

Report from the Governing Board meeting, April 2007

The Governing Board met on Thursday 26th. April 2007 at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London. A total of 14 people attended, including Valerie Davey, our Executive Chairperson and Lord Frank Judd, one of our patrons. In addition we had observers from the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Foundation.

The following is a brief summary of the discussions by the Board and the reports made to it.

Part I Administrative Business

WAMM- The Commonwealth Secretariat publication: “Link Into Education, Gender & Health” was circulated. This issue focussed on the Women’s Affairs Ministers Meeting (WAMM) scheduled for Kampala in June 2007. The publication is on the Secretariat’s website (<http://www.thecommonwealth.org/>).

Money- The Treasurer presented a first draft of the Annual Accounts for the year 2006-07. . The net resources retained in the last year were estimated to be just over £3,700. There has been a significant increase in the Council’s membership during the year.

The Council had provided only a small subvention for the CEC delegation to the 16th. Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Cape Town, as the delegation had been mostly self funded.

Funds for Knowledge Aid for Sierra Leone (KASL) are all restricted to the project itself and so do not feature in ‘net resources retained’.

The 50th. Anniversary of the Council comes up in 2009 and a real fundraising effort will be needed in the next two or three years to support appropriate activities to mark this event. Sponsorship for some or all of these activities will be sought.

After debate and a majority vote, the Board decided that an increase of £5 in the ordinary membership fee should be proposed to the Annual General Meeting on 26th. June 2007. If agreed, it would come into effect in April 2008. That would take the fee to £30 p.a. The institutional membership fee would remain at £140.

CEC Committees- The reports of the four Council committees were received and are attached at the bottom of this report.

Part 2 Policy etc.

CHOGM 2007- A major part of the discussion was the contribution the Commonwealth Consortium for Education, of which CEC is a part, would be making to the Commonwealth People’s Forum at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kampala in November 2007. The Consortium has proposed the theme: **Moving on from Cape Town: A holistic approach to education for transformation..** There are to be 19 streams altogether in the Peoples Forum, of which three are to be related to education. The Commonwealth Foundation was

concerned that these themes should provide three key (and different) resources for the politicians. They would need to be streamlined to give maximum coherence. Further discussion about the details of the programme would take place in the CEC Policy, Strategy and Public Affairs Committee.

The proposal was judged excellent, especially because of its holistic approach. There was a need to continually advocate for education at CHOGM. Social transformation could not happen without education – and thus it was important that education was mentioned in the final communiqué.

Influencing Government- A further discussion took place on the need to affect government policy. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, was very enthusiastic about education. He had committed £8.5 billion to education in Africa over the next few years.

Lord Judd said that if CEC wished to make a real impact on his thinking, it needed to make itself an indispensable resource to the important advisors around the Chancellor. Furthermore, CEC would strengthen its position, if it obtained the involvement of people on the front line, those actually directly involved in the provision of education. The Chairs of the CEC committees needed to get together to consider what sort of brief should be given to the Chancellor and his team.

Committee Reports to the April Governing Board.

Report from the Finance and General Purposes Committee April 2007.

Most of the business dealt with by the Finance and General Purposes Committee will be reported separately by the Secretary; Treasurer; Membership Secretary; the Policy, Strategy and Public Affairs Committee and the Programmes, Projects and Communications Committee

The remaining items follow:

1. **Fundraising.** VSO's response to the approach made by the Treasurer has been postponed due to their restructuring.
2. **Assistant Secretary.** Descriptions of the jobs of Secretary and Assistant Secretary have been received and further refinements will be made for the next meeting of the F&GP Committee.

Report from the Programmes, Projects and Communications Committee April 26th, 2007

The Programmes, Projects and Communications Committee has sponsored the following activities since February 2007:

1. Due to the energetic teamwork led by Valerie Davey and Peter Williams, the Spring Conference of March 5th and 6th 2007 took place in Marlborough House and St. Katharine's Conference Centre, Limehouse, and was judged very successful by participants. No formal report is yet available. CEC is very grateful to the Commonwealth Secretariat for the use of the Wren Room and for providing lunch and refreshments.

2. The projected joint discussion of education for nomadic and pastoralist communities by the Pastoral and Environmental Network of the Horn of Africa and CEC has had to be postponed. An alternative date has not yet been arranged with the Commonwealth Secretariat.
3. Mr. Bill Rammell, Minister for Higher Education, has offered to discuss his experience at the 16 CCEM in Cape Town on Monday, June 4th, from noon to 12.45. Arrangements for a venue and for publicity are in hand.
4. Thanks to the continuing hospitality of the British Council, the Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday, 26th June, at the Council's headquarters in Spring Gardens. The theme will be 'Islam and the Education of Women and Girls in the Commonwealth'. Rosemary Preston is leading a team of six to implement arrangements and the Aga Khan Foundation has expressed an interest in participating. A preliminary notice has already been sent out to the CEC membership, while the flier with fuller information is scheduled to be circulated in early May.
5. As International Education Week in mid-November could unfortunately clash with security arrangements for the Queen's Speech to Parliament and also comes just before the CHOGM in Uganda, the date of the event to mark achievements and challenges in education during 60 years of independence for India and Pakistan needs to be changed. The possibility of making the event serve as the annual Gladwyn Lecture is under consideration. Separate events to mark the 50th anniversary of independence for Ghana and Malaysia are also under consideration.

The report on the Malta CHOGM (2005) is now being printed and arrangements will be made with the Malta High Commission for an appropriate discussion. The report from the Seychelles conference on education for climate change is now available on the CEC website.

Richard Mawditt is taking forward his personal project for a book on 'Leadership in Higher Education', the royalties from which he plans to donate to CEC.

Despite illness and other pressures, Rosemary Preston produced the last CEC newsletter, which has been distributed to the CEC membership. A better distribution is needed of the work involved in producing the newsletter and arrangements are in hand for the formation of an editorial team.

GB will have noted that the Hon. Secretary has maintained the CEC website at high levels of quality and interest.

KASL will report separately on its development.

As a follow-up to the UPE Sustainability Project, the Commonwealth Secretariat has agreed to sponsor a book based on the paper presented to the 16 CCEM in Cape Town. Lalage Bown is once again leading the team to bring this project to a successful conclusion.

Report from Policy, Strategy and Public Affairs Committee

1. Since the last Governing Board meeting the Policy Committee has had one well-attended meeting, on March 26. It is due to meet again on May 15.
2. Discussion at the March meeting, a record of which will hopefully be available by the time the Governing Board meets, focused on many of the substantive issues that will occupy the Committee's attention in the coming months:
 - Taking stock of the discussions at the Spring Conference on March 5 and 6 and revising the Council's Three-Year Plan to incorporate the directions laid down, in terms of priority and focus, for future Council activity. It is hoped that by the time the Governing Board meeting a record of proceedings will have been prepared.

- Follow up with Commonwealth agencies and Consortium partners to 16CCEM recommendations especially those on education about the Commonwealth and on school linking. The two main forthcoming meetings when this might be discussed will be on Tuesday May 1 when the Education section will be meeting civil society groups (replacement for cancelled meeting on March 20) and the Secretariat/Foundation consultation meeting on Friday May 18.
- Preparing for the Kampala CHOGM and CW People's Forum in November, possibly working with the Consortium on workshops addressing Education for Transformation. It is now known that two workshops on education will be held: that being organised by the Consortium, in which the CEC is invited to participate and a second one involving the Secretariat, Ministry of Education and Ugandan civil-society groups. Plans for these will need to be finalised by end May or mid-June. CEC will need to prepare its own submission for the Kampala CHOGM in good time, probably to be delivered by early August.
- Co-operation with Government. In mid-April there is STILL no new Implementation Plan for the DfES International Education Strategy on the DfES website. Tim Boswell has put a question in the Commons about this and the text of question and reply are being accessed. Possibilities for influencing/reacting to DFID strategy paper on education, due in the summer, are being explored.
- Co-operation with partners in the Consortium, UKFIET, UK UNESCO, British Council etc. Major events this year will be the UKFIET Oxford Conference September 11-13 and the UK UNESCO Conference in Wales on July 13/14. Friendly letters to the outgoing and incoming British Council DGs have been drafted.

AdeS (Secretary) PW (Chair).

Knowledge Aid for Sierra Leone (KASL); Hulme-Fawn visit

Visit Conclusions

Report of consultations

Representatives of the KASL UK Support Group visited Freetown from 30 January to 9 February 2007 for meetings with local management to review achievements in KASL Phase 1 and to discuss plans for Phase 2. The main conclusions were as follows.

In the pilot project of phase 1, valuable experience has been gained, It demonstrated that Professor Eldred Jones's vision of giving Sierra Leoneans the benefits of the computer and Internet revolutions was achievable even in a country as disadvantaged as Sierra Leone; useful teaching materials were downloaded from the net and customised to meet local needs; the interest of teachers and students was aroused.. But the cost of computers and Internet access have not yet reached the point where every school can be turned into an ICT learning centre and some of those that were established have had resource problems they could not surmount. A change of emphasis has become necessary. Downloading and customising of teaching materials for the benefit of schools across Sierra Leone will continue at the existing resource centre and at schools that have the necessary resources to continue (e.g. from school associations). but there will be a new emphasis on teaching computer and Internet access skills at KASL- managed ICT learning centres. Teaching resources will be concentrated on a few ICT learning centres that can be given high-speed internet access. Two models will be tested :one will be a fixed centre in which learners come

to the computers and the other a mobile centre in which computers are taken to the learners.

We ha agreed an outline acion plan for establishing the first fixed centre in central Freetown over the next six months, using capital funds provided by the UK Support Group. The initial assessment is that it will have the capacity to provide 6000 21-hour courses a year, i.e. 6000 learners a year will each be able to learn computer and Internet skills. This assessment is subject to practical testing after the first teacher has been appointed and the first learners have attended

There are possibilities of obtaining money for the mobile centre from a recently established Commonwealth Fund (Commonwealth Connects), to which application has been made, but this is still uncertain.