



Commonwealth of Learning Strategic Plan Regional Consultation

Held at the 11th Association of African Universities General Conference
Cape Town, South Africa
February 24, 2005

The meeting was opened with a presentation by Paul West, Knowledge Manager and Education Specialist from the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). Following the presentation, the floor was opened for questions and recommendations on COL's 2006-2009 Strategic Plan.

Recommendations to COL

Brokering and Networking

- COL was advised to work with and foster closer working relations with organizations such as:
 - South African Universities' Vice-Chancellors Association (SAUVCA)
 - African Council on Distance Education
 - Southern African Associations of Universities
 - Association of African Universities (AAU)
 - Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA)
 - National Association of Distance Education Organisations in South Africa (NADEOSA)
- Since learners in developing countries have limited access to computer and Internet technologies, COL should work with institutions to strengthen their networks of distance learning support centres.
- COL should be open to working with non-profit, private sector universities in Commonwealth countries. This may be achieved by including these universities in activities involving public sector universities in the respective countries and regions.

Facilitating and model building

- Transnational education – COL can help national institutions in formulating their approach to transnational education;
- COL should continue and reinforce its work in teacher education;
- COL should offer more skills development programmes in writing skills for distance education materials;
- COL should work with institutions to improve the reach of distance education (in all its formats) to rural areas. This may include the use of community outreach by universities and community centres;

- COL should collaborate with partners in developing competence and sharing expertise in creative ways to overcome language and cultural barriers (e.g. the use of comics and drawings);
- COL should collaborate with partners to identify, design and implement multiple modes of delivery involving print, eLearning and mLearning;
- COL should collaborate with organizations that specialize in the distribution of books and journals (print or electronic); this initiative would focus on communicating the availability of materials and train educators in their use;
- COL should collaborate with Commonwealth country institutions to establish knowledge centres. These would provide information and knowledge resources to learners via the institutions' local and wide area networks;
- Once COL has done initial work with an institution (e.g. policy or skills development), it should continue to support the institution to ensure the longer-term impact.
- The use of Short Messaging via cell phones (SMS) was highlighted and how this was helping some institutions reach learners who do not have access to the Internet and where the postal services might be slow. COL should work to capture and share this experience;
- COL should continue and strengthen its role in organizing, hosting and facilitating national and regional meetings for the purpose of helping institutions and education associations face issues such as transnational education, the establishment and running of community learning centres, sharing of skills, etc.

Mr. West thanked the participants for their attendance and provided contact information for additional input to the planning process.

Attachments:

- Powerpoint Slide Presentation
- List of Participants