

EXCERPTS FROM:

COL in the Commonwealth

2006–2009 Country Reports

FOR: NIGERIA

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COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

Learning for Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	5
PAN-COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES.....	7
AFRICA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN	13
NIGERIA.....	62

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Daniel', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

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.



Africa and the Mediterranean

**Botswana | Cameroon | Cyprus (Mediterranean) | The Gambia | Ghana | Kenya |
Lesotho | Malawi | Malta (Mediterranean) | Mauritius | Mozambique | Namibia |
Nigeria | Seychelles | Sierra Leone | South Africa | Swaziland | Tanzania | Uganda |
Zambia**



REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

BACKGROUND

The African continent is home to 18 Commonwealth member states in various stages of development. It can be divided into the Southern, Eastern and Western African sub-regions and COL is active in all of them.

Distance education is not new to Africa. Correspondence education took root in Africa in the early part of the 20th century through colleges such as Wolsey Hall and Rapid Results. The University of South Africa (UNISA) was the world's first dedicated distance education university, established in 1951. It provided a model for the British Open University.

There are now four open universities in Africa and a further six are planned over the next three years. Distance education is also being used for increasing the number of trained teachers, for enhancing access to secondary schooling and for skills training.

Two further Commonwealth member states included in this region are in the Mediterranean: Cyprus and Malta.

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

COL is a partner of the Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) consortium. In June 2007, The BBC World Service Trust, in partnership with the UK Open University and 13 education institutions across Africa, launched the Teachers in Africa Radio Season. The project aims to help train thousands more teachers, so millions more children can receive a quality basic education. The materials developed by TESSA are easily accessed via the internet or provided in print format by teacher training institutions. Colleges and universities across Africa are able to download materials to equip primary school teachers with teaching skills in the key areas of literacy, numeracy, science, life skills, social studies and the arts.

In July 2007, COL and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) signed a Work Plan Agreement. Within the Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA), UNESCO and COL are working to link teacher policy to national development goals, increasing access and improving the quality of teacher education through open and distance learning (ODL) and strengthening the delivery of quality teacher education through effective multi-stakeholder partnerships with civil society, the private sector and academia.

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY – CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION (SADC-CDE)

COL provides funding support for the activities of SADC-CDE, located at the Botswana College of Open and Distance Learning. SADC-CDE activities are designed to build and strengthen regional capacity in ODL as well as the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

The Centre collaborated with the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA) to publish the *DEASA – SADC-CDE International Journal of Open and Distance Learning*, launched in September 2007. It is a refereed journal that publishes articles drawn from across the SADC sub-region.

COL undertook an evaluation of SADC-CDE in June 2008 and the report of the evaluation was tabled to the Advisory Council.

FREE/LIBRE AND OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE FOR EDUCATION INITIATIVE

The Free/Libre and Open Source Software for Education (FLOSS4Edu) initiative is promoting the development of free content in education using open source software tools among educators. Conceived in East Africa, several chapters have now been established including an East African Chapter and a West African Chapter. Now that a French language installation of WikiEducator is in development, a Francophone Chapter of FLOSS4Edu is being planned. The aim is to establish regional chapters throughout the Commonwealth.

During this planning period, two workshops, in Nairobi in November 2006, and in Ghana in July 2007, took place with participants from a number of African countries.

REGIONAL TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) SUMMIT

COL and UNESCO's UNEVOC Centre for TVET co-organised the first African UNESCO-UNEVOC TVET Summit on the theme of "Access to and Inclusion in TVET in Africa Through New ICT-based Solutions". UNEVOC is UNESCO's International Project on Technical and Vocational Education. Held in Nairobi in May 2007, the Summit attracted participants from across the region and was part of the 2nd International Conference on ICTs for Development, Education and Training. The sessions considered TVET as central to the effort to foster sustainable development and attain the first Millennium Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger in Africa. COL, the Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa and UNEVOC agreed to collaborate further to assist African countries through the sharing of knowledge and expertise in TVET and to organise a second TVET Africa Summit in 2008.

COL co-funded the second African UNESCO-UNEVOC TVET Summit in Accra, Ghana in May 2008. The Summit promoted good practice projects in the use of ICTs in TVET across Africa. COL sponsored two of the three winners. COL also sponsored the keynote speaker for the Summit.

ICTs IN EDUCATION IN AFRICA SURVEY

A survey on ICTs in Education in Africa, funded by the Information for Development Program (InfoDev) was carried out. A team of eight researchers were contracted by COL to produce reports for each African country and the final report was delivered at the end of June 2007. It covered all countries in continental Africa according to the following education sectors: Schools (primary and secondary), higher education, TVET, and non-formal education (adult literacy, health, agriculture, etc.). The study explored answers to several basic questions including how ICTs are currently being used in the education sector in Africa; what strategies and policies are related to this use; what the common challenges and constraints faced by African countries are in this area; what is actually happening on the ground; and to what extent donors are involved.

NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD) E-SCHOOL INITIATIVE

NEPAD asked COL and InfoDev to monitor and evaluate the NEPAD e-Schools initiative that was launched in a number of countries across Africa during the previous planning period. The completed report is available on COL's website.

REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS MEETING

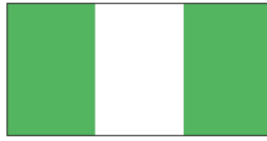
The first Regional Meeting of COL's Focal Points for Africa and the Mediterranean was held in Lilongwe, Malawi, in May 2008. These meetings are planned to take place every three years. During the meeting, each participant reviewed, on behalf of their country, the progress that had been made at the mid-term of COL's current Three-Year Plan 2006-2009. They provided feedback on COL's planning process and concrete inputs for developing the next Three-Year Plan 2009-2012. The meeting was also a valuable opportunity for inter-country networking that will facilitate future collaboration.

The role of the COL Focal Points was discussed and a number of key aspects of this valuable role were agreed. The Focal Points will be a one-stop window in each country for COL, will coordinate with other ministries and stakeholders and will disseminate COL-related information to relevant constituencies. The Focal Points will also meet visiting COL staff and arrange appointments with ministry officials and others as necessary. In particular, they will keep their Minister briefed and will ensure timely payment of contributions to COL. Finally, the Focal Points will be advocates for ODL and for COL in their countries and will provide advice and guidance to COL from time to time.

COL created an online "BaseCamp" for the African and Mediterranean Focal Points to encourage online dialogue and the exchange of ideas and information.

REGIONAL BROCHURES

COL 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.



NIGERIA

COL Focal Point: Mrs. N.I. Umelo (2006)
Mrs. N.Y. Atuanya (2006-2007)
Dr. Marie E. Uko, Federal Ministry of Education (current)

BACKGROUND

The links between Nigeria and COL are strong. Nigeria is a major donor to COL's budget and has a seat on the Board of Governors, currently held by Professor Michael Omolewa, Nigeria's Ambassador to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). COL's Education Specialist for Teacher Development, Dr. Abdurrahman Umar, is a Nigerian national who was formerly Academic Director of the National Teachers' Institute (NTI).

Nigeria is one of the E-9 countries with a large population that needs more education and training than existing institutions are providing. Open and distance learning (ODL) is seen as an effective delivery mode for reaching out to large numbers in remote and inaccessible areas. In this spirit, in 2001 the present government re-activated the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), which had been shut down in 1984. Former President Obasanjo is a firm believer in the merits of ODL and enrolled as a student in NOUN in 2006. The early engagement with ODL in Nigeria was focussed on the NTI, which is now recognised as a centre of excellence in teacher training. Given continuing political commitment at the highest levels, ODL systems are set to thrive in Nigeria.

SUMMARY

At the request of the Nigerian Government, COL's programme in Nigeria is focussed on the development of higher education and teacher education through its support to two national institutions: NOUN and NTI. However COL's work in Nigeria extends to all three sectors: Education, Learning for Livelihoods and Human Environment. Partners include several public institutions as well as regional organisations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and UNESCO.

COL has supported the establishment of the Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning (RETRIDOL), at NOUN for capacity building in ODL in the West African sub-region. Through this institute training programmes in quality assurance, instructional design, learner support and eLearning are being organised for both Nigerians and colleagues from anglophone West Africa.

EDUCATION

Quality assurance

Seven international experts including one from Nigeria took part in a workshop held in December 2006 in India by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, India and COL to review the pan-Commonwealth *Quality Assurance for Teacher Education and Development Toolkit*.

UNESCO's Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA) project held a two-day workshop on Quality Indicators for Teacher Education in Kaduna in February 2007. Forty nine teacher educators from Nigeria examined the key areas of quality for teacher training and analysed their own situations against each quality indicator. They were asked to return to their respective institutions and report on best practices which will be compiled into a publication for other teacher education institutions in Nigeria.

The Joint COL-UNESCO-UBEC Quality Assurance Forum in Teacher Education for West Africa was held in Abuja, Nigeria, in February 2008 and was attended by the Minister of State for Education as well as 17 teacher education policy makers and senior administrators from the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), the NTI, the Federal Ministry of Education and other institutions. The *Quality Assurance for Teacher Education and Development Toolkit* was distributed at the Forum and was discussed along with quality assurance efforts made to date in Nigeria and three other countries.

A UNESCO-COL Chair in ODL has been established at NOUN under which a three-day forum on "A Decade of Distance Education in the Commonwealth - Achievements and Challenges" was held in May 2009.

Teacher development

Regional collaboration in teacher education through WACTED has continued. COL supported a workshop in Ghana in February 2007, held in association with the Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) consortium. Teacher educators from Nigeria were among 20 delegates who attended from seven countries. The programme introduced new teacher education institutions to TESSA and WACTED and provided a session on quality assurance in teacher education.

COL and UNESCO signed a Work Plan Agreement in July 2007 as part of a plan to work jointly with the International Institute for Educational Planning and TTISSA for policy support and capacity building for teacher development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria will be one of six countries (five Commonwealth) included in the initial implementation of a six-month course for teacher education policymakers and administrators, currently in development.

A Green Teacher Programme, leading to a Diploma in Environment Education, has been adapted by NTI for teacher development in primary schools. This was a joint COL-UNESCO-NTI project. As part of the project, a delegation from NTI visited the Centre for Environment Education, India in March 2008 to attend a 10-day training workshop, among them the Deputy Director, Field Operations and Students' Services, the Assistant Director, Programme Design and Development, the Deputy Director, Area of Specialisation: Science/Ecology/Materials Development and the NTI State Coordinator.

Open/alternative schooling

COL supported a consultancy for the development of an open school. A proposal was submitted to the Ministry of Education in October 2006.

COL's support for open schools has given staff members from Nigeria training in learner support and quality assurance in the context of developing a quality assurance toolkit for open schools.

Higher education

The COL supported course on Legislative Drafting Programme, is being offered by NOUN to students in Nigeria.

COL has provided support for 50 Nigerian students enrolled in the Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education and the Master of Arts in Distance Education programmes of the Indira Gandhi National Open University under the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme. Training was arranged for local Nigerian tutors to provide the necessary learner support. Two workshops were held for the programme, with 27 students attending the workshop in Lagos and 20 in Abuja. The Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration and Masters in Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programmes are offered by NOUN, which is a member of a nine-country consortium.

RETRIDOL

COL has supported the establishment of RETRIDOL at NOUN to cater for the West African Region. RETRIDOL aims to develop expertise in ODL and information and communication technologies (ICTs) as well as to organise capacity building based on the needs of the region. To date, over 200 participants from across Commonwealth West Africa have taken part in workshops held by RETRIDOL, dealing with course writing, eLearning, quality assurance, learner support, instructional design/multimedia, dual-mode provision and research methods.

In February 2007, the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) in Ghana hosted a workshop on quality assurance in ODL organised by NOUN in collaboration with COL. It was attended by 23 academics including 10 participants from Nigeria: representing RETRIDOL, NOUN, the National Universities Commission, the Quality Assurance and Research Development Agency, the University of Buea, the University of Lagos and NTI. The workshop introduced important issues in quality assurance and ODL. The participants shared best practices and reviewed case studies. They also discussed issues such as international standards, quality assurance indicators and quality assurance in ODL course development, delivery and learner support systems.

In May 2008, COL undertook a programme-monitoring tour of West Africa and held focus group meetings with participants in Nigeria who have taken part in the training workshops offered by RETRIDOL. While there is room for improvement in its work, all indications are that RETRIDOL's performance has been fully satisfactory.

As part of the major pan-Commonwealth initiative, Learning4Content, 20 delegates from Nigeria participated in online workshops.

LEARNING FOR LIVELIHOODS

Learning and skills for livelihoods

Nineteen participants from Nigeria, including a representative from the National Commission for Nomadic Education, attended the 1st African UNESCO-UNEVOC technical and vocational education and training (TVET) Summit on the theme of “Access to and Inclusion in TVET in Africa Through New ICT-based Solutions”. Held in Nairobi in May 2007, the summit was co-organised by COL and the UNEVOC Centre for TVET and was part of the 2nd International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training.

As part of COL’s initiative for recognition of prior learning (RPL) in TVET, two workshops took place in Mauritius in 2007 and 2008. The second workshop, in June 2008, was attended by a delegate from Nigeria from the National Commission for Nomadic Education. Nigeria has started work toward implementation of RPL in TVET.

To assist Nigeria in a restructuring of TVET on a national level, COL organised a training workshop in June 2008 for 20 coordinators from all six geo-political zones in the delivery of TVET using ODL and ICTs.

COL organised a conference on Livelihood Initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa in Accra in November 2008. A delegate from Nigeria, Dr. Nuru Yakubu of the National Board of Technical Education, attended. The theme was “Think Globally; Act Locally”. He took part in a session on RPL resulting in a strategic plan for 2009-2012. He was also in a working group on ODL course materials development for community health nursing, drawing up a plan of action for 2009-2012 and contributed to the roundtable session on short and long term training and upgrading of TVET teachers using ODL. The conference participants created the West African TVET (WATVET), a regional TVET association. Dr. Yakubu was elected President of the Association.

As part of COL’s initiative to develop basic and middle level entrepreneurial education and training in literacy and skills development for youth and adults, Nigeria is participating in the development of vocational courses in Community Health Nursing using ODL. The pilot course development began in Ghana and Nigeria will adapt it at a future workshop in Abuja.

COL is collaborating with NOUN and the Department of Basic and Secondary Education of the Federal Ministry of Education to train course writers to use wiki open educational resource skills to convert core courses for vocational training. TVET experts from all six geo-political regions in Nigeria were trained by COL in 2008.

National/international community development

As part of the 4th Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) General Assembly & African Agricultural Science Week at Sandton, Johannesburg, South Africa in June 2007, COL and FARA organised side events prior to the General Assembly. One provided an opportunity to promote ODL/ICTs: “Technology-Mediated Open and Distance Education (Tech-MODE) for agriculture education and livelihoods in Africa”. COL facilitated the development of country case studies on Tech-MODE from eight countries including Nigeria.

The report, *Technology-Mediated Open and Distance Education (Tech-MODE) for Agricultural Education and Improved Livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa – Synthesis of Eight Country Studies* and the country paper, *Technology-Mediated Open and Distance Education (Tech-MODE) for Agricultural Education and Improved Livelihoods – A Nigerian Case Study* were distributed in September 2008.

Transnational programmes

Workshops to train course writers to use ICTs to develop courses for TVET were held in January and March 2007. Four participants from NOUN and one each from the Federal Ministry of Education and one Village Foundation attended. The participants of the workshops will form a core team of trainers for teachers across Nigeria.

Ten staff members of the International Labour Organisation, the World Health Organisation and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies based in Nigeria were trained in Writing Effectively through a tutor-mediated eLearning COL course.

COL's guide for caregivers working with orphans and other vulnerable children and youth has been adapted for Nigeria and is available online. *Counselling for Caregivers* is a set of self-instructional learning materials that provides caregivers with the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to support effectively the healthy development of children and youth in their care. It can be downloaded at no cost from the COL website.

COL is assisting Nigeria with the development of basic and middle level entrepreneurial education and training along with other West African countries and in partnership with ECOWAS, is developing common courses in vocational training. The ECOWAS office in Abuja is the host institution. In May 2008, COL organised an orientation for officials of the Federal Ministry of Education and ECOWAS in using ODL and ICTs for TVET in Nigeria, in preparation for a training programme for TVET coordinators across Nigeria.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Good governance

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. A two-day meeting was convened in July 2008 to deliberate how best COL and ComSec could develop the appropriate content using ODL tools. The focus for the initiative in the first instance is Africa. One delegate from Nigeria, the Gender Coordinator and Chief Development Officer at the Nigerian Administrative Staff College, attended the meeting.

Educational use of mass media and ICTs

As part of an on-going programme of media empowerment, COL is supporting and enhancing technology, training and the delivery of information via radio and television at NTI and the National Commission on Nomadic Education. COL upgraded the duplication, video editing and camera technology at NTI in March 2007. Advanced training and assessment of NTI's media unit was completed in October 2007 and COL was able to secure an FM licence for NTI through the President of Nigeria's office. In March 2007, COL also began a capacity building exercise with the National Commission on Nomadic Education by upgrading their audio and video production technology. Further training was undertaken in October 2007.

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 20 Nigerian delegates from various educational institutions and the Federal

Ministry of Education. In addition, seven delegates were sponsored by COL, from the National Commission for Nomadic Education, the University of Ado-Ekiti, the Federal Ministry of Education and the Guardian Newspaper Ltd.

At this Forum, His Excellency Professor Michael Omolewa, Ambassador/Permanent Delegate for the Permanent Delegation of Nigeria to UNESCO and a member of COL's Board of Governors was named Honorary Fellow of COL.

The Fifth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in London in July 2008 was attended by 48 delegates from Nigeria, including 13 COL-sponsored delegates, from various educational institutions and the Federal Ministry of Education.

Appointments

His Excellency Professor Michael Omolewa is a member of the Board of Governors and Executive Committee of COL.

Other events

The Vice-President attended the special convocation ceremony for the formal grand opening and commissioning of the headquarters at NOUN in March 2007. The Vice-President also gave a presentation on "Recent Developments in Higher Education and Implications for NOUN" to academics at NOUN. The topics included the shift of distance education focus from the developed to the developing world, increased cross-border provision, the rise of private provision, the deepening research divide, the open source movement and finally the advent of the "new learner".

COL sponsored a delegate from NOUN to participate at the 12th Cambridge Conference on ODL in the UK in September 2007.

The Vice-President returned to NOUN in March 2008 and gave a special lecture on "Digital Divide or Digital Dividend: postcards from the south" to NOUN staff.

The President & CEO gave the closing address, entitled "eLearning on the far side of the digital divide" at the 2nd Conference of the African Council for Distance Education held in Lagos in July 2008.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2009-2012, Nigeria will continue to be a major partner for COL activities in the region. NOUN and RETRIDOL are well positioned to provide regional leadership and expertise along with other institutions and partners in the country. The development of programmes and materials will be a priority area. COL initiatives in all three sectors are planned to continue in-country as well as involving Nigeria regionally. Nigerian expertise will reach Commonwealth-wide through the work of Dr. Abdurrahman Umar, COL's Education Specialist: Teacher Education.

COL will continue to support Nigeria's efforts in the innovative use of educational media and broadcasting.