

# SEYCHELLES

## COL activities in 2003-2006

### BACKGROUND

The Seychelles has a strong commitment to open learning. At the 14<sup>th</sup> Conference of Commonwealth Ministers of Education (CCEM), held in Halifax, Canada in 2000, the Hon. Danny Faure, then Minister of Education, played a leading role in the decision to develop the concept of a Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). He subsequently served on the steering committee that helped COL prepare a proposal for the 15<sup>th</sup> CCEM in Edinburgh. The Seychelles contributed about \$20,000 to COL in 2006 following its previous contribution of nearly \$15,000 in 2000.

### SUMMARY

As noted above the Seychelles were a driving force behind the decision to set up the VUSSC. Since then, the Seychelles have been actively involved in all VUSSC activities and have contributed expertise in developing learning materials related to tourism.

### POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

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

The Seychelles were an active partner in planning the creation of VUSSC being a dynamic and vocal supporter of the initiative from the very start. The Ministry of Education, Seychelles, jointly hosted with COL the meeting of Ministers of Education from small states which endorsed the draft plan for VUSSC before it was presented to CCEM in Edinburgh in October 2003.

Since then the Seychelles have been active at several levels in preparing the way for VUSSC to be established. A team leader from the Seychelles (along with counterparts from Samoa, Botswana, Mauritius and Trinidad & Tobago) took part in a meeting organised by COL in July 2006 to prepare the VUSSC Course Writers' Workshop (which was held in Mauritius in August 2006). The Seychelles have

also contributed expertise in the development of VUSSC courses in tourism/hospitality and business management (both important areas for the Seychelles domestic economy).

### **Preparation and use of learning materials**

The Seychelles participated in the first and second strategy meetings of Interlocutors and Institutional Managers held in Singapore in September 2005 and April 2006 respectively. The meetings reviewed developments in eLearning and the use of Open Educational Resources, considered funding proposals and planned the Open Content Development course materials. These materials are scheduled to be available in early 2007.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

In the second phase of the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme (RGFS), four students from the Seychelles successfully completed the Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University, India (IGNOU). In December 2005 the four students completed the Masters of Arts in Distance Education offered by IGNOU and should have graduated in June 2006. COL provided the necessary sponsorship to enable a group of tutors involved in RGFS to attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF3).

A teacher-educator from the Seychelles joined 19 other teacher-educators from Sub-Saharan Africa for the fourth out of a series of five Management Development Institutes which was held in Singapore in October 2004.

The Seychelles sent a delegate (supported by COL) to PCF3 held in partnership with Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ) in Dunedin, New Zealand in July 2004.

The Seychelles Ministry of Education worked with the African Virtual University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology and the Polytechnic of Namibia to develop the agenda for the first technical skills development workshop for eLearning. The workshop was held in Kenya in May 2005 and, as a result, COL now has access to quality, affordable skills to take this training to other parts of Commonwealth Africa.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

The Seychelles will continue to play an important role in the creation of VUSSC. In particular it will provide expertise to activities related to environment, eco-tourism, and if possible, alternative ways of farming. The Seychelles Hospitality and Tourism Training College and the Seychelles Agriculture and Horticulture Training Centre are likely to be important partners in this.