

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Development of a Guidebook for Education Initiatives in the Commonwealth

Background

One of the strengths and defining characteristics of the Commonwealth is the sharing of experiences based on common values. All Commonwealth countries have committed to meeting the Millennium Development Goals and to providing Education for All. Despite the commonality underlying these global goals, there is enormous diversity and innovation in the initiatives designed to help meet them. Even as Commonwealth countries accelerate to meet the goals, the differences in the rate of progress between countries continue. It is recognised that a 'one size fits all' model is not the best approach; however, there are many excellent good quality practices taking place that maybe applicable for the individual context of countries if the innovations are known and shared. There is a need to identify the most successful initiatives, and share them with other Commonwealth countries. This would allow all countries to benefit from more innovation, particularly in improving quality, and in making education more relevant, stimulating, participatory and inclusive.

If information about these initiatives is disseminated at all, sources are varied and inaccessible such as: country reports, academic journals, local newsletters and NGO pamphlets. While the [Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards](#) serve a vital purpose in drawing attention to some of the most exciting and successful activities, they cannot publicise more than a fraction of the initiatives in the entire Commonwealth, focus is mainly on primary and secondary education, and excludes the post-secondary education sector or initiatives by private organisations. There is therefore a need for another non-competitive way, to bring together more of the most effective initiatives in one, easily accessible guide.

To meet this need the Commonwealth Secretariat will publish a *Guidebook for Education Initiatives in the Commonwealth* (hereafter 'the guidebook'), and seeks consultancy services to research and write the publication. The guidebook will serve as a reference book for Commonwealth countries and will focus on quality education, innovative interventions and good practices including the use of technology. However, the book is intended for general use by all regional and district education offices, schools, colleges, technical and vocational training institutes, universities, teacher training institutes, research institutions, multi-lateral and non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders with an interest in education good practices and improving educational outcomes.

Aims and objectives

The overall aim is to make information about successful educational initiatives in Commonwealth countries available in a concise and easy-to-use format through the creation of a thematic 'guidebook'. The specific objectives are (i) to bring together good initiatives which improve teaching and learning in education in the Commonwealth; (ii) to provide a resource to advocate for greater attention to education quality for equitable growth and development, which will be cross-cutting themes running through the guidebook; and (iii) to showcase excellent education projects in the Commonwealth.

One immediate outcome is that the efficient exchange of best practices/initiatives enabled by the guidebook will provide policy makers with a wider range of contextualised examples of solutions to particular educational challenges. The focus on the outcomes of the initiatives will assist them in devising educational strategies based on demonstrable results, which will lead to a higher chance of success for the selected initiatives. Another immediate outcome is that policy makers will be provided with a contact point for them to find out

more detailed information. The opportunity to learn about effective practical implementation of the initiatives provided by the contacts will lead to better application of the initiatives.

These two intermediate outcomes will contribute to a better fit of practice to policy goals through evidence-based educational strategy and greater innovation in that strategy. The longer-term impact of this resource will be the continued sharing of best practices and experiences within and across regions through the Commonwealth Connect platform.

Scope

The guide will present information that can be used by ministries of education to enhance their effective running. It will also highlight key priorities facing governments and cover a range of interventions, policies and transferable good practices from across the Commonwealth. The following specific activities will be undertaken: i) communicating with Commonwealth ministries of education and other relevant bodies to identify successful policies, strategies and reform initiatives; ii) undertaking a review of the available literature to identify other successful initiatives in the Commonwealth; iii) collating details about these initiatives into a document to be known as the *Guidebook for Education Initiatives in the Commonwealth*; iii) undertaking a consultation exercise with stakeholders to ensure the usability and accuracy of the document, and amending it in light of the consultation outcomes.

The guidebook will use a consistent framework to present the information and initiatives, to ease comprehension and to enable cross-referencing between initiatives. The book will:

- include initiatives from as many Commonwealth countries as possible;
- group initiatives thematically, so that they can easily be found;
- cross-reference initiatives, so that connections can easily be made between different themes;
- provide a brief contextual analysis of each initiative, such that the relevance and impact of the background may be clearly understood; the analysis should include a short description of the education structure and situation in the country;
- identify the key features of each initiative, such that it could be easily replicated;
- describe what contribution each initiative makes towards quality and inclusion;
- identify what the outcomes were and how they were measured;
- describe the key challenges in implementing the initiative and how these were overcome;
- draw attention to initiatives supported by Commonwealth organisations by placing them in box-outs.

The initiatives will be arranged thematically (e.g. gender, adult education, TVET, multilingual, education in difficult circumstances etc), and cross-referenced (so that all initiatives at, for example, primary level are linked). The list of themes to be included will emerge as initiatives are submitted and will be finalised in consultation with the Commonwealth Secretariat. Every effort will be made to have at least one initiative from each Commonwealth country.

Since this will be the second publication on this subject, effort will be made not to reproduce Good practices that were published in the first publication of 2012.

Tasks

Task 1: Collection of information on good initiatives

The purpose of this task is to identify and collate information on as many key educational initiatives as possible within the Commonwealth. The main criteria for inclusion are that the initiatives are able to demonstrate success and that they contribute towards education quality and/or inclusion. Other desirable criteria include the ability to be replicated or adapted; innovation; a participatory approach; and the availability of reliable information about the initiative. An initiative by any agency can be included. A two-pronged methodology will be undertaken:

- 1) contact ministries of education and other relevant bodies (including but not limited to selected teacher training institutions, qualifications bodies, other relevant ministries, international organisations such as

Education International, UNICEF, UNESCO, and other non-governmental organisations) to invite submissions for the guidebook, using a questionnaire to be devised by the consultant; and

- 2) use existing knowledge bases to identify good initiatives and contact the originators for further information when necessary.

Task 2: Preparation of draft guidebook

The guidebook will be prepared in simple, concise English suitable for an international audience. Ease of use and accuracy of information are prime concerns. For each entry, the following information will be provided:

- Name of initiative
- Country
- Main theme addressed
- Other themes addressed
- Level of initiative (i.e. ECE/D, primary, secondary, higher/tertiary)
- Target beneficiaries
- Goal of initiative
- Summary of education system in country
- Statement of problem the initiative addresses
- Context
- Description of the initiative
- Implementation of the initiative: challenges and solutions
- Outcomes – what changed as a result of the initiative and how this was measured
- Advice for replication/adaptation
- Contact details, to include email, phone and postal address

Task 3: Consultation on draft guidebook

To ensure accuracy, the draft guidebook will be circulated by the consultant to all the contributors and to the Commonwealth Secretariat with a request that the contributors review and provide comments on the draft guidebook. Contributors will be asked for feedback on accuracy, readability and usefulness of the guidebook.

Task 4: Preparation of final guidebook

The consultants will amend the draft guidebook in the light of the comments made in the consultation and submit the guidebook to the Commonwealth Secretariat for review. The Commonwealth Secretariat reserves the right to request further amendments until the product is satisfactory.

Outputs

Inception Report. This report should be submitted for approval to the Commonwealth Secretariat at the end of the third week of implementation of the consultant services. The report will include the following:

- (i) a work plan and time schedule describing tasks and sub-tasks to be implemented;
- (ii) a list of documents to be consulted as part of the research on successful interventions;
- (iii) the questionnaire prepared to collect information;
- (iv) the contact made with ministries of education and other official bodies;
- (v) any issues related to the TOR.

Progress Report. A report describing the state of implementation of the TOR will be submitted for approval to the Commonwealth Secretariat within eight weeks of the approval of the Inception Report. This report will include all completed activities related to the implementation of the contract, achievements reached, substantial issues and recommendations (related to procedures, conduct of interviews, protocol format, etc.). The progress report will include the following:

- (i) results of the contact made with ministries of education and other official bodies;
- (ii) a summary of the number and type of interventions received to date and a list of further actions to be followed;

- (iii) any challenges found in the implementation of the consultancy and the steps to be taken to mitigate them.

Draft Commonwealth Education Guidebook, to be submitted for approval to the Commonwealth Secretariat within eight weeks of the approval of the Progress Report. The draft report is expected to be fully proof-read, and include all graphics etc to be included in the final copy.

Consultation Report, including the feedback from contributors and how the consultant has addressed them in the final draft to be submitted for approval within 8 weeks of the approval of the draft guidebook, and together with the final draft.

Final Commonwealth Education Guidebook, to be submitted to the Commonwealth Secretariat with the Consultation Report. Depending on the quality of the final report, the Secretariat may, within two weeks of submission, request further amendments to be made. In this eventuality, the requested amendments must be made within two weeks, after which the guidebook must be submitted again for approval.

Expected inputs and schedule of implementation

The consultancy is anticipated to be for a period of 60 working days spread over six months. For the performance of the duties enumerated under the Terms of Reference, the consultant will be paid an all-inclusive fee on approval of the final guidebook.

Deadlines on deliverables are as follows:

Deliverable	Deadline
Signing of Contract	
Submission of Inception Report	Within 3weeks
Approval of Inception Report	Within 2 weeks
Submission of Progress Report	Within 8 weeks
Approval of Progress Report	Within 2 weeks
Submission of Draft Guidebook	Within 8 weeks
Approval of Draft Guidebook	Within 2 weeks
Submission of Final Guidebook & Consultation Report	Within 8 weeks
Approval of Final Guidebook & Consultation Report	

Consultant's qualifications

The consultant(s) must be a citizen of a Commonwealth member country. The consultant(s) is expected to bring strong knowledge of educational good practices in a number of fields, and excellent research and report writing skills. The consultant must be able to demonstrate evidence of the skills, knowledge and experience detailed as below:

- A minimum of a degree (or equivalent experience) from an internationally recognised institution in Education or a closely related social science, with a preference for an advanced degree.
- Knowledge and work experience in educational research (in data collection instrument design, analysis of qualitative and quantitative data and report writing), preferably with a specialised expertise in good practices in education gained in a variety of fields, levels and socio-cultural contexts, with the ability to articulate clearly what constitutes success, and to analyse critically how practices may be adapted. This knowledge would ideally have been gained through both academic research and practical experience.
- Experience of writing similar publications combining research, analysis and report writing, and presenting the results in an accessible and engaging manner.
- Accurate written communication skills, with the ability to write fluently and concisely in plain English.
- Highly developed IT skills, with the ability to present information clearly.
- Ability to deal diplomatically and productively with a variety of stakeholders, including at ministerial level.
- Ability to produce high-quality work to tight deadlines with minimal supervision.