COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE FOR ASIA, NEW DELHI

Minutes of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) Advisory Council (CAC) held at 10:00 A.M on Tuesday, 16ᵗʰ September, 2014 at Penang, Malaysia.

The following were present:

Prof. Asha Kanwar President and CEO, Commonwealth *of* Learning (COL)	Chairperson
Mr. Vis Naidoo Vice President, COL	Dy. Chairperson
Dr.Vijitha Nanayakkara, Vice chancellor, Open university of Sri Lanka, Colombo.	Member
Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Anuwar Ali Vice Chancellor, Open University of Malaysia, Jalan Tun Ismail, 50480, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.	Member
Prof.Vinod Pavarala UNESCO Chair on Community Media (India), Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad, Gachibowli, Hyderabad, Andra Pradesh- 500 046.	Member
Mr.Anand Kumar Singh Director, MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi (Represented Shri. Praveen Prakash, JS)	Member
Dr. Sanjaya Mishra Director, CEMCA, New Delhi.	Member
Mr. R.Thyagarajan Head, Admin. & Finance, CEMCA New Delhi.	Secretary

Apologies:

Dr. S.S.Jena, ODL expert from India; Mr. Md.Nazrul Islam Khan, Secretary of Information and Communication Technology, Govt. of Bangladesh; Prof. Mansoor Akbar Kuntdi, Executive Director, Higher Education Commission, Govt of Pakistan; and Ms. Aminath Namza, Head, Foreign Relations, Ministry of Education, Maldives.

Item No. 1:   Chairperson's introductory remarks

Prof. Asha Kanwar welcomed the members and noted that COL was now 26 years old and CEMCA had its 20 year celebration earlier this year. It was noted that the Indian Government and COL had signed an MoU for the establishment of CEMCA. The Govt. of India's yearly contribution is received by COL which in turn grants funds to CEMCA for programme and operational costs. Prof Kanwar identified that CEMCA was funded entirely by COL and its work was aligned to that of COL's programme. However, COL had regional centres in Africa such as Regional Training and Research Institutes for Distance & Open Learning (RETRIDOL) in Nigeria and Southern Africa Development Community - Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE) in Botswana. The host institutions provided space and staff salary for the Regional Centres and COL provided capacity building support on an annual basis.

Between the previous meeting and the present, several important events had taken place. Prof Kanwar reported that the Heads of Government had appreciated COL's country focus, innovations in technology and VUSSC when COL presented its report at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held at Sri Lanka in November, 2013. COL was working with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur to launch a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on MOOC to provide a platform for developing knowledge and skills at scale. Earlier COL worked with IIT, Kanpur to offer a MOOC on Mobiles for Development, where 400 persons completed the programme and received certificates of completion. Similarly another MOOC was being run for teachers with National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi.

In terms of the COL Board, Prof Kanwar reported that Dr Linda Sissons has been nominated as the new chair. Dr Sissons had been a member of the Board for the last seven years and was well placed to provide the necessary direction for the achievement of further milestones in the coming years. Prof. Kanwar emphasised that COL tried to make a difference in developing countries by providing a voice for the voiceless, economic opportunities for people and skill up-gradation through technology-based learning.

After concluding her introductory remarks, she asked the members to introduce themselves as some of them were attending the meeting for the first time.

She requested Mr. Vis Naidoo, Vice President to say a few words before taking up the agenda items for a detailed discussion.

Mr. Vis Naidoo noted COL is evaluating its activities over the last nine years so that it could assess the impact the organisation has made, as reflected in the past three strategic plans. He felt that such an assessment will pinpoint the success and otherwise of the various initiatives undertaken by COL and would provide strategic direction for the next six-year plan.

Mr Naidoo expressed his satisfaction about CEMCA's performance and noted that CEMCA could do more in partnership with other countries. He requested the members to support CEMCA to establish partnerships in their countries.

Item No. 2: Confirmation of the Minutes of the 13th CAC meeting held on November 11, 2013.

The minutes of the Thirteenth meeting were confirmed unanimously after the abbreviations used are elaborated.

Item No. 3: Action taken on the decisions in the 13th meeting

Mr. R.Thyagarajan presented the Action Taken Report:

i)   Carrying forward the concept of VOS and launch the platform

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) with the active assistance of CEMCA has launched the Virtual Open Schooling (VOS) platform and two courses are being offered. The NIOS has requested to incorporate an examination module in the VOS platform. This has been developed and is currently being tested.

ii)   Promote policy development in the area of ODL, MOOCs and OER

CEMCA assisted Sri Lanka in developing its ODL policy. CEMCA helped the Government of India in developing OER policy for the National Mission on Education Through Information and Communication Technologies (NMEICT).

iii)   Contribute towards creation of skill development courses using open and distance learning

A strategy for skills development for Open Schooling was developed. The Tamil Nadu Open University was supported to align its vocational courses to the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) and National Occupation Standards (NOS).

iv)   Release of Community Radio Technology Certificate Course Materials as OER

In collaboration with the Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited (BECIL), the Community Radio Certificate course materials were developed and released. MoU was signed with Gauhati University to offer this course in open and distance learning (ODL) mode.

v)   Offer OER based eLearning programme for professional development of teachers

A pilot OER-based eLearning Professional Development Programme was offered online for 40 participants from eight institutions in Commonwealth Asia.

vi)   **Revise and develop the peer assessment model for Community Radio (CR)**

In association with University of Hyderabad, the Community Radio Continuous Improvement Toolkit was revised and a peer assessment model developed in consultation with the stakeholders.

vii)   **Further contribute towards Community Women Broadcasters' Training and CR sustainability**

Two Community Women Broadcasters training organised and research initiated for sustainability of CR.

viii)   **Work towards overall achievement of TYP and undertake an evaluation of select activities**

Most of the performance indicators will be achieved for the current Three Year Plan (TYP); and the Higher Education and Community Media related activities are being evaluated by independent consultants.

Item No. 4 and 5: CEMCA Annual Report 2013-14 and CEMCA Activity Plan 2014-15

Dr. Sanjaya Mishra presented the Annual Report for the year 2013-14 and presented CEMCA's 2014-15 plan. He noted the range of activities in CEMCA's initiatives (Open Schooling, Teacher Education, Higher Education, Technical and Vocational Skill Development, Community Media) and the progress achieved. He further reported that the Virtual Open School Platform was developed and released during the Silver Jubilee celebration of NIOS.

For promoting sustainability in the Community Radio (CR) sector, a research project covering 6 stations in India and two stations in Bangladesh is underway. CEMCA will release a 'do's and don'ts' report to promote sustainability of CR Stations. Research is proceeding well and a research methodology developed through consultation. Through Ek Dunia Anek Awaz (One World, Many Voices), content exchange platform, there was increased dialogue and content exchange has been made a reality. Through additional funding, CEMCA has completed the Open Access project sponsored by UNESCO. CEMCA also completed the Ford Foundation supported project for CEMCA Community Radio Facilitation Centre. Currently, the IDRC supported project on Research on OER for Development (ROER4D) is in progress. CEMCA has enhanced its web presence by incorporating three sub-domains to our main website. CEMCA has further granted awards and scholarships. While the awards are granted to female students who have excelled in programmes related to Information and Communication Technology, the scholarships are also granted to the students of Open Schooling for having achieved excellence in their studies.

There were 28 workshops/events, excluding the cascade training workshops held at 12 Community Radio Stations, organised during the period in which 705 (414 male and 291 female) individuals participated. The participants were from India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Pakistan, Maldives and Sri Lanka. A detailed report was released and this is now posted on CEMCA website.

He noted that CEMCA will focus on the following during 2014-15:

1.   Open Schooling: CEMCA will see that the examination module is incorporated in the VOS platform during the current year. CEMCA will aim at development of content for the VOS platform apart from strengthening the existing National Consortium for Open Schooling (NCOS) at NIOS. One industry linked course on "Sound Engineering" will be developed in accordance with the NSQF.

2.   Teacher Education: CEMCA will promote teacher ICT integration in blended learning. Further it will focus on strengthening community of practice of teacher educators. ICT training for teacher education is a niche area, where not many institutions are working. CEMCA would conduct capacity building for teacher educators for the state of Maharashtra/Madhya Pradesh.

3.   Higher Education: Institutional capacity building for OER-based eLearning in association with Wawasan Open University, Malaysia is envisaged.   The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) will develop a staff development programme for Sri Lanka using CEMCA resources on the subjects developed during 2013-14. In addition, one national workshop is planned in India with the Consortium for Educational Communication and other partner institutions. ICT Leadership workshop is planned to be held at Bangladesh in December. CEMCA will also develop an online tool for OER quality review.

4.   Technical and Vocational Skill Development: In partnership with BECIL, a programme on Community Radio Technology was developed as OER for adoption by certifying institutions. This course will be launched this year through Gauhati University. CEMCA will organise a national consultation on OER for Skill Development apart from supporting open universities in India to align their vocational courses to the NSQF.

5.   Community Media/ Healthy Communities: During this year CEMCA will support 10 CR stations to develop Community Learning Programmes. It would aim at developing sustainable model for CR stations in India and Bangladesh. A Content Exchange platform in Bangladesh would be supported and Web Radio training will be organised in Sri Lanka. One workshop for Community Women Broadcasters has already been completed in Bangladesh.

6.   The OER policy development: CEMCA will continue to associate with Government of India and other interested countries to adopt OER policies.

7.   Gender: All activities of CEMCA have gender considerations, and special efforts are made to increase participation of women in every activity. Awards and scholarships will continue to be offered to best women students. Community women broadcaster training would further support the empowerment of women in local communities.

8.   Knowledge Management: Publication of *EduComm Asia* would be continued. CEMCA new website has already attracted more viewers and hence CEMCA would focus on strengthening its website with new features and social network options.

9. Additional contribution: The IDRC supported two year research project on OER is progressing well. Its results will be available next year.

During the discussions, members complimented the work being done at CEMCA. Tan Sri Dato' Prof. Anuwar Ali has put on record the deep appreciation of Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, Director, CEMCA for his efforts to work in as many countries as possible and bringing high visibility and awareness about CEMCA activities through various publications and its web presence.

Prof. Asha Kanwar agreed and complimented Dr. Sanjaya Mishra for his presentation covering CEMCA's achievements and plans for 2014-15 and requested Mr. Vis Naidoo, to lead the discussion on COL's Six-year strategic Plan vis-a`-vis CEMCA activities.

Item No. 6: Discussion on COL's Six year strategic plan vis-à-vis CEMCA Activities

Mr. Vis Naidoo informed the members that COL will have six-year plan instead of the current three year plan. The first six-year plan will be for the period 2015 to 2021. He requested members to express their requirements of COL/CEMCA during the six-year plan.

Dr.Vijitha Nanyakkara, V.C, OUSL noted the following.

i.   ODL University ranking system needed and COL should develop the parameters.
ii.   School Radio broadcast will be useful to Sri Lanka
iii.   Teachers lack motivation and their morale needed to be elevated. He suggested having a Commonwealth license in the form of certification for teachers who actively use ICT.
iv.   Further development of CR movement in Sri Lanka.
v.   Mobile ICT Labs to reach disadvantaged schools and teachers need to be trained to use these labs.

Prof. Kanwar responded saying that performance indicators differ from University to University and developing a general framework was difficult. Presently Open Universities are compared with conventional universities. While a separate ranking system many not be acceptable to all, COL will work to implement the COL Review and Improvement Model (RIM) for quality assurance. She also noted COL has courses like the Commonwealth Computer Navigations Certificate and the Commonwealth Certificate for Teacher ICT Integration (CCTI), which can be adopted by any other institution.

Mr.Anand Kumar Singh, Director, MHRD, India stressed the following:

i.   OER quality indicators need to the used and promoted. The contents developed as OER should be assessed with reference to such indicators
ii.   MOOC is a priority item for India
iii.   National e-Library is being considered for India
iv.   Government will provide Wi-Fi to all campuses.
v.   COL could support India to develop the virtual technical university
vi.   COL could help in developing ICT integration as a methodology for teacher development.
vii.   Material developed under OER needs to be translated in different regional languages.

Prof. Asha Kanwar responded that all teachers can be trained in ICT intervention as the content is available. However, COL expects that language translation of available materials should be done by respective Governments, as all COL materials are available as OER in open license. In fact, most of COL materials were being used by the Chinese after translation.

Prof. Anuwar Ali, V.C, OUM, Malaysia noted the following as priorities:

i.   The issue of teacher training was raised as an important concern in Malaysia. The focus on technical training for teachers and on-going teacher professional development is being addressed by the Open University of Malaysia

ii.   He also suggested that the sharing of good practices on reducing the attrition rate at open universities would be most welcome. OUM would be happy to host such discussions and ways to share

iii.   OUM could also link with CEMCA on industry based courses.

Prof. Kanwar complimented OUM on bringing the attrition level to 20%. Prof. Anuwar Ali informed that the new target would be 10%.

Prof.Vinod Pavarala, UOH, India, emphasized that:

i.   Sensitisation and advocacy on e-Learning, OER and open learning at higher education level are still required.
ii.   It is often the case that Universities still have proprietary attitude on materials
iii.   Emphasis should be on access with equity.
iv.   Creating resources for empowerment of CR stations and self-sustainable in content and management is still critical to the survival of the station.

Mr. Vis Naidoo informed the meeting that COL's plans aim at sustainable development at the three levels of outcomes such as immediate outcome, intermediate outcome and final outcome. He expressed the hope that COL's final logic model will have some of the suggestions expressed by the members. He thanked the members for their forthright views.

Prof. Asha Kanwar, in her concluding remarks said that much needs to be done and we cannot be complacent and bask in the glory of present achievements. She congratulated CEMCA for the efforts put in during the year 2013-2014 and hoped that CEMCA will move to the next level by being relevant, responsive and results-oriented in the coming years.

Prof. Asha Kanwar thanked the members for sparing their valuable time and participating actively in the deliberations.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair and to the members.

Action items

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia, New Delhi.

Item No.	Action item
1.	Strengthening virtual open schooling through working with all stake holders
2.	Develop more industrial linked programme at secondary level
3.	Continue the work on ICT integrated teacher education and community of practice
4.	Institutionalize OER based eLearning programme for professional development of teachers
5.	Organise the ICT Leadership in higher education event in Bangladesh
6.	Promote OER and quality review process
7.	Promote a community radio technology course and support more curricula for skills development
8	Further strengthening of the community radio sector in India and Bangladesh through capacity building and model development
9.	Ensure achievement of CEMCA three year plans 2012-15 and analyse the evaluation reports on higher education and community media