

## CCfE at Ten Years Old

Brainstorming Session on Monday May 23

### A. The Record

#### **A. Origins and Foundation**

1. The Commonwealth Consortium for Education (CCfE) was founded in Brisbane in October 2001 on the eve of 'The CHOGM that never was', when Commonwealth civil-society representatives turned up for civil society events planned to precede a CHOGM that was then cancelled because of the "9/11" events in the United States. The CHOGM eventually took place in Coolumb, Queensland, the following year (March 2002).
2. The inaugural meeting was Chaired by Professor Colin Power (whose home city Brisbane is) who had recently retired from his post as Deputy-Director General of UNESCO and it was addressed by the then Director of the Foundation, Colin Ball. It was attended by around 25 people.
3. The idea of creating an umbrella body for Commonwealth NGOs in education had however been mooted as far back as 13CCEM in Gaborone in 1997, with further discussions taking place at the Durban CHOGM in 1999, the 14CCEM in Halifax Nova Scotia, and among Commonwealth associations meeting in London in September 2001. Some of the prime movers in the process were the Council for Education in the Commonwealth, Commonwealth Association of Science, Technology and Mathematics Educators, the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and the League for Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers.
4. The impetus for bringing the Consortium into being thus came from member associations themselves. It sprang from an awareness that there was a multitude of civil-society organisations engaged in Commonwealth educational co-operation but they often operated in isolation, unaware of each other's purposes and programmes and, because of fragmentation, lacking in clout when it came to advancing the cause of education with the Commonwealth Secretariat and Foundation. It was felt that they would more effectively advance the cause of education by working more closely together, occasionally sharing facilities and services as in the case of the CHOGMs and CCEMs. There was also an acute awareness at the time of the 2001 CHOGM that education was slipping off the priority list of Commonwealth Governments (the Report of the High-level Group that year did not mention education at all) and that parts of the CW education infrastructure were under threat. At the same time Commonwealth IGOs were encouraging CSOs to co-ordinate their activities on a sector basis.

#### **B. Objectives/Mission**

5. The Consortium's Constitution elaborates these as follows
  - 1.1. *To promote the development of education throughout the Commonwealth by:*
    - Mobilising the contribution of education-based NGOs.
    - Generating support for Commonwealth institutions and programmes in education.
    - Assisting Commonwealth inter-governmental agencies to draw on NGO resources and expertise.
    - Contributing views and insights to the formulation of policies on Commonwealth educational co-operation.
    - Developing and disseminating models of good practice in education.
    - Encouraging education professionals to become engaged with the challenges of Commonwealth educational development.
    - Monitoring the implementation of Commonwealth education policy.
  - 1.2. *To constitute a forum which will promote co-operation by members in terms of:*
    - Better articulation of the interests and views of Commonwealth voluntary and professional bodies working in the education sector.
    - Co-operative activities by members on behalf of educational development in the Commonwealth.
    - Exchange of information and experience between members.
    - Sharing representation, services & facilities at Commonwealth/ other relevant events.

### **C. Membership**

6. Under the Constitution, membership is institutional/organisational and there is no present provision for individual membership.

Full Membership is open to any non-governmental organisation or association working in the education, youth and cultural sectors and having a major focus in its work on the advancement of education and skill development in the Commonwealth or on education about the Commonwealth.

Associate membership is available to (i) Pan-Commonwealth voluntary and professional associations in sectors other than education, knowledge management, youth or culture that have professional development and training among their functions ii) international organisations, inter-governmental and non-governmental, that are active in education in the Commonwealth, while not being pan-Commonwealth in form nor restricted to Commonwealth countries in their operations (iii) academic institutions with an interest and commitment to the objective of promoting education in the Commonwealth and/or education about the Commonwealth. Representatives from associate member organisations cannot hold Consortium office, are not regarded as subscribing to Consortium submissions and advocacy, and do not have voting rights in General meetings. They pay a lower rate of annual subscription (currently £50 compared with £75 for full members).

Special membership is reserved for the three Commonwealth inter-governmental organisations – the Secretariat, Foundation and Commonwealth of Learning – are all Special Members.

7. The initial membership was 12 organisations. Over the first ten years there have been 30 separate institutions in membership, in addition to the three Special members. Out of these 30, four have ceased to exist: the Commonwealth Institute; the Commonwealth Linking Trust; the Federation of Commonwealth Open and Distant Learning Associations, and the League for Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers. In 2010 the Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit decided to merge its Consortium membership with that of its parent body, the Institute for Commonwealth Studies. The Institute of Commonwealth Studies itself resigned in 2011, and the Commonwealth Legal Education Association was asked to withdraw in 2006 after persistently failing to pay subscriptions due.

8. The current list of 23 members (18 full members and 5 Associate members) in 2011 is attached at Appendix 1. The most recent member to join, on the basis of reciprocal exemption from membership fees between it and CCfE, is BUILD (Building Understanding through International Links for Development).

9. Seven of the full members are based outside the UK – ACEAB (Barbados), ACLALS (Jamaica), ACS (officially Canada), CAM (Canada), CAPA (Kenya), CCEAM (Australia), LCD (South Africa) and 10 within the UK; all five associate members are also located in UK.

10. Out of the 17 full members and five associate members of the Consortium it is thought (subject to checking) that all except BECM, CAPA, CRT, ESU, LCD - and possibly ACEAB and ACS - have Commonwealth accreditation.

11. Eight of the full-time members have at one time or another performed ‘officer’ functions for the Consortium: Association of Commonwealth Universities, Commonwealth Association of Science Technology and Mathematics Educators, Commonwealth Human Ecology Council, Commonwealth Countries League Education Fund, Council for Education in the Commonwealth, Institute for Commonwealth Studies, League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers, Link Community Development. Two or three more served on the Interim Steering Committee.

12. Member organisations pay an annual membership fee which is currently £75 p.a. for full members and £50 p.a. for associate members. Special members do not pay a subscription.

### **D. Governance and Management**

13. The Consortium is not a legally registered body and does not have charitable status. It is accredited to the Commonwealth and as such is invited to be represented at both CHOGMs and CCEMs. It sends its own separate delegations to these events and submits its own (agreed by members) recommendations to them. Consortium members who are accredited make their own submissions and send their own delegations independently.

14. CCfE's Constitution was agreed in 2004. It sets out the purposes of the Consortium, modes of operation and conditions of membership. On Governance arrangements it provides that:

- Decisions are taken collectively through gatherings open to all members (i) face-to-face General Meetings every three years held in the wings of CCEMs, at Edinburgh 2003, Cape Town 2006, Bangi Malaysia 2009, and next in Mauritius 2012 (ii) twice-yearly Executive Committee meetings in London which are in fact opened to any member organisation to send a representative, and are not confined to officers. The papers for both kinds of meeting are circulated to every one of the 20+ organisations in membership.
- The Consortium Chair is an individual elected at the General Meeting
- The other officer duties (Alternate Chair based in London, Treasurer, Secretary, Communications Secretary, Assistant Secretary/without portfolio) are carried out by organisations who volunteer to perform the duties and nominate an individual from that organisation to carry them out.

15. The current position (2011) is that

- (a) The elected Chair of the Consortium, Professor Colin Power, is Australian
- (b) The other official roles carried out by member organisations through their nominee are
  - Alternate Chair: CHEC (Mark Robinson). In the past the role has been performed successively by CASTME and ICS.
  - Treasurer: ACU (John Wood, though the executive work is carried out by Keith Stephenson). Previously the role was carried out by LECT.
  - Secretary: CEC (Peter Williams).
  - Communications Secretary: LCD (Steve Blunden) based in South Africa. Formerly this was done by CASTME.
  - Officer without portfolio (Assistant Secretary): CCLEF (Casmir Chanda) who is Zambian, resident in UK.

#### **E. Activities 2001-2011**

16. The following have been the main activities and function carried out by the Consortium in the first ten years of its existence

##### *Representation*

17. There are two dimensions to this. First is the provision to external bodies of a conduit for accessing Commonwealth education CSOs collectively. The Commonwealth Secretariat in particular has availed itself of this service. For example in March 2011 the Consortium assisted the Education Section of the Secretariat to bring together Commonwealth education organisations for a collective consultation/ networking event. The Foundation has found the Consortium a useful partner in arranging education inputs for the Commonwealth Peoples Forums in advance of CHOGMs in Malta, Kampala and Trinidad (and it seems possible that the Consortium will play an important part in mobilising Commonwealth education organisations' inputs to the CPF in Perth later in 2011).

18. Second, the Consortium has regularly attended at the bi-annual Commonwealth consultation meetings at Marlborough House and, along with individual members of the Consortium, has attempted to represent the concerns of the education sector there. Following the joint work with Link Community Development in Zimbabwe in 2010 it currently represents Commonwealth education civil society on the Commonwealth Organisations Committee on Zimbabwe. It has also supported public events mounted by the Education Section of the Secretariat e.g. on International Teachers' Day, Launch of the Good Practice Awards etc

##### *Advocacy*

19. Since its foundation, the Consortium has made brief written submissions to Heads of Government and Education Ministers in the context of the three CCEMs and four CHOGMs in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These memoranda have focused on the importance of education for development and in Commonwealth relations generally, the need to nurture and develop the infrastructure of Commonwealth education co-operation (COL, CSFP, the Teacher Recruitment Protocol etc), the desirability of taking a holistic view of education and broadening our from the exclusive concentration on primary education, approaches to achieving quality Education for All, education for social cohesion and promotion of Commonwealth values, school and college links and partnerships, strengthening Commonwealth machinery for educational co-operation.

### *Policy development on Commonwealth educational co-operation*

20. The Consortium has used its triennial conferences on the eve of CCEMs to try to assist Commonwealth Ministers and the Secretariat to move agendas on Commonwealth educational co-operation forward. Working with Commonwealth IGOs, Commonwealth governments and other partners it has attempted to analyse issues in greater depth than is possible in Ministerial meetings and make constructive proposals for action.

21. The Consortium's role was particularly appreciated by the Secretariat in developing the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol, where it worked closely with the Commonwealth Teachers Group, and it was invited to serve on the Working Party that developed the Protocol that was signed in 2004, and later on the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on the CTRP.

22. In 2004 post-15CCEM the Secretariat sought the help of Commonwealth CSOs in thinking through the potential for follow up to the six action points set out by Ministers as priorities for action. A major project involving Consortium members convening six Seminars was undertaken and a report was prepared which the Consortium Secretary, Peter Williams, was invited to present to regional meetings of Education Ministers in the Bahamas and Sierra Leone in 1995.

### *Conferences and meetings*

23. Three major conferences have been held on the eve of the CCEMs in Edinburgh (on teacher retention and recruitment) in 2003, Cape Town (on school and college links and partnerships) in 2006 and Bangi, Malaysia (on Learning to Live Together – civil paths to peace) in 2009. The subjects chosen were ones on the agenda of the Ministerial Conferences starting two days later. In each case brief statements with policy recommendations were prepared immediately after the Consortium Conference and circulated to Ministers. The Conferences were attended in each case by about 100 participants of whom about 70-75% were local and the remainder from abroad. The principle has been established that the Consortium partners with another organisation – the UK teachers associations and Commonwealth teachers Group in Edinburgh, Link Community Development in Cape Town, and the National University of Malaysia in Bangi. A modest fee has been charged for these events and the presence of distinguished international speakers has in some cases been facilitated by the Commonwealth Foundation.

24. A second series of workshops has been delivered by the Consortium in the Commonwealth People's Forums, organised by the Commonwealth Foundation on the eve of CHOGM. In Malta in 2005 there were sessions on Commonwealth education partnerships and distance education; in Kampala a whole day event on holistic education; and in Port of Spain on the education dimensions of *Civil paths to peace*.

25. When COL and the University of London hosted PCF5 (5th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning) in 2008, the Consortium organised a session on the future of Commonwealth educational co-operation in its second fifty years.

### *Projects*

26. There have been just two major projects to date. One was the programme of seminars and a report for the Commonwealth Secretariat in 2004-05, as follow up to 15CCEM on the Edinburgh Action Plan for education. The second was the major project in 2010 on Education in Zimbabwe, described more fully in the Consortium's latest 2011 report, to which reference should be made. This last one was run in conjunction with a member organisation, Link Community Development, which invested a considerable amount time and energy through its CEO Stephen Blunden and colleagues Alex Wright and Beth Kreling, and also managed to mobilise financial and in-kind resources from its partners. Again, Commonwealth Foundation support to the Consortium was extremely important.

### *Publications*

27. The principal publications have been

- i. *Implementing the Commonwealth Edinburgh Action Plan for Education*. 2005
- ii. *Commonwealth education directory 2006*, and *Commonwealth education directory 2009*
- iii. 13 Commonwealth education briefing notes first published separately and then in a compendium: *Working together in education: a Commonwealth update 2009*.

28. Seven reports on Consortium activities have been issued, covering the periods 2001-2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008-2009, and 2010.

29. An information leaflet on the Consortium has been updated at regular intervals.

#### *Co-ordination and common services at CCEMs*

30. At both the Cape Town and Kuala Lumpur CCfE arranged a joint information/display stand for members and other partners on favourable terms through the generous support of Nexus Strategic partnerships.

#### *Information: Calendar and Website*

31. From early in its existence the Consortium has issued a quarterly *Commonwealth Education Calendar* of forthcoming activities, listing forward events planned by IGOs and CSOs, whether or not the latter were members of the Consortium itself. About 30 different sources of information are tapped through email communication and the finished product is issued to almost 200 different individual email addresses as well as being posted on the Consortium's website. Some member organisations incorporate the Calendar in their own Newsletters and post it on their websites. Feedback has been positive.

32. The Consortium's website *www.commonwealtheducation.org* has been maintained under contract by Mr Chris Davidge. Consortium officers have been able to give him only very limited support and advice in this task.

#### *Liaison and clearing house/catalyst*

33. Apart from the quarterly calendar, the Secretary has tried to keep Consortium Members informed of new developments and deadlines for registering for events, submitting memoranda etc. He has also been able to offer advice on procedures for accreditation etc and to offer advice on contacts, sources of information.

### **F. Resources and budget**

34. CCfE has no paid employees and the programme delivered above has been implemented with voluntary labour, almost entirely by the Hon Secretary. Since the Consortium does not maintain an office but merely maintains an official mailing address at Lion Yard in Clapham, South London, the main requirement for funds has been for its publications programme, office and travel expenses for the secretary, and the cost of executive meetings. Modest contributions have been made to expenses of officers attending Commonwealth international conferences on behalf of the Consortium but such expenses have largely been met by officers out of their own private pockets.

35. The main source of income for meeting these running expenses has been Members' subscriptions. The total amount realised from the subscriptions of £50 for full members and £30 for associate members was about £800 p.a. over the period up to 2009, and following the increase to £75 and £50 may be nearer £1200 in coming years. The Commonwealth Foundation made an 'association grant' of £1200 in 2009-10, and has made available £6,000 for 2010-11 with the prospect of an equivalent amount in 2011-12. The Foundation also contributed substantially towards the cost of printing the Directory and Commonwealth Education Briefing Notes.

36. Projects and conferences have of course required funding of a different order, in terms of a venue and running expenses and most particularly for bringing in speakers from Commonwealth countries. Some small revenues have accrued from Conference fees but these have not normally generated any surplus for retention by CCfE. The main source of income has been the Commonwealth Foundation which has provided grants to enable the participation of developing country resource persons at events sponsored by the Foundation, and also made a major contribution to the 2010 Zimbabwe project. Partners in these events have also made a major contribution, particularly Link Community Development in respect of the 2006 Cape Town, and - from both its own resources and those leveraged from its partners - the Zimbabwe project.

37. The Consortium's bank account is at the Unity Trust Bank. In the first period of CCfE's existence, LECT acted as Treasurer, but for the past three years the finances have been managed by the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

Peter Williams  
May 2011

## ANNEX 1

### Consortium Membership in 2011

17 Members and five Associate (+) Members = 22

<b>ACS</b>	- Association of Commonwealth Studies	<i>email: island16@sympatico.ca</i>
<b>ACEAB</b>	- Association of Commonwealth Examination and Accreditation Bodies	<i>www.aceab.org</i>
<b>ACLALS</b>	- Association of Commonwealth Literature & Language Studies	<i>www.aclals.org</i>
<b>ACU</b>	- Association of Commonwealth Universities	<i>www.acu.ac.uk</i>
<b>BECM</b>	- British Empire and Commonwealth Museum	<i>www.empiremuseum.co.uk</i>
<b>BUILD*</b>	- Building Understanding through International Links for Development	<i>www.build.org</i>
<b>CAM</b>	- Commonwealth Association of Museums	<i>www.maltwood.uvic.ca/cam/</i>
<b>CAPA</b>	- Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa	<i>capa@kenpoly.ac.ke</i>
<b>CASTME</b>	- Commonwealth Association of Science, Mathematics & Technology Teachers	<i>www.castme.org</i>
<b>CBC+</b>	- Commonwealth Business Council	<i>www.cboglobelink.org</i>
<b>CCEAM</b>	- Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management	<i>www.cceam.org</i>
<b>CCLEF</b>	- Commonwealth Countries' League Education Fund	<i>www.ccl-int.org.uk</i>
<b>CEC</b>	- Council for Education in the Commonwealth	<i>www.cecomm.org.uk</i>
<b>CHEC</b>	- Commonwealth Human Ecology Council	<i>www.chec-hq.org</i>
<b>CRT+</b>	- Commonwealth Relations Trust (of the Nuffield Foundation)	<i>www.nuffieldfoundation.org</i>
<b>CTG</b>	- Commonwealth Teachers Group	<i>email: s.garg@nut.org.uk</i>
<b>CYEC+</b>	- Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council	<i>www.cyec.org.uk</i>
<b>ESU</b>	- The English-Speaking Union of the Commonwealth	<i>www.esu..org</i>
<b>ICS</b>	- Institute of Commonwealth Studies	<i>www.commonwealth.sas.ac.uk</i>
<b>LCD</b>	- Link Community Development	<i>www.lcd.org.uk</i>
<b>LECT</b>	- League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers	<i>www.lect.org.uk</i>
<b>RCS+</b>	- Royal Commonwealth Society	<i>www.rcsint.org</i>
<b>ROSL+</b>	- Royal Over-Seas League	<i>www.rosl.org.uk</i>
<b>Special Members (3)</b>		
<b>CF</b>	- Commonwealth Foundation	<i>www.commonwealthfoundation.com</i>
<b>COL</b>	- Commonwealth of Learning	<i>www.col.org</i>
<b>COMSEC</b>	- Commonwealth Secretariat	<i>www.thecommonwealth.org</i>

\* Provisional, subject to ratification by both organisations.