

CAMEROON

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

A contributor to COL's budget since 2006, Cameroon has been an active participant in programmes to develop open and distance learning (ODL) in the West African region.

SUMMARY

In the 2003-2006 period, COL has worked in partnership with Cameroon to review existing systems and plan for the future. It has developed systems to improve farmers' prosperity and support AIDS awareness and prevention with the University of Dschang and the Ministry of Education. COL has also supported a number of professional development events and sponsored delegates from Cameroon.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Media Empowerment to address health issues

COL worked in partnership with the University of Dschang and the Ministry of Education to develop systems that will address training for farmers and extension officers and disseminate information concerning HIV/AIDS prevention in rural communities.

COL-POVERTY REDUCTION OUTCOMES THROUGH EDUCATION INNOVATIONS AND NETWORKS (PROTEIN)

This programme facilitates the implementation of innovative projects that adopt ODL and ICT for poverty reduction in the developing Commonwealth (www.col.org/protein). COL offers expertise in ODL and start-up, limited-term financial support to qualifying projects that help build human capacity to gain knowledge and skills in contributing to food security, environmental protection, rural development,

nutritional education and micro-enterprise. Successful projects have a high level of inter-institutional collaboration, significant and innovative ODL and ICT use, and well-researched content and learning design to support contextually relevant rural and peri-urban capacity building for poverty reduction.

Protégé QV, an NGO in Upper Nkam Division, received the award to help rural women use radio and cell phones for short message service (SMS/text messaging) for their communications for further learning, developing new skills and starting viable micro-enterprises.

Working in Partnership to Strengthen National Systems

COL established a Media Unit and installed a Campus FM radio station at the University of Dschang.

Strategic Planning

COL, in conjunction with the government of Cameroon and various Cameroonian institutions, ran a national forum on reviewing and establishing distance education policies in Cameroon in September 2003.

COL organised a stakeholders meeting in Lagos in 2004 where the participants mapped out the needs of the member states of the West African sub-region which identified their training and research needs in education. They also developed action plans and established partnerships among their member countries.

A Cameroonian scholar, Professor Ajaga Nji, was appointed Regional Consultant by COL to conduct a scan within Western Africa to ascertain potential roles for COL in the provision of ODL within the Education, Health, Agriculture and Governance Sectors. The scan informed COL's new Three Year Plan 2006-2009.

Open schooling

COL convened an international symposium on the application of multimedia to the school system. The symposium was designed to bring together institutions from Africa and South/Southeast Asia that are using satellite broadcasting to support the school system. Cameroon also participated in this symposium.

COL is working with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) e-Africa Commission to develop the NEPAD e-School Initiative which will provide young Africans with skills to participate in the knowledge society. Cameroon is a participant in this initiative.

Preparation and use of learning materials

In May 2005, Cameroon participated in two workshops on Instructional Design held at the National Open University of Nigeria (Lagos) and National Teachers' Institute (Kaduna) for 30 participants from West Africa. The objective of the first workshop was to build local capacities for revising existing print based study materials. The second was to train a group of potential trainers who would then impart similar training to colleagues in their own institutions.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL co-sponsored the Africa Copyright Forum Conference which was held in Kampala from 28-30 November 2005, for 23 countries including Cameroon.

One senior university administrator from Cameroon attended the 5th “Managing Change, Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education – a strategic development programme for leaders of Commonwealth Universities in Africa” Conference in Scotland from 8-13 August 2004.

LOOKING FORWARD

The work COL and Cameroon did in 2003-2006 to map out future needs is an excellent basis for moving forward into 2006-2009. In this period, higher education, health media empowerment and environment education will continue to be important themes.