

COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION NEWS



House of Commons – House of Lords

The Newsletter of the Council for Education in the Commonwealth (CEC) (2007-1)

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A Message from the Chair

AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE

*There are three things that cannot be recalled:
the arrow in its flight, the missed opportunity
and the spoken word*

This African saying came to mind at the beginning of the year when a Government Minister put Universal Primary Education in Africa high on the Chancellor of the Exchequer's long-term agenda, with an allocation of £8.5bn. Gordon Brown has now pledged a further £200m to primary education in India. Along with UK contributions to reduce the effects of HIV/AIDS, conflict and famine, generous UK support to Universal Primary Education (UPE) increases the scope for action by those of us who are committed to extending quality education across the Commonwealth.

The 1990 Jomtien Conference may have instigated the Education for All (EFA) movement, but in the UK, the Millennium has triggered new commitment to international development, especially to education, here and abroad. Stark television coverage of one tragedy after another and inspired NGO campaigns are all contributing. Live Aid, Jubilee 2000, Drop the Debt, the Global Campaign for Education are important players.

We may never know where or how CEC's influence has most been felt, but advocacy at Westminster, research, public meetings, publications and networking with other Commonwealth groups are our core work. Eight years at Westminster reinforced for me the view of most activists, that getting things done is one thing. Being seen to get things done is quite another!

CEC has often shown its creative potential and political acumen. Most recently this was in the study presented by Gituro Wainaina on behalf of CEC, to the 16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (16CCEM) (Cape Town, December 2006)(see below p11). The paper offered clear evidence that some African countries have achieved near UPE in the past, but been unable to sustain it.

With increased funding for education, especially in Africa, the CEC must exert its influence on how and where resources are spent and on whose authority, so as to improve the life chances of a whole new generation of children and young people. The wealth of experience and insight of CEC members, in collaboration with others, must be used to full advantage.

How can make this happen? We are dedicating the CEC Spring Conference to finding ways of making CEC support to Commonwealth education even more effective. Please come and hear the ideas of colleagues in Commonwealth and other partner organisations and contribute your own. This window of opportunity is not to be missed: 5-6 March, 2007, London (see details below).

I look forward to seeing you there.

Valerie Davey

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Forthcoming events

Spring conference 2007:

Theme: SUPPORTING COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION EFFECTIVELY

Times: 11.00 a.m. on Monday 5th March to 4.00 p.m. Tuesday 6th March 2007

Programme

Part 1 (Monday, 11- 5, 5th March, at Marlborough House) will listen to representatives from the British Government, Commonwealth countries and civil society organisations.

At the end of Monday afternoon, the conference will go by coach from Marlborough House (Pall Mall) to The Royal Foundation of St. Katharine (Limehouse), where the programme will continue through the evening.

Part 2 (Tuesday, 9-4 6th March, at The Royal Foundation of St. Katharine) will identify CEC priorities and propose strategies to pursue them.

[See full details and a booking form below or go the CEC web page www.cecomm.org.uk. A flier will accompany the hard copy of this Newsletter]

Malta Study Visit 2005 discussion

A meeting for High Commissioners in February 2007 has been suggested, to discuss the Study Group's report of its visit. Information will be circulated.

Nomadic education

It is proposed to hold a joint CEC and Pastoral Education in the Horn of Africa (PENHA) in the week beginning 7 May 2007, at a venue in central London to be arranged. Details will be circulated.

Summer conference and AGM

Theme: ISLAM AND THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS IN THE COMMONWEALTH.

Times: 10.30-5.00, Tuesday 26 June, 2007 [British Council Spring Gardens (London)]

The AGM will take place during the day.

CEC thanks the British Council for its generous offer to host the summer conference and the AGM meeting.

CEC NEWS

REPORTS FROM CEC COMMITTEES

The different committees* have submitted individual reports to the February 2007 meeting of the Governing Board. Highlights of their achievements since the last Newsletter and tentative plans are listed below. There will be an election of new Trustees at the AGM in June. Eight places fall vacant: six will be for three years; one each for one and two years. A call for nominations will be sent out in March.

*[Governing Board (GB); Policy, Strategy and Public Affairs Committee (PSPAC), Programmes, Projects and Communications Committee (PPPC), Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGPC); Knowledge Aid Strategy Group (KASG)]

Over the last year...

Much PSPAC energy went into preparations for meetings with Ministers of DfES and DFID in London and for the 16CCEM in December in Cape Town. A CommSec/CF meeting with civil society discussed preparations for the 2007 Commonwealth People's Forum (CPF) and CW Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Uganda and CEC/Commonwealth Consortium for Education (CCfE) lessons learned from Malta. It was noted that CEC/CCfE may be asked to organise an education section of the CPF in Uganda 2007.

In the coming months PSPAC expects to:

- follow up 16CCEM recommendations with CW agencies and CCfE partners, especially those on education about the CW and school linking;
- monitor development of the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF);
- keep a watching brief on Commonwealth Institute (CI) developments;
- prepare for the Kampala CHOGM 2007 and the CPF (November, 2007), possibly working with the CCfE on workshops addressing *Education for Transformation*;
- take note of progress on implementation of DfES International Education Strategy and DfES-DFID co-operation.
- examine the possibility of educational links with the *Commonwealth Business Council (Business Sector)* perhaps in relation to users of educational materials.
- obtain Information about CEF partnerships with business.

The PPCC has overseen the welcome development of the CEC website and sponsored a heavy programme of activities in the period since the last Newsletter (August 2006). A meeting about *Book Aid* took place in the Houses of Parliament in September was well-received. The Gladwyn lecture in the House of Lords in November was challenging and drew a good audience. The *UPE Sustainability* report was completed, accepted by the Commonwealth Secretariat and then presented to the 16th CCEM. An update on international student mobility was completed and submitted to the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Looking ahead, the PPCC is preparing for:

- the Spring Conference 2007 in March;
- a seminar to review the current status of education for pastoral communities in May;
- assisting *Book Power* with a meeting to disseminate information about its work facilitating access to books in higher education;
- the Annual Conference in June;
- using International Education Week (November 2007) to mark achievements during 60 years of independence in India and Pakistan, Malaysia, Singapore and Ghana.
- action to promote inter-faith understanding

The Knowledge Aid Support Group (KASG) reports the renewal of the Commonwealth Action Programme for the Digital Divide (following CHOGM 2005), with India and Malta taking it forward. A voluntary fund to support local initiatives has been established, under what is now the *Commonwealth Connects Programme* (CWCP). KASG is bringing forward proposals for a second phase of Knowledge Aid in Sierra Leone (KASL), to include: the consolidation of work with secondary schools; three new networks for tertiary, further and vocational education institutions; the production of multi-media presentations, *wikis* and support activities.

Archives. The CEC archive is being assembled and catalogued. Suggestions are invited for a place where it can be deposited, with access to CEC members.

Call for volunteers

CEC urgently asks a member with fundraising skills to donate some time to this activity. It is also looking for an assistant Honorary Secretary to under take some of the of the administration.

CEC Website (www.cecomm.org.uk)

The CEC website has been redesigned and is well worth visiting. It is being continuously updated with new material. Papers prepared for parliamentary and other meetings, research reports and regular announcements of CEC events can be found, along with those of related organisations of interest to members. There are links to other Commonwealth websites.

Web site visitors are finding it easy to use. It was designed by Dave Gray, a professional web designer for the voluntary sector, at no cost to CEC. Our thanks go to him. For this year, the web site is being hosted gratis by Altrunet. We are grateful to both Dave and Chandran Honour for this support to the work of CEC.

Over time, efforts will be made to combine web-site and Newsletter information to ensure that it is complementary and not repetitious.

For those who have friends or colleagues wishing to join the CEC, there is a membership application form. Please use it to encourage people from your other networks to join.

Membership of the London Institute of Education Library

CEC members may become readers at the Institute of Education Library at no cost. (The normal annual fee to the public is about £80). Known as Reference Members, such readers are not able to borrow books or otherwise remove material from the library. If you wish to join, please contact Peter Williams on email peterwilliams@onetel.com or Kees Maxey on kees.maxey@geo2.poptel.org.uk

Acknowledgement

Huge unpaid effort goes into the preparation and management of CEC meetings and the complex programmes of activities that they support. Thanks must go to all who give up so much time behind the scenes doing this essential work. New volunteers are always welcome. Overall its an enjoyable experience, in a very good cause. Get in touch if you are tempted. The more who are involved, the more we can do.

Reports of CEC events

Forum on nomadic education

Date/Venue: 20-23 June 2006, Garissa, Kenya

The Forum, organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat and COL was successful in terms of attendance and relevance. Enrolment and participation of representatives of nomadic communities were low. If the MDGs were to be achieved, relevant education provision had to be made and more targeted interventions increased. The Forum reviewed best practices on gender, maternal and child care, income-generation, animal husbandry and government policy, all of which were geared to increasing access and retention in nomadic schools. Government officials, NGOs, stakeholders and representatives from nomadic communities attended the Forum.

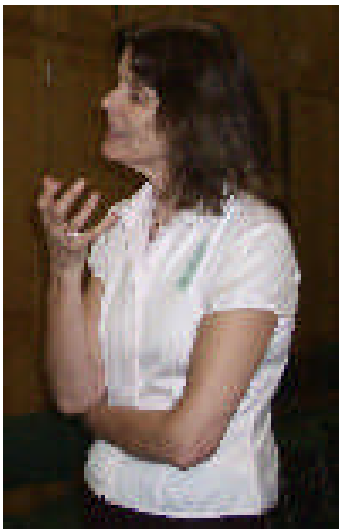
The Forum had initially been organised for colleagues from Commonwealth countries in Africa with nomadic populations. The welcome participation of UNICEF brought additional representatives from the Horn of Africa (Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea) to the Conference. Held in Garissa, it was in the heart of nomad country.

Two CEC members attended the Forum. Alba de Souza contributed an overview of the topic before the meeting and has written a report of the conference as a whole. Kees Maxey attended as a member of the Pastoral and Environmental Network in the Horn of Africa (PENHA) and presented a statistical analysis of the very low level of attendance of nomadic pastoralist children in the Horn of Africa, way below the EFA aims.

Kees Maxey

Celebrating International Literacy Day (8 September, 2006)

CREATING LITERATE ENVIRONMENTS: THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES



Chair: Sally Keeble, MP
Joint Parliamentary Chairperson
CEC

Speaker: Sara Harrity, Director of BookAid International (BAI)

Venue: 7 September, 2006, Portcullis House
London

Summary of Sara Harrity's presentation

The role that libraries in Africa play to reduce poverty is poorly understood. Policy development and investment in library networks are weak. Policy makers and donors recognise links between poverty reduction and literacy, prioritising textbooks to increase literacy and educational achievement. Much more is needed. Libraries sustain literacy. The reuse of the same books by different readers is a cost-effective way of creating literate community environments, enabling readers to find

information that will help them develop and solve problems. BAI works in 17 (mainly Commonwealth) countries in SSA, and also in Palestine. With CW partners, BAI builds capacity and advocacy skills to promote the distribution of books and libraries in communities are unable to buy taken-for-granted reading and writing materials, let alone consider access to IT.

Most schools in Africa have no library. Where one exists it is inadequately staffed with a small number of shelves and outdated, worn out materials. Public libraries are neglected. There are only 36 branches in Kenya's national library network for a population of 32 million. Community libraries can have a wide-ranging impact across social, cultural and educational fields, but it is difficult to measure. In Kenya, several libraries report more than 200 visitors a day. One has nearly 500.

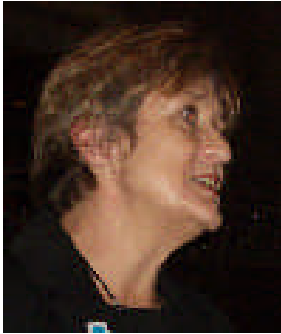
BAI supports mobile services: motorbike book boxes, the camel library. It encourages services for blind readers, HIV/AIDS materials and opening times dedicated to female readers. It enables library linkages: community librarians train school librarians and encourage reading. Libraries are part of sustainable literate environments. They enhance the quality of education and opportunities for lifelong learning.

[For the Powerpoint slides of Sara Harrity's presentation and related material go to www.bookaid.org]

The Gladwyn Lecture (28 November 2006)

The annual Gladwyn Lecture invites a distinguished speaker to examine a topical educational issue of global importance and their implications for CW states.

MEASURING WHAT MATTERS: STATISTICS AND EMPOWERMENT FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES



Chair: Lord Judd
Speaker: Denise Lievesley, Chief Executive of the Health and Social Care Information Centre (London) and President of the International Statistical Institute
Venue: The Moses Room, the House of Lords
Afterwards: The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) generously hosted a reception at Westminster Hall.

Denise Lievesley's (DL) presentation: summary

The world's preoccupation with educational evidence and measurement make the 2006 Gladwyn Lecture very timely. Until recently Founding Director of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (Montreal), DL reviewed the changing remit of the UN, in particular UNESCO, and the challenges faced by policy-makers seeking to achieve integrated, equitable development. She explored the implications of this for the work of statisticians in a world of increasingly short-term policy, which since 1945 has spent US\$8 trillion on nuclear weapons, but the equivalent of only 0.5 per cent of that amount on education. She reminded us that: only US\$7 billion is needed to get all children into school, the amount spent annually on cosmetics in the USA and on ice-cream in Europe; US\$1.45 billion, the price of one ballistic submarine, would double the education budgets of 18 poor countries.

Global data published in 2006 report primary enrolments and achievements in different world regions, more and less affluent states and in relation to pupil social background indicators, but measuring what matters is crucial for evidence-based policy, for statistics to be a tool of empowerment and to give voice to the poor. For this, the international statistician needs a number of tools (see Fig 1 for examples).



Statistics need to inform national and international governance, strengthening the capacity of states to govern effectively, accepting responsibility for their own people and, as a collective, for the well-being of the planet. UNESCO strives to ensure that data are relevant to policy without distortion, locally, nationally and internationally. It is concerned with accurate definitions and ensuring the quality of measures obtained within states. It seeks to build on the work of richer countries and multi-lateral organizations, protecting the interests poorer sectors of society, meeting the needs

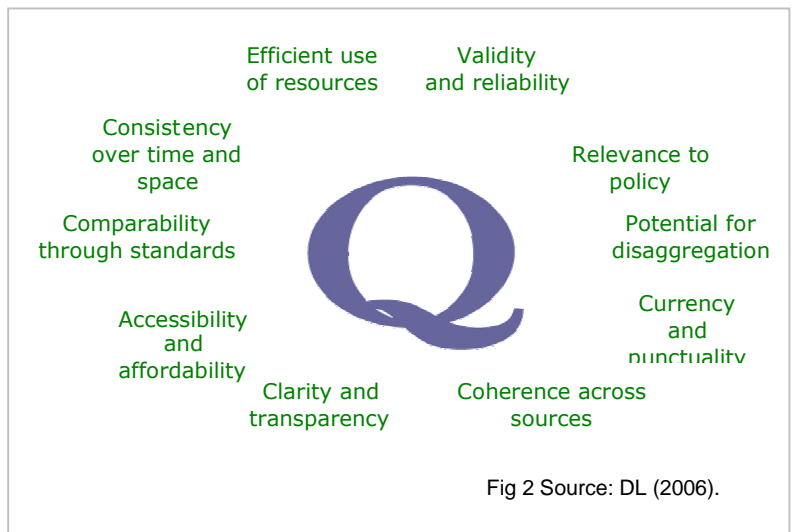
of both cutting and trailing edge countries. It aims to offer authoritative, independent data that are nationally owned, enable sound aid decisions and the accountability of the international community.

The purpose is to move countries up levels towards better data quality and more their more competent and sophisticated use (see table and Fig 2 below), but there is a need for awareness of: how world summits drive educational agendas, which might not always reflect national interests. There are

similar dangers with the high political significance attributed to indicators of performance. Useful tools of monitoring and advocacy, they are often imbued with more meaning than is justified or viewed as the only statistical information needed by government. They can be taken to imply inappropriate priorities and create incentives to misrepresent realities, with unforeseen consequences.

Country characteristics....		
Lacking statistical infrastructure; little government commitment and use of data; internationally comparable data not a priority	Basic data channels in place; some commitment to data use; but fragmented across ministries; attempts to improve coverage; some regional comparisons	Stable information system, good links between users and producers of data, responsive to complex policy issues, wide use of international comparisons.

Properly used, global and cross-national data are tools for advocacy, resource mobilisation, engaging donors, demonstrating commitment and ensuring the accountability of governments. They enable comparisons, learning from one another to show what can be achieved and benchmarking. They act as catalysts for debate and change. Risks include standardised frameworks across states for the collection, definition and classification of data. This distorts a national or sub-national picture, with the result that what matters is not measured.



It has to be remembered that information is interpreted in culturally sensitive ways. Even with national expertise, comparisons must be conceptually well-anchored, and embedded in appropriate standard classifications. Statistics can benefit society but may be used to maintain inequality and justify oppression. International statisticians face tensions between the interests of open accountability and national sovereignty, changing global contexts and aid paradigms. They need wider debate to ensure that data are trustworthy and trusted, that we measure what matters.

[The full Powerpoint slide sequence can be found on the CEC web page www.cecomm.org.uk The full text will be available in due course]

Advocacy and lobbying

Two CEC delegations met with New Labour Ministers in the Autumn of 2006:

- o Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development (4 September, 2006)
- o Bill Rammell, Minister of State for Higher Education and Lifelong Learning, DfES (8 November, 2006).

Meeting with Hilary Benn (4 September, 2006)

The delegation reported that, while CEC welcomed the *White Paper on International Development Making Governance Work for the Poor* (DFID, July), it would have wished to see a fuller treatment of education with greater attention paid to post-primary levels, migration and brain drain.

The delegation suggested ways of making better use of Commonwealth networks and infrastructures in the pursuit of the new development agendas, in the UK and overseas. It highlighted current CEC research on the sustainability of UPE and its support for innovative work in secondary schools in Sierra Leone. Through the KASL project, this was developing internet-assisted learning and teacher support. Each of these projects exemplifies ways in which CW countries share experience for mutual support.

On the pressing need to raise public awareness about development in poor communities, particularly in Africa, the Minister reported on monthly updates which follow the G8 meeting at Gleneagles (2005) and the newly formed Africa Progress group. This is chaired by the UN Secretary General and will report annual progress to the G8. The Minister foresaw that, under Germany's Presidency, the high EU profiling of Africa would continue. For the UK, Gordon Brown has made a ten year commitment to education, backed by generous funding.

Ways of making DFID publications since Gleneagles more widely available were discussed, for example in embassies, libraries, universities and associated websites. The recently formed African Business Schools Association, with supporting partners in the UK and US, was another channel through which to pass information and increase involvement. The mobilisation of commitment to development through UK-based *diaspora* should be encouraged.

The delegation urged the closer monitoring of improvements in the quality of education, given the amount now invested (£8.5 bn). CW agencies and networks are available to assist with this work.

The delegation reiterated the importance of well-trained teachers and the need to stop the migration professional expertise from poor countries. It was suggested that the professional development of teachers in the UK might include teaching abroad, as medical training does already. The allocation of funds from direct budget support for teachers' salaries was being piloted in Malawi, but may not be replicable elsewhere.

The meeting concluded identifying ways in which the CEC might raise CW educational issues with DFID on a regular basis.

Meeting with Bill Rammell (8 November 2006)

Discussion was wide ranging. It focussed on:

- o The recognition of international activities by staff at UK universities in the next Research Assessment Exercise
- o The exclusion of the Commonwealth and other international bodies from the level 4 curriculum,
- o Improving UK follow-up arrangements for the Commonwealth Ministerial conferences
- o CEC's forthcoming report on the sustainability of universal primary education and on points 3-6 of the DfES submission to 16CCEM.
- o The meeting was productive and positive. It paved the way for friendly co-operation with the Minister at 16CCEM in Cape Town, where he would address a session hosted by the CCfE.

In conclusion, Bill Rammell expressed a willingness to speak at a CEC meeting in 2007.

Report of the CEC/UKFIET at Caxton House (London) to discuss the DFES International Education Strategy (31 August 2006).

It was noted that Ministerial changes had impeded the completion of implementation plans for the Strategy. The commitment of the new Minister for Higher Education to international development was welcomed. A new implementation plan was being prepared with more feasible project content. The meeting noted that DFES saw itself facilitating this work through a small number of partner bodies, rather than assuming responsibility itself. UKFIET/CEC was willing to help DFES identify UK-based organisations specialising in internationalisation and development education and strategy, here and overseas. A further meeting to monitor progress was suggested for January 2007. This has not yet been arranged. The DfES International Division has recently been reorganised, with Winn Harris as the new Director. The revised Action Plan for implementing the International Education Strategy is now expected to be published in middle of February 2007.

Project Reports

Sustaining Universal Primary Education: A 5-country study

Sponsored by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the report of this study was presented by the CEC to 16CCEM, December 2006 in Cape Town.

The study examined the history of the drive for universal primary education in five Commonwealth countries: Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia. Through tremendous efforts, all had come very close to 100 per cent gross enrolment ratios by the early 1980s. All failed to maintain that ratio, even though actual primary school enrolments continued for the most part to increase. The increases failed to keep pace with population growth and the race to expand enrolments outpaced the supply of teachers, buildings and learning materials. Severe declines in quality and effectiveness ensued.

Main explanatory factors

The chief explanatory factor in all five cases was a failure to make the economy grow as fast as the population. The reasons for that failure were several and varied from country to country. Education as a national priority fell in relation to other sectors and investment in primary schooling dropped as it increased at higher levels. Declining government support reduced its quality and the transfer of costs to families meant that poorer parents withdrew their children from school.

Main lessons

1. Achieving and sustaining universal *enrolment* requires that primary schooling must be free in terms of tuition, learning materials, uniforms and other costs. Otherwise, the poor tend to abstain and, in particular, withhold their daughters from school.
2. Achieving virtually universal *retention and completion* of the primary course requires that what is learned be clearly worthwhile to pupils and particularly to their families. The poor tend to withdraw their children because the education does not seem worth the opportunity costs to the household.
3. Maintaining quality to make learning worthwhile requires trained and committed teachers and the retention of the full school day, as children learn much less short 3 or 4 hour shifts. Retaining female pupils requires making access to schools and school premises safe.
4. Achieving a sufficient supply of primary school places, competent, committed teachers and teaching and learning materials to provide a proper education requires:
 - o Economic stability to secure political stability and good governance
 - o At least sufficient economic growth to keep pace with population growth
 - o Maintaining the priority of education in relation to other government commitments
 - o Maintaining the priority of primary education *vis à vis* other levels of education
 - o A secure, long term education champion in high office
 - o Parallel protection for quality as quantities increase
 - o Reliable statistics and information for population and age cohort developments
 - o Forms of decentralisation that ensure that resources intended for primary education do benefit primary schools and their pupils.

[The study was coordinated by Lalage Bown. The case study teams were: Francis K. Amedahe and Balasubramanyam Chandramohan (Ghana); Alba de Souza and Gituro Wainaina (Kenya); Fidelis Haambote and John Oxenham (Zambia); Pai Obanya and Felicity Binns (Nigeria); Peter Williams (Tanzania). Funding came from the Commonwealth Secretariat and CREATE (University of Sussex). For a full reference see *Publications* below].

Balasubramanyam Chandramohan

Knowledge Aid for Sierra Leone (KASL): Bridging the Digital Divide

For years governments have been talking about the Digital Divide, the gap in ICT capacity between the more and less developed world and the damaging effect of this on the prospects of the latter. There has been more talk than action and the Digital Divide continues to widen. In 2005 CHOGM agreed to beef up the CW Action Programme for the Digital Divide and the CommSec was charged with establishing a voluntary fund to support local ICT projects to reduce it.

Through its support for KASL, CEC knew the potential of practical local initiatives and the importance of pump-priming support. It tried unsuccessfully to persuade DFID to contribute to the new fund but other countries, India and Malta, have succeeded in getting it established as the CW Connects Programme (CWCP). Governments, NGOs and academic institutions were invited to submit project proposals that *help bridge the Digital Divide by improving information and communication technology (ICT) skills in the CW and using them as tools for development*.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta, Michael Frendo, who chairs the CWCP Steering Committee, said that priority would be given to projects that can benefit from

the common ICT wealth of the CW. [] We seek projects that involve multiple partnerships in their implementation phase and which include plans to use ICT in national development.

The CWCP was launched on 3 August 2006. India, Malta, Mozambique and Trinidad and Tobago, all members of the Steering Committee, plan to fund the scheme, raising nearly £1 million over the next three years.

The first project was launched under the programme in August (2006). *Rebuilding After the Tsunami: Using ICTs for Change*, offers web development, e-communication services and training to organisations working on tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction in Sri Lanka and India. Other CWCP projects include radio-based business training for women in Cameroon to help them in micro-enterprise and the distribution of refurbished computers for computer training in local schools, donated by Caribbean governments and citizens.

CEC's Knowledge Aid project appears to fit squarely into the new programme, but perhaps because of lack of UK government interest, CEC did not learn of the launch until November, when the Commonwealth of Learning announced a second invitation for proposals. These had to be in by 5 January 2007. There was hurried consultation with Sierra Leone (SL) to meet the submission dead-line and a response is now awaited. CEC acknowledges the commitment of the project team in visiting every school supported by KASL, as well as the SL examination boards. CEC is mindful that the programme of activities is administered by the government of Sierra Leone and that its own role is to facilitate resources, not to intervene in the planning or design of the work. It notes SL concerns with the relevance of material which does not conform to government priorities and a request for hard copy texts for schools, rather than CD's, because of difficulties with IT maintenance and electricity supply. Finally, it notes the possible proposals to commercialize of IT development in SL, possibly bringing people from SL, under the BECTA scheme in Coventry. A KAP seminar may be arranged during 2007.

Geoffrey Hulme and others

News of members

A tribute

WILLIAM BONNEY RUST, OBE

Known affectionately to all of us as Bill, he was one of the CEC's elder statesmen. He was a Board member for very many years and an active member of the PPCC. He attended several CW Ministerial meetings, either as a CEC representative or on his own initiative. He always had original ideas for us and was ready to put in hard, practical work to implement them. When he was already in his late 80s, he set up a most useful conference on Vocational Education and Training in the Commonwealth and he pressed us to study Commonwealth countries' education systems on the ground. It was as a first-fruit of his work that a CEC group went to Malta on a study visit in advance of the 2005 CHOGM. He participated fully in this and all those who went appreciated his enthusiasm and interest, although he was by then not in the best of health.

Several CEC members had known Bill in earlier life. Lalage Bown recalls him in action in the late 1940s, when she was Speaker of the National Youth Parliament. He was already voicing idealism tempered with sense. Martin Kenyon gained helpful advice from Bill's NUS days. Janet Elliott was a close and appreciative colleague in his work with AVCI (see below). He leaves warm and admiring memories with all who knew him and CEC benefited as a whole from his indefatigability. Members of the Council may well say: "We shall not see his like again".

We are grateful to his long-standing friend, Ralph Blumenau, for the following account of Bill's life.

When in 1947 the 30 year old Bill Rust became President of the then left-wing but not communist National Union of Students (NUS), he was occasionally taken for his namesake, the leader of the Communist Party of Great Britain. To avoid such confusion, he had himself known as W. Bonney Rust. However, like many student idealists at that time, he hoped that communists and non-communists would work together in unity for a peaceful world. He was one of the founders of the International Union of Students (IUS) and strove hard to keep open the bridges between East and West and to keep the NUS inside the IUS, even as the latter became dominated by Stalinist communist organizations. By 1950 he realized that he had been fighting a losing battle and turned to other areas in which his idealism could find a more fruitful expression.

At the age of 8 Bill Rust was badly injured in a street accident and he spent the next two years in hospital. Every day his mother took him in a wheel-chair to a local Elementary School. The Head Teacher, seeing his ability, tutored him through the 11+ and 13+ examinations, and Bill was only his second pupil to achieve a grammar school place. This was at the Sloane Secondary School in Chelsea.

After leaving school, he spent ten years at the Gas Light and Coke Company and worked on the repair of damaged gas mains during the air raids on London in the Second World War. During that period he secured a place at Birkbeck College to take an external LSE degree, and it was as a representative of the LSE that he first came to be active in the National Union of Students. An Honours degree followed and then a Ph.D. in Economics.

In 1948 he began his long career in education, for which he was eventually awarded the OBE. From teaching at a school in Southgate, he rose to be Principal of the West London College in Holland Park and then Principal of the Hammersmith and West London College. In 1982 he was elected President of the 450-strong Association of Principals of Further Education Colleges. By then he had an international reputation: from 1972 to 1983 he was Educational Consultant for non-University Further and Higher Education to the Kuwait Ministry of Higher Education; he became a member of the Council for Education in the

Commonwealth; and from 1988 to 2004 was Director of Research at the Association of Vocational Colleges International. At home he was a member of the British Accreditation Council (1984 to 1990) and Chief Examiner in Organization and Method Studies for the International Baccalaureat (1984 to 1991).

He had many publications. They included his PhD. thesis 'Examinations: Pass or Fail?'; 'English as a Foreign Language' (1968), 'Objective Testing in Education and Training' (1973), and 'The Global Student' (1995). Shortly before he died he completed a contribution to 'The Management of Public Money' a book commissioned by the Comptroller-General of the National Audit Office, who was one of his former students.

Born on 4 November 1916, Bill died on 1 October 2006, a few weeks short of his 90th birthday. He leaves a wife, a son, and two daughters.

Lalage Bown and Ralph Blumenau

Congratulations

TREVOR BOTTOMLEY

Brunel University has conferred the status of *Honorary Fellow of the University* on Trevor Bottomley, in recognition of his outstanding services to the University and its students. Trevor served as the University Ombudsman for nine years. This was until January 2005, when the new Office of Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education came into being and individual University Visitors and Ombudsmen lost their powers, in respect of student complaints. The title was presented to Trevor at the end of November, 2006) at a ceremony forming part of the University's combined celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Isambard Kingdom Brunel and the 40th anniversary of the founding of the University.

CEC offers warm congratulations to Trevor on his Honorary Fellowship. He is has been a member of the Executive Committee/ Governing Board for over 20 years, Honorary Secretary 1992 to 2000 and Joint Deputy Executive Chair from 2001 to 2003.

ALBA DE SOUZA

In September 2006, Alba de Souza was appointed as Education Secretary to the UK National Commission for UNESCO. Alba reports that the work is immensely challenging, requiring the administrative liaison and support of a series of national committees and *ad hoc* groups that they have spawned. CEC is delighted that she has made it a condition of her service that she continues as Secretary of the PSPAC.

Commonwealth News

Commonwealth Foundation Conference

PREPARING FOR CHANGE: ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Venue: 9-12 October 2006, Victoria, Seychelles

To save lives and livelihood, the conference aimed to promote awareness and preparedness for ecological change and the ability to adapt to it. It sought to prioritise the implications for small states, as particularly vulnerable and comprise the majority of Commonwealth member nations. The main sub-themes of the conference were: Health and Environment, Education/awareness/role of media, Built and Urban Environment, Agriculture and Forestry.

Gertrude Shotte (GS) represented CEC at the Seychelles meeting. The theme of her presentation was *Post Disaster and Education Maintenance: A Practical Perspective*. It drew on personal experiences from two disasters in the Caribbean island of Montserrat: (i) the 1989 category 5 Hurricane Hugo and (ii) the ongoing volcanic crisis. GS reported on the challenges of maintaining a post-disaster system of education in Montserrat and how this has been influenced by the nature of the crises, the size of country and its international standing. Her underlying idea is that

None of us can be strong unless we have the support of the community. And unless the community is strong, it's impossible for us to be strong, no matter how big we become
(Camille Cosby, Wisdom of the Elders).

In the *Education and Awareness* breakout sessions, delegates were encouraged to think of: education in its broadest sense, in relation to today's children as tomorrow's leaders and today's adults, including ourselves. Issues addressed included:

- vulnerability in its broadest sense and include livelihood
- how country size affects capacities, resources, technologies and poverty

- the importance of indigenous knowledge and culturally-based, traditional practices and the integration of scientific and traditional knowledge
- how curriculum needs strong institutional frameworks
- the implications of climate change
- the case for using common language across the CW
- encouraging activities to prepare for climate change (essays, poetry, art, poster and calypso competitions, songs, drama, exhibitions, newsletters)
- music as a powerful medium to spread the awareness message
- using media proactively and preventatively to alert and warn
- respecting local media
- setting principles to disseminate information to the community relating to different types of disaster
- using CSOs and grassroots organizations, independent and other media sources.

Commonwealth organizations were encouraged to:

- develop guidelines and rules to guide educational practice in disaster and after
- put together a regional resource packs, that can be tailored to suit local needs
- organize cost-effective workshops to train trainers in disaster management, dealing with climate change
- monitor action at CW levels
- exchange of ideas from country to country; encourage volunteers and sponsorship
- position CW education activities within a global framework
- do everything to sustain awareness.

A highlight of the conference was the Seychelles students' presentation, *Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School* with climate change presented by young people who saw education as the medium to evoke positive reactions to climate change. Their message was clear: *No education, no knowledge, no reasoning, no life!*

Gertrude Shotte (25/11/2006)

[An appendix to Gertrude Shotte's paper comprises songs and poems on climate change, written and performed during the conference. It can be found on www.cecomm.org.uk]

16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (16CCEM)

ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION: FOR THE GOOD OF ALL

10th -14th December 2006, International Convention Centre, Cape Town

Delegations from 36 countries (29 led by Ministers) attended the 16CCEM. Civil society representation included several Commonwealth associations active in education in addition to CEC. Among them were the CCfE, Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies, Commonwealth Countries League, Royal Commonwealth Society; Commonwealth Association of Science Technology and Mathematics Educators, Commonwealth Human Ecology Council, Association of Commonwealth Universities, Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit, League for Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers. The CEC delegation included Richard Mawditt, Kees Maxey and Bala Chandramohan. A further five members of CEC's Governing Board were present in other capacities.

For the first time, in addition to the official ministerial meetings, the 16CCEM offered three parallel sessions: the Stakeholders' Forum and two independent programmes, one for the Youth of the Commonwealth and a new Teachers' Forum. The three parallel sessions came together for plenary sessions, to make contributions to the Ministers' Conference and social events, enriching the overall meeting in new ways. An added bonus for delegates was the pre-conference, *The Power of Partnerships: Strength of Friends*, convened by the CCfE. The Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards were a further innovation.

Of particular interest to the CEC were the three presentations to the Ministerial plenary, *Access to Education*.

- *EFA and MDGs: A Global Perspective and Commonwealth Performance* by Steve Packer, Consultant to Commonwealth Secretariat, and a CEC member.
- *Sustainability of UPE: Lessons from the Past*, presented by Gituro Wainaina from Kenya, on behalf of the CEC project team.
- *Increasing Access to Secondary Education*, Keith Lewin, Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE)

The plenary discussion following the session was led by the Minister of Education from Kenya, George Saitoti, and Yusuf Sayed of the EFA Global Monitoring Team in Paris.

Some 90 presentations to the Stakeholders' Forum examined access, improvement, finance and other resources as requirements of a good quality education. Opened by Don McKinnon (Commonwealth Secretary General), the first keynote speakers were Graça Machel (Trustee of the Nelson Mandela Trust) and Blade Nzimande (General Secretary, South African Communist Party). The third plenary and keynote by

Mahmood Mamdani (Professor of Government and Professor of Anthropology, Columbia University) was to the Ministerial Conference, with delegates to the Stakeholders', Youth and Teachers' Forums in attendance.

A late entry to the programme was a session sponsored by the Commonwealth Consortium for Education on *Building Institutional Partnerships in Education*. The leader of the UK delegation, Bill Rammell (UK Minister of Higher Education) gave an address on the *UK International Education Strategy and the place of partnerships in it*. He also gave a short vote of thanks to the organisers of the 16CCEM at the opening ministerial session, on behalf of visiting Ministers. Throughout the 16CCEM CEC delegates worked productively with the Minister, Scottish Minister Hugh Henry and their colleagues on the UK Delegation. There was also frequent contact with Paul Boateng, British High Commissioner in South Africa. He generously invited the CEC members to an informal pre-conference lunch at his residence.

On their return from Cape Town CEC delegates praised the smoothness of the orchestration of four complex events and their subsidiary programmes by the South African hosts and the CW Secretariat; their excellent choreography of the main events (the Opening and Closing ceremonies) and their splendid hospitality. They welcomed the introduction of significant new elements in the programme (the Teachers' Forum and the Good Practice Awards), which Ministers will repeat on future occasions. Concluding communiqués and statements included new commitments to COL and CSFP, as well as the promise of a Ministerial steering mechanism to oversee CW work in education between 2006 and 2009. The organisers of 16CCEM achieved good contact between participants in the different events, including access between Ministers and delegations. Providing lunch for delegates in the Exhibition Hall was an excellent way to ensure such interaction.

Lessons that could usefully be drawn for 17CCEM in three years time in Malaysia include: avoiding a theme that has been fully aired at global meetings for a number of years, so as to inspire new debate, policy and action; ensuring that keynote presentations are on theme; co-ordinating group reports so that they are to the point and coherent. The above, combined with improved drafting procedures, will lead to a powerful Communiqué as a tool for promoting theme-related policy and action in the triennium to come. A good balance in the national/regional and gender/ethnic mixes in sessions is essential. CSOs would benefit from proper arrangements for the distribution of documents and better visibility through lapel badges and name plates where they sit.

The CEC/CCfE group made the best of these sometimes challenging circumstances, supporting each other and exploring the theme *Access to Quality Education For the Good of All*. They were helped by having co-operated in the CCfE Pre-Conference on school linking, 8 and 9 of December, just before the CCEM events. Thanks to the generosity of Nexus Strategic Partnerships they were able to share a Consortium Display Stand in the Exhibition Hall. The group's long standing friendly relationship with the both the CW Secretariat and the S African teams was particularly welcome and helpful.

[The 16CCEM programme, communiqué and many of the papers can be found at www.16ccem.com/about/frameset.htm]

Commonwealth Consortium for Education (CCfE)

Link Community Development (LCD)

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS: STRENGTH OF FRIENDS

EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF SCHOOL AND COLLEGE LINKS IN THE COMMONWEALTH 8 and 9 December 2006, District 6, Cape Town, South Africa (Pre-16CCEM)

With several thousand international school and college partnerships throughout the Commonwealth, governments are placing school and college linking higher up their agendas. To date only anecdotal evidence suggests that such links increase international understanding, support school development and promote mutual respect and friendship. The pre-16CCEM sought more solid information. What are the benefits of partnerships? Do they improve the quality of education? Does the Commonwealth have a role to promote partnerships?

The conference took place at the Anglican Church's Zonnebloem Education Centre in District 6 and was opened by Ron Swartz the Secretary General of the Western Cape Department of Education. Mark Collins the Director of the Commonwealth Foundation attended throughout and gave a well-received address. The highlight of the Conference was an address by Naledi Pandor, Minister for Education, South Africa, *The Potential for School Partnerships in South Africa*. Following this, speakers examined:

- Contributions of partnerships to school improvement and the narrowing of the EFA gap. (Anita Govan, Malawi, Perran Penrose, LCD International)
- School partnerships and professional development for teachers (Rob Sieborger)
- Achieving quality in school partnerships (Karen Edge and Mary Dawson)
- The Commonwealth dimension in school partnerships. (Deryn Holland)
- The wider institutional support needed to make linking effective? (K. Quagrain, Ghana)

- Effectiveness of different communication modes (including ICT) in school linking. (Alan Mills, SSAT and Mark Swartz, Khanya)
- Opportunities and challenges in different models of school partnerships. (international, intra-national, south-south-north, cluster) (Derek Nkata, LCD, Uganda)

The findings of the meeting were encapsulated in a statement that was circulated to Ministers at 16CCEM. They agreed in their Communiqué that school linking should be a CW activity supporting improved access to quality education.

CHOGM 2007

In January, the Secretary General of the Commonwealth and the President of Uganda announced that the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) will be held in Kampala from 23rd to 25th November this year. CHOGM brings together businessmen and women, youth, civil society representatives, and other Commonwealth Groupings in 53 countries in discussions to deliberate are in one common language, English. The theme for CHOGM 2007 will be *Transforming Commonwealth Societies to achieve Political, Economic and Human Development*.

COMMONWEALTH PEOPLE'S FORUM (CPF): REALISING PEOPLE'S POTENTIAL"

Venue: 19-22 November 2007, at the Africana Hotel, Kampala, Uganda

Already there are CPF proposals for a meeting to be held within CHOGM 2007, addressing the theme *Realising People's Potential*. Steering group suggestions for workshops include:

- Economic Development
- Governance, participation and human rights
- Culture, creativity and identity
- Environment and natural resources
- Education for transformation
- Health at home and at work.

The CCfE and CEC will be publishing information on educational elements, as developments progress.

Commonwealth Education infrastructure

The CEC keeps a watchful eye on the health of the CW infrastructure and the agencies and programmes which support CW educational co-operation. Recent anxiety has been voiced over the temporary 'eclipse' of the Commonwealth Institute and the possibility that the Commonwealth Education Fund may wind up in 2008.

The **Commonwealth Institute** (CI) withdrew five years ago from its role as a champion of teaching and learning about the Commonwealth, planning to devote its energies and resources to support a new Centre for Commonwealth Education (CCE), at the University of Cambridge. In the event, realising the value of the CI listed building Kensington High Street has been much more difficult than anticipated, leaving the CCE (Director: Christopher Colclough) starved of funds. The CEC is keen for the CCE to prosper, but regrets the disappearance of the CI, as an institution devoted to education about the Commonwealth. It has been working with others to keep the issue on the agenda and is pleased that the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum is to some extent able fill the gap.

The **Commonwealth Education Fund** (CEF) was launched by Gordon Brown to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002. The fund supports activities in 17 CW developing countries. It promotes civil society advocacy for EFA and ways in which it can make government and school authorities accountable for educational expenditures. CEC notes British Government intention to wind up the Fund in 2008, without a clear rationale for this. CEC believes that there should be full public discussion in Parliament and outside of the merits of continuing the Fund in its present or a revised format, before any final decisions are taken.

The CEC was pleased the support of 16CCEM for the **Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan**, to which the UK is the leading contributor. Hopefully the united Ministerial voice will dissuade the Canadian Government from effecting the substantial reductions in its contribution, threatened in the Autumn 2006, with the election of a new Government came in Ottawa. Pledges at 16CCEM of additional money for the **Commonwealth of Learning**, the distance-education co-operation agency of the Commonwealth, are also particularly welcome. The resources of COL are incommensurate with the enthusiastic approval of its programmes voiced by Commonwealth Governments.

A development full of promise for the future is the formal inauguration in Cape Town of the **Commonwealth Teachers' Group**. This brings together some of main teachers' unions in CW

countries and will reinforce the constituency of CW/civil-society advocates of educational co-operation across the Commonwealth.

News from other partners

UK National Commission for UNESCO (UK/NC) EDUCATION COMMITTEE WORKING GROUPS (WGs)

The Education Committee of UK/UNESCO currently has 5 working groups.

1. **Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet)** has a busy programme of activities in England and Wales, including a number of partnerships with schools elsewhere in the CW.
2. The **Africa** WG is seeking to establish links with other National Commissions, initially in Kenya and Uganda. It is completing work on a study of the contribution of Africa and Africans to the UK and seeking funding to publish. Later in 2007, it is convening a workshop on the study Bob Moon and Brendan O'Malley *Teachers and Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, to include an account of the impact of HIV/AIDS on African teachers and education.
3. **Education for All (EFA)** As well as the Moon/O'Malley research (above): Janine Eldred has completed a study on Family Learning and Literacy. It will be posted on the UK/NC website; Colin Brock's study of Education as a Humanitarian Response will be available 2 March 2007. Yusuf Sayed presented a seminar on the *Mid-Term Review* (2008 GMR report) 19 January 2007 and an Early Childhood Care and Education seminar (GMR 2007) will be organised by DFID with UK/NC members invited.
4. **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)** has: proposed a project for funding by the DFES; arranged a presentation by Alan Landsdown, Head of Additional Needs, of the Welsh Assembly Government; Stephen Sterling from the ESD WG has been appointed member of the DESD Reference Group of UNESCO. William Scott has been invited to attend meeting in Amsterdam on higher education and ESD. Seminars are being planned on: faith-based learning; black organisation initiatives, web-based communication and information-based documents.
5. **UNEVOC** is a reconstituted and expanded group. It met 19th December 2006. A number of UNEVOC centres are to be created to raise the profile of technical, vocational and skills training in the UK and to contribute to the international UNEVOC network of national contact centres around the world. There will be an event in March to launch the Institute of Education (London) as the first UNEVOC Centre in the UK. A new Chair of the UNEVOC group is being sought from among FE principals.

At the annual conference of the UK/NC, in June 2006 in Nottingham, a cross-sectoral **Peace and Security** WG was formed. This has met three times since then and is committed to education before, during and after conflict as one of its key areas.

[For full information of UK/NC work go to www.unesco.org.uk]

UKFIET

UKFIET, founded in 1991, is an umbrella organisation with 30 members (including CEC). All are based in the UK and committed in different ways to international education and training. In 2006 UKFIET registered as a non profit company with charitable status. It held its first AGM in October and marked this with a presentation by Richard Arden of DFID. Its Newsletter came out twice in 2005 and 2006 and the first edition of 2007 will appear along side this one in February. UKFIET held a Regional Symposium on *SWAPS in Fragile States* 15 December 2006, at the University of York. It was convened by Roy Carr-Hill and Bill Rigby. A further Regional Symposium on *Education and Chronic Poverty* is planned for 2007, convened by Caroline Dyer at the University of Leeds. The major event of 2007 will be the 8th biennial UKFIET conference in September in Oxford. The theme is *Going for Growth? School, Community, Economy, Nation*. This is convened by Fiona Leach and Managed by CfBT. For information about how to take part in the already rich programme go to the UKFIET web page www.ukfiet.org.uk UKFIET plans to celebrate GMR 2008 with a Colloquium in London, shortly after its November launch, early in 2008.

EducAid

EducAid is a small charitable trust running three secondary schools and one primary school in Sierra Leone. Our first school, in the capital Freetown, was founded in 2000 by Miriam Mason, who had previously taught modern languages in south London. We sent her just months after the ceasefire in the long-running civil war, although setting up a school seemed risky. Fortunately the security situation continued to improve and operations have so far been safe.

Before setting up the school, we realised that 'free' education had to mean 'free': we decided not to have any school uniform and, more importantly, to provide lunch free to students. Neither is common in Sierra Leone,

but both create barriers, particularly for secondary-age children who are in demand in the home or workplace. It soon became clear that demand for free education far exceeded supply. Miriam developed very strict policies to ensure that we only cater for dedicated students: for example, persistent latecomers or non-attenders lose their places in our schools. We are working hard to attract more girls into our schools, but there is a strong ethos in Sierra Leone that women as young as 13 or 14 should be raising a family. Our biggest challenge presently is to hire excellent female teachers to provide a good role model for young women.

[CEC thanks EducAid for this clip. We look forward to hearing more. To learn about their work go to www.educaid.org.uk]

Mark Wallace, EducAid

Feature

WOMEN OF SIERRA LEONE: MAKE YOUR VOICES HEARD AND YOUR VOTES COUNT!

[Popular action and social mobilisation is a major strand of adult and community learning. This article reports on women learning to use their voice in preparation for the forthcoming elections in Sierra Leone]

Political parties in our beloved Sierra Leone must realise that it is the women's votes that will decide the result of the forthcoming election because they form the majority of the population. The 50/50 Group of Sierra Leone, a non-partisan campaign for more women in politics and decision-making through training and advocacy, urges women to use their voting power effectively. We insist that closing the gender gap is a key factor in any political party's success in the forthcoming election. *Or should we say outright that women should only support those political parties who show evidence of including an increased number of women at the leadership level?*

At the National Validation Workshop of the Women's Manifesto Working Group in January, participants agreed that the political parties in Sierra Leone should recognise that they will lose the support of women voters if they do not include women's concerns in their manifestoes and if they do not put 30 per cent women aspirants in winnable seats.

Decades of effort are starting to pay off. Women within the parties have been working for years to show the importance of women's votes, but they were rarely noticed by the media. Sometimes the 50/50 group's most important role, as a non-party organisation, has been to highlight publicly what people inside the parties can only say in private. By publicising the gender gap in the media, groups like ours have made it part of the mainstream political agenda. This allows women inside and outside the parties to mobilise and campaign for policies that will benefit women and an increase in the number of women candidates, as a right and an electoral necessity.

We are not only calling for policies to benefit women, but for a change in the political culture. We are showing how women are put off by the current style of politics, which values scoring points more than learning to solve problems, in a climate that excludes women, their gifts and talents. Women have learned, incidentally and through our training, that they too have a voice and a right to act.

Those who wish to resist change suggest that women cannot cope with confrontation and do not understand serious political issues. Nothing could be further from the truth. When we say that women do not like the current culture of politics this isn't because women can't cope, but because they don't see why they should have to. When women voters show less loyalty to a political party which does not value their vote, it does not mean they are less serious about politics, they are showing their dislike for a culture of politics that excludes them.

Sierra Leonean women are determined this time round and they are just as patriotic as their male counterparts. They think seriously, care deeply and have learned in detail about the economy and social issues. All we women want is meaningful and equitable partnership with our men in the furtherance of the development of our country.

The workshops and training sessions that the 50/50 Group has been implementing over the years have, without doubt, increased women's awareness of their social and political roles. Wider awareness of the importance of women's votes opens up the possibility of change, not only in the way political debates take place, but in the issues that are addressed. When such awareness translates into increased participation at leadership levels, the impact on national development will be great and positive.

Nemata Eshun-Baiden, CEC
Founder & First President of the 50/50 Group
Sierra Leone

Publications

Bown, Lalage, et al. (2006) *Attaining and maintaining universal primary education in Commonwealth Africa: Learning from experience*, London, CEC. A study for the Commonwealth Secretariat, presented to 16CCEM, pp18.

[The research draws on experiences of 5 countries, with different post colonial and educational histories and differently located in Africa. Taking the case of Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia, the report examines factors underlying their achievements in UPE and the setbacks they underwent at a later stage. From field observations, the study notes complex and interacting factors that saw a drop in educational levels over the last two decades, before proposing policy and strategy to restore the balance there and elsewhere. The full text will be available shortly on the www.cecomm.org.uk]

CCfE (2006) *Briefing Notes*, London.

1. Commonwealth Co-operation in Education: a Profile
2. Conferences of Commonwealth Ministers of Education
3. The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan
4. Distance Education and the Commonwealth of Learning
5. The Commonwealth and Education for All
6. Gender and Education: the Commonwealth *Dimension*
7. Commonwealth Education Co-operation: Role of Civil Society
8. Education about the Commonwealth
9. Science, Technology and Mathematics Education in the Commonwealth
10. Commonwealth Student Mobility: Trends and Issues
11. Teacher Development and Mobility in the Commonwealth
12. School and College Linking in the Commonwealth

The set of 12 Briefing Notes (the first five were initially prepared in 2003 for 15CCEM in Edinburgh), was updated for 16CCEM in South Africa. They comprise a folded A3 sheet (4 back-to-back sides of A4), in small print, with rich detail on each of the different themes. The papers can be downloaded individually from www.commonwealtheducation.org. Hard copies can be obtained (please send stamps to the value of £1 to cover mailing costs) from Peter Williams, Hon Secretary, Commonwealth Consortium for Education, 7 Lion Yard, Tremadoc Rd, London SW4 7NQ.]

DFID (2006) *Eliminating world poverty: Making Governance Work for the Poor*, London, HMSO, July, pp132.

[In the wake of 2005 commitments the Make Poverty History Campaign and the G8 meeting at Gleneagles, the white paper sets out the way as in which HMG is putting our pledges into practice, to promote better governance across the world, to tackle the threat of climate change, ensure security incomes and public services and to create an international development system that will tackle climate change and shape the 21st century. The White Paper presents many success stories, accepts that there is a very long way to go. It contains 2 pages on education]

Holland, Deryn (2007) *The Malta experience in education: report of a study-visit made in November 2005*, London, CEC, A discussion paper, pp17.

[A report of the CHOGM in Malta was given in the Newsletter (March 2006). This report is from the perspective of the CEC study visit ahead of the conference. It is being circulated to members for discussion and comment].

Jha, Joytsna (2007) *An Annotated Bibliography on Gender in Secondary Education: Research from Selected Commonwealth Countries*, London, Commonwealth Secretariat, £25.00, pp256.

[The bibliography brings together the currently available documentation on gender and education in five countries (Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, India and Pakistan). with special emphasis on secondary education. The bibliography includes both published and unpublished titles, from the United Nations, other multilateral agencies, NGOs, and research institutions. Where possible the location or source of the particular entry is identified to help readers source the original document. The volume should be useful to researchers, policy makers, planners, teacher educators, government and non-government education managers, as well as activists. For information go to <http://publications.thecommonwealth.org/publications>]

Maxey, Kees (2006) *Update of International Student Mobility in the Commonwealth*, London, CEC. A report to the Commonwealth Secretariat and presented to 16CCEM, December, pp10.

[The original 2000 report was first updated in 2003. The 2006 version describes global patterns of student mobility in HE and FE and then examines trends within the CW. It notes a continuing bias to

Anglophone destinations (US, UK and Australasia), reduced sponsorship and increasing dependence on private funding. It reports a majority of moves from high and upper middle income HDI countries, with negligible movement to and between low income states. Women may be in the majority at pre-university and undergraduate levels, with wide subject variations, but men are increasingly dominant after that. Commonwealth students in the UK have a reasonable chance of financial support, but constitute only a small minority of the total. The CS has abandoned support for student mobility, other than the administration of scholarships. Host states see the international student as a source of income, but sending societies give do not perceive the immediate and longer term economic gain to them. The Executive Summary can be found at www.cecomm.org.uk. The full report is available free to members of the CEC. It can be purchased by libraries and non-members for £5 plus £1 postage and packing by contacting the Honorary Secretary].

Packer, Steve; Aggio, Carlos (2007 forthcoming) *Achieving the Goals: The Performance of Commonwealth Countries in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Education and the Dakar Education for All Goals*, London. A report for the Commonwealth Secretariat for the 16th CCEM, pp101.

[In its assessment of progress towards the MDG and EFA targets, this CommSec report concludes that there is commendable progress in the majority of CW countries but that significant challenges remain between now and 2015. Although there has been a 19% increase in total primary enrolment between 1999 and 2004 (an increase of 40 million), a minimum of 27 million children never see a school out of a global total of 77 million. A majority of CW countries failed to achieve the 2005 gender parity target, but there is strong evidence from some countries that greater gender parity and equity is possible when bold reforms are introduced. The report also examines levels of early childhood education (123 million enrolled in pre-primary schools in 2004) and adult literacy (approximately 440 adults without basic literacy skills). Concerns about quality are raised and international assessment studies cited to illustrate levels of attainment. Most CW countries have medium term sector plans to address these complex challenges and 17 countries are shown to have increased their relative levels of spend on education in the new Millennium. Aid to basic education has also increased but from a low base in the 1990s. The Report concludes with a set of ten challenges and opportunities for improving basic education in CW countries. Ten statistical tables are provided].

Williams, P (2006) Ed., *Directory of Commonwealth Education, 2007*, London, Commonwealth Consortium for Education, pp42.

[A useful A5 inventory of organisations committed to educational development in different parts of the world, the *Directory* summarises purposes, describes activities, provides contact information and indicates forthcoming events. Crucial for busy people, it provides the full name of organisations and their official acronyms].

Williams, Peter; Etchart, Linda (2006) *Achieving Education for All: Good Practice in Crisis and Post-Conflict Reconstruction- A Handbook for Education Policy Makers and Practitioners in Commonwealth Countries*, London, Commonwealth Secretariat, £8.50, pp62.

[Conflict and other disasters are major obstacles to achieving UPE by the MDG target date in 2015. CW ministers are committed to prevent conflict and other disasters through education and to mitigate their effects on education in disrupted societies. The study is of sixteen CW countries in Africa with experience of conflict. It elaborates on the role education plays before emergencies occur, during crisis situations and afterwards in periods of recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation. As a practical guide, the study will assist policy makers and others worldwide to better understand the complex issues and options to share experiences of addressing situations arising from conflict, emergencies, and other difficult circumstances. For information go to <http://publications.thecommonwealth.org/publications>]

Zafar, Fareeha (2006) *Achieving Education for All: Pakistan - Promising Practices in Universal Primary Education*, London, Commonwealth Secretariat, £8.50, pp80.

[Despite the challenge of attaining the UN MDG of UPE by 2015, Pakistan has taken up the challenge, as have many other developing countries of the Commonwealth. This handbook for education policy makers and practitioners identifies good and promising practice which works towards the achievement of universal primary education in Pakistan. Policy makers internationally will learn from approaches reported here about how to address similar problems in their own countries. For information go to <http://publications.thecommonwealth.org/publications>].

Postscript

Editorial note

It is not easy to foresee the nature of a new task, even one undertaken over several decades in different guises for other organisations. There is no shortage of material for the CEC Newsletter and its associated bodies, in the CW and outside. It is abundant. The range and amount of CEC's work is wide and the education levels addressed include everything from small community initiatives to global policy meetings. In this issue, as well as news of activities in the UK, there are several items relating to Sierra Leone, detailed information about 16CCEM in South Africa and other happenings elsewhere. In future issues, a range of additional country experiences will be very welcome. To speed the publication we will be looking for slightly more finished contributions than have been available here, but we will be keeping a tight limit on word numbers, to a maximum of 250. Meantime, a big thank you goes to all those who have contributed material to 2007(1) and spent time correcting and proof-reading it. We hope that others will be tempted to contribute to 2007(2), for which copy is need 31 May. We have made a number of changes. The layout of the Newsletter is slightly different. To avoid mistakes, we have not accorded titles and honours, except in respect of members of the Houses of Parliament. We include at the bottom of this page a short list of abbreviations not already explained to help the reader decipher the acronyms, but we are not slavishly spelling out those which are commonplace. A full list for CW bodies can be found on the CEC web-page. Suggestions for improvements are always welcome.

Rosemary Preston, 13 February 2007.
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Abbreviations

COL	Commonwealth of Learning
CW	Commonwealth
CommSec	Commonwealth Secretariat
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DFID	Department for International Development
IT	Information technology
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa

CEC People

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Trevor Bottomley, Lalage Bown (co-opted),
 Jonathan Jenkins, Thelma Henderson, Alba de
 Souza, Geoffrey Hulme, Deryn Holland, John
 Oxenham, Felicity Binns, Rosemary Preston,
 Mark Robinson (co-opted), Mo Sibbons.

Newsletter

Rosemary Preston

Spring Conference 2007

SUPPORTING COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION EFFECTIVELY

11.00 a.m. on Monday 5th March to **4.00 p.m. Tuesday 6th March**
 Marlborough House, Pall Mall Royal Foundation of St. Katharine
 Limehouse

The aim

2007 is an important year for CEC reflection and recommitment. It is half-way to the 2015 target date, UNESCO is reviewing the world's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and Education and Education for All.

Following the 16CCEM in Cape Town (December 2006), the Commonwealth is embarking on a new triennium of educational cooperation, the 50th anniversary of which will be celebrated at the 17CCEM in Malaysia. CEC's own Golden Jubilee programme is also planned for 2009.

The 2007 Spring conference invites members to review recent CEC contributions to education in the Commonwealth and critically appraise future action. It looks forward to lively discussion as it seeks answers to four radical questions:

- (i) What are the main challenges for Commonwealth education in the years ahead?
- (ii) Are information and advocacy the best means through which the CEC can promote education in the Commonwealth? Should it branch into new projects, research, consultancy and other activities?
- (iii) Should it continue to operate almost exclusively from a British base?
- (iv) What activities would enable more members to contribute fully and effectively to CEC objectives?

The programme

On Monday, at Marlborough House, Part 1 of the Conference will listen to representatives of the very bodies to which CEC addresses its concerns. They will include parliamentarians and public servants, Commonwealth representatives and leaders of civil society organisations committed to Commonwealth educational development.

At the end of Monday afternoon, participants will transfer by coach from Marlborough House (Pall Mall) to The Royal Foundation of St. Katharine (Limehouse), where the programme will continue through the evening.

On Tuesday, at St Katharine's, Part 2 of the Conference will identify CEC priorities and propose strategies for pursuing them in the years ahead.

Dates: Monday and Tuesday, March 5th and 6th 2007

Invited speakers: Mark Collins (Commonwealth Foundation), Steve Packer (recently DFID/Education for All Monitoring team), Ann Keeling (Commonwealth Secretariat), Steve Sinnott (National Union of Teachers), Stuart Mole (Royal Commonwealth Society) and British Parliamentarians (Lord Thomson, Lord Judd, Tim Boswell MP and Sally Keeble MP).

Venues: **Monday, March 5th – Wren Room, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, SW1Y 5HX**
 (<http://www.thecommonwealth.org>)

Monday evening, March 5th and Tuesday, March 6th The Royal Foundation of St. Katharine, 2 Butcher Row, Limehouse, E14 8DS. (<http://www.stkatharine.org.uk/>)

Fees: **Full Conference [including refreshments, two lunches, dinner, bed and breakfast] £50.00**

One day only [including refreshments and lunch] £25.00

To Book: Please complete and return the form at the top of the next page as soon as possible and not later than Friday 23 February. In accepting applications, first preference will be given to those signing up for the full Conference.

Cheques should be made out to the "Council for Education in the Commonwealth".

Spring Conference booking form:**SUPPORTING COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION EFFECTIVELY**

Name:

Address:

.....

Phone: Email address:

I wish to attend both sessions, 5 and 6 March, and enclose £50

I wish to attend the first session only (Marlborough House), Monday 5 March, and enclose £25

I wish to attend the second session only (St. Katharine's), Tuesday 6 March, and enclose £25

I am interested and would like more information

Signed.....

Date.....

This form should be detached or copied, completed and sent with your cheque (payable to CEC) to:

Deryn Holland, 13 Green Road, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP13 5BD.

[UK phone: (01494) 526 354 e-mail: hollandderyn@hotmail.com or deryn.holland@sas.ac.uk]**Commonwealth Calendar 2007 (February-November)****February**

8 CEC Governing Board. Palace of Westminster

March

1 RCS. Deadline for submissions, 2007 Commonwealth Essay Competition

5-6 CEC. Spring Conference – 'Looking to the Future'

7 CCL. Members' Open Forum

12 Commonwealth Day 2007. *Respecting difference, promoting understanding*

tbc CAPA. Workshop. Increasing women's participation in TVET activities. Nigeria

April

26 CEC. Governing Board

tbc CAM. Triennial Programme Meeting (including Annual Meeting) Museums and Cultural Diversity - date, location to be confirmed.

May26-28 ACLALS Canadian Branch (CACLALS): Conference Aboriginal Storytelling, Poetry, and Performance Art, *Bridging Communities*, University of Saskatchewan.**June**

12 CCL. Annual General Meeting

26 CEC. Annual Conference (proposed theme: *Islam and the education of girls in the Commonwealth*, British Council, London)**July**

tbc ACLALS South Africa branch (SAACLALS) conference in Durban

8-12 ICASE (CASTME) World Conference on Science Education, Perth, Australia

August17-22 ACLALS Triennial conference. Vancouver, Canada (Details at www.aclals.org)

tbc CAM. Workshop for Group of Children in Caribbean Museums, Nassau.

September28-30 BELMAS. (British Educational Leadership Management and Administration Society - a member of CCEAM) International Conference. Wokefield Park, Mortimer, Reading, Berks. www.belmas.org.uk

30 Closing date for entries to the CASTME Award Scheme 2007

October

tbc UNESCO General Conference Paris

20 CCL. Foods and Crafts of the Commonwealth (formerly the CW Fair). Organised by CCL and wives of High Commissioners in support of CCL Education Fund. Lawrence Hall, RHS Horticultural Halls, Greycoat Street, London SW110.30 – 5.00.

November

19 Commonwealth Foundation. Commonwealth People's Forum. Kampala, Uganda

23-25 CHOGM. Kampala, Uganda

26-29 South Pacific ACLALS Triennial conference. *Images, Ideologies, Realities in Oceania*