

PREFACE

In 1986 the British government agreed to fund research on Commonwealth co-operation in open learning. The research contract was awarded to the Council for Educational Technology with the International Extension College. The aim of the research project was to help the Commonwealth Secretariat to respond to a request by Heads of Government that it should explore the scope for Commonwealth collaboration in distance education. Subsequently a group was established under the Chairmanship of Lord Briggs which put forward proposals.

There were two outcomes from the ODA - funded research work. The first was a report, Commonwealth Co-operation in Open Learning, which has been published by the Commonwealth Secretariat. The second was a collection of background papers which are reprinted in this volume. They were of considerable value both to the research team in preparing their general report, and beyond that to the Briggs group and the Secretariat in developing plans for Commonwealth co-operation. We thought that they merited wider distribution and, with the aid of funds from the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank, have now been able to prepare them in a form for publication.

It should be noted that the papers generally represent the state of developments in late 1986 and early 1987. It has not been possible to update them further since they were written. We hope that this publication will be of value to governments, and to all those concerned with distance education, in universities colleges or elsewhere, both within the Commonwealth and beyond.

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