



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

COL in the Commonwealth

**2012–2015
Australia**

Acknowledgements

All COL Education Specialists and their Programme Assistants as well as CEMCA colleagues have contributed to the development of the country reports which make up the volume *COL in the Commonwealth: 2012-2015 Country Reports*. This country report is an excerpt from the volume. The following people are thanked in particular for their role in the design and publication of these reports.

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Foreword

COL in the Commonwealth: 2012-2015 Country Reports summarises COL's activities over the last three years (2012-2015) and captures what we have achieved in each Member State and across the Commonwealth.

This volume is the result of a collaborative process that began in 2011 with extensive partner consultations. Following these consultations, a *Country Action Plan* was developed to guide COL's work in each country. The reports contained in this volume describe the implementation of these plans and highlight COL's achievements during this three year plan.

The reports cover all Member States of the Commonwealth, showing not only what COL has done in developing countries but also how its work aligns with the international development priorities of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The reports are grouped under four regions: Africa and the Mediterranean, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Each regional section contains a brief regional report as well as the reports for each country within that region. The Pan-Commonwealth section describes COL's Initiatives, under the two sectors: 'Education' and 'Livelihoods and Health'. The reports for this triennium categorise COL activities according to our five core strategies: partnerships, capacity, materials, models and policy, in order to better present how our work contributes to outcomes. 'COL in Action' highlights real life examples to illustrate how COL's work impacts on people, groups and institutions in developing countries.

Most of the initiatives that COL pursued during this triennium are showing demonstrable results in expanding and improving opportunities for education and training, building healthier communities, helping rural communities achieve greater prosperity, and contributing to skills development. As the external Impact Evaluation report states: 'COL has had a major impact on individuals including farmers...faculty members, institutional leaders in formal and non-formal learning, selected policy makers and educational administrators'(S. Murgatroyd with J. Tully, 2015). The external Outcome Evaluation concludes that 'all the Initiatives moved successfully forward, on time and within budget' (N. Kemp and G. Farrell, 2015). Both evaluations confirm that COL is highly respected and well regarded in the field.

The production of *COL in the Commonwealth: 2012-2015 Country Reports* was made possible through collective effort and collaboration. Partners on the ground have diligently provided updates to COL. COL staff have tracked and assessed results obtained from partners through a thorough monitoring and evaluation process. COL's advanced knowledge management systems have enabled us to capture information from numerous sources and synthesise this into the reports that make up this volume. I must particularly commend Alexis Carr for her diligent work in filtering the masses of raw data and converting them into a coherent and meaningful narrative.



Professor Asha S. Kanwar
President and Chief Executive Officer
Commonwealth of Learning



AUSTRALIA



CONTEXT

Australia re-joined COL as a major funding partner in 2011. The country was a regular contributor and a major donor to COL until 2004. The Australian government provides resources and financial support to projects around the globe through the Australia's aid programme, which is part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. As a major donor, Australia has a seat on COL's Bord of Governors.



DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

- ▶ A regional focus on the Pacific
- ▶ Provide basic education to increase literacy and improve post-secondary education and training to support jobs
- ▶ Increase access to essential health interventions to: improve maternal and child health; combat HIV/AIDs, tuberculosis and malaria; and reduce and prevent non-communicable diseases
- ▶ Improve political, economic and social opportunities for Pacific women



OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY COL IN PRIORITY REGION

- ▶ Support provided for the Outer Islands Delivery Strategy in Kiribati
- ▶ A technical and vocational education and training (TVET) Flexible and Open Learning Unit established in Papua New Guinea
- ▶ COL Vocational Literacy open educational resources (OER) in use in 25 Rural Training Centres in Solomon Islands
- ▶ Draft open and distance learning (ODL) plan and 12 draft ODL course units completed for five schools at Solomon Islands National University
- ▶ Ongoing support provided for open schooling in Tonga
- ▶ Vanuatu Open School established and twinning is underway
- ▶ Lifelong Learning for Farmers programme introduced in Papua New Guinea



COL'S WORK RELATED TO MDG TARGETS

MDG Targets Addressed by COL

- ▶ Make available the benefits of new technologies, especially for information and communications
- ▶ Promote gender equality and empower women
- ▶ Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- ▶ Address the special needs of small island developing states

COL's Work on the MDG Targets

- ▶ Policy development, training and materials provision in OER, ICTs, ODL and eLearning are underway
- ▶ The Lifelong Learning for Farmers model aims to empower women and improve the livelihoods and food security of participants
- ▶ Flexible and ODL approaches are seeking to address issues of accessibility that affect small island nations in terms of education



QUICK FACTS

COL Board

- ▶ As a major donor, Australia has a seat on COL's Board of Governors

COL Focal Point:

- ▶ Ms. Bethany Wellings, Policy Officer, UN & Commonwealth Section, International Organisations Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Notable Mention:

- ▶ Professor James Taylor, Emeritus Professor, Office of the Vice-Chancellor, University of Southern Queensland (USQ), won an Excellence in Distance Education Award (EDEA)

Areas of COL's Work in Australia:

- ▶ Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD)
- ▶ Healthy Communities



HIGHLIGHTS

COL has identified five core strategies to achieve outcomes and impact: partnerships, capacity, materials, models and policy. In practice, most COL activities incorporate more than one of these strategies and, in some cases, all five. However, for ease of reference, activities have been classified in only one of the five categories.

PARTNERSHIPS

COL partners with government agencies, public institutions, civil society and other organisations to improve and extend teaching and learning services to people in the developing Commonwealth.

- ▶ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Australia
- ▶ Central Gippsland Institute of Technical and Further Education (Gipps TAFE)
- ▶ TAFE New South Wales
- ▶ Audience Dialogue
- ▶ PACFOLD regional centre

CAPACITY

Capacity development pervades all COL activities and COL focuses primarily on human resource development.

- ▶ Community Learning Programme (CLP) Developer's Certificate

MATERIALS

Materials refer to learning and teaching resources including course materials, toolkits and frameworks. Materials are produced through collaboration with partners, or by partners themselves with COL support.

- ▶ Community Radio Continuous Improvement Toolkit (CR-CIT)

OTHER

- ▶ Speeches and presentations
- ▶ Contributions to COL publications
- ▶ Australian experts engaged as professional resources



LOOKING FORWARD: 2015–2021

In the lead-up to the 2014 Regional Focal Points Meeting, COL's Focal Point for Australia was asked to identify the country's top priorities and what COL can do to further support the national agenda of Australia. The following areas were identified:

- ▶ Pacific Regional Focus
- ▶ Provision of basic education to increase literacy; and improvement of post-secondary education and training to support jobs
- ▶ Increasing of access to essential health interventions in order to: improve maternal and child health; combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria; and reduce or prevent non-communicable diseases
- ▶ Improvement of political, economic and social opportunities for Pacific women

Appendix: COL's Activities in Australia

PARTNERSHIPS

The World Bank

In June 2013, COL met with **Mr Stephen Close**, the World Bank Human Development Specialist for the Pacific, to learn more about each organisation's activities and to discuss areas for collaboration.

Central Gippsland Institute of Technical and Further Education (Gipps TAFE): TVET Partnership

In October 2012, COL contracted **Gipps TAFE** of Australia to provide consultancy services to the TVET Division of the Department of Education, Papua New Guinea, to develop a strategic plan and organisational structure for the new TVET Flexible and Open Learning (FOL) Branch. A workshop on FOL in TVET was attended by more than 50 stakeholders and included presentations from five institutions on their plans for flexible TVET programmes.

Gipps TAFE also co-facilitated the Pacific TVET ODFL Forum in Tonga in March 2013, which was attended by 26 participants from government ministries, NGOs, Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) and TVET institutions in seven Pacific countries, as well as representatives from AusAID and NZAID. AusAID was represented by Ms Michelle Rochas, Senior Policy Officer, who made a presentation titled "Support for Pacific Tertiary Education in the Australian Aid Programme." In October 2013, Gipps TAFE provided three consultants to facilitate ODFL planning and materials development workshops for the FOL Unit of the TVET Wing, Department of Education in Papua New Guinea. The workshops were attended by 25 teachers and managers from four institutions in Port Moresby, including Limana Vocational Centre, Koki Vocational Centre, Port Moresby Technical College and Caritas Technical Secondary School.

TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute

COL met with **Laurie Price and Jane Anderson** of TAFE New South Wales to advance the plans for an application to the Australian Leadership Awards. If successful, this would provide funding for 13 Principals from COL INVEST Africa partner institutions to participate in a one-week study tour to the TAFE Institute in Sydney. COL, together with TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute, also submitted a bid to the Australian Awards Fellowships programme facilitated by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

PACFOLD Regional Centre

COL and the University of the South Pacific (USP) agreed to establish a regional centre to strengthen the use of ODL in formal, non-formal and informal learning particularly in skills development, health and agriculture. The aim is to add value

to the development process in the region. The Centre is based at the Regional Centre for Continuing & Community Education (RCCCE) at USP in Suva. However, the Pacific Regional Centre for ODL is designed to meet the needs of the whole region and makes extensive use of technology to reduce distance between stakeholders. The launch of PACFOLD took place at the Pacific Focal Points meeting in Samoa in September 2014 and included the introduction of the PACFOLD learn online community. **Professor Robyn McGuiggan**, Pro Vice Chancellor, James Cook University (JCU) is a member of the PACFOLD Advisory Board.

PARTNERSHIPS: MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

Pacific Centre for Flexible and Open Learning for Development (PACFOLD) Consultation Meeting

COL facilitated a consultation meeting for 16 Pacific stakeholders to discuss the establishment of the Pacific Regional Centre for ODL for Development, held in Vanuatu from 18 to 20 June 2013. Participants came from Tonga, Samoa, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, New Zealand, pan-Pacific organisations, NGOs and the host institution, University of the South Pacific (USP). Attending the forum on behalf of Australia was **Ms Vika Luti**, Programme Manager for Education, Disability and Gender in the Tonga Office.

MATERIALS

Community Radio Continuous Improvement Toolkit (CR-CIT)

To encourage good practices in community radio, the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) is collaboratively developing a continuous improvement toolkit for good community radio practices with community radio practitioners. On 13 May 2013, CEMCA supported a Validation Workshop on the Community Radio Continuous Improvement Toolkit, organised by the UNESCO Chair on Community Media, University of Hyderabad. Eight community radio experts from India, Bangladesh and Australia, and five community radio practitioners in India, working in an expert peer-group meeting, arrived at a broad consensus on non-negotiable principles such as participation, community ownership and management, gender equity, and representation of marginalised groups. They also identified actionable indicators to ensure good community radio practices in the region.

Mr John Goslino of Audience Dialogue in Adelaide attended the meeting as an international expert.

CAPACITY

Community Learning Programme (CLP) Developer's Certificate

Two regional distance training and mentoring courses have been developed and delivered through a partnership between COL and its Healthy Communities partners in the Commonwealth, including the Caribbean Institute of Media and Communication (CARIMAC) and the Media and Training Centre for Health.

Two editions of the 5-week “Communication for Development (C4D): Why. How. Now.” e-course were run in 2013/2014. In February to March 2014, **one participant** (a woman) was registered for the training.

In the 10-week Research for Planning e-course run in April to June 2014, one participant (a woman) from Australia was engaged in the training and mentoring course, resulting in comprehensive plans for CLPs based on formative research.

OTHER

Speeches and Presentations

Professor Asha Kanwar, the President and CEO of COL, gave a speech titled “Connecting Australia and the Asia Pacific: Promoting Learning for Development” at the **University of Southern Queensland (USQ)**, Toowoomba, Australia on 13 May 2013. USQ organised a one-and-a-half-day event for COL and its partners in the region.

Professor Kanwar also gave a presentation titled “Promoting Learning for Development in the Pacific” for representatives of the **Pacific Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade** on 30 March 2015 in Canberra.

Contributions to COL Publications

Professor Colin Robert Latchem is the Regional Associate Editor-Pacific for COL's *Journal of Learning for Development (JL4D)*. Prof Latchem also co-edited the book *Women and Leadership in Open and Distance Learning and Development*, published by COL.

Professor Denise Bradley contributed a chapter titled “Grasping the Opportunities: Women Leaders in Higher Education” to the book *Women and Leadership in Open and Distance Learning and Development*, published by COL.

Australian Experts Engaged as Professional Resources

COL consultant **Mr Michael Coghlan** from Federation Training in Australia facilitated a consultancy in May 2014 to support the design of a new Pacific TVET teacher training programme to be available as OER.

Mr Bradley Beach, Mr Clint Smith and Mr Doug Mullen from Australia were engaged to support Papua New Guinea's Department of Education, TVET Division, to develop strategic plans for the Flexible and Open Learning (FOL) Branch. Mr Coghlan was also engaged to support the Centre for Vocational and Continuing Education (CVCE) at the University of the South Pacific to develop a Certificate IV in Training, Assessment and Evaluation.

Dr Jerry Watkins of the University of Western Sydney is a consultant for COL's Healthy Communities work in the Pacific region. He is working on an initiative to build capacities for participatory communication in support of development and programming in Isabel Province and other areas in Solomon Islands. Dr Watkins conducted a workshop for senior policy-makers and community leaders in Isabel Province on communication for development strategies, 24 September 2012.

LEARNING FOR DEVELOPMENT

COL is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.

VISION: To be the foremost global agency that promotes learning for development

MISSION: To help governments and institutions to expand the scale, efficiency and quality of learning by using open, distance and technology-based approaches

CORE STRATEGIES: Partnerships, capacity, materials, models and policies

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