

MALAWI

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Malawi has a long history of open and distance learning (ODL) and has a College of Distance Education. It is also a member of the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA).

SUMMARY

In the 2003-2006 planning period, COL worked with staff located at the Malawi College of Distance Education and made it possible for staff to take a Masters of Arts in Distance Education offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).

COL has also made it possible for ministerial and institutional staff from Malawi to attend international and regional meetings, conferences and workshops thereby participating in international debate and exchange of experience.

Malawi was also involved in two regional collaborative materials development projects supported by COL – one in the area of producing learning materials for students at the junior secondary level, and a second in the production of teacher training materials in Science, Technology and Mathematics.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working with regional partners to strengthen national systems

In March 2006, COL supported and organised, in collaboration with the Kyambogo University (KYU) in Uganda and the International Extension College, UK a meeting to provide an overview and orientation to the programme “Introduction to Distance Education: a course for managers and practitioners”, the materials for which are now available through KYU.

Malawi sent representatives to the meeting and their opinion was that the programme would be very useful for staff at the Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE). A request was subsequently received by COL for support to offer the programme to staff at MCDE.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COL co-sponsored the Africa Copyright Forum Conference which was held in Kampala in November 2005. This attracted 120 delegates from 23 countries, including Malawi. The “Africa Copyright and Access to Information Alliance” was established at the conference and an Interim Board was elected to start the process of addressing copyright and related issues in Africa, with particular reference to education, libraries and people with disabilities.

Malawi attended the “International Literacy and Livelihoods Experts Meeting: Learning for Life in a Changing World” which was held in Vancouver in November, 2004. Approximately 30 international experts participated in the meeting.

Malawi participated in the “Forum on Open Schooling for Secondary Education” held in Botswana in October 2004, to raise awareness about and to advocate for the establishment of open schools in the Sub-Saharan region.

Two educators from Malawi participated in a two-week long institute in August 2004, which was hosted by the National Institute of Open Schooling, India.

COL supported the DEASA advocacy meeting held in March 2005 where Permanent Secretaries and Senior Education Officials were briefed about ODL and DEASA’s programme. Malawi sent participants to the meeting.

A Senior administrator from the Dunda College of Agriculture attended the 5th “Managing Change, Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education – a strategic development programme for leaders of Commonwealth Universities in Africa” Conference held in August 2004 in Scotland.

A delegate from Domasi College of Education, Malawi attended the workshop on “eLearning” organised at the University of Melbourne for science and mathematics teacher educators from Sub-Saharan Africa. The three-day workshop (29 June – 2 July 2004) gave a presentation on various eLearning possibilities to the participants.

COL sponsored three delegates from Malawi to attend the Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning which was held in Dunedin, New Zealand in July 2004.

Two students from Malawi were enrolled in the second presentation of the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme. One has completed the Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education and the second has successfully completed the Masters of Arts in Distance Education programme, both of which are offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University.

Two participants from Malawi attended Management Development Institutes in Singapore in October 2003 and November 2005. These institutes, organised by COL in partnership with the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were designed to benefit teacher training college principals and senior administrators from Sub-Saharan Africa. The participants represented Blantyre Teachers Training College and Domasi College of Education (October 2003) and Blantyre Teachers Training College and Karonga Teachers Training College (November 2005).

Preparation and use of learning materials

Malawi was a member of a consortium supported by COL which developed ODL learning materials for students at the Junior Secondary School Level. The materials, which cover the English, Science and Maths curricula, are being used at the MCDE.

Malawi is one of eight Southern African countries who agreed to work with COL on a five-year distance education project to develop learning materials and subsequently to train upper primary and junior secondary teachers and administrators in Science, Technology and Mathematics.

LOOKING FORWARD

The period 2003-2006 was one of fruitful co-operation between COL and Malawi. Much useful work was done with the Malawi College of Distance Education and this will serve well as a foundation for future progress.