

# BELIZE

## COL activities in 2003-2006

### BACKGROUND

Belize is a small state of the Commonwealth and an active partner in COL's activities although not a contributor to its budget in 2003-2006.

### SUMMARY

In 2003-2006 Belize joined other small states in creating the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) and is positioning itself to be a provider of learning materials amongst Commonwealth countries. The country has also been represented at the Pan-Commonwealth Forums on Open Learning (PCF). Belize is improving the training skills of its Tech/Voc instructors through a Special Diploma which was pioneered by COL. Delegates from Belize participated in a number of capacity-building activities within the region and in other parts of the world in support of the expansion of open and distance learning and eLearning in the country.

### POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

#### **The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).**

Belize is an active partner in the creation of the VUSSC (for more details of VUSSC see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives). Belize is also providing expert input to the development of open educational resources for VUSSC. The work started with a three-week "boot camp" in Mauritius during which four teams created learning materials, using existing open educational resources as inputs. Approximately ten notional learning hours in each of the subject areas of tourism and entrepreneurship were produced in Mauritius and the work is now being continued online. All materials will be made available online via a website.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

COL sponsored a delegate from Belize to attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pan- Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning which was held in Dunedin, New Zealand.

Belize is one of the 12 member countries of the Caribbean which participates in the annual meeting/workshop for Caribbean Chief Education Officers.

The Technical Teacher Training Programme, developed by COL through regional collaboration, is made available for Technical/vocational education and training (TVET) teachers in selected countries in the Caribbean. The programme, which is to train TVET instructors in pedagogical skills to complement their TVET knowledge, is being offered on a pilot basis as a Special Diploma by the University of Technology, Jamaica (UTECH) and may allow articulation into UTECH's Bachelor of Education degree programme. Belize is likely to adopt the programme in 2006.

### **Preparation and use of learning materials:**

A delegate from Belize took part in the three-day meeting of the authors of the proposed book on "Foreign Tertiary Education Providers in the Anglophone Caribbean", which was held in Trinidad & Tobago from 5-7 October 2005.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

The period 2003-2006 was one of very positive progress for Belize and its partnership with COL. This valuable contribution is set to continue in the period 2006-2009 when Belize's participation in VUSSC will be taken to a new level as the initiative is rolled out.