



## **Blogging opens new chapter in inter-cultural dialogue across the Commonwealth**

### **British Council and Commonwealth Foundation commissions Cordovan to set up and manage “The People’s Forum” blog in Uganda – High praise received from visiting ministers and dignitaries**

Communications and collaboration media consultants Cordovan, together with the British Council and the Commonwealth Foundation, have revealed details of the first ever blog created to support a major Commonwealth event. The “Realising People’s Potential” blog for the 2007 Commonwealth People’s Forum of the same name widened opportunities for comment and debate at the event which ran in parallel with last week’s Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kampala. The forum set out to increase visibility of civil society organisations within the fifty-three member states and to open up dialogue between civil society and government ministers on priority issues.

The People’s Forum blog (<http://peoplesforum.britishcouncil.org>) set out to stimulate interest in the issues raised at the event as well as to continue a dialogue on surrounding issues raised. Its aim is to provide a valuable and supplementary online forum that promotes exchange of ideas, feedback and experiences.

Cordovan was tasked with designing and creating the online platform as well as assisting in the management of the blog’s roll-out. More excitingly the Group also acted as onsite consultants and were responsible for training a local Ugandan team in the fundamentals of social media principles and techniques. Cordovan also managed and co-ordinated onsite activities during the event, assisting the assembled team, maintaining the quality of editorial material and maintaining motivation throughout the project team.

Martin Davidson, Chief Executive of the British Council said "Social media is an excellent vehicle to encourage discussion. Through this Blog, people from across the Commonwealth can engage with civil society in an exciting and effective way'

Richard Weyers, the Country Director at British Council Uganda who commissioned the blog added: "The design and platform that Cordovan developed for us, fitted well with our aims and objectives for the blog. Cordovan’s onsite manager, Matt O’Neill, added tremendous energy into the project ensuring that the site reflects the dynamics of views expressed at the event. He’s also provided valuable training for our local team to contribute as both bloggers and to maintain the site moving forward. He even assisted in securing an hour’s exposure for us and the blog on a popular current affairs programme on Ugandan television!"

David Paul, Managing Director of Cordovan in the UK commented: "This was the first time that an interactive space has been available to support the Commonwealth People’s Forum and follows on from earlier inter-cultural projects we have managed for the British Council using social media platforms. Needless to say it was an exciting challenge. Event Blogging creates an interactive forum in which visitors can openly debate social concerns and solutions that are important to them and their communities. We are already working with a number of organisations, including English Heritage, to set up similar platforms for open discussion and debate. It’s a project that we are delighted to be a part of and are very proud of what it’s achieving."

#### *About Cordovan*

*Cordovan Limited is a part of the international Cordovan Group. One of only a few players in the*

*market that navigates across the three tightly interlaced disciplines of sales, marketing and organisational development. Through single, targeted activities or integrated projects, the group works closely with clients to nurture and refine their intangible assets of knowledge, ideas, relationships and people.*

*For more information about Cordovan please visit: [www.cordovan.co.uk](http://www.cordovan.co.uk) or speak with:*

*David Paul, Managing Director, Cordovan on +44 (0)20 7043 6050 or via e-mail on [david.paul@cordovan.co.uk](mailto:david.paul@cordovan.co.uk).*

*Cordovan Press Contact UK*

*Nikki Alvey, Consultant*

*Tel: +44 (0) 7973 354 706*

*[Nikki.alvey@theprnetwork.co.uk](mailto:Nikki.alvey@theprnetwork.co.uk)*

*About the British Council*

- *The British Council is the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations*
- *We operate in 233 towns and cities in 110 countries and territories worldwide*
- *We build relationships and understanding between people in the UK and other countries and increase appreciation of the UK's ideas and achievements overseas*
- *The areas we focus on are creativity, education and civil society*
- *We are a non-political organisation which operates at arm's length from government*
- *Our income in 2006/07 was £551 million, of which our grant-in-aid from the British government was £189 million*

*About the Commonwealth Foundation*

*The Commonwealth Foundation is an intergovernmental organisation, resourced by and reporting to Commonwealth governments, and guided by Commonwealth values and priorities.*

*The mandate is to strengthen civil society in the achievement of Commonwealth priorities – democracy and good governance, respect for human rights and gender equality, poverty eradication and sustainable, people-centred development, and to promote arts and culture.*