

Commonwealth of Learning Media Empowerment (COLME) Programme



Solar FM Radio Station, Mountain Brown, Papua New Guinea

*PLEASE NOTE: COL's COLME programme was wound down during 2007-2008.
Please see www.col.org/livelihoods for COL's current Livelihoods & Health programme activities.*

Introduction - COL Media Empowerment Programme

The Commonwealth of Learning Media Empowerment (COLME) Programme focuses on a sector and regional approach that addresses the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) utilising Distance Education/Open Learning (ODL) methodologies to:

- Address the issues of the digital divide and the goals of Education for All through the creative use of radio, educational broadcasting, and online education.
- Provide media models that will stress local participation and transfer of knowledge and skills and amplification or dissemination of local knowledge.
- Create a core of skilled personnel that COL and other development organisations can draw upon for in-country training.
- Provide opportunities for disadvantaged groups to participate and benefit from new technology and media-based initiatives.
- Create a capacity for dialogue among government sectors, institutions and different interest groups.
- Provide new skills in the use of technology for the disadvantaged.
- Contribute to research and the body of knowledge that can be utilised by Commonwealth governments, organisations and communities by experimenting with and documenting new models for media and technology-based initiatives.
- Demonstrate ODL potential effectiveness with respect to priority issues such as literacy, child protection, gender, HIV/AIDS, basic education and life skills.
- Provide a means of sustainable employment and new skills for rural poor
- Demonstrate to governments ODL models that can aid in policy development.
- Provide value-added expertise to work undertaken by INGOs, NGOs and governments in focusing on the MDGs.
- Advocate the use of Distance Education and Open Learning methodologies to the member states of the Commonwealth.

Outline of the COLME Programme Activities, Models, Focus, and Partnerships

The COLME programme has centred on utilising radio, television, video and audio production, as the focus in the formal and non-formal sectors of education. The programme's impact has been to address the MDGs by empowering local communities, organisations and institutions with appropriate skills sets that can be transferred to other sectors or citizens of the given country. What follows is a description of the activity, outputs (immediate results of the activity undertaken through the COLME programme), outcomes (medium-term results of the activity) and lessons learned.

SECTION A

Capacity Building and Skills Development Through Open Learning – Impact: A Skilled Workforce that Aids in the Development of the Nation.

One of the underlying themes of COLME activities has been a focus on capacity building and the development of new skills sets. The activities are aimed at training of individuals to be able to contribute to the development of their organisations, governments or country. COLME capacity building activities allow institutions to move from being a receiver of training to a provider of skills to others. COL looks upon these trainees as contact points for media training for other sectors in country activities.

- NIGERIA - *Teacher Training Enhancement (National Teachers' Institute)* – At the request of the Minister of Education and the Office of the President, COL was asked to focus its efforts on capacity building in teacher education in Nigeria. The organisation responsible for teacher education in Nigeria is the National Teachers' Institute based in Kaduna. This activity has focused on training in areas that support the development of course materials (graphic artists, desktop publishing, library and production of audio, video) used for teacher education.
 - Activities:
 - Implementation of digital audio/video production system.
 - Workshop on video/audio production techniques and operation for DE delivery.
 - Workshop on integration of print with audio and video support for course development.
 - Training implemented for desktop publishing, graphic artists, library cataloguing.
 - Training on the FM radio production issues for integration of print and audio learning.
 - Outputs:
 - Skills upgrading of forty NTI staff in digital video/audio/design/publication methods.
 - NTI FM radio station reaching half million population in Kaduna that supports teacher education print training materials.
 - Awareness by the Ministry of Education, Commissions and Colleges of Nigeria of a cost effective alternative to teacher education training in the nation.
 - Outcomes:
 - More teachers trained via ODL delivery with quality course materials.
 - Promotion of teacher education as a viable career to prospective teachers.
 - Audio support programmes reaching teacher educators in Kaduna.
 - Model for institutional development that is a cost-effective method for appropriate course development and delivery.

- MOZAMBIQUE – This activity is located in the Ministry of Education, Maputo. It has involved media training for audio and video support to print materials for out-of-school secondary school students.
 - Outputs:
 - Two staff trained in audio and video production techniques.
 - Scripts developed for support of science materials.
 - Videos completed on Physics to accompany print based materials.
 - Outcomes:
 - Video and audio productions that supplement the out of school secondary student curriculum.

- MALDIVES – *Multimedia Courseware Development* – This activity has been centred with the Ministry of Education’s Educational Development Centre (EDC). The activity upgraded staff in techniques and technologies for multimedia production of support materials for primary and secondary schools in the atolls.
 - Outputs:
 - Six EDC staff trained in digital multimedia course development utilising video and audio.
 - Outcomes:
 - Multimedia productions completed and used in secondary school training of teachers and students in the remote atolls.
 - Increased use of multimedia for use in the school curriculum.
 - National Awareness Campaign videos for National Census and training for census taking.

- INDIA - *National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) Media Enhancement Project* – This activity aided NIOS’s capacity to produce video and audio in support of print based learning materials.
 - Outputs:
 - Six NIOS staff trained in digital audio/video techniques.
 - Outcomes
 - Audio and video based materials that supplement NIOS print materials.

- INDIA – *Media Support for Agricultural Training* - This activity has centred on the University of Delhi’s Faculty of Education pre-service and in-service primary and secondary teacher training programme. The Faculty is exposing teachers to different uses of technology for the classroom. This has included audio/video production and internet based technology.

- INDIA – This project has been undertaken with the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) to enhance the University’s ability to delivery training to extension and farmers throughout the state of Tamil Nadu. The project has focused on the Media Unit at TNAU, by enhancing their ability to create video and audio support materials to print based courses. The project will also consider a health component that will delivery HIV/AIDS information to rural areas using portable units in the field (further examples of this model of training are described in the section concerning health activities in The Gambia and Sri Lanka).

- INDIA - *HAM Radio to Address Rural Development and Agribusiness* – The activity is aimed at facilitating agricultural education and community development through provision of free exchange of communications between five farming communities and scientists from two agricultural research stations in Tamil Nadu, India. Their daily communications for one hour

using HAM radio allows farmers to share their experiential learning and local wisdom with agricultural researchers who provide scientific and technical information. Farmers, extension officials and researchers together discuss current agricultural problems and identify appropriate solutions in a timely and efficient manner. The combination of HAM (a two-way wireless communication system) and audiocassette technology is simple, accessible, affordable and thus attractive for economically, educationally and spatially disadvantaged, rural, resource-poor, farming communities.

The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Philippines provides support in the agricultural technology while Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) provides daily advice to the farmers and extension officials on agricultural aspects. COL assists in facilitating the media technology and use for HAM communications. Centre for Ecological Research, an NGO provides support for training HAM radio users and also helps in maintaining the HAM equipment.

- Outputs:
 - The groups have identified educational and training needs of farmers and appropriate agricultural technologies such as crop cultivars and cultivation practices, integrated pest management options to control crop pests and diseases effectively and ways to mitigate adverse soil and climatic factors that affect crop performance.
- NAMIBIA – *University of Namibia (UNAM) Distance Delivery Enhancement* – This activity was undertaken with UNAM to facilitate educational administration and DE course development/delivery employing an audio teleconferencing system. The system reaches fourteen centres in the country.
 - Outputs:
 - Audio conference system that facilitates administration of UNAM and teaching DE courses to UNAM’s fourteen regional centres throughout the country.
 - Outcomes:
 - Cost savings in travel to remote regions of the country for workshops or tutor support.
 - Increased use of DE/OL in the delivery of learning by UNAM throughout the country.
- CAMEROON – *Media Support for Agricultural Training Materials* - Working in partnership with the University of Dschang and the Ministry of Education, the activity focuses on both issues of training between farmers and extension officers and the dissemination of information to agricultural community concern HIV/AIDS prevention.
 - Outputs:
 - Video production unit that is producing audio/video based support for print-based agricultural learning materials.
 - Outcomes
 - Students in remote areas able to consider a post secondary education option via DE.
- GHANA - *Media Development for Women in Agro-Food Processing* – This activity has been focused on the Women in Agrofood Development (WIAD) Unit Extension officers located in the Ministry of Agriculture. These women were trained to undertake video productions aimed at aiding women’s cooperatives in new agro food and marketing techniques.

- Outputs:
 - Six agrofood extension officers training in video production techniques.
 - Video production unit established at WIAD.
 - Archiving via video of agrofood data by Extension.
- Outcomes:
 - Women in the working in urban and rural areas of the country have access through training workshops and demonstrations via video of new techniques in agrofood processing and marketing.

African Health Initiative - Impact: Addressing Health and HIV/AIDS Stigma/Prevention Issues through Open Learning

The World Health Organization (WHO) was attracted to COL's model building efforts, through COLME in utilising ODL for health in a number of countries. One of COL's activities was working with the Nova Scotia Gambia Association (NSGA) where COL aided this NGO with both the technology and training to document its work in peer health education in The Gambia. NSGA is now utilising both radio and video to train peer health educators throughout the country. With a gas generator and a data projector, video productions produced locally by NSGA are taken upriver and shown in villages in the evening. People view Gambian skits and discussions concerning HIV/AIDS in a localised context. It is relevant and powerful. This also allows the NGO to do its work more effectively, which in turn attracts outside funders (such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) who utilise the NGO for activities related to HIV/AIDS and malaria prevention. It is this kind of effective field-based activities utilising Distance Education in the health sector, which attracted WHO to work with COL in partnership in South Africa.

- **THE GAMBIA - Peer Health Education Project** – Working in collaboration with Nova Scotia Gambia Association, this COLME activity works in partnership with video/audio-based information used to facilitate peer health education training among young persons at risk of HIV/AIDS. The activity has resulted in radio programmes on health-based issues being broadcast on radio in The Gambia and video productions used at the village level in peer health education. Video productions have been taken to remote areas of the country, using a data projector and gas generator and shown as a supplement to HIV/AIDS discussion groups.
 - **Outputs:**
 - Three NSGA staff trained in digital video production techniques
 - Archiving of peer health education training session including skits and lectures.
 - Weekly radio programming that reaches the general population of Banjul and outskirts concerning HIV/AIDS.
 - Twenty video productions on health-based issues shown in remote villages.
 - **Outcomes**
 - Expansion of the peer health education programme to Sierra Leone using NSGA peer health educators and accompanying video/audio supplemental materials.
 - Use of peer health for HIV/AIDS prevention among the military.
- **SOUTH AFRICA** - Working in partnership with the WHO in Geneva, this activity has focused on the issue of HIV/AIDS stigma with a non-governmental organisation (NGO) Valley Trust (VT) located in KwaZulu-Natal. The project has served to aid VT in disseminating localised HIV/AIDS stigma information to the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal utilising video and audio production delivery. The workshops and training activities have achieved the following outputs.
 - **Outputs:**
 - A training programme for NGO workers who were taught the skills to create and edit video material.
 - The activity has promoted greater understanding among target groups in the rural sector of KwaZulu-Natal, through the use of video, of the effects of

stigma related to HIV/AIDS, on the care and well being of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA).

- It has allowed VT to build partnerships with local media outlets to use VT's video materials for advocacy and educational purposes in relation to stigma.
 - It has produced stigma videos that are being used for training of health care workers and stigmatisation at the village level.
 - It has focused video productions that deal with training issues with local health care workers. VT's major activity and income earner is training community health care workers. They can now streamline how they train these individuals with higher quality training and video-based demonstrations to accompany print materials.
 - VT have reorganised its strategic planning to reflect new outreach with DE techniques in training and information dissemination. This will allow for more effective use of the media in this NGO's drive to attract funding from the international community. Case studies can now utilise photos from the field work. Video can be streamed onto VT's www site. Media packages can be sent with accompanying CD's with the visual information from field work to demonstrate to funders the effective work of this NGO.
- SRI LANKA – *Health Issues Focused on Rural Development* - Working in partnership with the WHO Sri Lanka country representative (WR) and Sarvodaya, an NGO working in health and education in the country, the activity has focused on health issues such as malaria, alcohol abuse and HIV/AIDS. The project will reach villages throughout the country with video and audio productions undertaken by Sarvodaya in consultation with the WR. Video productions have taken to remote areas of the country, using a data projector and shown as a supplement to HIV/AIDS/Malaria discussion groups.
 - Outputs:
 - Sarvodaya staff trained in multimedia production for audio and video output.
 - Outcomes:
 - Reduction of HIV infections and malaria prevention in regions of the country where Sarvodaya has undertaken training.

Caribbean Regional Initiative - Impact: Agribusiness Opportunities, Fisheries and Forestry Management and Environment Sustainability

The activities in the Caribbean have addressed agribusiness opportunities and environmental sustainability issues by employing ODL delivery of training and information from scientist to extension officer to farmer. Countries and key players within each Ministry were selected in consultation with the regional office of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). This focus in agribusiness opportunities and environment has been to aid Governments in the region in their efforts to move towards crop diversification (i.e. away from single crop dependency such as bananas in Dominica or sugar in St Kitts and Nevis) among small plot farmers (e.g. Jamaica) who have been sidelined by mass-produced food products from developed countries. This imbalance in the traditionally agrarian economies has resulted in increased inflation, high unemployment and crime among the youth, as agriculture has become an unattractive option as a career path. COL has added value to agricultural/environmental training by employing ODL techniques using video and audio productions distributed via radio, television, workshops and field days to reach extension officers and farmers. Extension officers have been taught camera and production skills at the rural extension units. This in turn allows content to be localised in consideration of the conditions of the Parish or region of the island.

- GRENADA – *Agribusiness* – This activity with the FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture’s Extension Unit trained extension officers to create video productions that are used by the national broadcaster to educate farmers in new techniques and crop diversification.
 - Outputs:
 - Staff of the Media Unit trained in digital video/audio production techniques.
 - Extension officers trained in camera techniques.
 - Video productions on related to crop diversification completed and aired weekly on national television.
 - Archiving via video of agricultural, forestry and environmental data by Extension.
 - Outcomes:
 - Move towards organic agricultural techniques and employment opportunities that have arisen from markets available for organic produce overseas.
 - Figures indicate training in crop diversification via media indicates farmers moving away from single crop dependency.

- DOMINICA – *Agribusiness Opportunities, Fisheries and Forestry Management and Environment Sustainability* – Working with the FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, this activity has seen extension officers trained to produce video and radio productions that are used by the national broadcaster to educate farmers in new techniques and crop diversification and local populous on the benefits of a sustainable environment.
 - Outputs:
 - Twenty extension officers in agriculture and forestry trained in video camera and production techniques.
 - Archiving via video of agricultural, forestry and environmental data by Extension.
 - Outcomes:
 - Move towards organic agricultural techniques and employment opportunities that have arisen from markets available for organic produce overseas.

- ST. KITTS AND NEVIS – *Agribusiness, Fisheries Management, and Environment Sustainability* – Working with the FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, this activity has employed both radio and video productions that are used by the national television/radio broadcaster to educate farmers and fishermen in new techniques and general information. The focus is to aid farmers in moving towards crop diversification from a dependence on sugar.
 - Outputs:
 - Fifteen extension officers from Fisheries and Agriculture trained in audio/video techniques.
 - Radio productions on agricultural news and techniques aired nationally weekly concerning crop diversification.
 - Agricultural video magazine aired on television weekly.
 - Video training short productions on new agricultural techniques aired on television.
 - Outcomes
 - Statistical data of farmers moving to greater crop diversification.
 - Recognition and funds towards the rural extension media services in five-year Ministry planning cycle as an element for extension to reach farmers utilising localised media techniques.

- TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO – *Forestry and Environment Sustainability* - The activity has been undertaken with the forestry extension officers. The trainees are producing videos that are aimed at forestry and wetlands preservation in Tobago. Productions have been employed in the local schools to sensitise students to the issue of the local environment.
 - Outputs
 - Three extension officers from Forestry trained in audio/video techniques
 - Archiving via video of, forestry and environmental data by Extension.
 - Video productions completed and used in primary/secondary schools for environmental awareness training among young people.
 - Outcomes:
 - Productions completed for World Wetlands Day and distributed to the local schools. Awareness of the eco tourism and preservation of wetlands and forests reserve by young people in Tobago.

- JAMAICA - *Agribusiness and Environment Sustainability* – This activity has run media workshops with extension officers throughout the country and also implemented media units to cover western and central regions of the country (Kingston, Montego Bay and Mandeville). Video productions are now used to facilitate extension services efforts to aid farmers in crop diversification.
 - Outputs
 - Forty Extension officers from across the Jamaica trained in the process of audio and video production
 - Archiving via video of agricultural, and environmental data by Extension.
 - Productions completed in agriculture and land administration, pepper production, fertiliser, crop diversification, new technologies, pest control.
 - Outcomes:

- Recognition and funds towards the rural extension media services in five-year Ministry planning cycle as an element for extension to reach farmers utilising localised media techniques.
- Increased number of farmers attending local field days due to relevant training presented focused on local conditions.
- Statistical indicators of crop diversification use by farmers.
- Support by farmers for video based information concerning specific agricultural issues.

Pacific Regional Initiative – Impact: Vocational Skills Development in the Pacific

The COLME activities are part of a regional technical vocational initiative undertaken by COL and sanctioned by the Ministers of Education in the region in institutional capacity development with in-country Polytechnics and Technical Institutes. The activities have added value to the course development work at the Polytechnics and have enabled the institutions to advocate technical vocational training as a career choice among young people or those wishing to upgrade skill sets.

- SAMOA - *TVET, Employment Opportunities* – This activity is based with the Samoa Polytechnic in Apia. The workshops have aided in the creation of a media unit and staff that are now producing video materials for TVET for television broadcast across the nation. These materials are being used as a supplement to the workshop-based learning and also to promote technical vocational training among the young people in the country. Also, through the creation of the media unit at the Polytechnic, video and audio production is being considered as a course offering to students in the coming years.
 - Outputs:
 - Forty video productions that supplement the technical vocational face-to-face learning at the Polytechnic.
 - Media Unit implemented at the Polytechnic with five staff in production techniques.
 - Outcomes:
 - Increased enrolments in technical vocational courses by Samoans.
 - National television station broadcast video productions concerning the promotion of technical vocational education via Distance Education in Samoa.
 - Regional example to other institutions of using media effectively for promotion of and support of technical vocational education.
- KIRIBATI – *TVET, Employment Opportunities* – This activity is based in the Tarawa Technical Institute (TTI) in Basio, North Tarawa. The project aligns itself with the work in Samoa and Fiji. In both these activities a media unit was created and staff trained. The productions at TTI are now being employed as a supplement to print-based materials to be used in the outer atolls. There is concentration on retraining for new job skills for people living in the remote atolls of the country.
 - Outputs
 - Four TTI staff trained in production techniques.
 - Productions developed on seaweed collection and processing as a means for income in the outer atolls.
 - Outcomes:
 - Video productions that supplement the technical vocational face-to-face learning at TTI.
 - Increased incomes due to seaweed production activities in the outer atolls.
- FIJI – *TVET, Employment Opportunities* – This activity is with the Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT) that is based in Suva. FIT is moving towards a dual- mode structure of delivery of tech/voc throughout the islands. COL is aiding FIT in its delivery of tech/voc information via video, television and radio to the island groups of Fiji.
 - Outputs

- Digital audio/video production system implemented and training completed.
 - Integration of media into print based materials for delivery throughout the country.
- Outcomes:
 - Move by FIT from a single-mode to a dual-mode institution to deliver to all sectors of the nation.
- VANUATU – *TVET, Employment Opportunities* – This activity is with the Vanuatu Institute of Technology (VIT) that is based in Port Vila. VIT is rebuilding the institution in a move to promote tech/voc courses throughout the islands. COL is aiding VIT in its delivery of tech/voc information via video, television and radio to the island groups of Fiji.
 - Outputs
 - Digital audio/video production system implemented and training completed.
 - Integration of media into print based materials for delivery throughout the country.
 - Outcomes:
 - Move by VIT from a single-mode to a dual-mode institution to deliver to all sectors of the nation.

Lesson Learned Concerning the Use of ODL Techniques and Mass Media

- It is imperative the system for audio and video production that is implemented is self-contained and user friendly. PC or Mac-based systems are difficult to maintain in the field due to hardware and software issues. Virus attacks can be an issue in PC and Mac-based systems with the transfer of information or connection to the Internet. A dedicated non-PC based system cannot be interfered with by loading of incompatible software.
- Standardisation is important with technology. This allows for easier sustainability in the long term. If a similar media-based initiative is focused on another sector within a country/region (e.g. health or education) then the trainees from the previous training can be used as trainers and/or consultants.
- Master tapes should be recorded via digital firewire to digital tape or DVD for future dubbing. Proper storage and organisation of masters is important.
- Line conditioning and UPS are essential even under stable electricity conditions.
- Video post-production takes time. In the case of agricultural extension, officers must be allotted time to devote to the editing of audio and video. This must be outlined at the beginning of the activities with senior management.
- Depending on the prerequisite skill sets of the individuals focused on for training, additional training may be needed in the first phase of the project.
- Stakeholders including senior management should given an orientation to the systems involved. It is important that these people have an understanding of the capabilities of the technology.
- Units within government ministries may not have sufficient funds to allow staff to travel to rural sites to collect audio or video-based information. Therefore it is important that senior management understand the benefit of using mass media especially in how agricultural extension officers or community health care workers effectively reach their target groups.
- Extension units are under increasing pressure to do more with less funding. At times there are staff changes that have affected the progress of the activities. In some cases out of six extension officers, four have been away on extended leave on out-of-country advanced education. This puts additional pressures on staff and leaves little time for video/audio production or involvement in the project. It is important that a schedule be maintained for

training productions that fed into the main media unit and senior management insure that other extension personnel are trained in the system.

- Training tapes and email contact are important with the key players in the activities. This will aid in targeting additional training issues, to determine needs, and take preventative measures before issues arise.
- Scriptwriting in some cases has been an important element in the project. In some activities the recommendation by COL to the stakeholder(s) is funding or contributions from aid organisations could be made in the form of attachment of a person with scriptwriting skills.
- Evaluation systems such as audience surveys and statistical analysis have been used in some cases with the projects. However, this is difficult, expensive and time consuming. Therefore, in the case of agriculture, government statistics from a farming community and their efforts to move toward crop diversification or organic farming have been utilised as an indicator of effectiveness in reaching the farmers. The same holds true of in the health sector where WHO or government statistics are used as a base line in describing impacts.
- A number of trainees, due to the exposure to digital video/audio technology techniques have considered entrepreneurial activities. These people could leave the institution to develop their own businesses which is an indicator of success on the side of skills development but a concern if other staff have not been assigned to carry on the media-based work.
- There is a concern about activities being undertaken that are outside of the focus of education and training (e.g. events concerning Ministerial meetings etc). It is understood there may be circumstances where this activity will occur.

SECTION B

Community Radio - Impact: Empowering Rural Communities to Address Gender, Poverty Alleviation, and Food Security.

These activities have been implemented with the objective of demonstrating the effectiveness of education, gender, health-based information transmitted on a low-cost suitcase FM radio at the rural community level. The main thrust of the radio-based activities is to target rural disadvantaged groups addressing issues related to health, basic education and gender. The activities are also a vehicle to serve the role for advocacy of rural community radio as an effective means of addressing Education for All targets of 2015. Besides the technical aspects of operating and maintaining the technology, business skills were also taught that would aid in long-term sustainability of the rural FM stations. The FM stations are a means for governments and funders to consider first hand the effectiveness of community radio in a low-cost sustainable model. It is also an opportunity for policy makers within the government to observe within the cultural, linguistic and infrastructural issues of the rural areas of their countries, the opportunities that community radio could present for a nation. COL has been active in developing and promoting community radio in Papua New Guinea, Uganda, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, and Cameroon. COL, working in partnership Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC), has allowed secondary schools to develop an awareness of the importance of community radio and education. The station has been used in a number of schools in the south of the country where students get first-hand knowledge of programme development and broadcasting. In Papua New Guinea (PNG), COL working with the Ministry of Education, implemented a solar-powered FM station in the remote mountain community of Mountain Brown where educational programming can be broadcast to communities in their local language. PNG has hundreds of languages and some communities are virtually cut off from the outside world. Community radio has allowed communities to broadcast in their own language with local content and messages relevant to the community.

- **UGANDA - *Community Radio Project*** – This activity focused on the development of a solar-powered FM community radio station reaching a target audience of one million Luo speakers in the Northern Uganda. Programmes dealing with health, agriculture and gender issues have been one of the focuses of this station.
 - **Outputs:**
 - Solar-powered low-powered FM radio station that reaches the Apac/Lira region (estimated population of 1 million).
 - Daily programmes concerning health, gender, agriculture.
 - Five locally run workshops completed concerning community organisation and participation.
 - **Outcomes:**
 - Reorganisation of community radio licensing and fees by Government of Uganda.
 - Five additional community radio stations opened in hundred-kilometre radio due to the lead from Apac community radio station.
 - Health-based information that has led to the HIV/AIDS prevention in the community. (UNAIDS statistics indicated that infections rates had decreased in Uganda for the last ten years).
- **PAPUA NEW GUINEA – *Community Radio Project*** – This activity was a partnership with the Ministry of Education, the remote community of Mountain Brown and COL. Community

radio is still in its infancy in PNG. The activity implemented a solar-powered FM radio station in a remote community in the Owen Stanley Range, Mountain Brown, to broadcast school-based learning each evening. Villagers were trained in the operation and business model and general technical management of a community radio station.

- Outputs:
 - Solar-powered FM radio stations reaching a remote valley in the Owen Stanley Range with a population of fifteen hundred.
 - Daily educational programme prepared by the Ministry of Education transmitted to the primary/secondary students.
 - Fifteen villagers trained in both station management and running a business management.
- Outcomes:
 - Ministry of Education initiated a campaign to promote community radio to funding agencies as a major element to reaching disadvantaged groups within the country.
 - Interest by the mining industry in funding community radio in the districts.
- SOUTH AFRICA – Working in partnership with Open Learning Systems Education Trust (OLSET), this activity focused on a remote area of Kwazulu Natal. OLSET is a producer of educational radio-based programmes that reaches over a million primary students in South Africa. The activity was used by OLSET to advocate the use of low-powered FM radio to rural communities in South Africa.
 - Outputs:
 - Secondary school FM radio station that reaches the town of Manguzi in Kwazulu Natal (estimated population of 200,000)
 - OLSET radio programmes concerning health and support of primary education broadcast daily.
 - Outcomes:
 - Increased use of community radio programmes in schools by OLSET with external funding.
 - Changing of the environment for licensing issues with the South African government.
- SRI LANKA – This initiative was a partnership with Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC). SLBC was interested in sensitising young people to the effectiveness of community radio. The suitcase FM station has been used by the SLBC to set up and carry out training in broadcasting at secondary schools in the southern region of the country.
 - Outputs:
 - Portable FM radio station utilised in primary and secondary schools in Southern Sri Lanka.
 - Two hundred students trained in the value of radio and community development by SLBC.
 - Outcomes:
 - Student awareness of the value of community partnership through radio.
 - Partnership between broadcasters and educators in schools.

Lessons Learned – Concerning Suitcase FM Radio in ODL:

- Government licensing fees may increase thereby limited the income for running the station to be diverted into fees.

- A committee of local representatives acting as a board needs to be established early in the planning process in order to hold the station accountable for its work and maintaining the mandate. Also the programme manager has to work within the confines of the mandate and assure that the community groups (such as women or farmers) are represented on air.
- It cannot be expected that people will volunteer their time or be able to travel to the station. Therefore, compensation will have to be figured into the revenue stream of the station if groups are to be able to be properly represented.
- Community radio stations should form alliances with local health providers and educational institutions, as well as with local businesses; these help support the activities of the radio station both financially and through the provision of information and resources.
- Stations should be established as a business and an element of the training should be geared towards revenue generation and accounting.
- Government ministries involved with aspects of radio such as spectrum allocation, licensing, education and health should be given regular updates of the community radio station as a conduit for its information to general public.
- Local target groups such as health care workers should be regularly solicited to determine the media messages that are delivered via the radio station are applicable in the audience concerned.
- The use of radio combined with DE/OL methodologies as the most viable alternative for meeting MDG's has been a major thrust of the activities. It is apparent that the use of radio at the rural community level cannot be the domain of one ministry (i.e. Ministry of Education) but rather all sectors of government, including information and communications ministries. It must be in partnership across all government ministries if progress is to take place.
- Issues of ownership are important. For example, campus-based FM radio is susceptible to risk (i.e. vandalism), given the transient nature of the student populations. A campus station can only operate within the hours of operation of the institution in many cases. Radio stations cannot broadcast on a non advertised schedule. Therefore, it is important that the institution takes steps for ensuring that a committee responsible for the campus radio station be secured each academic year and individuals named to oversee the continuity of the broadcast schedule.
- During an Ebola outbreak in 2000, the Ministry of Health in Kampala utilised the services of the COLME radio project to provide information on the preventive measure to the local population in the Apac/Lira area. Because of the project's linkage to the Ministries, awareness of the Apac radio station, as a resource for local community information dissemination, was helpful in addressing the Ebola crisis.
- Evaluation systems such as audience surveys and statistical analysis have been used in some cases but it is difficult, expensive and time consuming. Traditional survey techniques require a large number of volunteers and financial resources. Indicators, such as an increased rate of condom distribution recorded at a local health service provider after a programme about family planning is aired, can be useful indicators of effective radio programming. In this way, a partnership with local health care providers is essential both as a support institution for programmes aired on community radio and as a tool for evaluation of effectiveness.
- Radio station systems require easy plug in and out leads so that soldering of wires is avoided.
- Dual microphone systems for discussion groups are important for community radio systems and should be built into the station council.
- Solar systems are effective only if the proper maintenance scheme is completed.
- Issues to do with lightening strikes are a constant threat to station transmitters and proper training and maintenance must be in effect.
- A maintenance scheme should be drawn up and ensured that the technician carries it out and reports to the radio station manager.

Conclusion

The lessons learned have been documented and developed for replication in other regions on a large scale. For example, the model for the using of mass media, in the form of print, audio and video production for peer health education in The Gambia with the Nova Scotia Gambia Association (NSGA) have been considered for use in larger and more populated countries such as Nigeria. The institutional capacity building exercise at the National Teachers' Institute in Kaduna, Nigeria can serve as a low-cost model for course development and the mechanisms/skills sets that support it. The COLME activities also, due to their focus on working with groups on the ground, are models that can influence policymakers within local and national governments. This is true of the solar-powered suitcase radio station in Uganda where community radio through the COLME activity, was proven an effective tool for the local community and also for government ministries in their direct involvement in promoting a media message. Using local community radio by the Ugandan Ministry of Health was effective in disseminating preventative messages to the community in their own language.



Community Radio, South Africa

(Note: Activities have been documented on video and will be available on DVD or CD in the near future.)



*Workshop in Nigeria on Audio/Video production and
David Walker of COL conducting a camera training session*

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COL is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.