

FRANCOPHONE SUMMITS

A Major Distance Training Project

The Institut TECCART in Montreal made an offer to the principal organ of La Francophonie, the Agence de La Francophonie (ACCT), to implement an important and large-scale technical and professional training project in electronics. The offer to implement this major distance training project was in keeping with the new impetus given to the International Francophone Distance Education Consortium (CIFFAD) by the CIFFAD advisory committee prior to the Cotonou Summit, which gave distance training in La Francophonie renewed emphasis.

In pursuing previous projects in Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal and Ivory Coast, the Institut TECCART noted that various developing societies often lacked a specialized labour force. This situation is particularly serious in electronics, since this sector is not only an essential component of development but, today as never before, is vital to all production industries.

Many countries can rely on an abundant unskilled labour force and also have a large number of universities at various levels. It must be acknowledged, however, that there is an especially costly shortage of skills in technical maintenance.

It was precisely to overcome this shortage of technical and professional training in electronics that TECCART designed and proposed its project: the individualized distance training system (SIFAD). Thanks to SIFAD, a showpiece of expertise developed over several decades, refined in the field and finally tested in various recent trials, TECCART is now able to offer a training project geared to providing a labour force specialized in electronics to national and

international firms. The result was the offer made to the ACCT and endorsed at the Cotonou Summit, where distance training won acclaim in La Francophonie.

The project submitted by TECCART consists in training, over five years, in various French-speaking countries and at a fifth of the cost usually involved, up to 1,000 electronics technicians per country. Another very interesting aspect of the project is that it may be extended to other complementary areas, if the countries in question so desire.

Valuable spinoffs of the project include the training of specialists in the field and the possible creation of independent institutes in each country.

One aspect of the project that cannot fail to arouse keen interest today is the fact that it creates jobs. Each person trained has a job, since each graduate has, in addition to the practical knowledge acquired, a full set of the instruments required to practice his profession, which were used in the training course.

After discussions and exchanges with the ACCT and CIFFAD, and with representatives of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Canadian team responsible for La Francophonie, development of the SIFAD in La Francophonie may take place in Tunisia, Morocco, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Benin, Haiti, Guinea Vietnam and Vanuatu.