

SINGAPORE

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

The experience of Singapore in using technologies for education has been a rich resource for COL. Endowed with institutions of excellence, including its own Open University, a range of good practices has emerged from the country. Exposure of such practices to other developing countries in the region and in the Commonwealth has enabled COL to engage with Singapore institutions in partnerships to foster south-south dialogue.

SUMMARY

In the triennium 2003-2006, COL developed long term partnerships with institutes of excellence in Singapore, such as the National Institute of Education, and the Management Development Institute at the Singapore Institute of Management. Singapore hosted a number of events for Commonwealth partners thereby making a valuable contribution to international dialogue and exchange particularly in the area of improving teacher training and launching the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Singapore provided expert input in the initial planning stage for the creation of the VUSSC. The Minister of Education of Singapore attended the meeting of a selected group of Ministers of Education, jointly hosted by COL and the Ministry of Education, Seychelles, to consider the draft plan for VUSSC which was subsequently endorsed by the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Edinburgh in October 2003.

Open schooling

COL convened an international symposium on the application of multimedia to the schooling sector of the education system in Ahmedabad, India in January 2005. The symposium was designed to bring together institutions from Africa, South and Southeast Asia that are using satellite broadcasting to support the school system. A participant from the National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore attended the meeting.

Facilitating debate and founding partnerships

Singapore hosted the Management Development Institute in October 2003. The institute provided teacher training to 19 college principals and administrators from Sub-Saharan Africa. It is hoped that the skills acquired at the institutes would enable them to improve the quality and quantity of teacher training, which in turn would help to achieve “Education for All” in their own countries. From 18-29 October 2004, Singapore hosted the 4th Management Development Institute. A total of 20 teacher educators from Sub-Saharan Africa participated. The fifth round of the COL-Singapore Management Development Institute was held in November 2005 at the NIE and 20 participants from 12 Sub-Saharan African countries took part in the workshop. All these workshops were jointly sponsored by COL and the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Singapore participated in the quality assurance in teacher education roundtable held in India in March 2003. A document entitled “Innovations in Teacher Education: International Practices of Quality Assurance” was published following the event.

A Workshop on Quality Indicators in Teacher Education was held in India in November 2004. Organised by COL, the event attracted a range of international participants including one from Singapore and 12 local Indian participants.

Singapore participated in the 2nd Roundtable on Quality Assurance at Abuja, Nigeria in April 2005. The theme of the conference was Quality issues in the use of ICT for teacher education.

Singapore Open University was represented at the forum, Revisiting ODL Planning and Management, organised by the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) in partnership with Wawasan Open University College, Penang, Malaysia in February 2006.

Supported by CEMCA, six Indian educational administrators from the University Grants Commission, India and the Consortium for Educational Communication, India, went on a study tour to NIE in June 2006. The purpose of the visit was to trigger collaboration between one of India’s largest treasuries of non-print content with an institution recognised for its excellence in pedagogy of learning and in the use of technology in education.

LOOKING FORWARD

Singapore's rich resources in education will form the backdrop of COL's engagement for the planning period 2006-2009. COL will work with an increasing number of Singapore professionals and institutions in regional and international conferences on ODL and ICT for education efforts in the region. Singapore will continue to support the emerging VUSSC and the National Institute of Education (NIE) and is very likely to be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of VUSSC.