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# **Distance Education in Asia and the Pacific: Country Papers**

**A Study conducted by  
The national Institute of Multimedia Education, Japan**

**Director-General: Hidetoshi Kato  
Project Director: Suk-Ying Wong**



**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MULTIMEDIA EDUCATION**

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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,  
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**DISTANCE EDUCATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC:  
COUNTRY PAPERS**

**VOLUME III  
SINGAPORE - VIETNAM**

**A Study conducted by  
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## **Note by the Secretariat**

The present collection of country papers on Distance Education in the Asia and Pacific region is a detailed and wide-ranging study which confirms the wealth of resources available in this specific geographical area.

The collection complements a survey of resources related to distance learning in the same region. Both have been produced for UNESCO by the National Institute for Media Education, Japan.

This document links to other surveys on existing distance learning resources carried out by UNESCO in Africa, Latin America and on a worldwide basis. In these activities, our partner has been the International Centre for Distance Learning at the Open University, U.K.

At the UNESCO International Consultation on Higher Distance Learning, held at Deakin University, Victoria, Australia from 6-11 September 1987, great importance was attached to the efficient collection and dissemination of information and statistical data. Therefore, the various surveys constitute an effective response to that call for the sharing of resources.

Throughout its long involvement in distance education, UNESCO has accorded priority to components which must underpin the development of these systems of learning: clear policy-making, the pooling of resources, the necessity for a strong infrastructure of personnel to assure academic standards and the need to develop close linkages between higher distance education and the world of work.

If these priorities are observed, distance education can continue to evolve and expand through the design of innovative programmes, experimentation in the uses of advanced technologies and because of its capacity to attract new learners with extremely varied profiles and educational needs.

In view of these challenges, it is hoped that increased information on higher distance education resources, both human and material, will help strengthen the exchange of expertise in this field.

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## PREFACE

*Distance education in Asia and the Pacific has been 'booming' in the past few decades. In order to respond to increasing demand for highly trained human resources for socio-economic development in the countries in the region, the government of each and every nation has paid special attention to the possibilities of distance learning in higher education. Moreover, rapid technological innovations require continuing education even for university graduates.*

*Thanks to the contemporary Electronic revolution, w people who are in need of such educational opportunities can have relatively easy access to university teaching by means of broadcasting and telecommunication. It was within this context that the Asian Development Bank, in cooperation with the UNESCO regional office, initiated an intensive seminar on distance education in 1986, the outcome of which was compiled in two volumes.*

*The National Institute of Multimedia Education (NIME), with a mission of innovating higher education especially with utilization of various media, was more than happy to accept conducting the overall survey of distance education in the region when such a request came from UNESCO in 1990. Though we could work with our colleagues in the area only by correspondence, they were extremely cooperative and eager to participate to make this project successful. On behalf of the Institute, I must express my deepest gratitude and respect to all contributors, without whom this research could not be possible. At the same time, I appreciate the assistance and advice given by UNESCO, from both its headquarters in Paris and its regional office in Bangkok, with whom we have thoroughly enjoyed our collaboration. I also thank the International Centre for Distance Learning (ICDL) of the Open University in the United Kingdom who has provided helpful comments throughout the project. It is our pleasure and honor if this publication can serve to further advance distance education not only in the region but also in other parts of the world.*

Hidetoshi Kato  
Director-General  
National Institute of Multimedia  
Education, Japan

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, distance education has emerged as one of the most feasible modes of instruction that aims at bridging many of the educational objectives and practices between the formal and the non-formal sector. For the last decade, distance education has attracted educators and policy makers as a new measure of educational provision. Especially in Asia and the Pacific, distance education institutions and/or programmes have developed rapidly and played an important role. Despite its importance and wide scope of practice in many countries, not enough is known about distance education in this region.

In light of this, UNESCO and the National Institute of Multimedia Education (NIME), Japan have completed this project, "Distance Education in Asia and the Pacific to add to our knowledge of where distance education stands at the present time. We initiated the project by inviting experts to write a case study and to co-ordinate the gathering of questionnaires about distance education institutions in their countries. For various reasons, we could not survey the entire Asian and Pacific area, but through the responses collected here, perhaps a comprehensive picture of the region emerges. The resulting case studies are attributed to their individual authors, while the survey has been compiled by us based on the efforts of the country coordinators and those who completed the questionnaires. Our efforts are therefore presented in two parts. The first part contains the case studies outlining the growth and environment of distance education. The second part presents a compilation of the surveys covering distance education institutions throughout the region.

Regarding the surveys, a few methodological points should be noted. Our primary objective is to systematically organize and present the data based on the information supplied to us by each country. As such, the amount of detail varies. Furthermore, in most cases the entries have been proofread by the participants and some have been subsequently updated. Thus, the information included here is as current as possible. However, the process of compiling questionnaire responses runs the risk of discrepancies. Therefore, we apologize for any errors that might exist.

Our editing policy of the case studies has been directed to presenting a uniformity of style. Aiming at clarity and coherence, this has in some cases required the editing of length. Regardless, we have fully retained each author's individual viewpoints, and hope the integrity of their work remains intact. In addition, we have included all references and citation information provided by the authors, including those which refer to sources in languages other than English. Compiling international references presents a challenge of accuracy due to varying customs of bibliographic format. Interested readers may therefore wish to contact authors directly for more comprehensive citations.

This is only the beginning. We have much more to learn about distance education and its potential in the future. The information collected here will hopefully serve not only as a general reference for people unfamiliar with this innovative mode of learning, but will also inform and inspire those who are involved in planning and decision-making in distance education, as well as administrators, educators, and academics. This work is the result of a collaboration among many experts and practitioners in the field. We thank them for the research they have done and for sharing their knowledge and experience. As pioneers in a young and growing field, we have come far in expanding the horizons of conventional education. By taking a moment to reflect on the past and present of distance education, the insights we gain from sharing our experiences may spur us on to an auspicious and enlightened future.

*The Editorial Committee*  
National Institute of Multimedia  
Education (NIME), Japan



## SINGAPORE

*Gajaraj Dhanarajan*

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### THE NATIONAL CONTEXT FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

Singapore is a democratic Republic. It became a sovereign, independent Republic on August 9, 1965. Before that it was part of the British colonial empire till September 1963 and after that, a part of Malaysia. It is by all measures a healthy, functioning democracy that has been highly successful economically. Other than a highly skilled and talented population, the island nation of about two million people does not have any natural resources on which to base its economy. Manufacturing and trade are the two mainstays of the market economy and in the last two decades it has established itself as the fourth dragon after Japan, Korea and Taiwan.

The Republic has a parliamentary system of government. The head of state is the President, who is nominated and elected by parliament. The administration of the government is vested in the cabinet headed by a Prime Minister. The cabinet is responsible to parliament, which is unicameral with a membership that is unique as parliamentary practices go. It is made up of eighty-one elected members, six non-constituency members who are selected from candidates who stood for and lost in elections and another six nominated members selected by parliament to represent minority views. The present parliament was constituted in 1988 following a general election.

Parliament passes legislation, approves budgets, questions the administration, debates policy and safeguards the integrity and sovereignty of the state. The two arms of the state viz the judiciary and the executive operate under the ambit of the written constitution. The President who is the nominal head of the executive is supported by the cabinet whose members are appointed by him. The head of the cabinet is the Prime Minister. There are fifteen ministries, each headed by a Minister, that serve the executive. Collectively they are accountable to parliament. The Ministries that make the Singapore cabinet are: Communications, Community Development, Defense, Education, Environment, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Health, Home Affairs, Information and the Arts, Labour, Law, National Development, and Trade and Industry. The Minister and the Ministry of Education have responsibility and jurisdiction on all matters relating to policies and practices of education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

The Republic covers a territory of 620.5 square kilometers. There are also about fifty smaller outlying islands and reefs; but the bulk (99%) of the population lives on the main island.

The Singapore economy is mostly market driven. Natural resources are scarce and therefore the island depends on imports for virtually all its requirements including food, water, consumer goods, raw materials, capital goods and fuel. The island therefore must export on a sufficient scale to generate foreign exchange earnings to pay for the imports, and the volume of exports must grow if the population is to enjoy the current standards of living.

In 1990 the economy saw a growth of almost 8.5%. This growth was spearheaded by the manufacturing sector, with petroleum products, paint, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals

being the fastest. The financial and business services sector also expanded by about 15%, the commercial sector including hotels, restaurants, and entreport trade grew at about 8.5%, transport and communication at nearly 9% and the construction sector by about 7%. The contribution of primary production to the economy, given the island's location and size did not amount to much. In 1990 it was less than 0.5%.

Current development in human resources is geared primarily to meeting the manpower needs of the Republic and towards this end provisions for and the channeling of participants in education is carefully managed by a government that is extremely sensitive to its competitive edge in the international market place.

TABLE 1: The Manpower Situation in Singapore in 1986\*

Occupation Category	Total Number of Persons+
1. Clerical and related workers	180,600
2. Sales workers	155,600
3. Service workers	136,500
4. Production workers	411,000
5. Professional/Technical workers	126,400
6. Managenal staff	68,100
7. Agricultural workers	12,800
8. Others	57,900

\* Source: Economic Survey of Singapore, 1986.

+ To the nearest thousand.

Government derives its income through duties levied on a selective group of products, rates or tax on landed property, entertainment, hotel accommodation, income, profits and earnings. It also derives income from various licenses, sale of land and investments. In 1990 the total government revenue was SG \$16,425,000. In that year government expenditure was SG \$9,037,000. Of this SG \$1,791,000 or 19.8% was allocated to education. Besides direct government support for education there were also other sources of funding for worker training, retraining, and upgrading, supplied by industry, businesses, trade unions and voluntary agencies.

In 1990 the population of Singapore was 2,690,100. It is basically a Chinese society with the non-Chinese races making up 22.3% of the population. The male to female ratio is roughly 1:1. Singapore is aging albeit slowly. Of the 2.6 million people about 31% are under nineteen and 9% above sixty. The remaining 60% are the productive part of the population. The literacy rate in Singapore is among the highest in South East Asia. A large proportion of the population has the capacity to use at least one of the four official languages at more than functional levels.

### *Language of Instruction*

Singapore has four official languages. These are English, Chinese (Mandarin), Malay and Tamil. All four are also used for social, commercial and educational purposes as befits a multi-ethnic and cultural society. However, for pragmatic reasons academic instruction is

provided only in English at the tertiary level, in English and Mandarin at the upper secondary school level and in all four languages at the primary school level. Separate schools are established for each language stream. Children are given the choice of instruction at the primary level and in a society driven by market forces, inevitably English and Chinese are the most popular.

### *Education System*

Singapore places a high premium on education. It is also a much debated political issue. The nation invests a substantial portion of its resources on educational activities. It is a vehicle for nation building. There is available today compulsory primary education and almost universal access to secondary education, at no or low cost. Access to higher education is selective and merit based.

There are, currently, 200 primary schools, 129 secondary schools, fourteen junior colleges and four centralized pre-university institutions in the country. The total enrollment in these schools was about 460,000 in 1990 and serving these half a million students are about 20,000 teachers. Besides these, some 17,000 young people attend full time training at the colleges and associated centres of the Vocational and Industrial Training Board.

Before children enter formal schooling on or just after their sixth birthday, many would have enrolled in kindergartens in courses that would vary from one to two years.

Formal primary education begins when a child is six years old. This phase of schooling lasts for six years. The curriculum is broad based. Literacy and numeracy are emphasized, as is moral education. The curriculum is common to all schools and achievement is measured by a Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). On the basis of performance in this examination, streaming into secondary school takes place.

Secondary education has three streams. Performance at the PSLE will determine the stream in which a student is placed. The three streams are Special, Express and Normal. Special and Express students prepare for the Singapore School Certificate Examination in four years. Students in the Normal stream take four years to do an ordinary level examination and if successful are allowed to proceed to a fifth year for the Singapore School Certificate Examination.

Successful completion of secondary education is a ticket to pre-university studies. Competition is extremely tough in this sector. Once again two options are available. High achievers can look forward to a two year programme in one of the fourteen junior colleges and the others will have to compete for a place in one of four centralized institutes where they will take three years to complete the pre-university courses. Both two and three year cohorts sit for the Singapore Advanced Level Examination. Students who perform well in these examinations compete for places in the two universities of the nation.

There are other post secondary, non university educational opportunities available to young people. Pupils interested in pursuing technical and vocational skills can continue their post primary studies in technical schools, which also have a five year curriculum leading up to technical certification. Those who do not wish, or fail, to enter pre-university programmes can seek admissions in the four polytechnics of the nation. The polytechnics offer three year programmes leading up to diploma level qualifications in business, technology and other engineering fields.

Teacher education in Singapore is provided by the Institute of Education and the College of Physical Education. Both these separate entities were merged in 1991 to become the National Institute of Education. This is an independent establishment under the umbrella of one of the universities in the Republic. The student population of the National Institute of Education in 1990 was 3,586.

Technical education at the diploma level is provided by four polytechnics. They are the Singapore Polytechnic, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Temasek Polytechnic and the Nanyang Polytechnic. The first is the oldest and the last the youngest. In 1990 some 16,000 students were studying a variety of courses in these institutions.

There are two universities in Singapore. The first and the oldest is the National University of Singapore. Its history dates back to 1905; the second is the Nanyang Technological Institute which was set up in 1981. Together the two institutions cater to undergraduate and postgraduate studies. In 1990 there were some 24,000 students studying in these two institutions.

TABLE 2: Enrollments in Educational Institutions in 1990

Type of Institution	Enrollment
Primary	257,757
Secondary	189,756
Vocational	026,468
Crafts	002,634
Tertiary	043,413

Singapore is well provided with communication infrastructure for internal and external linkages. It is a hub for regional air and sea services. Road and rail services link the various parts of the island nation effectively and efficiently. There are good public transport facilities. Postal services operated by the government are efficient and in recent times courier and mail services by proprietorial companies have been added to this provision. The telecommunication services are efficient. Penetration of telephones into the population is among the highest in the world. In 1990 an estimated 1,000,000 telephone lines served the population with about thirty-seven telephones per 100 people. There are more than 319,000 pagers and another 45,000 sets of mobile telephones. Facsimile transmission facilities are also increasingly popular. Advanced interactive videotext systems are being put in place as well.

The mass media includes eight daily newspapers, nine radio channels, and three television channels. Ownership of television, video tape recorders and radio receivers is very high. Some 600 licensed printing establishments service the nation.

## **HISTORY AND BACKGROUND**

The level of current educational provision in Singapore is now very high. Adult education opportunities are also extensive. Given the compact size of the territory, ease of

communication, and public provision for training and re-skilling, participation rates in these programmes are also among the highest in Asia. All of these activities are mostly supported by public funds. They have been and are being conducted in traditional style, which by and large fits with the perception of people on matters of education.

Until very recently, educational planners in Singapore did not see a need to make provision for either an open or distance education system for the island. All levels of education were easily available to the population, and drop-out rates in schools were minimal due to an efficient streaming system that placed individuals in channels appropriate to their demonstrable abilities, therefore access to self-paced distance education was not necessary.

While there has been a lack of distance education provisions through the public sector, the private sector has been active in facilitating self-paced learning for a very long time. The history of proprietorial distance education goes back to the late 1940's in Singapore. At least two major business houses have been involved in providing correspondence tuition for the University of London (external) degree programmes in Law, Arts, Economics, Divinity, Mathematics, Statistics and English. Home study courses by off-shore organisations using Singapore agents have also been available to Singaporeans, with emphasis on career, technical and vocational fields. Most of these programmes would not be considered as distance education as defined in this study, though. In addition, statistics are generally not available or difficult to come by because of the business nature of such provision. However the existence and survival of such businesses over a fifty year period seems to indicate a sustained interest by the population for such provisions.

From the mid-eighties onwards a new kind of distance education provider has emerged in Singapore. Driven by economic necessities and a perception of market opportunities, a number of British and Australian universities have been delivering their courses in Singapore using self-paced learning materials. These materials were mostly driven by print but they also contained audio and video elements and correspondence tuition. Occasionally tutorial support was also provided by the institutions using local or foreign academics. The fields of study were limited to areas such as Business Studies and Arts. Levels of study were at the first degree level except in Business where MBA programmes were available. In 1990 more than a dozen universities and polytechnics have been active. Some of them are the Universities of Warwick, Hull, Starthclyde, Brunel and Cranfield from the United Kingdom; and the Universities of Macquarrie, Southern Queensland, Edith Cowan and Charles Sturt from Australia. Student and course statistics are not available for these initiatives.

Concerned over the proliferation of distance education activities by overseas tertiary institutions and sensitive to the learning needs of its young adults, the Government of Singapore embarked on two major distance education initiatives in 1989. The first involves the training of working adults in basic numeracy, literacy, management and supervisory skills. The National Productivity Board is the home of this initiative. The programme is called Fast Forward and Learning. The second involves the setting up of the Singapore Open University. The planning of the University has been vested in the Ministry of Education.

The National Productivity Board of Singapore has the mandate and responsibility to improve the intellect, talent, skills and enhance the productivity of Singapore workers, supervisors, managers, industries and businesses. Set up by the Government of Singapore in 1972, the Board undertakes the task of improving the knowledge and skills of workers to prepare them for higher skilled and more value added jobs. The Singapore workforce is

made up of about 1.3 million workers of various educational levels. Table 3 captures the educational profile of the Singapore workforce in 1986.

TABLE 3: Educational Profile of Workforce, 1986

<u>Qualification</u>	<u>Percent of Workforce</u>
Below Secondary	52.5
Secondary	30.5
Above Secondary	17.0

Source: Labour Force Survey, Singapore.

Worker improvement is conducted through short courses in specialized institutions, the Vocational and Industrial Training Board, specialized institutions in collaboration with foreign technical institutions and companies, and through the Board's own training section. Some of the major initiatives have gone by the names of MOST (Modular Skills Training Programme), BEST (Basic Education for Skill Training), and WISE (Worker Education through Secondary Education). All of these programmes are classroom based. In order to assist people who have difficulty attending classroom instruction for one reason or another, Fast Forward and Learning was developed. Currently some four self-paced learning courses are offered via television.

Encouraged by the role of open universities in a number of countries, the Government of Singapore announced the start of the Singapore Open University (SOU) in mid-1991. The SOU will be designed to "give a second chance to working adults who have missed out on a degree bearing education earlier in life and who now find it difficult to give up their jobs in order to study full time." The SOU will have the same status as other universities in the territory with its own autonomy and government. The proposed start up date of the university was expected to be 1993.

## **THE LEGAL STATUS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

The National Productivity Board where the Fast Forward and Learning project is located is a semi government, self governing autonomous body. Its legal status is protected by an Act of Parliament. All of the training activities it undertakes has the support of not only government but also the business and industrial sector of Singapore. The Singapore Open University when it is set up will have necessary legislation in place, giving it the same status as the other two degree granting institutions of higher learning in Singapore, viz., the National University of Singapore and the Nanyang Institute of Technology. Universities in Singapore, similar to their counterparts in other parts of the Commonwealth of Nations are basically self governing autonomous agencies permitted by law to develop the rules and regulations governing their behavior.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SITUATION**

### *Aims and Objectives of Distance Education*

Since the Singapore Open University is still in its planning stage, the rest of the paper will describe the development of the Fast Forward and Learning project of the National Productivity Board and indicate the planning directions of the Singapore Open University.

The Fast Forward and Learning project has three main objectives: to promote the economic development of Singapore through worker education; encourage life-long learning; and build a cohesive, united and articulate society.

The Singapore Open University is expected to fulfill the national aims of providing a second change for intellectual or career development to all those who missed out on higher education for one reason or another. When the University is established, more specific short and long term objectives can be expected to emerge.

### *Control, Organization and Management*

The Fast Forward and Learning project is located at the National Productivity Board. Its head is the Director of the project. The Director reports to the Minister of Trade through the Board of Directors who manage the affairs of the National Productivity Board. The Board of Directors is composed of representatives from government, industry, chambers of commerce, business, and academia.

The proposed Singapore Open University will report to government through the Minister of Education. In fact recent press reports in Singapore indicate that one of the two State Ministers of Education will be the Vice Chancellor of the University. Vice Chancellors are normally the chief executives of Universities in Singapore. The Vice Chancellor will report to the Council of the University which is also the supreme policy making body of the Institution. Council is made up of academics, civil servants and community leaders. Academic programmes, regulations, rules and practice are formulated and established by the Academic Board of the Institution which is also called the Senate. The structure of the SOU has not been established yet.

### *Financing Distance Education*

The Fast Forward and Learning project is funded by development grants from the government through its various worker training and reskilling schemes. Approximately US \$10 million was spent on the project in 1990. The money was used for the development of the materials and for the support of project personnel. Indirect costs such as salaries of core personnel, space, communication, travel, stationary etc. is paid for by the National Productivity Board.

The Singapore Open University is expected to be funded by the government of Singapore. No figures have been published yet to indicate the level of funding.

### Geographical Coverage

Both the Fast Forward and Learning project and the proposed Singapore Open University are meant for Singapore nationals and therefore the coverage of the programmes is confined to the territories of Singapore.

### *Instructional Systems*

The Fast Forward and Learning programme is video driven. Accompanying the video are printed, audio and audio graphic materials, as well as an intense tutorial support system. Tutors are assigned to students and they work with them at sites as diverse as factory floors and community halls. Tutors are trained and provided with instructional material for classroom environments. Assessment is essentially formative. Learning materials are developed by the use of contract developers who follow the curricula and instructional design of the project managers.

The Singapore Open University is expected to be a secondary rather than a primary producer and user of learning materials. Initial plans seemed to indicate the acquisition of course materials from the British Open University en bloc and deliver them in Singapore with minor adaptation. There is an indication that the University will, however, design its own programmes and not use the British system of examinations and awards.

### *Research Activities in Distance Education*

To date there is no evidence to indicate any research activities in the field.

### *Enrollment in Distance Education*

Since the start of the Fast Forward and Learning project some 15,000 workers have gone through the system. Annually some 2,500 new students register in the programmes. To date about 4,000 students have graduated. It is expected to graduate at least 2000 students every year during the next few years. Student surveys indicate that about 80% of the students are aged between twenty-one and forty years old, less than 1 % is below twenty and not more than 2% above fifty. Regarding occupation, at least 50% are either professionals or administrators and about 13% are in production and manufacturing. The balance are distributed in a variety of trades and skills. The Singapore Open University expects to enroll students above twenty-one years of age.

### *International Affiliation*

No international affiliations have been registered yet.



### Growth and Expansion

The National Productivity Board is expected to expand its worker education programmes. Distance education or self-paced learning through the use of communication technologies can be expected to be used extensively. Current programmes are expected to double in the next few years. The Singapore Open University proposes to enroll about a thousand students a year.

### *Problems and Issues*

It is difficult to make predictions about something as new as distance delivery of knowledge in a compact and educationally well provided society like Singapore. Challenges that the systems will face will include learner acceptance of this mode of learning, staffing and management.

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Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa.

*Claire Matthewson*

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The focus of this paper is wholly on USP and the distance education which it has developed to serve twelve Pacific countries lying within the area extending approximately W. 155° - E. 150° longitude, S. 25° - N. 17° latitude. These are the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa.

USP is a regional university and, as such, a type rare in the international community. It is regional not just in outlook, programmes or staff but in its operational structure: financial, physical, political and academic. USP is owned by twelve Pacific countries which, as proprietors, exercise collective governance.

The point to be made at the outset, therefore, is that USP does not only exist, like all institutions, within a broader, regional context; it is, more importantly, the region's planned creation, an institution *of* it, as a legally established entity.

USP, after two years of formal operation, was established by Royal Charter in March 1970 in accordance with the wishes of eleven island states, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati and Tuvalu (formerly Gilbert and Ellice Islands), Nauru, Niue, Solomon Islands (formerly British Solomon Islands Protectorate), Tokelau, Tonga, Vanuatu (formerly New Hebrides) and Western Samoa. In 1991, the Marshall Islands joined the USP consortium, thus extending the University's membership to twelve countries. The major part of its recurrent budget is provided by its twelve regional proprietors. It maintains two Campuses (in Fiji and Western Samoa), two Complexes (in Vanuatu and Tonga), and ten in-country Extension Centres. The land and these physical facilities are provided to the regional entity by each of the respective member governments.

Its student body is largely regional - Polynesian, Melanesian, Micronesian and Indian - and, in the main, determined by government scholarship systems. By 1985, 60% of its staff were regional citizens.

From its inception, the University was conceived as a dual-mode teacher and, as such, has pioneered in the field of distance education delivery.

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

All member countries, with the exception of the Republic of Nauru, have aid-dependent or at least aid-augmented economies. Sources, levels and applications of bi-lateral aid vary from country to country and even from time to time.

TABLE 1: Income and Percentage (%) Education Expenditure

Member State	GDP per capita (AS)	Education % of Budget 1990
Fiji	2440	16.2
Solomon Islands	790	7.2
Western Samoa	901	11.0
Vanuatu	1266	20.0
Tonga	865	17.9
Kiribati	489	18.4
Cook Islands	1822	10.0
Nauru	N/A.	70
Tuvalu	450	16.8
Niue	1490	9.0
Tokelau	N/A.	22.3

Source for Column 1: *South Pacific Economies Statistical Seminary*. The dates for GDP range from 1983 to 1986.

It is not possible, on the basis of publicly available data, to separate out the distance education percentage of the respective national budgets from their overall education expenditure. The percentage Education Vote does include each country's contribution to the USP recurrent budget, but this in turn includes undifferentiated funding for the aggregated FTES of both on-campus and distance students. Moreover, separate from some of the percentages cited in some countries, there is varying and indirect external support of distance education by way of bi-lateral aid (funding for local tutors, third country scholarships and equipment); employer assistance with fees; and professional promotion incentives.

TABLE 2: Current Development at Senior Secondary School Level

Member State	Schools with Form 6 (yr 12)	Schools with Form 7 (yr 13)
Fiji	82	28
Solomon Islands	4	-
Western Samoa	18	1 (1)
Vanuatu	2	1 (2)
Tonga	14	2
Kiribati	3	1 (3)
Cook Islands	3	1 (3)
Nauru	1 (4)	-
Tuvalu	-	-
Niue	-	-
Tokelau	-	-

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1. Offered by National University of Samoa, using some adapted USP Extension materials
2. USP Extension Programme based at USP Extension Centre
3. USP Extension Programme based in secondary school
4. Available, but DO students enrolled in 1991

Tables I and 2: 1989 Data from *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific*

TABLE 3: Ethnic Composition by Region

	Population (000)	Major Ethnic Group(s)	Density Pop. Per Km2
Fiji	727	Melanesian, Indian	39
Solomon Islands	314	Melanesian	10
Western Samoa	163	Polynesian	53
Vanuatu	154,7	Melanesian	9
Tonga	103	Polynesian	146
Kiribati	68	Micronesian	88
Cook Islands	17,9	Polynesian	74
Nauru	8,8	Micronesian	387
Tuvalu	9	Polynesian	283
Niue	2	Polynesian	10
Tokelau	1,6	Polynesian	-

TABLE 4: Life Expectancy Rate by Country

	Live Births per 1000	Deaths per 1000	Infant mortality	Annual growth %
Fiji	25,9	5,0	26,0	1,1
Solomon Islands	43,8	-	72,0	3,3
Western Samoa	32,8	7,0	49,0	0,6
(figures only for Samoa)				
Vanuatu	40	7,5	53,0	3,3
Tonga	30,4	7,2	-	3,9
Kiribati	32,9	12,9	107,0	-0,3
Cook Islands	23,7	4,9	24,7	1,1
Nauru	-	-	-	1,5*
Tuvalu	-	-	-	12,5 (1989/p)
Niue	25.2 (1988)	6.4 (1988)	-	11,3 (1989)
Tokelau	-	-	-	-

\* Figure taken from United Nations Population Chart 1990 (revised)

TABLE 5: 1990 Data from United Nations Population Chart

	Life Expectancy at birth 0 - 4    65 +	Pop %	Pop %
Melanesia (includes Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu)	46	15	3
Micronesia (includes Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru)	65	12	4
Polynesia (includes Cook Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Western Samoa, Niue, Tokelau)	71	15	4

The linguistic profile of the USP region is complex. The estimated number of languages in current use is approximately 265.

*Cook Islands* - The students are generally bilingual, speaking Cook Islands Maori and English. (Cook Islands people hold New Zealand citizenship.) Schools are taught in both languages.

*Fiji* - The Bauan dialect is the most widely used of the Fijian tongues. The majority of Indians speak Hindi. English is the official language, however.

*Kiribati* - English is the language of official communication but the Kiribati language, a Micronesian dialect, is the lingua franca.

*Marshall Islands* - Marshallese is the official language, belonging to the Malayo-Polynesian language family. Quite distinct or different dialects are spoken on different islands. English, because of United States administration, is widely spoken also.

*Nauru* - Nauruan is the local language, widely spoken. As a written language, it has lost its currency. English is used for all written communication.

*Niue* - Niue students are generally bilingual, speaking Niuean (which is a Polynesian language closely related to Tongan and Samoan) and English (because of close ties with New Zealand and their dual-citizenship).

*Solomon Islands* - Although English is the official language, the lingua franca is Pidgin. Approximately 87 different dialects are spoken. There is no common vernacular.

*Tokelau* - Tokelauans speak a language similar to Samoan and Tuvaluan. English is taught as a second language.

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*Tonga* - Tongan, universally spoken, is a dialect of Polynesian. English is also spoken generally as a second language.

*Tuvalu* - Tuvaluan is a Polynesian tongue, similar to Samoan. On the island of Nui, a Gilbertese dialect is spoken. English is also used.

*Vanuatu* - The national language is Bislama, Vanuatu Pidgin. The official languages are Bislama, English and French. It is estimated, however, that approximately 115 languages are spoken in Vanuatu. Post primary schools are Anglophone or Francophone.

*Western Samoa* - The national language is Samoan, a Polynesian tongue. Although English is widely spoken and the official language in the Public Service and commercial sections, rural and older Samoans do not usually speak it well.

The education systems of USP's twelve member countries are generally separate, different and autonomous. Preceding a brief outline of each, however, some random points of interest can be made as follows:

The education systems tend to reflect colonial/missionary history. This means that a British derived model is prevalent; that Nauru, Vanuatu and the Marshall islands are rendered unique, in different ways, within the consortium of countries.

The Marshall Islands for historical reasons will be the sole provider to USP of students educated within a North American model (Grades one through twelve, curricula and standards, and a September - June teaching year). Vanuatu, once governed by both Britain and France, administers two quite separate education systems: an English-based model and a French-based model. Nauru, from former association with Australia as one of its Trustees, alone within the region follows the State of Victoria curriculum and assessment.

Some member countries' systems have had common external assessments such as the New Zealand School Certificate Examination (Form five or Year eleven), and the New Zealand University Entrance Examination (Form six or Year twelve). Some currently share subscription to the New Zealand Bursary Programme (Form seven or Year thirteen).

Since the abolition of the University Entrance Examination within New Zealand, countries which formerly used it have adopted either the replacement Sixth Form Certificate model or the Pacific Senior School Certificate, an assessment designed specifically for the region's schools. Fiji as one exception has developed its own National Sixth Form assessment (the Fiji Leaving Certificate).

The South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA) has been established as a regional body, providing professional consultancies to governments on assessment matters and overall standards monitoring/moderation for the south and central Pacific.

In Fiji, education is not compulsory but 98 % of primary age children attend school. Education is free or partly free, with remission of fees for low income families. In 1985, there were 668 primary schools, 139 secondary schools and 42 technical/vocational institutions. The majority of schools are government supported in some way but are committee-run, not state schools. Tertiary institutions include the Fiji Institute of

Technology, the Fiji School of Medicine, the Pacific Theological College, the Fiji College of Agriculture, Fulton Missionary Teachers College, Fiji School of Nursing, Fiji College of Advanced Education, Lautoka Teachers College, the School of Maritime Studies and the Telecommunications Training Centre.

In the Solomon Islands, approximately two-thirds of children have access to schooling. There are 423 primary schools run by Provincial Assemblies and fifty-four run by the churches. Provincial Secondary Schools, of which there are twelve, offer vocational training; National Secondary Schools, of which there are eight, offer academic training (in four this extends to Form six). Tertiary institutions include the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education, the Honiara Technical Institute and the Telecommunications Training Centre.

In Western Samoa, a tripartite system of primary, intermediate and secondary schools operates in Western Samoa. Instruction within the primary school is given in Samoan. Tertiary institutions include the Technical Institute, the Primary Teachers College, the Secondary Teachers College and the National University of Samoa. The last provides the only local Form seven or Year thirteen education and also offers degree programmes.

In Vanuatu, in 1984, there were 140 primary and seven secondary schools (English), and 104 primary and three secondary schools (French). The national language, however, is Bislama/Bichelamar. Tertiary institutions include a School of Nursing, and an Agriculture College. A Teachers Education Centre within the Vanuatu Institute of Education provides training for primary school teachers, using both English and French as the media of instruction. Secondary teachers are trained overseas. The Vanuatu Technical Institute is predominantly a French-language institution.

Tonga's education is compulsory at primary level and is provided free between the ages of six to fourteen. Primary education has been compulsory in Tonga since 1876. Of the 118 primary schools (1986), 100 are government schools. Tertiary institutions include the Institute for Vocational Education and Training, the Maritime Polytechnical Institute, the Teachers College, Queen Salote School of Nursing, the Tonga Police Training School, Sia'atoutai and Pierson Theological Colleges, Mango Agriculture College, a Rural Training Centre for men and a Technical College for women. The Atenisi Institute confers degrees. In Kiribati, government policy is the provision of compulsory and free education from Classes One through Seven (primary). There are 110 government primary schools and six secondary schools (three of which offer Form Six and one of which offers Form Seven). Tertiary institutions include the Tarawa Teachers College, Tarawa Technical Institute, a Marine Training School and a Theological College.

On Cook Islands, education has been compulsory and free between the ages of six to fifteen since 1966. Schools use both English and Maori as the language of instruction. There are thirty-eight schools, including nine colleges, twenty-six primary schools and a Teachers College. Institutions are government, Roman Catholic and Seventh-day Adventist Mission operated.

In Nauru, education is compulsory and free between the ages of six to sixteen. Government schools include five infant schools, two primary and one secondary. Church schools number one of each category. English is used as the language of instruction (except in the Location School for children of the Phosphate Company workers). An Australian curriculum is followed and selected children are sent to Australia and New Zealand from the upper primary level for further education. A Trade School offers vocational training.

Absenteeism at all levels is high. Most tertiary level students study in Australia, although some go to Papua New Guinea, Fiji and New Zealand.

In Niue, education is compulsory and free between the ages of five to fourteen. In 1983, there were seven primary schools and one secondary school. All are Government institutions. At Form Seven and tertiary levels, students go mainly to New Zealand, although some go to the Solomon Islands and Fiji.

In Tokelau, primary education is available to all children and is New Zealand assisted. Attendance is almost 100% and schooling is free. Children generally attend primary school from the ages of five to fifteen. Education is aimed at preparing children for life in Tokelau or a career in New Zealand (of which Tokelau is a non self-governing territory).

Communication systems - their efficiency/non-efficiency and even their existence/non-existence - are the most important (because problematical) features of distance education in the Pacific. In its regional endeavours to bridge teacher/learner distance, USP runs the gamut of all system and policy obstacles in each of the countries. Communication services (including transport systems) are critical features of distance education in the Pacific region. Services which may be taken for granted in other regions - as being comprehensive, reliable, affordable and frequent - cannot be taken for granted even on a weekly basis. Given the immutable vastness of the student catchment area and the multiplicity of service providers (both national and international), the challenges of communications and transport abate neither with time nor money.

Between the Campuses, Complexes and Centres, communication and information transfer is effected mainly by USPNET (using INTELSAT), facsimile, telephone, and mailbags.

USPNET: USP pioneered the use of satellite technology for educational support, beginning in 1972 on ATS-1. This was a PEACESAT enterprise, in which USP's participation was assisted by NASA, the Carnegie Corporation and USAID. After the gradual demise of ATS-1 between 1981-85 and some years of preparatory negotiation, USPNET was re-established on INTELSAT in 1986, first under the Project Share agreement and later with major support from Cable and Wireless Public Ltd (Hong Kong).

Currently, USPNET connects ten of the twelve member countries. Five Centres have direct access to the satellite space segment: Tonga, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Fiji and the Cook Islands. (The Kiribati Centre, formerly part of USPNET, was disconnected in 1989 due to local charging policies which could not be afforded.) Five other countries access USPNET on HF Radio relay: Nauru, Niue, Tuvalu, Western Samoa and Tokelau. International carriers supporting the network are Cable and Wireless Public Ltd, Fiji International Telecommunications Ltd (FINTEL) and Telecom New Zealand. The national carriers which facilitate the ground station services are Telecom Cook Islands, Fiji Post and Telegraph, Solomon Islands Telekom, Tonga Telecommunications Commission and Telecom Vanuatu. All of these autonomous providers are parties to the network agreement with USP. Any changes to contract conditions would require re-negotiation with each party.

The network is heavily used for administrative purposes, on a schedule of weekly meetings in specific areas: Extension Studies, Continuing Education, mailbag despatch and receipt checks, and Directorate sessions with Centre Directors. It is used regularly but less heavily for regional tutorials. As a half-duplex system, with often poor quality reception



from the HF Centres, it is not overwhelmingly attractive to many members of academic teaching staff.

Being a dedicated network, USPNET is also available for point-to-point communication at any time of the week between scheduled meetings/classes. The system's virtues are undeniable, technically linking staff with staff and staff with students. It maintains in addition a sense of community within constituent isolation which might otherwise be overwhelming. Without it, USP would be bereft, in both practical and morale terms.

Without gainsaying this, it must be noted, however, that USPNET currently gives cause for much concern. This has both technical and political bases. Matters of concern include the following:

The current USPNET agreement expires in 1992. Under it, the national carriers of five member countries and three international carriers agreed to provide, respectively, ground station services and space segment access. Since the agreement was forged, however, several providers have become privatised or corporatised. USP cannot be certain, therefore, that the present arrangements will be able to continue beyond 1992, or will continue at a new cost that could be afforded. It is hoped that the 'loss' of Kiribati will not prove to be a precedent.

Between the local ground stations and the USP Centres, use of local P&T lines is necessary. These vary in reliability and local maintenance. Centres can be off the network for weeks at a time. In the five countries where ground station services have not been made available to USPNET, the reasons are either technical or a matter of local policy. The HF radio option adopted for these countries is certainly better than nothing but frequently unsatisfactory. USPNET's greatest need is for full duplex, interactive facilities. Given that the present generous concessional rates for a half-duplex system are all that can be afforded, pricing policies for full facilities are likely to be prohibitive.

Facsimile services between the main campus and the regional Centres became comprehensive during 1991. (Until then, the lack of available circuits in some countries had delayed connection). Facsimile is very heavily used for communication between Extension Services and its outlying staff, taking up a considerable proportion of two Communication Assistants' time. Services are by and large reliable but not wholly so. Three countries in particular experience occasional transfer-loss (Vanuatu, Western Samoa and Kiribati). Local charging policies relating to international transmission (which all facsimiles are from USP Centres) precludes frequent use by the Kiribati staff. In two countries, the Centre telephone and the facsimile machine must share the same circuit.

Telephone facilities are comprehensively available between the main campus and the Centres but are not so heavily used as facsimile facilities. This relates not only to the often detailed nature of information to be conveyed but also to the unreliable quality of voice-circuits, and to voice send/receive delays.

The system of USP mailbags was introduced in 1976 as the more reliable alternative to normal postal and air freight services. The mailbags to and from each Centre to Extension Services Headquarters are despatched weekly using a multiplicity of carriers. These include Air Pacific, Air Nauru, Samoa Air, Solomon Islands Air, Air Vanuatu, Air New Zealand, Air Marshall Islands. Weekly mailbag checks are undertaken via USPNET, tracking safe receipt and the lost or off-loaded despatches. The latter are a continuing difficulty on some airlines because of limited carriage space and competing cargo.

A slow scan electronic mail system, sharing the common satellite channel, is also being gradually introduced. To date, however, only the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu have been connected, due to funding and technical difficulties.

There is, also, in the advanced planning stages an intention to establish during 1992 a computer network linking the regional Centres to the on-campus Student Records and Finance databases. This is intended to be effected by Banner software and funded from New Zealand aid. The actual means of the data transfer is proving to be problematical, however, given that not all Centres have direct access to the satellite and use of telephone circuits cannot be guaranteed.

Materials transport is mainly effected by the mailbag system, in accordance with the following conditions. Individual materials-items must: not exceed a monetary value of F\$50.00 (a carrier-specification); not be toxic or potentially hazardous; and not (for obvious reasons) exceed the mailbag's capacity. There are no weight restrictions. Materials which do not comply with these conditions are transported in whichever of the following ways is most appropriate: by normal postal services; by courier; as air cargo; as sea cargo; or as hand carried or accompanied baggage. It is worth noting, perhaps, that at particular times of the year (such as those coinciding with heavy tourist traffic or food shortages), shipping services can be more reliable than air services to some countries; that, because of frequent staff travel to member countries, the hand carried/accompanied baggage alternative is used as much as possible for examination script and equipment transportation.

The countries of Niue and Tokelau deserve a special mention, neither being serviced directly between itself and Fiji. Mailbags to and from Niue must be despatched through Western Samoa (Air Pacific) and thence (Samoa Air) to American Samoa and Niue. Alternatively, they can be despatched to Nadi (Air Pacific) and thence to Auckland (Air Nauru) and on to Niue (Niue Airlines). Tokelau materials must be transported initially to Western Samoa, out of Nadi. Thereafter, carriage must be effected by a shipping service which operates only once a month. Transport of materials in and out of Tokelau (including assignments and examinations) can be effected only on this monthly basis. All of the preceding information about communication and transport systems applies only to the primary (or easier) legs: those between services on campus and the in-country USP Centre. The latter in all cases is located in the main town on the main island/atoll.

The more difficult but equally important communication/transport links to be sustained are those which lie between the national Centre and the outlying islands and atolls. For a Centre which has ninety-five or sixty-six or thirty of these which are populated, the challenges are obviously formidable. A few islands might be serviced by a domestic airline; some others might be serviced by a small shipping agent. Some might have neither on a regular basis; there will be even some that have no telephone facilities. All of these vagaries must be accommodated as far as possible and planned for, without any degree of institutional control. Where available, the domestic air and boat services are utilised and relied upon. In-country HF and national broadcast radio are also available in some instances. In two countries - the Solomon Islands and Kiribati - the Centres are involved in the planning and establishment of in-country teleconference systems. Both ventures will be supported by externally negotiated funding. For some outlying communities, however, little can be done until the national communication and transport carriers develop more comprehensive systems.

For a distance mode teacher in the south and central Pacific, the distance learner's profile is perhaps the most important feature of Regional Context that he/she needs to know.

An understanding of that profile brings one closer to knowing the region. The students will probably be male, unlike the majority of distance learners in developed countries. (Female enrollment overall is 30%.) They will probably, nonetheless, be seeking first-chance training. The language of instruction might not be their first language. It will usually be their second and sometimes third. They will likely be the product of an education system not fully endowed with qualified teachers, adequate physical resources and strong preparatory programmes. Their profile will vary somewhat in relation to their home-country. They will probably have left school several years earlier without the formal qualifications for university admission. (Full secondary school programmes and easy access to them are still not available for the majority in the region). They will likely have many commitments, financial and of time, to Church, family and village community. They may possibly, before enrolling in courses of ultimate choice, need to undertake upper school level courses in English and/or Mathematics. (USP through Extension, still teaches Forms Six and Seven). They cannot be presumed to live near the local USP Centre, or a frequent airline/boat service for the transport of materials. Fortitude aside, they cannot be presumed to have access to resources other than those provided in the teaching/learning package. They cannot be expected to afford expensive materials, to meet the full costs of the chosen USP course, or to own or have access to technical equipment. The average rate of attrition is around 30%, due, in the main, to external factors. (These usually relate to employment or to materials-transport delays). Study through USP Extension is often their sole higher learning option.

## **HISTORY AND BACKGROUND**

The University of the South Pacific was established on the recommendation of a Higher Education Mission to the South Pacific which reported in 1966. The Mission was set up by the governments of the United Kingdom and New Zealand, with the cooperation of the Australian Government. It was chaired by Sir Charles Morris and had the purpose of ascertaining the viability and appropriate character of a university which would serve the needs of the region.

Sir Norman Alexander was subsequently appointed Academic Planner to the proposed institution and, in this capacity, consulted key personnel throughout the region for their responses to the Morris Report. The Alexander Report of early 1967 provided both an affirmation and some refining of the Mission's essential concepts and proposed ways in which these could be practically realised in a Pacific regional university.

By mid 1967 the Legislative Council of Fiji had approved an enabling Ordinance for the establishment of an Interim Council. At its January 1968 meeting, the Interim Council appointed the University's first Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Colin Aikman, Professor of Jurisprudence and Constitutional Law from Victoria University of Wellington.

The regional University for the South Pacific was established at Laucala Bay, Suva Fiji, on the site of a vacated Royal New Zealand Air Force flying-boat base. The first students were admitted in February 1968. After an initial period of two years, the University was formally established in March 1970, by Royal Charter.

University Centres (with their running costs initially funded by the Carnegie Corporation) began to be established the following year. Those in Honiara (Solomon

Islands), Tarawa (Kiribati) and Nuku'alofa (Tonga) were the first, in 1971. The Rarotonga Centre (Cook Islands) and the Apia Centre (Western Samoa) followed in 1975. One year later saw the establishment of the Centre in Suva, followed in 1977 by the Centre in Niue. The Vanuatu Centre in Port Vila and the Tuvalu Centre in Funafuti were both established in 1980 and most recently Nauru in 1986. Capital expenditure on the Centres during this period of two decades has been financed bilaterally by the governments of Australia and New Zealand. (Tokelau is served through the Western Samoa Centre. The Centre for the Marshall Islands will be established in Majuro during 1992).

The many factors which contributed from the outset to a commitment to regional distance education from this new university can probably be reduced to a few: USP was established to serve an area three times the size of Europe, with a diameter one sixth of the earth's circumference. Clearly it would need to spread itself in new and dramatic ways to reach much of its market. Much needed higher education in many vital areas had traditionally to be sought outside of the region in developed world countries. As such it was accessible to relatively few people. The conventional option of full-time internal study (which would also have to be residential for many students) was not an appropriate singular response to the needs of a region in which existing education systems still amounted to variants of under-development and which generally had a low capacity to provide for expenditure on higher education. Bridging study, part-time study, and home-based study while retaining employment were (and continue to be) appropriate other responses.

The University began with three On-Campus Schools: Natural Resources, Social and Economic Development, and Education. Responsibilities for 'Extramural Studies' were located in the School of Education but, in 1971 - renamed as Extension Services - became lodged in a separate entity with its own Director. USP in formal terms was at this time one year old.

The first distance education courses were offered in 1971, in the area of urgent need secondary school teacher training. These courses constituted the Diploma of Education, a sub-degree programme, fully supported with sets of distance learning materials. The Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, Fiji and Kiribati enrolled diploma students in that initial programme. By 1975-76, this programme had become completely revised, and the development of preliminary, foundation and first year degree courses was underway.

The Renwick Report (1991) records that the number of courses grew from six in 1971, ten in 1974, twenty-three in 1977, and thirty in 1979 - 80. Twenty of these were for preliminary/foundation and ten for degree/diploma (Page 16). By 1989, 148 distance courses were available: sixteen for preliminary, twenty-four for foundation, thirty-two for certificates, and seventy-six for degrees. In 1990 the number of courses stabilised.

TABLE 6: Number of Extension Courses Offered (by Level)

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Preliminary	19	16	12	17	12	16
Foundation	22	22	23	23	23	24
Cert/Dip/Voc	11	13	22	29	30	32
Degree	23	35	45	59	76	76
TOTAL:	75	86	102	128	141	148

The University's expertise in instructional media, centrally located, is capable of producing for distance education CAL packages, high quality video, and satellite conferencing. The extent to which one should choose (or not) to do so is a separate issue, however, relating to regional student-access. USP's traditional contract with its distance students has been that teaching packages developed for home study will provide all that they need for learning and mastery. Except in the few courses with laboratory components, this contract continues still to be largely honoured in the planning of instructional media. Teaching strategies dependent on computer access, video playback facilities, even libraries or electricity have to be weighed with care when being assigned a role. The weightier or more central that role is to course delivery, the more exclusive becomes the course's potential market. In brief, media selection is always a philosophical matter related to a mission and inseparable from context. While no choice is value-free in any medium selection, in a developing world region diverse within itself, course writers and developers have especial burdens of judgment.

USP began its distance teaching in the early seventies providing core instruction with printed materials. Print remains today the basic instructional medium. Audio tape material soon became a significant second medium, from the Learning Resources and Communications Unit established within Extension Services. By 1980 it had accrued a staff of eleven which, at that time, was half of the Section's staff. Audio tapes today are standard instructional package components. For the now stand-alone Media Unit (which provides university-wide professional services), 80% of its tape production and copying work is undertaken for the distance education programme.

Instruction augmented by live satellite teaching was experimentally implemented from 1973. Then, as now nearly two decades on, this medium provided instruction to enhance the print package: that is, not as a core or integral course component. Unlike audio tape materials now integrated with print, satellite instruction remains optional because of limited student access. An experimental project in the later seventies for the satellite transmission of visual materials (graphs, diagrams, slides and video) was abandoned for technical, management and cost reasons. There are no immediate plans to reactivate the endeavour. All that is deemed necessary is pre-produced and packaged. Computers are not used as an instructional medium. Students have little access to them, and durability and maintenance are difficult in tropical conditions.

The various ways in which USP's Extension Studies programme is funded are described later. In its essential parameters, the core funding pattern has not changed over time. It is the regional member governments which provide the base funding: up to 90% of the University's recurrent budget. Member governments have always assumed responsibility for the major financial support of their institution, and distance education - like on-campus education - has always been funded as an integral mode of teaching. Illustrative details of how the recurrent budget is augmented from year to year by External Aid are provided later. The pattern exemplified is not new in 1991. Most donors are traditional and the forms of support recurrent. Details are also provided of the specific benefits to distance education from both the institutional and bi-lateral aid programmes.

Acknowledgement should be made, however, of some particular, early assistance given to the University's extension activities. Although some have been subsumed or have passed with project completion, their founding timing and contribution were developmentally critical. For the establishment of the first USPNET (on PEACESAT), NASA, the Carnegie

Corporation and USAID provided the vital support. For the second USPNET (on INTELSAT), the Project Share signatories provided the vital support. Since the Project's ending, Cable & Wireless Public Ltd. (Hong Kong) has provided satellite segment-access free; the many telecommunications carriers have heavily subsidised USP's use of local ground stations. For the initial running costs of the early USP Centres, the Carnegie Corporation provided funding support. The Governments of New Zealand and Australia have provided capital funding for all Centre buildings through externally negotiated funding.

Several trends can be noted in USP's distance education. It has developed from an initial programme of teacher training courses into a University-wide programme emanating from all Laucala Campus Schools: Humanities (SOH), Social and Economic Development (SSED), Pure and Applied Sciences (SPAS). The initial Diploma in Education programme was phased out after the major contributing countries indicated that their respective Teachers Colleges had become sufficiently well established. In the first year of its school-based distance programmes, 1981, and ten years after the Education courses were launched - SSED extension enrollments were second only to enrollment in the compulsory courses in English and Mathematics. In Semester One 1990, of the 79 courses offered the discipline breakdown was School of Humanities, 28; School of Pure and Applied Sciences, 14; School of Agriculture (Alafua Campus), 1; and School of Social and Economic Development, 36. Among these courses, enrollments were markedly heaviest in Accounting, Economics, Mathematics and Management.

The increasing development of distance only programmes has been and continues to be a feature. Beginning slowly in the mid-seventies with occasional courses developed only for extension delivery, the range now includes several full programmes such as the Certificate and Diploma in Legal Studies, the Diploma in Librarianship, the Certificate in Management Studies, the new Diploma in Early Childhood Education, and the Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language. The proposed new Certificate and Diploma in Ocean Resources Management are establishing yet another model by developing a dual mode programme in which the distance mode precedes in development its on-campus equivalent.

Another trend is worthy of note. With the introduction of the Diploma in Librarianship, the Certificate programme was gradually phased out. This was due to staffing shortages and a general USP trend away from Certificates. Eight countries have objected with clear concern at the loss of the bridge to higher level study. The University Library is reconsidering re-introduction, therefore. Following on from this, the new Diploma in Early Childhood Education was proposed for development with the extant Certificate programme (also distance only) firmly entrenched in the Admission Regulations. The increase in the number of degree level courses and a balancing decrease in sub-degree courses continue slowly but surely. Degree level courses in 1989 accounted for 51.3% of the total programme. (In 1979-80 they comprised barely 25%.) This trend will doubtless accelerate in light of the Council's policy decision re-affirmed in 1990 to scale down subdegree activity.

## **LEGAL STATUS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

The extent to which distance education from USP could be deemed to have a legal status is to be found in the Royal Charter under which it was constituted. Therein

ELIZABETH THE SECOND by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of (Her) other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith' decreed as follows:

WHEREAS Our Principal Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has OD behalf of the Interim Council of the University of the South Pacific and in accordance with the wishes of the Governments of the British Solomon Islands, Fiji and the Gilbert and Ellice Islands and after consulting Our High Commissioner for the Western Pacific as regards the interests of the people of the New Hebrides, represented unto Us that it is expedient that We should constitute and found a University of the South Pacific ...

AND WHEREAS the Governments of the Cook Islands, the Republic of Nauru, Niue, the Tokelau Islands, the Kingdom of Tonga, and the Independent Stab of Western Samoa have also expressed the wish that such a University should be established.

NOW THEREFORE KNOW YE that We by virtue of Our Prerogative Royal in respect of Fiji and of Our especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion have willed and ordained and by these Presents do for Us, Our Heirs and Successors will and ordain as follows

There shall be and is hereby constituted and founded for the communities of the South Pacific a University with the name and style of the University of the South Pacific' (in this our Charter referred to as the University'), ...

The Chancellor, the Pro-Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor and all other persons who are for the time being members of the University pursuant to this our Charter and the Statutes of the University are hereby constituted and henceforth for ever shad be one Body Politic and Corporate with perpetual succession and a Common Seal by the name and style of The University of the South Pacific ....

Under the powers to be invested in the new institution, two are of particular relevance. The former grants general authority for determining the categories of admission while the latter refers quite specifically to an external teaching mode.

To prescribe in the Statutes, Ordinances or Regulations the conditions under which persons and categories of persons shall be admitted to the University for the purpose of pursuing any programme of course of study herein.

To provide through programmes and courses of study and otherwise instruction and training at such levels and by such means, including extramural tuition, as the University may think fit ....

In summary, therefore, under the Charter the University became a legal entity of the region, 'one Body Politic and Corporate'. Its powers, mission and mandate are those which have approval of the eleven Governments cited. Extramural provision is particularly identified as an institutional activity to which it is encouraged and for which it has been empowered.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SITUATION**

### *Aims and Objectives*

In the University's two preparatory Reports (Morris 1965 and Alexander 1967), the founding vision of USP was dramatically established. The new institution was to observe the traditional values of higher education; be responsive to the needs and special character of the region and its peoples; and be mindful and inclusive in its teaching mission of the dispersed communities beyond its walls.

Morris refers to the provision of 'university studies to towns and villages throughout the region'. Alexander envisaged, through USP outreach, a significant means of 'raising the general standard of village life'. The Programme Planning Seminar held in 1968 went on to identify a role for Extension Services; for some correspondence courses for university credit, and for the possibility of off-campus staff. The over-arching aims and objectives of the University have thus included from the very beginning a commitment to outreach and distance education. These aims and objectives have not changed since 1968. They are encapsulated generally in the Charter of the University (1970). USP is therein established for

the maintenance, advancement and dissemination of knowledge by teaching, consultancy and research and otherwise and for the provision at appropriate levels of education and training responsive to the well-being and needs of the communities of the South Pacific.

Distance education, as the Morris and Alexander Reports illustrate, was always perceived to be a major means of fulfilling this mission. The unchanged nature of the aims and objectives and the role of outreach in their achievement are substantiated by the following reaffirmations throughout the ensuing twenty-three years.

In the 1973 Report on the Long Range Future of the University, major space and attention are given to the 'role and function of Extension Services in the task of taking the University to the village and to the people across the whole Pacific'. In 1975 in his Statement to the University of the South Pacific, the Vice-Chancellor, Dr James Maraj, considered the projection of the University as a Regional Institution. Central to this projection were, he observed, 'an upgrading of our Extension Services and a strengthening of the University's outreach'. In 1979 the Tenth Anniversary Review (Springer Report) observed that 'heavy emphasis should be placed on the growth of Extension Studies ... the attempt must be made ... to reach the population wherever it is'.

The 1983 Regional Conference on Future Directions for the University of the South Pacific recorded that

the clearest and most consistent message from the region was the need for USP to establish a stronger presence in the countries it serves. The work of USP Extension Centres obviously is valued and appreciated, and most countries would welcome enlarged facilities and an expanded role. In particular, requests were made for the wider availability of diploma and degree courses via the extension mode ....



In 1991, the Vice-Chancellor, Mr Geoffrey Caston, reaffirmed in practical terms the University's sustained commitment to distance education as follows :

Each extension student, OR any course, has a claim to the attention of the Department which is *equal to* that of each Off-campus student OR the same course. (Teaching resources are allocated to departments according to this principle.)

It follows that every academic staff has an obligation to participate in distance education, to the extent and in a manner that the head of department, after appropriate consultation, specifies.

Beyond these aims and objectives which are entrenched, institutional commitments, there are aims and objectives approved for each new programme development and, within the programme structure, specific course aims and objectives.

The aims and objectives of the different levels of course offering can only be generalised, for obvious reasons. The purpose or role of a course is inseparable from structural context. Foundation level courses in the Foundation Programme differ somewhat from their purposes as vocational diploma components; courses comprising certificates which lead on to diplomas, or courses comprising diplomas with some degree-credit arrangements, differ somewhat in their purposes from those in stand-alone/end-stopped programmes.

The programme of Preliminary Studies was conceived originally as a topping up of schooling. It and the following Foundation Studies programme were (and remain still) a means of providing opportunities for students 'to get their basic education up to acceptable levels'.

As the majority of member countries have now established Form Six or Year Twelve education, partakers of the Preliminary Programme as a comprehensive substitute have declined. The courses as individual components remain, however, and only in the distance education mode. Their purposes are remedial or bridging. The Foundation Studies programme as a comprehensive or part-time substitute for a national Form Seven or Year Thirteen remains heavily subscribed. (Indeed, it is being strengthened in its distance mode of delivery, in the light of Council's decision to shut down the on-campus mode at the end of 1992-)

Foundation level courses also contribute to some of the sub-degree certificates and diplomas. Their purposes in this context are not quite the same as bridging (any more than a 100 level degree course is a bridge to 200 level, or a 200 level course is a bridge to 300). They have a formally structured place in these vocational programmes as initial points of entry, or introductions to advanced level courses. Certificate and diploma programmes are variously constituted. They may include (but gradually less so) foundation level courses, and appropriate degree courses at 100 and 200 levels. Some also may include courses designated C or D level: that is, courses designed and offered to meet the programme's specific aims and objectives. These are vocational in their focus (e.g. on Management and Legal Studies, Applied Computing, Accounting, Educational Administration). While they often, in practice, provide bridging for some students to advance their studies to degree qualifications, some candidates are already university graduates acquiring a vocational specialty.

The aims and objectives of the degree programmes which are available through distance education are the same as those for on-campus delivered degrees and, presumably for the BA, BEd and BSc everywhere.

At all levels of offering - preparatory, sub-degree and degree - the distance education courses and programmes clearly share, beyond their specifics, one overall objective: to make themselves available to students remote from campus.

*Control, Organisation and Management Structure of Distance Education*

The distance education programme is a regional establishment, proceeding from a legally constituted regional entity and academically autonomous. While some co-operative relationships do exist at various delivery and support levels, they are not 'established' arrangements affecting provider-status.

USP is a dual-mode institution; its courses and programmes of study for distance delivery are subject, therefore, to the same overall academic controls and procedures as those applying to internal courses and programmes; to the same overall budgetary and auditing controls and procedures as those applying to internal operations. For academic controls and procedures (course approvals, withdrawals, regulations, curriculum changes, continuous and final assessment), the Boards of Studies, the Academic Committee and the University Senate have ascending responsibility. The introduction of a new programme requires also the approval of the Academic Planning Committee and all new programmes require the approval of the University Council. Both the Director of Extension Services and the Deputy Director/Head of Distance Education are members of the Academic Committee, the Academic Planning Committee and the Senate. The Director is also a member of the four Boards of Studies and attends the Council *ex officio*. For budgetary matters (staffing costs, support services, programme resource needs), the Resource Management Committee and the Finance and General Purposes Committee have responsibility. All fiscal matters (including any developments with funding implications) are reported ultimately to the University Council for final decision/approval. Both the Director of Extension Services and the Deputy Director/Head of Distance Education are *ex officio* members of the Resource Management Committee, and the Director currently is a Senate appointed member of the Finance Committee.

Within the terms of reference of this infrastructure, distance education at USP is holistically managed; it is subject to university-wide and integrated jurisdiction. This has its philosophical virtues as well as its practical drawbacks. The theoretically integrated infrastructure for control precludes any simple answers in the areas listed. There are the obvious and expected tiers of responsibility which lie below it, or are delegated from it as the ultimate government. There are others, however, which remain collective or shared and difficult to attach clearly to accountability.

Responsibility for the administration of the distance education programme is perhaps the easiest to identify, belonging clearly to Extension Services. Although all distance students belong to the respective academic departments in the same way as their on-campus counterparts, they are the administrative responsibility of Extension Services staff. This responsibility includes pre-enrollment counselling and all enrollment processing; maintenance of student files and records (admissions, withdrawals, programme completions); materials production and distribution; assignment tracking, logging and all assessment records; production/ distribution of test and examination scripts; organisation of examinations; and collection of student fees. In none of these tasks are the on-campus and distance education

administrative systems integrated, even within the area of academic records.

Within Extension Services itself, to whom these tasks solely belong, administrative responsibility is undertaken regionally by its staff in each of the national Centres and in the Headquarters on the Laucala Bay Campus. Given the lack of computer links, and of reliable communication and transport systems to traverse the thousands of ocean-kilometres between them, it is formidable administration on a daily basis. It comprises responsibilities, however, which Extension Services would not welcome sharing. Administration designed to service a small body of largely resident, full-time students has little in common with that needed to service large numbers of part-time invisible students, resident in four time zones.

In terms of academic standards, the University is subject to triennial, overall review by the University Grants Committee. Distance education, being integral to teaching and support services, is reviewed quite naturally within this evaluation process. Each academic *department* is also reviewed regularly and separately by External Assessors. These persons are uniformly distinguished scholars from internationally reputable institutions. They review the department's distance teaching performance along with its internal teaching performance. Within its internal structure, the University has also a committee on overall Student Performance and procedures for dealing with individual Unsatisfactory Performance. Distance students are not exempt from these monitoring jurisdictions. All *staff* must be reviewed for confirmation of satisfactory performance once every three years. Review of cases of unsatisfactory performance within this period is undertaken annually. Academic standards and credibility in the distance education programme are additionally sustained by curricula and examinations common to both modes of delivery. Although initial admission criteria are purposefully different, course content and final assessment are purposefully not.

Resource planning ultimately lies with the University Council. Resource plans related to academic developments and staffing emanate usually from departments, passing through the Boards of Studies, the Academic Planning Committee, the Resource Management Committee, and penultimately to the Finance and General Purposes Committee (which recommends the following year's Annual Budget to the October meeting of the Council). Along the way within this process, particular committees exist for the disbursement of funds allocated for resources such as computer hardware and software (Computer Services Committee); for capital expenditure (Sites and Buildings and Medium Works Committees); support requirements (Equipment and Furniture Committee). The planned resource needs of the ten national Extension Centres and of their distance students are considered and met within this structure. Independent of their centrally allocated resources, Centres also accrue local funding from or for local activities such as continuing education and non-formal courses, project funding from aid sources, and grants and donations. These resources are managed separately by each Centre's Advisory Committee, comprising key community people with interest and influence in local education.

As is usual in dual-mode teaching institutions, the distance education provisions are published in the official annual Calendar. This is not widely useful, however, for the majority of current and potential Extension Studies students because it is published in December, in time for ensuing on-campus enrollment. By this time, for obvious practical reasons, most national Centres have completed their enrollment procedures. It is relatively expensive for many distance students who, unlike their full-time on-campus counterparts, are generally unsupported by government and employer scholarships. Moreover, it contains information which is largely irrelevant or unnecessary for students living on remote islands

and atolls, pursuing study in only one or two courses and under open entry conditions.

Most distance students, to the extent that they have access to and use any official publications at all, use the Handbooks published by Extension Services. In the new format introduced in 1991, these now comprise a set of nine small booklets: a Student Handbook containing basic, general information; six others which are subject/programme specific in Education, Librarianship, Language and Literature, Legal Studies, Mathematics, Computing and Science, Accounting, Management and Economics; and one for miscellaneous courses not specific to a programme, and one devoted to the non-credit Continuing and Community Education programme. This information is produced centrally for regional distribution, to Centres and thence to students, the Public Service and Education Ministries. It is probably the case, nonetheless, that the most useful student information is that which is provided more informally by the local Centre. This is effected verbally in face-to-face counselling, by newspaper advertisements/announcements, regular local radio programmes, Centre newsletters and answering telephone queries.

Relationships between distance and non-distance education institutions which exist within the region have a variety of bases. These include materials transfer, shared students, shared facilities, consultation and standards-monitoring, and course or programme accreditation.

As USP is still the only indigenous provider of distance education within its own twelve country region, its materials-transfers tend to be outward. They occur, it should be noted, not for the purposes of further distance education by the purchasers/recipients but for those of resource-acquisition for classroom teaching. The National University of Samoa, the University of Papua New Guinea, the College of the Marshall Islands and some Teachers Colleges and secondary schools are materials buyers. Superseded editions of coursebooks and textbooks are donated free to interested institutions.

The sharing of students brings USP into formal relationship with several institutions. Form Seven (or Year Thirteen) students in Kiribati and the Cook Islands are full-time USP students attending the local high school. They are theoretically distance students, supported by Government scholarships, but with face-to-face teachers provided by their respective schools. Unlike students in institutions in the materials transfer category, these students pay standard USP tuition fees, receive USP support and gain university credit for completed courses. King George V High School (Kiribati) and Tereora College (Cook Islands) participate in this type of arrangement.

Facilities-sharing between institutions occurs in two directions, use of USP facilities by others, and use by USP of others' facilities. In Fiji, for example, several strategically placed secondary schools have been designated Sub-centres, accommodating distance learning materials and local after-hours tutorials. In the Cook Islands, use is made by USP of the College's science laboratories. In several countries the USP Centre library is used regularly by other institutions' students.

Consultation and standards-monitoring are relatively limited within the distance education area. This year the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education, a non distance education provider planning a distance mode, placed one of its senior officers within Extension Services for eight weeks on consultancy/attachment for staff development purposes. The National University of Samoa, which uses adapted USP distance materials in some internal courses, gains accreditation for these, dependent on institutional monitoring.

There is another type of relationship between distance and non-distance education

increasingly being forged within the region by the University's Institute of Education. It involves, not another institution per se, but the Institute (WOE), the country's Ministry of Education, and specified Extension Studies courses. Two examples of this exist in Kiribati and Tuvalu, where IOE has assisted the respective Ministries in the establishment of a national In-service teacher training qualification which includes some USP components to be studied at a distance. A consequent Tuvalu Diploma in Education will be, therefore, a credential awarded by the Ministry, and one in which USP courses have a structural accredited place. In a major new venture in 1992, the Fiji Government Ministry has taken, for its secondary school teacher trainees at the College of Advanced Education, more than 100 course places in the USP distance programme. The eventual qualification being earned is not USP's but the 100+ course-enrollments are for the semester's duration.

Perhaps the closest relationship in the region between distance education and relevant non-distance education occurs within USP itself and so is easily overlooked. It is a crucial relationship, however, dynamic and needing care. Togetherness in practice does not always produce equality.

Historically, the distance mode courses have grown out of or by conversion of existing on-campus equivalents. This is still (but decreasingly) the predominant procedure. There is a very positive assumption that, as far as possible, courses developed for internal students should be made available to part-time distance learners. (In the programme proposals now, departments are required to state their schedule of development for eventual distance delivery). The negative assumptions which tradition has nurtured are that the non-distance mode chronologically and in priority comes first in the system, that what is appropriate for on-campus students can be appropriately adapted for distance students only with loss of academic quality and mode-equity. However, distance-only programmes are on the increase. In these, the negative assumptions are welcome absent.

The internal close relationship between USP's distance and non-distance education has not only been forged by equivalent offerings in which the off-campus courses follow on in development. Once developed with teaching packages, these distance courses also become resource-materials providers for internal application. The process thus becomes circular in a sense. The on-campus course is developed, the off-campus equivalent follows, and the latter's teaching materials are subsequently re-applied on campus. There are positive and negative considerations raised by this. There is the danger of the internal mode's needs inappropriately and unconsciously (or even consciously) determining the content and design of the external course. There are the virtues of ensuring that what is provided for distance students is not second best in quality, and of providing additional incentive for teaching staff to make the distance mode conversion.

### *Financing Distance Education*

Major financial support of USP is provided by its twelve member governments, as a recurrent commitment within their respective national Education Votes. Collectively, government contributions to the University's recurrent budget amounted to 90% of approximately F\$20 million in 1991, and will amount to 90% of approximately F\$24 million in 1992. The Fiji Government's contribution represents 60% of total contributions. Amounts levied against each member country are not voluntarily or arbitrarily struck. They

## *Distance Education in Asia and the Pacific*

are determined on the basis of a funding formula directly related to the number of students enrolled from each country. Both internal and distance enrollments are included in the funding assessment, converted to FTES also in accordance with an approved formula. In very simple terms, the more students which a country sends to the campuses or has enrolled in Extension Studies, the more it will be required to contribute to the University's recurrent budget. The formula itself and the level to which the University should be funded are regularly reviewed and determined for the triennium by the Ministers of Finance of member governments in collective decision. The remaining 10% of the recurrent budget is provided by the Government of Australia (6%) and the Government of New Zealand (4%).

Outside of this basic support funding, USP receives substantial assistance from a multiplicity of other sources. The amount of this external support received in 1991 was F\$12,356,400. Additional to this are other longer-term funding arrangements which support specific programme developments, such as Development Studies, Ocean Resource Management, and Tourism and Population Studies.

It is not possible even to begin to separate out the expenditure on distance education from these preceding sources of funding. Because the two teaching modes of the University have been integrated and holistically managed from the outset, funding to the teaching departments and service sections is allocated (and expended) untagged either for on-campus or distance activities.

The only exception to this is Extension Services itself, which has work requirements related solely to the two outreach operations of distance education and continuing/community education. That Extension Services received in 1989 only 13.6% of the overall budget (for expenditure on both of its outreach operations) but had within its care 38.7% of the FTES roll, indicates the extent to which distance education is also substantially supported or buried within all other sections' budgets.

In brief, therefore, money and staff time are generally expended without any system of differentiation between their internal and external purposes. This inclusive style of budgeting has both its obvious virtues and its obvious dangers. (The Renwick Report, in its review of two decades of distance education at USP, has voiced concern about this on-going procedure. The Team concluded that under the procedure, the claims that distance education students can properly make on the University's total quantum of resources are not being met. The Report and its recommendations on this issue have yet to be formally considered by the University community.)

Students, as everywhere, also contribute partially to the budget by way of their feespayments. For the distance courses (not differentiated by subject), current fees are predegree, F\$40; 100 level, F\$51; and 200-300 level, F\$68. Materials and textbook fees are additional charges made on a cost-recovery basis. For each course taken, students pay a Centre fee also, of up to F\$15. Unlike their on-campus counterparts, most Extension Studies students are not funded by scholarships. Some, however, have their costs reimbursed by employers on a successful completion basis.

## *Geographical Coverage of the Provision of Distance Education*

The physical context of USP has dramatic features: 6,500 km across and three times larger than Europe, the region's population of only 1.3 million is dispersed on land masses which,

aggregated, are no larger than Denmark. One country alone comprises one hundred populated islands, one other eighty, another twenty-six. Two more have island-counts of fifteen and thirty-three. The Republic of the Marshall Islands, by its recent membership, has brought to USP another thirty-four. In-country land mass dispersion is as follows:

TABLE 7: Land Mass Dispersion of USP Countries

Member State	No. of Islands	Inhabited Islands	Distance (km) from capital to most remote settlement
Fiji	322	95	420
Solomon Islands	c.400	6.60	1400
Western Samoa	6	4	120
Vanuatu	c.80	66	550
Tonga	170	30	590
Kiribati	33	21	3500
Marshall Islands	c.32	26	1100
Cook Islands	15	13	1350
Nauru	1	1	n.a.
Tuvalu	9	5	490
Niue	1	1	n.a.
Tokelau	3	3	n.a.

It is not a simple matter to state accurately the number of islands and atolls covered by the USP distance education programme. Theoretically, all populated land masses of each member country have access to distance education through their in-country Centre. Many, however, do not yet have the transport and communication systems which make participation a feasible possibility. In the Cook Islands, for example, the 1991 roll indicates that only six of the thirteen populated islands had registered students. These were Rarotonga, Aitutaki, Atiu, Mangaia, Mauke and Matiaro. Palmerston, Pukapuka, Nassau, Rakahanga, and Manihiki lack the necessary communication/transport systems. Penrhyn only acquired them in 1990. In Vanuatu in 1991 only nine of the sixty-six populated islands had registered students (Efate, Santo, Malekula, Tanna, Epi, Pentecost, Ambae, Ambrym, Tongoa). Two of these islands had a single enrollment, two others an enrollment of two. Kiribati recorded enrollment on fifteen of its thirty-three atolls, with the lowest percentage of total enrollment at 0.19% .

### *Instructional Systems*

The major components of instruction and delivery methods for distance education from USP can be classified as those which are centrally generated for regional purposes, and those which are locally generated for national purposes. These classifications can be applied to the separable components of teaching materials and learning support services.

Core materials for all distance education courses are centrally generated for regional consumption. They are developed by Course Teams, usually comprising an academic content specialist (Course Writer), an instructional designer (Course Developer), a media specialist and a course development assistant. Core materials usually consist of at least two printed texts: the Introduction and Assignments booklet and the Coursebook. Ancillary components

might include a Reader, textbook(s), audiotapes and, perhaps, a videotape.

The Introduction and Assignments booklet introduces the course as a whole, with reference to an introduction to the course writer/tutor; the overall aims and objectives of the course; a summary of the course content; a list of the course materials; a suggested study schedule; the forms of assessment used; help available through Centre resources, local or satellite tutorials, and course tutor visits; details of tests and assignments; content update and enhancement; a sample of an exam paper (new course); or a past exam paper (continuing course); and a course evaluation form. The Coursebook provides a study guide for the course; learning opportunities through the content and self-assessing exercises; integration of all the materials for the course; and readings, although these may be presented separately also in a Reader. Audiotapes are used for presenting information impossible to print such as dialects variation in a language course; personalising a course and bringing tutor and student closer; presenting further clarification of difficult topics; and enhancement of content. Commercially produced textbooks are prescribed for many courses but can occasionally present problems with their unfamiliar concepts and examples; their internationally determined prices; lengthy delivery lead-times; readability levels not appropriate for second language readers; and content sometimes irrelevant to Pacific learning needs. Given the geographic and economic circumstances of USP distance students, the use of videotapes is not generally encouraged for the transmission of core information, and computers cannot be used as an instructional medium.

### *Instructional Support Services*

Those centrally provided for regional purposes include Satellite Tutorials on USPNET (the regional telecommunications link based on INTELSAT); visits from campus-based Course Tutors to national Centres; Summer Schools in national Centres and outer islands; and personal correspondence with students.

Satellite tutorials are voluntarily convened and taught by the on-campus Course Tutor, so there is no institutional requirement that they be offered. Course Tutors who do provide such services to their distance students usually commit themselves to a regular weekly or fortnightly schedule of one hour sessions. Tutor Visits are vigorously requested both by students and Centre staff, and there is no lack of willing on-campus teachers to undertake them. The major difficulties in meeting demand, however, are always cost and often on campus understaffing levels which preclude travel. Costs of Tutor Visits can be very expensive simply because international air services in the Pacific are very expensive. Generally, each Centre receives two or three Tutor visits in each semester and these tend to be in core courses or those with high enrollment demand. As eighty to ninety distance courses are offered in each-semester, Tutor Visits seldom occur for many of them. Those that do take place are quantifiably effective, however, not only in lifting student morale but also in familiarising on-campus staff with the local and often difficult circumstances of their students.

Summer Schools are not officially distance education offerings. They are administered by Extension Services, however, because they are off-campus activities. They are provided only for students enrolled through the Extension Centres; they are the only means of delivering particular types of courses (e.g. those with practicum components) which are required for students to complete their distance programme but which are not available at a



distance; and they are the only means of delivering particular courses such as those in Science for which a well-qualified Local Tutor/demonstrator is required but has not been available. Summer Schools provide full-time tuition over a period of four to six weeks, with local students all coming to and residing at a central site. The complete semester curriculum is covered during this time and students are formally examined at the conclusion of the School. Funding is again an inhibiting factor on the numbers of Summer Schools which can be annually mounted. Minimal enrollment numbers per country have been set, therefore. Because the University's policy is that Summer Schools must be self-supporting, fees are high relative to Extension Studies courses (in 1991 F\$200 vis-a-vis F\$30), and running costs still require subsidy from external aid. This has come in the past mainly from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC). This funding is to end in 1991. The future of the Summer School mode is rather in doubt at present, although the Renwick Report has strongly urged its dramatic expansion. Some individual member governments are using bi-lateral aid funding in the meantime to ensure the survival of Summer Schools in their country.

Correspondence with students is undertaken by some on-campus Course Tutors but could in no way be regarded as a general activity. As in all distance teaching institutions, Teaching through Assessment as an opportunity for learner assistance is viewed positively by some and ignored by others. Comments on assignments range from pages-length to a mere grade. Overall and not unusually, most fall somewhere in between. There is no institutional policy on how responses should be formulated.

Instructional Support Services provided in-country by the national USP Centre for local purposes include various combinations of regular radio programmes; occasional television programmes; face-to-face tutorials with a Local Tutor; peer tutorials without a Local Tutor; teleconference tutorials on an in-country HF or public switched network; Centre bulletins/newsletters for students; library services (books, audio and video cassettes); computer facilities and study space; study skills and course counselling (either at the Centre or by Centre staff travelling); practical laboratory sessions (where possible and required); and bridging courses. The Centre serves as the clearing house for all materials/assignments, provides liaison between students and remote teachers and is USP in the member country.

### *Languages of Instruction*

The one language of instruction for both on-campus and distance courses is English. For the majority of the University's students, this is their second language or, at least, not their mother-tongue. For some students, English is even a third language. Students are not permitted to work in their vernacular for formal assessment purposes, for seldom if ever could work be marked in its original form. Even if students were to use their predominant native language (and not one of the other 264 recorded as still spoken in the region), the designated Course Marker in Suva or Port Vila would be unlikely to share any one student's linguistic profile, let alone the multiplicity of them within the course's enrollment.

In the Extension Centres around the region, some tutorials and many spoken transactions between staff and students may be conducted in the local languages. (This does not and could not generally apply on the two residential campuses, where both the student body and staff comprise multi-ethnic and linguistic groups.) Some Centres which produce local radio programmes for students present two versions, one in English and one in the vernacular.

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Three separate points are perhaps worth noting. First, research undertaken by the University's Language Resources Unit indicates clearly that students' academic performance in their initial year of (on-campus) study is directly related to their English competence. Competency-testing, which is systematically undertaken in the full-time pre-degree programme, has proved a most reliable predictor of results. Second, because of the particular language difficulties faced by the group of Ni-Vanuatu students who are Bislama/Francophones rather than Bislama/Anglophones, a limited range of distance courses has been allowed, exceptionally, to be translated into French. Three (LLD28 Elementary Translation Techniques; GE102 Cultural Geography; BIP02 Preliminary Biology) have been completed. Work is on-going for Preliminary courses in Mathematics (2), Chemistry (1), another in Biology, and one for a foundation course in Geography. Third, the Pacific Preschool Teachers Certificate, offered through Extension as a USP Continuing Education award, has now been translated into several major local languages. Even though this Certificate is not a qualification carrying academic credit, when offered in its local language it must become a confined local award (that is, not granted by USP's Continuing Education section).

### *Enrollment in Distance Education*

Enrollment statistics in USP's distance education programme have several particular characteristics. First, they exclude enrollments in distance mode courses and programmes of study which are not offered for academic credit: that is, institutional terminology differentiates between Extension Studies (credential courses and programmes) and Continuing Education (non-credential courses and programmes). Students enrolled, therefore, in the Pacific Preschool Teachers Certificate - who study at a distance, pursuing a formally structured, examinable programme over three semesters - are counted neither in the distance education statistical head-count nor in the University's FTES annual returns. Second, under the Extension Studies Regulations and the University Regulations for Part-time Students, enrollment in the distance education programme is normally limited to two courses per semester. Exceptions to the two-course regulation are occasionally permitted in individual cases (where, for example, a Centre Director might assess an unemployed adult student to be sufficiently competent for three), or where a member government specifically requests that a full-time programme be locally available. Three such exceptions exist in this category and all at the secondary education level. (In the Cook Islands, Kiribati and Vanuatu respectively, a full-time Form Seven or Year Thirteen programme is available to approximately twenty selected students.) In 1982, statistical data established that 78% of extension students were taking only one course, 20% two courses, 1 % three and 1 % four. (Fifty percent of these courses were at the pre-degree Preliminary/Foundation level.) Although time may have altered these specific course-load percentages to some extent, the load of one or two courses per semester remains the overwhelming pattern.

A third characteristic is that extension Services, responsible for the administration of all enrollments in the distance education programme, uses aggregated course enrollments (i.e. head-count) for the production of statistics. Statistics for internal students, however, are produced in terms of full and part-time student numbers. In servicing, for example, a particular Solomon Islands student enrolled in MGD01 throughout their course of study, it is not relevant in practical terms that they perhaps carry the same identification number as

an enrollee in LLF11. These courses belong academically to two different departments and for all intents and purposes are taken by two separate people.

A fourth characteristic to note is that when extension course enrollments are converted into FTERS percentages of the total university roll, they are not simply divided to produce a notional full-time student body. A Discounted Student Unit (DSU) formula is applied to conversions. In 1989 it determined that one full-time campus student equalled one FTES, one part-time campus student equalled one-third FTES, and one discounted Extension registration equalled one-fourth FTES. Because of significant dropouts during the semester, the enrollment figures of 1 April are discounted by 30% for preliminary registrations, 25% for Foundation, Certificate and Diploma, and 20% for Degree registrations.

A fifth feature is that admission to Extension Studies courses is governed by regulations which differ from those applied to the equivalent on-campus courses. Although in terms of subject content and performance assessment, the distance and face-to-face modes of a course are stringently kept as equivalent as possible, enrollment access to the home-study option has deliberately been established as more open. This policy relates directly to the perceived (and indeed originally conceived) role of USP as the University of a developing world and specifically to the philosophy of its extension activities. Access or admission to courses in the distance education programme is, under the University's mature entry regulation, open to all students over age twenty-three, so that formal criteria applied to internal students undertaking identical courses do not apply to this age group.

Moreover, until 1991, enrollment ceilings or quotas (which must for practical reasons apply to the face-to-face mode of courses) have generally not been applied to the distance programme. This, in addition to the mature entry factor, has obviously contributed to the high level and growth rate of distance programme enrollments. From 1991, this circumstance has altered, with enrollment controls now instituted on the advice of the University Grants Committee and by subsequent ruling of the University Council. Seven years of a frozen recurrent budget (1984-1990) and increasing student demand have severely impaired the delivery of quality teaching. Only a minimal growth rate in overall FTES will be permitted in the current triennium (1991-1993). Course ceilings have, therefore, had to be firmly imposed within the distance education programme.

TABLE 8: Semester One Statistics Of Extension enrollments by Country

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Cook Islands	204	177	247	253	422	400
Fiji	1603	1692	2047	2115	3445	3755
Kiribati	266	185	285	377	599	448
Nauru	11	42	235	117	*	114
Niue	41	26	23	33	*	26
Solomon Islands	194	249	290	362	537	362
Tokelau	49	40	37	76	84	26
Tonga	622	766	465	490	838	523
Tuvalu	22	36	25	23	112	103
Vanuatu	152	201	188	301	291	396
Western Samoa	270	288	243	257	369	298
<u>Total:</u>	3419	3699	4085	4404	6648	6451

\* No enrollment due to materials transport difficulties

The following graphs present eleven countries - specific profiles, indicating national course enrollments at the four available levels of distance education. Preliminary level equates with Form Six (or Year Twelve) within the secondary school system, Foundation level with Form Seven (or Year Thirteen).

Vocational courses are generally those which lead to certificates and diplomas as sub-degree qualifications, although many of the programmes include degree level courses. Degree courses are offered at 100, 200 and 300 levels (with the number available declining significantly at each successive level).

Table 9: Semesters One and Two Statistics of Extension Students by Country (1990 only)

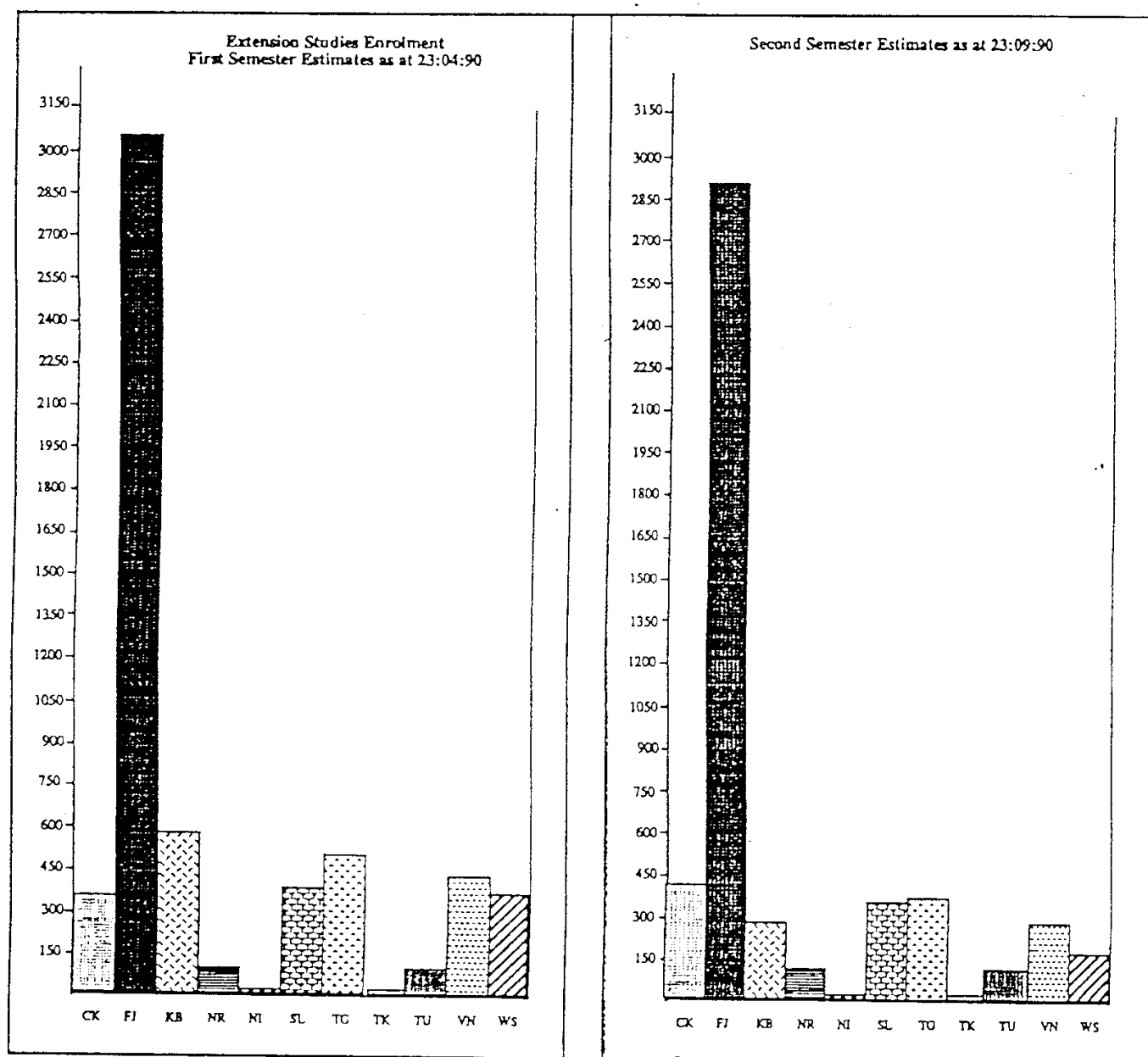
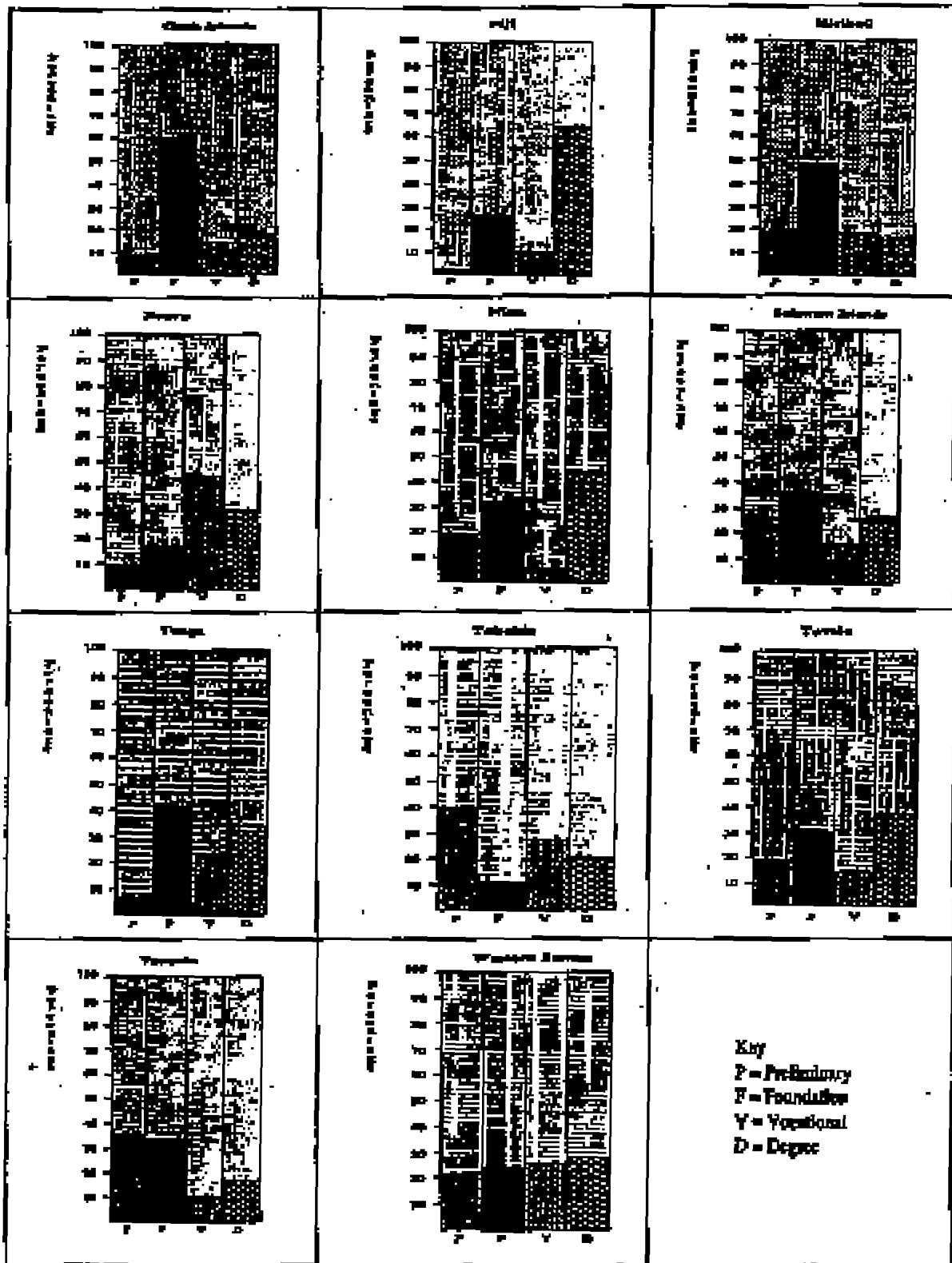


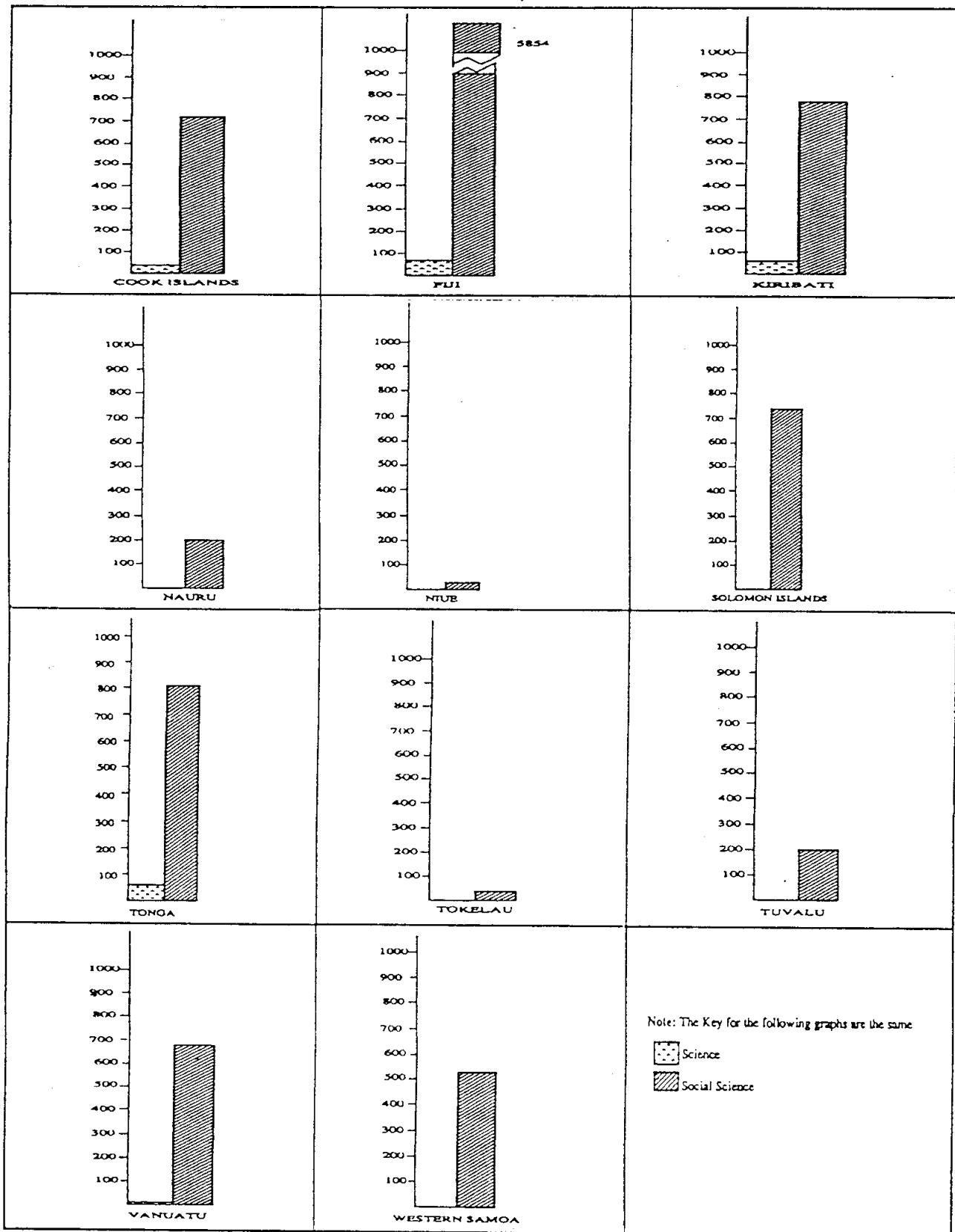
TABLE 10: Percentages of Total Course Enrolments by Country by Level in 1990



The above Table generally reflects the strengths or otherwise of the contributing national school systems. The Fiji graph, for example, with its very low Preliminary and relatively low Foundation enrollments, reflects a well-developed, widely available Form Six in the secondary system. This precludes much of the need for the USP Preliminary programme; has prepared students well for admission to the on-campus Foundation programme in the subsequent year. It also reflects the availability of Form Seven as a Foundation Programme alternative in some Fiji secondary schools. The lower enrollment of students in vocational programmes reflects perhaps the number of other tertiary institutions (e.g. Fiji Institute of Technology), which offer a variety of vocational training. The high level of distance enrollment at degree level almost certainly reflects some of the preceding factors, the high profile of USP within a host country and the stronger economy of Fiji within the region. The high Foundation level enrollments in Kiribati and the Cook Islands reflect the absence of a national Form Seven (making the USP extension Foundation programme the single available option). High Preliminary and Foundation enrollments in Vanuatu reflect the lack of local facilities and of Form Six to Seven options in the local schools. This in turn produces very low enrollments at the subsequent vocational and degree levels.

The following tables specific to science education show distance enrollment/provision patterns which give cause for concern, given the region's human resource development needs. The imbalance reflects a lack of existing in-country laboratory facilities for practical work; lack of USP funds to establish its own comprehensive facilities; lack of local qualified personnel to supervise mandatory practical work; and lack of adequate preparatory work in the various lower secondary school systems to produce potential enrollees.

TABLE 11: Student Enrolments: Social Science Against Science



## *Distance Education in Asia and the Pacific*

The requested differentiation between full and part-time distance enrollment is not easily provided. Extension Services records only course registrations; and the University's FTES conversions by definition do not reflect actual full-time enrollment. It is probable that in Semester One of 1990, however, approximately 600 course enrollments were carried by fulltime students. (60 x 10 in Foundation Studies).

Tables 12 through 21 have been taken from the University's Submission to the University Grants Committee, for the 1991-1993 Triennium.

TABLE 12: Share of Extension FTES in Each Country's Total FTES

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Cook Islands	77.4	77.1	73.3	68.7	72.7	77.7
Fiji	17.8	22.8	20.0	21.5	24.9	32.3
Kiribati	39.1	50.0	41.6	55.1	63.1	71.8
Nauru	58.3	40.0	63.6	95.4	76.0	0.0*
Niue	50.0	42.3	26.7	44.4	50.0	0.0*
Solomon Islands	22.8	22.9	26.0	29.3	28.9	40.9
Tokelau	56.3	46.2	30.8	30.4	25.0	46.7
Tonga	44.3	49.3	55.4	41.3	47.0	59.3
Tuvalu	35.1	15.4	24.0	22.2	48.3	51.3
Vanuatu	26.2	28.8	29.8	30.7	43.3	42.3
Western Samoa	42.4	32.1	35.1	30.5	36.4	46.8
TOTAL:	26.0	29.0	27.1	25.0	31.1	38.7

\* Note 1. Nauru and Niue had no enrollments in Semester One 1989 because of transport difficulties. In 1988, however, their distance enrolments comprised 79% and 50% respectively of their country's total FTES.

Note 2. Distance enrollments, as almost 39% of total FTES, peaked in 1989. The percentage has fallen slightly in 1990-91.

Note 3. In submitting this data to the UGC in 1990, the University drew attention to the fact that for most countries other than Fiji, study through Extension comprised more than 40% of all the FTES that they contributed. In the Solomons, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu the proportions have been increasing, and in the Cooks and Kiribati most markedly of all (over 70%). Even for Fiji, the proportion has been increasing since 1984.

## Mode of Study Comparisons

TABLE 13: Credit Enrollment (Head Count) by Mode of Study

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
UNDERGRADUATE *	5014	6837	8046	6367	6481	8933
Full-time	1469	1438	1685	1772	1602	1752
Part-time	471	378	452	466	475	568
Extension	3074	3419	3699	4129	4404	6613
POSTGRADUATE	52	36	64	106	61	66
TOTAL:	5066	5271	5900	6473	6542	8999

\* Includes Preliminary, Foundation and Diploma students.



The table shows that in the period 1984-89, the gross numbers of students (head count) taught by USP in credit courses increased from 5066 to 8999, a massive increase of almost four thousand students or 78%. By far the largest proportion of this increase was through the Extension mode which added 3539 students with a growth of 115%, although the fulltime and part-time student head counts also increased by 19 and 21% respectively.

TABLE 14: Credit Enrollment (Head Count) Percentages (%) (by Mode of Study)

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
UNDERGRADUATE	99.0	99.3	98.9	98.4	99.1	99.3
Full-time	29.0	27.3	28.6	27.4	24.5	19.5
Part-time	9.3	7.2	7.7	7.2	7.3	6.3
Extension	60.7	64.9	62.7	63.8	67.3	73.5
POSTGRADUATE	1.0	0.7	1.1	1.6	0.9	0.7
TOTAL HEAD COUNT	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

TABLE 15: Credit Enrollment (FTES by Mode of Study)

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
UNDERGRADUATE	2213	2219	2542	2718	2580	3204
Full-time	1469	1438	1685	1772	1602	1752
Part-time	157	126	151	155	158	189
Extension	587	655	706	791	820	1263
POSTGRADUATE	52	36	64	106	61	66
TOTAL FTES	2265	2255	2606	2824	2641	3270

The table shows that while the full-time and part-time students increased by 19% and 21 % respectively (adding 315 students), the Extension mode saw an increase of 115%, adding the equivalent of 676 students. While the proportion of full-time students declined from 65% to 54%, that for Extension increased significantly from around 26% to 39%.

TABLE 16: Credit Enrollment (FTES) Percentages (%) (by Mode of Study)

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
UNDERGRADUATE	97.7	98.4	97.5	96.2	97.7	98.0
Full-time	64.9	63.8	64.7	62.7	60.7	53.6
Part-time	6.9	5.6	5.8	5.5	6.0	5.8
Extension	25.9	29.0	27.1	28.0	31.0	38.6
POSTGRADUATE	2.3	1.6	2.5	3.8	2.3	2.0
TOTAL FTES	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Mode of Study Comparisons, by level**

TABLE 17: Credit Enrollment (FTES) Preliminary/Foundation

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Full-time	379	361	432	440	414	447
Science	209	218	267	254	238	268
Social Science	170	143	165	186	176	179
Extension	272	225	203	288	264	629
TOTAL:	651	586	635	728	778	1076

TABLE 18: Credit Enrollment Percentages Preliminary/Foundation

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Full-time	58.2	61.6	68.0	60.4	53.2	41.5
Science	32.1	37.2	42.0	34.9	30.6	24.9
Social Science	26.1	24.4	26.0	25.5	22.6	16.6
Extension	41.8	38.4	32.0	39.6	46.8	58.5
TOTAL:	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Within the Preliminary/Foundation programmes, the full-time student numbers increased by 68 students, mostly in science (Table 17). However, the extension students increased by 357 students, or by 131%, most of these being in Social Science. Significantly, the proportion taught through Extension increased from 42% to 59%.

TABLE 19: Credit Enrollment (FTES) Diploma/Certificate

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Full-time	259	223	346	335	266	370
Extension	56	99	167	188	137	168
TOTAL DIP/CERT FTES	315	322	513	523	403	538
Perc. Full-time %	82.2	69.3	67.4	64.1	66.0	68.8
Perc. Extension %	17.8	30.7	32.6	35.9	34.0	31.2

The Diploma/Certificate programmes show an overall increase of 223 students, a 71% increase over 1984. The full-time and extension both show about the same absolute increases of around 111 and 112, although the proportionate increase for Extension Diploma/Certificate programmes was 200% compared to only 43% for full-time students.

TABLE 20: Credit Enrolment (FTES) Degree

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Campus Degree	990	987	1060	1154	1078	1119
Full-time	884	890	955	1068	992	1030
Part-time	106	97	105	86	86	89
Extension Degree	259	331	336	315	319	466
Under-Graduate Deg.	1249	1318	1396	1469	1397	1585
Post-Graduate FTES	52	36	64	106	61	66

TABLE 21: Percentages of Total Degree FTES:

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Percentage Campus	76.1	72.9	72.6	73.3	73.9	67.8
Percentage Extension	19.9	24.4	23.0	20.0	21.9	28.2
Percentage Post-Grad.	4.0	2.6	4.4	6.7	4.2	4.0

As in the overall student enrollments, degree students taking courses through the Extension mode increased by 207, growing by 80% and taking their share of all degree students from 20% to 28%. Campus students increased by only 129 students, with a growth rate of 13%. Their overall share of degree students declined from 76% to 68%.

Figures on distance education graduates in this section are of limited value because students are recorded as Extension graduates only if they apply through Extension Services to graduate. They generally do (for logical reasons) only if they are completing the final course(s) of their programme of study in the distance mode. While a substantial number and range of courses are available at a distance, only a limited number and range of programmes are able to be completed fully and finally in this mode. Many USP graduates not classified as Extension, therefore, may either have begun their studies as a distance student and then transferred to one of the campuses, or have completed all but their final course(s) as a distance student, or have simultaneously studied throughout their programme as part-time in both modes. Finally, some USP graduates classified as Extension, moreover, may have pursued most of their studies on-campus and completed only their final course(s) as a distance student.

While foregoing considerations cause obvious difficulties with data on distance graduates? they arise quite positively from a policy of free movement available to all students between the two modes of study. With the modes' being regarded as equal in credit and quality, students may move to and fro without academic and administrative barriers. Only in those programmes unique to the distance mode, such as the Diplomas in Librarianship and

### *Distance Education in Asia and the Pacific*

Legal Studies, and the Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language, are Extension graduate numbers not able to be subsumed in internal graduate data.

The breakdown for 1988-1991 is as follows:

	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	
Certificates	102	118	84	91	
PGCE	10	?	17	6	
Diplomas	20	29	23	58	
Degree	<u>1</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>4</u>	5	
	<u>123</u>	<u>158</u>	<u>128</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>419</u>

Note 1. PGCE, the Postgraduate Certificate in Education

Note 2. The 1991 figures do not include all of this year's students who will complete their studies but who are awaiting final results.

As Extension enrollments during this short period were 41,959, the graduate total indicates the extent to which students do move between modes and choose to/or must complete their studies on-campus.

### *International Affiliation and Co-operation in Distance Education*

USP is an institutional member of the International Council for Distance Education (ICDE), the Australia and South Pacific External Studies Association (ASPESA) and is currently, in collaboration with the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE), seeking to establish a South Pacific Association of Distance Education (SPADE). Individual members of staff hold membership in the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) and the Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ).

The Vice-Chancellor of USP is an associate member of the Council of the University of Papua New Guinea (a mutual arrangement), the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee, the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, the Councils of the National University of Samoa and SICHE, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the South Pacific Organisations Co-ordinating Committee (SPOCC) and the South Pacific Forum.

Co-operative relationships of many kinds exist between USP, other institutions and international agencies. These tend generally to be department, discipline or programme specific. Their multifarious nature is perhaps unsurprising in view of the facts that, in statutory terms, USP is itself an international entity; that 40% of its staff (these mainly at senior/academic level) are citizens of countries outside the South Pacific, bringing with them to USP many international contacts; that a developing institution in a developing world appropriately looks beyond itself for particular resources; that aid-funding in itself can create institutional linkages, in terms of the conditions adhering to donation; that, in an increasing number of academic research and teaching areas, the University is establishing international expertise (e.g. in the Environmental and Marine Sciences, Pacific and Development Studies).

Examples of linkages which relate particularly to the University's extension activities, however, would in 1990-1991 include the following: with Simon Fraser University and the South Pacific Commission for the development of Nutrition Training materials;

with the French University of the Pacific (L'Université Française du Pacifique) in a formal Accord for support of Francophone students; with the University College of Central Queensland and the AIDAB Centre for Pacific Development and Training for the development of a diploma level course in Economics; with Massey University and the University of Papua New Guinea for the examining of their students resident in the USP region; with numerous New Zealand and Australian universities for staff development attachments; with UNICEF and the Pacific Preschool Council in the development of a distance Diploma in Early Childhood Education; with the Commonwealth of Learning in research, staff training and materials-sharing activities.

The external aid/support profile of USP is exceedingly complex in that grants are numerous; made by many donors and various types of donors; may be direct to the institution for regional application, or indirect to national USP ventures through bi-lateral aid to respective member governments. It can be recurrent or project-related; it can be financial, technical or instructional. As an indicative profile, however, a summary of external aid directly received by USP in 1991 is provided.

TABLE 22: Statement of Aid Income and Expenditure 1991

	FS	FS
Income	12,356,400	
Expenditure		
Budgetary	1,973,000	
Capital Development	2,264,700	
Project Support:		
Staffing Assistant	2,506,966	
Staff Development	586,588	
Other Projects	5,025,147	
		12,356,400

### *Foreign Aid*

A few examples of the diverse practical ways in which the direct and bilateral aid programmes have supported the University's extension activities in 1991 are new Extension Services Headquarters, Laucala Bay campus (Australia); new Library Building, Solomon Islands Centre (New Zealand); Early Childhood Education post, Extension Services Headquarters (UNICEF); Science Laboratory Equipment, Vanuatu Centre (Canada); Library Assistant posts, Vanuatu and Tonga Centres (New Zealand); Instructional Design and Mathematics Consultants, Extension Services Headquarters (Commonwealth of Learning); Preschool Co-ordinator post, Extension Services Headquarters (Nederland); Nutrition Training Project (Canada); Distance Education and Summer Schools Scholarships, (CFTC); Science Co-ordinator's post, Vanuatu Centre (France); Regional Survey of Science Teaching Facilities (Australia); Small Business Skills Consultant, Western Samoa Centre (New Zealand); Continuing Education Volunteer, Fiji Centre (Japan); Staff Development and Instructional Design Workshops, Port Vila, Suva, Sydney (Commonwealth of Learning).

Table 23: Aid Distribution by Donor Country/Organization

	Budget Support	Capital Aid	Staffing Assistant	Staff Development	Other Project Aid	Total Fiji\$
Australia	1,191,000	1,060,000	812,823	356,568	641,510	4,061,900
Canada			82,693		465,707	548,400
France			86,000		102,000	188,000
Japan			120,000		274,000	394,000
N.Z.	782,000	404,700	328,200	66,270	668,830	2,250,000
U.K.			861,250	163,750	90,000	1,115,000
U.S.A.			51,000		871,000	922,000
C.F.T.C.			165,000		187,500	352,500
EDI/WB					229,000	229,000
E.C.		800,000			1,228,000	2,028,000
U.N.F.P.A.					267,600	267,600
				Total AID Income		12,356,400

For USP, growth and expansion in terms of FTES, both internally and externally, is not a priority. Indeed, the policy in overall terms is for consolidation, control and the enhancement of quality. The University Council has imposed specific growth-limits, at least for the triennium (1991-1993); these are being strictly observed and will be reviewed by the next University Grants Committee for the 1994-1996 triennium. The Grants Committee's advice in October 1990, which became accepted as a future policy guideline, was that the University's 'standards are certain to fall further if it continues indefinitely to impose additional loads on already seriously overburdened staff'; that 'in terms of overseas aid, USP is likely to find it increasingly hard to attract such large sums as in the past'; that 'the University must ensure that the quality of existing services is not sacrificed in the interests of expansion, and that new initiatives are not introduced unless and until the additional and available resources needed for their successful operation on a continuing basis'; that 'special and particular attention' be given to the urgent needs of Extension Studies.

The recommendation, accepted by the Council, was that no significant increases in enrollment numbers should be allowed in 1991. Any increases in 1992 and 1993 should be kept to an absolute maximum of 5%. Thus maximum FTES enrolments for the three years would be 3,500, 3,675 and 3,755 respectively.

As the University Council comprises majority representation from member governments, the non-expansion has clear political support regionally. The freeze on

expansion and call for consolidation come after the seven years of a frozen budget, a frozen staff establishment, soaring numbers and a 40% F\$ devaluation. In response to the new policy, approximately 4,500 distance course enrollments were declined in Semester One 1991.

The projected increase in distance enrollments for the 1991-93 triennium was as follows in 1990:

TABLE 24: Projections of Extension Enrollments (FTES)

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Estimate 1 (Total FTES)	1263	1496	1749	2022	2314
Estimate 2 (Total FTES)	1263	1398	1533	1669	1804
Regression (Total FTES)	1263	1199	1312	1425	1538
Number of Courses	151	160	186	202	229

Estimate 1 (a high estimate of 83 % growth between 1989 and 1993) assumed that the average annual aggregate FTES increase for all students between 1985 and 1989 would continue, and that the proportion of Extension students would continue to change linearly as it has from 1986 to 1989 (so that by 1993, they would be 54% of the total). Estimate 2 simply continued the 1984-1989 average annual increase of 135 in Extension FTES to 1993 (giving a 43% increase between 1989 and 1993). The regression estimate fitted a linear trend to the Extension FTES figures for the different programme levels between 1984 and 1989 and extrapolates the aggregate to 1993. Clearly little of this will be able to occur.

*Problems and Issues*

The following is a personal assessment and evaluation of hindering factors. In *Distance Education at the University of the South Pacific*, the Commonwealth of Learning's review of USP's first twenty years, the international consultant team observes the context as follows:

There can be no other part of the world with as many challenges to the development of effective distance education as the region covered by the USP.... The problems which other institutions have to some degree, USP has on a massive scale.

The factors of this particular developing world context, which impinge on the effective implementation of distance education, are distance, regionalism, money and demand.

The common obstacles presented by distance itself in all distance education endeavours are massive for USP for one obvious and simple reason: the geographical vastness of its catchment/client region. This vastness factor is exacerbated by unreliable transport systems erratic communications technology, small communities' dispersal on minuscule land masses remote even from one another and from their national Centre.

Regionalism, on the one hand, is an enriching unique feature, but on the other hand, it presents organisational difficulties, educational constraints, multiple agendas and learning

needs.

Common financial concerns affecting education internationally are writ large for a provider dependent for its survival on aid-supported proprietors for 90% of its recurrent budget; on Australia and New Zealand for the further 10%; and on global aid-politics for its year to year non-recurrent budget. Long term planning; academic development and commitment; the recruitment and retention of experienced staff; costly equipment purchases and general capital expenditure are continually and/or underlyingly fraught with insecurity. From 1984-1990 the University operated on a frozen budget, diminished further within that time, in addition to inflation, by a major devaluation of the Fiji dollar.

Demand has exacerbated the financial situation. The student roll increased over these years by 44%. Separating internal from external increases, enrollments expressed as FTES grew by 19% on-campus and in Extension Studies by 115%. In real terms as a result, recurrent expenditure per FTES fell by 32%. Not surprisingly, these general factors distance, regionalism, money and demand - affect the external programme in quite specific ways.

Course materials and their range are limited by these factors. The effects of USP's developing world budget have been a frozen staffing establishment for the past seven years, staff salaries which are internationally uncompetitive, and frustrations with under-resourcing and work conditions. Academic staff turnover is, therefore, exceedingly high (60% of staff have held their posts for less than two years). The establishment at times must operate on 30% vacancy. Clearly, the long-term development and professional design of course materials are severely constrained by such unstable conditions. A course writer might leave during a development or revision process, be difficult to replace and not in time for process-completion. His/her eventual replacement is likely to come with little or no experience of the region and distance teaching, or with preferred other styles, course texts or focus. The results are that courses long due for revision often re-run unrevised for several semesters; that Extension's Course Developers - likewise too few on the ground - must often rush materials to production with little design input; that departments can make, with certainty, only short-term commitments to Extension course offerings (new, current and revisions).

Economic and distance considerations together combine to constrain materials-design in other ways. Our average distance student cannot be expected to meet the costs of expensive basic texts or additional materials other than print or audio cassettes. (Although the USP Centre can provide access to computers and VCRs, distance and islands-transport prevent this access from being general). Course design which fully integrates various media is precluded, therefore, in the interests of equity in the course market. Economic and educational factors constrain the provision and quality of external science teaching. No practical science courses are offered at degree level, and enrollments at lower levels amount to less than 3% of total enrollment. The constraints are a lack of suitable laboratories, either at the Centres or in local schools, and a lack of qualified in-country staff to conduct practical sessions.

Support services are also influenced by distance, money, demand and the regional context which create impediments like the following to effective learner-support. Some students, because of distance and/or cost will seldom or never get to their national USP Centre, thus conducting their course of study entirely at a distance, Centre libraries cannot offer outer-islands lending, through lack of qualified staff and sufficient books, in-country transport options and associated costs can preclude much outreach by Extension Centre staff;



qualified Local Tutors cannot be found in many subject areas; tropical conditions and power supplies which fluctuate damage technical equipment (for which there may be no local servicing); Centre visits and Summer Schools are costly exercises, requiring aid-fund support for which demand exceeds supply; the satellite network, reliant on local land-lines, sometimes fails in accordance with P&T resources, or is impaired by voice-distortion from the HF radio sites. Staff and students are, therefore, very reluctant to support tutorials, although the system is available to them twenty-four hours a day. Assignment turn around remains a major support problem, hampered by distance rather than by money; most work is marked on-campus (for consistent standards and/or a lack of qualified local staff); it, therefore, must run the gamut of regional transport systems. Islands shipping to the nearest Centre may be regular but only monthly; mailbag services thence to Fiji are regular but only weekly; assignments, course materials and even examinations can be off-loaded at any time by our servicing airlines, in deference to higher priority cargo. These time-lags and hazards are obviously encountered twice - inward and outward in the despatch process. Most students, therefore, face final examinations without having received back all or most of their coursework.

The attitudes of teaching staff towards distance education vis-a-vis face to face is a problem. At USP, as elsewhere, old habits and values die hard - or, perhaps, USP's being young and dual-mode from the outset makes it more apt to say, imported habits easily flourish. Although, as elsewhere, exceptional teachers do abound, valuing their distance work and students as equally important, the competing ethos is that real academic work is conducted on-campus, by way of personal research and teachers with an audience. The particular problems for USP in the existence of this attitude are that the distance education programme and students are, nonetheless, such a large proportion of its institutional commitment; they are not an ancillary or optional obligation as they can be in more traditional universities; that the regional mission of USP depends significantly on effective outreach education. Indeed, both the Renwick Report and the 1990 UGC Report to Council chose to remind the establishment of this fact:

Many universities have enlarged or added to their extension functions during the last twenty years ... What makes USP different ... is the high percentage of students studying for Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees through Extension modes. What makes it unique is the contribution its extension programmes make to the reality of USP as a regional University.

The delivering of Education through Extension is at the heart of USP's role as a regional university.

USP's holistic or integrated organisation of dual-mode education is both virtuous and dangerous. Its dangers are informal and, therefore, difficult to address. It bespeaks equal care for on-campus and distance modes and a collective institutional responsibility for outreach. It creates in practice, however, few day-to-day champions and defenders of distance causes. It attempts to administer a non-orthodox, new kind of institutional mission along the traditional lines of an orthodox model.

It courts the dichotomy which can arise between the theory and practice of integrated, collective management: that integration easily becomes dispersion, with control, responsibility, accountability and mandate so blurred in community that managing for change becomes dishearteningly complex.

There are further impediments to the effective implementation of distance education in this developing world; these could be said to relate to colonial attitudes. These seem to exist as strongly within the region and its citizens as without the region. Addressing the extra-regional attitudes first, colonialism and entrepreneurship tend nowadays to come in tandem, making assumptions about the Third World which are culturally/educationally arrogant. Developed world institutions in some parts of the globe presume that developing regions, per se, must be in need of them; that whatever they have to offer will be better or good enough. USP quite frequently turns away salespeople offering academic products in subject areas in which USP itself holds international reputation; offering distance education materials to an institution whose external development experience often far exceeds their own. This is not at all to say that USP has no interest in course acquisition from other providers; this is only to say that developing should not be (but often is) presumed to mean amateur or any seller's market. A quality distance programme in a developed country is not always a quality distance programme for the South Pacific. Yet through long colonial habit (and the wider human tendency to see the exotic as more prestigious), some regional governments buy in educational programmes which may be more expensive, less relevant in content and less appropriately taught than those available from USP. Both in the imported courses provided in-country and those which are accessed by physical re-location, there are curriculum issues with human resource development ironies: students studying the law of other countries' legal systems; not studying the Pacific environment to become regional geographers, Pacific History/Politics or Literature to become regional teachers; not studying Tropical Agriculture, Pacific Nutrition or Land Tenure. Such students inadvertently are being trained for export. Not always are these choices freely made within the market. Increasingly, aid to developing regions comes with tighter strings and more obvious entrepreneurship. These can preclude shopping for the most relevant programme, as bilateral funding is channelled back into the donor country. There must be concern, also, about scholarship-funding from aid, which in its application, can remove from a developing region (and thus from a USP) the most promising of its young people. Thus, colonialism and entrepreneurship from outside the region and traces of colonial cringe within it can combine ultimately to impoverish the region: its self-esteem, its local resource development and its young people themselves.

It would be valid to say that USP's distance education programme does require improvement in the quality of resource materials provided to students, and in access to these; the quality of support services available to students, and in access to these; the quality of academic and production support provided to course writers and teachers; the quality of administrative systems both at Extension Services Headquarters and the Centres, and the interface between these and the University's wider systems. These improvement needs are observably not unique to USP, but they are consequent at USP of quite unique factors: frozen funding, frozen staffing, soaring enrollments and regional conditions.

Despite these on-going challenges, however, there still is much to celebrate in the quality and effectiveness of USP's distance education programme. Against those odds described in the Renwick Report as being 'on a massive scale', the institution has produced and continues to produce - courses at least equal in quality to Much elsewhere. It has become a course vendor over recent years, not from entrepreneurial aims but in response to demand. It has honed within itself, over twenty years' endeavour, many professional skills in distance education. An unrelenting context is one of the finest training grounds, and this

one in particular demands patience and daily commitment. Extra-regional agencies of distance education would be advised to come with courage, humility and respect for its features.

For Pacific Islands students, whose environment is USP's own, the programme content, design, and support are planned responsive to their needs. Moreover, a pattern is now quantifiably emerging that USP trained students, more so than others, tend to remain in the Pacific returning their skills to the community. Such retention is a dire development necessity in all professional/vocational fields.

Auguring well for the future quality of USP's region-wide distance education are the further facts that the funding freeze has been lifted in 1991, with the Finance Ministers' decision for a 30% increase; that expansion of student numbers has at the same time been constrained; that distance education and extension support functions have been accorded initial priority in the increased level of funding; that many resources which will be freed by the withdrawal of on-campus Foundation Studies (almost 25% of 1989's internal FTES) are being applied to enhancement of the distance equivalent programme; that the major review of USP's distance education performance - funded by the Commonwealth of Learning and a full year in production - will shortly be received with its nineteen substantial recommendations; that the will continues strong to endure practical difficulties, to improve institutional performance in enhanced, expanded programmes; that the students keep on coming, in their thousands year by year, seeking distance study options as their only or more desirable means of access.

In his farewell address to the people of Kiribati, at the Graduation Ceremony held in Tarawa this year, Vice-chancellor Geoffrey Caston reviewed USP's special nature: its cultural wealth, its fields of excellence, the ways in which it serves. After his eight years of leading the University, it seems appropriate to accord his view the summary place:

USP offers to the people of Kiribati and the other countries of the region a university education and university research which are designed for the needs of the island countries themselves. As any international university should, it surveys the whole world of international scholarship and research, and selects and adapts from it those parts which are of most use to the particular communities it serves. It may not be possible to provide, for such a small population, economically viable programmes in all of the areas of higher learning, such as specialised engineering, architecture and so on. But I am certain that in those areas of higher education which we do cover, (and that is most of them) we provide far more effectively for the needs of Pacific Island students than the universities overseas which are the only alternative....

The quality of the work of this University is seen in the Commonwealth and elsewhere to be quite outstanding when compared to that in many other universities in other developing countries. Moreover, it is an international university of a kind which is almost without parallel elsewhere. Not just Regional but truly international, with its students drawn from many nations, small though they may be, and its staff drawn from even more. The importance of this should not be underestimated. Many of the values for which all universities should stand - and only a few do are those which transcend nationality and race. This has resulted in the creation at USP of an intellectual community of a kind I have not seen elsewhere. The Solomon Islander, the Tongan, the Fijian, the Indian, the i-Kiribati or indeed the European or American student coming to the University of the South Pacific has an important educational advantage which is denied to, say, the Australian or the British student going to a university in their own country. In the same way, the Samoan or American or British or i-Kiribati scholar working at USP finds himself or herself constantly challenged and stimulated by contact and even conflict with scholars from other cultures than his own.

## *Distance Education in Asia and the Pacific*

The University shares with the countries that make it up the extremely unusual characteristic in the world of being both very very small and very very big. In my experience, its smallness helps it provide a caring and intimate environment for learning, while its bigness and immense diversity can enlarge the outlook and the capacity of all those, both students and staff, who come to work there.

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### *Research Activities*

Although distance education at USP has always been an institutional rather than a sectional endeavour, research into aspects of distance education has tended to be undertaken only by the staff of Extension Services. To some extent perhaps, this is understandable in that career imperatives for academic teaching staff require that research reputation be established and maintained within their subject discipline and not in the field of teaching itself; in that the development, maintenance and support of distance education are the particular and primary tasks of Extension Services personnel.

Of the 120 substantive Extension staff members - located on the Laucala Campus and in the 10 USP Centres - 37 hold academic contracts. Although the tasks-requirements of these positions are markedly different from those held in teaching departments, the capability for and requirement of research still apply.

The on-going difficulty during the recent years of greatly expanding enrollment has been understaffing for the major administrative and support tasks which are immediate and daily. Pursuit of personal research activity has been, and continues to be, therefore, a luxury within working days. As J. Wallace has indicated in 'Extension Studies at the University of the South Pacific: An agenda for research', there is a wide and rich research field as yet untilled.

Over two decades, many research projects have been initiated by Extension Services. Of these, many have foundered through lack of sustainable resources (time and funding) or because of high staff turnover. For the many that have been completed, however, there has been an unfortunate lack of any central recording or systematic filing. Those that have been intermittently recorded are not accompanied by the details of the research team size requested.

The following list is not at all comprehensive, therefore. From those research projects known and recorded, a selection has been made with the intention of reflecting a useful range of interests.

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"Study of the Distance Education Institution in the South Pacific".

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"A Survey of Distance Education in Asia and the Pacific".

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"Survey of English Language Acquisition Programmes available in Australia".

Joint project between the Commonwealth of Learning and Extension Services, USP. COL funded (\$A23,000). Consultancy to be undertaken and completed in the first half of 1992.

"Survey of Science Teaching through Extension".

Research study to be completed December 1991. Survey Team of 4; funding of F\$20,000. Monograph to be published early in 1992.

"A study of the Performance of Extension Students who use Centre facilities".

Data collection and analysis completed. The report will be finished in 1992. Research Team of 3.

"Preliminary Investigation to Determine the Effects of Peer Group Tutorials in Reducing Drop-outs in Extension Studies Courses".

Phase One completed and report pending. Research Team of 3.

"Science Teaching at a Distance: The Effects of Using Audio Visual Aids for Practicals". In abeyance in 1991 for lack of funding.

"Measuring the Common Characteristics of Adult Learners Studying in the Distance Mode at USP".

Field Survey phase completed. Team of 2.

## **SRI LANKA**

*D.E.M Kotalawala*

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### THE NATIONAL CONTEXT FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

Serious attempts in Sri Lanka to provide education through the distance mode is of recent origin. This was largely due to the fact that a fairly wide network of primary and secondary schools and opportunities for tertiary education, seemingly catering adequately to the needs of the population, the economy and the infrastructure of the state, were available in the country at the time of independence in 1948. The phenomenal expansion that took place after independence in the school system with the special thrust on educational opportunity for all and the introduction of free education and instruction in the mother tongue were responsible for spreading educational facilities even to the remotest parts of the island.

Distance education, however, became widely accepted at the national level as an important strategy to counteract the inadequacy of the traditional system of education to keep abreast of the new demands. Distance Education is seen as a means of passing on the benefits of recent advances in communication technology to the masses and thereby actualising the concept of a learning society.

Programmes for the professional training of teachers in service, the retraining of workers made necessary by rapidly expanding technological development, training unskilled workers already in the labor force, and providing continuing education facilities for acquiring competency in English or for a second chance education to school leavers and dropouts were already in use. Distance education is recognized as a cost effective means of achieving these goals.

The British left a legacy of a colonial economy based on export oriented plantation agriculture developed with British personnel and immigrant Indian labour. There was stagnating domestic agriculture and no industrialisation. Such an economy made few demands on local skills and labour.

The education system that the colonial rulers established reinforced the inequalities brought about by the unequal socio-economic development. After independence in 1948, massive programmes of social welfare, free health facilities, food subsidies and free education were some of the measures that brought relief to low income groups. These welfare measures resulted in a high physical quality of life in the seventies. During this same period there was a nationalist based restructuring of the school system. The opening up of central schools, a scheme of granting scholarships, changing the medium of instruction in all primary schools to the mother tongue and its progressive extension to the secondary schools and universities, the establishment of more universities, and the dismantling of the denominational school system brought about major reversals in the colonial education policy.

The number of schools increased from 4537 in 1945 to 8937 in 1963 and to 9494 by 1971, leading to a phenomenal expansion in educational opportunity. With the extension of instruction in the mother tongue to Grades 11 and 12 in 1958 and to universities in 1960, enrollment at both levels rose dramatically.

Equally dramatic was the change in the composition of the student population at universities. By 1967 the proportion of rural students had increased to 73% from 19% in 1950. Women students who amounted to 10.1 % in 1942 at the inception of the university rose to 40.3% in 1967. These changes resulted in an unemployment crisis within two decades of independence. The labour force increased by 2.7% to 3% from the sixties although employment opportunities grew at less than 2%.

This "mismatch between education and employment" as the ILO pointed out in 1971 was largely due to the failure of the educational system to pay adequate attention to technical and vocational skills and positive attitudes towards work as much as to the failure of an undiversified, non-industrialized economy to absorb them. The mismatch was obvious even at higher levels as a shortage of skilled manpower existed, along with unemployment among the educated.

The establishment of the External Services Agency of the University of Sri Lanka in 1972, the Sri Lanka Institute of Distance Education in 1976, and the Open University of Sri Lanka in 1980 form an integral part of an exercise in adjusting higher education and continuing education opportunities in a cost effective manner towards meeting the employment needs of the country and the educational aspirations of employed and unemployed youth who could not find places in other higher education institutions. For an island with a total area of 65415 sq km, a population of 14.8 million as enumerated in the 1981 census of the Republic of Sri Lanka means a population density of 230 persons per square kilometer. The 1981 population figure was an increase of 8.2 million over the 1946 census figures. Population projections for 1989 based on census data and vital registration statistics was 16.8 million and it is expected to reach 20 million by year 2000. According to the 1981 census data 50.9% were males. The ethnic distribution was 73.95 Sinhalese, 18.22% Ceylon and Indian Tamils, 7.05% Moors and .78% others. The demographic indicators seem to suggest a demographic transition resulting in the simultaneous fall of birth rates and death rates and a slow decline in the rate of population growth.

Shifting to the National Languages (Sinhala and Tamil) as the media of instruction in schools was the second recommendation made by the Kannangara Committee which initiated free education in 1945. It was an attempt to bring about equality of opportunity for access to education. While vernacular education had always been free, English schools were now free as well. The majority of the children who went to free primary schools and studied in the vernacular did not benefit from this, however. They seldom entered a free English school for secondary education at the end of primary education in the vernacular.

The mother tongue was adopted as the medium of instruction in all schools commencing with Grade 1 in 1945. In the 1950's, the medium of instruction beyond primary became an issue and the progressive extension of Sinhalese and Tamil continued until they were introduced as the media of instruction into the secondary schools between 1953 and 1959.

By 1970 the languages policy in education was further extended by making it possible to follow a large number of university courses (except in faculties of Medicine and Engineering) through the national languages. It enabled a large section of the rural population to enter universities and the main stream of public service. In 1950 the majority of university students, in fact 81%, was from English educated professional families. In 1967, 70% were from village and town council areas.

As a result of free education and the change in the medium of instruction to the mother tongue, there was a significant expansion in enrollment at the secondary school and tertiary levels. These policies were also largely responsible for reducing urban/rural and gender disparities in literacy rates and in raising the general educational level of the population. English continues to be used in the Medical, Engineering and Science Faculties of Universities. The Open University also follows this policy in relation to degree programmes in the Faculties of Natural Science and Engineering Technology. To facilitate this all Universities offer intensive English courses to new entrants. Most programmes are offered in all three media at University level, however.

### *Policy and Organisational Structure*

The White Paper of 1987 took a comprehensive view of the education system as it existed and highlighted the inability of the employment sector to absorb even a fraction of the educated youth seeking employment, and the overemphasis on examinations and educational qualifications as recruitment came to be based on increasingly higher paper qualifications.

The White Paper recommended a restructuring of general education; the introduction of school clusters; pre-service training of teachers; creation of a district teaching service, changes in curriculum and evaluation methods upgrading the teaching of English in school; introduction of a three year technical stream parallel to grades 9, 10 and 11 in schools, and emphasized the role of the Open University in the tertiary education system. Introduction of life skills into the curriculum; continuous assessment in schools; establishing other tertiary level institutions to provide those not entering the university with opportunities for higher education in more flexible courses, the establishment of a National Education Council as an advisory body to government and a technical education authority; are a few of the other recommendations. Several of these recommendations were implemented and others are being considered.

In Sri Lanka the formal education system is comprised of three subsystems; general technical education, vocational education and higher education. The different provinces of the island have the same structure of general education. The present system of five years of primary, three years of junior secondary, three years of senior secondary and two years of collegiate level of education (5 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 2) was implemented in 1985. The collegiate level has the three main streams; Arts, Science and Commerce. Enrollment data in schools between 1953 and 1988 show an increase of 92%.

Enrollment rates in universities in Sri Lanka are very low even in comparison with some of the developing countries of the world. At the time of the inception of the University of Ceylon in 1942 enrollment stood at 904. A steady increase occurred thereafter with numbers rising to 2000 by 1950 and to well over 3000 by 1960 with the two new Universities, Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara (est. 1959), admitting students to degree programmes in Sinhala. In 1967 the grand total was 14,779. This figure remained constant for the next twelve years until it increased to 15,656 in 1979. Within a period of thirty-seven years the increase had been only seventeen fold.

From 1976 to 1984, the share of the GNP allocated for education (both recurrent and capital) had decreased from around 3% to 2.3%. There was a decline in recurrent expenditure during the same period from 2.91% in 1976 to 1.91% in 1984. Of this total

recurrent expenditure on education the share diverted to higher education had increased only marginally from 9.45% in 1979 to 10.85% in 1984. From 1980 to 1982 there was actually a drop. As a percentage of the GNP the resources diverted to recurrent expenditure on higher education annually has remained static at around 0.22% to 0.29% between 1979 and 1988. It is in this context that the Open University came to be established in 1980.

In 1989 there were twenty-nine divisional offices under which were a total of 511 post offices and 3330 sub post offices. In addition there were sixty-seven Agency Post Offices as well. A considerable extension of post office and sub post office facilities took place in 1988 as a result of the establishment of new settlements in the country under the Mahaweli Development project and in villages set up under the Garnudawa (village reawakening) programme. Statistics of inland postal facilities in relation to the population in 1988 showed that a population of 16,659,000 was served at the rate of one post office or sub post office for every 4305 persons. Land area served by each post office was 17 sq. km. on the average. However the area was as low as 2.6 sq. km. in Colombo and as high as 118.9 sq. km. in Mullaitivu. This largely explains the extensive utilization of print media in all distance education programmes in Sri Lanka.

Distance education in Sri Lanka has still not started utilizing telephone facilities as they are available only at the level of private subscribers. During the last few years the number of telephones in the country has doubled. In 1983 the number of telephones per 100 persons was 0.48. This increased to 0.54 in 1987. More than half the telephones installed are in the district of Colombo.

The newly passed Telecommunications Bill provides for the establishment of private telecommunication services. The Telecommunications Department will be the licensing and supervisory body and will ensure the maintenance of fair practices. It will also continue to be one of the telecommunication operators. A joint venture company to be set up by a Singaporean firm and the National Development Bank proposes to establish a data communication network. With such a facility the use of teleconferencing and telephone tutoring in distance education could become a reality, at least between study centres.

Between 1966 and 1971 the school radio service was renamed the Education Service with a greater degree of flexibility and freedom in its approach to programmes. Emphasis came to be placed on evening, late evening and night broadcasts. Morning broadcasts over Education Service came to be confined to school terms. This was a deliberate attempt to attract a new type of adult audience. Publications began to be sold to listeners and it is recorded that in certain subject areas the corporation sold more than 20,000 copies in one month (Gunaratna 1982). Between 1971 and 1977 broadcasting was specially used for the purpose of introducing the new curriculum and the new examination structure introduced into the primary and secondary schools. Expansion of medium wave transmission and the inauguration of regional stations between 1977 and 1982 coincided with the commencement of many informal and non-formal education programmes alongside the formal ones.

An important development during this period was the commencement of broadcasts to thousands of students who enrolled in the University of Sri Lanka External Service Agency established in 1972. Most of the broadcasts were in the fields of Education, Law, and English. The SLBC provided the OUSL with fifteen minutes air time free of charge at the beginning. This came to be extended to thirty minutes each of Sinhala, Tamil and English broadcasts from March 1986. However the OUSL does not use radio broadcasts for teaching purposes. The themes selected are of interest to both students and the general public. The

SLBC has now commenced FM broadcasts for all services and has extended medium wave transmission too. These should benefit educational broadcasts in many ways. The number of radio receivers estimated to be in use in 1988 was 3,224,323 (Statistical Pocket Book, 1990).

Sri Lanka Rupavahini (TV) Corporation was established under Act No.6 of the Parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in 1982, to oversee television broadcasting within Sri Lanka, to promote and develop the service, and maintain high standards in programming in the public interest. The regular educational transmission commenced on May 16 1983. The programmes planned for classroom use are prepared in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Special holiday transmission programmes are produced and telecast for the use of students, school leavers and adult population. Several other series of non-formal and informal programmes are produced and telecast in the evening for both students and adults.

Rupavahini's total telecast time devoted to ETV has increased from 240 hours in 1983 to 479 hours in 1989. This was a little over 16% of the total telecast time in 1989 and an increase of 46.5% over the previous year. In 1989, the time devoted to programmes in the local languages Sinhala and Tamil also increased considerably and consequently English programme time, which remained above 50% until 1987, dropped to 38.9%. Also in 1989, ETV programme time during morning school hours increased to 479.3 hours, from 327 hours in 1988, an increase of 47%. ETV has great potential in Sri Lanka as it reaches all parts of the country and the quality of reception is good. The number of licensed TV sets in 1989 was 43,000. However the distribution is very unequal, with one set for every fifteen persons in Colombo in contrast to one set for 195 persons in Vavuniya district. This, along with high cost of buying broadcasting time, has constrained the use of Rupavahini for regular telecasting of OUSL programmes.

Printing facilities are available in Sri Lanka in government, semi government and private organizations. In the government sector there is the Government Printing Press and the State Printing Corporation. The OUSL has its own press. It is equipped with offset machinery catering to all the printing requirements of the University. It undertakes and produces full colour printing with the help of the available resources. The press usually receives camera ready copies from the academic divisions. The demand on the OUSL press is sometimes more than it can handle. This is likely to continue in view of the fact that revision of course material and development of new programmes occur side by side with demands for the reprinting of already available course materials. The National Institute of Education also has its own press.

## **HISTORY AND BACKGROUND**

The history of distance education in Sri Lanka at the government level goes back to 1972 when the Distance Education Branch of the Ministry of Education started the correspondence teacher education programme aimed at training older primary school teachers lacking previous professional training. This programme consisted of printed lessons sent to the teachers in their schools; weekly radio broadcasts; and residential sessions held during school vacations. Students were admitted to this programme in 1972 and 1973 and the programme was discontinued in 1976.



The second institution associated with distance education, the External Service Agency of the University of Sri Lanka was also established in 1972. This year marked the amalgamation of the then existing universities to form a single University of Sri Lanka. Prior to this, external degrees were available at the separate universities of Colombo, Peradeniya, Vidodaya and Vidyalandara. However the universities did not provide any tuition to the students who registered for the external degrees. Instead they recognized certain private institutions for conducting classes for their students. In 1972 when the single University of Sri Lanka was established, a single central agency for all external and extension services was also established. This innovation led to significant changes in the services provided to the external students.

The External Services Agency (ESA) provided correspondence lessons, face to face sessions, and residential courses in association with the Ministry of Education Correspondence Education Branch to external students who enrolled in the Post Graduate Diploma in Education programme. It started regular radio broadcasts for these students and for those who had registered for the external LL. B. degree programme or professional English courses. The use of broadcasting facilities by the ESA became an important aspect of educational broadcasting in the 1970's, so much so that the whole exercise was considered "the fore-runner of the Open University concept" (Gunaratne 1982) by the then Director of Educational broadcasting.

The ESA registered external students for programmes in Arts, Commerce, Law, Science, Education (Post Graduate), English and Pre-School Education. Correspondence lessons were used only in the education programme. It made extensive use of radio broadcasts along with face to face contact sessions. A total number of 46,000 students registered with the ESA between 1973 and 1978.

In 1976, the Sri Lanka Institute of Distance Education (SLIDE) was established to offer programmes in Mathematics, Science, Management, and Technology through the distance mode. It resulted from the merger between the Technical Education Extension Services Unit of the Ministry of Education and its Technical Education Curriculum Development Unit. The aim of establishing SLIDE was to provide tertiary level education for those unable, due to socio-economic reasons, to attend institutions of higher education and to provide vocational courses in areas where acute shortage of persons existed. It functioned under the Ministry of Higher Education. In 1979 SLIDE offered Electrical Technology, Electronics and Telecommunication Technology, Civil Technology, and Mechanical Technology. According to its brochure issued in 1978 these programmes were broadly modelled on the pattern of programmes provided by the City and Guilds of the London Institute. For those who did not possess a sufficient knowledge of Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry, SLIDE offered foundation courses, after which the student could proceed to the Higher National Certificate in Technology Part I programmes in any of the areas specified. The entire programme from HNCT Part I to HNDT part II covered seven years (3 + 2 + 2). The teaching package consisted of written lessons dispatched by post; face to face teaching sessions of one day's duration once or twice a month, generally during weekends, at various technical colleges in the island; seminars; radio cassette tapes with film strips and assignments given at the end of lessons. The students had to submit three to six assignments each month and received written comments and model answers. They were exposed to short periods of practical training in University/Technical College laboratories which formed the Regional centres. A system of counselling also existed at the centres.

The other programmes of study offered by SLIDE were the Higher National Diploma in Management, National Diploma in Mathematics and National Diploma in Science. The popularity of the programmes was such that the number of applications exceeded the number of places available and students were admitted on the basis of fixed quotas for employed and unemployed categories. Eleven thousand applications in 1976 increased to ] 6,000 in 1977. The institution provided five programmes of study involving 4976 students in three languages, Sinhala, Tamil and English in 1979.

SLIDE was assisted by UNDP/UNESCO, SIDA, the British Council and the Japanese government in the form of expert services, equipment and training fellowships. The programmes were conducted under the direction of UNESCO/UNDP advisors and panels of consultants mainly from the Engineering Faculties of Universities. SLIDE enlisted the services of a large panel of lesson writers, editors and teaching staff as well. A Director headed the Institution. ESA and SLIDE were only seven years and four years old respectively when they were absorbed into the Open University and formed its nucleus of students and programmes in 1980. The absorption of SLIDE into the Open University of Sri Lanka explains one of OUSL's unique features, namely the strides it made in offering technical education through the distance mode.

The first statement of policy related to the establishment of an Open University in Sri Lanka appears in the National State Assembly Debates, Volume 23. No 1 of August 4th 1977. This volume of the National State Assembly Debates records the speech made by the then President of Sri Lanka on the policy of the new government that came into power in 1977. There he stated that the government will, "Establish an Open University for the benefit of those who are unable to continue university studies for reasons beyond their control. "

General pronouncements made in this policy speech and other reforms envisaged in the field of education bring out the reasons for the decision to establish an Open University. In the speech delivered by the then secretary to the Ministry of Higher Education at the inaugural ceremony of the OUSL in 1980, he outlined the reasons for the establishment of the OUSL in the following terms.

We are inaugurating the Open University of Sri Lanka for the purpose of providing higher educational facilities of those who are not students of any of the traditional universities. The demand for university education in this country is well known. Last year more than 100,000 sat the G.C.E. A/L examinations.....Nearly 30000 have gained eligibility to apply for admission to a university. Only 5000 can be admitted.....

Increasing the number of universities is very expensive..... It is for these reasons that the government has thought in terms of an Open University where the cost per student is much less - about one third that of a student in a traditional university and where much larger numbers could be catered for (Kalpage, 1988, p.73).

The next mention of the Open University and its role comes in the Education Proposals for Reform General, University and Tertiary, of 1981. In the introduction to this document, popularly known as the White Paper, the pressing problems created by large numbers of youth of both genders with more and more years of schooling and no enhanced employment prospects; the country's economy which was then facing serious problems; the failure to expand modern section employment opportunities; the rising level of educational

qualifications needed for various grades of employment; the inability of the university system to expand to the same extent as the school system; the absence of a system in the true sense of the word for technical and vocational education; and the need to expand support and guide this critically important sector in order to optimize the development of skills and the utilization of human resources are highlighted.

Its recommendations under 'Open University' reads as follows:

The strategy of the Open University will be significantly different from that of the other universities. As its very name implies it will afford access to those in employment and others who cannot devote their full time to studies thereby helping them to reenter the educational system to improve their education by following graduate courses. It will concentrate initially on Diploma and Certificate courses in Mathematics, Science, Management Studies, Electronics and Communication Technology, Electrical Technology, Civil Engineering Technology etc. to meet urgent manpower requirements in these fields.

Foundation courses will be provided for the benefit of those who do not possess adequate knowledge to pursue satisfactorily tertiary level courses offered by the Open University (Section 104 p. 16).

The above account brings to the fore the conditions at the end of the 1970's in Sri Lanka in the education and employment sectors that led to the establishment of the Open University. A firm basis for the establishment of an Open University in Sri Lanka was laid down in the Universities Act No 16 of 1978. Part IV section 23(i) of this Act states that the Minister may, in consultations with the Commission (UGC) by an Order (hereinafter referred to as an "Open University Order"),

(a) establish an Open University for the purpose of providing higher educational facilities to those who are not students of any of the institutions referred to in sections 21, 22, 24, and 25 (XIV/151).

The mention of these sections prevents students from enrolling at the OUSL who are already enrolled at another university, campus, University College, or any institution recognized by the Commission for the purpose of providing courses of study approved for the examinations of a Higher Educational Institution. The Order under section 23 (1) came on May 8th 1980 (The Open University Handbook p.1).

It must be noted that the term 'distance education' as the teaching strategy of the Open University is not mentioned in any of the documents quoted above. With the incorporation of the ESA and SLIDE in the Open University it was perhaps left to be understood that the teaching strategy would be distance teaching. The Corporate Plan for University Education 1984-1988 of the University Grants Commission (1984) states that the Open University is to provide 'alternative' learning opportunities to meet the demand for middle level skills and to reduce the demand for conventional university education.

Among the recommendations made at a national workshop organized by UGC in collaboration with UNESCO it was stated that courses should be structured in the Open University so as to meet, where practicable, "both unmet social demands and management needs, taking into account programmes already conducted at traditional universities, the maintenance of standards and the availability of staff resources" (Indraratna, 1987).

Although the mode of instruction was left to be understood, these pronouncements made clear the role that the Open University was expected to play in the field of tertiary education.

The other major institution that has two of its departments conducting distance education programmes is the NIE which came into being with the passing of the National Institute of Education Act, No. 28 of 1985. Among the stated objectives of the Institute is providing and promoting postgraduate education in the several specialties of education, and providing for the development of professional and general competence of personnel in the education system.

At the time the N.I.E. was created there were various units of the Ministry of Education established to achieve the above objectives. The Distance Education Unit was one of them. This unit was established in the Ministry with financial support from SIDA to provide for the training of non-graduate teachers in the education system. The limited intake to the existing teachers' colleges and the inability of the Ministry to release large numbers of teachers for institutional training because of the severe shortage of teachers in schools led to the establishment of this alternative arrangement. There were almost 35,000 untrained teachers in 1981. This unit along with a few other such units in the Ministry were absorbed into the NIE. It came to be known as the Department of Distance Education (DDE). The Department of Teacher Training (DTT) that handles post graduate teachers education was constituted after the NIE was established in 1985.

Course material development was first undertaken by the Ministry of Education in association with the ESA for the Post Graduates Diploma in Education correspondence course in 1973. A group of university teachers selected from Faculties of Education were assisted in writing lesson material by selected secondary school teachers who had post graduate professional qualifications. These teachers were selected for a period of six months to work with the university teachers. Material production was handled by the Ministry of Education. The lessons were not written at that stage in a distance education format, but were in lecture style with questions and references at the end of chapters. The lesson writers did not have any training in the art of writing lessons for distance students prior to commencing the task. ESA also utilized time on the Education Service of the SLBC for broadcasting recorded lessons on a regular basis. This was in addition to face to face sessions once a month and an annual residential programme, which had a compulsory practical component and a project. Practice teaching which formed the practical component was carried out through 'Master Teachers' appointed from among professionally qualified teachers. They supervised the teachers in their own schools for a period of three months.

SLIDE undertook the task of material preparation in a more systematic manner. Course material was prepared with advice on how to write for distance students. Seminars and workshops were held for training the lesson writers. Two-way communication between student and teacher as well as periodic assessment was ensured through a system of assignments and counselling. The practical component consisted of face to face and seminar sessions. The use of audio cassettes and slides provided further assistance to the learner.

From its inception, the OUSL used considerable resources for developing course material according to the accepted distance education format. Staff training was given both locally and abroad for this purpose while at the same time the services of foreign and local consultants were utilized to guide the course teams. The availability of UNESCO/UNDP funds enabled the OUSL to undertake such training and avail itself of consultancy services from abroad.

Audio recording facilities were available at SLIDE. These were transferred to OUSL. A separate audio recording studio was established in 1983, and a small video recording studio in 1987, to be expanded with aid from the Japanese government. The OUSL printing press commenced printing in 1981. These moves greatly facilitated the production of printed course material as well as audio video material at the OUSL itself. In almost all OUSL programmes these are combined in varying degrees with assignments for continuous, assessment, face to face sessions, tutorial sessions and laboratory demonstrations where applicable. Regular broadcasts over SLBC or SLRC are not used for purely instructional purposes at present.

The development of instructional media by the Department of Distance Education of the NIE and its prototype at the Ministry of Education has been done on a very systematic basis with the assistance of SIDA, the Swedish Company LiberHermods which has many years of experience in distance education, and the Department of Education at the University of Lund in Sweden. Although some of the training sessions especially for the staff of the Distance Education Unit were conducted in Sweden, the Swedish consultants ran a series of short workshops each of about two weeks duration with a specific focus and target group. During 1982 and 1983 alone, over ten national workshops were conducted for five different categories of staff: course writers, production staff, tutors, correspondence teachers and the administrative staff. They also produced handbooks for course writers, for tutors and for correspondence teachers (Dock, Duncan, and Kotalawala 1988). The programme which extended over a period of three years was conducted at Regional Centres located either in teacher training field centres or in schools. These centres are staffed by full time tutors who advise the trainees, distribute new modules, collect and mark assignments and organize and run contact sessions. The tutors also supervise teaching practice in the trainees' own schools. In 1981 the programme commenced with thirty such centres. The numbers have increased to 180 in 1991 as a result of the massive enrollment of 32,000 teachers for the programme. The centres are located on the basis of one or more in each divisional education office area. The Post Graduate Certificate in Education programme of the Department of Teacher Training of the NIE commenced in 1986, and was initially conducted only on a face to face basis during weekends. Module writing for this programme commenced in 1987 and they began to supplement face to face sessions in 1989. Module writing was done largely by staff from universities and they followed a common format adopted in developing self study material. The Department of Teacher Training also has its own study centres located in schools and they run a mobile library service for the student teachers. The programme is offered in Sinhala and Tamil languages.

When SLIDE was established in 1976 the costs of its full-time staff, other fixed costs, and overhead associated with SLIDE premises were born by the Ministry of Higher Education. Operational costs in 1979 totaled Rs.1,350,000 (around \$40,500) The cost of land, land improvement and structure outlay totaled another Rs.2,200,000 (\$66,000). Student fees were set to cover course related operational costs (Kaye and Rumble, 1981). In addition aid was received from UNESCO, ODA, SIDA, the British Council and the Japanese Government. Under the UNESCO project SLIDE received aid in the form of expert services, equipment and training fellowships to the value of Rs.8 million,

SIDA granted budgetary support to the value of Rs.23 million, the bulk of which was for the purchase of science equipment for the nine science laboratories, and technical equipment of the workshops which were set up. British Council assistance was mainly for

the purpose of purchasing library books. The monthly fee charged to students was a nominal Rs.25. A registration fee of Rs.50 per student was charged at the time of enrollment. SIDA assistance was available to the Ministry of Education. From the beginning of the programme in 1981, its Distance Education Branch assisted untrained teachers. Although details of the amounts granted during the initial years are not available, an annual grant of Rs.20 million (US \$500,000) was forthcoming from SIDA for running this programme. The grant from the Ministry of Education covers the cost of its full-time staff. An additional grant of Rs. 54,527 million (US \$ 1,350,000) was given in 1991 with the recruitment of 32000 untrained teachers to follow the programme. In the speech delivered at the inaugural ceremony of the OUSL, grateful mention was made by the then Secretary to Ministry of Higher Education of the assistance received from UNDP through UNESCO; the SIDA grant for equipment; and assistance from the British Council and ODA of Great Britain. Other than for equipment, assistance was for the development of programmes of study by experts, and for staff development.

According to UGC and OUSL records, UNDP assistance between 1980 - 1985 totaled US \$1,552,000. In 1985 the OUSL utilized a sum of Rs.33,27,014 of foreign assistance. The UNDP grant between 1987 -1991 as assistance to Phase III of the Technical Education programme is US \$417,000. The Government grant to Open University from 1984 to 1991 was: 1984 - Rs.39,650,000; 1985 - Rs.32,250,249; 1986 - Rs.45,425.145; 1987 Rs.48,932,803; 1988 - Rs.56,326,873; 1989 - Rs.96,070,000; 1990 - Rs.89,520,000. The government grant is utilized mainly for salaries of full-time staff and the new building programme.

Trends in the development of distance education in Sri Lanka are very positive. Open University enrollment has expanded from an initial 4000 in 1982 to almost 15000 in 1988. The present numbers remain steady at around 15000. Expansion in numbers at the DDE and DTT are more impressive. They are geared to the task of clearing the backlog of untrained teachers in this decade. The DDE enrolled a record 32000 teachers in 1991. The DTT also expanded its numbers from 650 in 1988 to 3400 in 1990 and to 7000 in 1991. The OUSL figures have been kept more or less at around 15000. Many applicants to some of the programmes must be denied due to lack of resources. Entrance tests are conducted for this purpose in the LL.B. degree programme and in the Post Graduate Diploma in Education programme.

With the establishment of the proposed University Colleges, demand for distance education courses will tend to increase as the Colleges are expected to follow a more flexible course, enabling students to leave at the end of the first year or the second year and gain employment. These students will have the opportunity to come back and join a university for further study up to degree level or follow courses at a distance and obtain their degrees.

## **LEGAL STATUS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

The legal status of distance education in Sri Lanka is derived from the legal status of the institutions engaged in distance education. This is so because none of the legal documents associated with the establishment of the Open University or the National Institute of Education specify that the mode of instruction shall be distance education.

The National Institute of Education Act No. 28 of 1985 does not mention distance education as the mode of instruction it will adopt. However the absorption of the Distance Education Branch of the Ministry of Education to the NIE made it inevitable that the NIE carry out education through the distance mode. The Department of Teacher Training which came to be established within the NIE followed suit.

It must be mentioned that professional qualifications conferred by all three institutions are recognized by relevant professional bodies and by the Ministry of Education in the case of teachers. The Council of Legal Education has recognized the LL.B. degree granted by the Open University. The Institute of Engineers of Sri Lanka officially recognized the Diploma in Technology programme of the OUSL.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SITUATION**

### *Aims and Objectives of Distance Education*

As the Acts and Ordinances dealing with the establishment of the OUSL or the NIE do not deal with their role as distance education institutions, the aims and objectives of distance education in Sri Lanka have to be deduced from occasional pronouncements in relation to education, employment and the economy as well as from specific references in brochures and bulletins.

The policy statement by the new government in 1977 emphasized the critical importance of education for the development of the country. Among specific objectives related to education, the establishment of an Open University was mentioned for the first time. Other accompanying objectives state the overall aims of the government in the field of education. It is pertinent to note that some of these objectives are achievable through the Open University system. Government policy clearly envisaged the importance of a competent and qualified teaching force; the importance of opportunities and facilities to workers, farmers, youth and other less qualified persons to train and qualify themselves for better and new jobs; and the need for a scheme whereby students could study while being employed.

The end of the 1970's saw the need for restructuring and diversifying the economy and for introducing new technology. That the Open University was expected to be a panacea for increased numbers seeking entry to universities was clear from the speech delivered at its inauguration. It could cater to large numbers in a most cost effective manner. Opportunities for those who wanted to study at leisure and for those who did not have formal GCE, O Level and A Level qualification to re-enter through foundation courses were also mentioned.

The White Paper of 1981 is an official document which specifically mentioned that the OUSL will afford access to those in employment and others who cannot devote themselves to full-time studies, thereby helping them to re-enter the education system and follow graduate courses. The OUSL was expected to concentrate initially on Diploma and Certificate courses in subject areas such as Mathematics Science, Management Studies, Electronics and Communication Technology. The White Paper also mentioned Foundation courses. The OUSL more or less echoes these aims and objectives in its documents. The

Handbook of OUSL (p.2) mentions the following:

The growing conviction that education is not only for privileged groups in society or confined to childhood and adolescence; that all people should have access to the extent and the kind of education which their full development requires; and that recent education explosion has made it difficult for the national education system to keep pace with the demand for admission into existing institutions of higher education.

The brochures issued by the several divisions of the three faculties of the Open University specify the aims and objectives of the programmes in relation to the levels at which they are offered and the discipline. For example the brochure of the Faculty of Natural Sciences (p.11) lays down its aims and objectives in relation to the foundation programme as:

The foundation programme in science is intended to provide the required basic knowledge for students to register for the level 3 courses of the B.Sc. programmes.

What was stated as the aims of the Foundation courses in Science are true of Foundation courses in Social Studies as well. Completion of these courses were to enable the students to apply for entry to the LL.B. degree programme or any other degree programmes the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences want to offer.

Aims specified in the Diploma in Technology programmes make mention of the need for providing the country with a pool of manpower trained in the technical fields that can contribute towards raising standards of the productive and service industries. This is in addition to providing opportunities to those in related technical fields to improve their knowledge.

In the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences which offer a variety of programmes, the pre-school education programme is meant for those teaching in pre-schools without training, for those who intend to conduct their own pre-schools or become pre-school teachers or creche workers, and generally for housewives.

The aims and objectives of the Professional English programme are to "Provide a foundation for the use of English as a medium of free communication (and) use English in a professional capacity or in his place of work and prepare for studies at other levels of proficiency". The teacher training programmes of the two departments within the NIE has as their general objective the provision of opportunities for the development of professional and general competence of personnel in the education system.

### *Control, Organizational and Management Structure of Distance Education*

The two institutions that provide distance education in Sri Lanka are both government institutions. As such, distance education in this country could be called a national venture. Although the Open University charges fees, they amount to roughly 60% of the cost of providing tuition for any of the programmes. The balance comes as a government grant from the University Grants Commission. Teachers who get their training through the two Departments of the NIE do not pay any fees. This could be called an extension of the national policy of free education. The Open University is empowered by its ordinance to 'demand and receive fees'.



OUSL as presently structured and organized, operates from a central campus at Nawala in the suburbs of Colombo. There are four regional centres located at Colombo, Jaffna, Kandy and Matara, and twelve study centres throughout the country which come under the ambit of the regional centres.

The Vice Chancellor is appointed by the President and is the Principal Executive Officer and the Principal Academic Officer of the University. There is provision for the appointment of a Deputy Vice Chancellor.

The authorities of the OUSL are the (a) the Council, (b) the Senate, and (c) the Faculty Boards of the three Faculties. Each Faculty is headed by a Dean and presently has five Divisions.

The council is the executive body and the governing authority of the OUSL. The Council is composed of one Vice Chancellor from outside the OUSL, nominated by the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Directors, the Secretary to the Ministry of Higher Education or his nominee, Secretary to the Ministry in charge of broadcasting, and other members appointed by the UGC from among those who have rendered distinguished service in educational, professional, commercial, industrial, scientific or administrative spheres. The academic authority of the OUSL is vested in the Senate.

The Senate consists of the Vice Chancellor, the Deans, the Director of Educational Technology, Heads of Divisions, all permanent Professors of the University, the Librarian, and two other members elected by the permanent teachers of each Faculty from among their number. The Senate controls the general direction of instruction, education, research and examinations in the OUSL. It has the authority to appoint Standing Committees, ad hoc Committees or Boards that would make recommendations to it in relation to special areas such as Library, Admissions, Research, Curriculum, Evaluation, Leave, and Awards.

Any matters relevant to programmes or courses of study, examinations and other areas of academic interest must be approved by the Faculty Boards prior to submission to the Senate for its approval. The process of initiating all academic decisions begins at the Divisional level with the assistance of Consultants and course teams where applicable.

The task of maintaining academic standards is ensured by appointing as course team members, staff from other Universities and Institutions of Higher Education or eminent members from industrial, commercial, legal, scientific, or managerial spheres. Any appointment as a course writer, tutor, visiting lecturer, moderator of question papers, and marking examiner must be initiated at the Divisional level and undergo the process of council approval.

At Senate and Senate sub-committee levels, matters related to all Divisions of the three Faculties are communicated to the members. It forms one of the mechanisms for in-house dissemination of information.

There is close communication between the central campus and the regional centres. They are linked by radio and special courier service to the center. Regional centres are administered by Assistant Directors of Regional Services and the study centres by Officers in charge. Inter-Faculty teams of senior staff from the central campus visit the regional centres occasionally after prior announcement so that students who wish to have individual counselling can meet them personally. Staff from the central campus travel to regional and study centres at student registration time as well to provide guidance and counselling.

The Regional/Study Centres provide facilities for face to face teaching, text book reference, distribution of course material, handing over of completed assignments, audio

## *Distance Education in Asia and the Pacific*

listening, video viewing facilities, and study circle activities. The establishment of study centres and recruitment of tutors and correspondence teachers is the function of the management section in the Department of Distance Education.

The Open University monthly newsletter carrying general information of interest to students and specific details regarding academic programmes is dispatched to all registered students.

The authorities of the NIE are the Council and the Academic Affairs Board. The two Departments have Directors who are responsible to the Director General, the principal executive officer and the principal academic officer of the Institute.

The Academic Affairs Board is responsible for the academic affairs of the Institute. It advises the Council on all academic matters, considers matters referred to it by the Council, considers matters connected with courses of study, admission of students, and teaching programmes and examinations conducted by the institute.

The Department of Distance Education submits quarterly reports which are reviewed by the NIE and SIDA jointly. These reports are based on records maintained at the study centres and the observations of Chief Project Officers and Project Officers who visit the centres regularly. Officers from SIDA also make visits to the centres.

## *Financing Distance Education*

Government grants, assistance by foreign agencies, and student fees are the main sources of financial support for distance education in Sri Lanka. In 1988 total Government expenditure on education (both recurrent and capital) was 3.17% of the GNP. The share diverted to higher education was 17.22%, or 0.55% of the GNP which was 0.58% in the previous year. Of the expenditure on higher education, about 71.7% was incurred on university education. It was 67.5% in 1987. It has fluctuated between 67% and 92% between 1979 - 1986. The UGC analysis of income of higher educational institutions mentions the following sources of income: government grant, interest, rent from properties, sales, fees, hostel recoveries, and miscellaneous. Entries under the Open University appear under all categories other than hostel recoveries. The two largest sources of income are the government grant and fees. Sale of publications is the third largest source of income to the Open University.

The Elementary and Science/Mathematics Teacher Training Programme conducted by the DDE is largely financed by SIDA. The government of Sri Lanka funds the local staff, provides buildings, furniture fuel for vehicles, and money spent on mailing and other miscellaneous items. The SIDA funds are utilized for consultancy services in the area of training and for local staff to make study visits abroad, for office and audio-visual equipment, project vehicles, printing, paper, laboratory facilities, and for allowances to course writers, editors, assessment tutors and the tutors manning the study centres (Dock, Duncan, and Kotalawala, 1988).

The total allocation from Sweden for January 1991 to June 1992 is estimated to be Rs. 104,185,000 and an additional SEK 1,400,000. The total commitment by SIDA for 1991 is SEK 101,467,218 (DDE records). Between 1986 and 1989 SIDA had spent SEK 8.9 million on this teacher training programme. The amount spent during 1989 to 1990 was SEK 3,296,000. The increased grant in 1991 was made with the enrollment of 32,000 trainees for this programme.

All expenses of the Department of Teacher Training of the NIE for its post graduate teacher training programme come from the government grant to the National Institute of Education.

The chief sources of information for budgetary comparison between distance education and non-distance education are the UGC records for the Open University and a major research study conducted by the Research Department of the NIE for its Department of Distance Education. The UGC determines the annual grant per year on the basis of the average actual expenditure of the three previous years.

The comparison of costs show the average annual expenditure for an OUSL student in the Faculty of Humanities to be Rs.649 in 1990 and Rs.688 in 1991, whereas the average cost per law graduate in the University of Colombo was Rs.1927 in 1990 and Rs.1955 in 1991. Similarly in the Faculties of Natural Science and Engineering Technology the average cost for an OUSL student was Rs.4200 in 1990 and Rs.5355 in 1991. The corresponding figures for Engineering at the University of Moratuwa are Rs.17,686 for 1990 and Rs.17,489 for 1991. Costs per student in the Engineering Faculty of the University of Peradeniya are less. Cost per science student in non-distance universities varies from Rs.9966 to Rs.19778 during 1990 and 1991. These figures do not include examination and other non-academic expenditure, however.

The following tables are from an unpublished research study titled "Cost Effectiveness of Distance Education for Teacher Training", conducted by the Harvard Institute for International Development and the Research Department of the NIE (Nielson et.al, 1991).

TABLE 1: Total Direct Cost Per Student By Type of Institution and Source of Funds (In SRI LANKAN Rupees and US Dollars)

	<u>Teachers Colleges</u>		<u>Colleges of Educ</u>		<u>Distance Education</u>	
	Rupees	Dollars	Rupees	Dollars	Rupees	Dollars
overall	10,929	364	29,161	9972	4,160	139
To Sponsor	7,230	241	23,658	789	2,787	93
To Student	3,699	1213	5,503	183	1,374	46

TABLE 2: Net Direct Costs Per Student By Type of Institution and Source of Funds (In SRI LANKAN Rupees and US Dollars)

	<u>Teachers Colleges</u>		<u>Colleges of Educ</u>		<u>Distance Education</u>	
	Rupees	Dollars	Rupees	Dollars	Rupees	Dollars
overall	24,753	825	34,961	1165	4,024	134
To Sponsor	21,054	702	29,458	982	2,650	88
To Student	10,126	338	298	10	1,511	50

TABLE 3: Total Cost Per student (Including Opportunity Costs) By Type of Institution and Source of Funds (In SRI LANKAN Rupees and US Dollars)

	<u>Teachers Colleges</u>		<u>Colleges of Educ</u>		<u>Distance Education</u>	
	Rupees	Dollars	Rupees	Dollars	Rupees	Dollars
overall	12,507	417	36,241	1,208	7 662	255
To Sponsor	7,230	241	23,658	789	2 787	93
To Student	5,277	176	12,583	419	4,875	162

## *Distance Education in Asia and the Pacific*

TABLE 4: Net Cost Per Student (Including Opportunity Costs) By Type of Institution and Source of Funds (In SRI LANKA Rupees and US Dollars)

	<u>Teachers Colleges</u>		<u>Colleges of Educ</u>		<u>Distance Education</u>	
	Rupees	Dollars	Rupees	Dollars	Rupees	Dollars
overall	26,330	878	42,041	1,401	7,524	251
To Sponsor	21,054	702	29,458	982	2,650	88
To Student	8,548	285	6,783	226	5,012	1676

The figures uphold the widely accepted contention that training teachers through the distance mode is much less costly to the sponsor as well as to the student than institutional training.

### *Geographical Coverage of the Provision of Distance Education*

Distance education provision is nationwide. The regional and study centres of the Open University of Sri Lanka and the regional centres for Post Graduate Diploma in Education programme of the Department of Teacher Training are in Anuradhapura, Trincomalee., Polonnaruwa, Nichaweratiya, Chilaw, Kurunegala, Matale, Ampara, Kandy, Gampaha, Bandarawela, Nuwara-Eliya, Kegalle, Colombo, Monaragala, Kalutara, Ratnapura, Tangalle, Galle, and Matara. The Department of Distance Education of the NIE which plans to expand the number of its centres to 180 will do so on the basis of at least one centre in each divisional office area. The number of extra centres to be opened in any division will depend on the student enrollment and the media of instruction.

### *Instructional Systems*

The teaching system adopted by the Open University is a multi - media integrated approach suitable for the conditions available in a developing country such as Sri Lanka. Printed material forms the major component of the study package. This includes printed texts, assigned books and recommended reading. The student is expected to devote about 55 % to 70% of study time to the printed material. The second important component is face to face contact, either at day schools or demonstrations, and practical work, depending on the needs of the particular course. Face to face contact sessions are highest in the English language programmes while demonstrations and practical work form an important component in Science and Technology programmes as well as in teacher training programmes. Approximately 15% of study time is expected to be devoted to these. Face to face sessions are used for group interaction, discussions, and counselling.

The use of audio-video material as an integral part of the study package is less frequent and varies from relatively high in English language and Law programmes to about 5% in others. Listening and viewing facilities however are available at the study centres for students to benefit from audio and video cassettes produced as support material. A selected number of these are broadcast by the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation and the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation for the benefit of the distant learner as well as the general public.

Assignments and periodic assessment through examinations form a compulsory component of the study package in all programmes. These are used as a teaching learning device as well as for continuous assessment of student progress. The grade for continuous assessment is important because it determines a student's eligibility to take the final examination in a particular course. In determining the final grade that a student obtains for a course, continuous assessment marks are given a weightage of 30%, with slight variation across Faculties.

The components of the Elementary and Science/Math Teacher Training programme conducted by the DDE are printed material, assignments for submission, contact sessions, local facilities, and practical training. Printed material in this programme comes in the form of a large number of modules, each module containing a single unit of a particular subject. The student teacher is expected to devote approximately one week for the study of the module and to attempt the assignment that accompanies it. Although each module is a single study unit, the student is advised to study them in the order that they are produced so that sequencing of subject matter is facilitated. The modules are planned so that the student will engage himself/herself in additional reading, self-innovations and surveys. The students are expected to submit one assignment per module, which are submitted to the correspondence teacher at the study centre for evaluation. Upon approval, the student then collects the next module.

Contact sessions form an important component of this programme. The organisers consider face to face sessions as a means of enhancing the effectiveness of study material and as a means of reducing drop-out rates and developing a group identity based around the study centre activities. These contact sessions take the form of one day study circles, usually once a month or more frequently; two day, practical sessions with a total of about eight per programme; and five day contact sessions with a broader focus intended for total teacher personality development. Eight such programmes are expected to be held within the period of three years.

Individual guidance and tutorial assistance is available to the student at the study centre through the full-time tutor attached to the centre. The tutor is also expected to visit the student teacher in his/her school to supervise practical training. Support services at the centres include library facilities and individual guidance.

The Post Graduate Diploma in Education programme offered by the DTT lays almost equal emphasis on face to face contact and printed study material. The student is expected to become familiar with the content of the modules in order to derive maximum benefit from the contact sessions.

The regional centres provide library facilities and audio cassettes with taped discussions on the issues arising from the content of modules. Video tapes produced for the purpose of developing teaching skills are also available at the regional centres. Face to face sessions at the centres take the form of lectures, group discussions and activities with emphasis on teaching and learning techniques such as individualised learning, learning by discovery and the activity method. Assignments and pedagogical practice form the other components of the learning package in this programme.

*Language of Instruction*

The following table lists the programmes and indicates the language in which each of them are offered to OUSL students.

TABLE 5: Language of Instruction, by Program

Name of Programme	Medium		
	Sinhala	Tamil	English
Foundation Course in Science and Technology	Y	Y	Y
Foundation Course in Social Studies	Y	N	Y
Certificate in Entrepreneurship	Y	Y	Y
Certificate in Pre-School Education	Y	N	Y
Certificate in Textile Technology	Y	N	Y
Certificate in Journalism	Y	Y	Y
Diploma in Technology	Y	Y	Y
Diploma in Management	Y	N	Y
Diploma in Distance Education	N	N	Y
Bachelor of Science Degree	N	N	Y
Bachelor of Laws Degree	Y	N	Y
Bachelor of Technology	N	N	Y
Post Graduate Diploma in Management	N	N	Y
Post Graduate Diploma in Education	Y	Y	N
Post Graduate Diploma in Construction Management	N	N	Y

The two teacher training programmes offered by the Department of Distance Education and Teacher Training of the NIE are conducted in Sinhala and Tamil. This follows from the fact that the media of instruction in schools are Sinhala and Tamil.

*Enrollment in Distance Education*

Enrollment at the OUSL as of May 91, distributed across levels, is as follows:

Foundation level	2941
Certificate level	3431
Diploma level	3381
First Degree level	2464
Post Graduate Diploma	2015
Computer Awareness Programme	1964
<u>Total</u>	15926

The DDE (NIE) offers only one programme, namely the Elementary and Science/Mathematics Teacher Training certificate and the most recent enrollment is 35,00(). The Department of Teacher Training (NIE) conducts only the Post Graduate Diploma in

Education Programme and the most recent enrollment is 7,000. Enrollment figures to compare distance education with non-distance education are available only up to 1988/89 as there was no intake in 89/90 due to the closure of the universities. The following table gives the enrollment figures at relevant institutions for different levels in 1989.

TABLE 6: Enrollment for 1989, By Level

Enrollment ratios worked out on the basis of the above figures are as follow:

Programme	Institutional		Distance		
	Technical	Teacher Colleges Colleges	Open Training	University	National Institute of Education
Certificate	64	11626		3444	
Diploma (not post Graduate)	838	4267		2798	
Degree	29775			4337	
Post Graduate	248			2652	1400
Trained Teachers Certificate			3500		3005

Enrollment ratios worked out on the basis of the above figures are as follow:

Programme	Institutional Training	Distance Training	(2) (1)%
Certificate	11690	3444	29,4%
Diploma (not postgraduate)	5105	2798	54,8%
Degree	29775	4337	14,5%
Postgraduate	248	4052	446,7%
Trained Teachers Certificate	3500	3055	87,3%

\* Student numbers enrolled in postgraduate and teacher training certificate programmes through distance education have increased many fold in 1990 and 1991.

#### *International Affiliation and Cooperation*

The Open University of Sri Lanka has membership in the Asian Association of Open Universities, International Council for Distance Learning, Distance Education Regional Resource Centre, International Association for Continuing Engineering Education, and The Association of Commonwealth Universities.

*Distance Education in Asia and the Pacific*

The following table gives the details of foreign aid received by the Open University between 1984 and 1990.

TABLE 7: The Open University of Sri Lanka Foreign Aid

	1984 Rs .	1985 Rs.	1986 Rs.	1987 Rs.	1988 Rs.	1989 Rs.	1990 Rs
Library Books	178,237	14,522	1,087,184	221,279	131,316	102,996	23,489
Equipment	5,691,692	3,506,031	-	4,040,194	11,018,490	10,208,721	1,217,146
Office Equipment	-	19,735	718,116	-	-	-	26,165
Teaching Equipment	-	344,774	1,521,714	2,118,369	-	-	-
	<u>5.869.929</u>	<u>3.885.062</u>	<u>3.379.842</u>	<u>6.379.842</u>	<u>11.149.806</u>	<u>10.351.717</u>	<u>1.266.800</u>

Source: Open University of Sri Lanka Finance Division

According to information available in the Statistical Hand Book 1988 of the University Grants Commission, the following foreign grants have been made to the Open University.

<u>Source</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>
UNDP	1980-1985	US S 1552 million
UNDP	1987-1991	* US S 417,000

\* As assistance to the Technical Education Programme. Phase III.

A request was made to the Japanese government by the Sri Lanka Government in 1989 for grant aid to establish an Audio Visual Centre. The Basic Design study for the Project was carried out in February - March 1991. The facilities and equipment planned involve a studio complex of about 2000 square metres and equipment for the studios. In addition training of OUSL personnel with Japan's technical cooperation by sending experts from Japan on a long-term basis and by providing training to several persons from OIJS in Japan for short periods is requested.

The programme offered by the Department of Distance Education of the NIE has been funded by SIDA from its inception, and SIDA has spent on the average Rs.20 million (SEK 3.296,000) a year. In 1991 the grant was Rs.54 million. SIDA funds are utilized for consultancy services in the area of training and for local staff to make study visits abroad, for office and audio-visual equipment, project vehicles printing, paper, laboratory facilities and allowances to course writers, editors, assessment tutors and tutors staffing study centres.

There is no clear statement of government policy referring to planned expansion in distance education. However institutions engaged in distance education have framed proposals mostly in the direction of diversifying the programmes.



The Open University aims at a total intake of 30,000 students with planned expansion in the regional services. It is also working towards launching more programmes. In 1991 students have been registered for Foundation Courses in Social Studies and for a Certificate Programme in Journalism. Course development for a Postgraduate Diploma in Management and a Certificate Programme in Tourism is nearing completion in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Faculty has already framed regulations and submitted syllabi for approval for Master of Education and Bachelor of Education degree programmes. These would be interfaculty programmes. The proposed first degree in Humanities and Social Sciences also would offer a variety of subjects across the disciplines handled by the several Divisions of the Faculty.

The Faculty of Natural Sciences in 1991 commenced offering a course in Wild Life Management and continuing education programmes. Any courses offered by the Science Faculty can be taken singly as continuing education programmes. The Zoology Division also coordinates a Norad Project on Environmental Studies. A BSc. degree in Nursing and courses in Industrial Chemistry and Atmospheric Physics are in the initial stages of planning by the Faculty of Natural Sciences. Post graduate Diploma in Construction Management is a new programme for which students were registered very recently in the Faculty of Engineering. Two other areas in which Post Graduate Diploma programmes will commence are Industrial Engineering and Agricultural Engineering.

The Department of Distance Education is not likely to go beyond the present capacity of 35,000 students. It has submitted for the approval of the Academic Affairs Board of the NIE course proposals for expanding training facilities in subject areas other than Science and Mathematics included in the present package. The new subject areas in the proposal are History and Social Studies, Commerce, Home Economics, Agriculture, Physical Training, Art, Music, Dance, English, and Religion. The proportion of written module and face to face components in these programmes will vary according to the particular needs of the subject. However they will be made available to teachers through the same distance teaching network of study centres.

The effectiveness and quality of distance education in Sri Lanka is intended to enable the country to face the twentieth century. The demands on the education system are both quantitative and qualitative. With less than two decades of distance education experience it has come to be accepted as a most viable alternative to traditional models, for providing training and retraining facilities necessary for achieving this task. The newness, the capacity and the cost effectiveness of the distance mode makes it more suitable than the formal system to effect changes and to do so swiftly. Its ability to reach large numbers is a distinct advantage. The policy of the present government in relying on distance education for teacher training is a case in point.

### *Problems and Issues*

In post graduate teacher training the three conventional universities together admitted an average of 275 graduate teachers a year between 1986 and 1988. Students were not admitted in 1989 and 1990. The Open University and the Department of Teacher Training of the NIE had 4815 students in all in 1990. Similarly all Teacher Training Colleges and Colleges of Education admit around 3500 a year to the teacher training programmes. The Department

of Distance Education of the NIE admitted 3055 in 1990 and has taken an additional 32000 in 1991.

The annual intake of the Faculty of Law of the University of Colombo is around 187 for the LL.B. degree programme. The Open University admits an average of 1000 per year. In Technical Colleges and affiliated Technical Units numbering twenty-nine in all there were 16999 enrolled for all courses at all levels in 1990. Enrollment figures in comparable courses at the Open University was more than one third that number.

The record is impressive and so is the recognition. The professional qualifications for teachers granted by the Open University and the two Departments of the NIE are recognized by the Ministry of Education as well as other relevant authorities to be on par with the certificates granted by conventional institutions for purposes of appointment, promotion, and salary adjustment. The Council of Legal Education has recognized the LL.B. degree granted by the Open University to be equivalent to the LL.B. degree granted by the University of Colombo. Certificates and Diploma in Management and Technology have been similarly recognized.

A recent study (BRIDGES REPORT) and the 1988 study sponsored by SIDA (Dock, Duncon, and Kotalawala) have ascertained the professional competence of teachers trained through the distance mode by the Department of Distance Education to be equal if not better than of teachers who have gone through non-distance training. The BRIDGES Report has brought out clearly the cost effectiveness of the programme as well. In these research studies the participant teachers pointed out many advantages of distance education. The ability to receive the training while remaining at home, receiving a large number of modules that continue to serve as resource material, and the ability to implement what is learned and receive feedback without delay because of continuous classroom contact during the period of training, figure prominently among the advantages. Being school-based during the period of training is a great advantage for the professional training of teachers.

With the vastly increased intake of the NIE Departments, the Ministry of Education expects the backlog of untrained graduate and non graduate teachers to be cleared within a few years, a feat that would have been impossible without resorting to the distance education mode.

This increased momentum to utilize distance education techniques has led to the development of support services and infrastructure facilities in the regions. These take the form of study centres, library facilities, trained tutors and activities involving groups of teachers. The high retention and pass rates in these programmes speak for the motivation generated among the teachers. These resources should facilitate the launching of other inservice short term programmes to continuously update the knowledge and competence of teachers even after the actual teacher training programmes shrink in numbers. The emergence of a group of resource personnel whose services will continue to be available in the remote areas of the country is a great advantage. Institutional training of teachers in the past never led to such a build up of resources. In this sphere the Open University lags behind the teacher training departments of the NIE as it cannot utilize to the same extent either the physical plant or the personnel made available to the NIE through the Ministry of Education. The proposed 180 study centres under the Department of Distance Education will be manned by senior and professionally qualified teachers on full-time secondment.

In a more general sense, the most important issues and problems facing distance education in Sri Lanka especially in relation to the Open University programmes centre around the need to maintain a continuous dialogue with student clientele and the need to

provide them sufficient support facilities to enable self-learning. In Sri Lanka mass media techniques such as television and radio broadcasting and telephone conferencing cannot be utilized for a number of reasons. Telephone facilities are not available even in most urban middle class homes. The high cost to the institution of buying time on radio and television is a deterrent itself. More so is the lack of rural electricity and uniform viewing and listening facilities across the country, especially in the rural and disadvantaged areas in outlying provinces.

The rural student also suffers from the lack of a cultural base for home study built around the availability of books, papers and media facilities on the one hand, and a positive attitudinal orientation towards self study on the other.

Most students young or adult in Sri Lanka are also beset with this need for external support to carry on their learning tasks a style of learning they have grown accustomed to within the formal school system where the teacher is the sole, or the major, resource. On the other hand, increased interaction is considered desirable psychologically as well, in order to maximize dialogue within groups that are socially and culturally alienated from the main stream. Such interaction helps to promote a sense of belonging and a group identity in addition to the support it lends to facilitate learning. Lack of such facilities can lead to distance education products which focus purely on knowledge content to be mastered through rote learning and to the exclusion of the affective fallout from the educative experience. Skill, practice, and learning to learn also must supplement theory, especially in the case of students who are entering the educative process after a lapse of time.

Perhaps it is because of these advantages that local support has not been dispensed with even in developed countries that have harnessed sophisticated techniques for delivering distance education. Local support goes a long way in reducing drop-out rates as well.

An important contributory factor to the degree of success attained by the Teacher Training Programme run by the Department of Distance Education is the establishment of a large number of study centres attached to the Divisional Education offices and financed through government and SIDA funds. The Open University finds the task of putting up buildings, manning centres and equipping them with library and other facilities costly. Having to levy high fees from students in order to recover costs other than the salaries of the university staff is a perennial problem for the Open University. Here again the Ministry of Education or foreign grants absorb all costs incurred in running the teacher training programmes of the NIE Departments. In an inquiry into reasons for student drop-out at the Open University, conducted in 1989, it was revealed that 43.7% of the drop outs (n = 222) cited inability to set aside a sufficient amount of money for fees and other expenses as the main reason for dropping out from courses.

Ironically it is to this same disadvantaged group that there is a pragmatic as well as a social need to pass on the benefits of a second chance education through the distance mode. It is within this group that we find the largest number of school drop outs and those who have taken up employment without adequate training or no training at all, and those who have failed to make the grade to enter other institutions of higher learning. It is largely the parents of this same group that require the assistance of their teenagers in their agrarian pursuits and therefore offer little encouragement to educational pursuits that need financing. The inability to incur travelling costs to reach study centres situated at distances could cause additional problems.

In Sri Lanka's context the remedy for this problem faced by the Open University is the availability of sufficient finances to set up a series of study centres equipped with listening and viewing facilities and well-stocked libraries so that the student can overcome almost all the drawbacks he or she experiences as a home based student. Increased student numbers will cut down costs to the students considerably. Lack of such well equipped study centres in the outlying areas demoralises present students, dissuades prospective students and also leads to an undesirable tendency to centralise activities around the main campus, incurring further strain on student finances.

The establishment of a scholarship scheme with outside contributions to the scholarship fund of the Open University has already benefitted some students who perform well on examinations but have financial difficulties in continuing with the programme. However high levels of performance on examinations require favourable conditions for self-study in addition to individual capacity.

The study on student drop-outs brought out other reasons that contributed to it. Among them are inadequate tutoring and counselling, insufficient practicals, and inability to complete the compulsory assignments in order to become eligible to sit the examinations. The unsuitability of printed texts and inability to reach the required level of competency in English were two other reasons cited by 20.7% and 10.5% respectively.

Distance education is undertaken mostly by adult learners. The content of distance education programmes tend to be moulded more or less on the model of conventional programmes available to younger and institutionalised full-time students because of the need for recognition and accreditation. Although the material is written in special self-study format, the programmes generally reflect the requirements demanded of conventional students. Learning is always an individual task. But for the home based student, learning is an individual activity to a much larger extent than for the institution based student. In this context the need to develop programmes in terms not only of content and format but also in terms of course completion requirements, so that adult learners have greater freedom as agents of their own learning, must be seriously considered. The distance education approach and requirements both have to be more practical and practicable. Rigid requirements are not in keeping with the distance education philosophy, although safeguards have to be built in to maintain standards.

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**APPENDIX**

*Research Activities in Distance Education*

"Investigation of the Distance Education Teacher Education Approach in Sri Lanka". L.S.D. Amaragunasekera. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis. University of Colombo 1987.

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## THAILAND

*Chaiyong Brahmawong*

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### THE NATIONAL CONTEXT FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

During the past two decades Thailand has experienced distance education in various forms. In 1971, an open admission university partly using a distance education approach was established and named Ramkamhaeng University. On September 5, 1978, Thailand's first open university using a full concept of distance education was established named Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University. Meanwhile, the Department of Non-Formal Education began its distance education programmes at the Elementary and Secondary Education Levels for out-of-school youth to study for an Elementary or Secondary Education certificate.

Thailand is one of the oldest nations in Asia. With a long history under a democratic system of government, it is making rapid progress both economically and politically to become a center of Southeast Asia. Thai history dates back more than a thousand years to when Thai people gradually migrated from their kingdoms of Ailao, Nanchao, Yunan and Sibsong Panna in the Southern part of China to their final settlement at the present location on the Suwannabumi (Gold) Peninsular. Thai people established their first capital of Sukhothai (the Dawn of Happiness) around 1290 A.D. During a period of more than eight hundred years, the capital of Thailand was later moved to Ayuttaya in 1350, Thonburi in 1767, and Bangkok in 1782 A.D.

Situated in the center of Southeast Asia, Thailand's territory covers a land area of approximately 513,115 sq. kms; bordered by Burma in the north and the west; Lao in the north and the northeast; Kampuchea in the east; Malaysia, the Pacific, and the Indian Oceans in the south. Half of the land is under cultivation, with the rest remaining forest and savanna.

Geographically, Thailand is divided into four main parts; the Central, the North, the Northeast, and the South. The Central part where Bangkok is located is a low, fertile basin around both sides of the Chao Phya, Thailand's biggest and most important river which passes through the middle of the country; the Northern part is half flat and half mountainous; the Northeastern part, covering the country's largest area, is a high and dry land; and the Southern part is flat and fertile covering the peninsular stretching south from the Central part to the northern border of Malaysia. It has a tropical climate with a high degree of humidity and the average temperature of 28.9 C.

Thailand is an agricultural nation and expected to become a newly industrialized agricultural country (NIAC). It has a population of 56 million (1990), 43% of which are younger than age fifteen, with a growth rate of 1.6%. Only about 6 million cluster in Bangkok, while 90% of Thais live in the rural areas. The majority of the people are engaged in agriculture, forestry, and fishing.

Bangkok, the capital, is the center of commercial, political and modern social life. All governmental agencies, business centers, social and cultural activities are located in the Greater Bangkok area.

Thailand is a free market economy state in which public and private sectors share equal opportunities in the development of the country. The public sector is in charge of the general administration of the country and the welfare of the people. State enterprises are established to take care of public utilities, as well as to launch new ventures which otherwise may be too risky for private sector investment. The private sector, on the other hand, takes care of businesses and industries not reserved by law to be operated by state enterprises.

Thailand's economy is growing steadily with the estimated Gross Domestic Production growth rate of 12% (1990). Exports of agro-industrial products such as rice, textiles, and the tourist industry, are the major sources of national income. In 1990, Thailand's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was more than 1,032 billion Baht (US\$ 41 billion) with the average per capita more than 30,000 Baht (US\$ 1,200). The growth of the economy in Thailand might be credited to both the education of the Thai and the efforts of the Thai government. During the past ten years, Thailand has been under a democratic system, which has increased the confidence of foreign investors.

The educational quality of the Thai people was increased as the result of the Educational Reforms of 1960 and 1978. Classroom teaching allowed more pupil interaction, group process, and practical work compared to the previous teaching and learning styles where the teacher used the talk and chalk technique. At the post secondary school level, more business and technical colleges were established to produce young people able to serve in the rapidly increasing business and industry spheres.

The majority of the Thai people are engaged in agriculture, forestry, and fishing. Men and women are treated equally in terms of job opportunities and social status.

Most Thai are Buddhists (95%) with some Muslims, Christians, and others. Buddhism has a strong influence upon arts, literature, education, politics and ultimately the Thai way of life. The people, however, have the right to participate in any religious activities. Under the Thai constitution and practice, His Majesty the King is the upholder and supporter of all religions professed by the Thai people. Christians live in all areas of the country while most Muslims live in the South.

Although there are some ethnic groups, the largest of whom are Chinese, there is no conflict nor racial discrimination between the Thais and minority groups.

The language of instruction is Thai. Thailand has its own writing system. Foreign languages are not allowed as the medium of instruction except in international schools and in teaching and learning other languages. There are three major dialects: Southern, Northern, and Northeastern. People from other parts understand the different dialects without much difficulty.

## Educational System

Thailand has a long educational historical background. Presently, its educational system is well established, ranging from pre-school to higher education level. It also has the most outstanding distance education system in Asia.

The educational system in Thailand has evolved from informal and non-formal types of learning starting in homes and expanded to Buddhist monasteries, workshop apprenticeship, and royal palaces for more than seven hundred years. Formal education began in the early 1870's. Home was the first learning institution. Parents taught their

children the three R's as well as the trades, socialisation, and in some cases, the arts of self-defense.

Buddhist monasteries offered Buddhist religious studies to boys to prepare them to become monks, which they all experienced for a period of time. This was usually for three months when they were twenty years old. The boys lived in the temple with senior monks who taught them how to read and write the Buddhist languages, Pali and Sanskrit, the Thai language as well as other necessary arts. Workshop apprenticeship took place in home industries and shops where boys came to live with the owner of the factories and learned the trade. They worked around the house and the factory without getting paid. In the Sukhothai and the Ayuttaya periods, certain prominent teachers offered private teaching at their homes. Young men would stay and learn in "Samnak" (camp or school). Most of the private teaching was about fighting arts. In royal palaces, educating princes and princesses to prepare them to live and work in the royal palace was undertaken by senior members of the royal families who were appointed as teachers by royal commands. Children of royal families learned the three R's, social, cultural, home economics, art, music, and for princes, the art of fighting.

In the time of King Narai the Great, a formal schooling system was introduced by Christian missionaries in Ayuttaya with the purpose of teaching the Bible to Thai people. Schools for young children and a college were established. In the years after the death of King Narai the Great, they were eradicated as part of a move to eliminate Christian influences upon Thai society.

Thailand was exposed to the western education system during the time of King Mongkut (Rama IV), who hired an English governess to teach his princes and princess. He allowed Christian missionaries to establish schools, the first of which was established in 1852, now called Bangkok Christian College (Secondary School).

During the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), the first public school for common people was established and the first Education Project was declared by a royal decree in 1871. Education was made available to all children. Under King Vajiravudh (Rama VI), the first institution of higher learning, Chulalongkorn University, was established in 1916. In 1921, the first compulsory Primary Education Act was enacted requiring all children younger than fifteen years old to attend school.

Presently, the four levels of education in Thailand are pre-school, elementary, secondary, and higher education. For Elementary and Secondary education the 6:3:3 system is used.

Pre-school education is provided for pre-school children between three and five years old to prepare for primary education in physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. Pre-school education is non-compulsory, but private sectors and local communities are encouraged to establish kindergartens and early childhood centers. There were approximately 1,240,577 children or 30% of the 3-5 year olds, attending more than 16,928 kindergarten and centers according to the National Education Commission survey in 1987.

Elementary education is compulsory and free for all. A child must stay in school from the age of 6-11 (from Grades 1-6). Four clusters of subjects are emphasised Skills (Thai language and mathematics), Life Experiences (Social Studies, Sciences, and Health Science), Work Education (Art, Handicrafts, Home Economics), and Character Building (Morality, Civic Responsibilities, Art, Music, Physical Education). English language is

taught from Grade 5. Presently there are about 7.2 million pupils or 97% attending more than 35,000 schools with a dropout rate of 3%. About 3% of children aged six to eleven living in remote areas, handicapped, or socially and economically deprived, are unable to attend elementary schools.

Secondary education aims at providing necessary academic and vocational knowledge and experience to boys and girls after they have completed this elementary education. A student must study for six years from Matayom 1 - 3 in Lower Secondary schools and Matayom 4 - 6 in Upper Secondary schools. Students may select the program to meet their interest, whether it is academic (arts or sciences), or vocational. In 1987, about 40% of elementary school graduates continued to the Lower Secondary schools totalling 1,277,619. Among these pupils, about 905,211 or 70% proceeded to the Upper Secondary school academic and vocational programmes.

Higher education aims at the further development of human intellectual abilities; the advancement of knowledge and technology; and the provision of academic and professional manpower needed for national development. Higher education is offered in both public and private colleges and universities. A student may study for a bachelor's degree (four years), a Master's degree (two years), and a doctorate degree (three to five years). In some technical and business colleges, the student may work for a higher certificate or an associate degree. Presently, there are sixteen national universities and institutes and a number of private colleges and universities under the coordination of the Ministry of University Affairs. In addition, there are thirty six teacher training colleges offering bachelor's degrees in education, sciences, humanities, and management sciences. There are more than one hundred technical and vocational colleges under the Ministry of Education. There are also colleges offering specialized training in agriculture, nursing, public administration, and military under the Ministries of Agriculture, Public Health, Interior, and Defense respectively. The enrolment in traditional, closed-admission institutions is based on performance in a competitive national entrance examination. Each year about 200,000 students take the entrance examination, and approximately 35,000 pass. Those who do not pass may gain admission to one of the two open universities, namely Ramkhamhaeng University and Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University. Ramkhamhaeng University is a triple mode open-admission university, whereas Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University is a single mode distance education institution.

Thailand has a good network of communication and transport systems. There are countrywide systems of roads (43,840 kms), rail (3,800 kms), and air, making it relatively quick and easy to travel by bus, train, and air services. In the Greater Bangkok area, a rapid transit system consisting of electric trains and monorails is being developed. There are more than 270 radio stations, and five colour television networks on Pal-B broadcasting system (Channels 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11) covering 95% of populated areas. While TV Channels 3,5,7 and 9 are operated on a commercial basis, Channel 11 was established for education, public relations, and national security purposes and is operated by the Department of Public Relations. Due to Channel 11 's limited times for network broadcasting, however, because all PRD stations in the provincial areas still operate commercially, it is unable to give adequate air time for educational programs. The National Education Commission (NEC) is therefore planning to establish a new educational television network in the near future. In 1987, there were approximately 18 million radio and 4 million television sets in the country. In addition, there are more than half a million telephones with a target of 3,000,000 or more

by 1995. The postal, telegraph, and telecommunication services via satellites (Intelsat and Indonesia's Palapa) are insufficient to meet the demands of domestic users. Therefore the government has permitted a private firm to launch a local satellite, the ThaiSat, to serve the needs of public and private sectors. On-line and computerized telecommunications are available for business industries and education, both in Bangkok and provincial areas.

## **HISTORY AND BACKGROUND**

Distance education in Thailand is provided by agencies in the Ministry of Education for elementary and secondary education, and the Ministry of University Affairs for higher education. The historical background, administrative and academic structure, instructional media system, delivery, and evaluation systems vary according to the institution.

Informal distance education was considered to have existed nearly a thousand years at the time of the Sukhothai Period. King Ramhamhaeng the Great reigned his country with an open policy allowing his subjects to trade and learn as they wish. Learning took place mostly at home without a formal curriculum. In the Bangkok Period, when the Wat Po, a Buddhist temple was established, learning centers were available within the compounds to offer knowledge and skills on medicine, and Yoga techniques. The Wat Po is considered the first open university in Thailand.

In the present concept, distance education in Thailand was first developed in 1933 with the establishment of the University of Moral and Political Sciences. The full use of distance education techniques was developed at the establishment of Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University in 1978. At the elementary and secondary levels, distance education programmes were started by the Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) a few years later.

The University of Moral and Political Sciences offered a general degree, Bachelor of Thammasart (BTh) via what is often called the Academic Market approach with an open admission policy to work towards degrees in law and business administration. Students bought texts and handouts to study by themselves or attend classes on campus. No distance educational media was specially designed for home-based students. The university was converted to a conventional university and renamed Thammasart University in 1957, at which time entrance examinations were required for admission.

Years later, Ramkhamhaeng University with an Academic Market policy was established as a public university by a Royal Charter on February 26, 1971. Originally modelled after the University of Moral and Political Sciences, it was later modified to more systematically serve the needs of students, employing certain distance learning approaches such as producing better texts, and using radio/television programmes for direct teaching. RU is an open-admission institution which provides a triple mode instructional system to class attending students, home-based distance learning students, and mixed type students both attending classes and studying by themselves. Their study mode was based on their preference to be on-campus, off-campus students or a mix of both.

Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University was established as a public university on September 5, 1978. It is operated on the single mode policy and uses the full concept of distance education. The whole range of specially designed printed materials, radio as well as television programmes, tutorials, and computerised instruction are used.

## *Distance Education in Asia and the Pacific*

The Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education, employs distance education via the so-called radio correspondence programmes for home-based students who had not completed elementary or secondary schools. It is aimed at providing the chance to study for both elementary and secondary education certificates.

Generally there are three factors leading to the establishment of distance education institutions. These are to meet the needs of those who had not earned certificates or degrees via conventional means, the need to upgrade the quality of life, and the need for improvement in the work of the people.

### *The Use of Instructional Media in Distance Education*

Historical development of the use of instructional media for distance education varies according to institution.

*Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University* (STOU) developed a multi-media package production system to be carried out by course teams. The production of multi-media packages is undertaken by a committee called "the Course-Team" which proceeds along appropriate steps set forth in the Multi-Media Package Production system. Printed media component is produced by the Office of the University Press. Audio-visual media, radio and television programmes, and tutorial media are produced by the Office of Educational Technology. The steps include the need to Analyze/Review the Content and Units; Identify Teaching Units; Plan the Lesson; Prepare Learning Activities; Produce Multi-Media Packages; Construct Test Items for Evaluation; Combine Multi-Media into Distance Learning Packages; Conduct Developmental Testing of Multi-Media Packages; and Implement Distance Learning Multi-Media Packages. The course team consists of nine to eleven members, including five to seven content specialists, one educational technologist, one evaluation specialist, one editor and a secretary. One academic is appointed as Chairman, and one as editor. The course team is appointed by the Academic Senate and charged with the responsibilities of the planning, the preparation, the production, and the evaluation of the media needed for the course. The course team also selects and submits the names of the writers of the fifteen units for the approval of the Academic Senate.

*Ramkhamhaeng University* (RU) makes use of class-room instruction as the main delivery approach. Lectures are conducted in various lecture halls, each of which can accommodate from 3,000 to 5,000 students. Closed-circuit television is used to link two or more lecture halls for some courses. Texts are available for all the courses offered, although most of them are not written for self-instructional purposes. Radio and television programmes are broadcast for certain foundation courses for home based students. Radio programmes are broadcast on Radio Thailand Programme 3, and television programmes are broadcast on Channel 11 of the Department of Public Relation and on the Thai Army's TV Channel 7. Since lectures are available for all courses, tutorials are provided on a limited scale. Students, therefore, have to help themselves by setting up the so-called peer tutorials on campus. Those students who have a good understanding of the course act as tutors and volunteer to teach other students. At the end of the semester students have to come to take their final examinations at the university's two campuses. Of more than 302,000 students, there are approximately 98,663 regularly class-attending students (32.67%), 127,383 students (42.12%) occasionally attend classes, and more than 75,954 students (25.15%) study by themselves from texts, radio, and television programmes.

*Financial Supports of Distance Education*

Financial support for distance education comes mainly from student fees, from the government, from external assistance, and investments. The sources and forms of support vary from one institution to another.

STOU receives only 15-20% of its budget from the government for the salaries of staff and construction of basic infrastructure such as buildings, workshops, and laboratories. Other expenditures, mostly operating costs and developing of advanced infrastructure, come from tuition fees and external assistance. External assistance is granted from various international organisations such as UNESCO, British Council, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Republic of Germany, and local business firms. For example, JICA provided a grant aid totalling USE 12 million for the construction of the Educational Broadcasting Production Center for producing radio and TV programmes, and the Government of the Republic of Germany provided nearly the same amount for the establishment of the Printing Technology Training Institute. In addition, STOU invests funds for various purpose such as Research Fund, Distance Education Media Development Fund, totalling about Baht 300,000 million. This yields more than 20 million Baht in annual interest. These form the annual budget of about 350 million Baht per year. The sources and forms of financial assistance have not changed for STOU.

The sources and forms of financial support for RU are similar to those of STOU. RU gets about 60% from the government for similar types of expenditure, as it has more staff than STOU. (While STOU has less than 300 full time academics, RU has more than 2,000). The sources and forms have not changed. Since 1991, there has been a movement to free universities from a government framework so that each university can manage itself independently, but it has not yet been implemented.

For the DNFE, most financial support comes from the government. Support from students fees and external assistance are limited.

Although, more distance education institutions may not be needed in the near future, distance education in Thailand is expanding in terms of offering new programmes, reaching more target groups, and improving the distance education techniques used in conventional institutions. Because of the demands for professional enrichment of people in various fields, existing distance education institutions plan to establish new schools and programmes of study. For example, STOU intends to establish the School of Science and Technology in 1995 and offer three Master of Education programmes in Educational Administration, Curriculum and Instruction, and Educational Technology and Communications. Master's degree programmes in other areas will also be offered within the next three years. The growth of business in Thailand offers work to secondary school graduates. More young people will want to work and study at the same time. Existing distance education institutions like STOU will have to modify its distance education system to make it suitable for younger people to study by themselves. Conventional universities, consequently, may find it more difficult in the future to confine their students to class-room instruction. Distance teaching techniques may be developed as integral parts of conventional teaching to reduce talk-and-chalk types of instruction and allow more time for seminar types of instruction.

## **THE LEGAL STATUS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

All distance education institutions are established by their own charter, thus they have the same legal status and authority as other educational institutions and certificates and degrees are of the same standard. RU was established by the Ramkhamhaeng University of 1971 and its amendment in 1978. STOU was enacted by the Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University Royal Charter of 1978.

## **OVERVIEW OF CURRENT SITUATION**

### *Aims and objectives of distance education*

The aims and objectives of distance education in Thailand are generally based on the philosophy of continuing life long education by providing and expanding opportunities for people who, for whatever reasons, had not earned certificates or degrees from other universities, and at the same time upgrading the quality of life and work. Various distance education institutions have their aims and objectives stated differently. For example, STOU states its aims and objectives as follows:

- 1) To open and expands the opportunities for higher education to working adults and secondary school graduates who are, for whatever reasons, unable to attend conventional colleges and universities;
- 2) To provide the most suitable self-instructional system based on existing infrastructure both on the part of the university and the students;
- 3) To utilize existing human resources and infra-structure outside the university in the production and dissemination of knowledge and experience to the students;
- 4) To provide continuing education and outreach programmes to all the public to upgrade their work and the quality of their life;
- 5) To make full use of advanced telecommunication and computer technologies for production and delivery systems.

STOU has to achieve four objectives observed by all public and private universities under the Ministry of University Affairs. The four objectives are:

- 1) To provide and promote academic and professional education at the university level in order to help the people upgrade their educational standard and serve the needs of the society;
- 2) To promote research and studies for generating new knowledge and applying it to national development;
- 3) To provide public service by disseminating knowledge to the people to help them upgrade their personal development and their professional competencies;
- 4) To preserve and promote arts, traditions, and cultural heritages of the country.



### *Control, Organisational and Management Structure*

The control, organizational and management structure of distance education institutions of higher learning under the Ministry of University Affairs are generally alike, but the DNFIE in the Ministry of Education is different.

Both STOU and RU are governed by University Councils. The management is under the Presidents and his staff. The following is the case of STOU illustrating the control, organisational, and management structure.

Like other universities in Thailand, STOU is governed by the University Council, the supreme governing board which selects and recommends the Royal appointment of the President and appoints high level administrators. The University Council is a lay board appointed by a Royal decree. It consists of a Chairman, members by position, and representatives of experts, and a Secretary. Members by position are the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of University Affairs or representative, the Director-General of the Department of Public Relations, the Director-General of the Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation, the Director-General of the Department of Post and Telegraphs, the Governor of the Communication Authority of Thailand, the Director of Mass Communication Organization, the President of STOU, and the representative of the Academic Senate. The Secretary is appointed from one of STOU's vice-presidents. Representatives of experts (nine members) are selected from professionally successful individuals in the areas of science and technology, social sciences, and humanities. The members of the University Council serve a two-year term.

The President and his administrative staff are responsible for the overall university administration together with deans, directors of respective schools, institutes and offices. The university is divided into sections under the charge of vice-presidents. The seven sections are Administration, Academic Affairs, Planning, Development, Operation, Educational Service, and Special Affairs. There are presently ten schools under the charges of chairpersons or Deans. The Office of the President in charge of general administration consists of Central Division, Planning Division, Finance Division, Personnel Division, Procurement and Property Division, Internal Audit Unit, and Seminar Centers.

For services, there are six offices (administrative organisations equivalent to schools or institutes), headed by Directors, namely Office of Academic Affairs, Office of Educational Technology, Office of Educational Services, Office of Documentation and Information Office of University Press, Office of Continuing Education, Office of Computers, and Office of Registration, Records and Evaluation.

Unlike Ramkamhaeng and other universities, STOU's schools are not divided into departments. STOU was established to fully utilize existing human resources and to prevent departmentalism. However, offices and institutes are divided into centers and divisions.

### *Geographical Coverage of the Provision of Distance Education*

Through a good network of communication, the coverage of distance education is nationwide, reaching more than 90% of the populated areas via radio and television broadcast.

*Instructional and Delivery Systems*

Among the three distance education institutions, STOU has the most systematic plan for its instructional and delivery systems.

Ramkamhaeng University, since it makes use of class-room instruction as the main delivery means, produces texts in traditional format. These texts are written individually by its academic staff. As a matter of policy for class-room extension RU makes use of direct teaching radio and television programmes for students who cannot attend lecture sessions on the two campuses at Hua Mark Main Campus and Pachim Sawat Swannapasri Campus (Toong Sethi), each about 20 kms from the heart of Bangkok.

The DNFE's distance education unit produces radio and television programmes through the DNFE's Center for Educational Technology (CET) and broadcasts via Radio Thailand Programme II for radio and Channel 11 for television programmes. Texts are available in some courses. Local studies are also set up for interest groups at provincial secondary schools for the radio-correspondence programmes. STOU is operated under the single mode system of instruction, and students mainly study by themselves. As stated in Article 6 of STOU Royal Charter (1978), educational experience provided by the university

. . .shall be disseminated through printed media via correspondence, radio and television broadcasts, and other techniques which are appropriate in helping the student learn effectively by themselves without having to attend regular classrooms....

Thus, STOU is prohibited by its own charter from setting up regular classes, except for special tutorials and professional enrichment activities. In order to provide education without regular classrooms, STOU developed its own distance education system called the STOU Plan using a systems approach to ensure that each programme of study is relevant to the needs of the society and the instructional system is helpful to home-based students. According to the STOU Plan, the instructional system model for media production and delivery of distance education consists of five majors steps.

*Identify Problems and Needs*

Before offering a curriculum or a study programme, each school must conduct a survey to identify problems and assess existing needs of the society so that the offered programme will really meet public needs and contain the type of knowledge and the skills that are useful for personal and national development.

*Develop the Curriculum*

After the area of study has been identified based on the needs assessment conducted in Step 1, a curriculum is developed in the form of an integrated curriculum. This covers both an inter- and multi-disciplinary approach to support the nature of STOU programmes which cover a wide range of subject matter within each area of concentration. Consequently each curriculum consists of philosophy, rationale and principles, aims, content structure, course list, course descriptions, recommended outline for each course's fifteen units, and unit objectives stated in behavioral terms.

*Produce Multi-Media Distance guarding Packages*

A clearly stated systems model or flow-chart is needed for outlining logical production steps for each type of media. The major steps include the planning, preparation, production, developmental testing, and evaluation.

### *Identify and Implement Delivery System*

The delivery system is identified based upon the existing socio-economic and cultural infrastructure of the country. In Thailand, print technology is readily available and the print media are considered the most economical media in education. Consequently print is used as a core medium in STOU's delivery system. In addition, STOU makes use of the broadcasting infrastructure that exists including Radio Thailand's 40 stations all over the country, as well as commercially operated TV Channel 7 and Channel 9. STOU has helped create a new infrastructure that includes Radio Thailand Educational Network, and the newly established Television Channel 11, which STOU helped develop and justify. STOU is also very much involved in helping to plan the new non-commercial educational television network whose approval is now pending the Cabinet's decision. STOU also makes full use of existing educational institutions and their staffs for tutorials, professional experience, and information services.

After identifying the modes of delivery, the delivery system is implemented using print media, AV media, radio programmes, TV programmes, community resources, and study centers.

### *Identify Modes of Evaluation and Follow-up*

Two modes of evaluation are identified in STOU's distance education system. Evaluation of students' learning achievement and evaluation of the distance education system itself. STOU developed the evaluation system to be the responsibility of designated divisions.

The delivery system of distance education at STOU is designed to disseminate knowledge and experience to its home-based students through print and audio-visual media via the mail, radio programmes via Radio Thailand Education Network (49.5 hours per week), television programmes via Channels 9 and 11, and tutorial sessions provided at local study centers located at provincial secondary schools, some teachers' colleges, and provincial universities.

### *Research Activities*

Research activities in distance education institutions in Thailand are of academic and institutional research. Research activities are usually identified in the research plan of each institution. Academic research activities are conducted by academic staff to discover and expand the frontiers of knowledge in their fields of specialisation. Research activities concentrate on the kinds of knowledge that may be delivered via distance education, content and media relationships, production and use of the various media, developmental testing of media packages, effectiveness and types of delivery systems, and evaluation of students' achievement. Institutional research activities are aimed at improving the distance education system.

### *Enrollment and Graduates in Distance Education*

Enrollment in distance education in Thailand is generally high. For STOU, there are approximately 450,000 students. The average new annual intake is about 80,000 students, most of whom are working adults. Since 1987, STOU has produced more than 111,000 graduates in the ten schools. RU has more than 302,000 students. Its annual intake, most of whom are high school graduates, is about the same as STOU. Since 1973, the RU has produced more than 218,000 graduates in the seven schools.

## *Distance Education in Asia and the Pacific*

### *International Affiliation and Cooperation*

Distance education institutions in Thailand usually have some sort of affiliation and cooperation with some international organisations.

STOU is a member of the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) and International Council for Distance Education (ICDE). It receives cooperation from UNESCO, the British Council, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and the Government of the Republic of Germany. RU receives cooperation from the Open Learning Authority in Canada, and a few universities in the United States.

### *Problems and Issues*

Problems and issues in distance education in Thailand may be described in terms of administration, personnel, communication and educational technologies infra-structure, delivery, and evaluation.

Distance education institutions, unlike conventional institutions, still have to prove themselves to win the trust of the public. Administrators must understand the philosophy of distance education, and be innovative to bring progress to the institution. Many administrators have had experience in traditional settings and so have difficulties in managing institutions in more innovative ways.

Personnel in distance education institutions usually have to work very hard to serve a large number of students. It is sometimes very difficult to recruit this type of personnel with competence, devotion, and a good understanding of the distance education system. Some academic and non-academic staff transfer to other universities or move to the private sector after a while because of the over-load in distance education institutions.

The success of distance education depends greatly on educational communication and technologies. The institutions have to invest in a communication and educational technological infra-structure which is very costly. Consequently, some type of educational and communication technologies needed for the production of distance education media packages are not yet established.

Delivery of some components of distance education is possible through the network of regional Centers, local study centers, and area resource ventures. Presently, distance education institutions such as STOU make agreements with the Department of Secondary Education, Ministry of Education for the use of provincial secondary schools as their study centers. Provincial public libraries, under the agreement with the DNFE, are also utilized for deposits of books, texts, and other types of printed materials for students. The number of local study centers however is neither sufficient nor convenient for students in remote areas. Tutorial sessions are not provided in every province because of the limited number of students registering for the course.

Sufficient Area Resource Centers (ARC), aimed at providing the various forms of information and documentation, and other types of activities have not been established to serve the need of all students. Originally, ten to twelve ARC's were supposed to be established. To date, only a few have been completed.

Evaluation of students' achievement should be based on both the evaluation of process

(assignments, activities, etc.) and the evaluation of product (final examinations). Presently, the evaluation of most courses is based totally on final examinations. The assignments performed by students are not counted as part of the final evaluation, thus making the students feel that the activities are not important. Some of them therefore do not carry out the activities at all.

## **CONCLUSION**

Distance education in Thailand has grown rapidly during the past two decades. It has gained much public support and recognition, thus becoming an effective tool for human resource development. As Thailand develops its communication infrastructure, better delivery system can be developed for home-based students.

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## Turkey

*Nur SoZEN*

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### THE NATIONAL CONTEXT FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

Turkey links southern Europe and Asia, sharing boundaries with Syria, USSR, Iran, Iraq, Bulgaria, and Greece. It is a mountainous country with a long coastline in Anatolia (Asia) and Thrace Europe. The area of Turkey in square kilometers is 81,457.8, with 790,200 in Asia and 24,378 in Europe. Turkey consists of seventy-three provinces.

The increase in the number of candidates applying for admission to Turkish higher education institutions towards the end of the 1950's led the governing bodies to think about providing more opportunities to avoid overcrowding and to support working high school graduates. Accordingly some effort was made to create facilities for distance education. Perhaps the most important impetus for this idea was related to the economy. Until 1981 higher education was free and it became difficult to provide efficient educational facilities for the continuously rising number of students without lowering the standards. On the other hand, Turkey is a country with a young population. According to the 1990 census, 51 % of the population is younger than twenty-four years of age. Undoubtedly, this young population wants the opportunity for better education, but on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that 41 % of Turkey's population is still considered rural. Higher education requires personal expenditure to cover education fees, education material, boarding and accommodation. To afford these amounts is not very easy for an average family. Therefore, distance education was considered an efficient solution. Moreover, the present infrastructure was able to support such services in Turkey. The number of high school graduates who could not pass the University Admission Examination or who could not get sufficient marks to be placed in an education programme of their preference started reaching significant levels. During the 1974-1975 academic Year Correspondence Instruction was introduced for those who had not been able to be admitted to a university. Such students studied by means of printed educational material supplemented by attendance in summer courses.

With the establishment of the Expanded Higher Education Institution (YAYKUR) in 1975 and the establishment of a Distance Education Faculty affiliated to Anadolu University in 1982, distance education gained in importance and was seen as an efficient means of higher education. Table 1 and 2 clearly show striking demographic changes in Turkey. Table 2 especially indicates the significant place of the young population in the total. Distance education seemed to provide higher education opportunities, along with technical training courses that lead to a certificate, for a considerable portion of this young population.

*Distance Education in Asia and the Pacific*

TABLE 1: Population Increase BY Years

1927	13 648 000	1965	31 391 000
1935	16 158 000	1970	35 605 000
1940	17 821 000	1975	40 348 000
1945	18 790 000	1980	44 737 000
1950	20 947 000	1985	50 664 000
1955	24 755 000	1990	56 969 000
1960	27 755 000		

Source: State Institute Of Statistics Statistical Yearbook, 1990.

TABLE 2: Population BY Age Groups And Sex (X1000),1985  
(Details Of 1990 Census Not Available Yet)

Age Group	Total	Male	Female
	50 664	25 672	24 992
0-4	6078	3 113	2 965
5- 9	6 739	3 457	3 282
10-14	6 193	3 210	2 983
15-19	5 407	2 744	2 663
20-24	4 784	2 334	2 350
25-29	4 041	2 056	1 985
30-34	3 374	1 724	1 650
35-39	2 787	1 414	1 373
40-44	2 208	1 098	1 110
45-49	2 009	992	1 017
50-54	2 043	1 040	1 003
55-59	1 649	824	825
60-64	1 130	556	574
65	2 126	995	1 171
Unknown	96	55	41

Source: State Institute Of Statistics Statistical Yearbook, 1985.

Although the language of instruction is Turkish, foreign languages, mainly English, but also German and French are taught. Course material for these languages are provided by means of books and TV programmes jointly prepared by language training institutions and Distance Education Faculty staff members, some of whom are foreign lecturers.

The Faculty of Distance Education (it is also called the Open Education Faculty) is one of the faculties of Anadolu University located in the city of Eskifehir. It is the only higher education institution involved in distance education. It has two distance education programmes, namely, Business Administration and Economics. Students are admitted according to the results of the first stage of the two-stage examination organized by ÖSYM (Student Selection and Placement Center). The total quota for the academic year 1989-1990



for these two programmes was 65,000. This is the highest quota for higher education programmes in Turkey.

The duration of the distance education programmes is four years and their instructional level is that of the License. Students of distance education take one mid-term, a final and a make-up examination. The Higher Education Council has given the responsibility of conducting the examinations to the Student Selection and Placement Center. Examinations are given in all the provincial centers where Distance Education Faculty offices function. Recently, Turkish students living in some European countries were also admitted in the Distance Education Faculty and their examinations were organized accordingly.

The duration of the Business Administration and Economics programmes of the Distance Education Faculty of Anadolu University is four years. During the first two years the students of both programmes take the same basic common courses. From the third year on the students take courses specifically designed and prepared for the programme. The first-year courses given during the 1990-1991 academic year were Introduction to Business Management; Introduction to Economics; General Accounting; Introduction to Behavioral Sciences; Basic Law; General Mathematics; Foreign Language (English, French, German); Ataturk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution; and Turkish Language I. The second-year courses offered were Business Management; Economic Analysis; Accounting Applications; Public Finance, Commercial Law; Statistics; Foreign Language; Ataturk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution; and Turkish Language II. Third-year courses for the Business Administration Programme included Business Finance; Marketing; Cost Accounting; Turkish Taxation Regulations; Administrative Structure of Turkey; Law of Business and Social Security; Foreign Language; Ataturk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution; and Turkish Language III. Third-year courses for the Economics Programme included Currency and Banking; International Economics; Turkish Taxation Regulation; State Budget; Administrative Structure of Turkey; Law of Business and Social Security; Foreign Language; Ataturk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution; and Turkish Language III. Fourth-year courses in the Business Administration Programme included Behaviour of Organizations; Advertising and Sales Management; Accounting Control and Financial Analysis; Turkish Economy; Investment and Project Evaluation; Computers and Basic Programming; Foreign Language; Ataturk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution; and Turkish Language IV. Fourth-year courses in the Economics Programme included Economic Development; Finance Policy; Taxation Applications; Turkish Economy; Investment and Project Evaluation; Computers and Basic Programming; Foreign Language; Ataturk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution; and Turkish Language IV.

Examinations are conducted by means of the central organisation on a previously announced date and place. These details are sent to all students, together with examination documents. Additional information can easily be obtained upon request from the Distance Education Faculty offices. These offices also provide counseling services. All examinations are prepared in the form of multiple choice tests which are later evaluated, by computer, at the Student Selection and Placement Center. The students must receive adequate marks from every course. The mid-term exam is weighted 30% and the final exam weighted 70% to determine the final grade. A student must therefore receive at least 50% on each exam to be successful. All the related information and the results of the examinations are sent to the students by mail. Those students who fail two courses can proceed to the next courses the following year, but the ones who fail more than two must repeat them and cannot advance.

The students of the Distance Education Faculty keep their student status for seven years.

All the services provided to the students are organized by the central office and local offices in connection with the central office. Among the services provided, the following are worth mentioning. The students who have successfully completed the first two years are awarded a Pre-License diploma, which allows working students the chance for employment promotion. Students who have successfully completed the whole four years and passed all the courses are awarded a License Diploma. The central office also prepares transcripts for each student. Transcripts can also be prepared in English.

To provide counseling services efficiently, academic counseling centers have been established at various locations. To perform these services, the Distance Education Faculty cooperates with other universities. Students can receive tutoring, course information, and advice on study skills from the academic staff.

The provinces where academic counseling services are provided are as follows: Eskifehir, Afyon, Kutahya, Antalya, Ankara, Erzurum, Sivas, Adana, Diyarbakir, yzmir, Aydin, Kayseri, Elazi°, ystanbul, Bursa, Zonguldak, Trabzon, Samsun, Konya, Balikesir, and Lefkofa.

Additionally, the Distance Education Faculty has twenty-two student offices in twenty provinces. The principal education material used by the Distance Education Faculty are books which are published and distributed. Television is another important tool for distance education. Lectures are prepared at the TV studios of the Distance Education Faculty and broadcast by the TRT (Turkish Radio and Television).

The present communication policy includes established network broadcasting, postal services, the telephone system and other means of mass media. The printed material can also be obtained through Distance Education Faculty offices in addition to the postal delivery services.

Very close cooperation has been established between the Distance Education Faculty and the General Directorate of TRT for the broadcasting of courses via TV. The programme of the courses to be broadcast on TV is announced both on TV and radio, and in the newspapers. These announcements are made in detail to cover the year. All types of courses are broadcast on TV, but radio programmes only cover foreign language courses.

## **HISTORY AND BACKGROUND**

In 1981, during the reorganization efforts of the higher education system as a whole, distance education was defined. According to Article 3 of the Higher Education Law, the forms of higher education were described as "formal, open, external and expanded". Distance education is open in the sense that instruction is conducted by means of radio, television and printed education material. Within this legal framework, the Faculty of Distance Education (AOF) was established in 1982 as a component of Anadolu University.

The Higher Education Law, which came into effect on November 6, 1981, established and organized continuous distance education. But, because other universities lacked the necessary mass communication technologies and facilities, they were unable to establish distance education, preferring to stick with traditional teaching methods. Accordingly the Distance Education Faculty at Anadolu University has sole responsibility for organizing distance education throughout the country.

Three major factors influence face to face education throughout the history of education in Turkey. One of them is the enormous cost of bringing people together under optimum conditions and facilities for education. The second is the ever increasing number of the people who want higher education. The third factor that developed over time created a solution to the problems created by the first two factors. This is the technological progress in mass media in terms of improving communication per se and reaching even the most remote areas. With these technologies and techniques, it has become possible to explain and teach the most sophisticated subjects to unlimited numbers of people in various places. The need for face to face instruction has gradually lost its previous importance. Using mass media in a reasonable mixture brought distance education to large numbers of people.

With its education technology and facilities, distance education brings school and university into the living rooms of every citizen in the country. This means that it is a modern education and training model that reduces the load both on the individual and on the universities. This can also be interpreted as more benefit for less cost.

In Turkey, although distance education can be used for public and adult education and training, it was initially started at the higher education level. There are virtually no differences between the programmes included in distance education and non-distance education. For example, the contents of a mathematics course taught during the first year of Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences of Anadolu University is the same as that of the first year of the Economics Programme of Distance Education Faculty. The only difference is that the Distance Education Faculty uses different methods and techniques to reach the students. Following the same programme, neither are there differences between the diplomas obtained. This means that the legal rights of the graduates are also the same. Turkish Higher Education Legislation considers the Distance Education Faculty to be equivalent to non-distance schools. Although efforts of organising an efficient system of distance education seems to date back to the late- 1950's, the specific objectives were not clarified until 1974. Indeed it was not until the Higher Education Law and related regulations were established in 1981 that distance education became well organized across the country. Undoubtedly the success of this organisation is closely related to the progress regarding TV broadcasting. Due to the joint efforts of PTT (Post, Telegraph, Telephone) and TRT (Turkish Radio and Television) to spread TV services throughout the country, distance education accelerated in 1984 with the new nationwide network of TV stations. Parallel to these efforts, the number of TV channels increased. At present, Channel 4 broadcasts the Distance Education Faculty courses. New developments can be expected in the future as technology facilitates improved means of communication, and distance education gains an international character.

Undoubtedly books are still the most important tools in education. Anadolu University Distance Education Faculty prepares all its textbooks in accordance with its programmes and, with PTT, it organizes the mailing of them to students. All students therefore receive their course textbooks in a convenient and orderly manner.

On the other hand, the Distance Education Faculty has well-equipped TV studios where courses given by various lecturers are recorded. These recordings are broadcast by TRT on Channel 4. Students can easily combine the information given in the books with what is explained by the instructor on the TV screen.

TABLE 3: 1990-1991 Academic Year Schedule

a) <u>Education</u>		
TV broadcasting (courses)	November 1990 - May 1991	
Radio Broadcasting (courses)	November 1990 - May 1991	
Academic counseling services	December 1990 - May 1991	
b) <u>Examination</u>		
Mid-term	March	23-24 1991
Final	June	1- 2 1991
Make-up	September	7- 8 1991

Table 4 clearly indicates the growing demand and interest towards distance education. Careful examination of the table shows a critical change in 1983 when expanded education was replaced by distance education. In spite of 35,000 available quota, only 14,982 students entered the distance education programmes, leaving almost half of the available slots free. But, increasing numbers of applications since 1984 have exceeded the quotas. One reason for this increasing demand is the success of the Pre-License Diploma, or Certificate, offered by the Distance Education Faculty for the students who complete the first two years of the four year programme.

TABLE 4: Summary of Distance Education in Turkey

	<u>Quota</u>		<u>Placement</u>		Disabled	Total
	General	Top Students	General	Top Students		
Expanded 1981 education	810	47	967	20	-	987
Expanded 1982 education	1304	142	1445	1	-	1446
Distance 1983 education	35000	-	14981	-	1	14982
Distance 1984 education	40000	-	47977	-	22	47999
Distance 1985 education	50000	-	59979	-	21	60000
Distance 1986 education	50600	-	68904	-	7	68911
Distance 1987 education	55000	-	73817	-	11	73828
Distance 1988 education	60000	-	81333	-	23	81356
Distance 1989 education	65000	-	85019	-	37	85056
Distance 1990 education	65000	-	83362	-	26	83388

Source: State Institute of Statistics years 1981-1990

TABLE 5: Number Of Distance Education Faculty Offices, Students And Graduates By Years

Academic Year	No of Offices	No of Students	No of Graduates
1982-1983	9	29 479	-
1983-1984	17	40 617	-
1984-1985	19	65 656	-
1985-1986	20	97 313	4658
1986-1987	20	106 860	6172
1987-1988	21	133 160	5662
1988-1989	22	174 738	5438
1989-1990	23	228 247	8406
1990-1991	23	206 762	X

X1990-1991 figures are not available yet.

## THE LEGAL STATUS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

There were various legal arrangements and regulations regarding Higher Education prior to 1981, but all were replaced by the implementation of No. 2547 Law. Regulations relating to distance education in No. 2547 Law of Higher Education (1981) Article 3/4 describe the various types of education currently existing in Turkey.

- Formal (Conventional) Education is that where students have to participate in conducted courses in classrooms and also participate in laboratory works and practises.
- Distance education (or open education) is the type of education carried by means of radio and TV broadcasting and by other means of education material.
- External education is that where students do not have to participate in conducted courses (taught courses), but have to take mid-term and final exams. These students might be asked to follow some taught courses that are to be organized from time to time.
- Expanded education aims to provide required information, knowledge and skills to the public in various fields.

Article 5 describes the main principles of Higher Education and in Article 5/4 distance education is considered the same as formal and other means of higher education. Article 12 of the same Law states the responsibilities and duties of Higher Education Institutions, and Article 12/d-f states that all types of higher education institutions including distance education are responsible for training the public, especially for the modernization of industry and agriculture.

No. 2809 Law of March 28, 1983, No. 41 Higher Education Institutions Legislation describes all the universities in Turkey detailing the faculties, vocational-technical colleges and related institutions of each. Article 21 of this Law explains all the aspects of Anadolu University and details how the individual units of education were put together in addition to new ones to form Anadolu University, and how distance education was also affiliated to this university.

Article 1. Distance Education, to take place in the universities in relation with No 2547 Law and Article 12/d-f and 43/c, is to be carried according to this regulation.

Article 2. Distance Education (higher education) is carried in two different ways: A) As the central distance education in Anadolu University B) As Distance Education in other universities

Article 3. Central Distance Education is carried by Anadolu University Distance Education Faculty according to No 41 Higher Education Legislation to serve the whole country. The fields to be covered by this type of higher education are decided by the Higher Education Council upon the offer or request of the university.

Article 4. To provide distance education in any of the programmes of universities is to be decided by the Higher Education Council upon the offer of universities. The quotas, student capacities, principles, system and equipment-material of education and training are to be decided by the authorized organs of university.

Article 5. The contents of the courses of distance education programmes of a certain university are the same as the formal programmes of this university.

Article 6. Admission to distance education programmes is possible according to undergraduate education examination regulation of universities. And, same rules apply both for distance and formal education.

Article 7. Students of distance education are required to fulfill all the conditions of articles of the Undergraduate Education and Examination Regulation except participating in the conducted courses.

Article 8. Distance education is carried by means of: - published education material ; video tapes, films, cassettes, books, printed lectures etc. - Radio, TV broadcastings - Group discussions with the presence of supervisors - Academic counseling

Article 9. In order to increase the efficiency of distance education various tests and evaluation systems can be applied on the students.

Article 10. Examinations of distance education other than the central, are organised together with the formal education faculties of the related university.

Article 11. Transfers between the central distance education and formal education of the same programme are to be decided by the authorised organs of the Higher Education Council.

Article 12. Education fees and the charges made for the books, cassettes, tapes, slides, letters, tests, experiment equipment etc. are considered as income by the revolving investment for Distance Education Faculty of Anadolu University and for related units in other universities.

Article 13. There is no difference between the rights of the students and graduates of distance and formal education. And the graduates of the both entirely have the same legal rights.

Article 14. The students of distance education cannot benefit from physical facilities of formal education other than libraries and planned practical studies.

Article 15. At every unit where distance education is provided a student office is established. Anadolu University that is responsible of central distance education can open special offices and counseling services throughout the country where necessary.

Distance Education Regulation, 1982.

## **OVERVIEW OF CURRENT SITUATION**

Turkey, comprised of a cross section of various cultures, resources, technologies and commercially important markets, must train and organize the necessary human power to handle all these highly sophisticated matters without causing conflicts. The state has always tried to achieve and maintain international standards. Therefore it is not wrong to say the standards adopted for all aspects of education including distance education are both international and regional. Undoubtedly such standards are decided upon by international and regional conventions. Objectives of distance education are designed and arranged to meet national needs and international standards. These objectives are explained in detail above. But, of course, none of the objectives can be considered stationary. On the contrary, they are to be rearranged according to continuously changing needs of society and ever increasing requirements of modern life and technologies. The Distance Education Faculty, with its dynamic attitude, tries to re-organize itself to bring instant solutions to spontaneous demands and requirements in addition to the ones foreseen in the education plans of the state. The sixth Five Year Plan prepared by the State Planning Department, points to the need for increasing the quality and standards at every level of education. Accordingly, the contents of the courses are to be designed to meet the present and future demands as well as requirements. According to Article 840 of the plan to increase the efficiency of expanded and distance education, legal regulations are to be made to establish cooperation between related institutions. Article 860 of the same plan emphasises the importance of well trained qualified human power for the socio-economic development of the country. In connection with these articles, Article 269 describes the main objectives for distance education for the next five years as " . . . (to) gain a more flexible structure to provide more knowledge and skills in every field required by public." Distance education in Turkey is a national institution and the related duties are to be performed by universities. The main responsibility of organising distance education resides at Anadolu University. Accordingly, the Distance Education Faculty has been established and affiliated at Anadolu University to serve the whole country. Governing bodies are the same as other formal higher education institutions as foreseen in the No, 2547 Law and related regulations.

The Distance Education Faculty cooperates with non-distance education institutions when necessary and receives academic support. These relations can be expected to increase considerably in the future to meet the new demands.

In 1985 a two year Pre-License programme was started for primary school teachers, in which 140,000 teachers have been enrolled, 125,000 of them have already graduated, and 15,000 are still continuing the programme. Anadolu University Distance Education Faculty started another programme in 1989 which aims to train qualified manpower for the tourism sector, called the Tourism Training Certificate Programme. People who are at least secondary school graduates and between ages 16-25 are accepted into this programme, and current enrollment is 8,000. The program covers topics such as serving, catering, kitchen, and office. The courses, which last one year, are given in accordance with distance education methods through books and TV programmes. Two-month practising programmes have also been arranged at various tourist facilities.

Another programme worth mentioning is the Pre License courses started in the 1990-1991 academic year in Nursing and Hygiene to train the staff required by health services. Anadolu University Distance Education Faculty is also going to start a one-year programme in 1991 which will serve secondary school teachers. So far 54,000 secondary school teachers have enrolled. The programme offers education in Biology, Geography, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Turkish Language and Literature.

Anadolu University Distance Education Faculty also provides education/training services for the student living abroad through the West-Europe Project. The Distance Education Faculty has 2,267 students living in Germany, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland enrolled in Economics and Business Administration Programmes. The examinations for these students are given in Berlin, Paris, Vienna, Bern, Brussels, Dan Haag, Frankfurt, Munich, Stuttgart and Hamburg. The Distance Education Faculty gives academic counseling and guidance services for the students living abroad in Koln, Duisburg, Frankfurt, Munich, Stuttgart and Berlin where the majority of the students live. The Distance Education Faculty also offers pre-license programmes for Turkish citizens living abroad, about 2,000 of whom participate. In addition to text books, TV and Radio broadcasts and face to face academic counseling, the Distance Education Faculty also provides counseling through telephone and well-prepared video education cassettes.

Sources of financial support for the Distance Education Faculty and its programmes can be divided into two groups. The first one is the state budget. Like all the other higher education institutions, the Distance Education Faculty receives approximately one-half of one percent from the state budget reserved for education. While this might seem insufficient, it's affiliation with Anadolu University means the Distance Education Faculty uses already existing university facilities. Additionally, it receives support in terms of teaching staff and facilities from other universities and also from government agencies such as Turkish Radio and Television, as well as the Ministry of Education. The second, but perhaps more important source is the revolving investment account comprised of education, examination and materials fees paid by students, which provides a considerable and dynamic source for further investments and rapid development. Revolving investment is a highly efficient means of creating financial support.

Statistical information provided in the following pages give the enrollment details, which illustrate the increasing demand for distance education since 1982, the year when regulations came into force to ensure the legal rights of the graduates of distance education. A comparison of the same academic years in Tables 8 and 9 clearly shows the increasing popularity of distance education. Students in the Distance Education Faculty are included in the figures beginning with the 1982-1983 academic year in Table 8.



TABLE 8: Higher Education Institutions Student enrollments, Graduates, And Teaching Staff BY Academic Year And BY Gender

Academic Years	Higher Education Institutions		Student Enrollment			Graduates			Teaching Staff		
	Universities	Faculties & Others	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1923-1924	1	9	2629	285	2914	-	-	321	307	-	307
1933-1934	1	17	5005	846	5851	622	138	760	533	41	574
1943-1944	1	26	14551	3742	18293	1420	439	1859	1146	257	1403
1953-1954	3	34	19090	4219	23309	2277	597	2874	1773	353	2126
1963-1964	7	83	61791	15490	77281	6114	874	7988	3451	917	4368
1973-1974	10	166	141661	35620	177281	20006	5296	25302	8778	2995	11773
1979-1980	16	347	203500	66778	270278	52542	15915	68457	15579	5120	20699
1980-1981	19	321	175558	61811	237369	23319	8522	31841	15605	5312	20917
1981-1982	19	334	174345	66058	240403	29454	11363	40817	16440	5783	22223
1982-1983	27	273	197962	83577	281539	24126	11018	35144	15975	5839	21814
1983-1984	27	286	213650	108670	322320	27086	12794	39880	14468	5865	20333
1984-1985	27	302	273028	125157	398185	29201	14663	43864	15413	6536	21949
1985-1986	27	310	303932	145482	449414	37700	20148	57848	16018	6950	22968
1986-1987	28	322	320624	160976	481600	44184	24376	68560	16797	7585	24382
1987-1988	29	335	327405	167776	495181	45964	26186	72150	18181	8430	26611
1988-1989	29	360	363570	188148	551718	46259	27335	73594	19178	8936	28114
1989-1990	29	378	419902	215927	635829	-	-	-	21162	10028	31190

Source: CEPES/UNESCO, 1990

TABLE 9: Number Of Distance Education Students BY Academic Year

	New enrolments			Total Number Of Students		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
1983-84	18892	4612	14286	40617	10335	30282
1984-85	31003	7621	23332	65456	16414	49042
1985-86	40455	11053	29402	98670	26351	72319
1986-87	42722	12219	30503	123804	35191	88613
1987-88	54209	15743	38466	133139	38082	95057
1988-89	64289	20890	43399	174711	52651	122060
1989-90	69146	23460	45686	228295	69931	158364

Source: State Institute Of Statistics, Higher Education Statistics, 1984-1990.

As Table 9 indicates, Distance education is popular among both female and male students. Although the number of female students is considerably less than the males, the figures clearly show the rate of interest.

The difference regarding the number of students between the various tables given on the following pages might be due to transfer students. As indicated under each table the main source is the State Institute of Statistics, but some other sources are also used to prepare the following tables. This might also be a reason for the difference.

TABLE 10: Distribution Of Quotas And Placements Among Programmes of the Distance Education Faculty Between 1985-1990

Programme		Quota General	Placement General	Disabled	Total
1985	Economics	12500	14988	12	15000
	Business Administration	37500	44991	9	45000
1986	Economics	12600	23376	3	23379
	Business Administration	38000	45528	4	45532
1987	Economics	13000	16465	3	16468
	Business Administration	42000	57352	8	57360
1988	Economics	15000	19140	8	19148
	Business Administration	45000	62193	15	62208
1989	Economics	20000	25270	13	25283
	Business Administration	45000	59749	24	59773
1990	Economics	20000	25093	11	25104
	Business Administration	45000	58269	15	58284

Source: State Institute of Statistics, Higher Education Statistics 1985-90.

As Table 10 indicates, Business Administration seems to be more popular among distance education students. But a careful comparison of the available quota and placement figures of the programme of Economics also points to the popularity of this programme.

After examining all the relevant information, prompt efforts to broaden distance education to offer programmes in other popular fields of interest seem inevitable. While state plans do not sufficiently satisfy present demand, they will require adjustments in the near future in order for significant progress to be made (State Planning Department, 1990). One of the most recent activities of the Distance Education Faculty worth mentioning here is a joint international project which is conducted by The European Institute for The Media. Various education and broadcasting (mainly television) institutions are involved in this education training oriented project. The project is called Channel E Project and Turkey is represented by Anadolu University. In accordance with the objectives of the project, the new broadcasting term started on June 17 1991. The broadcasting is provided via ASTRA Satellite to cover all European countries. The aim of the project is to train and educate the young Turkish population living throughout Europe. The education programme of 1991 consists of thirty television series and is designed to concentrate on improving Turkish language and culture, and various aspects

of Turkey and the tourism sector. The students who complete the programme will receive a certificate jointly prepared by Anadolu University and The European Institute for The Media. This certificate should give these young people better opportunities for employment upon their return to Turkey, especially in the tourism sector.

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## **VIETNAM**

*Tran Dinh Tan*

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### **THE NATIONAL CONTEXT FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION**

From 1941 to 1975 Vietnam's economy was war based. This struggle for national liberation was strongly impressed by a socialist ideology and the liberated areas first in the north from the mid-fifties and then in the south from the mid-seventies established centralized socialist state economies. This economy was frozen by the U.S. led oil embargo which was imposed from 1975. Since 1986, the development of a private economic sector, with private family companies, and private factories has been encouraged by the government of Vietnam. The government continues to support the development of the State economic sector and local cooperatives. Thus, the need of education in economic development is increasing rapidly.

Vietnam's population is 66.2 million (1991). The rate of annual population growth is 2.2%. The language of instruction is mainly Vietnamese. The education system consists of formal and non-formal sectors, with non-formal education comprised of correspondence courses, part-time courses, open learning, and distance education courses. It is necessary to distinguish here the definition of Open Learning commonly used internationally, and "DAO TAO MO RONG" commonly used in Vietnam since 1985 (which has a literal translation of "Open"). "DAO TAO MO RONG" is used to refer to education and enrollment of the Formal Education System, but that was additionally admitted apart from the enrollment stipulated by the State Planning Committee. The DAO TAO MO RONG students are taught with curriculums and methods of the Formal Education System. They are not in the list of official enrollment, and they must pay all of their education fee. So, the word "Open" here refers only to excess enrollment from those stipulated by the State Planning Committee.

Distance Education can make use of a rapidly improving postal service, national and local radio and television broadcasts for several hours a day, and video and audio tapes.

### **HISTORY AND BACKGROUND**

Every year the higher level formal education institutions are able to admit 10% of the country's secondary school leavers. Most of the rest have to take a course offered by the distance education system. Tens of thousands of technicians, engineers, businessmen, and administrators, need to be provided with modern economic knowledge and technology, through refresher courses, although in many cases recent economic theory is new to them. Thousands of demobilized soldiers need to be trained in economics and technology, so they can take part in the development of social production. Vietnam has fifty-three minority groups, most of which reside in remote and mountainous areas where movement is difficult. These people can only be served by the distance education system, which provides them with knowledge of health care, farming and agronomics, growing of medicinal plants, and economics, among others.

Since 1960, evening academic courses have been offered to adults. Since 1965, correspondence courses have been offered by higher and secondary institutions of formal education. The following instructional methods were combined: Self-study materials and textbooks; postal service; and face to face contact whereby students were required to attend a residential forty-five or fifty day session each school term of six months. In 1968 an institution specialising in correspondence and academic education was established in Hanoi. Since 1978 it assumed the additional task of offering courses in management and administration to managers and administrators of university or college, and professional secondary school.

Students of the correspondence courses were government employees, while a few were members of agricultural cooperatives. Students needed prior approval from the authorities and were fully paid while in school. They therefore did not pay education fees. The goal for most students was to obtain a degree or certificate in order to receive a salary increase or a better job in a government company or factory.

Some fifty academic institutions and seventy vocational secondary schools offered such correspondence courses, with curricula identical to those at formal education institutions. A strict entrance examination was required, with 50% of the applicants typically passing, and 45% to 50% of those admitted completing the course. The total number of graduates of non-formal education from 1960 to 1990 at the higher level is 662,833 (diploma), and at the secondary level is 275,475 (diploma).

Teaching programmes and courses were provided in dozens of subjects, including economics and management, agriculture science, engineering and technology, social science, law, civil engineering, and foreign languages, among others.

At present the formal education system in Vietnam, from the higher level to the secondary vocational level, operates under several constraints. The demand for education cannot successfully be met because the number of students who can be accommodated by institutions of higher learning each year represents only 10% of school leavers. A significant number of university graduates do not wish to work in rural areas, so there is a shortage of technicians, medical doctors, teachers, and other needed personnel in these areas. The duration of post secondary training courses is five or six years and often the content of the teaching programme is not linked with national needs and objectives. The reform process has been impeded by outmoded understanding of education and outdated institutional regulation. The system is biased against women, particularly mothers, and women in the workforce find entry to further education difficult.

Although fifty-three universities and seventy-three secondary vocational colleges have been offering courses by distance education, the curricula and teaching methods of these courses are a continuation of the formal education courses, so they may not always suit the students who are of older age and who work and study at the same time. The dominant factor in this system is that lecturers go to regional distance education centres for concentrated periods of time to give face-to-face lectures. Some print material and assignments are left with students for them to work on between visits. No specific distance education teaching material is produced. Therefore the enrollment is low, the range of courses is limited and the dropout rate is 50%. Rectors of participating colleges are open too busy managing on-campus courses to pay much attention to correspondence courses, and they are not inclined to upgrade the content and method of teaching in correspondence courses because of the time and labour needed.

Most universities and colleges of SR Vietnam are concentrated in the two big cities: Hanoi (northern Vietnam) and Ho Chi Minh City (southern Vietnam). In thirty-three of forty provinces there is no university. Students learning at a distance have to travel a long way to reach the colleges where face-to-face learning is provided. Many cannot afford the time and costs involved and eventually drop out.

Since 1975 the established provincial centres of distance education have been characterised as follows. Provincial centres of distance education are set up by the People's Committee of the province and recognised by the Ministry of Higher Education with financial allocation, with petrol and cars mainly provided by the provincial People's Committee. The enterprises and cooperatives that send staff members to Distance Education Centres also contribute financially. The Centre has a Director, teaching staff and assistants who assume the task of monitoring or giving teaching assistance.

The tasks of the Centres are to organise the courses in terms of recruitment and the teaching plan, to supervise students, and to sign contracts with universities for the provision of teachers. They also make accommodation arrangements for teachers and students during periods of face-to-face teaching and examination sessions. Often they request universities to run courses in a number of subjects, and to hold extra tutorial sessions for students if qualified teachers are available.

The teaching and organisation of examinations and the setting up of graduation examination commissions are assumed by the universities (which signed contracts with the centres). Currently there are twenty-six provincial centres and many study points in other provinces and districts.

Foreign language teaching is strongly characterised by the need for up-to-date technological and pedagogical information found in foreign language text books and by the need for interactions with foreign experts. In many localities foreign language courses are run at three levels, A-B-C (starting from A level). Some of them are held in the evenings, others in the afternoons or on Sunday mornings. Languages taught are English, French, German, and Russian (declining), among others. Japanese is becoming very popular. Language courses are organized in provinces by the Centres of Distance Education and in the cities by centres specialising in service language training.

There are several Distance Education Centres in industrial areas, such as: Da River power plant; Hongai coal mine; Thai Nuyen iron-steel factory; and Laokai Apatit mine.

The network of distance education faculties in universities as well as provincial distance education centres was supervised and monitored by the Department of Distance Education according to established principles and practices. The achievements of distance education in Vietnam have been immense. Nevertheless, the distance education system in Vietnam has been unable to meet the demand in the number of enrolled students and quality of training due to several factors. There is no centre which is responsible for designing the teaching syllabuses, for producing teaching materials (at low cost) to be delivered quickly and regularly to learners. Neither is there a centre responsible for producing audio-visual educational materials such as audio and video tapes, or slides. There is no professional distance education centre which carries out surveys, collection and translation of materials on distance education, and at the same time provides staff development courses for teachers and management staff.

Since 1986 the private, home economic sectors and foreign investment in Vietnam have been encouraged by the Vietnamese government. In support of the government's plan,

people at any age and of all social statuses are allowed by the Ministry of Education and Training to take any non-formal courses they need; but they must pay the education fee. In addition, institutions of formal education also admit more learners than the official enrollment stipulates and is granted by the government. The additional enrollments comprise System B, or an "Open" course. But the teaching programmes and methods are just the same as those of the formal education system (face-to-face instruction). Such education forms can only meet the educational needs of young people living in cities and towns, near a college university, or a secondary vocational school.

To address the problems mentioned above, the Ministry of Higher Education decided to set up a Vietnam People's Open University (VIPOU). This was approved by the Central People's Committee of SR Vietnam. It was intended to use the Institute for Management Cadres as a basis for this development. The Director of the Department of Distance Education was appointed Director of the Institute for Management Cadres and is the Interim Rector of VIPOU. In 1988 this institution was converted into the only institution in Vietnam offering distance education, and was named The Vietnam National Institute of Open Learning (VNIOL) where audio and video teaching tapes are now being produced.

VNIOL presently has two divisions and twenty-two Study Centres in the provinces. Division I in Hanoi is cooperating in its operation with twelve Study Centres in the northern parts of Vietnam. Division II in Ho Chi Minh City cooperates with ten Study Centres in the southern provinces of the country. Besides the courses offered by VNIOL, the National Radio and Television Centre provides three programmes in Distance Education everyday, including a sixty-minute language programme in English, French, and Russian, with an estimated 500,000 viewers and auditors, a thirty-minute programme on health care and basic knowledge in agronomy, and a thirty-minute programme (during summer vacation) on revision of knowledge at secondary school.

The number of viewers and auditors to the programmes is difficult to estimate. The programmes are partly managed and carried out by VNIOL, and partly by the Radio and Television Centre itself.

Since 1988 when VNIOL became the first Distance Education institution in Vietnam, it has been responsible for conducting research on the world's experience in distance education and applying it to Vietnam. VNIOL offers distance courses in organization, management, and technology to distance educators, teachers, and administrators. It designs and produces audio and video tapes to be sent to the Study Centres, and Radio and Television Centres. Moreover, it provides various types of courses depending upon the social demands of the year and those placed on specific categories of learners.

The types of students at VNIOL are mainly young people who have not had the opportunity to take face-to-face courses at a formal education institution. Adults take part-time and evening classes. Teachers at the primary or secondary school levels take refresher courses. Finally, young people and adults in rural areas, mountainous areas, and islands take public information courses.

The government gives financial support to build accommodation facilities, lecture halls, libraries, and laboratories, as well as for vehicles. It also provides a salary to teachers, and administrators, as well as a salary to students while they attend a residential face-to-face instruction session, and the cost of traveling to and from school. But the financial resources to produce self-study materials and other educational media are very few. Since 1985, students must pay part of their education fee to teachers. The number of

factories or companies that usually pays a salary to its employees while they are at school has decreased due to current economic difficulties.

In the coming years, greater development in the range of distance education operation in Vietnam is anticipated, for several reasons. The development of different economic sectors, with growing cooperation in economy, science and technology between Vietnam and overseas countries, requires more short-term courses with modern teaching content, and training in more than one foreign language. Most young people will need to take a distance education course while they fulfill their jobs at the work-place, because the government's budget to education is limited. Only a distance education system is able to meet the needs of education for millions of young people and people in remote islands and mountainous areas. This will help to develop the economy, and to achieve equality in social and economic development of minority groups in the areas where movement is difficult.

## **LEGAL STATUS**

The legal status of distance education was determined early with a Prime Ministerial Decision signed by Le Thanh Nghi, the Deputy Prime Minister, on October 11 1962, which states as follows:

Promulgation of general regulations on establishment of Open Learning Institutions and courses at higher and secondary levels. -Upon the requirements of consolidation and development of Open Learning institutions and courses aiming at training cadres with academic and secondary knowledge. -Based on the request of the Ministry of Education (1).

WHICH DECIDES Article I -Promulgate general regulations on establishment of Open Learning institutions and courses at higher and secondary levels. Article 2 - The Ministry of Education (I) is responsible for instruction of implementation of the general regulations.

## **THE GENERAL REGULATIONS ON ESTABLISHMENT OF OPEN LEARNING INSTITUTIONS AND COURSES AT HIGHER AND SECONDARY LEVELS**

Due to an increasing demand of Professional cadres with academic and secondary knowledge, that has not been met by conventional education institutions, in-service courses, part-time courses, evening classes and correspondence courses have recently been offered at factories, offices, and workplaces by some ministries.

These part-time courses provide learners with systematic curriculums in a rather long term, and aim at training cadres workers with academic or secondary knowledge or improving their knowledge. The organisation and management of the courses were not implemented by integrated regulations, even in their own way, thereby a good educational quality has not been achieved, thus resulting in the development of member of such courses,

So in time meet the above mentioned demand, part-time courses, evening classes, correspondence courses should be greatly developed together with the traditional instruction courses. A development of part-time schools and courses with academic and secondary teaching is needed to improve gradually the cadre's and worker's knowledge of technology and profession through Open Learning.



Aiming at the objective, the legislation defines purposes forms of part-time education, types of learner to be trained under the plan of part-time education institutions and courses at higher and secondary levels as follow:

## I - PURPOSES

Item 1 - The major task of the Open Learning schools is to offer the "work and study at the same time course to worker cadres, in a rule that Ma worker/cadre of a specialty should be a learner of his/her relevant subject"; their teaching programme should be systematically produced and taught, and their students as completion of the course should be supplied with knowledge of a specialty at a higher or secondary standard.

Item 2 - The detailed purposes of the Open Learning schools are as follow: a. Non-formal secondary schools (Open Learning schools):

- Offer courses training workers at secondary level.
- Provide staff development courses at secondary level to cadres of basic knowledge.
- Offer staff refreshment courses to cadres presently holding a leading position who are required to have knowledge of a specialty, at secondary level.

b. Non-formal academic institutions:

- Providing workers, cadres of basic knowledge with academic courses.
- Offer refreshment and up-grading courses at higher level to cadres of secondary knowledge.
- Providing cadres presently in a leading position who are required to obtain academic knowledge of a specialty with staff development courses.

## II - FORMS OF INSTRUCTION

Item 3 - The following major types of Open Learning courses can be taken upon the working conditions of each workplace:

- Evening course (or courses offered in ship): including face-to-face instruction after working time, learners are given lectures in group.
- Correspondence course: students are sent self-study material and only present on campus at a regular time for tutoring sessions, test or examinations.
- Evening and Correspondence course: mainly, students are supplied with self-teaching material, with on-campus sessions in the evening with tutor's help.

Besides, in terms of duration the courses can be held in a short term or normal term.

## III - TYPES OF LEARNER TO BE TRAINED

Item 4 - The student's admission should be followed by the common procedures to a Formal education institution. Some changes of entrance requirement which can suit and help the development of non-formal education are possible, such changes can be administered by a parent ministry or department upon the following regulations:

- a. - A worker of a specialty should be a learner of his/her relevant subject. He/she can enroll to a course with subjects different from his/her specialty as he/she has approval of his/her parent ministry or department.
  - b. - A student should have at least for a period experienced in his/her field of work before he/she takes a Open Learning course. A proper period of professional experience should be stipulated by a parent ministry or department.
  - c. - A student must be identified to have a good point of view, good conduct, and good attitude and behaviour towards his/her work and study.
  - d. - A student must have a qualification of basic education, a good health, and has not any infectious diseases.
- A student must have a qualification of primary education (7th form) to enter an open learning course at secondary level, and a certificate of secondary education (both form) to enter an open learning academic course.
  - As a student has not any of the required qualifications, he/she has to be given supplementary education needed to a course, before he/she starts the course, and the course duration may be longer.

- Quality of basic education especially in subjects essential to a course's curriculum ought to be achieved. Some priority can be applied to other optional subjects, but sooner or later the learner's qualification of a comprehensive primary education to a course at secondary level and his/her certificate of secondary education to an academic course are expected and required.

e. - Student's age is not really and necessarily regulated in general.

Item 5 - Priority is applied to the following in admission: cadres holding a leading position, dominant scientists and researchers, cadres or workers with good professional experience, with a good reputation to the revolution, labour heroes, outstanding farmers, soldiers, and workers.

Apart from those mentioned above, women, learners of minority groups, the regrouped southern people should be given proper priority.

#### IV - PLAN OF EDUCATION. AND CURRICULUM

Item 6 - A plan of Open Learning, and curriculum should serve objectives of Open Learning instruction, should be designed with principles, suited to approaches and methods to train professional cadres with secondary and academic knowledge. The Ministry of Education will give detailed instruction to the designing.

Item 7 - Every subject of the teaching plan must contain its curriculum developed under the direction and instruction of the Ministry of Education.

Item 8 - Plans of education, and subject's curriculum must be considered and approved by the parent ministry before a course starts. Any adjustments of education plan and curriculum must be approved by the Ministry of Education, and the adjustments are related to regulations set up.

Item 9 - The teaching programme of a non-formal education institution must comprise subjects (basic education subjects, politics, professional subjects, etc.) as stipulated in the teaching programme to formal schools. The politics must be taught with an integrated content. Learners who attended politics courses and were awarded by a non-formal school will not have to study the subject, but they have to take a test on politics.

Item 10 - In the programme of education the following must be defined: - Specific purposes of education.

- Course duration and total of hour. - Time distribution.

- Number of weeks spent on study, revision, test/examination, and holiday in a school term or year.

- Number of lessons taught within a week, hours of a lesson.

- Number of subjects, hours of study in each subject, sequence of the subjects of a school term, subjects with final examinations, subjects with tests of a school term, proportion in theory and practice, proportion of self-study and face to face instruction, forms and date of final examination. The duration must be clearly defined to each type of learner and subject.

#### V. - METHODS

Item 11 - Face to face instruction is the major education at evening classes. The evening classes must be given lessons with methods that serve the principles stipulated by the Ministry of Education. Besides face to face lessons, tutoring instruction can be provided, if possible, for revision and consolidation, or for student formerly absent with an acceptable reason.

Item 12 - The major education of a correspondence course is carried out with self-study material cent so learners and under principles and regulations stipulated by the Ministry of Education. The date of residential sessions for tutorial classes, tests, or examinations at one place or others must be identified annually.

Item 13 - All subjects written in the course curriculum must be completed with a test or an examination. There must be final examination at the end of the course. The performance of test or examination at a course completion and in admission to an upper course must be controlled and integrated by the Ministry of Education.

#### VI. - INTERESTS AND DUTIES OF LEARNER AND TEACHING STAFF

Item 14 - Students to open learning courses have the following interests and duties:

a. - Duties:

- Study well while working and fulfilling well the job at the workplace.
- Obey and have a good performance of the regulations in education. Students must ask their parent body for permission before they can drop.
- Students have to pay for their learning materials.

b. - Interests:

- Open learning students are given time off work for their study as regulated. After completion of a course, the graduates will be employed and treated as their counterpart from a formal course.

c. - Regulations on probation after completion

- Graduates of a subject relevant to their field of work are free from probation.
- Graduates of a subject irrelevant to their field of work must be on probation as regulated generally to their counterparts from a formal secondary or higher school.

#### Item 15 - Regulations to teaching staff

a. - Teachers of a formal secondary or high school who are assigned to give lessons to an evening class or correspondence course, the lesson given by them will be included in their total amount of teaching hour and paid under the present regulations on payment. If a teacher gives more lessons to the course than he/she is regulated, he/she will get an extra pay for his/her overtime work.

b. - An expert in an office, factory, or company who also takes a part in teaching to a course at a non-formal secondary or high school is allowed to spend a part of his/her office time on his/her teaching service, the amount of time stipulated and arranged by his/her parent office, and naturally he/she is paid for his/her service. His/her parent office has to provide him/her with an opportunity or favourable conditions to fulfill his/her work well at the workplace and to take an active part in teaching and research work.

The Circular by the Interministerial Body of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Security gives instruction on stipulation and arrangement of an amount of office time and payment to such an expert.

#### VII. - ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Item 16 - A great development of open learning course, evening course or correspondence course is encouraged at any place where it is possible especially a development a non-formal course at secondary level.

A consideration and decision on offering of an open learning course at secondary and higher level must be made under the contemporary regulations to a secondary or higher school of formal education.

The number of annual enrollment to a non-formal education institution must be approved by the State Planning Committee upon a request of a parent ministry, or a provincial level executive committee .

#### Item 17 - To Schools with a lot of Non-formal Course and Annual Enrollment

a. - At a secondary or higher formal education institution where also open learning courses are offered, a board of directors in non-formal education can be established, or such an existing board can be additionally staffed with professional officers, or part-time experts.

b. - At other institutions offering open learning courses, a board of directors can be set up by parttime experts or professional officers; the board of directors can have a staff subject to the enrolment to its open learning courses.

- Arrangement of teacher to a non-formal course and certification at completion of a course is made and stipulated by a parent ministry or provincial executive committee.
- The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Security will give detailed instruction on duty, authority, organization and management of a non-formal education institution.

Item 18 - Students to an open learning course, at a non-formal education institution are formed into classes for a convenience in their study and life in group. Detailed regulations of authority, organization and management of a non-formal education institution will clarify tasks, duties, interests, authority, organization and management of a non-formal school and its students.

Le Thanh Nghi  
Deputy Prime Minister  
(On behalf of the Prime Minister)

This was followed by an "Instruction by the Prime Minister", Pham Van Dong, September 30, 1963, about "giving the time off work to cadres and workers to follow the open learning courses offered by the open learning schools and classes of intermediate and higher level.

1 - Apart from the annual leave of absence permitted by the state, college open learning learners can have one or two months off work more for revision and exams every year. In their final school year, apart from the annual leave permission, the learners can have one month off work more for their final examination. In case of making thesis or design the learners can have one to four months off work more.

2 - The time of revision, tests and examination applied for the intermediate open learning learners is as much as two-thirds the time for the college open learning learners.

3 - Basing oneself on the above instruction, the Ministries, Departments, executive committees of provinces and cities which the open learning colleges and schools belong to should negotiate with the Ministry of Education to define the specific time for each kind.

According to the arrangement of the schools, and after having been permitted by the office the learner can be free from work once or several times depending on the need of the revision, examination of the school year.

4 - All expenses for organizing the open learning schools and classes herein are paid by the state. There is no change in their salary whenever they are off work to revise their lessons and take examinations and the salary is paid by the original offices. In order to carry out this Instruction successfully, to reduce hindrance in production and salary budget, the Ministries and Branches which manage open learning schools and classes should pay attention to the following:

1) The enrolment should be planned annually. The enrollment norm must be put into the National Plan. The enrolment should not focus on part of the office or some factories only, otherwise they will meet difficulties in production and work.

2) Along with the enrolment, the alternates should be planned to replace the learners whenever they are busy with their revision, exams, especially their final examination. In order to limit the regular staff and save money, the administration and the Trade Union should encourage workers and clerks to undertake the learners' work. The alternates are admitted only in case of urgency, until the learners take their work again. The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the National Planning Department, Branches, the Executive Committee of Provinces and Cities Concerning the open learning schools and classes and learners are responsible for the execution and inspect the execution of this instruction.

These two pieces of legislation established the legal bases of all subsequent developments in distance education.

## OVERVIEW OF CURRENT SITUATION

### *Aims and Objectives of Distance Education*

The aims and objectives of distance education can be gleaned from the types of courses offered. From 1960 to 1985 the following courses were offered to students: professional training courses at the secondary level to workers and farmers; up-grading courses on new advances to technicians; and staff development courses in economics and technology to administrators of provincial governments and district governors. Most of the enrollees were paid by the State, some of whom were paid by an agricultural cooperative. They took a course in order to acquire better knowledge to meet the requirements and demands of the State.

Since 1985, private capital accumulation, as well as investment by both individual families and overseas companies in the private economic sector, have been encouraged by the government of Vietnam. Therefore, more young people (aged 20-25) enroll in distance education courses, and more short-term teaching programmes with realistic content specific to production and business have been offered.

### *Control, Organizational and Management Structure of Distance Education*

The Ministry of Education and Training assumes the organisation and management of the whole distance education system. It approves the teaching programme of professional secondary and academic level, then inspects the actual performance of the programme. It approves the list of graduates to be awarded a degree. It administers and pays the salary for essential lecturers (teaching staff of a formal education institution at a professional secondary or higher level).

The provincial and district government and Union of Factories organize and manage the local distant education centres. They provide houses, lecture halls, campus, motor vehicles, and expenses needed for the courses offered at the local study centre, as well as pay staff members of the Distance Education Centre. They select and recommend graduates to gain entry at local places of employment, and supply students with education fees, room and board.

Vietnam National Institute of Open Learning (VNIOL) gives essential direction to the whole system of distance education. It designs and produces video and audio teaching tapes to be sent to provincial distance education centres, students, and to the central and local radio and television stations. Further, it carries out the tasks of compiling, writing and printing of bulk self-teaching materials. It offers staff development courses to teachers, administrators and managers of distance education centres. Finally, it conducts research into theories of world distance education, and introduces its experience in distance education to the distance education institutions of Vietnam.

Teachers who work part-time for the distance education institutions come from formal institutions; such institutions are also places where distance education students can use facilities for their laboratory, practical or field work. Nowadays these formal education institutions only provide part-time courses with regular residential sessions giving face-to-face instruction. They also give evening classes besides their formal teaching service.

## *Distance Education in Asia and the Pacific*

### *Financing Distance Education*

Sources of finance to distance education come from the central government and the provincial government. The amount provided by the two sources is usually only enough to pay the teachers and administrators; only a small amount of money is spent on printing self-teaching material and producing audio-visual teaching aids. An education fee is paid by the family of students or by the students themselves. Such fee is taken as an additional contribution to teachers' salaries. There are no sources of financial support from overseas countries or international agencies or organizations.

### *Geographical Coverage of the Provision of Distance Education*

There are distance education courses in all forty-four provinces and cities of Vietnam, including six northern border provinces. This includes those in the central part which are mountainous areas where transportation and movement are not easy or convenient. Among those, Distance Education Study Centres have been established in thirty provinces. The centres constantly offer distance education courses, and each centre has a staff of 20 to 100 administrators, managers or monitors.

### *Instructional Systems*

The major methods from 1960 to 1988 were self-study materials and instructional books, mail, and face-to-face contact. Since 1988 they have used the above methods as well as video and audio tapes (of poor quality, and only a few), and teaching broadcasts (a few hours a week). The first three methods are commonly used in many Centres.

Research is planned around the educational needs of the people of different ages and different economic sectors in Vietnam, and the training needs by overseas companies who are going to invest in Vietnam; and the designing of suitable teaching programmes and modern methods (1991). Research planned for the coming year will focus on teaching programmes, forms of instruction, language of instruction, and effective methods of distance education to young male and female minority students residing in the northern mountainous areas and in the central part of Vietnam. In 1992-1993, methods of evaluation of quality of distance education for students of different ages and different professions (in social science, natural science, state employees, private businessmen, employees of overseas companies) will be undertaken.

On-going research activities are examining the experience and methods of designing audio and video teaching tapes for public information, secondary and higher courses (1991). This will be followed by a focus on the methods of compiling and writing self-learning bilingual materials (in Viet-Thai language, Viet-Hnong language) *and* video and audio teaching tapes to groups of minorities in 1992-1993.

*Enrollment in Distance Education*

The following table illustrates enrollment rates for on-campus institutions, open learning institutions, and distance education broadcast courses for the period from 1960 to 1990, and the year 1989-1990.

TABLE 1: Educational Enrolment in Viet Nam by Type of Institution

	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	
	1960-1990	1989-1990
<u>FORMAL EDUCATION</u>		
Higher Education (Diploma)	2,027,373	108,800
Vocational Technical (Diploma)	2,625,059	138,000
<u>OPEN LEARNING</u>		
Higher level (Diploma)	662,833	38,842
<u>Vocational Technical</u> (Diploma)	275,435	18,760
Certificates:		
- Economic Management	180,730	58,840
- Foreign Languages	1,880,900	200,000
<u>DISTANCE EDUCATION</u>		
Foreign Languages (daily 60-minute broadcast courses)		500,000 (est)
Community Education (daily 30-minute broadcast courses)		100,000
Secondary Courses for Young People (daily 30-minute broadcast courses)		100,000
Correspondence and Video Tape Courses		6,000

The number of distance education students has been estimated and rounded off. There are also no doubt many auditors of the course programs who are not counted as enrolled students.

*International Affiliation and Cooperation*

VNIOL is currently the only institution specialising in distance education in Vietnam, though it has not been a member of a regional or international organisation of distance education. However, in the past three years it has received some material and had an exchange of information with the UNESCO-sponsored newsletter: NEVER TOO FAR, published at STOU, Thailand. A few Japanese language teaching materials of The Japan Foundation Japanese Language Institute were received, as well as some materials and documents of The University of New England, Australia. Correspondence has been exchanged with the

### *Distance Education in Asia and the Pacific*

National Institute of Multimedia Education (NIME-Japan); the Open University, Walton Hall Milton Keynes (UK); and Tele-Université (Québec, Canada).

VNIOL has not been supported by overseas or international organisations, but was provided aid by UNESCO/PROEAP for two Training Workshops. Currently, VNIOL needs aid for development of its Audio-Studio, Television Studio, and offset Printing shop, so that VNIOL will be able more effectively to organize and provide distance education in Vietnam. This is under discussion with Japanese and Australian aid dispensers.

### *Growth and Expansion in the Next Five to Ten Years*

A vigorous development of distance education is expected in Vietnam. Hundreds of thousands of young Vietnamese people will continue to study using the distance education system because, due to economic difficulties, the annual enrollment in formal education institutions cannot increase. The demobilised soldiers can be estimated as 600,000 to 800,000 people. They should be provided with knowledge of economics and technology through distance education courses so they can take part in social production. Groups of minorities are residing in remote and mountainous areas where the traffic service is poor, travelling is difficult, and the weather and climate is very hard. They expect to be offered a knowledge of culture, economics, and technology through distance education, which can be provided to them in both their own language and the national language. Since April 1991 Vietnam has employed the satellite National 14 to televise its programme to all parts of the country. Many provinces now have their own television centre, so telecommunication services in Vietnam have greatly improved in recent years. But the development of broadcast distance education in Vietnam can only be implemented if VNIOL is supplied with equipment, and is capable enough to produce video and audio teaching tapes, and to print teaching materials.

### *Problems and Issues*

The effectiveness and quality of distance education in Vietnam presents sophisticated problems. But experience proves that people who take a course with subjects relevant to their field of present work, and work in the same field after the course completion, often acquire a high-quality education. In subjects of social science, senior managers or administrators usually achieve better results in comparison to young people. Farmers who are tied to their rice fields, and minority people who are accustomed to and love their mountainous homeland often achieve poor results in theoretical areas of study. Their actual work and production, however, is often more successful and effective than those who are not interested in working and living in remote mountainous areas. Subjects with colour video tapes for illustration are easier for learners to study than those with only reading material and lectures. Finally, in language subjects, young people often seem to study better than adults.



## ABBREVIATIONS

AADEP	Australian Association of Distance Education Principles
AAOU	Asian Association of Open Universities
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
ACHS	Air and Correspondence High Schools
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEC	Atoll Education Centers
AIDP	Australian International Development Programme
AIOU	Allama Iqbal Open University
APEI	Asia and the Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development
APEID	Asian Programme of Educational Innovation and Development (UNESCO)
ASPESA	Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association
AVEC	Audio-Visual Education Centre
BIDE	Bangladesh Institute of Distance Education
BTT	Basic Teacher Training
CCC	Catholic Doctrine Correspondence Course
CEP	Condensed Education Programme
CEID	Centre for Educational Innovation and Development
CES	Centre for Educational Services
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CODE	College of Distance Education
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
CRTVU	Central Radio and Television University
CTSDC	Curriculum, Textbooks, Supervision Development Center
CEC	Centre for Extramural Studies
CUHK	Chinese University of Hong Kong
CUT	Cutin University of Technology
CVC	Community Viewing Centers
DDE	Department of Distance Education
DE	Distance Education
DEANZ	Distance Education Association of New Zealand
DEC	Distance Education Centre
DEEC	Distance Education English Course
DERRC	Distance Education Regional Resource Centre
DTEC	Distance Teaching English Course, Maldives
DTT	Department of Teacher Training
ESA	External Services Agency
HECS	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
HMG	His Majesty's Government
IACE	International Association for Continuing Education
ICDE	International Council for Distance Education
ICIHE	International Council for the Innovation of Higher Education
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IGNOU	Indira Gandhi National Open University
IHTES	Interstate Heads of TAFE External Studies
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOE	Institute of Education
ITM	Institute of Technology in Mara

JSC	Junior Secondary Certificate
KACU	Korea Air and Correspondence University
KEDI	Korean Educational Development Institute
KSA	Korean Standard Association
LU	London University
MOEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
NDE	National Department of Education
NFEU	Non-Formal Educational Unit
NIEMT	National Institute of Educational Media and Technology
NIME	National Institute of Multimedia Education, Japan
NTV	Nepal Television
ODA	Overseas Development Agency
OLI	Open Learning Institute, Canada
OLIHK	Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong
OPP2	Second Outline Perspective Plan
OU-UK	Open University, the United Kingdom
OUSL	Open University of Sri Lanka
PCP	Personal Contact Programmes
PNGADE	Papua New Guinea Association for Distance Education
PNU	Payame Noor University
PROAP	UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
PRTVU	Provincial Radio and TV Universities
PTOC	Primary Teachers' Orientation Course
RTTP	Radio Teacher Training Project
RTP	Radio Tuition Programme
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SBP	School Broadcasting Programme
SICHE	Solomon Islands College of Higher Education
SIMs	Self-Instructional Materials
SLBC	Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SLIDE	Sri Lanka Institute of Distance Education
SLMs	Self Learning Materials
SOU	Singapore Open University
SPACE	School of Professional and Continuing Education
SPADE	South Pacific Association of Distance Education
SPOC	South Pacific Organizations Coordinating Committee
STOU	Sukothai Thammathirat Open University
TAFE	Technical and Further Education Colleges
TFYP	Third Five Year Plans
TTC	Teacher Training College
TVUs	Television Universities
UA	University of the Air, Japan
UGC	University Grant Committee
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Family Planning Association
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education

UPNG	University of Papua New Guinea
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia
USP	University of the South Pacific
UT	Universitas Terbuka
VAOP	Victorian Association of Off-Campus Providers
VOM	Voice of Maldives
VSO	Volunteer Service Overseas
WHO	World Health Organization

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