

COMMONWEALTH CONSORTIUM

for

EDUCATION

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2006

October 2007

Commonwealth Consortium for Education

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www.commonwealtheducation.org

FOREWORD

By Professor Colin Power AM, Consortium Chairperson

It gives me great pleasure to endorse the 2006 Report on the activities the Commonwealth Consortium for Education. As the Report demonstrates, the Consortium continues to play a valuable role on behalf of the civil society in supporting co-operative efforts among Commonwealth countries to improve both access to education and its quality. I believe that it is extremely important for those who believe in the right of all to education, to speak with one voice when working with Heads of Government and Ministers, and thus would want to thank the members of the Consortium for their contributions to its work.

Finally, I would like to pay a particular tribute to the industry and leadership role played by our very hardworking Secretary, Peter Williams, and to express my gratitude to Tim Shaw, Dennis Chisman and Mark Robinson who so often and so ably have served as Alternate Chair.

Commonwealth Consortium for Education

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2006

This was the Consortium's fifth year of operation following its creation at the end of 2001. This Report follows on previous reports for 2001-3, 2004 and 2005.

Second General Meeting

As provided by the Constitution, the second General Meeting of the Consortium was held at Zonnebloem Education Centre, District Six, Cape Town, on Saturday December 9. It was attended by 11 people from eight member organisations, and chaired by Dennis Chisman.

Membership

The Commonwealth Human Ecology Council and Link Community Development joined the Consortium as full members at the end of the year, bringing membership up to 25 of which 19 were full members and six associates. The Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Foundation and Commonwealth of Learning are in Special Membership.

A communication was received at the end of the year from the Commonwealth of Learning indicating that the Federation of Commonwealth Open and Distant Learning Associations (FOCODLA) was being dissolved. Consequently membership numbers at the start of 2007 would be 24.

The Consortium renewed its invitation to eligible organisations to take out full or associate membership.

Executive Committee and Officers

The Executive Committee met twice in London on July 6 and November 22. Prof. Timothy Shaw as Alternate Chair presided over the first meeting and Dennis Chisman, as Acting Alternate Chair at the second: both were standing in for the substantive Chair, Professor Colin Power, who is based in Australia.

Professor Shaw returned to Canada in July, after serving as Alternate Chair for two and a half years. His place was not substantively filled immediately: Dennis Chisman agreed to fill the role on a temporary basis until the General Meeting in December. The other officers in 2006 were unchanged from 2005. They were Colin Power (CASTME, Chair), Peter Williams (CEC, Secretary), Anna Tomlinson (LECT, Treasurer) Dennis Chisman (CASTME, Communications Secretary). Although Anna Tomlinson had announced a year earlier that LECT wished to vacate the Treasurership and it had been agreed that the Association of Commonwealth Universities (through its Secretary-General, John Rowett) would take over the responsibility, it had not been possible to effect the anticipated transfer of accounts and associated banking arrangements by the end of the year.

At the Second General Meeting of the Consortium held in Cape Town on December 9, Professor Power (CASTME) was re-elected to the Chair for a further period and Mark Robinson (CHEC) was appointed London-based Alternate Chair. The offers of CEC (Secretary), ACU (Treasurer) and CASTME (Communications Secretary) to fill officer positions for the period to the next General Meeting were accepted, and the individuals named to the respective posts were Peter Williams, John Rowett and Dennis Chisman.

Participation in 16 CCEM and Parallel Events in Cape Town December 11-14 2006

As an accredited Commonwealth association the Consortium was invited to attend the 16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers as an official Observer and was represented by the Alternate Chair, Dennis Chisman, and the Secretary, Peter Williams. Several member organisations belonging to the Consortium had their own separate representation.

Consortium members played an active part in proceedings during the Ministers' Conference

- CCfE submitted a memorandum to the Conference, which was circulated to Delegations. This addressed, *inter alia*, the need to nurture and strengthen Commonwealth education infrastructure; the role that Commonwealth civil society organisations could play in Commonwealth education co-operation; the

scope offered by school partnerships and linking across the Commonwealth; and the need for Ministerial-level ongoing machinery to monitor progress in Commonwealth education co-operation.

- The Statement from the Consortium-Link Community Development Conference on school and college linking at Zonnebloem Education Centre was made available to Ministers.
- Members observed the plenary Ministerial sessions and participated in Ministerial Working Groups.
- Private conversations and advocacy in the corridors and at social events made it possible to exert informal influence on the wording of the final Communiqué in some useful respects: the points raised on the Consortium memorandum, notably the suggestion for a small Ministerial committee to monitor progress, and references to both school linking and education about the Commonwealth, were included.
- The Directory and Briefing Notes were circulated to Delegations.

The Consortium organised a plenary session in the Stakeholder Forum on school linking and partnerships. A lead address was given by Bill Rammell MP, Minister of State in the UK's Department for Education and Skills and leader of the UK Delegation to 16CCEM. Other speakers were from Link Community Development in UK, Uganda and South Africa. The session was chaired by Mark Collins, Director of the Commonwealth Foundation, and some 70-80 people attended. The Directory and Briefing Notes were made available to SF participants.

An Exhibition complemented the Conference and the various Forums (including a Teachers Forum and Youth Forum). Through the generosity of Nexus Strategic Partnerships the Consortium was allotted an exhibition stand free of charge and this enabled the various delegations from CASTME, CCL, CEC, RCS and others to display their publications and to meet and answer enquiries from members of the public.

The Consortium members attending 16CCEM planned to undertake a 'post mortem' on the Cape Town events and to share their conclusions and suggestions for future CCEMs with the Secretariat, Foundation and others.

Conference on School and College Linking in the Commonwealth, Cape Town, December 8 and 9

The Consortium decided to repeat the successful pattern of events in 2003 when its first Conference - on Teacher Recruitment, Retention and Mobility - was held in Edinburgh on the eve of 15CCEM, by convening a second conference on the eve of 16CCEM.

The Conference was held on December 8 and 9 at the Zonnebloem Education Centre in District Six, Cape Town in the week before Education Ministers assembled for their Conference. The theme was school and college linking and partnerships under the rubric *The Power of Partnerships: Strength in Friends*. Much time in the last half of the year was devoted to organising the Conference, and the preparatory work included two planning meetings in London.

The Consortium entered into partnership with Link Community Development (LCD), based in South Africa but also having operations in several other Commonwealth countries, to organise the conference. Considerable help was also given by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and its South African partner Khanya College, the BUILD Consortium (Building Understanding through International Links for Development), and by the Commonwealth Foundation, which allowed the Consortium to use unexpended funds from its grant for Briefing Notes and the Directory to support the Conference. Smart (Canada) generously hosted a reception for delegates. The Consortium wishes to record its thanks to all these partners: most especially to Link Community Development and its Director Steve Blunden, for the substantial contribution, in both staff time and financial resources, that LCD devoted to the enterprise. The Consortium is also grateful to the Zonnebloem Education Centre for the facilities and support it provided for the Conference, at modest cost, and to Miles Giljam of the Royal Commonwealth Society for making the introduction to ZEC.

The Conference was attended by about 100 participants from South Africa, other Commonwealth African countries, UK and Canada. It was opened by Ron Swartz, Superintendent-General of the Western Cape Education Department; and the opening session was also addressed by Mark Collins, Director of the Commonwealth Foundation. Other plenary sessions heard well-received presentations from SSAT/Khanya College, BUILD, the University of London Institute of Education, CASTME, and LCD staff in South Africa and Uganda.

The highlight of the Conference was the keynote address given on the second morning by Hon Mrs Naledi Pandor, Minister of Education of South Africa. The Minister enunciated the principles that should govern partnerships in education, and emphasised the importance of clarity of purpose, recognition that each had something to share with and learn from the other, and sustainability over the longer term. She stressed that North-South linking the funders of partnerships should focus as much on the benefits that southern schools could derive in terms of school improvement, as on widening the horizons of children in the north. Linkages could beneficially involve whole districts, not just single institutions, and should be formed on a south-south as well as south-north basis.

Much of the work of the Conference took place in small groups addressing the contribution of partnerships to school improvement & narrowing the EFA gap; school partnerships and professional development for teachers; achieving quality in school partnerships; using school links to impart a Commonwealth and international dimension to learning; the wider institutional support needed to make linking effective; the effectiveness of different communication modes (including ICT) in school linking; different models of school partnership (international, intra-national, south-south, cluster). Reports were made to a final panel session in which among others Steve Sinnott, General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers and Convenor of the Commonwealth Teachers Grouping took part (the Malta Minister of Education, who had also agreed to participate, was prevented by illness from doing so at the last minute). The Conference agreed the main points that would be incorporated in a Statement to be sent to Ministers of Education for their Conference the following week. This Statement, appearing on the Consortium's website alongside Mrs Pandor's address, was duly finalised and circulated to Ministers, and to the Youth, Teachers, and Stakeholder Forums.

Other Programme Activities

Briefing Notes and Directory

The Consortium applied for and received a grant of £9000 from the Commonwealth Foundation to produce a series of 12 Commonwealth Education Briefing Notes, addressing aspects of Commonwealth Education cooperation, and a Commonwealth Education Directory.

Five of the Briefing Notes were updates of notes first prepared in 2003 for the 15CCEM in Edinburgh and seven new ones were prepared covering gender and education; education about the Commonwealth; science, technology and mathematics education; student mobility; teacher development and mobility; and school and college linking. The Hon Secretary, Peter Williams, acted as general editor for the series.

The list of Briefing Notes with authors is as follows:

1. Commonwealth co-operation in education: a profile	Peter Williams
2. Conferences of Commonwealth Education Ministers	Peter Williams
3. The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan	ACU (John Kirkland)
4. Commonwealth co-operation in distance learning	COL (Dave Wilson)
5. The Commonwealth and Education for All	Steve Packer
6. Gender and education: the Commonwealth dimension	Casmir Chanda
7. Commonwealth education co-operation: role of civil society	Peter Williams
8. Education about the Commonwealth	Peter Williams
9. Science, technology and mathematics education.	CASTME (Dennis Chisman)
10. Commonwealth student mobility: trends and issues	Kees Maxey
11. Teacher development and mobility in the Commonwealth	CEC (Peter Williams)
12. School and college linking in the Commonwealth	UKOWLA (Nick Maurice)

The Consortium is grateful to the Association of Commonwealth Universities and the Commonwealth of Learning for generously revising the texts of Nos.3 and 4 without charge, and to the Hon Secretary for doing the same in respect of Nos. 1 and 2. A small fee was paid in respect of the other eight briefing Notes.

2000 copies of each Briefing Note were printed in South Africa by a Cape Town-based commercial firm, Creda, for distribution to participants in the Commonwealth meetings in Cape Town and for wider subsequent

distribution in the Commonwealth. Each briefing note was a folded A3 sheet, printed on both sides to produce four sides of A4 text, and six different colours were used.

The Commonwealth Education Directory 2007 was prepared by the Hon Secretary in time for the 16CCEM and contains entries for over 40 pan-Commonwealth education organisations and programmes. It was drafted in consultation with members and other responsible bodies, in many cases using their entries for the Commonwealth Yearbook as the basis, with the kind agreement of the publishers of the Yearbook, Nexus Strategic Partnerships. 1200 copies of the Directory were printed in Cape Town by Salty Print, the Methodist Church printers. Distribution was undertaken in Cape Town and subsequently more widely.

Commonwealth Education Calendar

Five issues of the quarterly Commonwealth Education Calendar were produced in January, April, July, October and December. The December issue was advanced from the normal January (2007) date in order to be available at the 16CCEM in Cape Town. The Calendar is available on the website and circulated by email to about 60 individuals and institutions.

Representation at Commonwealth meetings

The Consortium played a full part in the Commonwealth consultation meetings convened at Marlborough House by the Secretariat and Foundation in May and December. It was also represented at a Secretariat-convened meeting in Thames Ditton in April to consider teacher development and mobility in the Commonwealth. It was unable to accept an invitation to attend a further Commonwealth consultation in Tshwane (Pretoria), South Africa, on the mutual recognition of teacher qualifications.

Publicity and Website

A revised publicity leaflet for the Consortium was prepared during the year to take into account the updated list of members and activities. This was widely distributed at various meetings, including the events in Cape Town, and was distributed to member organisations and to the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Foundation. The website (www.commonwealtheducation.org) has been kept up-to-date with the Commonwealth Education Calendar every three months and with the 12 Briefing Notes.

Finance

The Consortium's regular income is derived from subscriptions from member organisations at the rate of £50 p.a. for (full) Members and £30 p.a. for Associate members, yielding approximately £1000 p.a. at current membership levels. (In 2006, when the Consortium was without a Treasurer subscription income was £660, leaving some amounts due to be recovered in 2007). Because the Consortium has no office or paid staff, normal annual expenditure is also at a relatively low level and mainly takes the form of secretarial expenses (postages, telephones, document reproduction, modest local travel expenses for officers, the website, bank charges).

In some respects 2006 was an exceptional year with funds being required for the Second Conference held in South Africa, for which an outlay of £1250 on expenses of CCfE representation at the 16CCEM was agreed. The Consortium also engaged in a major undertaking to produce the Commonwealth Education Briefing Notes and Commonwealth Education Directory with the help of a grant from the Commonwealth Foundation of £9,000.

Against the grant from the Foundation the Consortium's outlays on the Briefing Notes were approximately £7,600 (mainly honoraria for authors, document formatting and printing) and £1,000 on the Directory (nearly all printing). About £750 of this was still to be paid in 2007. Largely because South African printers were used, with the encouragement of the Commonwealth Foundation, the cost of production of the Briefing Notes and Directory came well within budget. Fees payable for two of the briefing notes fees subsequently waived, bringing the eventual net outlay on briefing notes and directory to about £7,400.

The balance of the Foundation grant was then applied with the agreement of the Foundation to the Conference at Zonnebloem to support of which the Consortium contributed approximately £1,800 in total.

As the accompanying financial statement shows, the balance at the close of the previous financial year was £ 5806 and at December 31 2006 it was £5064 , a decrease of £742 but with a further anticipated expenditure of £750 for the printing costs still to be paid in 2007.

Commonwealth Consortium for Education (CCfE)

Income and Expenditure Account 2006

INCOME	£
Balance brought forward from 2005	5806.34
Subscriptions from members and associate members	660.00
Donation	1250.00
Commonwealth Foundation grant	9000.00
Total Income in 2006	10910.00
Total Resources Available during the year	16716.34
EXPENDITURE	
Honorary Secretary's expenses	192.65
Other Officers' expenses	13.15
Webmaster's charges	202.13
Bank charges	86.65
Consortium meetings and General Meeting (Cape Town)	163.66
	658.24
Briefing Notes and Directory (met from Foundation grant)	
Fees and honoraria	5900.00
Printers' costs	
Local costs in Cape Town (Rand 24577.99)*	1859.98
Postage materials back to UK (934.20 rand)	70.44
	7830.42
Consortium/LINK Conference Cape Town (largely from Consortium grant)	
General grant for conference administration and	
registration fees for selected participants	1300.00
Travel costs for rapporteur (2505 rand)	191.66
Donation to Education Conference Centre (1500 rand)	114.77
Administrative expenses	200.00
	1806.43
Participation in 16CCEM, Cape Town	
CCfE Leaflets – reprints (315 rand)	24.01
Publicity to Ministers of Education	82.62
Grant towards delegation expenses	1250.00
	1356.63
Total Expenditure in 2006	11651.72
Balance carried forward December 31 2006	5064.62

*A further R10,000 (£748.57) outstanding, to be paid in 2007.

TOTAL	15466.34
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Income and Expenditure Account

2007

INCOME

	£
Balance brought forward 2006	5064.62
Subscriptions from members and associate members	1066.05
Commonwealth Foundation grant	
TOTAL	6130.67

EXPENDITURE

Honorary Secretary's expenses	
Other Officers' expenses	42.35
Webmaster's charges	
Briefing Notes and Directory fees and honoraria	
CCfE Leaflets – reprints (315 rand)	
Printers' costs	
Transfer 10,000 rand from UK	748.57
Local costs in Cape Town (24577.99)	
Consortium/LINK Conference Cape Town	
General grant for conference administration and	
registration fees for selected participants	
Travel costs for rapporteur (2505 rand)	
Publicity to Ministers of Education	
Donation to Education Conference Centre (1500 rand)	
Postage materials back to UK (934.20 rand)	
Consortium meetings and general meeting (Cape Town)	
Bank charges	64.93
Sub-total	855.85
Balance August 2007	
	5274.82

TOTAL	15466.34
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