

TUVALU

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

The island group of nine coral atolls in the South Pacific Ocean which make up the nation of Tuvalu are one of the small states of the Commonwealth (population about 12,000). Tuvalu contributed to the COL budget in 2004 and has enjoyed an effective partnership with COL in developing the use of information and communications technology in the country. With a very high literacy of 92%, Tuvalu's educational needs are in vocational skills such as fishing, tourism and agriculture.

SUMMARY

In 2003-2006 COL's partnership with Tuvalu included the development of technical and vocational learning materials which are now being used by different institutions in the Pacific region. Recently, the participation of Tuvalu in the COL-driven Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) has opened the way for improving access to quality education and training. COL has also sponsored senior people from the education system to attend a variety of training events in other countries. This has led to much valuable exchange of expertise and best practice.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Expanding access to education

COL sponsored a pilot project for over 100 adults based on remote atolls to study introductory level courses at a distance.

Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Tuvalu is participating in the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives) and is also providing expert input for the development of open educational resources.

Representatives attended a three-week “boot camp” in Mauritius during which four teams created learning materials, using existing open educational resources as inputs. Approximately thirty notional learning hours in each of the subject areas of tourism and entrepreneurship were produced in Mauritius and the work is now being continued. Once completed, all materials will be made available online via a website.

Preparation and use of learning materials

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.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Through COL’s Young Professionals Attachment Programme, an intern visited Tuvalu with the COL Pacific Project Manager and produced a report on “Education in Tuvalu – An Overview of Flexible and Distance Learning.”

LOOKING FORWARD

In the period 2003-2006 Tuvalu made some significant achievements in the areas of expanding access and making its education and training systems more relevant to economic needs. It also made an important contribution to the setting up of the VUSSC. In the next triennium this progress will continue as Tuvalu participates in the VUSSC activities to build and strengthen a network of educational professionals who are able to function online as competently as in a classroom.