

SAMOA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

The Government of Samoa has been a steady contributor to COL since the organisation's inception in 1988. Ministry of Education Sports and Culture officials have participated in and benefited from regional consultations over the years including Pan-Commonwealth Forums and Pacific Association of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (PATVET) meetings that COL has facilitated. The former Minister of Education, Fiamé Naomi Mata'afa, joined the COL's Board of Directors in July 1998 and served until December 2004. COL has been active in assisting the technical vocational sector in Samoa through the former Samoa Polytechnic (now amalgamated with the National University of Samoa).

SUMMARY

As a result of COL's partnership with Samoa in 2003-2006, Samoans benefited from increased opportunities to learn and train. Some of these opportunities were provided through the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme and the creation of a Media Unit at the Samoa Polytechnic. Samoa has also been involved in the collaborative development of technical and vocational learning materials which are now being used by different institutions in the Pacific region. The participation of Samoa in the COL-driven Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) was an important step forward which will help the country to bring more quality education and training to its citizens.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in Partnership to Strengthen National Systems

COL has promoted technical and vocational training to improve employment opportunities in Samoa. It has held a series of workshops at Samoa Polytechnic in Apia. These have aided in the creation of a media unit and staff that are now producing video materials for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) for television broadcast across the nation. These materials are being used as a supplement to the workshop-based learning and also to promote technical vocational training among the young people in

the country. Also, through the creation of the media unit at the Polytechnic, video and audio production is being considered as a course offering to students in the coming years.

Strategic Planning

COL sponsored a delegate from Samoa to attend the International Literacy and Livelihoods Experts Meeting: Learning for Life in a Changing World which was held in Vancouver in November 2004.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Samoa is one of the countries which has signed the Singapore Statement to work together to create the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives).

Preparation and use of learning materials

COL facilitated the development of an on-line course, with a face-to-face component, designed to train senior managers of vocational education on developing policy to support open and distance learning in Samoa.

COL helped to develop three basic trade courses for the Pacific region. The first course “Working with Timber” has been completed; the second course “Working with Concrete” is about to be released and the third course “Small Engines” is in the planning stage.

COL worked with the chief executives of technical institutes and senior Ministry officials in vocational education in the Pacific island states to develop new skills-training learning modules. The modules were piloted in four Pacific countries and Samoa was one of them. More modules are in development.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL sponsored two Samoan delegates to attend the biennial Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in New Zealand in 2004.

In the second phase of the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme, three students from Samoa have successfully completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Distance Education offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). They are now working towards the Masters of Arts in Distance Education offered by IGNOU.

LOOKING FORWARD

The positive achievements of 2003-2006 set the tone for Samoa’s partnership with COL in the next planning period 2006-2009. In this period, on-going activities within the health, gender and technical and vocational education areas will be an important element. Samoa’s commitment to VUSSC will also start to yield positive benefits in this period as the initiative is rolled out. Samoa will also continue to benefit from the regional consultations concerning PATVET.