

KIRIBATI

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Kiribati is a small republic made up of an island and atolls scattered over an expanse of ocean equivalent in size to the continental United States.

COL has been working in Kiribati for over a decade, centred at the Tarawa Technical Institute (TTI) in North Tarawa. The Vice President and Minister of Education, Youth and Sport, Ministry of Education is a member of COL's Board of Governors where she represents the South Pacific countries.

Kiribati became a contributor to COL's budget in 2006.

SUMMARY

In the period 2003-2006 Kiribati played an active part in international meetings such as the Pan-Commonwealth forum thereby contributing to debate and exchanging experience and best practice with other countries. It also made advances domestically with the development of video as a means of reaching its scattered population. Kiribati is also an active participant in the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in Partnership to Strengthen National Systems

COL assisted Kiribati in developing and delivering video based educational programmes in the technical vocational education sector. Video productions at TTI are now being employed as a supplement to print-based materials to be used in the outer atolls. These concentrate on retraining people living in the remote atolls of the country for new job skills. This work gave rise to a new partnership, facilitated by COL, with a small media organisation called Kiribati Video. COL enhanced Kiribati Video's facilities for the

production of videos on HIV/AIDS awareness to be distributed to the remote atoll villages and throughout the densely populated areas of North Tarawa. In recent years the population of North Tarawa has risen dramatically due to the lack of employment opportunities in the outer atolls. This increase has seen an upsurge in HIV related cases and also health issues related to sanitation.

At the request of the Asian Development Bank, COL assessed the existing and potential frameworks for information and communication technology (ICT) in twelve island countries including Kiribati. The study assessed ICT readiness, including physical infrastructure, financial and human resources, and regulatory framework for future development. The terms also identified bankable ICT-related projects, particularly in areas of distance education, e-commerce and e-government.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Kiribati is an active participant in the VUSSC (see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives for more details of VUSSC).

Preparation and use of learning materials

One participant from Kiribati attended the workshop to develop a model for delivering training in basic trade skills to local communities which was held in Suva 28 April – 2 May, 2003. The participants later successfully developed one basic trade course on “Working with Timber”, a second one on “Working with Concrete” is nearing completion and the third course “Small Engines” is in the planning stage.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL provided support to one delegate from Kiribati to participate in the 3rd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in partnership with Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ) in Dunedin, New Zealand from 4-8 July 2004 and the Vice President and Minister of Education, Youth and Sport, is expected to attend the 4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in Jamaica in 2006.

In 2005, COL organised a workshop for Regional Consultation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the Pacific – The Way Forward at the South Pacific Community Education Training Centre in Fiji. COL shared ten years past experience on the use of media support for the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions in the region (Fiji, Samoa, Kiribati and Vanuatu) and work on the Millennium Development Goals in general and COL’s focus on health in the region in particular. The meeting also gave COL an opportunity to meet and update Pacific Association of Technical, Vocational Education and Training (PATVET) participants with whom it has been working for the past ten years.

LOOKING FORWARD

Kiribati's commitment to VUSSC will be an important element in its forward planning for 2006-2009. The valuable work which was done in partnership with Kiribati Video will also continue in the next planning period to provide more resources for video based educational programmes for the Pacific region especially in the area of HIV/AIDS awareness.

Kiribati has recently signed an agreement with the European Union aimed at ensuring sustainable fishing of Pacific tuna. This could link in with 2006-2009 activities to promote Learning for Livelihoods.