

ZAMBIA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Zambia has an established history of distance education with a directorate of distance education functioning in the University of Zambia from the 1970s. While Zambia needs to increase the use of open and distance learning and information and communications technology (ODL/ICT) in all areas of education and training it also possesses ODL expertise and experience which could be used in the region. The Open University of Zambia is one of the three open universities in the Commonwealth countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. Educational needs in Zambia include adult literacy, universal primary education and increasing participation in tertiary education with a focus on vocational skill development in areas related to agriculture, mining and industries.

SUMMARY

In 2003-2006 COL worked with Zambia to develop a range of learning materials and plan a strategy for teacher education. COL President Sir John Daniel visited in September 2005 to attend a one day seminar with Zambian education ministers. COL has also sponsored senior people from the education system to attend a variety of training events in other countries. This has led to a valuable exchange of experience and best practice.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Strengthening national commitment through awareness-raising

COL organised a one day seminar on ODL during September 2005 at which Sir John Daniel, President of COL and all three Ministers of Education, Government of Zambia participated. This has led to an increased awareness of the potential of ODL for development in the country.

Strategic planning

COL undertook a review of teacher education strategy in Zambia with funding from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). An Education Specialist from COL acted as Leader of the Consultancy Team and the final consultancy report was submitted to the Ministry of Education in December 2005.

Open schooling

COL assisted the development of open schooling through supporting the participation of two Zambians in the two-week programme on establishing open schooling systems offered at the National Institute of Open Schooling in India in August 2004. It also supported the attendance of two Gambians at the Forum on Open Schooling for Secondary Education held in Botswana in the same year.

Literacy

Zambia is one of the beneficiaries of a recently concluded COL Literacy Project with special funding from the British Department for International Development. The project demonstrated the use of technology-based community learning centres to support literacy work with a focus on reading skills. The Government of Zambia has indicated that it will carry the work forward into other regions of the country.

Preparation and use of learning materials

Zambia was one of eight southern African countries working with COL on STAMP 2000+, a five-year programme of learning materials creation aimed at teachers and administrators in Science, Mathematics and Technology as well as General Education. Forty-six modules have been developed and 300 educators were trained in the process of creating the materials.

Zambia is part of the programme on Increasing Access to Secondary School Level Education through Quality Learning Materials. Materials on English and Science are complete and in use by the Directorate of Distance Education, Ministry of Education.

Writers from Zambia received training at a COL-organised workshop in Kenya in February 2004 on preparing ODL materials to provide skills training and knowledge for caregivers working with orphans and vulnerable children. COL then piloted the print-based flexible learning materials with staff working at selected NGOs in Zambia - ZINGO, the SOS Village, and two Care, Zambia sites. The piloting, which was co-ordinated locally through the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative, indicated that all learners and facilitators were pleased with the materials – as well as with the delivery method which was very new to them.

COL supported the pilot implementation of a distance learning programme in the agronomic management of cowpeas and soya beans in Eastern and Southern Africa. It was implemented by the In-Service Training Trust in collaboration with training institutions in Uganda, Tanzania, Namibia and Zambia.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL organised Management Development Workshops for Senior African Teacher Educators in India (2) and Singapore in 2003, 2004 and 2005. There were eight participants from Zambia representing: Mufulira College of Education, Zambia Institute of Special Education (2), National In-service Teachers' College (NISTCOL), Charles Lwanga College of Education, Copperbelt College of Education, Mongu College of Education, Chipata College of Education and Copperbelt Secondary Teachers College.

COL and the Association of Commonwealth Universities organised a professional development series: Managing Change, Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education – a Programme for Leaders of Commonwealth Universities in Africa, in Scotland from 2003 to 2005. Zambia's one participant represented the Copperbelt University in August 2003.

COL sponsored three Zambian delegates to attend the biennial Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in New Zealand in 2004 and an advocacy meeting with briefing for Permanent Secretaries and Senior Education Officials organised by the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa in 2005.

COL supported the participation of one Zambian at a high-level institute in Vancouver in May 2005 to explore the relationship between open, distance and technology-mediated learning and development. The Institute provided an opportunity for the participants to dialogue across the boundaries of disciplines and functions.

COL helped Zambian institutions to use ODL for capacity building of agriculturists at a two-week workshop in Ghana in September 2004. The main objective of the workshop was to share ideas to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of agricultural extension agents through the use of ODL.

Under COL's Young Professionals Attachment Programme, two interns were placed in Zambia at the In-Service Training Trust and at the Commonwealth Youth Programme Africa Centre.

Being a Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE) member, Zambia benefited from COL's activities with SADC-CDE to develop members ODL capabilities.

COL supported two Zambian academics representing Copperbelt University and University of Zambia to attend the first Distance Education and Teacher Training in Africa (DETA) Conference in Pretoria in August 2005.

LOOKING FORWARD

The period of 2003-2006 saw a number of very valuable initiatives take root in Zambia. These have laid the foundations for further progress in the 2006-2009 triennium. In this period, the focus of COL's collaboration with Zambia will be the education sector with activities planned in the areas of capacity building and quality assurance in teacher education (building on the results of the review of teacher education which COL completed in December 2005). Open schooling will be strengthened by building up the numbers of teachers and improving course material. A research study in the area of cross-border tertiary education is also planned.