



Commonwealth Consortium for Education

DRAFT REPORT 2017

Recording Activities of the Consortium in 2016

August 2017

**Commonwealth Consortium for Education
c/o Association of Commonwealth Universities
Woburn House, 20-24 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HF**

www.commonwealtheducation.org

FOREWORD

After the welter of activity in 2015 occasioned by the coincidence of a Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (19CCEM) and a Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in the same year, 2016 was much less busy. It was however far from uneventful for supporters of Commonwealth educational co-operation, in so far as new mechanisms for maintaining momentum between CCEMs - the Education Ministers Action Group and the Commonwealth Accelerated Development Mechanism for Education (CADME) - were brought into play, holding their inaugural meetings.

Unfortunately the high hopes generated at the Malta CHOGM in late 2015 for reinvigoration of Commonwealth co-operation were dashed. First, the result of the UK referendum on continued membership of the European Union greatly diminished the prospect of close collaboration between Malta and the UK as intended successive holders of the presidency of the EU in addition to the Chair of the Commonwealth. Second, the hoped for improved availability of resources at the disposal of the Commonwealth Secretariat failed to materialise, in part reflecting adverse assessments of Secretariat performance effectiveness in using its available resources. Financial contributions sharply diminished, instead of growing. The assumption of office as Commonwealth Secretary-General by Patricia Scotland, the first woman to hold the post, had no observable immediate effect in mitigating the serious financial situation.

The consequences for educational co-operation were dire. Limitation of funds stood in the way of securing the breadth of representation at the EMAG and CADME meetings that their remits ideally required, and there was little scope for those gatherings to embark on new initiatives. Still more ominous for the future was the planned overall reduction in the Commonwealth Secretariat staff complement and the reported intention to target the Secretariat's Health and Education Unit severely reducing its strength to just three, with only one professional post remaining in education. As the year ended anxiety over this situation was weighing heavily on Consortium members, an anxiety that was made more intense by the transparency deficit in the Secretariat's conduct of its affairs. The contribution to dialogue and collaborative action that would-be partners like the Consortium would like to make is severely impaired when the Secretariat fails to disclose its intentions in areas of key concern or to consult about them.

1. Membership and administration

The Consortium continued to enjoy accredited status with the Commonwealth. Its mailing address is with the Association of Commonwealth Universities (c/o ACU, Woburn House, 20-24 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HF. Website: www.commonwealtheducation.org

Members (see listing at Appendix B)

The number of member organisations of the Consortium remained at 19 during 2016. with 17 full members and two associates. The Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth of Learning and Commonwealth Foundation are deemed special members of the Consortium.

The majority of the 19 members were based in the United Kingdom. Two were headquartered in Australasia, one in Africa (Kenya), one in Canada, and one in the Caribbean (St Lucia). Several members have branches or corporate/individual members across Commonwealth regions.

Subscriptions were received from 15 of the 19 members. In one case, that of BUILD, there is a reciprocal exchange of membership, neither body paying a subscription to the other.

Officers (see also Annex B)

Chair. Professor Colin Power, based in Australia, remained as Consortium Chair. The Commonwealth Human Ecology Council (CHEC) continued to provide the London Chair (Alternate Chair) in the person of Mark Robinson, who is also a Trustee of the Council for Education in the Commonwealth. He presided over the Executive in Professor Power's absence.

Treasurer. The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) filled the role of Treasurer through its Secretary-General, Professor John Wood. ACU's Director of Resources, Revd Keith Stephenson, undertook the day-to-day management of the Consortium's finances.

Secretariat. Arrangements agreed with the Council for Education in the Commonwealth (CEC) in 2015 whereby two members of CEC's then Executive, Beth Kreling and Casmir Chanda discharged

Secretariat functions for CCfE continued with Beth as Hon Secretary and Casmir as Assistant Secretary. Peter Williams, the Hon President, assisted as needed.

A well-attended Executive Committee meeting was held in London in December.

2. Inter-Governmental Activities

As indicated in the introduction, there was no Education Ministers Conference or Heads of Government meeting in 2016, but the year witnessed the inauguration of two new pieces of consultative machinery agreed at 19CCEM in The Bahamas in 2015.

In January a first meeting of the Commonwealth *Education Ministers Action Group* was held in London. To the regret of the Consortium and its partners, Ministers decided at this first meeting not to conform with their own decisions at 19CCEM that the EMAG should

have regional representation, as well as that of Youth, Teachers, Stakeholders, Multilaterals, and other partners, (para 22 Nassau Declaration, June 2015)

The Consortium wrote to the Secretariat to express its disappointment over this departure from what had been agreed in The Bahamas.

We accepted an invitation to attend the first and second meetings of the Technical Working Group of the *Commonwealth Accelerated Development Mechanism for Education (CADME)*, held at Marlborough House in June and October, and participated actively. The June meeting was combined with a consultation on quality standards in education and the October meeting with a session to discuss the viability of holding a Education Forum at the CHOGM in the UK in 2018 in both of which consultations the Consortium took part.

The Consortium agreed to join the Steering Group for the Twentieth Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers to be held in Fiji in February 2018 and attended the first meeting in October.

3. Advocacy

The objectives of the Consortium include 'generating support for Commonwealth institutions and programmes in education' and 'contributing views and insights to the formulation of policies on Commonwealth educational co-operation'. These objectives are pursued through contribution to Commonwealth discussions and debates, through publications and through formal submissions on the occasion of Education Ministers Conferences and Heads of Government Meetings.

In the year under report there was no call on CCfE to make formal presentations of its views, with no major Ministerial meetings. Internal reviews of Commonwealth Secretariat organisation and procedures did not provide for partners to submit views, and the high-level group that the Secretary General had announced had still not got off the ground by the close of the year.

Whenever opportunity offered, CCfE stressed the importance to pan-Commonwealth civil society associations in education of a strong well-resourced professional education teams in the Commonwealth inter-governmental organisations with which to partner. Rumours to the effect that the Secretariat strength in the education sector was about to be drastically reduced were a warning sign that 2017 would be a year in which advocacy activity would be of unusually high importance to those promoting the value of education in building and sustaining the Commonwealth.

Consortium officers and members were also active in responding to an invitation from the Commonwealth of Learning to submit views on the viability of an Education Forum at the CHOGM to be held in the United Kingdom in 2018. COL had been mandated by Heads of Government to explore this possibility and submit a report. Opinion in civil society, as expressed at the consultation meeting in London in October, was broadly in favour: with the benefits thought to outweigh the undoubted additional strain of co-ordination on CHOGM organisers, and a crowded education calendar in early 2018. So there was some disappointment on learning that COL's ultimate advice on the viability of a Forum was negative.

4. Outreach and communication

Communications with members - information and alerts

The Consortium serves as a clearing house to keep members informed of new developments in Commonwealth educational co-operation, and to alert them to events of interest. This achieved by means of:

- The Consortium website at <http://commonwealtheducation.org>
- A calendar of upcoming events of particular Commonwealth relevance in the areas of education, culture and youth.

These are supplemented by occasional email alerts drawing members' attention to information received from the Commonwealth Secretariat and others about matters requiring action or of likely interest and concern.

Website

The Website, revamped in 2015, is now overseen and updated as appropriate by the Secretary

Commonwealth Education Calendar

Three editions of the Calendar were produced in January, April and September 2016. The Calendar is updated on the basis of a direct approach made to some 25-30 organisations (including all CCfE members) that regularly organise such activities. It is distributed by email to about 200 users and is posted on the Consortium's website. Use of a digitised version of the Calendar on the Consortium website makes possible the constant updating of available information in between quarterly updates and space to provide more detailed information on events.

Publications

Most of the remaining stock of the Consortium's Commonwealth Education Directory,, *Commonwealth Education Directory 2015*, was distributed to interested parties. This fourth edition was prepared in time for the 19CCEM in the Bahamas in 2015.

5. Representation

The Consortium endeavours to play a full and constructive part in Commonwealth deliberations and consultations. Its purpose in so doing is to ensure that the contribution that education can make to the well-being and progress of Commonwealth peoples is recognised and harnessed for the common good; and within the framework of Commonwealth educational co-operation to draw attention to the part that civil society organisations usefully play.

In 2016 the Consortium engaged actively in a number of Commonwealth Secretariat-convened consultative fora, some of which are alluded to in Section 2 of this report but which also included

- 'Commonwealth Family meetings' at the Secretariat in January and June for exchange of information and views between the Commonwealth Secretary-General and staff and Commonwealth ngos
- an education partners meeting convened by the Health and Education Unit in April
- meetings of the Youth Policy Group convened by the Youth Affairs Division
- a special session to address the role of the education and health sectors in combating female genital mutilation in November.

Peter Williams served as a member of the Advisory Board of the Commonwealth Education Hub.

CCfE participated in a number of Commonwealth civil-society consultation meetings convened at quarterly intervals by Commonwealth accredited organisations.

Consortium officers also endeavoured to attend where possible events organised by CCfE members. In a few instances they were more directly involved in the Executive operations of Commonwealth civil-society bodies:

Mark Robinson was a Trustee of the Council for Education in the Commonwealth (CEC) and the Commonwealth Human Ecology Council (CHEC); and was Treasurer of The Round Table

Beth Kreling was an Editorial Board Member of The Round Table

Peter Williams acted as Hon. Secretary of the Council for Education in the Commonwealth's Support Group for the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, a group of which Mark and Beth were also members.

6. Finance

A financial statement covering 2016 and earlier years for comparison, is attached to this report at Appendix A. This year the account was in surplus by £460 - compared with a deficit of £4,497 in 2015.

The balance at the end of the year was £16,433.87.

Subscription income was at a level only exceeded in recent years in 2015.

Expenditure was much reduced reflecting the absence of recourse to paid administrative support, and on the kinds of expenditure (on publications, public relations and travel) that are incurred in CHOGM/CCEM years.

The Consortium continues to hold its account with the Unity Trust Bank.

7. Acknowledgments

The Consortium wishes to put on record its appreciation to its members, officers and other partners who made significant contributions to its work in 2016 and earlier. In particular we thank:

The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) which handled our financial administration (through John Wood and Keith Stephenson) and provided the Consortium with its mailing address.

The Commonwealth Human Ecology Council which provided us with our Alternate Chair, Mark Robinson.

The Commonwealth Secretariat through whom our accredited status with the Commonwealth afforded us opportunities to participate in policy-making and professional dialogues and enabled us to use accommodation in Marlborough House for our own meetings. In particular close contact was maintained with the Health and Education Unit headed by Joanna Nurse and the Partnerships Support Officer, Emma Kerr.

The Council for Education in the Commonwealth from whose membership the Consortium's secretariat (Beth Kreling, Peter Williams, Casmir Chanda) was drawn.

Nexus Strategic Partnerships which under the leadership of Smuts Beyers and Simon Goodlad provided generous encouragement and support to the Consortium over a number of years, particularly in the context of recent ministerial conferences where we were partners (with the Commonwealth Secretariat) in the delivery of the Stakeholders Forums and where Nexus facilitated provision of the Consortium's Exhibition stands. Nexus also provided advice and editorial help in preparing recent editions of the Commonwealth Education Directory for print. It is understood the firm has now ceased trading and the Consortium therefore wishes to take this opportunity to record its appreciation of the friendship and assistance we have received.

APPENDIX A FINANCIAL STATEMENT

COMMONWEALTH CONSORTIUM FOR EDUCATION

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE IN 2016 AND EARLIER YEARS

| INCOME | 2016 | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 |
|---|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Subscriptions from members and associate members - current year | 950.00 | 1,100.00 | 825.00 | 850.00 |
| - earlier years | | 135.00 | | 50.00 |
| Commonwealth Foundation Grants | | | | 15,000.00 |
| Commonwealth Scholarship Commission Professional Development Fee for services | | | | 1,050.00 |
| Contributions to 19CCEM Exhibition stand | | 510.00 | | 2,064.20 |
| TOTAL INCOME IN THE YEAR | 950.00 | 1,745.00 | 825.00 | 19,014.20 |
| EXPENDITURE | | | | |
| <i>Administrative Costs</i> | 489.51 | 4,853.53 | 3,954.38 | 2,828.80 |
| Honorary Secretary's expenses | | 109.69 | 55.55 | 278.95 |
| Bank charges | 18.00 | | | |
| Other Officers' expenses & Cost of Meetings | 381.51 | 426.47 | 312.15 | 447.85 |
| Link Community Development Administrative Support | | | 2,040.00 | 2,102.00 |
| Commonwealth Human Ecology Council Administrative Support | | 2,010.29 | 1,498.18 | |
| Website | 90.00 | 1,708.08 | 48.50 | |
| Exhibition Stand at CCEM | | 500.00 | | |
| CCfE brochure | | 99.00 | | |
| <i>CCfE Representation at Commonwealth Conferences</i> | | 548.34 | | |
| CCEM (Bahamas 2015) | | 548.34 | | |
| <i>Project activities</i> | | 840.00 | | 1,055.80 |
| Commonwealth Education Directory | | 840.00 | | |
| Commonwealth Scholarship Commission Professional Development Education calendar | | | | 886.80 |
| | | | | 169.00 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE IN THE YEAR | 489.51 | 6,241.87 | 3,954.38 | 3,884.60 |
| NET SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR | 460.49 | (4,496.87) | (3,129.38) | 15,129.60 |
| Balance brought forward at 1 January | 15,973.38 | 20,470.25 | 23,599.63 | 8,470.03 |
| BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD at 31 December | 16,433.87 | 15,973.38 | 20,470.25 | 23,599.63 |
| Represented by: | | | | |
| Cash at bank – Unity Bank | 16,619.27 | 16,654.53 | 23,115.90 | 25,642.08 |
| Debtors: CSC | | 85.00 | | 1,050.00 |
| Creditors: creditors / unrepresented cheques | (185.40) | (691.15) | (2,645.65) | (3,092.45) |
| Creditors: Subscription in advance | | (75.00) | | |
| | 16,433.87 | 15,973.38 | 20,470.25 | 23,599.63 |

APPENDIX B

Consortium Members and Officers in 2016

Members

(17 Members and two Associate Members = 19)

| | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| ACEAB | - Association of Commonwealth Examination and Accreditation Bodies | www.aceab.org |
| ACLALS | - Association of Commonwealth Literature & Language Studies | www.aclals.org |
| ACU | - Association of Commonwealth Universities | www.acu.ac.uk |
| BUILD | - Building Understanding through International Links for Development | www.build.org.uk |
| CAM | - Commonwealth Association of Museums | www.maltwood.uvic.ca/cam/ |
| CAPA | - Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa | www.capa-sec.org |
| CASTME | - Commonwealth Association of Science, Mathematics & Technology Teachers | www.castme.org |
| CCEAM | - Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management | www.cceam.org |
| CGEF | - Commonwealth Girls Education Fund | www.cgefund.org |
| CEC | - Council for Education in the Commonwealth | www.cecomm.org.uk |
| CHEC | - Commonwealth Human Ecology Council | www.checininternational.org |
| CLEA | - Commonwealth Legal Education Association | www.clea-web.com |
| CSA | - Commonwealth Students Association | www.commonwealthstudents.org |
| CTG | - Commonwealth Teachers Group | <i>email: s.garg@nut.org.uk</i> |
| CYEC+ | - Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council | www.cyec.org.uk |
| ESU | - The English-Speaking Union of the Commonwealth | www.esu.org |
| LCD | - Link Community Development International | www.lcdinternational.org |
| RCS | - Royal Commonwealth Society | www.rcsint.org |
| ROSL+ | - Royal Over-Seas League | www.rosll.org.uk |

Special Members (3)

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| CF | - Commonwealth Foundation |
| COL | - Commonwealth of Learning |
| COMSEC | - Commonwealth Secretariat |

+ Denotes Associate Member of the Consortium

Officers

Hon President

Peter Williams

Chairperson:

Professor Colin Power AM

Alternate Chair:

Commonwealth Human Ecology Council (**Mark Robinson**)

Treasurer:

Association of Commonwealth Universities (**Prof John Wood**
assisted by **Rev. Keith Stephenson**)

Hon Secretary:

Council for Education in the Commonwealth (**Beth Kreling**)

Assistant Secretary:

Council for Education in the Commonwealth (**Casmir Chanda**)