REVIEW OF THE
FIRST COMMONWEALTH
EDUCATION GOOD PRACTICE AWARDS

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Executive Summary

This review was conducted in response to a request by Ministers of Education at the 16CCEM that the first Education Good Practice Awards should be examined to inform the management and conduct of the Award process in future years. The review focused largely on procedural elements of the Award procedure and, though not guided by a formal set of indicators against which performance could be measured, established a set of criteria and standards which will be useful in assess subsequent rounds of Education Good Practice Awards.

The review used an assessment framework which was based on some general principles:

- Clarity of information on the adjudication criteria for both nominees and the judging panel;
- The degree of shared understanding by the panel of the assessment criteria; and
- The transparency and consistency of the adjudication process and procedures.

A combination of evaluation methods were used - background file research, interviews with ComSec staff, a structured survey questionnaire was sent to nominees and a number of interviews were held with the adjudication panelists and the winners. The analyses of the interviews and questionnaire responses are presented in the report and contribute to the overall findings on the Awards.

Overall the assessment is that this first round of Education Good Practice Awards was generally regarded as a success by participants, adjudicators and by the Secretariat managers. However, though it was a successful event there was a clear finding that aspects of the design and the conceptualisation of the project needed further attention and recommendations have been provided to address these issues. The main findings of the review are presented in the form of specific lessons and suggestions for action under a number of areas.

In assessing the management and implementation of the Awards the review found that there was a high degree of consensus in understanding the purpose of the awards which led to a consistent approach during the various stages of implementation.

- The publicity for the Awards was sufficient to attract nominations but the Secretariat and Ministers of Education will need to develop specific publicity strategies to ensure a broader degree of awareness of the Awards across the Commonwealth.
- The format of the submissions was appropriate but more details should be provided for intending applicants, particularly on the criteria for assessment, the process of adjudication and on the eligibility criteria.
- The calibre of the adjudication panel is critical to the process and a priority should be placed on the selection and engagement of panelists with strong professional credentials for the duration of the process. An increase in the size of the panel and publication of the panelist names is recommended.
- The methodology used in the adjudication process was considered satisfactory and has a number of strong elements which should be built on for the future. Some adjustment to the rating scale is required.
- There was a high degree of satisfaction with the process of judging though a few shortcomings were noted, dealing mainly with ceremonial and logistical aspects surrounding Award announcements during the CCEM. Better publicity for the finalists and the winning organisations and their submissions should be incorporated.

- **A stronger design and budget process should be adopted which provides a more predictable approach to planning and implementing the Awards. The high level of ownership by the CCEM host government would contribute to a more robust implementation process. Assessment criteria for monitoring the Award project should be developed.**

The review examined the design and the fit of the Award project with the Secretariat strategic priorities and Plan objectives. The education strategy includes the documentation of best or good practice as an important approach to achieving programme objectives. The review examines the contribution of the Awards project in this context and suggests further analysis is needed to tease out the linkages between identification of good practice examples and wider dissemination and adoption of these practices across the Commonwealth. It notes that the value of the Awards project must be justified on broader grounds than merely providing symbolic recognition if the project is to contribute to the strategic outcomes of the Secretariat's Education Plan Programme. The review also encourages closer integration of the Awards projects within the Education Programme and greater synergies with other areas of Secretariat work in this sector.

A key issue the review sought to investigate was what effect did winning an Award have on an organisation, what were the benefits it derived from having won an Award. The main outcome appears to be an increased level of national awareness and heightened publicity for the organisation and its work. It is too soon to assess any more substantial longer-term benefits for the organisation though the report provides some suggestions for follow-up to monitor the impact of the Award on winning organisations. The review recommends the development of a post-Award strategy to maintain and to strengthen linkages with award winners, particularly to open up avenues for collaboration with Commonwealth organisations.

1.   Introduction and purpose of the Review

In December 2006 the Commonwealth Secretariat announced the winners of the first Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards (EGPA) during the 16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM). This event was the culmination of almost two years of planning and activity following the initial announcement of the desire to institute Good Practice Awards during the 15th CCEM in Edinburgh. Both the Secretariat division responsible for the management of the Awards, the Social Transformation Programme Division (STPD) and the Ministers at 16CCEM suggested that a review of the first Education Good Practice Awards be conducted in order to inform the planning and execution of future Awards. The Evaluation Section of the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division (SPED) was requested to undertake the review, in collaboration with STPD.

The purpose of the Review was to examine the planning and execution of the Awards in 2006 in order to identify those elements that were successful, and should therefore be retained and enhanced, and those elements that warrant improvement. The Review also examined the conceptualization of the EGPA and the extent to which the implementation processes supported and were aligned with the strategic intent of the Awards. The review therefore focuses closely on implementation processes as well as the conceptualization of the EGPA. Much of the discussion of issues relating to the design and strategic intent of the Awards is presented at the end of this report - this has been done purposefully as it is important that in planning and preparing for the next round of the Awards that these issues are taken into account. As the data from interviews and survey responses will show, most of those associated with the Awards reported high levels of satisfaction with the management of the process and those more closely associated with implementation acknowledged the success of the Secretariat (STPD) in organizing and co-coordinating the process within compressed time-frames and with limited resources.

The report provides a fairly detailed overview of the manner of implementation of the EGPA in the hope that this will serve as a consolidated record of the processes associated with the conceptualisation and management of the project. It is worth adding a note about the terminology used in the Review: throughout the course of this report the Awards are referred to as being a 'project' conducted by Education Section, this is simply for ease of reference and it is recognised that the Awards (or the EGPA) is but one activity within STPD's larger project in support of the attainment of Universal Primary Education, and that this activity - and the project as a whole - contribute to the achievement of the Education Programme's various result areas.

2.   Approach and methodology

As the Review focuses largely on procedural elements of the project, it was not guided by a formal set of indicators against which success of the project was judged; however, the following general principles were used as a basic assessment framework:

> The clarity with which adjudication criteria were explained to nominees and adjudicators;
> Shared understanding of adjudication criteria by members of the adjudication panel;
> Transparency and consistency of the adjudication process.

In designing and conducting the Review of the EGPA it was necessary to accommodate as many different interpretations of events as possible and to reconcile different experiences of the same set of events and processes. In order to achieve this, stakeholder groups associated with the Awards were identified and the key research questions defined that were to be directed to each group. The following stakeholder groups were identified as possible sources of data:

- The Commonwealth Secretariat - with the Education Section in STPD being most closely associated with the management of the Awards
- The adjudication panel
- The organisations nominated to receive Good Practice Awards. This group was further subdivided into those organisations that were:
  - Nominated to receive Awards, but were not short-listed
  - Short-listed organisations
  - Finalists
  - Winners of Awards

Unfortunately the methodology of the review was constrained by the fact that no budget had been allocated to support the activity; the research design therefore had to utilise the most cost-effective means of gathering data. Table 1 summarises the methods used to collect data from different stakeholder groups.

Table 1: Data collection methods

Stakeholder Group	Method of data collection	Respondent profile
Commonwealth Secretariat	File review of documentation on the project. Individual interviews with key members of staff	Historical documentation on the evolution and implementation of the project. Director of STPD/Awards Coordinator
Adjudication panel	Telephonic interviews	Chair of the Adjudication Panel Adjudicators that had participated in two adjudication events
Award Nominees	Electronic (on-line) survey	Organisations that made submissions to be considered for an Award
Award Winners	Telephonic interviews	Winners of EGPA

In order to ensure that data was as reliable and open to generalization it was decided that all Award nominees would be invited to complete an on-line questionnaire created using specialised survey software. Using the email addresses provided by participants in their submissions, all organisations were invited to complete the survey. The survey remained open for almost two months and organisations were sent up to three invitations to complete the survey; the survey was also advertised on the Commonwealth Secretariat's Education web-page and on the Good Practice Awards web page. Organisations were also emailed a copy of the survey that could be printed out and discussed by their staff. The on-line survey software allowed respondents to complete the questionnaire in phases, allowing individuals to return to the survey as often as required and to change previous responses. Table 2 summaries the profile of the respondents to the survey and interviews.

Table 2:   Profile of Respondents by Stakeholder Group

Stakeholder Group	Number of Respondents
Interviews with Secretariat staff	2
Interviews with members of the adjudication Panel, (including the Chair)	3
Surveys completed by Award nominees	19[1]
Interviews with Award winners	2

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[1] Nineteen respondents (19) accessed the questionnaire, however only 11 valid responses were received as 8 respondents provided information only on their region - a compulsory question necessary for access to the rest of the questionnaire.

Members of the adjudication panel who had participated in both the selection of finalists and winners were invited to take part in a telephonic interview. Only one of the adjudicators responded to this invitation, however this does not amount to a serious limitation as the chair of the panel and the CAPAM consultant who participated in the final adjudication round were also interviewed.

It is worth providing a short explanation of the approach used to analyse and report the survey data. As indicated Table 3 only 11 valid responses were received to the questionnaire. However as the questionnaire was structured in such a way that certain sections were only relevant to those respondents whose organisations had been short listed or selected as finalists the total number for different sections varied, depending on the content of the questions. The total number of respondents from each category is summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Composition of Survey Respondents by Category

Respondent category	Number[2]
Total of valid responses	11
Submitted but eliminated after first round	5
Shortlisted	6
Finalist	4
Award winners	2

3.   Overview of the Education Good Practice Awards

In order to place the discussions of different phases of the project in context, it is useful to begin with a short overview of the entire project - more detailed discussions of implementation processes are provided in sections 4 and 6.

The Commonwealth Secretariat was responsible for the management and implementation of the Awards, with funding for the project being provided through the budget allocated for work on Universal Primary Education (HCWG176) and the 16CCEM budget. The project was managed by one of the Education Advisers in STPD, and administrative and logistical support was provided by Programme Officers. Changes in Secretariat staff meant that two project managers (or coordinators) were responsible for the project; the coordinator responsible for the implementation of the project at 16CCEM only assumed responsibility for the task in October 2005 after much of the initial planning and conceptualisation had taken place. A total of 19 respondents accessed the on-line survey and completed the first mandatory question (an indication of the region in which they were based). Of the 19 eight failed to complete any other questions in the survey. In order to present a balanced and fair analysis of responses these respondents were removed from the data set.

The introduction of Best Practice Awards was proposed and agreed to at the 15th Conference of Education Ministers (15CCEM) in 2003, with the expectation that the Awards would draw attention to educational issues and highlight good practices throughout the Commonwealth. The format and nature of the Awards was refined during a series of Ministerial Review Meetings held during 2005/06 where the framework for the Awards and respective roles of the Secretariat and country Ministries were clarified. During this time it was decided that in the title of the Awards that the term "best" should be replaced with "good".

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[2] Due to the low number of respondents and the variation in the size of the respondent population, response rates have been reported in raw numbers to avoid distortions created by reporting totals in percentages (a difference of 1 response would amount to a shift of almost 10 percentage points).

Following the receipt of 47 submissions (nominations) from organisations, schools and Ministries of Education, STPD and representatives from three London-based High Commissions and a representative from the Commonwealth Teachers Group reviewed submissions and arrived at a short-list of 21 submissions. An adjudication panel comprised of education experts from across the Commonwealth was constituted to review this short-list in order to identify finalists, from which list the winners would later be selected. The final phase of the adjudication of the Awards took place just prior to 16CCEM; the adjudicators and nine finalists were present in Cape Town (where 16CCEM was held). The Award itself takes the form of a trophy, inscribed with the winning organisation's name; there is no monetary value attached to an Award. The winners were announced during the closing ceremony of 16CCEM. (For a more detailed statement of the Awards procedures, the submissions and short-listing and selection outcomes see Appendix 1)

Table 4: Schedule of Events

Date	Project Milestone
October 2003	Idea of an Awards Programme to recognise best practice in education in the Commonwealth mooted at 15 CCEM.
April, July & November 2005	Concept of the Awards programme refined and debated at Ministerial Review Meetings
October 2005	Awards publicized
31 March 2006	Closing date for submissions (nominations)
12 April 2006	Initial short listing of submissions
5 July 2006	Selection of finalists from short-list
6 & 7 December 2006	Presentations by finalists to the adjudication panel in Cape Town
14 December 2006	Awards presented during closing ceremony of 16CCEM.

4.   Management and implementation of the Education Good Practice Awards

4.1   The purpose and intent of the Awards

Based on interviews with key stakeholders associated with the Awards, it would appear that the Awards were intended to serve two distinct objectives, one practical and the other largely symbolic. On a practical level the Awards were intended to identify and draw attention to good, promising or innovative educational practices that could be replicated in different Commonwealth contexts. On the more symbolic (or less tangible) level they were expected to acknowledge, encourage, motivate, inspire, reward and generate enthusiasm within the education sector[3]. The chair of the adjudication panel added that the Awards should draw attention to positive innovations in education, which was felt to be particularly important in countering negative public perceptions of education. The extent to which the Awards realised these intentions and the relationship between the Awards and the broader objectives of the Secretariat's Education Programme will be examined in the closing sections of the review report.

Interviews with various stakeholders showed a high degree of consensus in understanding the purpose of the Awards, which is likely to have contributed to the consistency of approach evident during different implementation phases. Survey respondents also felt that the official publicity materials on the Awards provided sufficient information on the purpose of the Awards (9 out of 10 respondents).

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[3] Wording based on interview data with STPD staff and members of the adjudication panel

4.2   Publicity and Nomination Process

A number of mechanisms were used to publicize the Awards including:
  ➢ publication of a pamphlet on the Awards which explained the format for submissions and entry procedures;
  ➢ information published on the Commonwealth Secretariat's website;
  ➢ announcements made about the Awards at conferences or meetings attended by Secretariat staff; and
  ➢ Ministries of Education in member countries were requested to assist in publicizing the Awards.

Survey respondents indicated that most had been made aware of the Awards through announcements made by their Ministry of Education (7), by information on the Commonwealth Secretariat website (2) or via the printed pamphlet (2). (For examples of the publicity used for the EGPA see Appendix 3)

It is worth reflecting a little more on the role of the national Ministries of Education in raising awareness about the Awards. Unfortunately it fell outside the ambit and budget of the current review to ascertain the manner in which national Ministries had publicized the Awards, however it is interesting that the seven (7) survey respondents who indicated that they had first heard about the Awards through their national Ministries were drawn from all participating regions: Africa (2), Asia (1), Caribbean (2), Europe/ Mediterranean (1) and North America (1). The chair of the adjudication panel, the Director General of the Department of Education in South Africa, reported that his Ministry had publicised the Awards by placing large announcements in national newspapers. Given the number of submissions made by South African organisations (accounting for 30% of the total number of entries), it would appear that this strategy was successful in raising local awareness of the Awards, especially considering this was the first time that the Awards were being offered. Given the important role that Ministries played in creating awareness about the Awards, the Secretariat may wish to consider ways of assisting or supporting Ministries to encourage further nominations.

In addition to working closely with Ministries of Education, the Secretariat may wish to consider how it utilises the networks in which other education-focused Commonwealth organisations and associations participate. In line with this suggestion, the Awards could also be announced on the Commonwealth Foundation and Commonwealth of Learning websites.

Lessons:
  ➢ Develop strategies for encouraging and supporting Ministries of Education in creating awareness about the Awards and encouraging organisations to submit nominations.
  ➢ Consider publicizing the Awards among a wider range of Commonwealth organisations.

4.3   Preparation of submissions by organisations

It had been decided that organisations would be able to nominate themselves for a Good Practice Award based on their work and its alignment with the six Commonwealth Education Action Areas. A deliberate decision was taken to accept nominations directly from civil society organisations, individual schools as well as Ministries. Submissions from organisations did not need to be endorsed or seconded by a Ministry of Education; however the organisation was asked to inform the national Ministry of their submission; however, this was not a condition for a submission being accepted. This approach marks a departure from the Commonwealth Secretariat's traditional style of operations that privileges contact with government agencies and

accredited Commonwealth civil society organisations. Staff in STPD believed this strategy had been very successful and should be retained in future.

The format for submissions was based on one developed for the CAPAM *Awards for Innovation in Public Service*, a long-standing Commonwealth Awards programme. The format used by CAPAM has worked successfully for a number of years and was seen as a viable model that could be adapted and applied (see Appendix 2).

The Review sought feedback from survey respondents on the level of information provided in the call for nominations and the ease with which they could comply with the stipulated formats. In general, it was felt that the level of detail provided about the submission process, the information that should be included in the submissions and the adjudication criteria was either 'good' or 'very good'. Of the three aspects that were assessed, respondents commented least favourably on the level of detail provided on the criteria that were to be used for assessing submissions - two rated it as either 'very poor' or 'poor' and six rating it as 'good' or 'very good'. As a comparison, other aspects had eight or more positive responses.

Most respondents (8 out of 10) indicated that they had experienced little or no difficulty complying with the instructions given for the preparation of submissions. Even if respondents had reported experiencing little difficulty when preparing submissions, respondents were asked to identify the requirements with which they experienced the most difficulty complying. Their responses are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Areas of greatest difficulty for Respondents

Areas of Difficulty	Number of respondents
Preparation of 50 word Executive Summary	5
Project description (1500 words)	2
Information on implementing organisation	2
Information on Project budget	4
Information on the beneficiary/target population	1
Note: Respondents could select more than one option	

Respondents provided the following suggestions on how the information on submission requirements could be improved:
 - Supply more detail on the criteria that will be used when submissions will be judged to enable organisations to highlight the information most relevant to the criteria in their 1500 word summaries.
 - Provide greater detail on the process of adjudication and the nature of 'good' practice being sought.
 - Provide more information on eligibility of organisations for the Awards.
 - Include information about previous winners in order to illustrate the kinds of projects that have received Awards and their successes.

4.4 Processing of submissions by the Commonwealth Secretariat

As of 31 March 2006 a total of 47 nominations had been received from organisations from across the Commonwealth. Table 6 shows the diversity of submissions received.

Table 6: Submissions by Region

Region[4]	Number of submissions	Percent
Africa	30	64
Asia	9	19
Caribbean	2	4
Mediterranean/Europe	4	9
North America	1	2
Pacific	1	2

A range of organisations entered submissions for the Awards, mostly non-government organisations, but a few were submitted by educational institutions or Ministries of Education and other State-linked organisations[5].

A strict deadline was applied for the receipt of submissions. The project co-ordinator considered this as necessary though it meant, unfortunately, that some interesting submissions could not be considered. All submissions were recorded on receipt by the Secretariat and, following an initial review and determination of short-listed candidates (a process described below); the Secretariat provided written feedback to all organisations on the status of their submission. Organisations were asked to provide comment on their experience of this phase of the Awards process. Most organisations appeared to be very satisfied with the quality and speed of the response from the Secretariat. Respondents were asked to identify elements of the process that could be improved in future and these responses are summarised below in Table 7.

Table 7: Areas for Improvement in Processing Submissions

Element in the Process	Number of respondents
Information on the criteria for assessing applications	5
Feedback on why an application was unsuccessful	3
Clarity of feedback for submitting organisation	2
Speed of processing application	1

4.5   Appointment of adjudicators

The review process was divided into three phases:
1. Initial review of 47 submissions and short-listing
2. Review of short list and selection of finalist
3. Adjudication of winners

The first phase of the review process was undertaken jointly by the Commonwealth Secretariat and representatives from three London-based High Commissions representing different Commonwealth Regions and a member of the Commonwealth Teachers Group. After the completion of the review phase, an adjudication panel of Commonwealth education experts was constituted to review the short-listed submissions and to select the Awards winners. The project co-ordinator reported that invitations were extended to recognised regional experts in education identified by STPD staff to elicit nominations of panelists. Efforts were made to ensure that the panel represented expertise in the six Action Areas and that the composition of the panel was representative in terms of both gender and regional diversity. The duties and expected time

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[4] Regions do not coincide exactly with the four Commonwealth regions used to classify projects as it was felt that this would blur the distinction between projects from the Caribbean and North America and between Asia and Europe/ Mediterranean.

[5] A nomination was received from a South African body independent from the Ministry of Education but which was established by statute and receives funding.

commitments from adjudicators were explained to those approached. All adjudicators volunteered; they were not remunerated for their service.

During the planning meetings in 2005 a decision was taken that the Award adjudication panel should be chaired by a senior official from the CCEM host country – therefore, the adjudication panel for the first Awards was chaired by the South African Director General of Education. The level of commitment to the Awards by the CCEM host government and the skills of the chairperson were widely praised by interviewees.

Interview data suggests that there is a commitment to continue this model of operation for 17CCEM and it is therefore worth reflecting on the chairperson's observations about the role of the chair and perceived (or real) conflicts of interest that may occur. The chair noted that the role of the host Ministry in promoting the Awards had led to a high number of submissions from South African organisations (30% of the total nominees). This meant there was an enhanced likelihood that one or more of these national organisations would be selected as finalists or as a winner. If finalists are drawn from the host country this may be perceived by unsuccessful candidates as an indication of preference or bias. The chair and the CAPAM advisor offered a number of suggestions for managing real or perceived conflicts of interest that could occur:

> The calibre of the adjudication panel plays a key role in promoting the image and status of the Awards.
> Local knowledge of organisations and their work need not be seen as handicap - it provides greater insight into the work of organisations and will not always operate in their favour.
> Given the range of contexts from which adjudicators are drawn it would be very rare (and even undesirable) for no panel members to have some knowledge of candidates from their region.
> The professional context in which the adjudication of the Awards takes place contributes significantly to perceptions of fairness and impartiality. This must be borne in mind at all times by the adjudicators and organisers.

All those interviewed commented very favourably on the high calibre of the adjudicators, and particular mention was made of the skill with which the chair discharged this role which had contributed greatly to the success of the Awards. However, interviewees noted that it was unfortunate that the composition of the adjudication panel did not remain constant between the election of finalists and of the winners - due to the inability of some panel members to participate in the winners' adjudication in Cape Town which meant a replacement adjudicator had to be found at the last minute.

Lessons:
> Have the chairperson of the adjudication panel present during all phases. The chairperson indicated that it would have been useful for him to have participated in the short-listing of applicants.
> Provide all adjudicators with a written briefing document that outlines their duties and any travel commitments.
> Request all adjudicators to sign a letter of commitment to participate in accordance with the terms of reference/ brief issued to them. The documentation could be prepared in such as way that it also contains commitments to keep all deliberations confidential.

4.6   Adjudication methodology

The methods used to assess the relative merit of different submissions were strongly influenced by the approach used by CAPAM in their Awards process. The same methodology for reviewing and ranking submissions was used during the selection of finalists and winners and drew on scoring procedures applied during the identification of short-listed submissions. It is worth noting that in the interests of reducing the cost of the Awards, the selection of finalists was done by means of a telephone conference, with the panel only meeting together once. The adjudicators felt that this had been an effective strategy.

The Commonwealth Secretariat developed a template to be used in the scoring of submissions which was used during all three adjudication phases. Submissions were scored against the criteria described In Table 8. None of the criteria were weighted so each was scored out of 20. Each submission could score a maximum of 120 points.

Table 8: Adjudication Criteria

Adjudication Criterion	Description	Points allocated
Relevance	The Good Practice will demonstrate a socio- culturally sensitive and economically appropriate response to the context and challenge of education delivery in a specific country.	20
Measurable impact and effect	The value of the Good Practice is measured through qualitative and quantitative indicators to demonstrate impact and effect.	20
Sustainability	The Good Practice is or can be projected to have positive impact and effect, either intermittently at intervals on a consistent, continuous basis as required.	20
Efficiency and Effectiveness	The Good Practice has demonstrated cost-savings and/or the efficient and effective use of resources in its implementation.	20
Community Participation and Contribution	The success of the Good Practice is enhanced through community and civil society participation, ownership or contribution.	20
Replication	Given similar conditions and circumstances, the Good Practice has the potential to be replicated in the Education systems of other Commonwealth countries.	20
TOTAL		120

These criteria were the same as those described in the publicity materials as recommended by the Executive Director of CAPAM who provided consultancy services to the project. It was noted that it was very important to maintain the same criteria throughout each phase of the adjudication process and that these should be made known to those organisations that wish to be considered for an Award.

The adjudication process was informed by the general principle that the numeric scores would be used to rank submissions relative to each other, identifying those submissions that were clearly worthy of consideration and those that were not - rather than using the scores to compute an average score based on each juror's ratings and to select those that scored above a certain level. The chairperson of the adjudication panel indicated that it had been his preference to use numeric scores as guides to identify those submissions on which there was clear agreement on their merit (or lack of thereof). He noted that it was interesting that in spite of the different regional backgrounds and areas of expertise of the panel members that there were surprisingly high levels

of consensus amongst the adjudicators. He noted that the use of scores to rank submissions also allowed for greater subjectivity in the interpretation of scores and criteria and overcame the challenges of having some panelists who may have marker more strictly than others. Submissions on which there was no clear consensus on whether they should be included or excluded were subjected to a more rigorous discussion.

The following were identified as being the most successful elements of the adjudication process:

1. *The calibre and performance of the chairperson* Without exception all those interviewed on the adjudication process highlighted the key role played by the chairperson in seeking consensus and ensuring that all jurors' views received adequate consideration. The willingness of the chairperson to invest time in the adjudication process was seen as a key factor contributing to the project's success.

2. *The profile of the members of the adjudication panel* The expertise, professional profile and different areas of specialization of the panel members were all felt to have contributed to the success with which the group operated.

3. *The rigour with which the process was conducted.* All interviewees felt that the processes followed in selecting finalists and winners were sufficiently rigorous and could stand up to scrutiny.

4. *Jury dinner should be retained as a means of allowing adjudicators to become familiar with each other prior to entering into the adjudication of finalists.* As the adjudicator's dinner immediately prior to the judging of the finalists was the first opportunity that adjudicators had to meet in person it was felt to have been an important occasion in which they could exchange views, develop an understanding of each others' professional perspectives and a sense of solidarity and team spirit.

4.7 Selection of winners and the Awards ceremony

The final phase of the adjudication process took place in Cape Town, just before the commencement of 16CCEM. All finalists and adjudicators were invited to Cape Town, where the finalists made presentations on their work. The process of adjudication was very similar to that described above, for that reason this section of the report focuses on the participants' satisfaction with the management of logistics and the perceived value of attendance at events taking place alongside 16CCEM. 10.

When assessing their satisfaction with the adjudication process, finalists rated their experience of different elements as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Finalists satisfaction with the aspects of the Judging

Issue	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Explanation of criteria	-	1	1	2
Information on presentation: duration and requirements	-	-	2	2
Feedback from the adjudication panel	1	-	-	3
Communication of the results	1	-	-	3
Publicity given to the finalists and Awards	-	1	3	-

The responses show generally high levels of satisfaction with the process of judging awards, with some reservations about the communication of results and the publicity given to the Awards (an issue which is discussed in more detail below).

The finalists who were interviewed indicated that in future it would be very valuable for all finalists to be in a position to observe the presentations made by each other. Their informal interactions and discussions of their work (at social events and through informal contact at the hotel in which they stayed) were reported to be useful and interesting. There is a tension between the desire to maintain a degree of confidentiality about the adjudication process and the professed intention of the project to stimulate innovation and encourage learning and the sharing of experience. Clearly, the panel's deliberations must be kept confidential however it would be beneficial to find ways of encouraging greater exchange of ideas between finalists.

Table 10:   Satisfaction with logistics before and during 16CCEM

Issue	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not applicable
Communication on travel arrangements	-	-	1	3	-
Communication of visa requirements	-	-	-	2	2
Assistance in obtaining visas for South Africa	-	-	-	1	3
Booking of air transportation (class and route)	-	1	-	1	2
Selection of hotel accommodation	-	-	1	2	1
Transport to and from airport	-	1	-	1	2
Transport between hotel and conference venue	-	-	1	2	1

Two serious short-comings were identified during the course of interviews with stakeholders:
1. It was disappointing that the Awards presentations were scheduled at the end of the CCEM, when many key stakeholders (including Ministers) had already departed.
2. All winners (not just the one organisation affected) were dissatisfied that air transportation had been booked at an inappropriate time which resulted in one of the winners not able to attend the presentation ceremony.

A number of suggestions as to how the awards ceremony could be improved were received:
➤ Consider having the presentation event earlier in the CCEM schedule in order to generate more interest in the finalists' work and greater opportunities for interaction between the finalists and those interested in their areas of work over the duration of the CCEM and related fora.
➤ Provide winning organisations with replica or smaller versions of the trophies that can be retained by the organisations and displayed prominently in their premises or offices.
➤ Provide all finalists (and winners) with certificates that prove that they have been selected as finalists for or winners of Education Good Practice Awards.
➤ Supply all finalists with photographs of the event so that these can be used in their publicity material that they produce on their work.
➤ Ensure good understanding of purpose of the Awards through good structured media briefings. This should contribute to more substantial coverage of the presentation event.

4.8 Relationship of the Awards to 16CCEM

From the outset the Awards have been linked to meetings of the Commonwealth Education Ministers, as it was the Ministers at 15CCEM who first mooted the introduction of the Awards. The association of the Awards with CCEM was felt to have been positive as it raised the esteem of the Awards and the presentation event and allowed Ministers to have the opportunity to interact with the winners (and vice versa). The almost simultaneous scheduling of these two events was seen to have raised the media profile of the Awards and to have attracted greater media coverage than would have been possible had the Awards been taking place in isolation from the Ministerial meeting.

Finalists were given the opportunity to attend the CCEM Stakeholders' forum and were given an opportunity to make presentations on their work. It was unfortunate that no Secretariat officers were available to attend these presentations because of the requirements on then to attend other events during the Ministerial meeting. The winners also indicated that had the presentation ceremony been held earlier during CCEM their presentation sessions would have been better attended, generating greater interest in the work of all Award finalists.

In spite of this, all four finalists who completed the survey indicated that they had felt that their attendance at 16CCEM had been a worthwhile and valuable experience. It is worth quoting a few responses:

> 'I found it totally incredible. 1 gained so much and 1 am still using the books and information form the conference that 1 received. 1 really gained much from a few of the key papers presented and also the talks. 1 also loved the networking with other applicants and sharing our learning."

> "I rated as extremely valuable the exchange of ideas with other participants of the conference as well as with the academics presenting several very interesting current educational issues that were very informative and interesting. We had the chance to be informed about current educational issues and problems that trouble other countries and ways these countries are dealing with them that gave us the chance to deal with prevention of such issues in our country. I believe that the exchange of ideas with us also helped the countries [by] organizations coming in contact with fresh ideas."

> "Well worth meeting colleagues from the Commonwealth and learning about what they do."

> "It has improved upon my knowledge and skills in gender-related issues in education."

The adjudicators were given the opportunity to attend the Stakeholders' Forum, albeit at their own expense. One of the adjudicators indicated in interview that it would have been desirable for the panel to have attended or observed sessions of the Ministerial Meeting. However, as attendance at these meetings is governed by strict accreditation rules, this constraint could be made communicated to the adjudicators when they receive their briefing documents, so as to avoid raising false expectations of observing or participating in the Ministerial meeting. Members of the adjudication panel would only be able to gain access to the Ministerial meeting if they invited guests of the Secretariat attending a session that had particular relevance for their work as adjudicators or were accredited through Commonwealth Associations to which they belong and that have endorsed their participation.

5.   Effects of the Awards on the work of winning organisations

One of the key questions that the Review sought to investigate was the effects of having received a Commonwealth Education Good Practice had had for the winning organisations. Some of the key benefits that they had derived from having won Awards included:

- ➢ Heightened interest in their work
- ➢ Recognition for and endorsement of their efforts
- ➢ Raised morale of those working on the project
- ➢ Improved relationships with national Ministries of Education
- ➢ Attention of policy makers drawn to their work
- ➢ Media coverage and kudos through association with the Commonwealth brand

It is interesting that when organisations were asked what had motivated them to make a submission for an Award most focused on the potential of the Awards to draw policy makers' attention to their work (8) and to gain international publicity for their organisations (8). Only one organisation mentioned that they had hoped that the Awards would assist in attracting donor support for their work or that the Award would be in the form of a monetary prize.

All the winning organisations reported that the Awards had heightened awareness of the work that they do and had stimulated greater interest in it at a national level. The media coverage received in their home countries contributed greatly to this, with two organisations having received substantial television coverage. This, in turn, had generated interest in their work and had led to them being approached by other organisations based within their home countries eager to learn from their experiences and implement similar projects. Unfortunately it would appear that there has been very little cross-country interest in the winners' work.

At least two of the winning organisations reported that they had some kind of pre-existing relationship with the Commonwealth Secretariat prior to winning the Awards, and that being an Award-winner had not significantly increased their interaction with the Secretariat. All three winning organisations indicated that there had been no overtures from the Secretariat to further investigate their work or to link it with other areas of its work (even where clear synergies existed). For example the project on multi-cultural education in Cyprus would have been relevant to the Secretariat's Respect and Understanding initiative as it demonstrated how respect and understanding had been fostered between two antagonistic communities, both within the school and among parents of different ethnic backgrounds.

It was suggested that to sustain the effect of attaining finalist status or indeed of having won an Award, organisations should be given the opportunity to focus on the recognition from the Commonwealth that the Award generated. To this end, the Secretariat should issue a clear statement on whether winning organisations can make use of the Commonwealth logo in their publicity materials or when reporting that they are Award winners. One way in which this could be done would be to create a small image that reflects the Commonwealth logo and the words *Education Good Practice Award Winner* or *Finalist* and only allow the use of this specially created image in publicity material associated with finalists and winners, to give the Secretariat control over the use of its name and logo.

6.   Review of project design and the strategic intent of the Awards

The Review also considered the design and conceptualisation of the Education Awards. This discussion is presented here for two reasons:
(i).   to allow design-related issues to be understood in the context of the implementation of the first Awards; and,

(ii.) to support forward-looking analysis of the Awards' design informing planning for the second round of Awards to be presented at 17CCEM.

In assessing the design of the project the following issues have been considered:
- The extent to which the project activities are aligned with the Secretariat's Strategic Plan;
- The relationship between the Awards and the Education Section's broader programme of work;
- The extent to which the purpose of Awards is clearly articulated and conceptualised;
- The alignment of the implementation processes with the purpose of the Awards; and,
- The nature of quality and performance indicators that could be developed for the Awards project

6.1   Fitting with the Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Plan

The Secretariat's Strategic Plan (2004/05-2007/08) and the Operational Plan (2006/07-2007/08) make reference in the discussion on the Education Programme to identification of best practice. In particular, the Strategic Plan refers to the identification of best practice as a strategy to be employed in achieving the programmes stated results, and not a result in and of itself. The question therefore has to be asked whether the identification of best or good practices through the Awards have contributed to the overall results statements of the Plan.

One of the Education Programme's indicators, as articulated in the Secretariat's Operational Plan 2006/07-2007/08, is '…that good practice in the six Action Areas is documented, disseminated and recognised amongst 53 member countries'. The Education Good Practice Awards are clearly one way of identifying good practices, however, as adjudicators and staff have noted, they are not the only means for identifying good practices. Two issue are raised here: the ability (or appropriateness) of the Awards project to achieve this objective, and secondly, the basis on which particular practices are determined as being 'good practice' in terms of educational value and contribution to teaching and learning.

The Executive Officer of CAPAM who advised the Education Section and participated in the final phases of adjudication noted that Awards programmes are - in general - a way to highlight and draw attention to the presence of good practice, playing a symbolic (as opposed to practical) role in recognising these practices and thereby inspiring practitioners. However, without additional support or technical assistance to promote and support the extension, adoption or replication of these practices it is unlikely that the Awards (on their own) will promote policy change or influence practice. If the intention behind the Awards is to draw attention to good practices in order at as a catalyst for adoption by Commonwealth countries, what kind of assistance should be provided to achieve this outcome? As part of the planning and revision of the activity, the Secretariat should invest resources to undertake a review of the work of Award winners and use this analysis to develop strategies for adoption based on these successes. If the matter has not already been addressed, the Secretariat needs to consider how it expects replication to take place.

The use of the term 'good' practice immediately raises the questions: how is 'good' defined? Whose standards determine what is considered to be 'good'? Does a common understanding of 'good' practice exist among those who plan and adjudicate the Awards? Based on data collected for the Review, it would not appear that within the Education Section there is a clearly articulated sense of what practices, systemic features or principles should be reflected in the education systems of Commonwealth countries. Put slightly differently - there does not appear to be a shared, articulated conceptual framework for educational development that drives the work of the Secretariat's Education strategy which in turn should influence the focus of all activities in support of their main project and also create a basis for assessing the educational merit of various

innovations. A review of the adjudication criteria shows that they give more emphasis to issues relating to project design than to educational content and the educational focus of innovations.

The merit of using self-selected (self-nominated) projects or examples of good practice as the basis on which member states are encouraged to adopt, adapt or replicate these practices should be interrogated. It is recommended that the Awards be used to identify innovative or promising solutions to common problems and to profile these; the practices that will form the basis of policy advocacy should be based on a solid theoretical framework for educational development and for should be based on long-term demonstrable impact.

> **Issues:**
> ➤ How can the Awards used more effectively to contribute more substantially to the achievement of the Education Programme's results statements?
> ➤ How can the Awards project be used for effectively as a catalyst for the introduction of new strategies for dealing with common problems in education?
> ➤ Can the Education Section develop a coherent framework for educational development that should guide the notion of what amounts to a good practice?

6.2 Relationship to the Education programme

The data supports the view that the Awards were implemented as a stand-alone activity, operating in isolation from other projects/ activities within the Universal Primary Education project (HCWG176). This can be attributed in part to the nature of the project which was made up of a number of processes leading up to and supporting a public event (i.e. the Awards presentation). There is a danger that the presentation of the Awards is seen as end (or result) in itself and not as an element in a strategy to promote and support improvements in the provision and quality of education in Commonwealth countries.

Both the project co-ordinator and the Director of STPD noted that the Awards had not been integrated into the Education Programme and that formal linkages with other activities carried out within the Section had not been actively sought. It is unfortunate that no efforts were made to link the work of the Award winners with other activities within the Secretariat - even though clear opportunities for synergy existed - the first prize winner's work on promoting behavioural change amongst youth to prevent HIV AIDS has resonance with the work of the Health Section and the Youth Affairs Division. Linking the work of Award winners with other projects and activities carried out by the Secretariat would deepen the relationship and standing of the projects within the Commonwealth, provide winning organisations with opportunities for greater interaction with Commonwealth stakeholders and expose them to new ideas and approaches through their interaction with the Secretariat.

Attention should be given to improving the clarity with which the purpose of the Awards is conceptualised and articulated. As noted earlier, STPD staff and adjudicators associated with the Awards shared a common understanding of their purpose, seeing the role of the Awards as being to identify good or innovative practice, motivate, inspire and encourage those working in the Sector. In spite of the emphasis in the Strategic Plan on using the identified good practice as the basis for policy borrowing and replication, it is worth noting that most of the adjudicators focused on the symbolic intent of the Awards.

6.3   Alignment with the Award objectives

One of the measures that can be used to assess the quality of project design and implementation is to determine the extent to which implementation processes reinforced or supported the project's developmental objectives.

i.   Identification of stakeholders

All organisations operating in the education sector - schools, non-governmental organisations and Ministries of Education - were eligible to participate in the first Awards. While this value of process is not disputed, it is worth considering the implications of this decision on the professed purpose of the Awards to act as a catalyst for change in policy and practice within member states. As an inter-governmental organisation, the Commonwealth Secretariat's primary constituency is the governments or Ministries in member states. If the Awards draw the bulk of their nominations from small and medium size non-governmental organisations or from private sector bodies, how feasible is it for these practices to be replicated on national or sub-national levels? For this reason that it is recommended that the organisers of the Awards consider the introduction of different categories of Awards for small organisations (or that involve smaller numbers of schools) and those that focus on systemic interventions led by State agencies. The fact that the Awards were opened up to all organisations working in the education sector meant that the Secretariat moved away from its normal mode of interaction that privileges interaction with government or Ministerial representatives. The strategy used by STPD is a very visible and effective demonstration of the ways in which stronger relationships can be built with civil society organisations.

ii.   Drawing positive media attention to innovative educational practices

The Awards ceremony received media coverage in South Africa and all of the winning organisations indicated that their work had been reported on by local media. It was recommended by CAPAM that short descriptions or summaries of the official submissions made by all finalists should be posted on the Commonwealth website. This will assist in disseminating information about good practice. Although a publication with information on each of the finalists' work will be disseminated shortly, it was felt that this information should be made publicly available prior to the adjudication process.

6.4   Quality and results indicators for the Awards project

With an increased focus on the achievement of results in the Secretariat it is important to establish indicators of success for different aspects of work. Key individuals associated with the Awards process were asked to identify possible indicators for assessing the success of the Awards; the following were suggested:
  ➢ Year-on-year increase in the number of submissions
  ➢ Submissions received from a wider range of regions and countries
  ➢ Increase in the quality of submissions and in the ability of entrants to adhere to guidelines
  ➢ Increased number of submissions reflecting sound organisational partnerships (with civil society, community leaders, private sector and the State)
  ➢ On-going interaction between winning organisations to promote and deepen their good practices
  ➢ Sustained interaction between the winning organisations and the Commonwealth Secretariat
  ➢ Evidence of adoption of new ideas as a result of the winning submissions

6.5   Assessment of Effectiveness

The Education Section of STPD must be commended for the manner in which they planned, co-coordinated and executed the first Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards. The pressures under which they operated were widely recognised and in spite of changes in project leadership, the large amount of work to be completed in a relatively short time period and the range of logistical arrangements that had to be made, the Awards were generally regarded as having been successful.

The Awards appear to have met the symbolic objective of inspiring, motivating, recognising and encouraging those organisations short-listed as finalists and who won an Award. However, the lack of contact with the winning organisations by other Commonwealth governments or organisations suggests that practical interest from other parties who wish to adopt or replicate their strategies is less than desirable. However, interest in the work of individual projects may increase after the dissemination of the publication on the work of the nine finalists.

7.   Looking ahead to 17CCEM and beyond

In accordance with the brief issued to SPED, a number of recommendations are contained in the report which focuses on improving the planning, design and implementation of the second Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards. Where a recommendation is fairly self-explanatory or has been discussed in the report, there is no discussion of its content.

7.1   Programme Design

1.   Developing consensus on what amounts to 'good practice' It is recommended that the Education Section develop a set of general principles or statements that they believe should characterize an effective and efficient education system within the Commonwealth. This vision of effective and efficient education should shape and guide the criteria used to identify and promote good practices in education. These should be general principles and not tied to resource levels and specific national features. The identification of the kinds of desirable education systems and practices that the Commonwealth Secretariat would like to see in member states should drive the full range of activities undertaken by the Education section - by aligning the Awards with this vision for Commonwealth Education the Awards programme will automatically share closer conceptual and practical linkages with other activities in the Education portfolio.

2   Promoting greater synergy between the Awards project and other elements of the Education Section work Given that the first Awards process was a fairly labour intensive exercise it is suggested that greater synergy be sought between them and other education-related activities so that the expertise of all section members can be utilised effectively.

3   Use the Awards to highlight innovation and interesting work in education The purpose of the Awards should be limited to highlighting interesting and innovative work in education in order to motivate, inspire and encourage new efforts in education. The identification of practices that can be replicated on a larger scale should be the subject of a more rigorous, evidence-based review of policy options.

4   Link the Awards to the work of the Secretariat's key constituencies Ministries in member countries and civil society organisations It would be possible to service the expectations of two stakeholder communities if the Secretariat considered having different Awards for smaller projects (implemented either by individual schools or by non-governmental organisations) and innovative and interesting systemic reforms introduced by governments (with our without donor assistance). This would also make it easier to compare similar types of projects and organisations that face similar staffing and resource constraints.

5.   Consider base each round of Awards on a particular theme The statement issued by Ministers following 15CCEM suggests that good (best) practice Awards should be issued in each of the six education Action Areas. In order to create greater coherence in the advocacy work that follows the Awards process to highlight innovation in a particular area, it would be possible to combine or group particular categories on the basis that all innovations should support or promote

UPE and quality education. There is a precedent for having thematic awards offered by Commonwealth bodies as each round of the CAPAM awards has a particular theme.

7.2   Project Management

1.   Establish a dedicated project budget It is recommended that an activity budget be developed within the project budget for the Awards that can provide a clear indication of the total amount approved for this activity before implementation commences. If extra-budgetary resources or private sector support is required, then fundraising could be initiated well ahead of the Awards and the commencement of adjudication so that funding constraints do not have a bearing on the total number of short-listed candidates or finalists.

2.   Maintain high levels of ownership by the CCEM host government One of the key factors that interviewees felt contributed significantly to the success of the Awards was the high levels of ownership displayed by the South African Ministry of Education and, in particular, by the chair of the adjudication panel. The host Ministry's involvement was felt to be crucial in maintaining a focus on the Awards within CCEM events.

7.3   Improving the Awards

1.   Support and encourage national Ministries of Education to disseminate information on the Awards and p*rovide more information on the adjudication criteria to guide the content of submissions* Survey respondents repeatedly indicated that they would have liked more information on the criteria used to assess submissions (an issue raised in relation all phases of the adjudication process). While it is noted that the adjudication criteria were specified in all publicity materials, entrants' responses suggest that they did not find this information sufficiently clear or easy to interpret. It is therefore recommended that the adjudication criteria be made more concrete and specific, reflecting the vision for Commonwealth Education that the Secretariat wishes to promote through its work. These criteria should be pushed prominently on the website.

2.   Develop graded rating scales to assess project performance against each criterion. For each adjudication criterion, it is suggested that a rating scale (similar to a Likert scale 4) be developed that illustrates poor, average, good and excellent performance against each criterion. The introduction of a more structured rating scale should increase inter-rater reliability and ensure that all submissions are viewed using a common lens. There is some debate about the range that should be used in these scales, with some researchers preferring an even number of options so that respondents cannot use a neutral or median option, which forces data towards the middle point of the scale. Consistency should be the aim in any scale that is adopted.

3.   Increase the size of the adjudication panel. Several interviewees indicated that they felt that the size of the adjudication panel should have been increased. Not only could this increase the representation of the panel (in terms of both geographic region and areas of expertise in education) but it would also be beneficial if some jurors withdraw unexpectedly - although this should be avoided at all costs.

4.   Publish the names of the adjudicators Interviewees commented that the profile and calibre of the adjudicators contributed significantly to the profile and integrity of the Awards. Given the type of people who are approached to serve on these panels and committees, it gives prominence to the Awards to profile the adjudicators. As the Education Good Practice Awards are relatively new, the stature of the adjudicators demonstrates the importance and weight that is being attached to this activity.

5. *Obtain signed letters of commitment from all adjudicators.* When agreeing to participate in the Awards process, all adjudicators should be asked to sign a letter of commitment agreeing to participate in all relevant phases of the process, noting the expected time commitment.

6. *Improve the management of event logistics.* Although the problems with transport (and related matters) described by participants were relatively minor, for the person experiencing these problems they can create a very negative impression of the event and by extension of the Commonwealth Secretariat especially if it is their first formal interaction with the organisation.

➢ *Identifying the most appropriate point during the CCEM formalities for the presentation ceremony to be held* Ensuring appropriate arrangements are made so that all finalists have the opportunity to attend the presentation ceremony.

➢ *Improve the opportunities for learning and interaction between finalists and other participants at the CCEM Stakeholders' Forum* A number of finalists and Award winners expressed some disappointment that they had not had the opportunity to benefit fully from their presence at the CCEM Stakeholders' Forum. Profiles of the finalists' work could be included in conference documentation and opportunities for presentations on their work could be effectively integrated into the main Stakeholder Forum events, as some reported a perception that their sessions and events had been "tacked onto" a pre-arranged programme.

7. *Publish summarises of submissions made by all finalists on the Commonwealth Secretariat website* In the interests of disseminating information on innovative practices, short summaries of each project submission should be available on the Commonwealth Secretariat website, along with contact details for the organisation.

8. *Decide on a post-award strategy for maintaining and strengthening linkages with the Award winners* One of the areas in which the management and execution of the project could have been significantly improved is maintenance and strengthening of linkages with the Commonwealth family- especially where the is obvious synergy between the work undertaken by a project and other activities of the Secretariat or associated organisations (such as the Commonwealth Foundation, Commonwealth of Learning or education focused civil society organisations).

8. Concluding comment

The first education Awards were generally regarded as a success by participants, adjudicators and those that managed them. It is a credit to the team within STPD that the first event was held so successfully, marred only by relatively minor logistical problems, which should be resolved by the second round. However, in spite of this being a successful event, it is recommended that for STPD, in particular the Education Section, pay close attention to the observations and recommendations on the design and conceptualisation of the project. The Awards have the potential to become a key strategy for highlighting innovation in education, reinforcing and supporting other work done as part of the Education Programme.

Concluding Report on the first round of the
Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards 2006

Background

Ministers at 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) agreed to promote best practice in the 6 Commonwealth education Action Areas of the Edinburgh Action Plan, recommending that the 16th CCEM should be the first occasion for the recognition of these good and promising practices in education.

Following discussion of the Awards programme at each of the 3 Education Mid-Term reviews held in 2005, the launch of the programme was announced through the Commonwealth website on October 1st, 2005. Brochures providing details of the programme and newsletters were sent to all 53 member countries and civil society partners in education indicating a closing date of March 31, 2006 for the first round of submissions. By closing date 47 submissions had been received from a total of 19 member countries and unfortunately, many other submissions were received after this date which could not be considered.

Initial round of short-listing: April 12 2006

The first round of short-listing was undertaken by a panel of four persons comprising representatives from the Australian, Barbadian and Kenyan High Commissions, spanning three of the regions of the Commonwealth and a representative of the Commonwealth Teachers Group. This first short-listing panel felt that there was clear evidence of interesting, innovative and creative practices which conformed to the criteria. They acknowledged that in general the reasons why certain submissions did *not* meet and satisfy the criteria were due to a lack of presentation and focus; lack of evidence of good practice; lack of implementation; lack of evidence of measurable impact and effect and the evidence of private sector submissions which could not be considered as per the Awards guidelines. This Panel agreed to the selection of 21 Good Practice listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Short-listed Submissions- First Round

NAME OF PROJECT	ORGANISATIONAL AFFILIATION	LOCATION
The Junka and Noo Programme	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology	Bahamas
The Speak English Campaign	Ministry of Education	Brunei Darussalam
Educational Innovations carried forward by the School Unit after acceptance in the Educational priority Zone of the Ministry of Culture and Education of the Republic of Cyprus	18th Agio-Lemesos Primary School	Cyprus
The Scholarship Trust Fund for Girls	Department of State for Education	The Gambia
Training Untrained Teachers in Ghana	Ministry of Education and Sports	Ghana
Using IT Tools to Teach Visually Challenged Children in Sikkim	National Association for the Blind	India
Adolescent Girl's Health Education Project	BMSS Mumbai	India
Strengthening the Public Education	BMSS Mumbai	India
Advancing Lessons from Udaan – Addressing	CARE India	India

NAME OF PROJECT	ORGANISATIONAL AFFILIATION	LOCATION
Challenges faced by Vulnerable Children		
Sanitary Towels Campaign	Girl Child Network	Kenya
Home Grown School Feeding and Health Programme	Federal Ministry of Nigeria	Nigeria
Eliminating Gender Disparities in Secondary Education…and Resource Centres	Alif Laila Book Bus Society	Pakistan
The Seychelles School Improvement	Ministry of Education and Youth	Seychelles
Early Childhood Development Enrichment Centre Pilot project	Centre for Early Childhood Development	South Africa
Khanya	Western Cape Education Department	South Africa
In-Service training of educators undertaking the Advanced Certificate in education	University of Pretoria	South Africa
Orphans, Educators, Practitioners and Guardian Aids Project	The Art Therapy Centre – Lefika laphodisa	South Africa
Supporting Education in Difficult Circumstances	Generation of leaders Discovered Peer Education Development Agency	South Africa
The Woolworths Trust EduPlant Programme	Food and Trees for Africa	South Africa
Persona Dolls Life Skills Project: Making a Difference	Education Dept. of the Western Cape Province and NGO, Persona Doll Training	South Africa
Black Boys Can	National Black Boys Association	UK

Second Round of Adjudication – Pan-Commonwealth Teleconference – July 5, 2006

The second round of adjudication to select the finalists for the third and final round was held on July 5th, 2006. The process took the form of a pan-Commonwealth teleconference which was chaired by the Director General of Education in South Africa, Mr Duncan Hindle who flew in from South Africa especially for the event. Through the facilitation of the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) who run their own Innovation Awards programme and who had been providing the Commonwealth Secretariat with technical assistance on the awards since January 2006, a teleconference was arranged which enabled the following adjudicators to discuss and evaluate submissions from their various Commonwealth locations despite the varying time zones:

- Duncan Hindle (Chair) – South Africa
- Keratile Thabana – Lesotho
- Marlene Hamilton – Jamaica
- David Plummer – Trinidad and Tobago
- Asha Kanwar – The Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver
- Vrinda Sarup – India

Alan Jogioba of Papua New Guinea was unable to be contacted by telephone but had sent his scores of the project in advance.

In this round the adjudicators selected nine finalists from the short-list of 21. They advised that there were a number of points which they wished to be conveyed to both the finalists and those who had not made it into the final round and this was undertaken by the Secretariat by letter. These points included the fact that despite evidence of the high standard of many of the

submissions some projects did not adhere closely to the criteria for the awards and several projects lacked clear demonstration of the impact and effect of the initiative. Other projects had been submitted at too early a stage to receive the serious consideration of the panel and were recommended for submission in a later round of the awards.

Final Adjudication – December 6 - 7 2006

The final adjudication for the awards was conducted in Cape Town immediately prior to the 16th CCEM in Cape Town, South Africa. The adjudication panel comprised the same members as those who had participated in the July 2006 teleconference excepting for the representatives from the Commonwealth of Learning, India and Lesotho. The panel of 5 chaired by Mr Duncan Hindle heard 9 submissions over the two days and following final deliberations, agreed on three winners by the conclusion of the second day. See Table 2 for the list of finalists.

Table 2: Finalist for the 2006 Education Awards

Title	Organisation	Country
Educational Innovations carried forward by the School Unit after acceptance in the Educational priority Zone of the Ministry of Culture and Education.	18th Agio-Lemesos Primary School	Cyprus
The Scholarship Trust Fund for Girls	Department of State for Education	The Gambia
Training Untrained Teachers in Ghana	Ministry of Education and Sports	Ghana
Advancing Lessons from Udaan – Addressing Challenges faced by Vulnerable Children	CARE India	India
Eliminating Gender Disparities in Secondary Education and Resource Centres	Alif Laila Book Bus Society	Pakistan
The Seychelles School Improvement Programme	Ministry of Education and Youth	Seychelles
Early Childhood Development Enrichment Centre Pilot project	Centre for Early Childhood Development	South Africa
Orphans, Educators, Practitioners and Guardian Aids Project	The Art Therapy Centre – Lefika laphodisa	South Africa
Supporting Education in Difficult Circumstances	Generation of leaders Discovered Peer Education Development Agency	South Africa

Presentations

Finalists presented their projects to the Stakeholders Forum of 16CCEM on the final afternoon of the Forum at 16CCEM.

All finalists were presented with a Nelson Mandela medallion by the Honourable Naledi Pandor at the Secretary General's cocktail party held on December 12th, 2006. The 16CCEM Closing Ceremony was selected as the opportunity to acknowledge and recognise the Winners who were presented with tokens from the Commonwealth Secretariat which were presented to them by Deputy Secretary General Ransford Smith. They were:

First: Generation of Leaders Discovered Peer Education Development Agency. South Africa
Second: Educational Innovations carried forward by the School Unit after acceptance in the Educational priority Zone of the Ministry of Culture and Education, Republic of Cyprus.

Third: **Advancing Lessons from Udaan, Addressing Challenges faced by Vulnerable Children. India**

Education Section, STPD
December 2006

CAPAM Report on the First CCEM Good Practice Awards

Introduction

The first CCEM Good Practice Awards process was robust which in turn elicited strong submissions and, ultimately, enthusiastic presentations at the final round of adjudication in South Africa. The participating Jurors worked well as a Team under the leadership of a very able Chair. The following constitutes the CAPAM report on the Good Practice Awards process, including observations and recommendations on various aspects of the Programme in which CAPAM was involved.

Observations and Recommendations

1.   Jury Management:

The Jurors worked well together in both the teleconference and in person in Cape Town. A list of Jurors, with a short bio attached, would be valuable as it would give the Jurors a sense of what specific expertise and perspective they each bring to the table. This list should be available for the first teleconference meeting and when the Jury comes together in person to remind members with whom they are working.

For the teleconference meeting at which the Jurors select the Awards Finalists, the organisers need to bear in mind the fact that Jurors at opposite ends of the time zones will be participating in "off hours", likely from a home line. Thus, the teleconference planning should start with these 'bookends' as it were, in determining at what time the call should take place.

The Jury should be made fully aware of the relationship of the Good Practice Awards to the Ministers meeting and other elements of the CCEM programme to follow the final adjudication. Jurors will thus understand when and how both the Finalists and the Jury's decision will be featured in the programme. This will also enable them to make good judgments with respect to travel arrangements and participation in the various programme elements (stakeholders/youth/teachers *etc.*).

It is important for the organisers to understand why the Jurors who did not attend chose not to participate. The strength of the Good Practice Awards Programme and the value of the Awards themselves will be strongly attached to, among other aspects, the perception of the strength and integrity of those doing the adjudication. In accepting the honour of sitting on the Jury, the members need to understand the prestige associated with the Awards and thus the importance of their participation in all stages of the adjudication (i.e. not to opt into the teleconference only to opt out of the two-days of deliberations).

The Jury should be clear on the 'prizes' that are being awarded (to see a trophy, for instance, would be appropriate). It should be borne in mind that each Juror becomes an ambassador for the Awards programme in future. The fuller their understanding of the

programme, the more knowledge they have of the purpose of and context for the Awards, the more effectively the Jurors can fulfil this ambassadorial role.

2. Jury Dinner

The Jury dinner the evening preceding the final adjudication provided an excellent opportunity for Jurors to get a sense of one another and for the Chair in particular to understand the dynamics of the group with which she or he is dealing. The dinner also provided a good opportunity to discuss specific processes the Jury would like to follow in its decision-making and to raise issues that need be dealt with prior to the commencement of the adjudication. The dinner went a long way to ensuring a smooth adjudication process, which indeed it was.

3. Adjudication Process

Building upon the experience of this first Good Practice Awards programme, next time the organisers will be in a position to share information with the Jury in advance with regard to the specifics of judging, from how the scoring sheets will be utilised to dealing with a (real or perceived) conflict of interest to a policy in the instance of a tie or too few judged to be of sufficient merit to present all three of the Awards. This will alert the Jury to some of the more subjective elements of the process that can have profound effects on the outcome.

The issue of confidentiality of all the discussions that take place during the teleconference and during the Jury deliberations, as well as the final outcome, should be discussed with the Jury from the beginning to ensure that it is well understood that the integrity of the process is what will, *inter alia*, determine ultimate value of the Award.

4. On-Site Adjudication

The scheduling of Finalist presentations went well, with very smooth timing and coordination of presentations, as well as meals, breaks *etc*. The facilities were excellent with pleasant venues provided for all aspects of the Jury's meetings and the presentations by the Finalists. The Finalists appeared to be well briefed and to understand the process well. More detail is required of Finalists as to their specific AV requirements; bearing in mind the varied nature of their requirements is likely to continue to evolve as technology evolves.

Finalists need to understand that the bases upon which the Jury will make its decision comprise the original submission, the presentations, and ensuing question and answer (Q&A) session only. Additional materials handed out during the presentation are not given deep consideration by the Jury unless specific reference is made to them in the course of the presentation or ensuing Q&A. Thus, Finalists should ensure that information with a critical bearing on their submission is made available through the submission and the presentation process.

5. **General Recommendations for the Future**

It is recommended that the outcomes be publicised as broadly as possible to raise the profile of the Awards to both inspire and inform good practice, and to encourage more submissions to the next programme. It is recommended that, at a minimum, the winners are profiled on the ComSec web site, with the summary of their submissions and contact information for independent follow-up made available. The next level is to profile all Finalists on the web site providing similar types of information. The best option is to provide easy access to all submissions, any one of which may provide inspiration to and/or critical 'good ideas' to someone in another setting.

Further, with respect to publicity, all of the Award Winners should be contacted when they return home to learn about how their success was received in their local context. They should be asked to share with the Programme any and all media coverage or special commendation that they received in their country or region. This media attention should be made available on the ComSec web site and through other communications vehicles available to the Programme.

Finally, the views of the Jurors, both those who participated and those who opted out, should be solicited to provide input for the future programmes.

Conclusion

Overall, the first Good Practice Awards programme was executed smoothly and professionally and sets a high the standard for the future programme(s) to build upon. The organisers are to be commended on a highly successful first Awards programme.

December 13 2006
Gillian Mason
Executive Director & CEO
CAPAM

Example of Publicity for the EGP Awards

Structure of the questionnaire used to gather data on nominees' perceptions of the Education Good Practice Awards

> Explanatory note: The questionnaire was formatted by the electronic survey software tool (*Survey monkey*). Where appropriate, the type of response was indicated below or alongside the text of the questions (e.g. *yes/no* or *open*). Although the instrument may appear lengthy, the fact that the survey was completed on-line facilitated speedy completion of closed questions. Closed questions were also used to assist with the analysis of data. Respondents were able to complete the questionnaire in sections and hence did not need to complete the entire questionnaire in one sitting.

Publicity about the awards
1. Where did you first hear about the Commonwealth Education Good Practice Award?
    Respondents can tick more than one option
    ➢ Commonwealth Secretariat Website
    ➢ Publicity leaflet
    ➢ Word of mouth
    ➢ Direct communication with the Secretariat
    ➢ Other (specify)
2. Did the publicity material provide sufficient about the awards and their purpose? *(Yes/No)*
3. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects of the announcement of the awards:
    ➢ Clarity of information on judging criteria
    ➢ Amount of provided to prepare submissions
    ➢ Detail on the information that should be included in submissions
    ➢ Amount of detail allowed in submissions
    ➢ Clarity of guidelines for the preparation of submissions
    5 point rating scale ranging from very dissatisfied to very satisfied
4. Please rate the ease with which you were able to adhere to the instructions for the preparation of submissions. *4 point rating scale: very difficult to no difficulty experienced*
5. Which aspects of the submission format were most difficult to adhere to? (You may tick more than one option).
    ➢ Preparation of an Executive Summary (50 words)
    ➢ Project description (max 1500 words)
    ➢ Information on the implementing organisation
    ➢ Information on project budget
    ➢ Information on beneficiary/ target population
    ➢ Other (please specify). *Open*
6. How could the publicity material for the award be improved? *Open*

Motivation for submitting an application for the Awards
7. What motivated you to submit an application for the Award? *Open*
    8. Which of the following described your expectations of the Awards? *Respondents can select more than one option.*
    ➢ monetary award
    ➢ Possibility of attracting other donors to support your work
    ➢ Showcasing your organisation
    ➢ Drawing policy makers' attention to your work
    ➢ Other (please specify) *Open*

Post-application processes
9. Please rate your satisfaction with the following:
    ➤   Acknowledgement of receipt of application
    ➤   Indication on the success of your application/ nomination
    ➤   Feedback on the quality of your application
    5 point rating scale ranging from: very dissatisfied to very satisfied
10. Which of the following aspects of this phase of the awards process could be improved?
    ➤   Provision of reasons for submission not being short-listed
    ➤   Speed with which submissions processed
    ➤   Clarity of communication with organisations
    ➤   Clarity on the criteria used to assess submissions
    Respondents can select more than one option.

Selection of finalists and winners
11. Were you informed in a timely way that your organisation had been selected as a finalist? *Yes/No)*
12. Did you receive sufficient information on the following (tick if yes):
    ➤   16 CCEM and your attendance at sessions and related fora
    ➤   The format & duration of finalists' presentations to the adjudication panel
    ➤   Judging criteria
    13.   Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects of the logistical arrangements made for attendance at the 16 CCEM. *5 point rating scale.*
    ➤   Communication of travel arrangements
    ➤   Communication of visa requirements
    ➤   Assistance in obtaining visas for South Africa
    ➤   Air transportation
    ➤   Hotel accommodation
    ➤   Transport to and from airport
    ➤   Transport between hotel and conference venue
14. How could the management of logistics have been improved? *Open response*
15. Did you find it valuable to attend/ participate in the 16 CCEM? *Yes/No*
16. Please provide reasons for your response. *Open response*

Judging of finalists
17.   Please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of the judging of finalists (*5 point rating scale*):
    ➤   Communication of judging criteria
    ➤   Communication of the duration of the presentation and presentation requirements
    ➤   Feedback from adjudication panel
    ➤   Communication of the results
    ➤   Publicity given to the awards and finalists
18. How could this phase of the awards process be improved? *Open response*
19. Has being selected as a finalist for the awards been of any benefit to your organisation? *Yes/ No*
20. If YES (to question 19) Please indicate how it has been of benefit. *Open response*

General comments
20. Which aspects of the management of the EPBA do you feel were most successful or handled most efficiently?   *Open response*
21. Which aspects of the management of the awards could be improved? *Open response*
22. Would your organisation consider submitting an application for the next round of the awards? *Yes/No*