

MALDIVES

COL activities in 2003-2006

BACKGROUND

The archipelago of the Maldives has a small population dispersed across a wide area in the Indian Ocean.

With almost universal adult literacy, a small but effective educational system, and most of the Millennium Development Goals met, the Maldives' needs are different from those of its neighbours in South Asia. It has a good IT infrastructure backbone, connecting all islands and atolls. Priorities for the Maldives are capacity building and professional development of teachers, educational administrators, and developing locally and linguistically relevant content for its system.

Badly battered by the 2004 Asian Tsunami, the Maldives government found itself having to cope with a major disaster. Hence, it focussed its attention on relief and rehabilitation for much of the time in 2005.

SUMMARY

In the triennium 2003-2006, COL provided support to the Educational Media Unit of the Ministry and sponsored professionals from the Maldives to take part in workshops in other countries. The Maldives is participating in the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

POLICY AND SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

Working in partnership with COL and regional partners to strengthen national systems

With Asian Development Bank funding, COL designed a post-secondary education and skills development plan for the Maldives. The plan addresses the Maldives' need to increase training output, accelerate training and improve on the quality of training using open and distance learning.

COL has had a long relationship with the Educational Development Centre (EDC) of the Ministry of Education. Since 1996 it has been supporting the multi-media efforts of the EDC by supplying training and technology. This has resulted in multi-media based materials being produced for primary and secondary schools throughout the atolls.

The Maldives is one of the countries in the South Asia consortium for Teacher Education Development (SACTED), created by COL, which brings together institutions using distance education as means to provide teacher education and in-service training. The Maldives was represented at the first SACTED meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 3 - 4 November 2004.

The Maldives was represented on the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) Advisory Council until 2005.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

The Maldives is participating in the VUSSC (see section on Pan-Commonwealth initiatives for more details of VUSSC).

Preparation and use of learning materials

The Maldives is one of the countries to have benefited from the multimedia training package on Gender and Rural Development created by the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization office in Bangkok.

CEMCA also provided the Radio and Television system of Maldives with MEDLIB, software developed by it, to archive non print media materials (audio, video, and CD) in June 2006.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Maldivian representatives took part in a COL organised consultative meeting for the South Asia Region as part of its activities to promote literacy and skills training, using open, distance and technology-mediated methods for up-scaling. The meeting took place at the BRAC Centre Inn in Dhaka from 26-28 September 2005.

A representative nominated by the Maldivian government was trained by CEMCA in multimedia production at its training programmes in November 2004.

In 2005, the Maldives attended the COL organised consultative meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh for the South Asia Region on the promotion of literacy and skills training using ODL methods to take to scale.

LOOKING FORWARD

The Maldives has made a significant amount of progress in achieving ODL priorities for teacher training and developing relevant course materials. In the 2006-2009 period its capacity building efforts will continue and in this the Maldives will be supported by its partnership with COL and other countries in South East Asia.