

EXCERPTS FROM:

# COL in the Commonwealth

## 2006–2009 Country Reports

FOR: SIERRA LEONE

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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 21<sup>st</sup>*

*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](http://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 150<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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 20<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.col.org/regional).



# SIERRA LEONE

**COL Focal Point: Mrs. Musu Gorvie, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (current)**

## BACKGROUND

Even though Sierra Leone only has a population of five million, it does not qualify as a “small state”. However, at the request of the then Minister of Education, the Honourable Dr. Alpha T. Wurie, Sierra Leone was invited to join the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

The COL-organised National Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Forum held in February 2005 resulted in the passing of a bill on ODL. A national ODL policy is under development and a Distance Education College is proposed. COL will support its implementation which will serve not just education but health and agriculture as well. Capacity building in different aspects of ODL will continue through COL and the Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning (RETRIDOL), the COL-supported regional centre of expertise in ODL for West Africa, either in face-to-face training workshops or through the Master of Arts in Distance Education programme offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University, India.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) has developed a comprehensive ten-year Education Sector Plan. Areas of focus include “meeting the teacher needs of an expanding school system”, “expanding and improving post-primary schooling” and issues of HIV/AIDS, gender equality, and capacity-building. COL will work with partners in Sierra Leone to provide technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and eLearning as well as support the FM radio station of MEYS.

Sierra Leone has contributed to the COL budget in 2008/2009.

## SUMMARY

During the previous triennium, COL’s work in Sierra Leone focussed mainly in the areas of policy development in ODL, teacher training, peri-urban agriculture and community health. This involved a range of partners: the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Freetown Teacher Training College (FTTC), Njala College of Agriculture and the Nova Scotia Sierra Leone Programme (NSSLP). This work has continued during this three year period. The specific outcomes are that staff from Sierra Leone institutions have received training in teacher education, quality assurance and TVET. COL has also worked closely with NSSLP to organise workshops in schools for raising awareness about HIV/AIDS and STDs. Two radio transmitters were installed in Sierra Leone during this period.

## EDUCATION

### Quality assurance

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 COL Focal Point for Sierra Leone from the Ministry of Education and another delegate from the University of Sierra Leone. The pan-Commonwealth *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 Sierra Leone and three other countries.

### Teacher development

Regional collaboration in teacher education through the West Africa Consortium for Teacher Education Development (WACTED) has continued. COL supported a workshop in Ghana in February 2007, held in collaboration with Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA). Teacher educators from Sierra Leone 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. A recent meeting of WACTED was held in Abuja in February 2009 where four delegates from Sierra Leone participated.

COL and FTTC organised an Instructional Design workshop in Freetown in December 2008. It was attended by 30 staff from Milton Margai College of Education and Technology, Fourah Bay College, the University of Sierra Leone, Njala University Bo Campus, Port Loko Teachers' College, FTTC and the International Rescue Committee. Participants were taught appropriate skills for instructional design and development and the process of developing learning materials for ODL.

### eLearning for education sector development

In February 2007, the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) in Ghana hosted a workshop on quality assurance in ODL organised by The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) in collaboration with COL. It was attended by 23 academics including two participants from Sierra Leone, from the Institute of Advanced Management and Technology and FTTC. 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.

## LEARNING FOR LIVELIHOODS

### Learning and skills for livelihoods

Sierra Leone hosted a policy awareness seminar on integrating information and communication technologies (ICTs) and eLearning into TVET in Freetown in May 2007. The event was co-sponsored by COL and the Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA). Delegates came from 120 TVET institutions across 17 African countries. They received valuable information about the potential of using ODL to improve livelihoods.

Nineteen participants from Sierra Leone attended the 1st African UNESCO-UNEVOC 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 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training.

A second TVET Africa Summit was held in Ghana in May 2008. It promoted good practice projects in the use of ICTs in TVET across Africa. Sierra Leone was one of the three winners with a project called “Help a Needy Child, Street Boys and Street Girls Reintegration Project”.

### **National/international community development**

COL-sponsored participants from Sierra Leone attended the 4<sup>th</sup> Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) General Assembly and African Agricultural Science Week, held at Sandton, Johannesburg, South Africa in June 2007. The main theme of the Assembly was “Innovation to transform agriculture for improved livelihoods and development in Africa”. More than 670 delegates representing stakeholders in agriculture in the public and private sectors and the donor community attended the Assembly, including 30 COL-sponsored participants from 11 Commonwealth countries.

As part of the Forum, 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 Sierra Leone.

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, *Toward the Introduction of Technology-Mediated Open and Distance Education (Tech-MODE) – An overview of Agricultural Education and Training in Sierra Leone* were distributed in September 2008.

### **Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)**

Sierra Leone is a member of VUSSC. During 2006-2009, activities have included capacity building and the creation, customisation and reuse of open educational resources (OERs). Quality assurance and cross-accreditation of learning programmes have also been a focus area in this planning period. A participant from the Ministry of Marine Resources attended the fifth of six training and course development workshops that took place.

The Interlocutor for Sierra Leone, from FTTC, attended a key VUSSC meeting, when the Ministry Interlocutors met in London in July 2008.

### **Transnational programmes**

One staff member of the World Health Organisation (WHO) based in Sierra Leone was trained in Writing Effectively through a tutor-mediated eLearning COL course. One staff member UNHCR was trained in the online Operational Data Management Learning Programme (ODMLP) in 2008.

### **Health, welfare and community development**

COL has continued to support NSSLP in its efforts to address HIV/AIDS prevention and stigma throughout the country. COL implemented a media unit and FM radio station with NSSLP in Freetown in November 2006. Health video productions are now being delivered, via village cinema events, throughout the country.

Two delegates attended the LearnShare, HIV/AIDS in Africa Workshop for Community Radio in April 2009.

### **Educational use of mass media and ICTs**

COL has continued to support the multimedia development of teacher education course materials for the FTTC, updating the video editing system at the College in April 2007. COL has also continued support for the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology efforts to utilise FM radio for education support for schools in the Freetown area. COL updated the FM radio transmitter at the Ministry in November 2006.

## **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 four delegates including two sponsored by COL. Delegates were from Angels Haven Outreach, Fourah Bay College (FBC), the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and Childhelp Sierra Leone.

The Fifth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, held in London in July 2008, was attended by three COL-sponsored delegates from Sierra Leone, from NSSLP, FTTC and Childhelp Sierra Leone.

### **Regional Focal Points meeting**

The Regional Focal Points meeting for Africa and the Mediterranean, held in Lilongwe, Malawi, in May 2008 was attended by the COL Focal Point for Sierra Leone.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

For 2009-2012, Sierra Leone has the opportunity to increase involvement in the VUSSC and further benefit from the capacity and resources it offers. TVET and teacher training will continue to be a major theme with initiatives during this period building on the work already done. COL will support the development of the Higher Teachers Certificate at the FTTC. It will also continue to strengthen capacity in the use of the FM radio stations for education and health.

It is hoped that regular contributions will be received over 2009-2012 to enable COL to make a significant impact on education and training in Sierra Leone.