Report on the Regional Meeting of Focal Points in the Caribbean

Ocho Rios, Jamaica

March 10-11, 2008
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A. SUMMARY

Thirteen Focal Points from twelve Caribbean Commonwealth countries participated in a two-day consultative meeting in Jamaica, March 10-11, 2008. The meeting was part of the Commonwealth of Learning’s (COL) planning process for 2009-2012 and, as the first meeting of its kind, also served to clarify and advance the Organisation’s country focal points strategy.

The specific objectives of the meeting were:

1. to review the progress on COL’s Country Action Plans 2006-2009 for each participating country;
2. to obtain feedback on COL’s planning process and concrete inputs for the 2009-2012 Three-Year Plan; and
3. to provide a platform for networking and future collaboration among Focal Points and COL staff.

The President and Vice-President presented an overview of the Organisation’s objectives and the current strategic planning process. Country reports were presented by the respective country Focal Points highlighting the achievements and relevant needs of each country. COL Education Specialists reviewed work done in the Organisation’s three programme sectors with special focus on Caribbean.

With all countries in the region represented, the meeting was useful and productive, generally showing the success of COL’s Focal Points strategy as a means to engage and consult directly with member countries of the Commonwealth. The meeting clarified the strategic role of country Focal Points, provided a unique source of feedback and inputs to COL’s programming, and allowed for networking among Focal Points and with COL staff.

Key outcomes of the meeting

- Overall, the strategy to establish and develop COL Focal Points in each country of the Commonwealth was proved successful. There was a high degree of engagement between and among Focal Points and COL staff.
• Country reports provided a general endorsement of COL’s current programme plan and there was consensus that the Organisation should continue its current direction.

• The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) has gained major traction in the region and is clearly valued by regional stakeholders.

• There is a need to coordinate and capitalise on synergies between initiatives like Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network (CKLN), Caribbean Universities Project for Distance Education (CUPIDE), University of the West Indies Distance Education Centre (UWIDEC) and VUSSC.

• Key issues in the Caribbean include teacher development, including technical and vocational teacher training.

• Youth-at-risk, boys underachievement, and community wellness emerged as key development issues for consideration as part of COL’s Human Environment sector.

**Recommendations**

• Provide an online space for archiving, interaction and coordination among Focal Points and COL staff by establishing a Basecamp facility for COL in the Caribbean.

• The two-day duration of the regional Focal Points meetings is appropriate given the focus on review and planning of COL activities and planning needs.

• Interactive sessions provide a welcome shift in dynamics and an excellent means to get direct input from Focal Points. In general, COL should invest more resources (time, funds, etc.) in innovative facilitation approaches and in planning and running interactive and group sessions, as part of meetings in general and the Focal Points meetings in particular.
B. PROCEEDINGS

1. Opening

The meeting began with a round of introductions. Twelve Focal Points representing eleven Caribbean countries were present (the thirteenth participant arrived only the following day as a result of delayed travel due to adverse weather conditions).

The President inaugurated the meeting with a presentation about the Commonwealth of Learning, including an overview of its purpose and key stakeholders, its operational and planning processes, funding, guiding objectives, and programme context. The key thrust of the presentation was the transition from the current Three-Year Plan, 2006-2009, to the upcoming plan, 2009-2012, guided by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the commitments of Education for All (EFA), and the Commonwealth values of peace, democracy and equality. The presentation also covered COL’s programme structure and the Organisation’s strategy for stakeholder engagement, including the designation of Focal Points in each Commonwealth country.

The Vice-President made a presentation tracing the development of COL’s strategic planning in the context of the concurrent developments in the field of open and distance learning (ODL). The presentation looked to the Organisation’s strategic outlook, mission and niche in terms of how ODL has and continues to evolve, particularly in view of specific MDG, EFA and other goals. The presentation shared key points from the evaluation of COL’s programming (executed prior to the current Three-Year Plan) which recommended that COL work towards structuring its programming in fewer, larger packages. The emerging direction for COL’s programming and its evolving mission were related with a focus on the importance of achieving specific results, particularly in small states and least developed countries of the Commonwealth.

2. Reports by Caribbean Country Focal Points

There was a general round of country reports in view of the current and upcoming three year programme periods. Focal Points from each country presented key developments over the past several years as well as current priorities, particularly in terms of areas to be addressed by COL. These reports are appended to this report and archived digitally as part of the interactive online Caribbean Focal Points’ Basecamp at http://colkm.updatelog.com/clients.
In advance of the meeting, all Focal Points had been requested to send a two-page document describing the status of open and distance learning (ODL) in their country and to identify five key priorities that COL could help address during the next triennium. Five of these reports were received in advance and the rest were distributed at the meeting.

The country presentations confirmed that all countries had some form of distance education. There was a general appreciation for COL and high expectations for the future. The country plans provided a general endorsement of COL’s current programme plan and there was a general consensus that the Organisation continue in the same directions. One common challenge that all Focal Points face is coordination with other ministries and they requested that they be kept abreast of all engagements with the different stakeholders in their countries.

Capacity building and technical advice were requested in the following key areas:

- Teacher training, including:
  - Leadership training for principals;
  - Upgrading teacher qualifications;
  - Guidance and counseling to deal with growing indiscipline in schools;
  - Instructional design; and
  - Integration of ICTs into the school curriculum

- eLearning and educational use of mass media, including:
  - VUSSC;
  - Conversion of existing course materials into multimedia and online formats; and
  - Technical advice regarding EDUSAT, including translation of materials from Spanish into English.

- Quality assurance and transnational qualifications frameworks:
  - Legislation and accreditation; and
  - Policy development.

- Livelihoods training:
  - Special diploma in TVET;
- Training for agricultural extension;
- Autotronics training; and
- Entrepreneurship

- Gender:
  - Women’s entrepreneurship training; and
  - Boys’ underachievement – youth-at-risk

- Course materials:
  - Disaster management;
  - Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration /Masters in Public Administration (CEMBA/MPA);
  - Life Skills; and
  - Tourism and hospitality

- Higher Education:
  - Dual-mode systems development; and
  - External providers

- Secondary Education:
  - Open schooling; and
  - ICT training

- HIV/AIDS, especially concerning policy development

- Study visits, internships, support for the Caribbean Association for Distance and Open Learning (CARADOL).

**COL sectoral sessions**

The President made a presentation on the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), an initiative that holds great significance for the region. COL Education Specialists led sessions on the three sectors: Education, Learning for Livelihoods, and Human Environment.

Each of the presentations is appended to this report and archived digitally as part of the interactive online Caribbean Focal Points’ Basecamp at [http://colkm.updatelog.com/clients](http://colkm.updatelog.com/clients). These sessions started with a
presentation from the COL colleague, who asked leading questions which were addressed by the three breakout groups.

3. **Virtual University of the Small States of the Commonwealth**

The Virtual University of the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) represents a joining of forces to support the small states, a collaborative initiative among Commonwealth governments and institutions along with COL and UNESCO. To date there have been three planning meetings; one meeting on transnational qualifications frameworks; and five “bootcamps” for collaborative skills and content development and networking, including workshops on:

- Tourism and entrepreneurship,
- Professional development of educators,
- Life skills,
- Disaster management, and
- Fisheries.

VUSSC has operated to date on a limited budget, which includes important contributions from participating governments. Key players in the operationalisation of VUSSC include the country interlocutors and the implementing institutions. Worth noting is that at the time of the Focal Points meeting in the Caribbean, VUSSC had just completed an important meeting on transnational qualifications frameworks in which all of the small states participated, many with high level delegations. The direction of VUSSC was also flagged, specifically moving from an informal network of ministries of education towards a consortium of institutions, towards curriculum expansion and ongoing content creation without the necessity of “bootcamps,” and the need to increase synergy with initiatives like CUPIDE in the Caribbean.

The President noted in particular that VUSSC is achieving a great deal of traction in the Caribbean region; for example, Trinidad and Tobago, a very keen VUSSC participant, sees it as a key element in their national strategy to reach developed country status by 2020 and has put in place procedures to ensure that there is follow-up work after each “bootcamp”. Antigua and Barbuda, which took no part in VUSSC until the end of 2006, claims that participation in the Singapore Education Sector development workshop has transformed teacher education in the country. St. Vincent and the Grenadines related that the success of the VUSSC model in terms of bottom-up, collaborative content development has influenced national practices. There was anecdotal evidence presented in discussion to suggest that
econtent capacity had increased and that those trained at the “bootcamps” had come back to train other colleagues.

The general message is that the impact of VUSSC goes beyond the simple use of VUSSC materials and has a wider effect on re-energising teaching and learning in the topic areas of the course development workshops. The development of a growing cadre of IT-competent educators is also an important factor.

4. Education - presentation by Mohan Menon, Education Specialist, School Development

The following general points were made about the work of the education sector in the current Three-Year Plan.

The Education Sector programme is clearly guided by COL’s mission and the Organisation’s commitment to internationally agreed goals and Commonwealth values. Consistent with the Organisation’s strategic plan, the Sector aims to support policy development, capacity building, networks and consortia, and materials development. The Sector’s key initiatives are:

- Quality Assurance;
- Teacher Development;
- Open/Alternative Schooling;
- Higher Education; and
- eLearning; the first and last of which are cross-cutting initiatives.

The guiding elements of teacher development are

- Increased Access & Equity/Opportunities; and
- Enhanced Quality.

Open Schooling – the delivery of school-level education through flexible techniques and methodologies, including distance education and appropriate information and communications technologies – is an increasingly strong focus for COL. Open Schools aim to reach a wide range of learners, from out-of-school children to working adults, from vulnerable children and youth, especially girls, to learners in areas where there are not enough places in the conventional schools. With growing interest from all sectors, COL is assisting its partners to define an emerging model of open schooling, for instance through an international study of selected open schools in order to get more evidence on the success and cost-effectiveness of the model. Key issues for open schools include the following:
• Quality self-learning materials;
• Learner support systems;
• Reliable, accessible delivery and management systems;
• Personnel trained in ODL management;
• Well trained course tutors and facilitators at study centres; and
• Use of appropriate technology.

The presentation made note of the following key activities implemented by COL in the area of higher education:

• National policy forums;
• Building capacity for higher education by ODL;
• Strengthening ODL systems;
• Supporting open universities and dual mode institutions;
• Partnerships and training materials;
• Auditing and Quality Assurance; and
• eLearning for high education and OERs.

The presentation included a detailed outline of specific areas of work managed by the sector, including strategic principles as follows:

• Policy dialogues: regional/national forums;
• Longer engagement with partners;
• Link to global and government priorities;
• Programme focus rather than projects;
• Situated capacity building;
• Partnerships and consortia;
• South-South cooperation; and
• Pan-Commonwealth generic materials.

The group work and discussions that followed the overview of work done in the sector revealed a long list of highlighted points, summarised under the following needs:

• An overall concern for quality of teachers in schools which may have to be tackled by using ODL and technology for ongoing professional support to teachers and other education personnel;
• Need to train untrained teachers was highlighted by countries like Guyana, Jamaica and Belize;
• Training of technical and vocational teachers is a strong need in many countries in the region; and
• There is need and potential for open schooling in Jamaica and strengthening of open schooling in Trinidad and Tobago.

5. Learning for Livelihoods – presentation by Krishna Alluri, Education Specialist, Food Security and Environment

*Learning for Development* aptly describes Caribbean priorities, as presented by the Focal Points, in particular the focus on sustainable livelihoods. Caribbean communities will clearly benefit from COL’s assistance in developing national and regional policies, strategies and implementation plans to address the Learning for Livelihoods programmes.

The discussion during the Focal Points meeting centred largely on the two following initiatives:

• Learning and Skills for Livelihoods; and
• Rural and Peri-urban Community Development.

Overall, there is a need for COL to conduct needs analysis and opportunities for developing specific pedagogy, learning materials and delivery models for educational programmes for livelihoods. Learning for Livelihoods should aim at developing educational programmes with emphasis on building practical skills, competency, and entrepreneurship, with particular focus on youth-at-risk, for the following:

• Learning and Skills for Livelihoods: The technical education programmes should include autotronics and motor mechanics to cope with changing new technologies, electrical and electronics, welding, construction; and
• Rural and Peri-urban Community Development: The vocational education programmes related to agriculture and natural resource management based livelihoods should be linked with income generation, e.g. Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) and the Caribbean “life wires” (tourism and heredity), particularly for the rural communities.

COL should assist the Caribbean in initiating good action research approaches to develop a dual mode model for addressing Technical Education and Vocational Education. Specific comments included the points listed below.
Learning for Livelihoods:

- There is a need to document successful Caribbean examples of Learning for Livelihoods, to share case studies widely and, where feasible and possible, to replicate them with COL-partners in the Caribbean;
- COL’s support in developing national ODL policies relevant to livelihoods will be useful; and
- There is a need for special learning materials, models and programmes for the urban and rural communities, especially youth.

Technical and Vocational Education and training (TVET) using ICT:

- There are some good examples in this field, e.g. the CARICOM TVET certificate programme, Organisation for the Advancement of Structured Information Systems (OASIS); Sustainable Technology Education Project (STEP); Human Employment And Resource Training (HEART) Trust, Jamaica;
- There is a strong need for professional development of TVET teachers;
- Visual and performing arts have been undervalued and need to be prioritised, especially as concerns youth-at-risk;
- The COL-UTECH (Jamaica) special diploma in TVET should be strengthened; and
- There was a strong emphasis on wellness, extending from health issues such as AIDS/HIV to food and nutrition.

Agriculture:

- There is a need to review and design demand-based programmes in the following key areas:
  - Agricultural production and marketing;
  - Agro-processing for preserving and add value;
  - Agricultural extension;
  - Small enterprise development;
  - Wellness – ideal diet (nutrition, organic agriculture); and
  - Community leadership, with emphasis on women’s entrepreneurship in rural communities.
6. **Human Environment – presentation by Ian Pringle, Education Specialist, Media**

Alongside an overview of the sector’s five initiatives in terms of overall approach, focus areas, objectives and challenges in the context of the current Three-Year Plan, the presentation included a summary of the key conclusions from a COL-sponsored consultative meeting held immediately prior to the Focal Points meeting. As with sessions covering COL’s Education and Livelihoods sectors the session ended with an interactive component, in this case to consider developmental priorities, coordination among ministries and other stakeholder groups in-country as well as the possible contributions of new technologies towards innovative solutions.

The presentation covered the five different initiatives currently part of the sector noting the challenges of Gender and Governance as broad new initiatives with complex and multifaceted demands, issues of financial and human resources and strategic programme development among Health and Media initiatives, and the challenge of identifying suitable activities for the Environment Education initiative in the Caribbean.

Key points distilled from COL’s Consultative Meeting on Using Media for Education for Livelihoods, held in Ocho Rios the week prior, included the following:

- The need to change information, learning and knowledge building processes:
  - From one-way, one-to-many systems to interactive, multimedia networks;
  - From technology-centred, supply-led to need-based, community-led approaches;
  - Drawing information from a range of networked providers;
  - Networking content producers and information providers: local, national, regional; and
  - Producing content for a range of media, e.g. mobiles, local radio and telecentres, national TV and online portals.

- Building capacities for effective content:
  - New programme strategies: multi-stakeholder, focused on learning;
  - Designing effective learning programmes for media and local ICT centres and networks; and
- Using new applications: social networking, wikis, and repositories.

- Priority areas
  - Agricultural livelihoods; farmers groups;
  - Other livelihoods, fisheries, tourism;
  - Community facilities and community-based groups; and
  - Youth-at-risk.

Key inputs from discussions with Focal Points towards COL’s upcoming programme periods include the following community development priorities:

- Health: wellness, AIDS/HIV, diabetes and hypertension;
- Local governance: community leadership, participation, democracy in schools; and
- Women's entrepreneurship.

Strongly related to community development and especially relevant to COL’s work with media and information and communication technologies, another key area in the region is alternative and open schooling. With primary and particularly secondary schooling as one of countries' primary responsibilities to its citizens, there is an interest to supplement traditional schooling approaches with whatever tools are available (and Focal Points made specific note of community learning centres, community radio, and cable). In resource poor environments and in remote and isolated areas, the latter being particularly relevant in some islands of the Caribbean, mass media, including the internet, offers education boards and schools powerful tools to innovate learning approaches and to extend education.

Additional notes on environmental education include the following:

- There is a need to address climate change at the school and community levels, requiring continuing professional education for teachers;
- It is a challenge to identify opportunities for addressing climate change that are relevant at the local level and that impact directly on community livelihoods;
- There is a strong need for integrated programmes on environment, e.g. the Green Teacher programme, ecotourism, adaptation to Climate Change, public awareness on environment sustainability for wider community, disaster preparedness, management and mitigation;
• Disaster management and preparedness with a focus on women and increased participation by women as they contribute most to disaster mitigation and yet they tend to be most vulnerable; so they should be most prepared.

7. **Networking – presentation by Willie Clarke-Okah, Education Specialist, Higher Education and Policy Development**

The session focused on what networking means in relation to the Focal Points and how the entire group could support and facilitate it. This was a useful session as it helped clarify the roles and responsibilities of Focal Points. One key suggestion to emerge was to establish a Basecamp facility for the Focal Points as a networking space where COL could, for example, archive the various country reports from the meeting.

For COL, the coordination role of the Focal Points is critical as there is a strong need for coordination and information sharing among the different ministries and stakeholder groups in each respective Commonwealth country.

Actions that were discussed and endorsed by the Focal Points at the meeting include establishing a webpage for each country on the COL website so that the different Focal Points are aware of new developments concerning different institutions and organisations in their country. Informing Focal Points regarding staff visits to countries continues to remain a major need.

The meeting was useful in clarifying the role of Focal Points, namely the following points:

- Be a one-window stop in each country for COL;
- Coordinate with other ministries and stakeholders;
- Disseminate COL-related information and useful examples and practices from other countries in the Commonwealth to relevant constituencies;
- Meeting with visiting COL staff and to arrange appointments with ministry officials and others as necessary;
- Keep the Minister of Education briefed;
- Follow-up on the timely release of contributions to COL;
- Be advocates for ODL and COL in their countries, generally in terms of awareness and in specific areas of budgeting and resource allocation; and
- Provide advice and guidance to COL from time to time.
8. Conclusion

The meeting concluded with a round of reflections by all the participants in the meeting. There was a general consensus that the meeting had been enjoyable, useful and productive, particularly in view of the main objectives and especially in terms of furthering the Organisation’s country Focal Points strategy.

The Focal Points and COL staff met in the evening for an informal dinner; many of the Chief Education Officers also attended the dinner in advance of their meeting, which started the following day.
C. LIST OF ANNEXES

I. Agenda

II. List of Participants

III. Country Presentations

- Antigua & Barbuda by Ms. Peecheeta Spencer
- The Bahamas by Ms. Michelle Sears
- Barbados by Mrs. Sylvia Henry
- Belize by Ms. Maud Hyde
- Dominica by Ms. Irene Ducreay
- Grenada by Mr. Julien Ogilvie
- Guyana by Ms. Inge Nathoo
- Jamaica by Mr. Philbert Dhyll
- St. Kitts & Nevis by Ms. Jacqueline Flemming
- St. Lucia by Mr. Marcus Edward
- St. Vincent & The Grenadines by Ms. Susan Dougan
- Trinidad & Tobago by Mrs. Lystra Sampson-Ovid and Ms. Karen Rosemin

IV. Presentations by COL staff

- Commonwealth of Learning – Learning for Development by Sir John Daniel
- Proposed Three-Year Plan, 2009-2012 by Professor Asha Kanwar
- Education (review and planning) by Professor Mohan Menon
- Learning for Livelihoods by Dr. Krishna Alluri
- Human Environment by Mr. Ian Pringle
- Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth by Sir John Daniel
- Networking by Dr. Willie Clarke-Okah
REGIONAL MEETING OF THE FOCAL POINTS – CARIBBEAN
MARCH 10-11, 2008
AT SUNSET JAMAICA GRANDE, OCHO RIOS, JAMAICA
(WINDSOR A ROOM)

AGENDA

Monday, March 10, 2008

9 – 10 a.m. Inaugural Session: (Introductions, COL, its present Three-Year Plan and the role of Focal Points): Sir John Daniel

10 – 11 a.m. Country presentations (overview of needs and priorities): Focal Points
(Each Focal Point will have 10 mins. to make the presentation.)
Ms. Peecheeta Spencer – Antigua & Barbuda
Ms. Michelle Sears - The Bahamas
Mrs. Sylvia Henry - Barbados
Ms. Maud Hyde – Belize
Ms. Irene Ducreay – Dominica

11 – 11:15 a.m. Coffee break

11:15 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Country presentations (overview of needs and priorities): Focal Points (Cont’d)
Mr. Julien Ogilvie, Grenada
Ms. Inge Nathoo - Guyana
Mr. Philbert Dhyll – Jamaica
Ms. Jacqueline Flemming – St. Kitts & Nevis
Mr. Marcus Edward – St. Lucia
Ms. Susan Dougan – St. Vincent & the Grenadines
Mrs. Lystra Sampson-Ovid and Ms. Karen Rosemin – Trinidad & Tobago

1 – 2: p.m. Lunch

2 – 3 p.m. Proposed Three-Year Plan, 2009-2012: Professor Asha Kanwar

3: – 3:15 p.m. Coffee break

3:15 – 5:15 p.m. Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC):
Sir John Daniel
REGIONAL MEETING OF THE FOCAL POINTS – CARIBBEAN
MARCH 10-11, 2008

AT SUNSET JAMAICA GRANDE, OCHO RIOS, JAMAICA
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AGENDA

Tuesday, March 11, 2008

9 – 10:30 a.m.  Education Sector (review and planning): Professor Mohan Menon

10:30 – 10:45 a.m.  Coffee break

10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.  Learning for Livelihoods (review and planning): Dr. Krishna Alluri

12:15 – 1:30 p.m.  Human Environment (review and planning): Professor Asha Kanwar and Mr. Ian Pringle

1:30 – 2:30 p.m.  Lunch

2:30 – 3:30 p.m.  Networking: Dr. Willie Clarke-Okah

3:30 – 3:45 p.m.  Coffee break

3:45 – 5 p.m.  Valedictory: Summing Up: Professor Asha Kanwar and all participants

6:30 p.m.  Dinner for Focal Points and Chief Education Officers @ Poolside (hosted by COL)

March 2008
REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS MEETING - CARIBBEAN  
MARCH 10-11, 2008  
OCHO RIOS, JAMAICA

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS & CONTACT DETAILS

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March 2008
COUNTRY PRESENTATION: ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

By: Peecheeta Spencer

Current Three Year Plan 2006 - 2009

Antigua has benefited from two (2) workshops namely:

- Professional Development of Educators held in Singapore in March 2007 and
- Life Skills Workshop held in Trinidad & Tobago in June 2007.

Outcomes

Institutions are developing the capacity to offer online courses as participants at the PDE workshop are taking responsibility for training of staff. Teachers in various institutions in Antigua and Barbuda are being trained to convert current face to face courses for online delivery. This is particularly important to the Department of Teacher Education at the Antigua State College as our mandate is to fast track the training of teachers to ensure that all teachers in the system become certified, registered teachers by year 2010.

This particular exercise will also enhance our ability to increase access to current and new programmes.

Antigua State College is also collaborating with regional institutions to share courses developed for online delivery.

The Life Skills Workshop has provided an instructional approach to the delivery of one of the electives in the Department of Business. This has the potential for use not only in the College programme but in Programmes developed specifically for the training of Youth Workers. Further developments will be noted after the meeting with the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC). The CYPCC will be establishing new standards for the training of Youth Workers and will be developing programmes leading to the award of a diploma, first and master's degrees.
Three-Year Plan 2009 - 2012

Priorities for this period include:

- Guidance and Counselling

- Training of teachers in Technical and Vocational Education in both content and pedagogy:
  - Building Construction
  - Electrical/Electronics
  - Automotive
  - Cosmetology.

- Building the capacity Educational Broadcasting Unit to independently produce audio and video materials. This will enhance the service the wider public, visually impaired and special needs persons as well as provide relevant teaching materials to teachers in General Education.

- The training of IT Technicians is critical

- Agricultural practice and production.
COUNTRY PRESENTATION: THE BAHAMAS

By: Michelle Sears

Overview

A glance at a map of The Bahamas immediately brings focus to the challenge this country faces in bringing quality education to its people. With a population of a mere 350,000 unevenly dispersed over twenty-two islands and cays, The Bahamas has had to seek creative means to deliver equitable levels of education particularly to people in the more distant islands.

Historically, the practice of correspondence study, a precursor of distance learning, has been most popular especially with the adult learner since the 1950’s. Over the years, distance learning has become more deliberate and focused beginning in the 1970’s with the gradual influx of offshore universities - Benedictine University, the University of Miami, Nova Southeastern, St. Thomas, Kent State and UWI – they offer a range of Bachelor and Masters degree programmes in Education, Business, Law and Hospitality Management.

With the advent of modern technologies, The Bahamas has sought to keep pace recognising that quality education demands quality teaching.

- In 1985, The Bahamas Ministry of Education and the College of The Bahamas, in collaboration with the Organisation of American States, piloted by distance, a teacher upgrading programme for teachers on our family islands
- In 1992, The Bahamas hosted a Commonwealth of Learning conference using distance learning methods and offered an opportunity for retraining for technical and vocational teachers
- In 2001- 2005 Commonwealth of Learning and the University of Technology, Jamaica, co-sponsored a programme to provide training for 27 technical vocational teachers using face to face sessions supported by telephone, email, and virtual classroom setting.

In more recent years the Ministry of Education has placed great emphasis on the provision of opportunities for distance learning using mixed media programmes including print, radio, television, video and audio cassettes and computer-based instruction. Distance learning in The Bahamas most often provides support to the classroom teacher.
The following attempts to highlight some recent developments and enhancements in the delivery of distance learning.

**Television Broadcasts**

With technical support from the Commonwealth of Learning, The Bahamas Learning Channel (BLC) was launched 30 March, 2007. The BLC currently airs nine programmes on Cable TV 12 and beginning this week similar programming will air on ZNS Television 13.

Programming includes three areas of interest

- School based programmes targeting preschoolers through secondary school students
- Allied ministries and agencies targeting college students, parents, the general community
- News and special features, particularly news emanating from the ministry of education youth sports and culture.

**Dubbing Center**

Our Distance Learning Unit collaborates with Cable Bahamas to provide teachers with copies of non-copyrighted materials that have aired on Cable TV, for example programmes from the Public Broadcasting Service. In addition, video and audio tapes of local events and educational presentations are similarly made available to teachers for use in preparation of their lessons.

**Radio Broadcasts**

Radio programmes have been at the foundation of distance learning in The Bahamas.

- A time for Education - has been modified over the years to accommodate primary students in the morning at 10:00 and secondary students / adults at 3:30 in the afternoon
- Audio study guides that parallel the national exam syllabi in core curriculum areas.
Print Media

Print media is indispensable in the delivery of distance learning and we continue with the creation of newspaper supplements and learning packages.

The Junka & Noo Vocabulary Development series deserves particular mention as it continues to extend its offerings, and recently developed a television series for lower primary. Piloted in the 1990’s this series produces indigenous integrated and interactive resource materials for students, teachers and parents to enhance the learning experience. Lessons that parallel the teachers’ manual are now available on CD-Roms; in addition, independent learning and active engagement is provided on the Junk & Noo website. Presently the Junk & Noo series is being mass produced to facilitate its distribution to the most remote classrooms in our archipelago.

The Junk & Noo programme received international recognition in 2005 when it reached the semi-finals in the Commonwealth Best Practice Awards.

School Computerisation Project

The computerisation project with our international partners – OAS and IDB - continues to provide training in basic computer literacy for teachers and will facilitate use of full range of multi-media resources and integration of technology into instructional programme. Our goal is to have trained 2700 teachers by the end of 2008 and to provide technology –aided instruction in grades 4 through 6.

The installation of active boards continues and to date we have 30 schools including three in the Family Islands, and teachers have been trained and are actively using the boards.

Destination Reading and Math interactive programmes are used in an increasing number of primary schools.

Resource Centers

We continue to maintain four resource centers on major islands that provide additional resources to students and teachers.
Our top priorities

- Redefine our distance learning programme and harmonize our goals and activities with the current and ever changing technologies.

- Procure funding for training in distance learning, for writing teams and for printing of learning packages.

- Expand Bahamas Learning Channel hours and produce more creative instructional programming by increasing technical staff.

- Establish an interactive website that mirrors the BLC to provide additional learning opportunities with a student, classroom, parental or community focus.

- Expand ministry’s website to include streamable audio and visual programmes.

- Increase level of Family Island contribution to programming at BLC.

COL can support The Bahamas with the following

- Internships, or tours of exemplary distance learning models in island state settings such as ours.

- Ongoing training for BLC personnel in latest technology (final cut – pro system); programme development and delivery, in particular script writing, equipment repair and website production and maintenance.

- Technical support for improving Ministry of Education website to optimize the delivery of distance learning.

- Developing distant learning modules, units, lesson plans for radio broadcast from preschool to high school.
DISTANCE EDUCATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS

THE CHALLENGE
- Approximately 350,000 people on 22 islands
- About 48,000 students in 160 public schools;
- 111 primary and All-age schools;
- 54 secondary schools and
- 10 special needs schools
- School populations range from 5 to 1000 plus
- Bringing quality education to all

AN OVERVIEW OF DISTANCE LEARNING IN THE BAHAMAS
- An historical perspective
- Offshore support
- A multi-media approach

OUR SUCCESSES
- Launched Bahamas Learning Channel in April 2007
- Indigenous television series for Lower primary based on the Junka & Noo Vocabulary Development Program; on CD Rom; an interactive website
- Radio programs and audio study guides that parallel national exam syllabus in core curriculum areas
- Training in Distance Learning techniques for officers and writing teams.
OUR SUCCESSES

- Learning packages and Newspaper supplements
- On-going computerization Project with international partners – OAS, IDB, - to provide training for teachers in computer applications to facilitate use of full range of multi-media resources and integration of Technology into instructional program
- College of the Bahamas programs in Grand Bahama, Abaco, Eleuthera, Exuma and Andros

OUR PRIORITIES

- Redefine our Distance Learning Program and harmonize with
- Procure funding for training in Distance Learning, for writing teams and for printing of learning packages
- Expand Bahamas Learning Channel hours and produce more creative instructional programming by increasing technical staff

OUR PRIORITIES

- Establish an interactive website that mirrors the Bahamas Learning Channel and other learning opportunities with a student, classroom, parental or community focus
- Expand Ministry’s website to include streamable audio and visual programs
- Increase level of Family Island contribution to programming at BLC

SUPPORT NEEDED

- Internships, visits or tours of exemplary models
- Ongoing training for BLC personnel in latest technology, program development and delivery, equipment repair and website production and maintenance
- Technical support for improving Ministry’s website to enable delivery of Distance Learning
THE BAHAMAS…

Thanks to all!

Michelle V. Sears
Professional Development Officer
Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture
COUNTRY PRESENTATION: BARBADOS

By: Sylvia Henry

Introduction

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development is the newly named government agency responsible for the formulation of educational policy and for the administration and regulation of education and educational policy in Barbados. Up to December 2007, the Division of Youth Affairs and Sports was responsible for the formulation and implementation of policies on youth development and sports. A recent change in governmental administration has resulted in a reorganisation of Ministries.

The Barbadian education system caters to approximately 28,000 students at the primary level, 22,000 students at the secondary level and 14,000 at the tertiary level including those enrolled at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus. Within the education system there are 71 public primary school, 1 infant school, 7 public nursery schools, 20 public private schools, 22 public secondary schools, 2 public special education schools, 2 private special education schools, 7 private secondary schools, 3 tertiary level institutions, 1 teachers’ training college and 1 central administration agency.

Mission

The mission of the Ministry is to:

• ensure equitable access to quality education programmes for all our citizens so that their potential is fully realised; and
• assist in the development of responsible citizens who are disciplined, industrious, creative and confident and who can function effectively in a modern society.

Main Goals

Some of the main goals of the Ministry are to:

• provide high-quality free education for all, from pre-school to tertiary education;
• provide a wide range of higher education and training opportunities to enable those best able, to avail themselves of these facilities to
develop the professional, technical and other skills they can use to further their careers and contribute to the development of the Barbadian economy and society;
• to promote gender fairness which will produce citizens who are well-balanced, disciplined, creative, self-reliant persons who can think critically and function effectively in a modern society; and
• use technology as a tool to facilitate teaching and enhance learning

Access to Quality Education

Having achieved the goal of universal access to education, it was only natural that Barbados sought to ensure that students, at all levels should benefit from quality education. Additionally, teachers should be given the tools and resources to allow them to deliver quality education. It was therefore necessary to redefine the school environment to include the utilisation of technology as a tool for learning and as a facilitation of expanded access to educational opportunities, particularly at the post-secondary level where access was limited.

Use of ODL in Barbados

1. Distance Learning/ Open and Flexible Learning Project at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic Project- currently 19 courses;
2. ODL training for teachers in the area of special education;
3. UWI Open Campus for non traditional students who reside in countries without a campus;
4. Establishment of e-campus at Barbados’ Audio Visual Aids department to enable online support for programmes and services offered by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development.
5. Online Dissemination of HIV/AIDS information and healthy lifestyle information;
6. Codrington College theological Seminary and online facility for teaching and learning;
7. Cave Hill School of Business and gradual repositioning to increase the number of online business courses.

Importance of COL to Barbados’ Agenda

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development appreciates the willingness of COL to assist with the development of Barbados’ capacity to develop the human resources required for economic and social development, and to support some of the priority initiatives in education. Some of these priority initiatives are as follows:
1. developing quality assurance systems for the Barbados Certificate of Secondary Education and the Barbados Accreditation Council;
2. application of Open and Flexible Distance Learning to increase access to post secondary education; as well as the developing and strengthening of systems, models and materials for higher education through open universities, like the Virtual University for small states of the commonwealth (VUSSC). One policy of the government is to establish a community university to allow for a higher level of access to education for all persons;
3. Increasing awareness, building capacity and developing content for learning in the education sector through online programmes offered at our Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, and online mentoring and learning support for teachers and principals;
4. Expanding teacher education through combinations of open and distance learning and classroom focused training, as well as increasing opportunities and capacity for developing and delivering quality professional development for teachers and other education sector personnel such as education officers;
5. Development of e-Enterprise or self-employment programmes to assist unattached youth who spend considerable time on the “blocks” without gainful activity, and provision of access to facilities for training and positive personal empowerment.

Given the major thrust in Barbados to revolutionise its system through the use of cutting edge information communication technologies, COL can provide valuable assistance as Barbados continues to:

1. make sense of the ICT revolution and the appropriate use of technology in training and the enrichment of education in general;
2. expand opportunities of e-access at the post–secondary level;
3. focus on educational research, quality assurance and quality control of all programmes;
4. offer divergent opportunities for teacher development, alternative forms of schooling and special education;
5. extend its e-learning possibilities of interfacing with distant agencies;
6. allow for a more efficient sharing of expertise and skills, research data and educational materials through online collaboration across e-campuses.
Online Access to Education and a Life of Sustainability

Sylvia Henry
Senior Education Officer
Barbados

Mission
- Ensure equitable access to quality education for all
- Development of responsible citizens

Main Goals
- Provide a wide range of higher education and training opportunities
- Provide high-quality free educational opportunities for all citizens from preschool to tertiary
- Use technology as a tool to facilitate teaching and enhance learning
- Promote gender fairness

ODL in Barbados
- Providing food and education are the most important things for the development of the individual and a nation. Morris, 2005
Distance learning or Open and flexible learning has the potential to offer new learning opportunities unrestricted by distance, time or individual differences among students.

Demand for places has outstripped the supply at post-secondary level.

Need to free space for HIV/AIDS education and Drugs education.

Centre for Open and Flexible Learning was officially opened at the Samuel Jackman Polytechnic, Barbados in December 2003 and offered 5 courses to 164 students in the first year.

Instructors were trained in design, delivery and management of online courses.

Led to integration into areas with partner institutions.

Challenge to overcome faculty resistance through consensus building within a framework that enables teachers to recognize the need for change.

Development of a seamless system for learning at home, school and workplace.

Challenge to access sufficient funds and technical support to maintain ODL projects and consistent delivery to students.
Over 30 persons have been trained to deliver ODL courses
In first two years 350 students had enrolled in 5 courses
Completion and graduation rate has been 50%
Great benefits for Council for Disabled

Special Education
Preparing of teachers of special education through ODL with Mt St Vincent University Canada
UWI open campus facility for non-traditional students who have no campus in their country

E-campus at Ministry of Education, Barbados to enable online support for educational programmes and services
Online dissemination of HIV/AIDS education and Health and Family Life Education information

Theological education for Christian ministry
School of Business, Cave Hill Barbados and access to degrees and diplomas in Business Administration
COL and Barbados’ Agenda

- Barbados Certificate of Secondary Education and Accreditation Council
- Expansion and sustainability of ODL at post-secondary level and associated training of persons to deliver courses
- Development of ODL to support leadership training for education officers, principals and teachers aspiring to be leaders

COL and Barbados’ Agenda

- Development of E-enterprise opportunities to assist unattached, at-risk youth
- Technical expertise as we continue to place these new areas of learning into perspective
- Expertise as we engage in educational research and data-driven instruction
- Better inclusion of special needs in planning

COL and Barbados’ Agenda

- Wider opportunities for linkages with distant agencies and inter-campus collaboration

The End

- Barbados looks forward to sharing mutual benefits and collaboration with its partners in education in the future
COUNTRY PRESENTATION: BELIZE

By: Maud Hyde

Introduction

Belize continues to view Open and Distance Learning (ODL) approach to education delivery as a strong and viable option to address the demand for access to education beyond the post primary level. In areas of specialisation such as teacher education and community health and development training, ODL approaches can effectively provide access where distance remains a constraining factor. The challenge over the last two years has been to address the development of the infrastructure and capacity within local institutions to support ODL delivery of programmes. The Ministry of Education, the Office of Governance and the University of Belize have been the key agencies working towards capacity building in order to facilitate ODL as a mode of delivery. Other local institutions do offer some courses by distance mode; however these act as local centres for larger regional and international providers.

ODL at the University of Belize

The Ministry of Education lends full support to the University of Belize in its capacity building to develop infrastructure and capacity for ODL delivery. To date the University of Belize has established a strong E-Learning Steering Committee to spearhead its ODL efforts. In January 2006 the University piloted its first fully online course, Introduction to Computer Studies. As of August 2007, the number of students enrolled in the course has more than doubled. The course is now being offered to students in Belize as well as three other Caribbean countries.

The success of the first online course has encouraged the University to increase its efforts to offer more courses at a distance. To date four University faculty members have received training to develop online course materials through the VUSSC project coordinated by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). These faculty members upon their return from the VUSSC bootcamps, conducted training for other faculty members to assist them to develop online materials and use distance education tools.

University of Belize faculty members have also benefitted from training in use of distance education tools and distance materials development provided by
the Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network (CKLN). CKLN, which is headquartered in Grenada, was established in 2004 by Caribbean Heads of Government to enhance the competitiveness of Caribbean countries by upgrading and diversifying skills and knowledge through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) connectivity. CKLN will seek to connect the region’s colleges and universities by developing region-wide e-learning programmes and knowledge sharing.

It is anticipated that in the near future the University of Belize will expand its offerings of distance programmes to include teacher education, tourism, workplace empowerment (re-tooling the workforce) and Life Tools (including HIV/AIDS education).

E-governance

The Office of Governance, with assistance from various local and international agencies, continue to pursue efforts at building capacity within the Public Service to maximize the use of ODL in upgrading workplace knowledge and skills. The Office of Governance has conducted numerous workshops and training for public officers to assist them to better engage technology for greater efficiency and effectiveness at the workplace. Currently the use of electronic means of communication is much more prevalent within the Public Service, and in some instances has facilitated group discussion and planning thus effectively reducing expenditure of time, energy and resources that would normally be expended when using the traditional mode of meeting and planning.

Other ODL Initiatives:

University of the West Indies:

Through its virtual campus, the University of the West Indies, has introduced programmes of study leading to award of degrees at both the Bachelors and Masters level which fully utilise distance mode of delivery. Students are able to enroll in these programmes through the University’s School of Continuing Education in Belize City. These programmes engage the use of online classes, some face to face sessions and printed materials. Currently local enrollment is small, however the programmes offering teacher education degrees receive much more interest and maintain higher enrollment than other courses.
Caribbean Examinations Council

Belizean secondary and tertiary level learners can join others throughout the English speaking Caribbean in pursuing certification through self-study using distance materials developed by CXC with assistance from COL. In 2003 CXC undertook a major initiative to transform some of its examination materials that readily lend themselves to self-study into distance materials (mostly paper) to better accommodate independent and adult learners who wish to upgrade their academic qualifications without having to attend structured classes. This programme is reporting success in the region with increasing enrollment from private candidates.

Belize’s Telesecundaria Project

The telesecundaria initiative is common to Latin America where a number of such programmes are operating successfully to bring secondary education to many rural communities. This project uses satellite technology to broadcast high school level educational programmes to learners where limited numbers of teachers would otherwise greatly reduce the number of persons able to receive a secondary education. The telesecundarias also allow flexible learning as lessons can be transmitted at a convenient time with the use of video cassettes in instances where learners need to work.

The typical Telesecundaria is equipped with a television and a teacher who acts as a resource person as lessons are broadcasted to learners. Currently only one site in Belize operates fully as a telesecondaria. It is hosted in Esquela Secondaria Technica Mexico, a secondary school located in the northern district of Corozal where Spanish is widely spoken.

Two other schools, another in the north and one in the south of the country have embarked on developing the infrastructure to adopt the telesecundaria method to assist early school leavers to pursue a high school education. These schools were assisted to acquire satellite equipment by funds made available through the OAS. Educational materials used in the programme are obtained through the Mexican EDUSAT programme.

Conclusion

As Belize continues to seek to upgrade workforce efficiency in an effort to enhance competitiveness in the global economy, ODL will play a vital role in increasing access and opportunity for training to a wider cross section of the Belizean population. Currently the numbers of trained teachers at both primary and secondary levels remain below 50% even as universal access to primary education is attained and access to secondary education is ever expanding. The use of open and distance learning approaches is
undoubtedly the most effective way to quickly address the need to increase opportunities for untrained and, or aspiring teachers to access teacher training opportunities even in remote areas of the country.

ODL can also provide a solution to the challenge of making secondary education accessible to a wider population as well as early school leavers and adult learners. The country plan for 2006 – 2009 speaks to a number of critical areas that ODL methods may readily facilitate delivery to wider populations that have not yet been addressed such as environmental education, citizenship education and health education. Given the University of Belize’s willingness to advance ODL as an alternate mode of delivery, it is anticipated that as its capacity for delivery is enhanced these areas will be addressed sooner rather than later.
COUNTRY PRESENTATION: DOMINICA

By: Irene Ducreay

Proposed Activities in Dominica - 2009-2012

Education

Quality Assurance

- Pan-Commonwealth Quality Indicators could be used by Ministries of Education and teacher education institutions for quality assurance in teacher education.

- Develop capacity to facilitate establishment of the Accreditation Board to access information.

- COL to organise regional institutes for policy makers/administrators in education/teacher in quality assurance in teacher education.

Teacher Development

- Set up centres in various communities to expand teacher education e.g. North East, Grandbaby, East and North. Programmes will originate from the State College and could be accessed in classrooms at all secondary schools.

Elearning for Education Sector Development

- COL provides a rich set of resources via its website (www.col.org/resources) and knowledge finder service, a virtual library of about one million documents from selected sources (www.col.org/kf) and database of learning objects (www.col.org/lor). COL’s WikiEducator (www.col.org/wikieducator) provides an online service to support online educational communities.

- The Caribbean Chief Education Officers are brought together approximately every year for a briefing on COL’s activities in the region as well as to give them an opportunity to discuss new ODL/Education Technologies activities in their countries – both planned and initiated. In conjunction with the meeting, COL organises a professional development activity or the meeting is held in conjunction with a larger ODL/ICT event or activity.
Learning4Content aims to build capacity among educators in using Wikieducator to develop free content for education. Training is free and educators will “pay” for their training by donating time to develop one free content lesson of their choice. COL is planning to hold at least one workshop in each Commonwealth member state.

**Learning and Livelihoods**

_Learning and Skills for Livelihoods_

- Foster linkages with institutions offering technical educational programmes. It is suggested that this project be developed by the Adult Education Department as it has ongoing educational programmes set up in several adult education centres. The Ministry of Education will provide assistance in facilitating some programmes.

**Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth**

- The Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) has conducted meetings of policy-makers to agree strategy and the hosting of capacity “building-by-doing boot camps” of educational professionals, to create open educational resources (OER) which are published on the Internet. The boot camps create virtual communities or “new Diaspora” of professional educators who work and collaborate online.

Dominica will be participating in the activities of the VUSSC during the next three years (www.col.org/vussc). Activities already started include the creation, customisation and reuse of OERs. Quality assurance and cross-accreditation of learning programmes will be a focus area in this planning period.

**Human Environment**

_Gender and Development_

- The Department of Gender Affairs has indicated interest in this project and is willing to accept the project. This will strengthen the women in society equipping them with the necessary skills to be self-sufficient.

**Educational Use Mass Media ICTs**
• COL has supported the efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment in producing media to address the needs of targeted groups in the Country.

• COL will develop the multi-media capacity in the Ministry of Education that will develop materials for students and teachers.
COUNTRY PRESENTATION: GRENADA

By: Julien Ogilvie

Introduction

Subsequent to Grenada’s participation in the Singapore’s Commonwealth of Learning Workshop on the development of Open Distance Learning (ODL) materials, support was sought from CKLN (Caribbean Knowledge Learning Network) Office to convert existing face-to-face curriculum material into ODL materials for offering courses at the T.A. Marryshow Community Campuses throughout the country.

The urgency to train the full cadre of secondary teachers and the need to raise the level of qualifications of teachers in general, the Ministry of Education embarked on a number of approaches to meet this dire need.

These approaches include:

1. **A special Diploma Pilot Programme in Technical and Vocational Training** in collaboration with the University of Technology (UTEC). Twenty secondary teachers were trained in the pedagogy for Technical Education.

   The programme was specially tailored on the assumption that participants would have developed skills competence in their respective areas of specialisation consistent with the demands of industry.

   The programme was delivered using a blended approach that combined face-to-face electronic support and print media. This programme will move to a second phase.

2. **Online Teacher Training**

   Forty-eight (48) teachers were given scholarships to access online training provided by the University of the West Indies. Areas identified for support were: Educational Administration, Literacy Studies, Spanish, Mathematics, Science, Computer Science, History and English. Additional support in the form of tutorials were given to these teachers.

3. **Distance Education Centre**
Structures are being put in place to provide Distance Learning opportunities through T.A. Marryshow Community College.

- Training of staff to initiate and implement Distance Education Plan;
- Identifying support Distance Education Institute;
- Establishing a Distance Education Unit at T.A. Marryshow Community College;
- Building institutional technological capacity to deliver Distance Education;
- Setting up physical structure for the delivery of Distance Education.

4. **Smart School**

The Ministry is establishing a technology platform as a medium on which distance learning and specific teaching expertise will be made available to schools, through video transmission.

Smart School will be able to provide many options to the teaching learning experience.

**Support Needed**

To provide greater access to Open and Distance Learning opportunities, the Ministry of Education seeks assistance with the following:

1. Support for T.A. Marryshow Community College with technical advice on training in technical vocational education;
2. Assistance in the establishment of an office in-structure for Distance Education operations that can accommodate the facilitation of video conferencing delivery;
3. Technical assistance to consolidate internet connections and configure load balancing between internet lines;
4. Technical assistance in course conversion and use of the Moodle platform;
5. Technical assistance in the delivery of TVET. This can be face-to-face or online;
6. Technical assistance in developing a strategic approach to technical education;
7. Assistance in the provision of ICT in secondary schools.
COUNTRY PRESENTATION: GUYANA

By: Inge Nathoo

Introduction

Hon. Sir John and other colleagues from the COL office in Vancouver, esteemed colleagues from the Caribbean Chapter of the Commonwealth of Learning, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I bring you warmest wishes from Hon. Shaik Baksh MP and Minister of Education, for a fruitful meeting.

Review

In reviewing Guyana’s work with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) over the last three years, it was noted that activities were not as brisk as they should be with such a programme, but we intend that this situation should improve where Guyana could take full advantage of the very necessary expertise, if we are to improve the levels of literacy to an acceptable standard for our people.

Some Ongoing Initiatives

Practically, as we speak, one very important assignment is being carried out under the auspices of COL, where a Guyanese (our Senior Education Officer – Technical) is undergoing training on accreditation, equivalencies of qualifications, etc. in Singapore.

We were informed by the University of Guyana of a very interesting programme that they have started with COL, i.e. acquiring the licence for the delivery of an MBA programme in Business and Public Management. This is to be implemented sometime later this year.

The Institute of Distance and Continuing Education (IDCE) has also benefited from Japan through their programme Caribbean Universities Project in Distance Learning (CUPIDE) where at least 15 persons have learnt how to take face-to-face programmes and translate them to e-learning; equipment was also donated as part of this project.

The Organisation of American States (OAS) also funded the Caribbean Knowledge Learning Network (CKLN), where 10 persons are benefiting
from online training in writing e-programmes, administration and technical aspects.

We have also recently implemented EDUSAT, but the material is in Spanish which needs to be translated and edited.

Under our GBET/CIDA collaboration, COL is also expected to soon start work on devising a National Policy for Distance Education in Guyana. GBET presently focuses on training for hinterland teachers.

In doing my research for this assignment, detailed interviews were carried out with the University of Guyana, the Institute of Distance and Continuing Education (IDCE) and National Centre for Education and Resource Development (NCERD).

More specifically, the Hon. Minister emphasized the need for the promotion of Distance Education so necessary because of the vastness of our territory and the differing terrains that challenge the deliver of education at all levels.

**Needs and Priorities**

At the level of implementation (and we have been told to list no more than five priorities), we may mention the following:

- **Technical help with EDUSAT** (translating and editing – Spanish/English)
- A Literacy Coordinator in our quest for improved delivery of Literacy inclusiveness
- Teacher Training for this new mode of delivery, including the development of learning resources to make materials and techniques more user friendly
- Equipment such as TVs and CDs, and solar power in unserved areas
- Bandwidths for specific telecommunication technology
- Vehicles.

**Conclusion**

We are extremely grateful for the assistance we have received todate so far. With the appointment of a Focal Point, after a hiatus of some years, we look forward to the channeling of approved projects in a more cohesive manner, i.e. at the Ministry of Education.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for your attention.
The Meeting of Focal Points for the Caribbean Region
Inge Nathoo (Ms)
Secretary General
UNESCO and the Focal Point (COL) Guyana
Sunset Grande, Ocho Rios
Jamaica
March 10-11, 2008

INTRODUCTION

Guyana’s work with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) over the last three years
– Activities were not as brisk as they should be with such a programme,
– We intend that this situation should improve where Guyana could take full advantage of the very necessary expertise
– We plan to improve the levels of literacy to an acceptable standard for our people
SOME ONGOING INITIATIVES

- A Guyanese is undergoing training on accreditation, equivalencies of qualifications, etc. in Singapore.
- The University of Guyana will be offering later this year a very interesting programme that they have started with COL, i.e. acquiring the license for the delivery of an MBA programme in Business and Public Management.

CONT.

- The Institute of Developing and Continuing Education (IDCE)
  - Benefited from Japan through their program Caribbean Universities Project in Distance Learning (CUPIDE)
  - 15 persons have learnt how to take face-to-face programs and turn them to e-learning
  - Equipment was donated as part of this project.

- The Organisation of American States (OAS)
  - funded Caribbean Knowledge Learning Network (CKLN) 10 persons are benefitting from on-line training in writing e-programs, administration and technical aspects.
- We have also recently implemented EDUSAT
  - the material is in Spanish which needs to be translated and edited.
- Under our GBET/CIDA collaboration
  - COL is also expected to start work on devising a National Policy for Distance Education in Guyana.
  - GBET presently focuses on training for hinterland teachers.

NEEDS and PRIORITIES

Level of implementation
1. Technical help with EDUSAT.
2. A Literacy Coordinator in our quest for improved delivery of Literacy inclusiveness.
3. Teacher training for this new mode of delivery, including the development of learning resources to make materials and techniques more user friendly.
4. Equipment such as TVs and CDs, and solar power in unserved areas.
5. Bandwidths for specific telecommunication technology.
CONCLUSION

• We are extremely grateful for the assistance so far.
• The Ministry of Education looks forward to coordinating approved projects in a more cohesive manner.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you
COUNTRY PRESENTATION: JAMAICA

By: Philbert Dhyll

Jamaica continues to support and benefit from the activities of the Commonwealth of Learning.

Through the Virtual University for Small States Consortium (VUSSC) a number of resource persons have participated in workshops designed for developing materials for:

- Online Distance Learning
- Life Skills Education
- Disaster Management
- Transnatural Qualifications Framework

Participants have been asked to develop a proposed action plan for the dissemination of information and establishing training workshops. Appropriate networking has also been taking place with a view to providing national support for the implementation of programmes.

For example collaboration has already been established with the Caribbean Knowledge Learning Network (CKLN) a regional entity to develop a resource data base so that persons who received training, say in an online tutoring can contribute to the rapid development of distance education in the Caribbean.

Similarly, the Caribbean is developing its own Qualifications framework in Teacher Education and skills learnt through the COL workshops will be useful in guiding our local effort. So too, arising from the workshop on Disaster Management a proposal has been forwarded for Disaster Management courses to be integrated in existing college/university syllabuses. Adaptation of these courses should lead to a reduction in dependency on the national disaster preparedness system.

In the area of teacher training the facilitation of online distance learning through COL to upgrade all teachers to degree status is critical. Jamaica looks forward to working with COL to develop a model of blended teacher training modality for the Consortium in Teacher Education (CITE).

For 2009/12 several other areas of cooperation will continue, the University of Technology, University of the West Indies have all expressed interest in forging greater linkages with COL.
COUNTRY PRESENTATION - ST. KITTS & NEVIS

By: Jacqueline P. Flemming

The Use of Open and Distance Learning in St. Kitts & Nevis

The Use of Online and Distance Learning in St. Kitts and Nevis is mainly promoted through our local College of Further Education and the University Centre - an affiliate of the University of the West Indies.

The College of Further Education has been successful to date in developing its website. It is in its embryonic stage of posting the content for some of its courses online. The posting of the content for all courses offered at this Institution has however not been completed. The College faces the challenges of building capacity to actually post the content and ensuring that this content is converted interestingly enough to maintain/sustain the interest of users. The completion of this project will allow the College to offer a more blended/dual learning opportunity for students.

The Ministry of Education, through its Curriculum Development Unit and donor, is in the process of establishing a structure to teach Spanish online. The infrastructural development such as a Satellite is being put in place to transmit the said training via Cable to all Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Institutions.

The University Centre of the West Indies offers two (2) primary courses to citizens of St. Kitts and Nevis namely, the Bachelor’s of Science in Management Studies and the Bachelor’s of Education in Educational Administration. A maximum of fifty (50) courses are offered of which almost 75% are done through blended learning process/ODL. Teleconference support, online tutoring, tutorial support are available next to printed material and face-to-face interaction. Plans are on stream to fully develop the Open Campus which would allow the Centre to offer more courses. It is anticipated that 90% of the existing courses offered at the Centre will be done online.
Top Priorities for St. Kitts & Nevis

The following have been identified as critical areas for further COL intervention:

1. **Teacher Re-training to Build Capacity**

   There is a need for teachers to be able to integrate IT in the delivery of the curriculum. Skills in the use of IT tools such as the Smart Board, for example, to enhance content delivery would be an asset. The development of a Learning Support System is critical as the Ministry braces to offer a certificate programme to assist teachers with methods for identifying, planning for and working effectively with students who require learning support in the regular education and other classroom environments. Administrators and teachers alike to be exposed to methods which will assist them in dealing with increasing school violence. The Ministry looks forward to continued support for the Special Diploma in TVET.

2. **Higher Education**

   The College of Further Education has identified the need for a more organised administrative structure to promote ODL i.e., a working ODL unit elearning could be integrated in the system.

3. **Training to Enhance Online Learning**

   Weaknesses have been identified in the area of curriculum development for ODL. The consensus is that there is a great need to develop the capacity of individuals (graphic designers, curriculum developers) to convert the existing content to online content in a more interesting way.

4. **Educational Use of Mass Media**

5. **Gender Development**
COUNTRY PRESENTATION: ST. LUCIA

By: Marcus Edward

One of our main challenges as a small vulnerable state is to find ways to guarantee a sustainable level of resources which will ensure access to quality education to promote our competitiveness in this global knowledge economy. The new strategic plan for the Commonwealth of Learning has as its title “Learning for Development” and aptly reflects the challenge in education for St. Lucia and the Caribbean region just mentioned.

The Ministry of Education and Culture in St. Lucia is in the process of developing its five-year strategic plan and will seek to play its part in ensuring the realisation of the outcomes stated in COL’s Three-Year plan. Thus, St. Lucia is looking forward to deeper involvement and participation in COL’s activities in the coming years.

Distance Education

Distance learning and its relationship to emerging computer technologies have together offered many promises to the field of education. Many of the promises of distance learning are financial in nature. Administrators hope that distance learning methods will help make access to education more cost-effective.

The Government of St. Lucia has embraced distance learning modalities as a means of increasing access to education and training opportunities for St. Lucians. Several education and training providers both public and private now make extensive use of distance learning.

Challenges and Concerns

St. Lucia has had a short history of involvement with distance education. However, the experience thus far has revealed that many distance learning programmes fall short of what they attempt to accomplish. Some of the shortcomings are due to problems with the technology; others have more to do with administration, instructional methods, or students themselves. The following highlight some of the key issues and challenges with regard to distance education in St. Lucia.

Absence of Legislation
The growing need for persons to access further education has resulted in the emergence of a number of institutions offering programmes using distance learning modalities. However, those institutions operate in the absence of legislation that would protect students in the event that there is a premature end to the institution’s existence. There seems to be no recourse for students when local institutions which offer distance programmes experience financial difficulties and have to discontinue their services.

Policy and Accreditation
A national system for evaluating and recognising the various programmes and the performance of educational and professional training institutions in St. Lucia should be established to ensure that programmes offered meet set standards in terms of delivery and quality of programmes offered. Issues of consistency, relevance and certification are of paramount importance.

Although there is no policy in place for distance education in St. Lucia, the Ministry of Education has developed a National Accreditation Policy, which would encompass the activities associated with distance learning. The draft National Accreditation Policy has been forwarded to the Attorney General’s Office for ratification.

Areas for Collaboration in Education
The Ministry of Education is astutely aware of COL’s expertise in increasing awareness, building capacity and developing content for eLearning in the education sector. Following are some areas for future collaboration.

- Facilitate collaboration among institutions. In small states where resources are limited it is imperative that institutions collaborate in determining the types of programmes and corresponding certification that are offered and their relevance to the developmental goals and human resource needs of the countries.

- Research in key areas such as male underachievement; violence in schools; student dropout at secondary level; and HIV/AIDS.

- In the absence of a formal policy, there is no restriction on individuals wishing to register for any programme by foreign institutions. However such a policy is urgently needed to assure the credibility of institutions offering distance learning programmes, the integrity of such programmes and the quality and validity of assessment and certification.

- The annual Chief Education Officers (CEOs) meetings are useful for sharing of experiences and good practice among the various countries and should be continued.
• The upgrading of the Sir Lewis Community College to university status is imminent. Concomitant with this should be its transformation from face-to-face mode of delivery to a dual delivery mode incorporating Distance Education. One advantage of the distance learning mode is the ability to increase enrollment without the concomitant high cost of physical infrastructure normally associated with increasing student intake. The rapid diffusion of the Internet and the computer have made it possible to access learning anywhere. This development has engendered new and exciting avenues for learning and made the old technologies of teaching obsolete. Many major universities have some form of distance education or internet based instruction incorporated into the delivery of their programs. They boast of on-line libraries with digitised content. The assistance of COL will be sought to assist the institution in developing its online learning programmes.
COUNTRY PRESENTATION: ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

By: Susan Dougan

The government’s strategy aims to improve social safety nets for the vulnerable to develop the capacity to facilitate poverty eradication initiatives, to empower communities to identify, prepare and implement projects and to encourage greater community participation in promoting national development. At the top of the agenda is education reform for which emphasis is placed on breaking down the barriers of the digital divide.

While there are several lessons learnt from previous ICT development initiatives funded by international donor agencies, it is critical that access and quality underpin basic and tertiary education; thereby providing increased opportunities for adult, technical and vocational education.

The current initiatives of COL in the open distance learning initiatives have served as a model for the development of several programmes in St. Vincent and the Grenadines including those of:

1. Curriculum Development
2. Improvement in Teacher Education
3. Human Resource Development
4. Infrastructural Changes to accommodate delivery of Online Courses.

E-Learning for Sector Development

- The website has been used by teachers to access information in the programmes funded by the Government.
- The information distributed at the Pan Commonwealth Fora is distributed to professionals to enhance ICT activities in institutions.
- Learning and skills for Livelihoods. Plans are well advanced to provide training for TVET teachers using the University of Technology, Jamaica, as the Service Provider.
- Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth – St. Vincent and the Grenadines attended the workshops in Mauritius, Singapore and Trinidad. To date, the activities started include the creation, customization and reuse of the OERs.

Discussions are being held to pursue quality assurance initiatives and cross accreditation of learning programmes.
Quality Assurance

St. Vincent and the Grenadines looks forward to the use of the Pan Commonwealth Quality Assessment Toolkit for Teacher Education. Dean of the Teacher Training Division has attended workshops on Teacher Education.

Teacher Development

The model provided by COL is used extensively in St. Vincent and the Grenadines to build capacity. These programmes used dual modality – Face-to-Face and Distance. The programmes include:

- Training in Literacy via Distance mode for teachers
- Training for secondary principals, Vice Principals and Heads of Departments
- B.Ed. in Educational Management for Principals and Senior Teachers in Primary Schools
- The Remedial Education – Teacher Training Programme
- Training for Teachers in assessment and intervention strategies with technology integration

Open Alternative Schooling

Training is provided for 25 adult educators to teach out-of-school youth using mixed modality.

Top Priorities

1. Training in technology integration for Teachers
2. Use of the EMIS in the Ministry OF Education
3. Implementation of the EDUMAX Virtual Project in Primary Schools
4. Enhancement of programmes at the Community College with emphasis on CKLN and VUSSC.

Support from the Commonwealth of Learning

1. Education for livelihoods – Technical support for setting up a National Training Agency for TVET
2. Technical Assistance/Training for Ministry Officials in the use of EMIS
3. Training for teachers in the integration of technology –CKLN
4. Open Alternative Schooling
5. Higher Education. The Higher Education Act 2007 has been passed through Parliament in preparation for the implementation of systems to deliver programmes by dual modality and to guide the processes of accreditation and training. Assistance is needed to support the Board in setting up the necessary guidelines.
COUNTRY PRESENTATION: TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

By: Lystra Sampson-Ovid and Karen Rosemin

In 2006-2009 COL’s work in Trinidad & Tobago focused particularly on the following priority areas:

1. Supporting the implementation of open schooling;
2. Advising on the development in Higher Education including Teacher Education in COSTAATT and the University of Trinidad and Tobago
3. Coordinating the development of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.

In 2009-2012 Trinidad & Tobago will build on its already strong working links with COL in these areas as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Update on Activities</th>
<th>Proposed activities for T&amp;T 2008-12</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OPEN/ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING</td>
<td>Pursue collaborative activities that can build on synergies between the Pre-university Programme (PUP) of UTT and NOSTT. Continue capacity building activities in the following areas: <strong>Course Writing:</strong> Computer Literacy Training; Continue the writing of self-study modules in 8 academic and 3 tech voc areas (print format). Introduce other subject areas based on demand. <strong>Learner Support:</strong> Expand the number of centres; Train more tutors; Offer online support to tutors and students. <strong>Management of Open Schools:</strong> Establish a NOSTT Advisory Board; Develop NOSTT Policy; Governance training for NOSTT advisory board; Include UTT’s PUP personnel in all training activities for NOSTT. Leveraging technologies to increase access to learning content, provide professional development training for teachers and tutors, learner support services, administration and management and allow for collaboration.</td>
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<td>National Open School of Trinidad and Tobago (NOSTT) officially launched in Sept. 2007. COL assisted with the provision of expertise for:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 1 workshop on Instructional Design for ODL</td>
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<td>• 2 workshops on Self-learning materials development</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 1 workshop on management of Open Schooling.</td>
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<td>31 course writers trained; In-house style guide developed; Topic mapping and lesson development commenced; 8 NOSTT centres established; Learner support services include face-to-face tutoring in centres, the provision of Lesson summaries, Electronic support materials and exam solutions for CXC CSEC Math &amp; English; Study skills and examination tips workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>Update on Activities</td>
<td>Proposed activities for T&amp;T 2008-12</td>
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<td><strong>HIGHER EDUCATION</strong></td>
<td>Facilitate the establishment of a comprehensive, fair, and transparent system of registration or licensing for cross-border tertiary education providers wishing to operate in the country.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• External Providers</td>
<td>Submitted T&amp;T’s Chapter for the study - External Tertiary Education Providers in Anglophone Caribbean. Case Study - Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teacher Education</td>
<td>Build upon the activities that focus on the use of ODL and information and communications technologies (ICT) for teacher development. Proposal for modules of the MATE programme to be adapted and incorporated in UTT’s Education programme. Assist UTT and COSTAATT with implementing their strategic plans for Distance Education/blended learning, in particular training faculty to transition courses for ODL delivery and the provision of the requisite administrative and support structures to support a sustainable system that guarantees learner success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quality Assurance</td>
<td>Encouraging the development of a comprehensive capacity for reliable quality assurance and accreditation of ODL and cross-border higher education provision with key area being:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Quality Assurance Toolkit for Teacher Education Institutions delivered to UTT and the Ministry of Education Teacher Development Unit. | • QA for ODL programmes  
• QA for e-learning projects  
• QA for dedicated ODL institutions and dual mode institutions  
• QA for Online Resources  
• Accreditation of ODL programmes. |
| The Quality Assurance Micro-Site made available from COL’s website was promoted to the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT). | Continue collaboration towards the implementation of the TNQF and its alignment with our NQF |
| Meeting of Senior Officials of National Qualifications Networks (NQFs) 25<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2008, Dr. Ruby Alleyne, Executive Director of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) attended. | Propose that COL assist in facilitating national communities of practice for policy makers/ administrators in education/teacher education in quality assurance in teacher education, which |
## Update on Activities

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Proposed activities for T&amp;T 2008-12</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>will be connected to a regional institute.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adopting and utilising of quality standards by Teacher Education Institutions.</td>
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### VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH


### Content Development

- Workshop for using Wiki-educator and eXe conducted for local subject matter experts in the Hospitality and Tourism community – 2006
- Workshop for using Wiki-educator and eXe conducted for local subject matter experts in Education.
- Interactive Electronic Role Play Game (Pilot) - Destiny X developed for the Life Skills community - 2007
- Life Skills Online - Development team of Life Skills Tutors working on using freely available collaborative and communication tools on the Web (e.g. vox.com) to develop online lesson plans in Financial Management – 2008

- All Boot Campers to impart their experiences to local communities through on-going workshops and communities of practice in their various disciplines.

- Learning Object Repositories (LORs) to be created for each discipline, for materials developed from workshops and other development activities

- Production of the entire series of Destiny X.

### Life Skills Online

- Proposal for the Online Financial Management Module to collaborate with the Financial Literacy Programme of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago for wider public consumption.

- Development of Online Modules for all Life Skills Curriculum Units.

- COL to assist in negotiating a three
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Update on Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>month technical attachment of T&amp;T content developers with Mindset South Africa for the purpose of understudying procedure and operations for a Content Development Agency. Training in Knowledge Management and the development and management of LOR’s.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ODL POLICY AND SECTOR IMPLEMENTATION</strong></td>
<td>National consultation on a Draft ODL Policy for Higher Education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>COL assisted with the provision of expertise for developing a Policy Framework for ODL in T&amp;T, Feb. 2008</td>
<td>ODL policy framework informs the development of ‘specific’ ODL policies e.g. TVET, ODL in Education etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Learning and Skills For Livelihoods.</strong></td>
<td>ODL Policy for TVET to be developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COL assisted with the provision of expertise for: TVET Stakeholders meeting in 2007; The formation of a TVET educators association 2008; Defined TVET needs within a wider ODL policy framework in 2008; Discussions with the Ministry of Local Government for occupational training project for daily paid workers in 2008</td>
<td>COL to assist in a capability building initiative with the Ministry of Local Government to source and develop programmes and courses, develop and manage a system for transitioning nationals dependent on “unemployment relief programmes” to become self-reliant and equipped for re-entry into the labour force. Assistance with sourcing and developing a comprehensive ICT training programme for all categories of staff at the Ministry of Education.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>• Gender And Development</strong></td>
<td>COL to assist with the development of policies and programmes to address the needs of underachievers -especially boys, inner city communities and those in rural communities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>• Health, Welfare and Community Dev.</strong></td>
<td>COL to assist the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC) in the introduction of online training and professional development programme for Medical Laboratory Technicians across the region. COSTAATT to be one of the region’s Centres of Excellence for the programme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Update on Activities</td>
<td>Proposed activities for T&amp;T 2008-12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Good Governance</strong></td>
<td>UTT to continue dialogue with CYP with a view to customizing materials. Market this programme to the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs and support the delivery by blended mode.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTT developed links with CYP Caribbean Centre and participated in a train the trainer workshop.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Use Of Mass Media and ICTs</strong></td>
<td>COL to broaden consultation to the installation of broadband connectivity across Trinidad and Tobago for a National Knowledge and Learning Network to Tobago and the development of an Education TV Channel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary discussion regarding the development of a strategic plan for SchoolNet TT</td>
<td>COL assistance with the development of SchoolNet TT strategic plan and sourcing a management and implementation consultancy from a mature SchoolNet jurisdiction to provide support for at least six months.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trinidad and Tobago is a productive, innovative nation comprising of well educated people in which every citizen has equal opportunities to achieve his/her fullest potential. All citizens are assured of a sound, relevant education system tailored to meet the Human Resource needs of a modern, progressive, technologically advancing nation.

Priority Areas 2006-2009

Open/Alternative Schooling
1. Implementing open schooling

Higher Education
1. External Providers
2. Teacher Education
3. Quality Assurance

VUSSC
3. Boot Camps
4. Content Development

ODL Policy Development and Implementation
5. Drafting National Policy
6. Learning and Skills for Livelihoods

3. Gender and Development
4. Health, Welfare and Community Development
5. Good Governance
6. Educational Use of Mass Media and ICTs
PA1: Open Schooling

Accomplishments
- Official launch in Sept. 2007
- 500 learners enrolled
- 31 course writers trained; in-house style guide developed; topic mapping and lesson development commenced; 8 centres established; Learner support services include face-to-face tutoring, lesson summaries, electronic support materials and exam solutions for CXC CSEC Math & English; Study skills and examination preparation workshops.

Areas for COL’s Assistance
- Governance training for NOSTT management teams
- Support for multimedia content development
- Development of a learner support management system
- Creative use of social technologies to support learning
- Information/Knowledge Management Systems
- Hosting a Regional Open Learning/Schooling forum
- Attachments to mature Open School jurisdictions to support system development.

PA2: Higher Education

Accomplishments
- Participated in External Tertiary Education Providers Study
- Courseware development workshops – UTT and COSTAATT
- Quality Assurance Toolkit for Teacher Education
- Meeting of Senior Officials of National Qualifications Networks

Areas for COL’s Assistance
- Study on appropriate registration and licensing systems for external providers
- Customize the MATE Programme for adoption of relevant modules by UTT
- Development of systems to support the deployment of the MATE programme
- Capacity building for QA and Accreditation systems for ODL
- Facilitating communities of practice for policy makers/administrators in QA in Caribbean region
PA3: VUSSC

Accomplishments
- Tourism and Hospitality' and
  'Small Business Management'
- Ms. Elia Grant-Fraser, "Training
  Educators to Design and
  Develop ODL Materials".
- Mr. Ainsworth Ovid, UTT, "Life Skills"
- Ms. Ceronne Prevatt-Wiltshire, MSTTE, "Disaster Preparedness".
- Mr. John Sylvester, Ciprani
  College of Labour and
  Cooperative Studies, "The
  Fishing Industries".
- Ms. Tullia
  Ible of the Caribbean Fisheries

- Workshops for using Wiki-
  educator and eXe
- Interactive Electronic Role Play
  Game (Play) - Destiny X
- Life Skills Online - Development
  team of Life Skills Tutors working
  on using freely available
  collaborative and communication
  tools on the Web

PA3: VUSSC

Areas for COL’s Assistance
- Development of course materials,
  short courses and certificate
  programmes for all subject matter
  areas developed in BC
- Development of Learning Objects
  Repositories
- Continued production of the
  interactive RPG – Destiny X
- Technical attachment for content
  development at Mindset South
  Africa

PA4: ODL Policy and Implementation

- Draft ODL Policy
- ODL Policy for TVET
- Gender and Development
- Health, Welfare and
  Community Development
- Good Governance
- Educational Use of
  Mass Media and ICTs

- Policy Framework workshop
- TVET stakeholders meeting for
  upgrading TVET teachers
- Framework for TVET educators
  association
- Discussions with Ministry of Local
  Government for a Literacy and
  Livelihoods intervention
- UTT participated in a "Train the
  Trainer" programmes for
  implementing the Commonwealth
  Youth Programme (CYP)
- Collaboration on the development of
  a TOR for SchoolNet TT

PA4: ODL Policy and Implementation

- Areas for COL’s Assistance
- Online delivery of training
  programmes for Medical Laboratory
  Technicians – CARECO/ODL/TAATT
- ODL facilitated ICT training for all
  categories of staff at MOE
PA4: ODL Policy and Implementation

• Areas for COL’s Assistance
  • UTT to establish system to customize CYP materials/adopt/deliver programme
  • Collaboration on study tours of International Research Networks to support the deployment of a National Knowledge and Learning Network
  • Collaboration on the innovative deployment of Education TV and Radio

PA4: ODL Policy and Implementation

• Areas for COL’s Assistance
  • SchoolNet strategic and implementation plan and sourcing a management and implementation consultancy from a mature SchoolNet jurisdiction to provide support for at least six months.
  • Capacity building for all categories of staff—Masters and PhD fellowships

Thank You

• Karen Rosenin
• Lystra Sampson-Ovid
Meeting of Caribbean Focal Points
10-11 March 2008
Ocho Rios, Jamaica

SERVING YOU BETTER
Preparing COL’s Plan for 2009-12

The Planning Schedule
Focal Point Meetings:
* Caribbean (Jamaica)       March 2008
* Africa (Malawi)           May 2008
* Asia/Pacific              Autumn 2008
* ComSec, etc.              Autumn 2008

COL Board:
* Planning session         June 2008
* Approval                 June 2009

17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, Malaysia, June 2009
The Commonwealth of Learning

WHAT IS IT?
• Intergovernmental
• CHOGM 1987 - Vancouver
• Voluntary $$$ C’w countries (up from 27 to 37)

WHO IS IT?
• Commonwealth-wide Board
• 40 staff in Vancouver and New Delhi
• Networks across Commonwealth
• Country focal points

PURPOSE
To help Commonwealth governments and institutions use various technologies to improve and expand education, training and learning in support of development

WHY LEARNING TECHNOLOGY?
• Economies of scale
• Geographical reach
• Flexible and cost-effective
Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

The Commonwealth of Learning

FUNDING?

Major donors (Board Members ex officio)
Canada
India
New Zealand
Nigeria
South Africa
United Kingdom

The Commonwealth of Learning

FUNDING?

Contributions in 2006-09 from 32 other Commonwealth Governments
THANK YOU!

The Commonwealth of Learning

Three-year Plan 2006-09
The Commonwealth of Learning

**CONTEXT**

**2006-09**

- a young world
- a diverse developing world
- spreading technology
- an unfinished agenda

The Commonwealth of Learning

**FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMONWEALTH**

- Sustainable livelihoods = *key development challenge*
- HIV/AIDS = *development disaster*
- Education/training of women = *governments’ priority*
- Digital divide = *concern at CHOGM*
The Commonwealth of Learning

EVALUATION

- Fewer programmes for longer
- Link to government priorities
- Programme focus: not projects
- Partnerships

The Commonwealth of Learning

Three-year Plan 2006-09

UN Millennium Development Goals

Education for All
(The Dakar Goals)

Peace
Democracy
Equality
Good governance
The Commonwealth of Learning

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

- Gender and Development
- Health, Welfare and Community Development
- Environmental Education
- Good Governance
- Educational use of Mass Media and ICTs

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Focal points in countries
- Country Reports (2003-06)
- Country Action Plans (2006-09)

FOCAL POINTS

- Feedback to COL
- Align with national priorities
- Coordinate between Ministries
- Information exchange

WHAT YOU GET FROM COL:

- COL works for you
- Expertise in learning + technology
- South-south collaboration
- Development without donors
- Successful and transferable models
The Commonwealth of Learning

WHAT COL ASKS OF YOU:
• Dialogue about your priorities
• Identify common regional issues
• Get involved (e.g. in VUSSC)

THANK YOU
Vision and Mission

The purpose of COL is:

‘...to create and widen access to opportunities for learning, making use of the potential offered by distance education and by the application of communication technologies to education. COL’s activities will strengthen member countries’ capacities to develop the human resources ....’

MOU, 1988, amended 1995

This Meeting

• Vision and Mission?
• Our niche?
• Which development goals?
• How will we do it?
• Possible strategy/countries?
COL’s Vision statements

- Mid-1990’s: “Access to education means access to a better future.”
- 2001: “Access to education - Access to a better future”
- 2006: “Access to learning is the key to development”.

Our niche?

The evolution of DE

- Correspondence edn
- Distance edn
- Open Learning
- Blended and flexible learning
- Convergence of f2f and ODL

What is the relevance of ODL/COL today?
ODL: the evolving situation

1988: 600 publicly funded DE facilities globally: 1 million students
2000: 1,133 DE ventures globally; 3 million students
2008: 140 publicly funded institutions serving 6.6 million students in India alone

Which development goals?

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
EFA Goals

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.

4. Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Commonwealth priorities

- Peace
- Democracy
- Good governance

Develop our own Pgm/bring ODL expertise to partners?
How will we do it?

Mission
To help governments, institutions and organisations to use ODL strategies to:
• Increase access to learning
• Enhance the quality of content and the teaching-learning process
• Build capacity for better systems and the effective use of resources

Towards corporate outcomes?
• Carry forward from current TYP
• Feedback from M&E
• Feedback from Focal points and other stakeholders
• Global trends

The global context
• 1 billion people live on less than $1 a day
• 2 billion teenagers in developing world (65 million in the CW)
• By 2020, 40% of the global workforce will be knowledge workers, with a need for tertiary qualifications
The Global Context

- 18 million additional teachers globally
- Less than 20% who complete primary get to secondary schools

Emerging Hosts & Sources

- Middle East/North Africa: 2,000 - 7,000, 250%
- East Asia Pacific: 14,000 - 39,000, 175%
- South Asia/West Asia: 6,000 - 15,000, 150%
- Latin America/Caribbean: 7,000 - 15,000, 114%
- Central/East Europe: 10,000 - 19,000, 90%
- Developing World: 36,000 - 64,000, 144%

Source: OBHE, UK
Gross Enrollment Ratios in Secondary Education (2004 or latest)

Access to Internet

Access to phones

Emerging trends


Source: Adapted from World Bank, Information and Communications for Development, Global Trends and Policies (World Bank, Washington, DC, 2006), p.6

Number of telephone subscriptions and internet connections per 100 population, 1999-2005 (Percentage)
CUPIDE Evaluation: recommendations

• to develop on-line/blended in-service teacher training courses to address urgent shortage of trained teachers in Guyana, Suriname, Haiti
• support for establishment of quality assurance standards/accreditation for on-line/blended courses in region

Tertiary level institutions (excluding universities) in the Commonwealth Caribbean in 2001

- Trinidad and Tobago 60
- Jamaica 38
- Guyana 11
- Belize 7
- Barbados 5
- Dominica 3
- Antigua & Barbuda 2
- Bahamas 2
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines 2
- Grenada 1
- St. Kitts-Nevis 1
- St. Lucia 1


Education Sector: Outcomes

• Increasing access to learning, improving learning quality, and increasing productivity in the formal education systems.

Education Sector

• Teacher Development
• Open/Alternative Schooling
• Higher Education
• OER’s?
Learning for Livelihoods: Outcomes

• Enabling access to education and training for target communities to increase their level of livelihood

Learning for Livelihoods

• Learning and Skills for Livelihoods
• Rural and Peri-Urban Community Development
• Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Human Environment: Outcomes

• Enable access to training and information for communities to improve the health of individuals, address issues of climate change and to promote good governance.

Human Environment

• Health Welfare and Community Development
• Environmental Education
• Good Governance
Special Initiatives: Outcomes

- To strengthen regional and international partnerships and to develop individual and institutional capacity by using ODL and ICT enhanced methods.

COL Special Initiatives

- Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia
- eLearning for International Organisations
- RETRIDOL (West Africa)
- SADC-CDE (Southern Africa)

Crosscutting Themes: outcomes

- The achievement of gender equity across all activities.
- Closing the digital divide
- The development of Open Education Resources (OER’s).

Cross Cutting Themes

- eLearning for formal and non-formal learning
- Educational use of mass media and ICTs
- Gender
2009-12: Focus on

- Clusters of countries based on shared development priorities
- Innovations
- Scalable models
- South-south and north-south collaborations

Least Developed Countries (LDC’s)

- Bangladesh; Gambia; Kiribati; Lesotho; Malawi; Maldives; Mozambique; Samoa; Sierra Leone; Solomon Islands; Tuvalu; Uganda; Tanzania; Vanuatu; Zambia

CW Fragile States

- Cameroon, The Gambia, Guyana; Kenya; Kiribati; Nigeria; Papua New Guinea; Sierra Leone; Solomon Islands; Tonga; Vanuatu

DFID, 2005
Thank You
Meeting of the COL Focal Points in Caribbean, 10-11 March 2008

Mohan Menon

Learning for Development
EDUCATION

LEARNING FOR LIVELIHOODS

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

- Policy
- Systems
- Models
- Materials

EDUCATION SECTOR

Education Sector

Sub-sectors:
- School /Teacher Development
- Open/Alternative Schooling
- Higher Education

Cross-cutting areas:
- Quality Assurance
- E-Learning
School and Teacher Development

School/Teacher Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COL's Work Outcomes</th>
<th>Policy Support</th>
<th>Capacity Building</th>
<th>Network/Consortia</th>
<th>Materials Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased Access &amp; Equity/Opportunities</td>
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<td>Enhanced Quality</td>
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OPEN and ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING

Open Schooling – What Is It?
Open Schooling is the delivery of school level education through flexible techniques and methodologies, including distance education and appropriate information and communications technologies.

Open Schooling: Whom does it reach out to?
- Out of school children
- Working adults
- Women and girls with responsibilities at home
- Individuals with physical disabilities
- Vulnerable children and youth
- Refugees
- Rural and urban poor
- Those that live where there are not enough places in conventional schools

Emerging model of Open Schooling
➢ To study selected open schools to get more evidence on the success and cost-effectiveness of this model
Quality Education through Open Schooling

- Quality self-learning materials
- A learner support system which facilitates communications between learners and the OS system (including prompt return of marked assignments, tutorial support, counselling/guidance, etc.).
- Reliable, accessible delivery and management systems.
- Personnel trained in O/DL management.
- Well trained course tutors and facilitators at study centres.
- Use of appropriate technology

Higher Education
Higher Education

• National Policy Forums
• Building capacity for HE by ODL
• Strengthening ODL systems
• Supporting open universities and dual mode institutions
• Partnerships and training materials
• Auditing and Quality Assurance
• E-learning for HE and OER

Education Sector: Specific Areas of work

Strategic Principles followed

• Policy dialogues: Regional/National Forums
• Longer engagement with partners
• Link to global and government priorities
• Programme focus rather than projects
• Situated Capacity Building
• Partnerships and Consortia
• South-South cooperation
• Pan-Commonwealth generic materials

Policy Support

- Advocacy
- Orienting policy makers/administrators
- Advice for Policy formulation
- Facilitating Strategy Development
Capacity Building

- Self-learning material development
- Institutional restructuring towards dual-mode
- Improve the learner support system
- Augment the audio-video production facility
- Training for developing e-content
Partnerships/Consortia

- Networking of countries/institutions
- Facilitating and participating in consortia
- Pan-Commonwealth networking
- Regional Consortia
- Twinning and institutional partnerships

Materials Development

- Course materials
- Resource Materials
- Joint course development
- Sharing of materials

Cross-cutting areas:
Quality Assurance
Quality Assurance

Higher Education

• To assess the state of quality assurance mechanisms in universities with a view to preparing for external institutional audit and undertaking specific and general institutional reforms/improvements.
• To investigate the state of cross-border education and country-specific policy and educational choices

School Education

• Explore the concept of Gender Friendly Schooling and School Environment
• Developing Process Indicators for Gender Friendly Schools

Teacher Education

• Quality Assurance Tool-kit for Teacher Education Institutions (QATTEI) comprising:
  – Introductory Module to Quality Assurance
  – QA Indicators
  – Best Practices
• Orienting Policy Makers and Senior Administrators in QA for Teacher Education
Cross-cutting areas: E-Learning

- Building e-learning capacity
- Wikieducator Platform for networking
- e-content development though community participation
- Open Education Resources
- Online courses
- Evolving innovative learning designs for e-learning

Looking Forward
Highlights from the country presentations

- Use Quality assurance Tool-kit for TE
- Quality Assurance in DE
- Facilitating/strengthening Open schooling for post basic education
- Expansion of TVET
- Capacity for ODL based teacher training
- Training for special education and guidance and counseling
- CEMBA/CEMPA adaptation
- Networking for teacher development and schooling

- Need for Regional Teacher Qualification Framework
- ICT and e-learning for school and higher education
- School indiscipline- what could be done? Training of teachers
- Alternative Teacher strategies
- Computers for children- issue of programming
- e-Learning and e-Content development
- Teacher retraining in use of ICT

Discussion in Small Groups

- Identify 2-3 priority activities for COL cooperation during the new plan period (2009-12).
- Identify at least one activity which could be carried out during the plan period (3 years) jointly involving institutions from two or more countries and also suggest the modalities of work.
- Identify 1 or 2 areas in which there is possibility of adapting models/materials developed in other countries.
thank-you
Welcome to COL Focal Points

- Antigua & Barbuda
- The Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Dominica
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Jamaica
- St. Kitts & Nevis
- St. Lucia
- St. Vincent & Grenadines
- Trinidad & Tobago

Learning for Livelihoods - L4L

1. Learning & Skills - TVET (Joshua Mallet)
2. Rural & Peri-urban - National /International “agriculture” (Krishna Alluri)
3. VUSSC (Paul West)
4. eLearning / International (Angela Kwan)

L4L Outline

- Livelihood issues in the Caribbean
- Livelihoods - TVET (Technical)
- eLearning - international
- Livelihoods - “Agriculture” (forestry, fisheries, animal sciences)
- Current approaches
- New approaches
- Requests to the Focal Points

Learning & Skills for Livelihoods (TVET) - Joshua Mallet
Learning and Skills for Livelihoods

With existing and new partners:

- raise awareness for the formulation of ODL policy and the framework for institutional and national policies;
- train in curriculum development;
- write study materials for basic livelihoods.

Learning & Skills - TVET

Jamaica: UTech - COL Special Diploma in TVET for the region.

- Bahamas: 1st cohort in 2005 (Sir John)
- St. Kitts/Nevis: 1st cohort in 2006 (Joshua)
- Grenada: 1st group of learners (25 teachers) (graduation Nov; 2nd group in 2008)

T&T: To develop a national ODL policy

- Technical Vocational Educators’ Association.
- The Ministry of Local Government wants COL support in TVET & Adult literacy

(Open Education Resources - WikiEducator)

Key Partners and Countries

COUNTRIES (25): Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, The Gambia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Samoa, New Zealand

Caribbean: Jamaica, Trinity & Tobago, Grenada, St. Kitts & Nevis (VUSSC)

PARTNERS: Africa: ECOWAS commission; Ministries of Education, of Health; universities; polytechnics; MQA; CAPA; ADB

- Asia: DAM; TNOU; ABES; AIOU; NIOS.
- Pacific: PATVET; NUS
- Caribbean: Ministries of Education and Education institutions of technology

REGIONAL / INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS:

- UNEVOC; UNESCO Paris; AMREF

Levelling the Learning Field

eLearning in international organisations

Angela Kwan
The initiative is making very good progress with new partnerships formed and increasing numbers of learners being taught.

COL’s focus is on high quality courses, supported by efficient tutor back-up, and for tailoring the product to the needs of an organisation.

What do we do?

- **Design** eLearning courses
- **Develop** content through customization
- **Deliver** courses through a cross-border virtual classroom

eLearning happens through...

- Supporting tutors
  - Training, Professional Development, Monitoring
- Supporting learners
  - Welcome package - Key dates, FAQ, Rules and Regulations
- One-on-one tutoring support
Our partners include:

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- The World Bank
- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- The Office of Internal Oversight Services, United Nations (OIOS)
- United Nations Children’s Fund, India (UNICEF)

eLearning in the Caribbean

Increasing eLearning in the Caribbean region by adapting the World Bank online Writing Programme in partnership with the Inter American Development Bank (IADB).

Rural & Peri-urban Community
(Life long learning for Farmers - L3F)
National & International Organisations

COL- PROTEIN: for innovations

National & International Organisations

COL partners with national, regional & international agriculture organisations.
- Internationally, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO), Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)
- Caribbean partners include, MOE, MOA, CARICOM, CARDI, CCCCC, UWI, CBWMP, Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and Jamaica (RADA, CARDI, ICT4D and newly, School of Agriculture)
Rural & Peri-urban & Institutions

Jamaica: L3 Farmers
UWI: Online courses in agriculture
Guyana: Broiler course
COLME - Agriculture initiatives
Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts/Nevis, Trinidad & Tobago
Caribbean Water Management Programme Inc. (CBWMP Inc.) - COL initially assisted in their Regional eLearning course

(Open Education Resources - WikiEducator)

Life long learning for Farmers (L3F)

- INDIA: Initiated, fine tuned, expanded
- SRI LANKA: 5 Universities and policy makers have committed to take up at a national level
- JAMAICA, KENYA, NIGERIA & PNG Introduced / adapted and to be validated.

Conventional agricultural extension

- Public sector supported extension
- Face to Face and broadcast based
- Singular focus on production technologies and problem solving
- Not harmonised or integrated among actors
- Use of ICTs minimal with poor integration of information and information

L3F: Major ODL/ICT Challenges

Conventional ODL initiatives for Formal education tend to be:
- supply and institution driven
- push based from the providers
- discrete use of ODL & ICT (DE materials, Online courses)
- provide institutional calendar based scheduled courses
- courses, diplomas, degrees etc. that are accredited
- project based (developing policy, course, capacity)
L3F: New ODL/ICT Opportunities

NFE for community learning (L3F) aims at:
- community demand driven (Programme)
- pull based from the learners (communities)
- just in time, context-based learning
- ODL/ICT may be intangible and discontinuous (video mails, mobile, FAQs)
- innovative use of multiple and mixed ICTs with F2F interventions
- consortia with win – win – win arrangement for all the partners.

Lessons Learned

Conventional production technology based agriculture is not likely to be viable in the Caribbean
There is a need to consider linking agriculture with the Caribbean life wire - tourism industry and the market

Proposal to continue the approach for

- For initiatives on ODL/ICT policy, systems, and institution based formal education for outputs on curriculum, learning materials, accredited courses etc., COL will continue current approach.
- For L4L, this approach is relevant to TVET, agriculture, eLearning for international organisations and VUSSC.

Proposed New Approaches

- Farmer Organizations and Community based organizations taking lead
- Providing demand led, just in time information which is through F2F, uni-casted, multi-casted and broadcasted
- Pluralistic approaches to enable farmers and producers reach their farming goals; example food security, nutritional and market participation: providing options to farmers instead of one shoe size fits all
Proposed New Approaches

- Collaboration and integration through partnerships between all actors and stakeholders at community, country and regional level to improve effectiveness and efficiency
- Investment in learning opportunities through public-private-community win-win partnerships and consortia to ensure sustainability

Proposed New Approaches

- Coherence in information generation and equity in access ensured through community ownership of information and learning systems
- Use of ICTs optimized for meeting needs. Mixed media approaches using Cellular telephony, computers, Internet, Audio and Video, Print and F2F channels
- Youth to be involved as information and knowledge intermediaries

Farmers in Jeffrey Town, Jamaica

- Motivated farmers; some returned from UK
- Believe in using ICT for farmers’ education
- Willing to enter in to market agriculture
- Willing to borrow loans
- Community learning centre with computers - the Internet, community radio exists

Need Inputs to
- Soil, crop, environment mapping
- Improved group governance
- Developing win - win - win partnership
- Involve youth and link tourism and market
- Innovations in ICT

(Dominica expressed interest in L3F)
Expected Role of Nodal Focal Points

- Champion Learning for Livelihoods in region, country and community levels
- Play a central role in creating awareness, advocacy and sensitization for L4L
- Contribute technically to learning consortia
- Create a regional network of NFP and linking with national ministries and other partners for sharing information, knowledge, skills and technology on L4L
- Link with COL and other actors to propagate L4L in the region

Looking to the next 3-year plan

Questions:
- Suggest your priority areas for which, you wish COL to partner
- Among the above, suggest at least one new activity that could be initiated during next year and completed in 3 years.
- Suggest areas in which ODL materials and models (L3F) could be adapted / developed

Initiatives for consideration in small groups:
1. Livelihoods - TVET
2. Livelihoods - Agriculture
3. eLearning - international

Thank-you All Very Much

GROUP 2

1. Priorities: Programmes to engage Youth; agriculture, tourism, counselling, guidance, livelihoods, with emphasis on entrepreneurship
Document successful experiences / case studies; e.g., OASIS; STEP (short-time employment programme) and share
2. New Areas: Parenting education; fostering parents-teacher partnership to help children
3. Replicate L3F Potentially in St. Lucia, St. Vincent; diversification of agriculture and also within the banana industry.
GROUP 3

1. Priority areas: Certified TVET programmes (Level 1, 2, 3) need to be well aligned (also in agriculture) with practical competency based skills; competency based cohesive programmes (CARICOM) TVET certificate programmes that is well integrated could be used; integrating literacy and numeracy;

2. Link with private sector / industry. COL could help conduct a review of best practices, including Guidance and counseling (Boys on the block)

3. Models & materials: Hotel industry to be linked with local production (Bahamas); cottage industry; TVET programmes. HEART programmes is a good model.

GROUP 1

1. Priority Areas: TVET (autotronics repairs; agriculture for small enterprise development, alternative farming methods, public awareness and career focus. Wellness - ideal diet (nutrition, organic agriculture, niche farming)

2. Support in training in innovative initiative, new and modern techniques; extension officers proponents for change;

3. Course adaptation and development in Marketing strategies, packaging, production, work ethics.
Human Environment Sector Review

Caribbean Focal Points Meeting
10-11 March 2008, Jamaica

- Learning for development, Commonwealth values
- Community development context
- Non-formal learning
  - Sustainable community development
  - Health, especially HIV/AIDS
  - Governance
  - Environment
  - Links to livelihoods
- Cross-cutting themes and tools
  - Media/ICT: governance, L3F, open/alternative schooling
  - Gender: internal and external

Human Environment Sector Initiatives

1. Gender and Development - Tanyss Munro
2. Health and Community Development - Ian Pringle
3. Environmental Education - Krishna Alluri
4. Good Governance - Tanyss Munro
5. Educational use of mass media & ICT - Ian Pringle

HE.1 - Gender and Development

- Approach
  - Internal and external focus
  - Cross-cutting other sectors and initiatives

- Focus Areas
  - Research for gender mainstreaming approaches
  - Policy input
  - Development of programme tools
HE.1 Gender and Development

- **Achievements**
  - COL gender policy developed
  - Women and Science radio series
  - Gender Keys tool
  - Research on gender mainstreaming approaches in public service in 4 African countries
  - Boys Underachievement publication

- **Challenges**
  - New initiative
  - Volume and depth of the requirement

HE.2 and HE.5 - Media empowerment

- **Approach**
  - Enabling production of learning content by learning agents: teachers, extension officers, health workers
  - Training: on-site, situational
  - Appropriate technology solution
    - Simple, adaptable, high-quality
    - Cost effective
    - Multimedia: radio, TV, print, online

- **Focus areas**
  - Community development
  - Agriculture
  - Education
  - Health, especially HIV/AIDS

HE.2 and HE.5 - Media empowerment

- **Global achievements: outputs**
  - Media empowerment activities in 31 countries
  - 40 media unit activities in the last ten years; 19 media units established since 2006
  - Cadre of trained personnel in all regions
  - Tangible increase in local content relevant to focus areas

HE.2 and HE.5 - Media empowerment

- **Scope in the Caribbean**
  - Countries (10): Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago
  - 13 media unit activities; 8 established since 2006
  - Focus on television, radio production
  - FM radio broadcasting
  - Partners: ministries, colleges, NGOs
HE.2 and HE.5 - Media empowerment

• Global achievements: outcomes
  - Specific, effective model demonstrated for content production
  - Relevance to grassroots learning and community development, e.g. health, livelihoods
  - Taken-up by government and civil society
  - Indications of impact, e.g. HIV in The Gambia

• Global challenges
  - Human resource investment
  - Ongoing capacity building, especially advanced skills, and systematisation
  - User/client-centred approach
  - Systems for integrated network approach to production and distribution of content
  - Scaling up, especially in resource poor areas
  - Sharing and networking, especially regional
  - Research and documentation

HE.3 Environmental Education

• Approach
  - Relation to livelihoods
  - Formal education: schools and institutions

• Focus
  - Climate change for communities
  - School children and teachers
  - Professionals in environment and engineering: air pollution, underground water managements, solid waste management, environmental management

• Achievements
  - Continuing professional education for environmentalists, engineers and managers in public, private and CBOs
  - Environment education for school students and school teachers (Green Teacher, in print and online)

• Challenges
  - Explore interests in the Caribbean
  - Innovations for linking climate change, community learning and livelihoods
HE.4 - Good Governance

Focus and approach
- Institutional governance: Ministries of Education, Educational Institutions, NGOs
- Local governance: municipalities and community-based organisations

Achievements
- Activities underway in 3 regions and in development in the Caribbean
- Identification of international partners

Challenges
- New initiative
- Identifying implementing partners

Ideas from the consultative meeting on media/ICT and livelihoods, 5-7 March 2008, Jamaica

Changing the knowledge building process
- From one-way, one-to-many systems to interactive, multimedia networks
- From technology-centred, supply-led to need-based, community-led approaches
- Drawing info from a range of networked providers
- Networking content producers and information providers: local, national, regional
- Producing content for a range of media, e.g. mobiles, local radio and telecentres, national TV and online portals

Building capacities for effective content
- New programme strategies: multistakeholder, focused on learning
- Designing effective learning programmes for media and local ICT centres and networks
- Using new applications: social networking, wikis, repositories

Priority areas
- Agricultural livelihoods; farmers groups
- Other livelihoods, fisheries, tourism
- Community facilities and community-based groups
- Youth-at-risk
Looking to the next 3-year plan

Questions concerning learning for development:

1. What are the most urgent development issues in your countries that you think HE could address? List 5...
2. Choose one, and discuss how gender factors in? Come back with 2-3 points...
3. Choose a different one, and identify what ministries, departments or groups would you need to get involved?
4. Choose one and discuss what role for media and other ICTs to foster some innovation?

Points from small group discussion 1/4

Key issues identified for Caribbean communities:

- Wellness revolution / Food and nutrition
- Community leadership - governance
- HIV/AIDS
- Environmental education
- Women’s entrepreneurship in rural communities
- Illegal drugs
- Violence and crime
- Diabetes and hypertension
- Disaster management
- Patriotism and democracy

Points from small group discussion 2/4

Gender considerations for selected issues in the Caribbean:

- Community leadership
  - Less women or men take up leadership; there is always an imbalance
  - Strive for gender equality/balance
  - Sensitive to impact of training and how it affects the status quo
- Illegal drugs, alcoholism
  - Peer pressure
  - Imbalance of males in schools, male drop outs, early pregnancy
  - Aids/HIV
  - Crime and incarceration; social pressure
- Disaster management
  - Women are the most prepared
  - Focus on women for preparedness
  - Women will go out and mobilize afterwards
  - Women will be the most vulnerable; may need most assistance afterwards
  - Women’s livelihoods are affected

Points from small group discussion 3/4

Identifying key stakeholders for specific issues:

- Wellness
  - Ministry of Health, Agriculture, Technology, Education
- Violence
  - Ministry of Home Affairs, National Security
  - NGOs
  - Ministry of Social and Human Services
  - Churches
  - Parents (real home affairs)
- Abuse
  - Department of Social Development
  - NGOs (especially with hotlines)
  - Youth group
  - Kids on the block
  - Police
  - Church
Points from small group discussion 4/4

Media/ICT applications for innovation in selected areas:

- Environmental education
  - Convergence technologies
    - Radio
    - Websites
    - Mobiles: SMS
  - Awareness
  - In the context of disaster preparedness
  - Broadcast (radio, TV, SMS) and print to sensitize the public
  - Empowerment and sustainability

- Open schools
  - Media take a lead in production
  - The Bahamas Learning Channel is a good practice
  - Producing materials to support education
  - Making low cost solar/wind-up FM radios ($10) available to learners
  - Using learning centres to expand access to digital content, in real time and archived
  - Talk radio dealing with issues of education; it promotes democracy; voice

Thank you for your time and your contributions
The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

Focal Points Meeting

Caribbean

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

Transnational Qualifications Framework

Singapore

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

Fisheries

Seychelles
The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth
Planning Meeting in Seychelles – March 2003

Joining forces to support
the Small States

Course development workshops (“Boot camps”)
- Tourism & Entrepreneurship
- Professional Development of Educators
- Life Skills
- Disaster Management
- Fisheries

Transnational Qualifications Framework
TQF
The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

Course development workshops ("Boot camps")

Results:
- eLearning materials
- IT skills
- Cross-cultural ties

Mauritius VUSSC Boot Camp – August 2006

"negotiated collaborative contents"

Seychelles VUSSC Boot Camp – March 2008

"negotiated collaborative contents"

... a linking structure ... to help build human capacity and strengthen countries
What do **YOU** want it to become?

How are we doing?
Plan: $20 million (5 years)
Fact: $2 million (5 years)

Thank you to…
- The Hewlett Foundation
- The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation
- The Government of Singapore
- Participating governments

How are we doing?
“SHOE STRING”
“BOOT STRAP”
The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

Key players

INTERLOCUTORS (government)

IMPLEMENTERS (institutions)

Participation in VUSSC events

3 Planning Meetings, 1 TQF meeting
Total attendance: 132
(of which 59% from Government)

5 Course Development Workshops (Boot Camps)
Total attendance: 87
(of which 71% from Institutions)

Overall Participation in Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad &amp; Tobago</td>
<td>21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belize</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Kitts &amp; Nevis</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Vincent and the Grenadines</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Hosted Course Development Workshop
**The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth**

**Ministry of Education participation in Meetings**

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<td>The Gambia</td>
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<td>Belize</td>
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<td>Dominica</td>
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<td>Grenada</td>
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<td>St. Kitts &amp; Nevis</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Swaziland</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Bahamas</td>
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* hosted a Course Development Workshop

**Countries ranked by institutional participation**

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>University of Swaziland</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2=</td>
<td>BOCODOL (Botswana)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2=</td>
<td>University of Samoa</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2=</td>
<td>St. Vincent &amp; The Grenadines CC</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>University of Lesotho</td>
<td>(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6=</td>
<td>Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College St. Kitts &amp; Nevis</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>University of Belize</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8=</td>
<td>NOLNET (Namibia)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>University of Papua New Guinea</td>
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**Ranking of institutional participation**

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</table>

*“...the ability to put electronic learning materials in a repository, but more importantly the know-how to get them out again and into the hands and minds of students”*
What is YOUR vision for it?

Will NOT become a UNIVERSITY

Now it is an informal network of ministries of education and public tertiary institutions supported by
The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

Time to move from an informal network of ministries of education to a CONSORTIUM OF INSTITUTIONS

ICT Capacity Building (International Training & Material Development Workshops: 2005-2010)

Institutions create online programmes (International online training on implementing eLearning; peer support processes: 2008-2012)

TQF & Portal

TQF work party

Institutions that have online programmes

TQF Meeting

ICT Capacity Building

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Curriculum Expansion?

The 3-week face-to-face workshop has served the VUSSC well..
The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

**Curriculum Expansion**
- without ‘boot camps’

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**Build on CUPIDE?**
- development and scheduled offering of a total of 18 courses through on-line or blended modalities in the co-beneficiary universities;
- training of more than 130 academic staff, 38 technical staff and 20 student leaders in the use of and support for the LMS;
- development of a web portal through which all of the CUPIDE universities can share the on-line and blended courses they develop;
- development of an e-learning course through collaboration between two CUPIDE universities;

(Evaluation of CUPIDE for UNESCO by COL)

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

pooling experience of Course Delivery
YOU will determine what the VUSSC becomes

Thank you

Paul West  
John Daniel

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES
Networking & Sharing

- People
- Devices or machines
- Communication connections

People
- Existing networks and Diaspora
- New networks and New Diaspora
- Must have a reason and desire to communicate
- Must have the skills to communicate

Devices or Machines
- Paper & post
- Telex, Telephone, Fax, Video Phone
- Internet
  - Internet chat,
  - Internet telephone & video,
  - virtual reality.
Communication connections

- Bandwidth!
- Bandwidth!
- Bandwidth!
- Affordable prices of bandwidth
- Access to the Internet by personal connections, computer labs, internet cafes, cellphones.

‘How to’ Options

- eMail-only discussions
- eMail & Web discussions
- Web only discussions
- Online team workspaces
- Easy to make websites
- Virtual reality websites

eMail & Web

- Simple and easy
  - Mail only
  - Web only
  - Both together

Online team workspaces

- Example: Basecamp
Easy to make websites

- Example: Wiki Websites

Virtual reality websites

- Example: Second Life

Suggestion

- Private team collaboration
  - Basecamp/Online team project space
- Public information & debate
  - Web-based discussion with summaries by email
  - News updates via newsletters (online & print)
- Global/Interactive Wiki site
  - Create the space for anyone to participate

Private team collaboration

- Threaded discussion
- File sharing
- Project milestones
- Writeboards/document drafts
Public information & debate

- Website
- Discussion
- News

Global/Interactive Wiki site

- The space for anyone to participate

Suggestion

- Private team collaboration
  - Basecamp/Online team project space
- Public information & debate
  - SADC Website; partners to link
  - Web-based discussion with summaries by email
  - News updates via newsletters (online & print)
- Global/Interactive Wiki site
  - Create the space for anyone to participate