

Report on the Sixth Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF6)

24-28 November 2010 at Le-Meridien, Cochin Resort & Convention Centre (Kochi, Kerala), India

The Commonwealth of Learning's biennial Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning has grown to become a leading international conference on learning and development. Jointly organized by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) PCF6 brings the forum to India for the first time. The theme of PCF6 was: Access and Success in Learning: Global Development Perspectives. The conference provided an opportunity to share experience and expertise and to contribute to future policy and provision.

PCF6 as an international conference explored the contribution of open and distance learning to international development goals by opening up access to learning at every level. The practitioners, researchers, planners and policy makers in the fields of open and distance learning and development from over 70 countries participated in the conference. Participants were from the main Commonwealth, Asia and international institutions and agencies active in the field, including funding bodies and technology providers.

In its efforts to provide quality learning materials that reflect government's educational policy, latest pedagogical inputs, as well as learner needs, NIOS has taken up the task of revising its Secondary level course materials. In doing so NIOS has adopted a new approach which focuses on integrating subject knowledge with life skills. This has been done with a view to empower learners with both the ability to have sound subject proficiency as well as effective life skills that would enable them to negotiate vulnerable situations by making informed decisions.



This material was developed in year 2009-10 in collaboration with MHRD and UNFPA in a project mode to support the learners at secondary level.

As PCF6 was exclusively on open learning it was decided to present the learning of this NIOS-MHRD-UNFPA exercise. A brief report about the conference is presented below.



AEP at NIOS booked a stall at the PCF6 to showcase the materials produced under the programme. The stall showcased the print material, audio and video programmes and other advocacy materials. **Pledge Pole** was an interactive method of introducing the concept of Life Skills. One of the most popular activities in the exhibition, it helped in creating an enabling environment for the Panel Discussion held on 27th November, 2010.

Panel Discussion

Integrating Life Skills in Secondary Curriculum of National Institute of Open Schooling



Date and Time: November 27, 2010. 11.00 AM -12.30 PM



Life skills enhancement as an educational approach

- Concept and relevance in the current Indian context
- Rationale for integration in NIOS curriculum



Development of Life Skills Integrated Self Learning Materials

- Unique characteristics of the system and its learners
- Development Process of Self Learning Materials, including Advocacy
- Specific examples from the life skills integrated materials on learning objectives, content, and evaluation



Challenges and Way Forward



Questions and Discussion

Chair: Dr Jena, Chairman, NIOS

Speakers: Ms Asheema Singh, NIOS and Jaya, UNFPA

Discussant: Mr. Venkatesh Srinivasan, Assistant Representative, UNFPA

As part of AEP work plan NIOS was supposed to carryout sensitization and capacity building of the officials of Regional Centers and State Open schools of the states in which the programme had been carried out during 2010. Consequently Regional Director, Bhubaneswar and Secretary Rajasthan State Open Schools accompanied. This programme was very beneficial for them.

Lessons Learnt:

The idea of utilizing ICT to reach out to young people because of their familiarity with ICT has been a great learning lesson. The use of radio, website, SMS, and other such devices can be very effectively used in reaching out to the target group of National Institute of Open Schooling. The lesson learnt from Nambian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) in terms of selecting topics for production of Audio/Video Support programmes based on study conducted on the difficulty level of the answer sheets shall be very valuable.



I Pledge to improve