Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

Emergence of ODL in an Era of ICT & OER

15th March 2013
University of Swaziland

John Lesperance
Education Specialist
The Commonwealth of Learning

- Established 1988 by Commonwealth Heads of Governments
- Headquartered in Vancouver - 1989
- Intergovernmental agency
- 54 member countries
- Funded on a voluntary basis by Commonwealth Governments
COL Support Education for Development

... governments and institutions
  - to expand the scope, scale and quality of learning
  - by working with partners to promote policies, build models, create materials, enhance capacity and
  - nurture networks of people in support of development goals.

... by using new ODL approaches and appropriate technology
COL Programme Structure

**Education Sector**
- Open Schooling
- Teacher Education
- Higher Education
- VUSSC

**Livelihood and Health Sector**
- Skills for development
- Learning for Farmers
- Healthy communities
- Integrated eLearning
Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)
Small States

- Population of less than 4.5 million
- Specific cultural context
- Vulnerability
The Ministers Proposed...

... to develop...a virtual university to particularly serve the small states of the Commonwealth, using existing structures and capacity. . .

Halifax, 2000
Enable small states to be contributors as well as consumers
Add value to existing institutions
VUSSC - To be Unique! (2)

- Evolve and change quickly
- Delivery in different formats
- Adaptable & flexible
Vision & Roles
The Vision

- a consortium of ministries & institutions,
  - enabled by appropriate ICT applications...
  - plan programmes
  - develop the required content and
  - ensure the delivery of those programmes and
    support services to learners.
Ministries of Education

- Support implementation
- Monitor implementation
- Collect data
- Share information with partners
Interlocutors

- Represent the Ministries
- Provide a communication channel between VUSSC and the Government
- Take decisions and make recommendations on behalf of their Governments
VUSSC Management Committee

Composition

- The Chair inclusive of the six interlocutors and the chair of the TQF
- Two interlocutors representing each of the three regions
- COL Education Specialist for VUSSC
- COL Secretarial and Administrative Support
VUSSC TQF Management Committee

Roles

- developing and maintaining
evaluating the TQF
- developing promotional materials for the TQF
- promoting best international practice
- providing information for budget requirements
- collaborating and coordinating with VUSSC MC and interlocutors
- advising on registration of qualifications
- advising on, sharing information and facilitating the translation of qualifications
Institutions

- Assume responsibility for programme development and delivery
- Be responsible for supplementing or adapting course materials to local contexts to meet the specific needs of students
- Commit to the granting of the awards earned by graduates through NQAs
Implementers

- Senior managers in institutions
- Have the management position to carry out decisions taken by Interlocutors
- Have people and infrastructure in their institutions to apply to VUSSC activities
The VUSSC Workshop

- Capacity building
- Immersion ICT skills
- Introduction to ID
- Concept of OER
- Understanding copyright
- Buddy learning
- Develop content
Medium term

- Courses are available
- Courses offered by institutions
- Students in the small states have access to quality education
- Institutional capacity built
Long term

- Human resources developed
- Mutual cooperation and respect promoted
- Brain Drain reduced
- Sustainable development achieved
Open Educational Resources (OER)

Materials that are:
- Free and freely available
- Suitable for all levels
- Usable
- Digital
Identification of Priority Areas

Senior government officials meeting
Curriculum Planning

Programme Credits/Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>TOE Credits</th>
<th>National Courses (Contact Time)</th>
<th>Eta</th>
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<td>360</td>
<td>3600</td>
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<td>Degree</td>
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<td>(Professional)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
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<td>400</td>
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<td>Foundation</td>
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+ NASCAR Project?

+ 3
Capacity Building

Developing Content
Quality Assurance/Accreditation
Content Review

Content / Courses
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Exact course title</th>
<th>Country w/s held</th>
<th>Date of w/s</th>
<th>Course level/type of the TQF</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>Tour Guiding</td>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>August 2006</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sustainable Tourism</td>
<td>Not a boot camp course</td>
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<td>Business and Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Starting your own Business</td>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>August 2006</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bachelor in Business and Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>March 2011</td>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>Training Educators to Design and Develop ODL Materials / Introducing Distance Education</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>March 2007</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Educational Leadership</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>November 2011</td>
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<td>Life Skills Development</td>
<td>Life Skills</td>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>June 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disaster Management</td>
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<td>Samoa</td>
<td>November 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fisheries</td>
<td></td>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>March 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Linux for IT Managers</td>
<td>Not a boot camp course</td>
<td>October 2009</td>
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<td>Construction</td>
<td>Safety Practices in the Construction Industry</td>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>November 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maritime</td>
<td>Port Management - Stevedoring</td>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>November 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Sustainable Agriculture for Small States</td>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>March 2010</td>
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Why ODL?

- Few constraints on time and place of study
- Scale, consistent quality, cost-effectiveness
- Learner centred, interaction
- Good resources + student support
- In the workplace
- Customisation
eLearning, mLearning and ICT

- New environment to promote flexible learning
- Enhance learner motivation
- Blended learning
- Increase access
- Interactive learning
**Learning Management System (LMS)**

**LMS** takes the learning content and organizes it in a way where courses divided into modules and lessons, supported with quizzes and tests and discussions and much more.
The VUSSC Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF)
TQF

Ten level framework

Transfer of courses, qualifications & learners

Not replacing existing frameworks

Transnational Qualifications Framework for the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

April 2010

Commonwealth of Learning
Learning for Development
Benefits of the TQF

- Increase access to online learning
- Promote life long learning
- TQF is voluntary – not replacing existing system
- Enhance transnational education and training system
- Institutions can offer courses to other small states
- Increase institutions’ visibility
Monitoring and Evaluation (key issues)

- M&E integrated in COL
- Capacity building
- Data collection
- Impact evaluation
- VUSSC reporting line
- Establishing baseline for VUSSC
- Gender as a factor in M&E
ODL – The Solution

- The Learning Cycle and Distance Education
- The facilitator and the learner - dialogue
- Differences and between conventional learning and ODL
- Encouraging active participation
- Example of good ODL materials
- Quality assurance and accreditation