

Revised Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Advisory Council of the Commonwealth Educational Media Center for Asia, held on May 12, 2003 in the Indira Gandhi National Open University, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi 110068

The following members were present:-

Prof. H.P. Dikshit, Vice Chancellor IGNOU
Chairman

Mr. Brian G. Long, Vice-President, The COL Vice-Chairman

Dr. Ramli Mohamed, Dean/Professor, Institute of
Graduate Studies, University Sains Malaysia Member

Dr. Abdul Muhsin Mohamed, Ph.D., Director General,
Educational Development Centre, Ministry of
Education, Male', Republic of Maldives Member

Dr. W.A Rupa Wijeratne, Senior Lecturer, Educational
Technology and Director, Educational
Technology Centre, The Open University
of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka Member

Mr. K. Narayanan, Retd. Head, Admn & Finance Member

Dr. Usha Vyasulu Reddi, Director, CEMCA Member

Leave of absence was granted to Mr. Kiran Karnik, President, NASSCOM, Mr. Ravi Mathur, Joint Secretary and Mr. V.S. Pandey, Joint Secretary, Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, members.

The Chairman extended a hearty welcome to the new members of the Advisory Council and placed on record his appreciation of the work done by the earlier members of the Council.

The following matters were considered:-

Item No. 1: Confirmation of the minutes of the Fourth meeting of the Advisory Council held on November 23, 2001.

5.1.1: The minutes of the fourth meeting of the Advisory Council held on November 23, 2001 were confirmed as a correct record.

Item No. 2: Action taken report

5.2.1: The Council noted the report of the action taken on the minutes of previous meetings and the highlights explained by the Director, CEMCA.

5.2.2. While considering the report of action taken, the Chairman suggested that as SAARC countries would be resorting to ODL in the pursuit of their development goals, CEMCA should develop relationships with these countries. The suggestion was appreciated and opportunities in that respect will be pursued wherever they are seen to be helpful to the fulfillment of CEMCA's particular remit.

5.2.3. The Council also noted that the mid term evaluation of the COL conducted recently had

commended CEMCA's role.

Item No. 3: Annual Report of CEMCA for the year 2001-2002 and Plan of Action for 2002-2003.

- 5.3.1: The Council noted the activities of CEMCA for the year July 1, 2001 to June 30, 2002 as contained in the agenda note and the brief explanations provided by the Director, CEMCA on the capacity building training programmes conducted by CEMCA and the work done in other areas of its mandate in tune with COL's activities.
- 5.3.2: The Council noted the observations of the members on some of the aspects of the functioning of CEMCA, which are detailed hereunder:
- 5.3.3: The Council noted that CEMCA's practice of using COL support to leverage other funding should be expanded wherever feasible.
- 5.3.4: The contributions by partnering organizations, whether in direct funding or in kind contributions, should be recorded.
- 5.3.5: With this in mind, while the financial accounts of CEMCA reflect the accounting of funds received from COL and other organizations, it is important to capture the contributions of IGNOU and other institutions and acknowledge it appropriately in the Annual report.
- 5.3.6: While capturing the contributions made by the many institutions in the region, the Advisory Council wished to record their profound appreciation of the contribution of IGNOU in the growth, development, and ongoing work of CEMCA, whether by way of providing infrastructure facilities, academic and other resources or in terms of its unwavering and continuing support. It was especially noted that the continued willingness of the Vice Chancellor of IGNOU to serve as Chair of the Advisory Committee is valued evidence of the highest possible level of institutional support. Such support should be reflected in the annual reporting of CEMCA activities.
- 5.3.7: There should normally be some charge for training programmes in order to ensure that it is valued by the recipient organizations. (The pattern of the World Bank model might be instructive).
- 5.3.8: CEMCA's focus of operations should extend beyond the present South Asian countries to all of Commonwealth Asia including The Republic of Maldives so as to address their needs with a strategy in this behalf to be developed.
- 5.3.9: For raising resources for funding operations or programmes a rationalized fee structure, which provides for waivers or reductions for the participants from the poorer countries of the Commonwealth Asia may be evolved.
- 5.3.10: CEMCA could play a helpful role in preparation of research projects or training proposals by assisting clients who do not have the expertise to do so. Assessment of media based training programmes to be undertaken with a view to enhancing their utility.

Item No. 4: Plan of action for the year 2002-2003

- 5.4.1: While considering the plan of action for the year 2002-2003, the Council took note of the potential value of conducting training programmes online or through teleconferencing, instead of face to face so as to orient the recipients of training in the use of the current technologies. Director, CEMCA observed that the first training programme may be done on face to face basis in order to

- orient the participants to the subject and thereafter training might be feasible and desirable online or through teleconferencing.
- 5.4.2: Where connectivity is a problem, training material could be provided on CDs to the participants to facilitate familiarization with the media.
 - 5.4.3: A strategy for conducting training programmes that draw on the strengths and resources of other international organizations on the basis of a co-incidence of interest, not by renting of facilities, should be developed.
 - 5.4.4: The Council noted that the first training programme in the Republic of Maldives is to be done in June 2003.

The Council also noted that in the area of publications, CEMCA had, in addition to publishing four issues of EDUCOMM ASIA annually, taken up the publication of Manuals for training in Multimedia, Teleconferencing etc. and which work was expected to be completed by June 2003.

Item No. 5: A three-year vision and plan of activities 2003-2006

- 5.5.1: The Director, CEMCA explained that the document under consideration was drawn up, based on discussions with the COL and the need for developing a long-term strategic plan.
- 5.5.2: The Council noted the observations of Mr. Brian Long, Vice-chairman, that COL had adopted a three year planning cycle based on the recommendations of the CCEM, Botswana and that two cycles of three years plans had been completed with COL now going into the third cycle. COL had recently adopted the Results Based Management system in its operations and its current three-year plan was being drawn up to meet the requirements of the RBM system. COL's operational focus is in ODL Capacity Building, with programmes designed to support Policy and Planning, ODL Systems Development and Applications of ODL; CEMCA's plans should reflect COL's focus. Long expressed the view that CEMCA's plan could be seen in the context of the COL Programme for ODL Systems Development. CEMCA should identify and envisage the changes it would seek to influence in the countries where it operates and indicate the initiatives it would undertake over the three year period to engender those results. Each initiative should have clearly specified outputs. CEMCA's role as a catalytic agent might be one of the inputs required to successfully carry out the initiative, as would its role as a trainer in all aspects of educational media. While the planning cycle calls for a three-year plan, it could be helpful to think initially in terms of a longer vision such as ten years. Long commended the Director, CEMCA on her single-handed preparation of the Vision document, but encouraged her to revise it further to bring it more in line with the RBM framework that COL has adopted. He particularly noted that whereas COL has been benefiting from the services of consultants on RBM funded by CIDA, CEMCA has been attempting to make this shift largely on its own. He commended CEMCA on the progress it has made despite the absence of such training.
- 5.5.3: The Council noted the observations of the Chairman that in drawing up the Plans of CEMCA and its operations, national policy and plans of each of the nations in Commonwealth Asia have to be kept in view. Examples of success to be showcased for the policy makers and planners to be influenced. In the developing counties of Commonwealth Asia the concern for improving the quality of life is growing and therefore there is a need for fast action. There is therefore no alternative but to include ODL as a key strategy especially since it is appropriate for large target groups. CEMCA has a role to play in these areas and this should be reflected in the Plan document. While strategies should be developed appropriate to the needs of the different countries comprising Commonwealth Asia, it is not necessary to devise country-specific strategies for this plan.
- 5.5.4: Director, CEMCA agreed to revise the document and circulate to the members of the Advisory

Council for their comments.

Item No. 6: Outreach into the region, i.e. in-country and regional programmes

5.6.1: The Council noted that two outreach programmes planned for the year 2001-2002 had been executed and two programmes had been planned for the year 2002-2003. of which one in Sri Lanka on E-Learning had been completed in January 2003. CEMCA would be conducting its first training programme in the Maldives in June 2003.

Item No. 7: Partnerships

5.7.1: The Council noted and complimented the efforts under way to develop partnerships with international and regional agencies in CEMCA's work.

Item No. 8: Any other matter with the permission of the Chair

5.8.1: The Advisory Council at the instance of Mr. Brian Long, Vice Chairman, recorded its deep appreciation to IGNOU for providing office space free of cost and in extending generous support to CEMCA/COL in their operations. He also reiterated his appreciation to Prof. H.P. Dikshit, Vice Chancellor for continuing to chair the Advisory Council despite his busy schedule and various other commitments and demands on his time. These expressions of appreciation were strongly endorsed by the Board as a whole. The Council also recorded its appreciation of the members from Malaysia, Republic of Maldives and Sri Lanka for sparing time and traveling long distances to contribute to the meeting and support CEMCA in its work.

5.8.2: The Council also recorded its appreciation of the good work done by the staff of CEMCA noting that such good work requires good leadership and that such leadership is evident in the Director.

Item No. 9: Vote of thanks

5.9.1: The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

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(Prof. H.P. Dikshit)
Chairman