

# College Manager

acm

October 2007

Managing change

Recruitment offer



**Students train to become hairdressers in Dar es Salaam**

## A UK college and trade union visit to Tanzania

A year after the launch of the ACM-led *Fair Trade in Skills* project, a joint UK college–trade union delegation of four college principals, one vice principal and five trade unionists from ACM, the UCU and Unison arrived in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in June.

The purpose of the visit was to identify opportunities for FE colleges in the UK to work in partnership with the Tanzanian vocational training system. We wanted to listen and learn, and to work with Tanzanian colleagues to design a practical and realistic programme of support for vocational education in Tanzania over a period of five years.

In Tanzania we visited vocational training centres in Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Dodoma and Mikumi. As you would anticipate in one of the poorest countries in the world, these centres were usually ill equipped with regard to learning resources, books and computers. During the visit, teaching and the management of teaching emerged as the most striking areas for building capacity.

As in all developing countries where the economy is based on subsistence agriculture, general poverty entails a low tax-take. A low tax-take severely constrains public investment; limited public investment restricts the development of educational capacity, including that of a trained and skilled workforce to teach and manage teaching and learning. In the UK, further education may sometimes feel neglected and under resourced, but Tanzanian students are infinitely more disadvantaged than our students. ►



ACM's Tanzania project is about their future

### ◀ A vision for provision

Our colleagues in the Tanzanian Vocational Education Training Authority (VETA) were wonderful and welcoming hosts, and expressed great enthusiasm for a partnership with UK colleges. We encountered some excellent practice during our visit, and a number of committed, energetic and skilful individuals. Some of those had developed a real vision for the provision for which they were responsible. Nevertheless, we concluded that there is substantial scope for colleagues from UK colleges to support, mentor and coach their Tanzanian counterparts in teaching and vocational skills.

Meeting Tanzanian students was a very special experience: often quiet, always making the most of their learning opportunities, they also loved being photographed and seeing their image on the camera. One group of students who were decidedly not shy were the hairdressing students we met in Dar es Salaam. Chatty, noisy, lively and friendly, we could have been in any hairdressing training room in the UK.

The Learning and Skills Council and Lifelong Learning UK both lent material and other support to the visit. In a memorandum of understanding between VETA and the UK delegation, we made commitments that we will now take forward. There are likely to be two strands of activity: direct support, training and mentoring of teacher leaders, teacher trainers and new teachers; and direct support through resources including computers, and learning and training materials.

### Calling UK colleges

In order to make these ideas reality, we will seek the participation of other colleges in the sector that would be willing to identify individual teachers and managers who would be keen to work in Tanzania for short periods of time to offer support to practitioners in that country. These ambitions will cost money and we are pursuing a number of possibilities for funding: the Africa desk at the Foreign Office, the Department for International Development and the British Council. At the same time we will set up processes and systems for colleges to contribute resources, such as computers, to Tanzanian vocational education. Since our return, *Fair Trade in Skills* has sent a large number of computers to Tanzania and the money to build a dormitory for female trainees at a centre in Dodoma (necessary in rural districts for the girls' safe participation).

While Tanzania is afflicted by poverty, it has many characteristics that make it attractive for this kind of work. Relatively free from corruption, it is a democratic country and enjoys political stability. The grace, dignity and humour of its people inspired us and we envisage opportunities for manager, teacher and student exchanges that would offer wonderful learning for both parties.

The project website will be live shortly – a link will appear on the ACM website and in this newsletter. If your college is interested in signing up to this project, please e-mail [nadinecartner@acm.uk.com](mailto:nadinecartner@acm.uk.com). We would welcome your participation in this exciting and important venture.

## Elections for Council members 2008

Elections will soon be held for Council members; the timetable is outlined below. A request for nominations will be sent to members on 19 October 2007 and the closing date for nominations will be 5pm on 23 November 2007.

### Council elections

The term of office for members elected to Council will run for either two or three years from the AGM in 2008. Council meets three times a year. Two meetings a year are held at ACM's head office in Market Harborough. These take place on a Friday and are followed by an optional dinner in the evening. Overnight accommodation is provided where necessary. The third meeting is held in Birmingham and runs from Friday lunchtime through to Saturday lunchtime. Members of Council may wish to be nominated to sit on national working groups or Association committees but this is optional and is not a requirement of being a member of Council.

We look forward to welcoming new members on to Council and hope to receive your completed nomination form. The Council is keen to be as representative of ACM's membership as possible and requests that you help it to achieve this by completing the nomination form and returning it to us.

If you have any queries regarding ACM Council or problems completing your nomination form, please contact Peter Pendle on 01858 411 544 or by e-mail at [peterpendle@acm.uk.com](mailto:peterpendle@acm.uk.com)

## ACM awards 2008

**2008 is ACM's 21st birthday.** To mark the occasion, the annual awards made by the Association will be our 'members' awards'. There are to be two awards: one for services to the sector and another for services to the Association. Please send your nominations for either or both of these categories to [nadinecartner@acm.uk.com](mailto:nadinecartner@acm.uk.com).

### Elections timetable

08/10/07	Electoral Reform (Ballot Services) Limited (ERBS) to be instructed as independent scrutineer to conduct the ballot on behalf of ACM (if required) and Electoral Reform (Mailing Services) Limited (ERMS) to be instructed as the independent organisation to distribute the ballot papers
19/10/07	Letter from the Chief Executive and General Secretary to be sent to members advising of the election timetable and the independent scrutineer, and seeking nominations
23/11/07 by 5pm	Closing date for nominations to be received at return address
30/11/07	Nominations to be checked and approved by Council and sent to ERBS
14/12/07	ERBS to compile and print ballot papers
11/01/08	ERMS to distribute ballot papers, containing election addresses, to appropriate members
15/02/08 by 5pm	Closing date for voting papers to be returned to ERBS
22/02/08	ERBS to count voting papers
25/02/08	ERBS to declare the results to the Association's Chief Executive and General Secretary and also to inform him of receipt and resolution of any complaint alleging breach of the election procedures
25/02/08	Scrutineer's report to be posted at head office in a conspicuous place accessible to members for at least one month
23/05/08	Chief Executive and General Secretary to announce new representatives to Council at AGM
June newsletter	Names of the new representatives to Council to be published in ACM's newsletter, together with contents of the scrutineer's report. Members to be notified that the Association will, on request, supply any member with a copy of the report free of charge.

## The work of the Network for Black Professionals

The government has provided clear leadership to colleges and the learning and skills sector about the need to make progress towards a more ethnically representative workforce, particularly at senior levels. Last year, Bill Rammell MP, Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education, wrote to colleges saying that:

*Colleges and other post-16 providers are in a unique position to support community cohesion and improve the aspirations, achievement and social mobility of young people and adults. As educational leaders, you have an unparalleled opportunity to shape the skills, opinions and beliefs of learners who will ultimately make up the national workforce. That is why it is so important that the ethnic profile of the sector's own workforce reflects that of the community it serves.*

The Foster Review of the future role of FE colleges similarly noted the 'marked under-representation of black and minority ethnic groups in governance roles and top management positions'.

The Network for Black Professionals (NBP) has a 10-year history of lobbying the sector, developing policy and initiating innovative action programmes and services to support the career development of black and minority ethnic (BME) managers, tutors and business support staff working in further education. Formerly known as the Network for Black Managers, it was instrumental in establishing the Commission for Black Staff in Further Education (see [www.nbm.org.uk/publications-commision.htm](http://www.nbm.org.uk/publications-commision.htm))

A membership-based organisation to which over 160 colleges and other corporate bodies affiliate, the NBP is recognised as the national voice for black staff in the learning and skills system. Headed by Chief Executive Robin Landman, it is an independent, black-led organisation that seeks both to challenge and to support the sector towards achieving greater social justice in the area of race.

One of the outcomes of the work of the Commission for Black Staff in Further Education was the creation of the Black Leadership Initiative (BLI) in 2002. Funded initially by the Learning and Skills Council and located within the Association of Colleges, the BLI has recently incorporated into the NBP as its professional development and training arm; it receives funding from the Centre for Excellence in Leadership.

### Continuing professional development

Headed by Rajinder Mann, who also serves on ACM's board, the BLI has pioneered a series of progressive programmes to support BME staff, including mentoring, work shadowing, secondments and career development workshops. (Over 200 college managers, many principals and sector leaders, including ACM's Chief Executive, are trained BLI mentors.) One of the flagship schemes, developed in close partnership with Ofsted, has been the inspection shadowing programme, which provides opportunities for black teachers and managers to experience a real-life college inspection as part of the Ofsted inspection team. Independent evaluation of the BLI has shown that it is having an impact on the career progression of BME staff in the sector, with 77% of surveyed participants having achieved some form of progression in their careers.

Another key partnership for the NBP has been the development of the 'First Steps to Leadership' and 'Next Steps to Leadership' programmes with the Centre for Excellence in Leadership. The programmes have been designed to raise the aspirations and confidence of black managers in the sector but also to challenge them with high-profile inputs from nationally recognised college and sector leaders in areas such as curriculum quality, college finance and governance. Over 10 cohorts of BME managers working in colleges and sector bodies have completed these courses and a number of customised programmes have been delivered for individual colleges or college consortia.



## Working time survey

Please find a moment to complete the enclosed questionnaire on working time and related issues. The survey results will help with future campaigns work and collective bargaining, locally and nationally.

The NBP has also announced the launch of its Talent Management Service for black professionals. The service aims to put ambitious and talented black professionals in touch with the growing number of progressive organisations that want to recruit a diverse workforce drawn from the best talent available.

### Seeking a representative workforce

When the NBP was established, there were only two black principals – Wally Brown at Liverpool Community College and Ahmed Choonara at South Nottingham College. Today, there are eight principals drawn from the BME community, including the first Asian woman, Sunaina Mann at NESOT. This still represents just 2% of the total number of college principals, and the number of BME senior managers remains small. Research by the Lifelong Learning UK Race Advisory Group has indicated that in order to achieve a workforce representative of the BME population in England, over 450 black college managers would need to be appointed immediately. Moreover, aligning college management with the ethnic profile of the FE student body would require something in the order of 2800 new BME management appointments.

Progress is being made but it remains slow. Britain's diverse communities will, over the next 10 years, become critically important to our future national prosperity in a globalised economy. In the face of these challenges, the NBP remains committed to pursuing its strategy of 'diversity in action'.

**For more information about the Network for Black Professionals and the services it provides, please visit [www.nbp.org.uk](http://www.nbp.org.uk)**

## What changes to the LGPS will mean for you

The new Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) becomes effective from 1 April 2008. On this date, all existing scheme members will transfer to the new scheme automatically. For membership accrued up to 31 March 2008, benefits will be calculated under the current 1/80th method. However, all service from 1 April 2008 will be calculated at 1/60th of final salary for each year of service.

Another particularly important change concerns contribution rates. From 1 April 2008, under a new banding system, all scheme members earning up to £18,000 a year will pay less, and all those earning above this figure will pay more. The bands are as follows:

Pay	Contribution rate
Up to £12,000	5.5%
£12,000.01–£14,000	5.8%
£14,000.01–£18,000	5.9%
£18,000.01–£30,000	6.5%
£30,000.01–£40,000	6.8%
£40,000.01–£75,000	7.2%
More than £75,000	7.5%

The Department of Communities and Local Government has published a short update on the new changes. It can be downloaded from the ACM website at [www.acm.uk.com](http://www.acm.uk.com)

## Wise words

In our recent poll, 93 members agreed and 58 disagreed that substituting 'students' for 'learners' and 'library' for 'learning centre' was an example of what George Orwell called the tendency of government and the civil service to bureaucratise and impoverish the English language.

### Cast your vote in our new poll

'On balance, a fair conclusion must be that the resource allocation and the policies of the Blair years were favourable to further education.'

Do you agree or disagree? E-mail [memberfeedback@acm.uk.com](mailto:memberfeedback@acm.uk.com) or vote on the ACM website at [www.acm.uk.com](http://www.acm.uk.com)

## Why suspension is rarely the answer

David Green

ACM Head of Employment Relations

In June, one of our members was suspended because of alleged poor performance. In the same week, another member at a different college was suspended because of irregularities with certain information. As is often the case, neither member had any idea what was coming when they attended a meeting with their line manager. Indeed, in one 10-day period that month at least seven ACM members were suspended on full pay pending an investigation into allegations against them. But were any of the issues serious enough to warrant suspension?

The answer is definitely 'no'. Suspension is not supposed to be a punishment and should be used only in the most limited of circumstances. By that I mean for an offence of alleged gross misconduct and, crucially, where there is a serious risk of loss or perhaps violence if the individual remains in post. So allegations of fraud or fighting might be acceptable reasons to suspend, but even then, other duties could be considered if it removed the risk.

In one case above, the college had commissioned consultants to look at the college's performance. A weakness was identified in our member's department. There was no question of negligence or wrong-doing but our member was suspended anyway, pending an investigation. In the other example, our member identified some missing figures and asked those responsible for these to be provided. She and another employee were subsequently suspended and she was not told what she had allegedly done wrong.

## Too convenient

In my view, both colleges used suspension because it was convenient. There was no consideration given to the seriousness of the issue or to the feelings of, or impact on, the employees concerned. The colleges simply wanted them out of the way quickly and quietly. Indeed, suspension usually is accompanied with a warning not to contact anyone at the college. Yet if this stops the individual from making reasonable efforts to defend themselves, then any resulting dismissal may well be unfair.

To make a bad problem worse, suspension is frequently protracted. In some of the very worst examples we have had members on suspension for a year. When this happens there will always be serious consequences, regardless of whether the allegations are upheld.

There is the difficulty of returning to work after a period of absence. Even with the support of colleagues and line managers, it can be difficult to pick up where you left off, particularly if the work has piled up. Then there is the undoubted stigma. Be in no doubt, suspension does have a serious effect on trust and confidence. It undermines the individual in front of colleagues, and it undermines their morale. Add in isolation and sometimes anxiety and it can also affect health. No wonder so many of our members prefer to leave rather than fight the allegations.

## Good news

Fortunately, the impact of suspension has been recognised in a recent legal case. In *Mezey v. South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust*, the Court of Appeal made it clear that suspension is not a neutral act. The judge said: 'Suspension changes the status quo from work to no work, and it inevitably casts a shadow over the employee's competence. Of course, this does not mean that it cannot be done, but it is not a neutral act.'

This legal recognition is significant, particularly for further education where suspension is routine. But getting the message through to colleges will be a challenge. As a union, ACM needs to stress the damage colleges are doing, not just to the individuals but also to the reputation of the sector as an employer.

## ‘Now let the work of change begin’

The title of this article mirrors the words spoken by Gordon Brown as he entered No. 10 Downing Street as Prime Minister. Anyone working in further education could be forgiven for asking: ‘When did it stop?’

Further education, since incorporation in 1993, has been subjected to constant change; virtually permanent revolution. The FEFC was dissolved to be replaced by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for funding and planning. Arrangements for inspection, once the responsibility of the Adult Learning Inspectorate, transferred to Ofsted.

At the time of incorporation, the College Employers’ Forum represented the colleges. The group was later replaced by the Association of Colleges. Now that organisation, too, is proposing a rebrand to Colleges England. And which college has not been closed, merged or rebranded since incorporation?

Managers will know better than most that restructuring is an inevitable, sometimes annual, part of the permanent revolution.

The LSC itself is not immune. It is subject to its own Agenda for Change, driven by the DfES. Remember the DfES? It has been carved up and replaced by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). It is the latter department that is now responsible for further education. At least Bill Rammell remains as Minister for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education – a pillar of stability in this world of organisational flux.

Among the responsibilities of the DIUS is the implementation of the Leitch Report with its emphasis on a demand-led approach to FE provision. It is hard to envisage what the impact of a truly demand-led approach might be, but one inevitable consequence will be further turbulence for providers.

## Full circle

Along with the new government departments comes a further change in funding, with 16–19 funding to be re-directed to schools and colleges via the local authority education budget instead of via the LSC. It seems like only yesterday that the responsibility for funding sixth forms was transferred from local authorities to the LSC. And this is no minor tinkering: it is the transfer of over half the LSC’s budget.

The ability to change and change quickly is an essential skill in the struggle to survive and thrive. Darwin propounded his theory of natural selection and the survival of the fittest in the mid-19th century and at the same time Cardinal Newman wrote that to live is to change and to be perfect is to change often. Change is essential for a healthy organisation in a rapidly changing environment. It brings necessary improvements, but it is also stressful and can be a debilitating and depressing experience; only the fittest survive. What can be done to promote the positive aspects and diminish the negatives?

## Change the way we manage change

First, the government needs to be attentive to the views of the students, staff and communities affected by change, and there are encouraging signs that Gordon Brown intends to listen and learn. Above all, the government needs to learn to avoid micro-managing organisations that it cannot possibly know and understand in sufficient detail in their local context.

What about the role of college managers in all this? Do new managers behave like new ministers, introducing changes mainly to make their mark? Do managers interpret and implement government policies in the best interests of their own college and local community?

**How do you cope with the demands ‘from above’? How do you introduce changes in your college or department? Let us know and we’ll share your good practice.**

## Putting pay to negotiations

Once again we started a new academic year with the majority of college employees, including managers, receiving no annual cost of living increase. Pay negotiations in England have stalled. Five of the six recognised trade unions have indicated their willingness to accept the offer made by the Association of Colleges (AoC). The University and Colleges Union (UCU) has yet to make a decision and, as a result, AoC has so far refused to make a recommendation on pay to colleges. AoC grumbles about ending national negotiations and UCU threatens industrial action. Don't expect the situation to be resolved much before Christmas!

We hoped that Wales would become a model for England but, this year, the situation there is not much better. Over recent years, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) has funded settlements negotiated between the unions and fforwm that have seen national pay scales introduced and salaries for college employees catch up with those in schools and other parts of the public sector. However, this year, the WAG has severely cut the funding for several colleges and so far refused to cover any pay increase. The result is that some colleges may be able to pay an increase: others won't be able to afford it. The national pay scales everyone worked so hard to achieve may be lost.

Surely there is a better way to manage these annual pay negotiations? We are always told that staff are the most important resource in any organisation and yet, almost every year, we have the farce of pay increases not arriving in salaries until many months after they are due: this year there may be no increase at all. When we lobby government ministers they say it's nothing to do with them: that it is a matter for college corporations and that they can't interfere.

Despite the flaws with the schoolteachers' pay review arrangements, perhaps the time is arriving when a similar and linked system should be introduced for colleges, funded in the same way that it is for schools. It would enable colleagues to concentrate on hitting recruitment and achievement targets, and corporations to manage their budgets with greater certainty.

**What do you think? Is it time for ACM to start a campaign for a colleges' pay review body?  
E-mail your thoughts to [peterpendle@acm.uk.com](mailto:peterpendle@acm.uk.com)**

### Quote of the issue

'Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new'

Albert Einstein

### Contact ACM

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Contact details for all ACM staff can be found on our website [www.acm.uk.com](http://www.acm.uk.com)

## Help us to help you!

**From 1 September to 31 December 2007, ACM is giving a special 'thank you' to members who recruit a new manager colleague to ACM. All you need to do is write your name and organisation on the enclosed application form and pass it on to a non-member colleague. If they subsequently join, we will send you a £20 Marks & Spencer voucher.\***

Anyone with management responsibility is eligible to join ACM. Heads of school, directors, assistant directors, team leaders, department managers and section leaders from business support or academic areas are welcome.

The more members ACM has, then the more significant we are as an organisation. So, recruiting new members is a priority for everyone. Additional application forms can be downloaded from [www.acm.uk.com/join](http://www.acm.uk.com/join)

\* This offer is valid from 1 September 2007 until 31 December 2007 and is open to fully paid up ordinary members of ACM. No member who is related to, or has an association with, an ACM employee is eligible to participate. To qualify for your voucher, the new member you have recommended must be in membership for a minimum period of four months. We will send you your voucher as soon as the minimum period has been completed.