

Building for the Future

People are at the heart of development. Much of the Secretariat's work is therefore directed towards achieving greater equity of opportunity and better quality of life for people.

The development of human resources continues to be guided by the 1993 Commonwealth Working Group report, *Foundation for the Future*, which proposed strategies for improving the impact, effectiveness and sustainability of existing policy. In particular, it advocated a holistic approach involving five key strategies:

- ◆ more professionally managed government (PMG);
- ◆ partnerships between governments, NGOs and the private sector;
- ◆ priority for gender issues;
- ◆ appropriate use of technology; and
- ◆ innovation in the mobilisation of resources.

The report recommended applying these five strategies to the core elements of human resource development: education and training, primary health care, nutrition, population policies and employment.

The Secretariat promotes these strategies in two ways. First, it has initiated a series of high-level workshops in which senior government officials and other stakeholders are sensitised to the key strategies, and specific tools are developed to aid their implementation. Second, the Secretariat has applied the principles to its own human resource development programmes, both to lead by example and as a valuable technique for increasing their impact.

Initial workshops based on the strategies of *Foundation for the Future* involved senior officials from education ministries and examined the first key strategy of professionally managed government. As well as providing information and training to participants from across the Commonwealth, these workshops (in Malaysia and in Britain in July and October 1995 respectively) created the concept of a Professionally Managed Government Audit and developed an inspection list and toolkit. Following further work by a consultant in 1996, this practical device to assist countries in instituting improved PMG was published early in 1997 as *The Role of Professionally Managed Government: Action for Human Resource Development*.

Subsequent workshops focused on the second key strategy: promoting more effective partnerships between governments, NGOs and the private sector. A workshop in Botswana in July 1996 involved senior officials from education and health ministries and senior executives from NGOs. This meeting was itself an example of the close working relationship between the Secretariat, which brought in the government officers, and the Commonwealth Foundation, which brought in the NGO representatives. The Commonwealth Foundation's recently published *Non-Governmental Organisations: Guidelines for Good Policy and Practice* was used as a source of information and stimulus to the debate.



A report of the Botswana meeting, *Partnership Between Government and Non-Governmental Organisations: Basic Education and Primary Health Care*, was published in 1997. It contains practical recommendations for governments and NGOs on extending the scope and effectiveness of their joint work in human resource development.

A pan-Commonwealth workshop in India in December 1996, hosted by the Indian Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, marked a further step in the process of increasing the impact of the government-NGO-private sector partnership. It focused on the specific issues of quality assurance and resource mobilisation in the areas of education, training and the creation of employment opportunities. A further workshop on public-private sector partnerships in Jamaica in May 1997 focused on the key area of technical and vocational education and entrepreneurship training.

At the same time, the Secretariat has incorporated the essence of the key strategies into its own programmes of technical assistance and consensus-building in human resource development. This Report contains numerous examples of its efforts to promote good governance, the emphasis placed on encouraging gender equity, and the focus of the Commonwealth Science Council on appropriate technologies for environmentally sound, sustainable development.

Examples are also found in the following chapters on education and health, which are two of the main pillars on which national development is constructed. In both these areas, the Secretariat has emphasised encouraging multi-sectoral approaches, developing partnerships with NGOs, giving priority to women and girls and adopting the most appropriate technologies to meet local needs.

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