

Training to Enhance Skills

In order to help countries develop the skills they need for sustainable development, the Secretariat, through the CFTC, supports the training needs of member countries in a number of ways. Broadly, it offers training packages designed to help meet strategic human resource requirements, and assists local and regional institutions in improving their ability to offer relevant courses. It also provides opportunities for upgrading technical and vocational skills. Since mid-1995, the Secretariat has provided training to more than 9,000 middle- and top-level managers and officials in the public and private sectors through about 350 institutions, mainly in developing countries.



Training and teaching for future needs ... here Professor Shashi Kumar Gupta heads a department of environmental engineering in a Tanzanian college

The Secretariat's training programmes vary in scope. They include training-of-trainers programmes in specialist areas such as training needs analysis and quality and productivity improvement in the public sector, and programmes for trainer-motivators of entrepreneurs and information analysts. They work to build up institutions, for example by strengthening management development institutions which promote public sector reform (see page 43) and universities, and by running specialist post-graduate programmes. They also provide for the upgrading of technical and vocational skills for middle-level engineers, technologists and managers of industrial enterprises.

The Secretariat also supports in-country and regional training programmes on gender issues and on matters that address the needs of small states (see page 85).



Special programmes have been designed to improve the skills of women managers

Most of the Secretariat's training activities have been designed for the government sector, but training opportunities for the private sector and NGOs have also been expanded. Assistance for participants from the private sector has enabled them to attend training programmes that contribute to strengthening the liberalisation of the economic environment.

Institutional Capacity-building

The Secretariat encourages member countries to work towards becoming self-sufficient in the skills they need to build relevant education and training institutions into national or regional centres of excellence. In doing so, it assists in staff development, teacher training and networking.

Assistance has been given to training programmes for Commonwealth professional organisations and to regional networks of management institutions in Africa and South Asia for which the Secretariat has helped to obtain international donor support.

The Secretariat also supports training for the development of specific organisations and sectors in a country or region. Since 1995, for example, 16 managers from the public and private sectors have been trained as professional managers through the Masters in Business Administration programme in the South Pacific, and over 30 middle to senior public servants have been trained through the Masters in Public Sector Management programme in the West Indies.

Customised Masters Degree Programmes

With the support of the Secretariat, some institutes of higher learning are developing and running new postgraduate courses in priority fields.

The Secretariat has provided a combination of technical expertise, academic staff upgrading through academic exchange, short- and long-term external consultants and lecturers, and the guarantee of support for a minimum number of students to ensure the viability of these programmes for a number of years. It has also helped develop specialist materials for these programmes.



Malta Freeport has become one of the country's centres of excellence where recipients of CFTC awards train

The programmes are: Master of Business Administration, Africa University, Zimbabwe; Master of Science in Computer Science, National University of Science and Technology of Zimbabwe; Master of Science in Environmental Science, University of Botswana; Masters in Public Sector Management in Small States, University of the West Indies; Masters in Policy Studies, Southern Africa Regional Institute for Policy Studies; Diploma in Educational Planning and Management in Small States, University of Malta; Diploma in Human Resource Development and Management, Seychelles Institute of Management. The development of a Master of Science in Environmental Engineering programme has just been completed at the University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago.

The CFTC has supported 110 scholars in the above programmes in the two-year period since mid-1995.

Enhancing Industrial and Vocational Skills

The Commonwealth Industrial Training and Experience Programme (CITEP) promotes industrial expertise by helping to upgrade technical and vocational skills through training. In the two years since mid-1995, more than 200 technicians and technologists have had the opportunity to develop skills in advanced technologies and new manufacturing processes in such fields as CAD/CAM, CAE, maintenance engineering and machine and tool design.

Skills for Mozambique

The three-year Mozambique-Australia Human Resource Development Programme, which began in 1994, is funded by AusAID and managed on its behalf by the Secretariat. Since then, Mozambique staff from a number of fields have received training, mainly in health, agriculture, telecommunications and the English language.

Since Mozambique was admitted to Commonwealth membership in 1995, new programmes of assistance have been developed for it under the Commonwealth Capacity-Building Facility for Mozambique. With the increasing demand for proficiency in English, over 200 government officials are currently being taught the language in Maputo. Awards have also been given for 14 officials to attend specialist courses or seminars in other Commonwealth countries. Advice has been given on privatisation, and the Secretariat is providing short-term experts on public service reform. The National Assembly is developing links with other parliaments through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Skills Development for Women

Member governments and regional training institutions have asked the Secretariat to organise regional and in-country training in gender policy and strategy formulation, gender sensitisation and the elimination of gender stereotyping. The training programmes were designed for a wide range of professionals in government and NGOs.

Training programmes on gender policy planning have been developed in the past two years in the Africa and Caribbean regions. For example, short courses in related areas, for which the Secretariat provided partial support, were run at the Centre for Gender and Development Studies of the University of the West Indies, Jamaica, in June 1996. Programmes such as these have been developed for senior government policy-makers, directors of women's bureaux, officers responsible for women's desks in government and international agencies, and project officers in NGOs.

Special emphasis has been placed on improving the skills of women managers. The Secretariat supported participants for various workshops and training programmes which addressed the need to enhance the special role and skills of women, including one in Zimbabwe for senior African women managers and another in Sri Lanka for women managers in higher education, both in 1996. Training programmes that focus on economic empowerment for women as part of efforts to alleviate poverty have also been supported. The aim of many such programmes is to help create an environment for the establishment of efficient and effective credit schemes and networks for rural women.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMALL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

In the past few years, governments have emphasised promoting the growth of entrepreneurship in small- and medium-sized enterprises. In developing countries, such enterprises have increasingly contributed to substantial growth in employment. Providing entrepreneurship training in this sector also speeds the pace of industrial development.

The Secretariat has therefore organised training workshops for small enterprises as well as for developing entrepreneurs. Five pan-Commonwealth and regional training workshops have been held in the two years since mid-1995, along with other assistance to individual countries. Some of these workshops were aimed at enhancing the skills of those working in credit and income-generating enterprises for rural women and also developing skilled professionals who would work for the promotion of economic activities among women.