

MALAYSIA

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

Malaysia has been a consistent supporter of COL. Its contribution to COL is most visibly reflected in that one of its eminent citizens and educators, Dato' Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan was the President and Chief Executive Officer of COL from 1996 to 2004. The current Chairman of COL's Board of Governors, Mr. Lewis Perinbam O.C., is of Malaysian origin. Malaysia is a contributor to the COL budget.

SUMMARY

In the period 2003-2006 COL's engagement with Malaysia became much more visible. This period of increased activity coincided with the establishment of the Open University of Malaysia. The increased level of partnership between COL and this rapidly growing economy and educational system has already greatly benefited other Asian Commonwealth countries as well as Malaysia itself.

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Improving teacher training

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in September 2003 between Tamil Virtual University, TMI-Nusantara Consultants Sdn Bhd. (Malaysia) and COL to provide an opportunity for Tamil school teachers in Malaysia to upgrade their knowledge and qualifications in Tamil so that their quality of teaching in their mother tongue (Tamil) could be improved.

Facilitating international partnerships and debate

The Government of Malaysia hosted the ICT and Gender Forum: Optimising Opportunities in Kuala Lumpur in August 2003. This forum was organised by COL and various partners including the Global

Knowledge Partnership (GKP), UNESAP, UNESCO, IDRC, Asian Pacific Women's Information Network Centre and the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity. Over 700 delegates from around the world attended the Forum.

The Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration/Master of Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programme is set to be launched in Malaysia after the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Wawasan Open University College and COL

Supported by the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), six Indian educational administrators from the University Grants Commission, India and the Consortium for Educational Communication, India, went on a study tour to the Open University of Malaysia, the Multimedia University, the Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcast Development, and the Asia Pacific Broadcast Union in Malaysia in June 2006. The purpose of the visit was to trigger collaboration between one of India's largest treasuries of non-print content with institutions in Malaysia.

Through CEMCA, COL participated in the launch of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development, hosted by the Government of Malaysia and the United Nations System in Putrajaya, Malaysia in June 2006.

Open schooling

COL convened an international symposium on the application of multimedia to the schooling sector of the education system at Ahmedabad, India in January 2005. The symposium was designed to bring together institutions from Africa, South and Southeast Asia that are using satellite broadcasting to support the school system. The Malaysian participant from University Sains Malaysia, Penang attended the meeting.

Preparation and use of learning materials

Malaysian authors contributed to the CEMCA publication "Educational Media in Asia" by providing country and case studies that have proved valuable in understanding the state of practice of educational applications of information and communications technologies (ICT) in Asia in 2005.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Together with the GKP, COL sponsored six delegates from Malaysia to attend the third Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF3). These included participants from the Open University of Malaysia, Wawasan Educational Foundation, University of Technology, and University Putra Malaysia. COL also supported a delegate from the University Sains Malaysia, to attend the International Conference organised by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization-UNESCO (SEAMEO-UNESCO) office in Bangkok in 2004.

CEMCA worked with Wawasan Open University College to organise a regional forum on the theme of Revisiting ODL: Planning and Management in June 2006. The event was attended by senior administrators from Asian ODL institutions including the Open University of Malaysia.

Under COL's Young Professionals Attachment Programme Malaysia hosted interns at the International Plant Genetics Resource Institute's Asia Pacific Office; the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Education in Science and Mathematics; and the GKP Secretariat.

LOOKING FORWARD

In the next planning period 2006-2009 Malaysia will build on the excellent partnerships founded in 2003-2006 and will continue to be a rich resource of knowledge and experience for Commonwealth Asian countries. COL will seek to involve Malaysian expertise in international forums and conferences and will look forward to testing models in the use of ICTs for themes such as women's self employment and empowerment.