

Imfundo: Partnership for IT in Education

DFID, 1 Palace Street, London, SW1E 5HE

www.imfundo.org

Newsletter 22 - February 2003

Imfundo held a successful Partners' Dialogue on 14th January (see details below), which provided an opportunity for us to update our partners on progress with our delivery of ICT-education initiatives in Africa, and new developments with the KnowledgeBank. This month, we are actively pursuing the development of our work in Ghana, Kenya and Ethiopia.

Tim Unwin

11th February 2003

Imfundo in The Gambia

Bas Kotterink and Digby Swift (DFID's Education Adviser for West Africa Department) visited The Gambia from 20-24 January to discuss the framework for DFID support to The Gambia Education Sector. The visit coincided with a World Bank mission on the Education For All Fast Track Initiative. In 2000 and 2001, members of the Imfundo team had worked in The Gambia on preparing an ICT based distance education programme for teachers, and this visit provided an opportunity to integrate this initiative with DFID's wider programme of support for the country.

Imfundo visits to Africa in February

The Imfundo team will be busy taking forward discussions with partners and governments in Africa during February. The following visits are planned:

- **Ghana** 2nd-7th February: discussions with Ghana Education Service officials and partners concerning the implementation of Imfundo's programme of support for the Teacher Education Division. Meetings will also seek to carry forward Imfundo's work on Special Educational Need. The visit coincides with a workshop held by the Imfundo funded ITEPA team.
- **Kenya** 17th-21st February: Caroline Pontefract and Tim Unwin will visit Kenya

to participate in the launch of SchoolNet Kenya, and meet with DFID and government officials to take forward proposals for Imfundo support to the Ministry of Education.

- **Ethiopia**, 24th-28th February: Caroline Pontefract will participate in the DFID mission to identify ways in which DFID can respond to the Ethiopian Government's request for assistance in the use of ICT for distance education.

2003: European Year of People with Disabilities

2003 is the European Year of People with Disabilities (www.eypd2003.org). ICT has a very important role in enabling all people to take greater control of their own learning, and it can make a very significant difference to the lives of those with visual and hearing difficulties, as well as those with other physical requirements. Imfundo is committed to identifying ways in which ICT can be used to help all those with learning needs in Africa, and will shortly be commissioning a major study of ways in which ICT can contribute to Special Educational Needs across the continent. Do look at the recent RNIB factsheet on Imfundo's KnowledgeBank for the use of ICT for those with sight difficulties: <http://imfundo.digitalbrain.com/imfundo/web/plan/sightdiff/?verb=view>.

The BBC (an Imfundo ResourceBank partner) also has some useful material:

- www.bbc.co.uk/seehear/ (for deaf and hearing difficulties)
- www.bbc.co.uk/ouch/ (website that reflects life as a disabled person)
- They have developed a program called BETSIE (BBC Education Text to Speech Internet Enhancer) which is released as open source software



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(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/betsie/>)

New Liaison Partners

We are very excited that the **Association of Commonwealth Universities** (www.acu.ac.uk) has become a Liaison Partner. The ACU serves its member institutions by advancing international co-operation and understanding in higher education, and we look forward to working with them in our liaison with higher education institutions across Africa.

We are also delighted that **CWA New Media** (<http://www.cwa.co.nz/about.html>) has also become a Liaison Partner. They are the 'discoverability' people behind New Zealand's e-governmental portal search heuristics (www.govt.nz) and are co-developing and managing New Zealand's student-centred online learning e-community (www.tki.org.nz).

Imfundo partner dialogue presentations

For those partners unable to attend our dialogue on 14th January, some of the material presented is now available at <http://imfundo.digitalbrain.com/imfundo/web/partners/partnerevent/>. This provides an update on our work, focusing particularly on the KnowledgeBank, Ghana, Mozambique and South Africa. We were very grateful that the Secretary of State was able to attend the reception that followed the formal discussions.

Department for Education and Skills: resources for Imfundo

We are very grateful to the Department for Education and Skills (an Imfundo ResourceBank partner), who have recently made available 4,000 copies of Norton AntiVirus for use in our activities in Africa. This is being distributed through our other partners and the Ministries with whom we are working.

ICTs in African Education - workshop 27th April-2nd May Gabarone

Several of Imfundo's ResourceBank Partners (SchoolNet Africa, the Commonwealth of Learning, The World Bank, and the International Institute for Communication and Development) together with the Botswana Ministry of Education, are convening a major workshop for practitioners and policy makers on ICTs in African education. Full details are available at the conference website: <http://www.schoolnet africa.net/IAS2003/index.htm>.

Interesting content

- COL is hosting a virtual conference on copyright and the web: www.col.org/copyright
- For those unfamiliar with Science Across the World, do look at <http://www.scienceacross.org/>
- E-learning breaking down barriers in Africa: http://www.washingtontechnology.com/news/1_1/daily_news/19945-1.html

Commonwealth scholarships launch distance learning initiatives

Commonwealth Scholarships to pursue Masters degrees at UK universities by distance learning are now available for the first time. The initiative, launched in July 2002, has now recruited some 70 students on four courses - at Imperial College, the University of Sunderland and two at the University of Loughborough. Expressions of interest from UK institutions in offering the second wave of courses are currently invited, with preference given to providers who act in partnership with developing country institutions. Further details of the scheme, and other initiatives under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, can be obtained from a new web site - www.csfp-online.org.

