both institutions where participants tried out the software to create interesting content in varied formats. The software was initially tested in collaboration with NIOS, using their courseware. CEMCA also conducted EasyNow workshops for NCERT in June 2008 and August 2008 with 25 participants and another workshop at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad. In September 2008, CEMCA organised two workshops where Indian experts provided training to Malaysians and Sri Lankans on EasyNow. CEMCA has engaged two consultants to prepare a report on capacity building with teachers in developing different deliverables through one electronic source. NIOS is also a partner in this project.

CEMCA organised a four-day workshop on Quality Governance for ODL for the mid-level ODL Professionals of the School of Open Learning, Campus of Open Learning, University of Delhi in February 2009. Thirty six participants were trained in various aspects of governance and office organisation.

Open/alternative schooling

COL sponsored 16 participants including two from NIOS to a workshop on Developing Digital Content hosted by the Mindset Network in Johannesburg in September 2007.

COL is working to raise awareness of the strength of open schooling and, to promote the establishment of new open schools through various activities in partnership with NIOS. During this planning period, COL has been extending its support to NIOS in different ways for enhancing the quality and standard of teaching-learning through ODL and for the training and development of the staff at NIOS. Two officers of NIOS were nominated by the Chairman of NIOS to visit Saskatchewan Learning in Regina, Canada. The visit was conceptualised and funded by COL and took place in December 2007. The purpose was to review Saskatchewan Learning's expertise in certain areas:

- Digital material development,
- Video streaming at Campbell Collegiate,
- Saskatchewan Community Network (SCN),
- System integration at the curriculum and eLearning branch, and
- Student record database.

The major objectives of the visit were to:

- Visit various organisations to see how the technology is being used for imparting distance education,
- Share experience in the field of distance education between the two countries, particularly the use of technology,
- Explore the possibility of using the same technology-based instruction in India, particularly at NIOS,
- Identify the possible areas for mutual collaboration in the field of open and distance education,
- Give recommendations to COL and NIOS regarding further action points in this regard.

CEMCA in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), has undertaken a project to train ODL professionals in quality mixed media courseware, using an authoring tool called Metamorphosis. Three distance and open universities in the region, including YCMOU, are participating. As a further value addition, CEMCA has incorporated a two-day orientation to script writing for audio and video formats, to enable ODL course writers/teachers to create audio and video clips to integrate into the authoring tools package. In February 2008, UNESCO funded a five-day Metamorphosis Authoring Tools course for 15 faculty members from YCMOU.

COL commissioned an evaluation study on open schooling for secondary and higher secondary education. Focussing on NIOS, the study included an examination of the cost efficiency, effectiveness and benefit of open schools, the student profile, how open schools can best complement the formal system, learner success, course types and

development, learner support and assessment, planning and management systems as well as quality assurance. The report was submitted in October 2008.

In October 2008, Ministries of Education and open schools in six countries including India began a two-year partnership with COL to develop Open Educational Resources for Open Schools (OER4OS) in 20 subjects to be used in open and conventional schools. The open educational resources (OERs) will be available to all Commonwealth countries.

In further support for open schools, India was one of 11 participating countries from across the Commonwealth to attend a workshop on “How can ICTs enhance the capacity of Women in Leadership?” in Vancouver in November 2008. A participant from NIOS attended the workshop which featured presentations, discussions and site visits to educational institutions. The workshop’s recommendations and findings informed the development of self-instructional materials that can be used to help women in leadership positions in open schools to embrace the potential of ICTs.

Staff members from India were trained in learner support and others from India and 13 other countries were trained in quality assurance in the context of developing a quality assurance toolkit for open schools.

An advanced Self-learning Multiple Media Training was organised for the course writers of Haryana Open School in December 2008. The training programme was organised by CEMCA in association with CIET, NCERT, New Delhi.

CEMCA collaborated with NIOS in conducting a three-day induction programme/brain storming on ODL in general and Self-Learning Multiple Media (SLMD) materials in particular with the Assam State Open School, Guwahati, Assam in January 2009.

India is contributing to the development of two new publications for open schools through a chapter author, the Chairman of NIOS, for the *Perspective Series on Open Schools – Open Schools for the 21st Century* and a *Handbook for Managers of Open Schools*.

Higher education

COL has continued its Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme that supports students who study the IGNOU programmes, the Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education and the Master of Arts in Distance Education, at a distance. COL offers 25 scholarships to Commonwealth citizens, covering tuition fees for the programmes. COL will be selecting two universities in developing countries of the Commonwealth to act as regional institutions to represent and administer the programme for neighbouring institutions. Preference for scholarships is given to faculty members seeking professional development in ODL, particularly those with conventional teaching experience who are teaching students learning by distance or who will be teaching via distance methods.

As part of COL’s support for leadership training for vice-chancellors and heads of tertiary institutions, the Vice-Chancellor of Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University participated in a conference on Higher Education in the Administrative Staff College, India, in September 2006.

To assist in capacity-building in ODL, a consultant was engaged to write a 10,000 word essay on the development of State Open Universities in India. The essay was submitted in November 2007 and is available on COL’s website.

Participants from India were among 20 from five South Asian countries who received training at a workshop organised by CEMCA on “ODL for differently-abled teachers” at IGNOU in December 2007.

India, through IGNOU, has been one of the partners in the Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration/Master of Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programme.

CEMCA supported the Director, Campus of Open Learning and the Executive Director of the School Open Learning, University of Delhi to carry out a study tour to the Open University of Malaysia and Multimedia University, Malaysia and an observation tour to the National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore in June 2008.

CEMCA has contributed to the course development process of the Certificate Programme on Community Radio Management offered by IGNOU. In January 2009, CEMCA also offered 150 scholarships to learners enrolled from both Commonwealth Asia and India.

Ms. Bhavana Shukla won the CEMCA Award for Best Female Student in ICTs in ODL in February 2008 and Ms. Namita Bajaj won the Award in February 2009. These Awards were presented at the Convocation of IGNOU.

ELearning for education sector development

India was represented at the regional expert roundtable organised by CEMCA in collaboration with the Centre for Women's Research in December 2006 in Sri Lanka, to develop knowledge resources focussing on the contexts and conditions of the use of ICTs for women in the Asian region.

Educational Multimedia Research Centre (EMMRC), Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee in India hosted a one-day workshop organised by COL on Video Production and e-Content in May 2007. The workshop enabled participants from new ODL institutions to have hands-on training in the production of video programmes and their subsequent modification into eLearning material. It was attended by three participants from India.

COL supports the development of regional expertise in ODL and ICTs as well as organising capacity building actions as needed, including supporting new and emerging institutions in the region. During this planning period, CEMCA fostered collaboration with Haryana Open School for developing self-learning instructional multimedia material. A preliminary meeting with a core group was held in September 2007, and a capacity-building workshop was held in October in New Delhi.

As part of CEMCA's assistance in capacity building for using the dedicated educational satellite facilities provided by the Government of India (EDUSAT), the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India and the Indian Space Research Organisation, two workshops were held at YCMOU in March and at NCERT in June 2008. YCMOU has started using the training materials for their Radio on Demand EDUSAT lessons.

As part of the major pan-Commonwealth initiative, Learning4Content (L4C), India hosted seven face-to-face workshops between October 2008 and April 2009 at the Acharya Narendra Dev College and Gargi College, University of India. In addition, over 175 participants from India have taken part in online workshops.

CEMCA launched the India Chapter of the WikiEducator in November 2008, inaugurated by Professor M.S. Swaminathan, Honourable Member of Parliament and Agriculturist and Social Reformist, in the presence of Shri Jainder Singh, Secretary, Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. WikiEducator pages in five Indian languages, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and Gujarati, were also initiated on the day.

LEARNING FOR LIVELIHOODS

Learning and skills for livelihoods

India hosted a review workshop on the Livelihoods Skills Activities of COL in South Asia, held in Chennai in February 2007. COL is partnering with NIOS and Tamil Nadu Open University (TNOU) in developing and adapting technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes for use in other regions. Participants from India included eight from MICO-BOSCH, TNOU, Arul Anandar College (AAC), IL&FS Education and Technology Services, Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Central Institute of Vocational Education, Jawaharlal Nehru University and IGNOU.

Women coordinators of continuing education are undergoing training in Kerala to develop literacy materials with support from COL. The first phase of curriculum development was completed in March 2007 and 30 women coordinators were trained for the district literacy programme.

India is a founding module developer for the Commonwealth Computer Navigator's Certificate, an international collaboration to develop a qualification in basic skills in ICTs using open source software. Seven content developers including two from India met in Vancouver in June 2007. They reviewed the status of the local certification programme at their own institutions, examined progress and identified areas for improvement in the course materials. They also designed an assessment strategy, specified potential multimedia support resources and student support requirements.

COL is in partnership with Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Bangladesh for the development of ODL courses for house helpers, as part of "Basic and Middle Level Entrepreneurial Education and Training". Netaji Subhash Open University (NSOU), India is supporting DAM in editing the course materials developed for Home Management for girls and young women.

Rural and peri-urban community development

The Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) initiative has continued to expand across Tamil Nadu and other states in India. In partnership with AAC, L3F developed a touch-screen approach to integrate the concept of L3F for rural development and to build the capacity of staff and students in its concepts. Approximately 1,000 members, nearly 50% of them women, are utilising the mobile-based learning materials on credit, banking, goat rearing and agriculture for their livelihoods. The L3F programme in India has attracted the attention of a number of COL partners in the country and elsewhere. COL facilitated participants from Kenya, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Uganda and India to visit the L3F sites and to meet the programme partners in Tamil Nadu. The familiarisation is aimed at helping the partners to adapt the concepts for their own community development initiatives.

COL is working with a number of countries including India in pursuing the concept of Knowledge Infomediaries for the L3F programme. COL and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) organised a think-tank meeting on Knowledge Infomediaries at ICRISAT, Hyderabad in September 2008. The participants from India and Bangladesh reviewed their experiences regarding the roles, responsibilities and learning needs of Knowledge Infomediaries, who facilitate information sharing and knowledge creation for community development. The group recognised the need to promote the concept of Knowledge Infomediaries for ICTs for development initiatives. The World Bank-supported National Agricultural Innovation Programme (NAIP) in India showed interest in the concept. Five universities, research institutes, NGO partners and ICRISAT have been facilitated by COL to come together for developing online agricultural resource materials called AGRID.

The Society for the Development of Rural Women and Children (SDRWC) India was a recipient of a COL-PROTEIN Award. SDRWC promotes health, education and women's empowerment among disadvantaged people in Andhra Pradesh State. Through COL-PROTEIN, SDRWC established a Livelihood Resource Centre to help enhance the livelihood opportunities of the most vulnerable and marginalised populations in the Prakasam District of Andhra.

National/international community development

COL is working with the Veterinary Council of India and associated institutions to develop agricultural education programmes and to promote the use of wikis for skills-development materials. MAFSU is institutionalising Technology-mediated Open and Distance Education (Tech-MODE) and is involving a number of partner institutions. MAFSU has offered four ODL courses to field veterinarians and has triggered the development of a digital archive and experimentation with a Learning Management System for regular academic activities. The Bombay Veterinary College of MAFSU has developed an intranet using various open source platforms and is offering an online repository of course materials and instructions to its regular students. It has initiated technology-aided discussion forums and an internet radio for the student services. MAFSU has also trained a limited number of its staff in optimised technology-assisted operations and academic functioning.

COL is working with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and various state agricultural universities to promote the use of community radio for agricultural education programmes. The University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, commissioned its first community radio in May 2007, thereby becoming the first community radio station in the state of Karnataka and the first agriculture university in India to possess the facility. The university and CEMCA jointly organised a workshop on "Operationalisation of community radio stations in the State Agricultural Universities" in May 2007. The workshop was attended by 15 senior officials from various agricultural institutions where they got a first-hand experience of the workings of a community radio station. After the workshop two other universities submitted their applications for setting up stations.

CEMCA supported the development of a multimedia training resource kit for children with special needs in the community. The resource kit, produced in partnership with the Centre for Applied Research and Education on Neurodevelopment Impairments and Disabilities related Health Initiatives, was released in April 2008 and is aimed at community-based rehabilitation workers, parents, teachers and caregivers of special-needs children in resource-poor settings. Over 1,000 copies of the resource kit have been distributed to agencies working with special-needs children through the National Trust, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. Localisation of the resource kit in Indian languages is also being undertaken by CEMCA.

Transnational programmes

159 staff members of the International Labour Organization (ILO), World Bank and UNICEF based in India were trained in Writing Effectively through a tutor-mediated eLearning COL course.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Gender and development

CEMCA partnered with the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, in their initiative to offer scientific information on health and nutrition-related information for women in resource-poor settings, using community radio. Twenty-two radio partners were invited for an exploratory and proposal formulation workshop in March 2007. Thirteen partners were selected and CEMCA conducted a baseline study in 13 locations covering 1,000

women per location, making a total of 13,000 women. Phase one of the project was successfully concluded in 11 locations. Phase two is currently underway.

CEMCA has also been working with the Foundation for Research in Community Health (FRCH), by training women community health workers in developing audio and video content on health-related issues by holding capacity building and refresher workshops. The programmes were narrowcast and disseminated through audio, video tapes and CDs. In June 2008, CEMCA started working with FRCH to build capacity among communities to use community radio to support development initiatives.

COL is working with partners to develop a toolkit for Gender Friendly Schools, consisting of indicators including how to develop such schools for the primary and secondary level in the Commonwealth, beginning in South Asia. In March 2008, a roundtable was held at the Institute of Social and Economic Change (ISEC) in Bangalore, India, jointly organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec), the Commonwealth Foundation and COL. The outcome was a set of draft indicators for school management committees, parents, schools and students. Participants included 13 from India from a variety of organisations including Care India, Women's Action Group, the Central Institute of Education (CIE), NCERT, the Centre for Socio-Economic and Environmental Studies (CEES), National Law Society, Azim Premji Foundation and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

The draft indicators were then field-tested with the user groups in both Bangladesh and India. A follow-up meeting was held at ISEC in November when participants from India and Bangladesh discussed the preliminary findings of the field testing. The indicators have been completed and are available as an open resource.

Health, welfare and community development

During this planning period, COL has been working with the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) in a project to address HIV/AIDS prevention and stigma in rural Tamil Nadu. For this initiative, the digital video production system was upgraded at the media unit in November 2006. An assessment of the media unit's work was undertaken by COL in December 2006. Reports concerning the health activity were submitted to COL and the first phase of the activity was completed. Video productions were completed and delivered to targeted groups through the state broadcaster.

CEMCA also trained poor rural women in Mysore in audio content development in partnership with IT for Change, a Bangalore-based NGO in November 2006 and April 2007. The programmes produced by the women were put on CDs and given to the radio station for broadcast.

Environment education

COL has continued to support the Centre for Environmental Education (CEE), UNESCO and other international agencies in the application of ODL/ICTs for professional development leading to sustainable development. COL was a partner and member of the International Advisory Committee for the 4th International Conference on Environment Education (ICEE) towards a sustainable future in November 2007. COL, in partnership with CEE, held a pre-ICEE workshop on "Climate Change and Water Resource Management" to discuss and develop plans to enhance the capacity of partner institutions and arrangements to use Tech-MODE for addressing the global environmental issues of climate change and water resource management, where these relate to sustainable development and specifically to communities involved in agriculture and food production.

COL and CEE are jointly developing a programme framework for Tech-MODE assisted delivery of material and instructions for an international Training Programme in Education and Communication for Sustainable Development based on an earlier international Certificate Course in Environmental Education that was offered as a three-month

residential programme. COL and CEE are also developing a learning object repository and an umbrella structure has been decided for a primary Learning Content Management System to link all content available at CEE and elsewhere that is in digitised mixed-media format and related to climate change.

COL's support for the Indian Institute of Science and the Karnataka State Open University in environmental education continued with a new phase including the validation and piloting of 10 modules developed for school children and teachers, beginning in November 2007.

Good governance

For Women's Empowerment at the Local Level (WELL), it was determined that Bangladesh, India and Pakistan could benefit from sharing ideas to lead to the development of a model to strengthen the role of women in decision-making at the local level. A study was undertaken by Himgiri Nabh Vishwavidyalaya University in the state of Uttarakhand to determine some of the underlying issues in women's empowerment. CEMCA helped COL to hold a two-day meeting in New Delhi in November 2008 that included five participants from India. It further explored the key characteristics necessary for successful empowerment activities. As a result of the WELL workshop, work is now underway with Mahila Samakhya in Uttarakhand on a pilot model to empower women through expanding their "People's Court" activities and learning through ODL. This programme is poised for expansion in 12 states in the country soon.

Educational use of mass media and ICTs

An assessment of the University of Delhi's Faculty of Education multimedia development was completed in December 2006. Digital video editing technology was upgraded with accompanying training at NIOS in December 2006. A media unit was implemented at CEE by COL in Ahmedabad in December 2006 and training of staff was completed.

CEMCA also functions as the nodal agency for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India for community radio related initiatives. From 2007-2008, seven regional consultations about community radio awareness have been held in different parts of the country including Puducherry (South), Kolkata (East), Baramati and Ahmedabad (West), Lucknow and Solan (North) and Guwahati (North-East) where live broadcasts from the host community radio station using simple and readily available mobile telephones were demonstrated. More than 1,000 participants, many of them potential applicants for community radio licences from educational and agricultural institutions and civil society organisations participated in these consultations, resulting in about 50 completed applications.

Two capacity-building workshops for station managers of functional community radio stations have also been held on behalf of the Ministry in Delhi in February 2008 and Chennai in February 2009. CEMCA has set up a help desk to facilitate and guide the licence application process.

CEMCA, with the support of IGNOU and Wawasan Open University (WOU), Malaysia, achieved a breakthrough in operationalising a new economical IP-based teleconferencing system in September 2008. A consultant commissioned by CEMCA, conducted a presentation workshop on skills for effective teleconferencing for Deans and faculty members of WOU.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Pan-Commonwealth Forum

COL's Fourth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, held in Ocho Rios, Jamaica from 30 October to 3 November 2006 was attended by 34 participants from various educational institutions in India. In addition, COL sponsored 13 delegates from Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU), NIOS, Mother Teresa Women's University, IGNOU, Centre for World Solidarity, Sandhan Foundation, Association of Indian Universities, Edupro Foundation, TNAU, YCMOU and I-CONSENT.

At the Forum, the Reverend Father Thomas V. Kunnunkal, Research Director, Indian Social Institute, and founding Chairman of India's National Open School (now NIOS), was named Honorary Fellow of COL. In addition, NSOU was one of the recipients of the Awards of Excellence for Institutional Achievement.

The Fifth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, held in London in July 2008, was attended by approximately 85 participants from India including 68 COL-sponsored delegates. Professor Abdul Khan, Assistant Director-General for Communications and Information, UNESCO and Mr. Mahesh Chandra Pant, Chairman of NIOS, were named Honorary Fellows of COL. The Right Honourable Mr. Kamalesh Sharma, Commonwealth Secretary-General and former High Commissioner for India to the United Kingdom, was one of the guest speakers at the Forum.

Regional Focal Points meeting

The Regional Focal Points meeting for the Asia and Pacific regions, held in Kuala Lumpur in October 2008, was attended by the COL Focal Point for India.

Other events

A Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Workshop was held in Delhi from 29 November to 1 December 2007. The workshop was designed to enable COL and its partner organisations to effectively monitor and evaluate their collaborative programme activities. Participants are now expected to be able to describe how M&E could be incorporated into the COL model of programme planning, develop an exemplary M&E plan for a programme currently being undertaken by COL and a partner organisation and assist colleagues in their own organisations to develop M&E plans. Twenty five participants from various institutions including IGNOU, NCERT, Delhi University, State Bank of India, AAC, MAFSU and GT Secretariat attended the workshop.

CEMCA facilitated the recording of a video series on "Civil Paths to Peace" based on the report by Nobel Laureate, Professor Amartya Sen. Three recordings were completed: an introductory episode with Professor Amartya Sen in discussion with Professor Asha Kanwar, Vice-President of COL and two discussions with Professor Amartya Sen and His Excellency Mr. Kamalesh Sharma, Secretary-General of ComSec, that were conducted by Mr. Dileep Padgaonkar, a renowned Indian journalist.

Resources

India is one of the major countries included in the South Asia node of the Global Distance Education Network (GDENet). ODL professionals from India are listed in the *Biographical Directory of ODL Professionals in the Asian Commonwealth Countries*, compiled by Professor Neela Jagannathan and published by CEMCA in December 2008. The database is available on the CEMCA website.

Appointments

Mr. Agrawal, Professor R. Pillai, Vice-Chancellor, IGNOU, Mr. M.C. Pant, Chairman of NIOS and Mr. Kiran Karnik, President, NASSCOM accepted COL's invitation to join the CEMCA Advisory Council.

LOOKING FORWARD

In the next triennium, COL anticipates another period of close collaboration with partners and institutions in India. COL has activities planned in all eight initiatives in the two programme sectors, *Education* and *Livelihoods and Health*. COL greatly values the expertise that it can draw on in India and its many institutions will continue to be active in every field of COL's work, contributing knowledge and resources to the Asian region and beyond.