

SOLOMON ISLANDS

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

A small state of the Commonwealth, the Solomon Islands is part of the grouping of South Pacific island nations.

SUMMARY

In 2003-2006, COL's partnership with the Solomon Islands concentrated on the COL-World Health Organisation health project at the Solomon Islands Development Trust. With the help of a consultant, provided by COL, an open and distance learning (ODL) policy for Literacy and Livelihoods and natural resource management was established for the Solomon Islands. The President visited the Solomons in 2004 for discussions with the Minister of Education and Deputy Prime Minister, Snyder Rini.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in Partnership to Strengthen National Systems

A consultant was contracted by COL to outline a plan for the establishment of an ODL Policy for Literacy and Livelihoods (L&L) and natural resource management (NRM) including an implementation strategy/plan in four Pacific Island countries. The Solomon Islands is one of the four countries.

COL-Poverty Reduction Outcomes Through Education Innovations and Networks (PROTEIN)

This programme facilitates the implementation of innovative projects that adopt ODL and information and communications technologies (ICT) for poverty reduction in the developing Commonwealth (www.col.org/protein). COL offers expertise in ODL and start-up, limited-term financial support to qualifying projects that help build human capacity to gain knowledge and skills in contributing to food security, environmental protection, rural development, nutritional education and micro-enterprise. Successful projects have a high level of inter-institutional collaboration, significant and innovative ODL

and ICT use, and well-researched content and learning design to support contextually relevant rural and peri-urban capacity building for poverty reduction.

The Rural Development Volunteer Association of Honiara received the award to expand and strengthen the Youth First Computer Centre, an existing ICT resource and learning centre for young people.

Media Empowerment for Health Issues

In partnership with the World Health Organization, COL implemented a Media Unit at Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT), an NGO based in Honiara and trained the staff there on creating and delivering health videos to disadvantaged groups on key issues such as malaria prevention. A FM radio station was also implemented with SIDT to aid with the dissemination of accurate information to the NGO sector (i.e. health, environment, agriculture, forestry, governance, etc.). The range of the station will cover the city and surrounding region of Honiara.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

The Solomon Islands was invited to participate in the creation of the VUSSC at a meeting in Singapore in September 2005. (For more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives).

Preparation and use of learning materials

With the establishment of a Media Unit by COL, SIDT staff are now able to produce their own videos and promote awareness raising programmes to the rural areas. SIDT is also seeking external funding to construct a new building to house the Media Unit. The Unit will be available for a range of development work by the NGO sector.

Ongoing support is provided to SIDT for their Media Unit to produce videos on health issues.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL sponsored one delegate from the Solomon Islands to attend the biennial Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in New Zealand in 2004.

LOOKING FORWARD

The valuable work done in 2003-2006 will serve as a foundation for further progress in the next planning period 2006-2009. In this period COL will continue to work with the Solomon Islands to develop activities in the areas of health, education, governance, literacy and technical vocational education. There is also scope for the Solomon Islands to become more actively involved in the VUSSC as the initiative is rolled out.