

Part I COUNTRY PROFILES

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Structure of guidebook

The *Guidebook to Education in the Commonwealth* is presented in two sections. The first section contains background information about the 31 countries that have submitted information about their education initiatives for inclusion in the guidebook. The second section of the publication provides reports on more than 60 education initiatives, with activity-specific, detailed information about:

- the theme of each initiative;
- key issues addressed;
- learners and other participants;
- goals, objectives, outputs and outcomes;¹
- how the initiative was implemented;
- any challenges faced and how these were resolved;
- advice for other Commonwealth countries considering a similar initiative; and
- contact details for the initiative, if more specific data is required.

1.2 Locations of initiatives



1.3 Background to country education systems

The information contained in this chapter provides a brief summary of the background, development and current education priorities of each of the 31 countries that have contributed to the guidebook. Where recent statistics for each of the contributing countries are available, those data are included in a table following each country description.

As can be noted from each of the country descriptions and data tables, a wide range of information sources have been used. Wherever possible, current available primary sources for each Commonwealth country government (annual reports, other government publications, official webpages, donor reports) have been used.

Commonwealth publications and websites have also provided useful information about countries and their education systems. Secondary sources, where appropriate and valid – such as regional education and training bodies and consortia – have allowed some data confirmation and cross-checking.

Many countries provided broad statistical data for this publication in response to a request by the Commonwealth Secretariat. This data includes the number of enrolments, institutions and teacher numbers across the four levels: pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary. Clearly these figures will provide only broad data, as they do not necessarily differentiate between, for example, *full-time equivalents* or *total staff employed* when listing teacher numbers. Similarly, some countries include pre-primary and primary enrolments in a single number when reporting such data. In some cases, schools for students with special needs have been included separately in primary and secondary schooling data; in others these data have not been provided. In addition, in terms of tertiary-level data, it is always difficult for participating countries to decide whether to include, for example, *adult and continuing education* facilities, institutions and enrolments in tertiary numbers in the tables. Similarly, some countries choose to list in their statistical records only the number of individual universities, while others list total number of campuses.

Where individual countries represented in the guidebook were unable to provide statistical data, this has been based on the information available from UNESCO's Institute of Statistics (UIS) searchable databases. However, as the UIS database is usually dependent upon country-supplied information, gaps in the UIS database will reflect corresponding gaps in individual country data.

Therefore, in acknowledging the limited precision of the statistical data included in the guidebook, its purpose nevertheless has been to provide participating countries with an indication of the relative size of their counterparts' education systems. In this way, comparisons and decisions about the relevance and/or transferability of specific initiatives can be made with a reasonable knowledge of systemic equivalence – or otherwise.