



# COMLEARN

NEWS PUBLICATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING

APRIL 1992  
VOL.3 NO.1

## Commonwealth Heads of Government Commend COL

ine improvements  
e quality of life.



**COL President, Prof. James Maraj (left) welcomes Prime Minister Nicholas Brathwaite of Grenada to COL's information exhibition at the 1991 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe.**

**P**rof. James A. Maraj, President of The Commonwealth of Learning (COL), represented the Chairman, Board of Governors, and staff of COL at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in Harare, Zimbabwe from October 16 - 21, 1991 and formally presented COL's second *Report to Commonwealth Heads of Government*.

The report, which was presented on behalf of the Board of Governors, reviewed the activities undertaken by COL to date, related these to COL's mandate, and proposed actions that Heads of Government could take which would help in achieving the objectives set for the organisation by Heads of Government. Appended to the Report were an Executive Summary of COL's *Strategic Plan 1991 - 1993*, COL's latest *Compendium of Activities*, and a statement of pledges made and funds received to date.

*Heads of Government noted with satisfaction the remarkable progress made by The Commonwealth of Learning since the last meeting of Heads of Government in Kuala Lumpur.*

The organisation's work in the transfer of educational materials, telecommunications, training, institutional development and information services were highlighted in the Report, as was the attention given to issues pertaining to environment, women in development and continuing professional education.

In the proposals for action, the Board of Governors asked that Commonwealth Heads of Government note the further progress made and respectfully requested them to assist COL by taking steps to facilitate the sharing of existing educational materials, helping to publicise COL, remitting outstanding pledges, and making new pledges for a second tranche of funding to enable COL to continue the work which has been initiated.

The response of Heads of Government is reflected in the following paragraph in their Harare Communiqué:

### Highlights

<i>Commonwealth Heads Commend COL</i> .....	1
<i>Women in Development</i> .....	2
<i>COL Fellowships Program</i> .....	4
<i>COL and TVET</i> .....	6
<i>*COL/ICDL distance education database</i> .....	7
<i>Staff appointments and changes</i> .....	8
<i>Continuing Judicial Education</i> .....	9
<i>An Historical Synopsis</i> .....	11

# WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

## *Literacy: The Key to Access for Women*

*Access to education and training is an essential prerequisite for female participation on a more equal basis in society. Literacy is one of the most fundamental avenues to access.*

**T**he Ottawa Declaration on Women and Structural Adjustment (Third Meeting of Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs – Ottawa, Canada; October 1990) was endorsed by Commonwealth Heads of Government at their 1991 Meeting in Harare and emphasises the necessity to ensure investment in education for women. Access to education and training is an essential prerequisite for female participation on a more equal basis in society. Literacy is one of the most fundamental avenues to access.

### THE ROLE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION – COL SYMPOSIUM

In Pakistan, the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Islamabad, is one of the few Commonwealth institutions offering literacy programmes for women through distance education. To enable other Commonwealth countries to become aware of this and share their approaches to the problem of female illiteracy, COL, in conjunction with AIOU, hosted a Symposium on *Women's Literacy Programmes – The Role of Distance Education*, from September 23 – 27, 1991. Participants – women in senior level positions from various literacy programmes – came from ten countries within the Asian and Pacific regions: Australia, Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, and Tonga. Backgrounds included open universities, government ministries, a correspondence

school, and UNICEF. A number of observers were also present, representing UNESCO, CIDA, and UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women).

### LITERACY FOR WOMEN

Countries represented at the Symposium ranged from those with systems of free, compulsory, universal education with 100% literacy to those with low percentages of school attendance and thereby very poor rates of literacy, especially among women and girls. Participants' presentations highlighted the importance of literacy for women as, first and foremost, a basic human right as well as an important means of empowerment.

The importance of tailoring literacy programmes to meet different needs was a point that was emphasised. Women working wholly or partly in the home, for example, require a programme which allows "space for the inscribing of 'unofficial' languages, but which also acknowledges women's needs to access public-domain languages."

*Participants' presentations highlighted the importance of literacy for women as, first and foremost, a basic human right as well as an important means of empowerment.*



*Motivational exercise in Ban-Kalas, Pakistan, conducted by Prof. Razia Abbas of Allama Iqbal Open University.*

*The Commonwealth of Learning is committed to the goal of empowering women through improved access to education.*

The existence of a free educational system was cited as the main reason for a female literacy rate of 85.2% (92.2% for males) in Sri Lanka, and almost full literacy in Tonga. Compulsory schooling, however, is no guarantee of full literacy. Five to ten per cent of the population in New Zealand requires literacy assistance, and this is provided by the Adult Reading and Learning Assistance Federation and the Correspondence Schools. Over half of those enrolled in such programmes are women.

Impediments to women's literacy were attributed to geographical, cultural and socio-economic factors. Where there is a large geographical spread and lack of inter-island communications, as in the Maldives and the Solomon Islands, overall education suffers, especially for females. In the Maldives, distances from the capital, Male, combined with the high costs of post-primary education impact adversely on females. Similarly, in the Solomon Islands, with only 10% of the 5,000 villages having a primary school, communication difficulties compound educational problems. When to this are added the number of languages spoken and the traditional village attitudes to female education, women are most likely to be disadvantaged. Very similar problems are encountered in Papua New Guinea which has 700 different languages and reportedly one of the lowest adult literacy rates in the entire Asia-Pacific region. Literacy programmes, specifically for women, have been set up by the Ministry of Education and focus in a functional way on topics such as rape, family planning, and malaria.

The situation in India and neighbouring Pakistan, however, is not as promising. India has a female illiteracy rate of 75% and, according to the Indian participant in the Symposium, rural women who make up the vast majority of illiterates, have little exposure to the language of administration, which is a peculiarly male knowledge. While the constitution in Bangladesh assumes rural access to education for females, women bear the greatest brunt of poverty, hunger and ignorance. The national female literacy rate at the last census was quoted as 19% (45% for males) and, as is so often the case, the greatest barrier to education for women is socio-cultural.

#### **THE INTEGRATED FUNCTIONAL LITERACY PROJECT - PAKISTAN**

One of the reasons for choosing Pakistan as the venue of the Symposium was to enable participants to hear about and see first-hand the work of the Bureau for University Extension and Special Programmes (BUESP) at AIOU. The Bureau was established in 1987 and operates directly from the Vice-Chancellor's office to implement the Basic Functional Education Programme, the Integrated Functional Literacy Project, and field research in remote areas. The main purpose of the Basic Functional Education Programme is to bring about rural development through education. The Programme is developing a replicable strategy approach for rural Pakistan, that can be extended from the outreach system of AIOU's Regional Offices, which offer courses to help rural people learn functional skills for use in their everyday lives.

The Integrated Functional Literacy Project is primarily for women. It aims to make women literate and numerate, as well as bring as many girls as possible to primary level. The Project's intention is to ensure that those completing a literacy programme are also qualified and equipped to join the mainstream of formal/non-formal middle level education. It also produces tested instructional materials and gives training in income-saving and income-generating skills.

Another of the Bureau's major undertakings is the Women's Matriculation Project which provides facilities

for matriculation for those women who have no access to higher education. This Secondary School certificate project is designed to introduce women to vocational education and aims to awaken educational consciousness, introduce new skills, and raise awareness of the importance of augmenting income. This unique project will be launched in all four provinces through AIOU's distance education system.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE SYMPOSIUM**

The objectives of the Symposium, whose focus was in keeping with COL's prioritisation of providing access for women to education, were to orient senior level personnel engaged in literacy and post-literacy programmes to critical issues concerning women; to examine methods and techniques of planning, implementing and evaluation of such programmes; and to highlight how literacy could be accomplished through distance education techniques.

The major thrust of the discussion was in regard to the application of distance education and open learning systems to literacy and basic education programmes. Design of literacy projects and plans for effective utilisation and cost effectiveness of local resources for literacy programmes were also considered. The group also identified and discussed the implementation of a national programme with particular emphasis on curriculum design, teacher training, management, material production, use of mass media, and student assessment and evaluation.

The federal Minister for Education in Pakistan, Hon. Syed Fakhar Imam, officially opened the Symposium and acknowledged that Pakistan's extremely low female literacy rate of 31% (down to 7% in many rural areas) inhibited the country's progress. The government is committed to bridging the literacy gap over the next five year plan, as well as making concerted efforts to provide better access for women to education. He hoped that AIOU-COL collaboration in this area would be helpful.

#### **MEETING WITH THE EDUCATION MINISTER**

The Education Minister had expressed a keen interest in meeting with the Symposium participants and invited them to a round-table discussion at the Ministry offices. The group was accompanied by Dr. Zaki, AIOU Vice-Chancellor, and Prof. Abbas and Dr. I.N. Hassan, two of the most senior women on the academic staff. Topics discussed with the Minister covered incentives for retention of female teachers in rural areas in particular, and throughout the education system, in general; equal opportunity of employment (there are no senior women in the Education Ministry); and the Government's policies for female education. The Minister exhibited a genuine interest in systems in place in New Zealand and Australia and agreed that the participation of educated women in the labour market in Pakistan should be encouraged more actively.

#### **LITERACY - A COL COMMITMENT**

The Commonwealth of Learning is committed to the goal of empowering women through improved access to education. The Symposium revealed that there are many ways in which the techniques of distance education can address fundamental literacy needs, and COL will be working throughout the Commonwealth to encourage and assist the development and implementation of such programmes.



*BC Fellows (left to right): Mr. Dick Scales, Dr. Monique Layton, Dr. Iain Cooke, Dr. Nalini Murthy, Mr. David Ormandy, Ms. Wendy Norman, Mr. Mark Bullen, and Mr. Wes Koczka.*

#### COL FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAMME

## British Columbian Educators Selected to Work with Developing Commonwealth Countries

**E**ight British Columbia educators will soon be on their way to selected developing countries to broaden their experience while providing expert services. The Canadians were named by COL as this year's Fellows receiving awards under a programme jointly sponsored by The Commonwealth of Learning and the B.C. Government.

The individuals were selected from nominations received from educational institutions throughout B.C. by matching their experience with specific educational needs identified by Antigua/Barbuda, Bangladesh, Dominica, India, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia.

"By travelling to developing countries and providing advice and guidance, it is expected that British Columbia educators will discover at first-hand the challenges that face educators in these regions," said COL President,

Prof. James Maraj, after making the announcement. "We are also hopeful that some of these interchanges will result in collaborative projects between institutions in B.C. and developing countries."

In each case, the Canadians will participate in projects related to distance education. Prof. Maraj described educational opportunities as being "severely restricted" throughout most of the developing world, but "by adopting the techniques and technologies associated with learning at a distance, access can be increased and the quality of education improved. The promotion of human resource development in the Third World will increasingly have to make use of distance education."

The eight British Columbia educators named as Fellows are: Mr. Mark Bullen (UBC Access, University of British Columbia), Dr. Iain Cooke (Computer Based Education Department, Camosun College), Mr. Wes Koczka (Division of University Extension, University of

*"By travelling to developing countries and providing advice and guidance, it is expected that British Columbia educators will discover at first-hand the challenges that face educators in these regions,"*

*— Prof. James Maraj*



Victoria), Dr. Monique Layton (Centre for Distance Education, Simon Fraser University), Dr. Nalini Murthy (Computing Science Department, College of New Caledonia), Ms. Wendy Norman (Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology), Mr. David J. Ormandy (Business and Economics Department, North Island College), and Mr. Dick Scales (Open College, Open Learning Agency). Details of specific projects are available from The Commonwealth of Learning.

The COL/B.C. Government Fellowships programme, which is in its third year, also includes annual study visits to B.C. by visiting educators from developing Commonwealth countries. Participants in the September 1991 programme included Mr. Abu Samah bin Mohd. Amin, Ministry of Education (Malaysia); Mr. R.A. Aggor, University of Ghana; Ms. Frances Harris, Dominica Teachers' College; Mr. Brima S. Konteh, Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Sports (Sierra Leone); Ms. Josephine Maioni, College of Distance Education (Papua New Guinea); Ms. Marguerite Mancienne, Seychelles Polytechnic; Ms. Kathleen Monyane, Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre; Mr. Gabriel M. Muita, Kenya Institute of Education; Ms. Tamkanat Niazi, Allama Iqbal Open University (Pakistan) and Ms. Dalene van der Westhuizen, Ministry of Education and Culture (Namibia).

To date, educators from twenty-eight of the forty-six developing Commonwealth countries have visited British Columbia under the Fellowships Programme. Other countries that have sent representatives include Bangladesh, Barbados, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, The Gambia, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Malawi, Mauritius, Nigeria, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

*To date, educators from twenty-eight of the forty-six developing Commonwealth countries have visited British Columbia under the Fellowships Programme.*

The B.C. programme serves as a model for similar programmes in other Canadian provinces and other developed Commonwealth countries. This year, the Canadian province of Ontario, in cooperation with COL and a number of Caribbean Commonwealth members, are participating in the first visiting Fellowship Programme to that province. In Manitoba, another Canadian province, talks are progressing on the establishment of a fellowship scheme.

The two aspects of the British Columbia Fellowships Programme have been warmly commended by past participants, their governments, and institutions. By 1993, it is expected that all developing Commonwealth countries would have had the opportunity to send an educator to visit British Columbia. It is also hoped that by the same year, all post-secondary institutions in British Columbia would also have had the opportunity to send members of their staff to developing countries to provide specific advice, guidance, and training, in the area of distance education, while gaining an international perspective.

## Distinguished Visitors

**O**n September 16, 1991, COL was honoured by the visit of African National Congress (ANC) Deputy President, Mr. Walter Sisulu, and his wife, Mrs. Albertina Sisulu, to COL's Vancouver headquarters. Mrs. Sisulu is a leader in the ANC Women's League. Discussions with professional staff included a review of the progress made by the ANC to date and the role that COL might play in post-apartheid South Africa.

Mr. and Mrs. Sisulu have both been leaders in the ANC and related organisations for over 50 years. They were married in 1944. In June 1964, Mr. Sisulu, along with Mr. Nelson Mandela, was convicted of treason and sentenced to life imprisonment. Released after 25 years in October 1989, he immediately plunged back into the struggle and has been a key figure in reorganising the ANC inside South Africa.

Mr. and Mrs. Sisulu were in Canada on a tour organised by Oxfam, Canada and were accompanied by other ANC representatives based in both Africa and Canada.



*COL President, Prof. James Maraj (left) with Mr. Walter Sisulu.*

continued from page 1

*Heads of Government noted with satisfaction the remarkable progress made by The Commonwealth of Learning since the last meeting of Heads of Government in Kuala Lumpur, and the impressive strides it had taken towards widening educational access and raising educational quality through distance education. They commended the Board, the President and staff of The Commonwealth of Learning on the achievements to date, and on the contribution which the organisation had already begun to make to human resource development in several Commonwealth countries. They welcomed the new pledges made and urged all member countries to pledge additional financial support as soon as possible, to enable the organisation to develop and expand.*

In addition to the reporting formally as required under its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), COL provided CHOGM delegates with the opportunity to learn more about the organization and its programmes through an exhibition mounted at the Conference Centre. A highlight of the exhibition was the demonstration of various applications of communications technologies, including teleconferencing, in the delivery of education. COL's courses database developed by the International Centre for Distance Learning (ICDL), and a project on education about the Commonwealth, produced jointly with the Commonwealth Institute, were also on display.

## COL and Technical/Vocational Education And Training

COL's involvement in the field of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) was launched at the conference which it convened in Hong Kong in November 1990. The organisation is now poised to make a significant contribution in this area, and to assist some of the many people who are in real need of access to training that will provide them with the skills to become employable, as well as imbue them with the confidence and motivation to pursue further qualification.

There is a very broad spectrum of skills as well as a wide diversity in levels of study in the TVET field. There are men and women who have had no formal training, and require competence in a basic skill that will enable them either to become employable, or at the very least, self reliant in some form of provision of basic need. Another group who have been trained in a particular field may require either upgrading or perhaps retraining to enter a different occupation in the work force. Both of these groups fall into a category that is encompassed within the definition of "vocational." Then there is a further group, possessing either formal qualification or considerable skill, who wish to advance into the higher orders of TVET and require education and qualification at a technical, tertiary education level. This group has been classified as "technical."

COL is committed to assist across this entire spectrum of need, and to this end has taken some positive steps. Among these has been the appointment of a Senior Programme Officer with a particular responsibility for TVET. Ms. Mavis Bird from the TAFE (Technical and Further Education) Off Campus Co-ordinating Authority in Melbourne, Australia, joined the staff of COL in October 1991. Ms. Bird comes to COL with fifteen years experience in the trade areas of vocational training and two years as a Manager in a distance educa-

tion organisation. Her task will be to coordinate the TVET activities that COL is involved in and to take a proactive role in ensuring that Technical and Vocational projects become a major element of COL's work programme.

Also, as a direct result of the Hong Kong conference, a Reference Group has been established to assist COL in formulating policy and establishing priorities within TVET. Members of the group were chosen for their particular skill and/or experience in vocational education and distance education and, as a group, represent all regions of the Commonwealth. This group met for the first time in November 1991 at COL headquarters in Vancouver.

A major part of the meeting was devoted to the further development of proposals from the regions initiated at the Hong Kong conference. These proposals have now to be refined and are currently at the feasibility study stage. Collectively they span a wide but predictable range, with the need for training of TVET teachers and instructors standing out significantly. Other proposals address concerns that have been identified by a specific region, but which have significant and relevant implications for all regions, both developing and developed. They include:

- licensing agreements for use of materials;
- training in the use of delivery technologies;
- management skills for TVET educators;
- training in the design and development of distance education materials in both teacher and subject content training;
- learning skills development for students, with specific emphasis on the African region; and
- supporting the establishment of a Distance Education Department at the University of Zimbabwe.

Projects that are already being addressed include the provision of assistance to Zambia in the form of a computer awareness course from the Open University of Sri Lanka.

A COL-sponsored TVET workshop in Pakistan, initiated at the request of the Government of Pakistan, is about to get underway. The objectives of this project are to identify and establish the means by which TVET can be implemented in the region via distance education, to select a number of subject areas for a pilot programme, and to establish methods for the acquisition/development of materials to support it.

Through the kind cooperation of Dr. Helen Parker of the Queensland Distance Education College (QDEC), Australia, COL has acquired materials for an *automotive mechanics* course which will be used to assist in the development of pilot training courses in selected countries. These materials were developed jointly by the Department of Employment, Education and Training (Government of Australia) and the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training (Government of Queensland). They were produced by QDEC and are a self-paced training programme, designed to be implemented on-the-job, using the supervisor as an instructor. The materials cover the training of the supervisor as an instructor, as well as training the tradesperson. They should prove to be a useful model for addressing the issue of vocational training at a distance from a traditional institution.

The Hong Kong conference provided the impetus for COL's activities in the TVET area. The meeting of the Reference Group gave it an additional fillip. With a set of policy guidelines now in place, and an indicative work plan established, COL looks with confidence to making a significant contribution to the advancement of technical and vocational education and training in the Commonwealth.

*With a set of policy guidelines now in place, and an indicative work plan established, COL looks with confidence to making a significant contribution to the advancement of technical and vocational education and training in the Commonwealth.*



## Log in to the COL/ICDL distance education database!

**D**o you want to know which African institutions offer distance-taught courses in agriculture, or which institutions in India teach medical and paramedical courses at a distance?

Do you know which institutions in Australia and Canada are teaching at a distance and exactly what courses and programmes they offer?

Do you need to keep up-to-date with the latest distance education research reports and other literature?

All this information and a great deal more is now available from the distance education database offered by The Commonwealth of Learning through the International Centre for Distance Learning (ICDL) at the United Kingdom's Open University. Funding for ICDL is provided by the UK as the country's contribution to COL.

The database is accessible both on-line and on CD-ROM (compact disc-read-only memory), and ICDL staff undertake searches and answer enquiries on behalf of those who are not in a position to make use of either of these means of access. Particular priority is given to inquiries from developing countries. All aspects of the service are currently available free of charge, although it is expected that institutions in developed countries will soon be levied access charges.

*The database now contains detailed descriptions of over 14,000 courses and programmes offered by institutions throughout the Commonwealth.*

The database now contains detailed descriptions of over 14,000 courses and programmes offered by institutions throughout the Commonwealth. The database also contains more than 300 institutional descriptions and in excess of 3,000 entries relating to distance education literature, research, and study. The institutional and literature sections are world-wide in scope. The database has been designed to be used by people with little or no computer or database experience and feedback from both developing and developed countries indicates that it is quite easy to use.

Institutions from all countries have been allowed free access until now in order to encourage use, the provision of data, and feedback. Response has been good and, as a result, significant enhancements have been introduced or are planned. Two such enhancements, which will be available shortly, are an improved search facility, which will enable more specific searches in the course area via strings of "searchwords," and the inclusion of the full text of key documents in the literature area.

However, since the primary target of the database is the developing world, COL and ICDL are particularly anxious to ensure that the needs of developing country institutions are reflected in the services provided. Colleagues in institutions in developing countries are invited to contact ICDL to express their views and describe their specific needs in relation to information that ICDL can provide. Only through an expansion of a network of contacts, and through familiarity with their requirements, can we ensure that ICDL takes the right direction in forthcoming years.

In addition to providing support for those who do not have either on-line or CD-ROM access, ICDL information service staff also assist the frequent visitors who come to ICDL to use the extensive library of distance education literature. The library has been built up during the 14 years since the original Open University unit was established (from which ICDL has evolved). The library

*Colleagues in institutions in developing countries are invited to contact ICDL to express their views and describe their specific needs in relation to information that ICDL can provide.*

contains books, journals, journal articles, conference papers and proceedings, research reports, dissertations and a variety of other literature on all aspects of distance education world-wide, as well as a very large collection of current prospectuses and calendars produced by distance teaching institutions.

For six years, until 1989, ICDL was a small documentation centre funded by the United Nations University. Now, 14 full-time staff members are in post, ICDL has an international reputation as the major provider of information on distance education, and is represented at major distance education events all over the world. The first operating version of the database was demonstrated on behalf of The Commonwealth of Learning at the Commonwealth Ministers of Education Meeting in Barbados in 1990 and successive versions have subsequently been demonstrated by ICDL staff in many countries including Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, Hungary, India, Italy, The Netherlands, Sri Lanka, the United States, Venezuela, and in Zimbabwe at the recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

For further details, please contact:

Dr. Keith Harry  
Director  
International Centre for Distance Learning  
The Open University  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA  
United Kingdom

Fax: (44 908) 654173  
Telephone: (44 908) 653537

## Staff Appointments And Changes

*Six senior staff appointments have recently been made:*

**Mr. Lewis Perinbam** joined COL on October 1, 1991 as Special Adviser to the President. Formerly a Vice President of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), he has also represented the World Bank at the United Nations and its specialised agencies and was the first Secretary-General of the Canadian National Commission for UNESCO. His responsibilities will primarily be to strengthen COL's relations with the non-governmental and private sectors.

Also on October 1, **Dr. Alexander A. Kwapong** assumed his appointment as COL's Director of African Programmes, Research and Evaluation. Originally from Ghana, Dr. Kwapong came to COL from Dalhousie University (Halifax, Canada) where he held the Chair in Development Studies at the Lester Pearson Institute for International Development. He is a former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana and a former Vice-Rector of the United Nations University.

**Mr. John Steward**, Senior Programme Officer in COL's Caribbean Programmes and Materials Acquisition and Development Division, has been Acting Head, Administration and Finance from August 13, 1991.

**Ms. Mavis Bird** commenced her duties, on October 14, as Senior Programme Officer in the Caribbean Programmes & Materials Acquisition and Development Division. Ms. Bird has special responsibility for the Technical/Vocational area. She was, most recently, Manager, Educational Services, TAFE (Technical and Further Education) Off-Campus Coordinating Authority in Melbourne, Australia.

**Mr. Patrick Guiton** joined COL on October 30. Mr. Guiton is attached to the Pacific Programmes & Continuing Professional Education Division as Senior Programme Officer, having special responsibility for the development of programmes to advance the continuing education and training of Commonwealth professionals and para-professionals. He is on a secondment from Murdoch University in Perth, Western Australia, where he is Director of External Studies. He has been employed in management capacities at distance education institutions in both Australia and the U.K. for over 20 years and was the foundation Director of the Murdoch External Studies programme.

**Dr. Abdul Khan** has been appointed Senior Programme Officer in the Technology and Telecommunications Division. Dr. Khan has had extensive international experience in educational technology, most recently as the Communications Director at the Indira Gandhi National Open University in New Delhi, India. He commenced his duties at COL headquarters on March 5, 1992.

*COL has also contracted with two senior educators to serve as the Organisation's first Regional Coordinators:*

**Prof. O.S. Dewal**, formerly Principal, Regional College of Education, India, has been appointed as COL's Regional Coordinator for India. He will be located at the Indira Gandhi National Open University in the Office of the Vice Chancellor, IGNOU. The appointment was effective July 20, 1991 and is for a one-year term. Upon the resignation of Prof. G. Ram Reddy, Prof. Dewal was relocated temporarily to COL's Vancouver headquarters and given temporary responsibility for overseeing COL's Asian programmes.

**Prof. Leslie Robinson**, formerly Pro-Vice Chancellor and Principal, Mona Campus, University of the West Indies, has been appointed as COL's Regional Coordinator for Caribbean Programmes. He continues to be located at the Mona Campus of UWI. The appointment was effective October 1, 1991 and is for a one-year term.

*COL is indebted to four senior staff members who had been with the Organisation from its earliest days. They have now returned to responsibilities in their own countries:*

Responding to a call from his country's government to take up the position of Chairman of the University Grants Commission, COL Vice-President, **Prof. G. Ram Reddy**, resigned his position after two years and returned to India in October, 1991.

Also responding to a call from his government, COL's Director of Technologies and Telecommunications, **Mr. John Quigley**, concluded his secondment from the Canadian Department of Communications and returned to his Department as an Assistant Deputy Minister.

**Mr. Hafiz Wali** completed his two-year secondment as COL Director of African Programmes and Information Services, and returned to his position with the Nigerian Ministry of Education in November.

**Mr. Sooknath Lackhan**, formerly Head, Administration and Finance, returned to his position as Deputy Bursar at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad and Tobago on August 13, 1991, after completing a two-year secondment with COL.





## Continuing Judicial Education

Chief justices, judges and directors of continuing judicial education programmes from around the Commonwealth met at COL's Vancouver headquarters in March 1992. The three-day workshop, organised and hosted by The Commonwealth of Learning, provided Commonwealth judicial administrators with their first opportunity to discuss possibilities for collaboration in training programs for judges and established the basis for a continuing Commonwealth initiative in judicial education. The initial areas of concentration will be the education of newly appointed judges.

COL President, Prof. James Maraj, said that "the prospect of having judges in all parts of the Commonwealth exposed to appropriate induction and continuing exposure to education and training should result in significant improvements to the justice system, which will reinforce Commonwealth ideals of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. COL and relevant agencies will continue to work with the Commonwealth judicial jurisdictions on programs toward this end."

A substantial background paper was prepared and distributed prior to the meeting and the workshop reports will be distributed to each Commonwealth judicial administration.

The meeting was arranged in cooperation with the Society for the Reform of Criminal Law, also headquartered in Vancouver. The Society is a non-governmental international organisation which brings together, on a

continuing basis, parliamentarians, judges, lawyers, academics, and heads of public interest groups in working for the improvement of the criminal law and the administration of criminal justice, both in their own jurisdictions and internationally. The workshop was chaired by Mr. Justice Ken Lysyk of the Supreme Court of British Columbia, Canada.

## Teleconference and Educational Technology Centre, Vancouver

COL consultants have completed the engineering work associated with the installation of a technologically advanced **video-teleconference centre** at COL Headquarters in Vancouver. A contract has been signed with the British Columbia Telephone Company to provide access to their provincial, national, and international switching capability. The teleconference centre has been designed to be compatible with any teleconferencing facility world-wide and will provide COL with the ability to use and demonstrate the vast potential of this emerging communications method.

Planning has been completed for the establishment of an **educational technology centre** also at COL Headquarters. Training, evaluation, and demonstration facilities will include a wide range of educational technology equipment and software as well as links to world-wide electronic messaging and research services. Much of the equipment and capabilities are already operational.

Both facilities were made possible through funding received from the Canadian Department of Communications.

## Directories

The first editions of three directories have been compiled by The Commonwealth of Learning. Two have been published and distributed and a third is at the printing stage:

- *Directory of Courses Available by Distance (Volume 1 - Teacher Education)*
- *Directory of Courses and Materials for Training in Distance Education*
- *Directory of Commonwealth Continuing Legal Education* - a directory of education and training resources for the entire field of law and law-related subjects.

COL, in conjunction with the International Centre for Ocean Development and the Marine Affairs Program at Dalhousie University (both in Halifax, Canada), has also published the 1992 edition of the *Catalogue of Audio-Visual Materials in Ocean Development and Management*.



*The Rt. Hon. Lord Ross, The Lord Justice Clerk of Scotland (left), confers with The Hon. W. Wambuzi, Chief Justice of Uganda (right) at COL's judicial education workshop.*

## South-Asian Vice Chancellors

To promote regional cooperation and, specifically, sharing and exchange of materials, COL organized a meeting of south-Asian Vice Chancellors and senior academics. The meeting was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka and was attended by senior representatives of the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) and the Vice Chancellors of Indira Gandhi National Open University, India; Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University (formerly, Andhra Pradesh Open University), India; Kota Open University, India; and OUSL. Also in attendance were the Chairman of the University Grants Commission in Bangladesh, the Director of the Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong, and the Assistant Director of the Non-Formal Education Centre in Maldives.

## Scholarship/Bursary Schemes

Recognising a need for support for students studying in alternative modes, COL, in cooperation with the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC), has recently launched a Bursaries Scheme for distance education students. Through the scheme, selected institutions offering courses by distance will be provided with modest funds towards the cost of the fees of distance education students taking local courses.

Among the institutions receiving the first tranche of support are the Open University of Sri Lanka, The University of the South Pacific, The University of the West Indies, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University (India), University of Zimbabwe, Allama Iqbal Open University (Pakistan), University of Nairobi (Kenya), Makerere University (Uganda), the University of Guyana, The University of Papua New Guinea and The College of Arts, Science and Technology (Jamaica).

## Regional Training Workshop – Pacific

The second Pacific Region Training Workshop took place in Sydney, Australia, under the direction of Dr. John Chick of the University of New England (Australia). University Centre Directors from all the USP regional countries and from the University of Papua New Guinea provincial centres undertook a personal development training course concerned with maximising their efficiency in operating the student support services of their country or province. COL provided the technical input to the workshop and the COL/Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (COL/AIDAB) programme for the Southwest Pacific provided funding for travel and subsistence for the regional participants.

## CADE Conference '92

The eighth annual conference of the Canadian Association of Distance Education (CADE) will be hosted by Algonquin Community College in Ottawa from May 12 – 15, 1992. The theme of the conference is *New Alliances*. Canadian distance educators will be joined by many international colleagues at this event and international participation is also expected at the pre-conference workshop on *Instructional Design of Distance Education Material*. Further details are available from the Conference Chairperson, Ms. Margery West (c/o School of Continuing Education, Algonquin Community College, 1385 Woodroffe Avenue, Nepean, Ontario, Canada K2G 1V8; phone 613 727 7667; fax 613 727 7684)

## Survival!

In conjunction with Canada's International Development Week (February 3 – 9, 1992), the board game SURVIVAL! was introduced to young Canadians. Playing the game demonstrates what it takes to "survive" in the developing world. Along the way, students need to avoid the obstacles faced by people in this other world – drought killing their cattle, a school that runs out of textbooks, and a baby formula mixed with contaminated water.

But they also learn some of the ingenious ways people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America overcome their problems: a home-made remedy for dehydration caused by diarrhoea that is saving the lives of millions of infants; puppet shows that spread health information; bankers on bicycles that help rickshaw drivers double their incomes; and a biogas plant that converts cow dung into cooking fuel.

The game was developed by the **Aga Khan Foundation Canada**, with financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency and collaboration with leading Canadian educators, artists, and international development experts. SURVIVAL! has now been distributed to schools, libraries, and youth groups across Canada.

"Teachers told us they were hungry for educational tools that provide a balanced picture of developing countries, but which are also fun," said Mr. Nazeer Ladhani, Chief Executive Officer of the Aga Khan Foundation Canada. "SURVIVAL! is an attempt to meet that need."

SURVIVAL! is aimed at eight to 11 year-olds, and is actually several games in one. In addition to a board game, there are word searches, mazes, crosswords, and brain-teasers. The students learn about the many uses of trees, and about how Thai farmers solved their peanut shelling problem with an old tire. They also learn how to play Yoté, a marble game from West Africa.





# THE COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

## An Historical Synopsis

The concept of sharing Commonwealth resources in distance learning can trace its origins to a growing concern among Commonwealth leaders and Education Ministers about a sharp reduction in student mobility due to the introduction of higher fees in certain countries. Commonwealth Heads of Government at their 1985 meeting in Nassau requested the Secretary-General to explore the scope for new Commonwealth initiatives in the field of distance education.

The ensuing report, *Towards a Commonwealth of Learning*, acknowledged the potential of communications technology for extending educational opportunities by countering the barriers of distance and isolation. One way of meeting the challenges facing educators confronted with a growing demand and constricted resources, was by harnessing the advantages of new communications technology in the field of distance learning. It was seen that Commonwealth collaboration could be extended if there were an institution established which was dedicated to Commonwealth co-operation in distance education. The object of such an institution would be "to widen access to education, to share resources, to raise educational quality and to support the mobility of ideas, of teaching, of relevant research and of people."

Commonwealth Heads of Government met in Vancouver in October 1987 and recommended that a Commonwealth institution to promote co-operation in distance education be created. On September 1, 1988 Commonwealth Governments formally agreed, through a Memorandum of Understanding, to establish The Commonwealth of Learning (COL), in Vancouver. A Headquarters Agreement between the Government of Canada and The Commonwealth of Learning recognised the Agency as an autonomous, independent, international organisation. It became operational in January 1989 when the founding President, Prof. James A. Maraj, assumed office.

The purpose of the Agency, as reflected in the Memorandum of Understanding, is to create and widen access to education and to improve its quality, utilising distance education techniques and associated communications technologies to meet the particular requirements of member countries. The Agency's programmes and activities aim to strengthen member countries' capacities to develop the human resources required for their economic and social advancement and are carried out in collaboration with Governments, relevant agencies, universities,

colleges and other educational and training establishments among whom it also seeks to promote co-operative endeavours.

In determining its initial activities, The Commonwealth of Learning has been influenced by the consultations held with Governments and by the priorities set by the Board of Governors. It has also closely followed the guidelines on functions and objectives contained in the Memorandum of Understanding. The key functions to which The Commonwealth of Learning has given early attention relate to undertaking and supporting staff training in the techniques and management of distance education; assisting the acquisition and delivery of teaching materials and more generally facilitating access to them, as well as promoting their adaptation and development.

The Commonwealth of Learning has also facilitated the channelling of resources to projects and programmes

*In performing its functions, The Commonwealth of Learning seeks to ensure the appropriateness of programmes and of distance education techniques and technologies to the particular requirements of member countries.*

in distance education, and has provided information and consultancy services on aspects of distance education including the selection of appropriate technology. Projects in these areas naturally contribute to institutional development and in some instances have resulted in the channelling of resources in support of distance education. In performing its functions, The Commonwealth of Learning seeks to ensure the appropriateness of programmes and of distance education techniques and technologies to the particular requirements of member countries.

In order to involve as many Commonwealth countries as possible, the initial work plan has had a geographical focus on Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. In these regions, ongoing consultations with leaders and policy-makers will continue to be undertaken, in order to ensure that The Commonwealth of Learning's action is in consonance with identified priorities. These include training of distance educators, teacher training and providing assistance in setting up distance education institutions, as well as developing and strengthening institutions by providing course materials.

In fulfilling its mandate both from a functional and a geographical perspective, The Commonwealth of Learning will place special emphasis on the environmental sector.

*In fulfilling its mandate both from a functional and a geographical perspective, The Commonwealth of Learning will place special emphasis on the environmental sector.*

tor. The objectives are to help individuals and groups generally acquire an awareness of and sensitivity to the environment and its problems, and of what they can do to address these problems. Assistance is to be given to foster, through the formal education system, a healthy attitude to the environment among children and youth. The professional development of those who have special responsibility for managing and protecting the environment will also be assisted.

The Commonwealth of Learning is also developing a programme for women in development which has the overall aim of improving the status of women through widening access to education. Distance education is envisaged as a means of enabling more women to improve the quality of their lives, to play a more active role in their communities, and make a greater contribution to their countries' development. Priority will be given to improving access to relevant education for key groups such as those who, despite poor basic education, must acquire relevant skills in order to support families, or to those who wish to re-enter the workforce or assume community leadership roles.

In close co-operation with the Government of British Columbia, The Commonwealth of Learning has implemented a Study Fellowships Programme. The major objective of this Programme is to enhance professional development of the Fellows through carefully structured programmes featuring visits to institutions, universities and colleges, and presentations at the headquarters of The Commonwealth of Learning. The Programme also includes the sponsorship of visits by key British Columbia educators to overseas institutions to assist in reinforcing distance education programmes there and to experience at first-hand the challenges faced by the countries. By 1993, it is anticipated that each developing Commonwealth country will have had an opportunity to participate in the Programme. Companion COL Fellowship Programmes have recently been instigated in the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Manitoba.

COL reported to Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1989 and was commended for its progress. Heads of Government reaffirmed their belief in the Organisation's potential to enhance Commonwealth co-operation and to strengthen the Commonwealth fabric itself.

In 1990, The Commonwealth of Learning reported to Ministers of Education for the first time. At their meeting, they noted the further progress made, expressed their satisfaction with what had been achieved and pledged their continued support.

Commonwealth Heads of Government, at their meeting in Harare in 1991, commended The Commonwealth of Learning for the remarkable progress made since its inception less than three years ago and for the contribution which the organisation has already begun to make to human resource development in several Commonwealth countries.

Initially, voluntary pledges had been made by nine countries. By the time of the Harare CHOGM, 27 countries had contributed and Heads of Government urged all member countries to pledge additional financial support, as soon as possible, to enable the organisation to develop and expand.

*Initially, voluntary pledges had been made by nine countries. By the time of the Harare CHOGM, 27 countries had contributed.*

A five-year Strategic Plan and accompanying Work Plan have been developed and a *Compendium of Activities* records the extensive programmes which have been undertaken.

*Distance education is envisaged as a means of enabling more women to improve the quality of their lives.*

#### APRIL 1992 Volume 3, Number 1

COMLEARN is published by The Commonwealth of Learning. COL is an international organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development of sharing of distance education resources.

#### Contributors to this edition of COMLEARN:

Prof. James A. Maraj,  
President, COL  
Dr. Dennis Irvine, Director  
Dr. Alex Kwapong, Director  
Mr. Peter McMechan,  
Director  
Mr. Lewis Perinbam,  
Special Adviser  
Mr. John Steward,  
Acting Head, Administration  
and Finance  
Ms. Mavis Bird,  
Senior Programme Officer  
Prof. Peter Kinyanjui,  
Senior Programme Officer  
Ms. Susan Phillips,  
Senior Programme Officer  
Ms. Sherrill Whittington,  
Senior Programme Officer  
Mr. Dave Wilson,  
Public Affairs Officer  
Dr. Keith Harry,  
Director, International  
Centre for Distance Learning

Unless otherwise stated, articles appearing in COMLEARN may be reproduced. Acknowledgement should be made to The Commonwealth of Learning. This edition of COMLEARN was edited by Mr. Dave Wilson.

The Commonwealth of Learning  
1700 - 777 Dunsmuir Street  
Box 10428 Pacific Centre  
Vancouver, B.C.  
Canada V7Y 1K4  
Tel: 604 660 4675  
Fax: 604 660 7472  
Telex: 04507508  
COMLEARN



# COMLEARN