



Council for Education in the Commonwealth

House of Commons – House of Lords

Three-Year Plan 2008-2011

Commonwealth House • 7 Lion Yard • Tremadoc Road • London SW4 7NQ
Tel & Fax: 01277 212357 www.cecomm.org.uk • E: secretariat@cecomm.org.uk

Patrons: Lord Judd of Portsea • Lord Thomson of Monifieth KT PC •

Joint Parliamentary Chairpersons: Tim Boswell MP • Simon Hughes MP • Sally Keeble MP

Registered Charity No 1091704 Company limited by guarantee No 4391999

The CEC 2008 to 2011

ABOUT THE CEC

The Council for Education in the Commonwealth (CEC) is committed to the urgent expansion and improvement of education throughout the Commonwealth. It regards the quality of education that the majority of Commonwealth citizens receive as depressingly inadequate, and considers this a continuing affront to the more affluent minority.

The CEC aims to promote more and better education and training for children and

adults at all levels across the Commonwealth by:

- influencing the agendas, discussions and conclusions of the Conferences of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEMs) and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGMs);
- engaging in educational advocacy with UK ministers and Commonwealth governments;
- forming partnerships to pursue these agendas in the wider Commonwealth community, especially through High Commissions in London, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and sister organisations in membership of the Commonwealth Consortium for Education;
- providing a forum for informed discussion and analysis of these issues.

Status and Relationships

- CEC is *a voluntary organisation*, incorporated as a company limited by guarantee, with charitable status.
- CEC has *formal Commonwealth accreditation*, enabling it to be represented at CHOGMs, CCEMs and at associated civil society events.
- All *Commonwealth High Commissions* in London are honorary members of CEC.

Since its foundation in 1959 the CEC has had enjoyed close links with Parliament in London. Its Patrons are members of the House of Lords and its Parliamentary Chairs are elected members of the House of Commons. Other parliamentary members are drawn from the main political parties. A member of the Governing Board serves as CEC's Parliamentary Liaison Officer. This parliamentary connection gives CEC a unique platform from which to inform educational advocacy across the Commonwealth.

The CEC regularly works in partnership with others, including the Commonwealth Secretariat; the Commonwealth Foundation; the Commonwealth of

Learning; the Association of Commonwealth Universities; the Commonwealth Consortium for Education and its constituents; the UK Forum for International Education and Training (UKFIET); and the Institute of Education (IOE) of the University of London. (The IOE is a corporate member. It generously offers individual CEC members free reference library reading rights at its Library in Bedford Way).

The CEC has a special relationship with the British Council, the League for Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers (LECT) and the Royal Commonwealth Society/Commonwealth Club (RCS). The British Council is a long-time collaborator and supporter. LECT has provided us with an administrative base. The RCS offers privileged membership rates to CEC members.

How the CEC Works

The CEC's main resource is its *membership*. Membership records and subscription renewals are managed by the Charities Aid Foundation. The CEC is statutorily responsible to its membership through an Annual General Meeting. A periodic newsletter keeps members informed of activities. Members and the wider public are encouraged to visit the CEC web-site: www.cecomm.org.uk. The elected Governing Board is legally responsible for ensuring that the CEC works to achieve its charitable purposes, supported by proper financial administration and effective management. The Board is served by three Committees: Finance and General Purposes; Policy, Strategy and Public Affairs; Programmes, Projects and Communications. Non-Board members may be invited to serve on the two latter Committees. Executive functions are carried out by CEC officers, with support from other Committee members. CEC *income* comes from subscriptions (enhanced by Gift Aid), surpluses on events and activities, and occasional paid commissions for the Commonwealth Secretariat and other bodies. The current system has significantly enhanced the CEC's financial position.

THREE-YEAR PLAN 2008 – 2011

INTRODUCTION

The three-year plan informs members and others interested about the issues with which CEC is currently engaging and the activities being prepared in relation to them. The plan is updated annually. After the draft has been submitted to the AGM, the Board is asked to approve the revised plan at its first meeting in the following year. The Board assumes responsibility for the execution of the Plan, supported by its three Committees, with the help of members and in collaboration with other agencies.

PLAN PRIORITIES

The Plan (2008-2011) prioritises three areas of activity, as recently approved by the Board.

- 1) The Conferences of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEMs) and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGMs) are the focus of most CEC initiatives.
- 2) The strengthening of CEC links with the British Parliament and Government, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth High Commissions in London will ensure that they remain key channels for bringing knowledge and advocacy to bear on Commonwealth policy and action.
- 3) The promotion of education about the Commonwealth for all groups of learners, particularly but not only in the UK, is a key CEC commitment.

1] Contributing to the CCEM and CHOGM:

CEC will focus on four events: the Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in London in July 2008, organised by the Commonwealth of Learning and the University of London; the 17CCEM in Malaysia (June 2009); the CHOGMs in late 2009 in Trinidad and Tobago and in 2011 at a venue yet to be announced. Through working groups of members, CEC will contribute suggestions for conference themes and will develop substantive papers on central issues. CEC will also participate actively in the Stakeholder Forum for civil society associated with CCEM in Kuala Lumpur and in the Commonwealth People's Forums that will precede each of the CHOGMs. The Board has resolved to contribute to the costs of its representatives attending these Meetings, on the basis that those attending for CEC are also asked to make a substantial personal financial contribution.

CEC will continue to pay particular attention to the implementation of the Cape Town (16 CCEM) Plan of Action in relation to:

- Ensuring continued progress towards sustainable, universal primary education in Commonwealth countries.
- The development of school and college links across the Commonwealth.
- Policies that emphasise the linkages between the different levels of education and the importance of secondary, tertiary and lifelong learning in supporting Education for All.
- Strengthening and revitalising universities in Commonwealth developing countries, particularly in Africa.
- Support for proposals to strengthen and expand the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, and to maintain the coverage of the UK contribution to include all Commonwealth countries.

- Support for the Commonwealth of Learning.
- The expansion of Open Education Resources for schools and universities.

2] **Strengthening links with the British Parliament and Government, the Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth High Commissions:**

Parliament: The CEC will extend its relations with the different All-Party Parliamentary Groups which concern themselves either with particular Commonwealth countries or with issues that affect education in the Commonwealth. The CEC will also explore opportunities for increasing parliamentary awareness of education in the Commonwealth.

British Government: The CEC will press for:

- (a) Follow-up by relevant departments on:
- Government commitment to the implementation of the Commission for Africa Report (2005);
 - the International Education Strategy first issued in 2004 by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and now the responsibility of the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS);
 - the human development implications of the most recent (2006) Department for International Development (DFID) White Paper on development;
 - full British engagement in Commonwealth scholarship and other education programmes and generous contributions to budgets supporting Commonwealth education co-operation and interchange;
 - arrangements to continue the activities supported by the UK's Commonwealth Education Fund, which completes its original mandate in 2008.
- (b) Increased public support for
- the public interest work of the British Council and the BBC in international education;
 - the Centre for Commonwealth Education at the University of Cambridge;
 - the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, on the point of moving from Bristol to London.

The CEC will continue to mobilise working groups of members to maintain its role as valued and rapidly responsive resource for the British Government in matters of education in Commonwealth countries.

High Commissions: CEC aims to hold at least one liaison/briefing meeting a year with Commonwealth High Commissioners and their Education Officers. It will also encourage them to participate in its public meetings.

Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth Foundation: CEC will participate substantively in all the public consultations, formal and informal, that the Secretariat and Foundation convene on education.

Civil-society partners: CEC will work closely with civil society groups which have similar aims. In addition to closer partnership with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, it will develop its links with the Commonwealth Business Council, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, Commonwealth Teachers Group and the Global Campaign for Education. CEC will link up with kindred bodies in Commonwealth countries to bring advocacy to bear simultaneously on their governments and on the British government. As a founding member, and provider of the secretariat of the Commonwealth Consortium for Education, CEC will promote collaboration and joint initiatives by Commonwealth associations in the education sector.

3] Promoting education about the Commonwealth among all groups of learners

The Annual Conference and the prestigious annual Gladwyn Lecture will continue as vehicles to keep the CEC membership and a wider public informed of current prominent issues. In addition, the CEC will organise four or five public meetings a year, at least one of which will be held outside London. During 2009 the CEC will celebrate educational progress since independence in Sri Lanka (60 years) followed in 2010 by Nigeria (50 years) and in 2011 by Tanzania (50 years). Following the successful study visit to Malta in 2005, the possibility of a similar programme in Malaysia in 2009 will be explored. As part of its effort to ensure follow-up to decisions at the 16 CCEM, CEC will consult with other concerned and experienced organisations in the field of education about the Commonwealth to assess how the Ministers' recommendation on the subject can be taken forward through a coordinated approach.

Independently and working in co-operation with its partners, CEC will:

- campaign for the development of curricula for in-school and out-of-school learners to gain a greater awareness of the Commonwealth and identify with its values;
- promote the provision of appropriate educational materials through the internet and for hard-copy use by schools and others;
- encourage its members to launch initiatives at local levels, including activities with Commonwealth diaspora groups;
- meet with interested MPs to raise issues about the Commonwealth and the function and funding of Commonwealth institutions;

- find ways to persuade the media to give more prominence to the Commonwealth;
- seek to engage active private sector interest and contributions.

SPECIAL EVENTS 2009

50 year milestones: 2009 will be a special year. The CEC programme will be inspired by celebrations to mark its own fiftieth anniversary and that of other Commonwealth educational institutions founded in 1959. These were the inauguration of inter-governmental Commonwealth Education co-operation and the first Commonwealth Education Conference, held in Oxford, from which were launched the series of Ministerial Conferences, the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, and the Commonwealth Education Liaison Unit. Over time, this last evolved to become the present Education Section of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

These anniversaries make 2009 an occasion for celebrating past Commonwealth achievements in education and for looking ahead to the future.

Anniversary activities: A special conference is envisaged for the Spring of 2009 to explore the potential for enhanced co-operation in education in the Commonwealth and to make proposals for consideration in July by the 17CCEM in Kuala Lumpur. It is hoped to arrange a CEC education visit to Malaysia in July 2009, to coincide with CCEM. In November/December 2009, the Annual Gladwyn Lecture will be followed by a special Parliamentary reception. The CEC is preparing two books to mark this Golden Jubilee: a critical account and analysis of its own 50-year record of activity on behalf of Commonwealth education, and a volume celebrating the 50 years of contribution of women to the development of education in the Commonwealth. The CEC will also invite members and friends to contribute to a modest fund to provide support for the education of deprived children in a Commonwealth member country.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Projects: CEC will continue to sponsor ‘Knowledge Aid for Sierra Leone’ (KASL), which promotes the use and adaptation of Open Education Resources from the Internet for the benefit of secondary schools. CEC will continue to waive the overhead costs incurred in supporting, monitoring and taking formal responsibility for the project. It would like to encourage the expansion of KASL and mobilise an increase in funding to bring this about.

In 2008 the CEC will finalise its research report on the Sustainability of Universal Primary Education for publication by the Commonwealth Secretariat. In partnership with the CEC and Commonwealth Foundation, the Common-

wealth Secretariat will publish the Proceedings of the 2007 CEC annual conference, *Islam and the Education of Women and Girls in the Commonwealth*, written by Fauzia Ahmad, John Oxenham and Rosemary Preston,

The Hon. Projects Officer will continue to explore opportunities for appropriate project research and development.

STRENGTHENING THE CEC

Membership: A recruitment drive will aim to increase membership to 200 individual members and 40 corporate members by the fiftieth anniversary in 2009. Students temporarily in the UK from the Commonwealth, including Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows, and Commonwealth-originating diaspora groups resident in the UK are recognised as two constituencies with potential interest in CEC membership and programmes. Efforts will be made to attract younger members, building on the 2008 Annual Conference. To this end, the CEC is actively exploring participation in the Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit project, *Putting Youth Engagement into Practice*.

Information and communications: Members will continue to receive *Commonwealth Education News* periodically, helping them to stay abreast of the CEC's own activities and events and also of Commonwealth programmes and initiatives. The redeveloped *web-site* will be kept up to date and expanded.

Governance: There will continue to be a conscious effort to redress the age imbalance in the Governing Board, following recent success in achieving a better gender balance.

Management: The CEC will recruit an assistant to the Hon. Secretary to ensure sufficient capacity to manage an increasing programme of activity. A volunteer fund-raiser will be appointed as soon as possible.

Finance: To strengthen its financial stability, the CEC aims to increase its regular income from membership, donations and overhead to at least £15,000 by 2012. The Board is indebted to the significant voluntary professional *pro bono* contribution from many of its executive and members which if measured in financial terms would enhance the annual revenue figure ten-fold or more. In building its reserves in recent years the Council policy is to continue to build on this firm foundation with the aspiration of establishing an endowment sufficient to realise its future plans and potential. It is seeking fund-raising advice and is considering how to attract greater private sector support.

Sponsorship will be sought for the programme of events celebrating the 50th anniversary.