

Internationally, Canada took the lead on an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) study on the integration of information and communication technology through professional development for teachers, involving nine APEC economies. The project looked at the use of ICT from two standpoints: in the preparation and delivery of professional development programs for teachers, and in teaching teachers to use technology effectively as a learning tool.

Seven countries, including Canada, prepared a report on current trends and issues that was the focus of an educational workshop, held in Toronto (Canada) in December 1999. Participating countries were able to showcase their best practices — five of which were documented and presented (one from each region) to show the range of programs. Workshop participants learned of best practices that they will be able to apply to their own particular situations. The Canadian report was co-ordinated by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and the workshop was organized by CMEC in conjunction with Human Resources Development Canada.

Immediately preceding the APEC workshop, CMEC organized a Canadian forum on teacher professional development in information and communication technology. Held in November 1999 in Toronto, the forum was organized in collaboration with Human Resources Development Canada's Office of Learning Technologies and Industry Canada's SchoolNet. The forum helped to identify a wide body of knowledge from a range of perspectives from which policy makers, program developers and service providers could draw to test the applicability of new approaches in their own economies. The forum also created an APEC network of expertise in the field and developed options for future co-operation in the delivery and evaluation of school-to-work interventions for youth risking unemployment. Planning is currently under way to follow up on forum recommendations.

In 1998, the Canadian International Development Agency initiated a \$3.8 million project to support L'école nouvelle d'Artibonite in Haiti. The project is a pilot effort to strengthen local governance capacities in basic education by improving school governance and administrative management. Training is being provided for administrative and educational officials as well as for local parents so that they can be more effective participants in local decision making. The project will also help establish a decentralized school governance system for the up to 40 schools in the region of Artibonite.

As well, CIDA is implementing a project worth \$5 million over five years (2000-2004) in Guyana — the Guyana Basic Education Teacher Training Project — to improve the quality of basic education and to strengthen the teacher training system. The project is consistent with the Guyanese Ministry of Education Policy and Five Year Development Plan (1995) for Guyana, which recommends the use of distance learning to ensure that at least 80 percent of all teachers at the primary and secondary levels are trained by the year 2000. About 40 percent of teachers at the primary level are academically unqualified — not having completed secondary school — and pedagogically untrained; about 80 percent of these are women.