

GHANA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Ghana has a long history of interest in open and distance learning (ODL) and support for COL. Professor Alex Kwapong held the position of Director at COL in the early 1990s and Dr. (Mrs.) Esi Sutherland-Addy became the first Ghanaian member of the Board of Governors. COL has regularly engaged the services of Mr. Reuben Aggor as a consultant in West Africa to facilitate ODL related projects. Ghana is a contributor to COL's budget.

SUMMARY

In the period 2003-2006 COL worked in partnership with Ghana on a number of levels. Joint projects for materials development and capacity building were undertaken. This work was carried out in association with the universities; the Ministry of Education and Sports; technical and vocational education and training institutes; community radio stations; and agricultural extension officers.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in Partnership to Strengthen National Systems

When the President of COL, Sir John Daniel, visited Ghana in September 2005 he called on the Ghanaian President John Kufuor. The President has, on a number of occasions, stressed the need to improve on the delivery of technical/vocational education and training (TVET) and the need to train young people so that they can take advantage of opportunities to improve their livelihoods. To fulfil these objectives, COL is working with the President's Special Initiative on Distance Learning (PSI-DL) to develop an open schooling programme in TVET for Ghana.

COL contributed towards the costs of a national meeting of policymakers, practitioners and stakeholders held in Ghana on the theme of the development of ODL resources for open technical/vocational schooling. The meeting was organised in partnership with the PSI-DL in Accra.

Working with regional partners

Two senior administrators from the National Council for Tertiary Education and the University for Development Studies in Ghana attended the 4th “Managing Change, Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education – a strategic development programme for leaders of Commonwealth Universities in Africa” Conference in Scotland in August 2003. Ghanaians also 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 in 2004. Again in 2005, Ghana was at the “Abertay Conversation: Consultation on Future Developments in Higher Education in Africa” organised by COL in collaboration with the Association of African Universities, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the University of Abertay Dundee and the Scottish Executive.

Ghana attended the eLearning workshop hosted in Nairobi, Kenya in 2004 which produced a draft policy framework for eLearning.

Ghana took part in a Learner Support Workshop organised by COL for the West African Teacher Training Consortium at the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana in 2004 to build capacity in the Learner Support System (LSS) in other institutions offering distance education.

In January 2006, COL and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the use of ODL in education. As part of that MOU, an initiative to offer training in literacy and skills through the use of appropriate technology has been launched for Anglophone West Africa. Following that in May, a Consultative Meeting co-hosted by COL and ECOWAS was held in Abuja, Nigeria. The meeting was held to promote discussion of how ITC could be used for training in literacy and skills.

In 2006, a meeting was organised at the Kyambogo University (KYU) in Uganda by COL and the International Extension College for participants across Africa to review “Introduction to Distance Education” programme materials and expertise which are now available through KYU and could be offered by other countries on request from COL.

Strategic planning

Ghana attended the “International Literacy and Livelihoods Experts Meeting: Learning for Life in a Changing World” which was held in Vancouver in November 2004 to advise COL on redefining its role in improving livelihoods in Commonwealth countries.

Achieving development goals through ODL

Ghana was represented at the high level institute hosted by COL in Vancouver in May 2005 to explore the relationship between ODL and development.

Achieving better prosperity for farmers through ODL

In 2004 Ghana hosted a two-day workshop, which was organised by COL, in collaboration with the Continuous Agriculture Education Project, Ghana (CAEPG), at the University of Ghana to review the status of and plan potential projects related to ODL use for capacity building of agriculturists in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Zambia. Participants came from research institutes, universities, the agriculture ministries and farmer-based organisations.

COL supported the Centre of Distance Education at the Institute of Education, University of Ghana to hold a stakeholders meeting and translate existing print materials on healthy vegetable production into the local languages of Twi, Dangme and Dagbani and record these on audio cassettes for use by farmers.

COL supported the Institute of Adult Education, University of Ghana, Legon to implement the Continuing Agricultural Education Project in collaboration with the Crops Research Institute, Kumasi, and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Techiman. Participants acquired instructional design skills and five ODL modules were developed to enhance the professional capacity of extension agents in Ghana. They in turn enabled five farmer groups (50 farmers) to gain relevant knowledge and skills to grow healthy vegetables.

Mr. Collins K. Osei of Ghana was awarded a £5,000 grant by the Gender and Agriculture/Rural Development in the Information Society (GenARDIS) Small Grant Fund to work on a project promoting the cultivation of healthy vegetables by farmers: A gender approach to using ICTs. This is one of the three COL-supported projects that received a 2005 GenARDIS grant.

Open schooling

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

COL is assisting in a series of training workshops for writers, course designers, managers and production houses in open technical schools in Ghana, to allow course writers to continue writing courses in Block Laying and Concreting and Hospitality.

In 2005, COL and the National Institute for Open Schooling, India supported and organised an Institute for education/government officials from Commonwealth developing countries including Ghana for the purpose of providing them with first-hand experience of an operational open school.

COL is working with the New Partnerships 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. Ghana is a participant in this initiative.

Preparation and use of learning materials

COL supported the University of Education, Winneba in setting up a distance education Bachelor of Education programme in Technical/Vocational Education and Training.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ghana participated in two workshops in Nigeria on Instructional Design held at the National Open University of Nigeria, Lagos and the National Teachers' Institute, Kaduna for 30 participants from West Africa in May 2005. 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.

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

In 2004, COL and Singapore co-hosted the fourth out of a series of five Management Development Institutes. A total of 20 teacher educators from Sub-Saharan Africa participated and Ghana was one of them.

Ghana participated in COL's Third Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in Dunedin, New Zealand in 2004 and in the Management Development Institutes in Singapore (2003) and India (2004). These institutes were organised by COL in partnership with the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Indian National Council for Educational Research and Training to benefit teacher training college principals and senior administrators from Sub-Saharan Africa.

LOOKING FORWARD

COL's partnership with Ghana produced some very positive results in the period 2003-2006 and these will serve as foundations for further progress in 2006-2009. In the next planning period open schooling and vocational training for young people will be important themes.