

BACKGROUND AND ARRANGEMENTS

1. The first regional training course in book development organized by the Commonwealth Secretariat was held in Guyana from 25 July - 2 September 1977 for participants from 11 Commonwealth Caribbean countries. Its origins dated from the Sixth Commonwealth Education Conference, held in Jamaica in 1974, which agreed that the Commonwealth Secretariat "should explore further the promotion of training opportunities for key personnel at both regional and Commonwealth level", and noted the offer made by Guyana to host a regional course for the Caribbean. Further support was given by the third of the Commonwealth Secretariat's regional book development seminars, held in Nigeria in February 1975, at which a paper on "Training Courses in Textbook Publishing" was presented by Mr. Abul Hasan, Special Officer (Books) in the Indian Ministry of Education and Social Welfare.

2. As a result of these expressions of interest, the Commonwealth Secretariat prepared a discussion paper on "The Need for New Courses" (an extract from which appears as Appendix 1) and sent it to seven governments and three universities, selected on a regional basis, together with an invitation to nominate representatives to a planning meeting. This meeting, which was held in London in December 1975, agreed that the shortage of trained writers, translators, book designers, book illustrators and other people engaged in the book industry was a major factor retarding national educational, social, and cultural development. It recognized that existing training opportunities were inadequate, and prepared outline syllabuses for nine courses which covered most sectors of the book industry and were designed for use in developing countries themselves. In view of the urgency of the need, the meeting recommended that the Commonwealth Secretariat's book development programme should give high priority to supporting the establishment of courses in book production at regional centres in Commonwealth developing countries. It also recommended that the first regional course should be held, if possible, "by the end of the next financial year" (i.e. by June 1977).

Planning the Course

3. Preparations began in June 1976 when the Director of the Education Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat visited Guyana and held discussions on the venue for the course and its content. It was agreed that in order to keep costs down the course should, if possible, be held during the long vacation at a residential institution. It was also agreed that most emphasis should be placed on techniques of editing and book production.

4. Further refinement of the course content took place when, in early December, the Guyana Ministry of Education appointed Mr. Herman Hubbard of the Curriculum Development Unit as Course Co-ordinator. Mr. Hubbard was at that time attending a Seminar on Publishing in Developing Countries at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex. It was therefore possible to hold discussions with him and with participants from three other Commonwealth Caribbean countries (Jamaica, Belize, and the British Virgin Islands) who were also attending the course.

5. Following these discussions a preliminary draft of the course outline was sent to Ministries of Education throughout the Commonwealth Caribbean (Appendix 2) together with a letter (Appendix 3) outlining the proposals for the course and seeking suggestions for modifying its content. As no modifications were proposed, the draft formed the basis of the eventual programme, though in the time available it was not possible to cover everything contained in it. Meanwhile, Mrs. Sybil Cort, who had been appointed by the Guyana Ministry of Education as Administrative Officer for the course, provided detailed information on the course venue (the Cyril Potter College of Education), the facilities offered by the College, the dates when the College would be available (late July until early September), and the cost of accommodation.

6. At the beginning of February 1977, a meeting was held between Mr. John Macpherson of the Commonwealth Secretariat (later appointed Course Director), Mr. Herman Hubbard (Course Co-ordinator) and Mr. David Plumb (a typographer and designer who was later appointed as one of the consultants to the course). It was agreed that the course should last for six weeks, be limited to a maximum of 30 participants, and proceed in three phases each lasting for two weeks. During the first two weeks the participants, working in small groups, would write, illustrate and produce mimeographed booklets, and become so familiar with the techniques and equipment involved (particularly with typewriters, electronic stencillers, and mimeograph machines) that they would be able to train other people to produce similar materials by similar methods. During the second two weeks the participants, working in different groups, would be given identical sets of photographs as a basis for writing, designing and preparing camera-ready typeset copy of booklets to be printed by offset litho. Then, in the final two weeks, the participants would learn the techniques of silk-screen printing, observe one of the offset booklets at various stages of production at a printery, and discuss a number of matters connected with editing and publishing. Teaching during the first four weeks would generally be confined to those topics that the participants would need to know in order to carry out the practical projects.

7. At the meeting it was also agreed that, subject to approval being granted by the Government of Guyana, Mr. Hubbard should pay a stop-over visit to St. Lucia on his return home. In St. Lucia he would hold discussions with Mr. R.D. Payne, the Regional Education Adviser of the British Ministry of Overseas Development who for several years had been assisting Commonwealth Caribbean governments in the production of curriculum materials and who possessed specialist knowledge of the preparation of inexpensive mimeographed booklets. As an outcome of Mr. Hubbard's visit, and with the agreement of the Ministry of Overseas Development and the Government of St. Lucia, Mr. Payne was appointed consultant to the course with specific responsibility for training participants in the preparation and production of mimeographed booklets. It was further arranged that Mrs. Payne should accompany her husband and share equally in the tuition. As a result of their combined expertise, it was possible to divide the participants into eight small groups and thereby to produce 800 copies of eight mimeographed booklets in eight days - an achievement which astonished even the participants themselves. Also during Mr. Hubbard's visit to St. Lucia, a provisional timetable for the mimeograph component of the course was prepared, as was a list of the machinery, equipment and supplies needed to produce the booklets.

8. In April a letter was sent by the Commonwealth Secretariat to Ministries of Education throughout the Commonwealth Caribbean setting out details of the course and seeking nominations. The following places were

allocated: Antigua 1, Bahamas 2, Barbados 2, Belize 2, British Virgin Islands 1, Dominica 2, Grenada 1, Jamaica 3, Montserrat 1, St. Kitts 2, St. Lucia 2, St. Vincent 1, Trinidad and Tobago 3, and Guyana (the host country) 5. Part of the letter read as follows: "In view of the nature of the course content, it will be seen that the selection of suitable participants is of crucial importance. The Report of the Planning Meeting which recommended the introduction of regional book development courses stressed that 'it is of vital importance that before participants for (these) courses are nominated, governments ensure that on their return participants will be employed in jobs in which their skills will be put to direct use for a reasonable period of time.'" Because it was realized that some of the most eligible participants might not be attached to Ministries of Education, the letter went on to say that, "People engaged in the preparation of materials for adult literacy, health, nutrition and agriculture should not be overlooked. The course is also open to employees of private publishing firms, should you choose to nominate them." Moreover, so that Governments could take full advantage of this opportunity, they were informed that they could, if they wished, nominate an additional participant for consideration if numbers fell below 30.

9. As far as numbers were concerned, the results were not encouraging. No government expressed an interest in nominating an additional participant, and several did not fill their allocation. Thus, Antigua and Montserrat nominated no one; Jamaica nominated two out of three (one of whom was replaced at the last moment); Trinidad nominated three, but one withdrew and was not replaced because a Cabinet decision was required to make the adjustment; the Bahamas nominated one participant who failed to arrive, and Dominica was able to fill only one of its two places. Moreover, many of the nominations were made at the last moment, long after the closing date of 31 May and too late for the participants to make adequate advance preparations. A copy of the nomination form appears as Appendix 4.

10. In the final event, the distribution of participants was as follows: Guyana 5, Barbados 2, Belize 2, Jamaica 2, St. Kitts 2, St. Lucia 2, Trinidad and Tobago 2, British Virgin Islands 1, Dominica 1, Grenada 1, and St. Vincent 1. Five were members of staff of schools or teachers' colleges, six were attached to curriculum units, materials units, and audio-visual units for schools, three were education officers or supervisors, and seven came from outside the formal school system.

11. As far as the nominations themselves were concerned, these can only be judged by results. On the whole the selections were fully justified. Most of the participants who attended the course began making use of their newly acquired skills shortly after their return home, and in some instances the results have been impressive.

12. Something has already been said in paragraph 7 about the two consultants who took charge of the mimeograph component of the course. The third consultant to be appointed was Mr. David Plumb, at that time President-Elect of the Society of Typographic Designers. His experience included designing for a variety of industrial purposes, lecturing at a College of Art, and serving as a consultant at the Commonwealth Science Council's Communication Techniques Workshop in Tanzania in 1976. Mr. Plumb assisted with the mimeograph component of the course, took sole charge of the offset component, and shared in the concluding activities. His expert tutoring of individuals and groups was particularly appreciated by the participants.

13. Acting on advice gained from the reports of other book training courses, it was decided to appoint a full-time Course Co-ordinator (Mr. Herman Hubbard) and an Administrative Officer (Mrs. Sybil Cort). In the event, both appointments proved to be fully justified. Indeed, if Mr. Hubbard and Mrs. Cort had not been fully available for the duration of the course and for a period beforehand and afterwards, the objectives of the course could not have been fully realized. They took charge of the loan and return of equipment, the day to day administration of the course, the supervision of the office staff, the arrangements for visiting lecturers, the general welfare of participants, and the study visits to printers and other organizations. They also took charge of the social programme - so important for people staying in an isolated residential institution. Among other things this included week-end visits to places of interest which enabled the participants from overseas to gain a first-hand insight of Guyana and thereby supplement and correct what they read about the country in the international press.

14. In the weeks leading up to the course, preparations were being made both in Guyana and London. In Guyana the Course Co-ordinator and the Administrative Officer were borrowing such major items of machinery as typewriters, electronic stencillers, film and slide projectors, and stencilling machines, obtaining stocks of equipment and paper for use during the course, making arrangements for printing, silk screening and transportation, reserving the accommodation and teaching facilities at the Cyril Potter College of Education, estimating the costs involved, and budgeting for the host government's contribution to the course. In London the Commonwealth Secretariat purchased other items of equipment and shipped them to Guyana. They included a polaroid camera capable of preparing screened prints and transparencies suitable for offset printing, sets of slides on various printing processes, Letraset sheets, books, printers' rules and typescales. A list of materials and books used at the seminar appears as Appendix 5. Two other tasks undertaken by the Commonwealth Secretariat were those of securing the services of the consultants, and, through the mechanism of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, providing funds to meet the cost of travel, board, lodging and subsistence for the consultants and participants plus certain other items of expenditure. The Commonwealth Secretariat is most grateful to the Ministry of Overseas Development not only for assigning Mr. Payne for the duration of the mimeograph component of the course but also for meeting part of his expenses.

15. A few days before the course began, the Course Director, the Course Co-ordinator, the Administrative Officer, and the two consultants for the first part of the course met at the Cyril Potter College of Education to confirm the programme for the first week of the course, check the materials, and test the equipment to ensure that it was in working order. The consultant for the second part of the course, who arrived the day before the opening, not only assisted with the training for the first two weeks but had sufficient time to plan the work for the offset component, give introductory illustrated lectures on offset printing, prepare and mimeograph a handbook for the participants, visit the printers who would be involved in printing the course materials, and prepare work schedules for the participants. Day to day planning was undertaken by the course officials on most evenings so as to take the day's progress and problems into consideration.

The Course Venue

16. The course was held at the Cyril Potter College of Education adjoining the University of Guyana and about four miles from the centre of Georgetown. The main advantage of using a residential college was that it provided accommodation (in single rooms) and meals for the consultants and

participants on the same site as the course work. As a result no time was lost in travelling, and groups were able whenever they wished to continue working on their projects after dark. The College was able to provide offices for the consultants and administrative staff, and rooms for storage, teaching, group work, and audio-visual demonstration. It also provided items of equipment, without which the course could not easily have achieved its production schedules. In addition, the participants were able to make use of the College's sports facilities. Thanks are due to the Principal of the College and those who assisted her for the excellence of the arrangements and for the unfailing care and consideration they gave to the consultants and participants.

Formal Opening

17. The course was formally opened by the Guyana Minister of Education, Social Development and Culture, Cde. Vincent Teekah, at 8.30 a.m. on Monday 25 July 1977. Other speakers at the ceremony were the Chief Education Officer, the Course Co-ordinator, and the Course Director. The vote of thanks was proposed by one of the participants, Mr. K. Seepersad of Trinidad and Tobago.