

Preface

For more than a decade, we in the Commonwealth Secretariat have taken an active interest in the viability of distance learning as a medium of education, indeed as the only possible one in certain situations. During these years all levels of education have experienced a spectacular increase in the number of distance teaching institutions and enrolments. The Secretariat has responded on the information side by publishing directories on the Commonwealth dimension of this phenomenon. At the more operational level the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation has funded the establishment of the Namibian Extension Unit in Lusaka and the South African Extension Unit in Dar es Salaam. These institutions now offer educational opportunities for people displaced from their native countries and denied education by the politics of apartheid.

We believe there is a need for practical handbooks for those who have responsibility for managing distance-teaching institutions or for those producing instructional materials to be used by their students. The first of these was a volume, "Training Teachers at a Distance", which went into the economics and practicalities of using distance methods for teacher education. The present volume, "Course Development", is an attempt to help those responsible for producing effective teaching materials for distance education.

It marks a new step in the relationship between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the International Extension College. Although the Secretariat has made extensive use of IEC's services over the years, this is our first joint publication. By coming together in this way we hope to help a wider clientele to benefit from a book offering detailed guidance based on the extensive experience of its author, Janet Jenkins.

I have pleasure in commending this venture, confident that it will contribute sound, practical advice for hard pressed editors and will help to raise the quality of education offered by distance methods around the Commonwealth.

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