



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

A world map is shown in a light grey tone. Several regions are highlighted in a medium blue color, including North America, parts of South America, Europe, Africa, and India. A circular inset map in a yellowish-green color is positioned on the right side, focusing on the Pacific region and Southeast Asia.

COL in the Commonwealth

2018–2020 HIGHLIGHTS

FIJI

L E A R N I N G F O R S U S T A I N A B L E D E V E L O P M E N T

TARGETS 2021



Improved sustainable livelihoods
300,000 PEOPLE



470
ORGANISATIONS
Improved organisational
capacity to leverage ODL

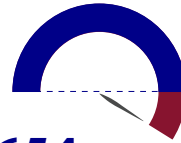


1.4 million
PEOPLE
Increased and equitable
access to, and use of, quality
learning opportunities

ACHIEVED BY 2020



257,484 people



654 organisations

Target
EXCEEDED



880,039 people



Introduction

Since its creation some 30 years ago, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has become a true catalyst for positive change for a third of the world's population. Our vision of “learning for sustainable development” means that learning must lead to social inclusion, economic growth and environmental conservation. This aligns COL's work with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote learning opportunities for all.”

COL harnesses the potential of open, distance and technology-enabled learning to help Member States accelerate progress towards achieving development outcomes.



To achieve outcomes and impact, COL has led six paradigm shifts:

- If the child cannot go to school, the school comes to the child.
- Technology-enabled learning can break open the ivory towers of tertiary education.
- Open educational resources (OER) are the answer to closed and costly textbooks.
- The digital divide can be transformed into a digital dividend.
- Literacy is not always a precondition for learning.
- The social capital of the mother is the most important determinant in bringing girls to school.

What are COL's key success factors? COL aligns its work with global priorities and ensures that it stays relevant to Member States' needs and priorities. COL is relevant, responsive and results oriented. The 2018–2020 Country Highlights summarise COL's progress towards achieving SDG4.

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



Highlights

Working in two sectors, Education and Skills, with Gender as a crosscutting theme, COL uses pioneering models and approaches to achieve impact.

- COL has developed an innovative employability framework to strengthen and evaluate the impact of higher education institutions on graduates' employability, with a focus on industry and labour-market engagement.
- GIRLS Inspire has reached close to 81,000 girls and young women in remote and unreached communities, providing schooling and skilling them for livelihoods.
- The Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) model is being upscaled in partnership with national banks, moving from the meso to the macro level.
- The Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) programme is now being implemented across the Commonwealth.
- Ambitious projects to improve gender equality in two Commonwealth regions have been launched. These holistic models are based on community mobilisation and address areas such as capacity building in education, gender-based violence, health, empowerment, economic opportunities, and policy.
- Blockchain technology, built according to open standards, was used to issue certificates for massive open online courses (MOOCs) in different disciplines.
- COL has developed a comprehensive solution for data resilience in education for small states facing climate-related disasters.
- The ninth Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF9), held in Edinburgh, brought together close to 550 thought leaders, policy makers and practitioners to share best practices and harness innovation for change, with a view to providing employability skills to young people, offering a quality education to all regardless of circumstances, and identifying practical ways for technology to speed up our progress.



COL works with partners in Fiji to expand access to quality education and lifelong learning for all. The Honourable Siaosi 'Ofakivahafolau Sovaleni, Minister of Education and Training, Kingdom of Tonga, represents the Pacific Region on COL's Board of Governors, and Ms Alison Burchell, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts, is COL's Focal Point for Fiji.

COL's current work in Fiji is primarily in the areas of technical and vocational skills development (TVSD) and technology-enabled learning (TEL). Fiji is a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), and The University of the South Pacific (USP) hosts the Pacific Centre for Flexible and Open Learning for Development (PACFOLD). Learners from Fiji have benefited from open online courses and other COL resources.

The following are the highlights from 2018 to 2020.



HIGHER EDUCATION

The Higher Education initiative works with ministries and higher education institutions to increase equitable access to tertiary education and to address the needs of industry and national development through the use of policies, systems, models and gender-responsive learning resources.

In May 2018, COL organised a high-level roundtable for vice chancellors and heads of ODL in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. There were 31 vice chancellors and their representatives from 19 countries in attendance, including a representative from Fiji's USP. The meeting was co-hosted by Asia eUniversity.

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH (VUSSC)

Fiji is a member of VUSSC. Initiated by ministers of education of developing small states of the Commonwealth, VUSSC supports the collaborative development and sharing of OER to promote learning for sustainable development.

In the past few years, VUSSC has connected institutions through online technologies to promote eLearning and the collaborative sharing of educational resources using multi-institutional partnerships. The emphasis is now on supporting institutions to offer VUSSC courses and programmes, while promoting the use of the Transnational Qualifications Framework.

COL aims to promote and enrich national capacities in good governance. Through the School of Law at USP, COL is funding the participation of students from Fiji in its Legislative Drafting programme.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (TVSD)

TVSD supports partners in harnessing ODL to increase access to demand-driven, competency-based skills training. TVSD is increasingly focused on innovative models that use ODL for theory, with practical skills development organised in workplaces and communities.

TVET teachers and managers from Fiji were among those supported by COL to complete the Certificate in Designing and Facilitating eLearning, from the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.

In December 2018, COL's Education Specialist: TVSD visited Fiji to identify a Skills in Demand project that would contribute towards implementation of the recommendations from the August 2018 Fiji TVET Rapid Review (which provided an analysis and roadmap for priority actions to strengthen the TVET sector). She met with the Permanent Secretary, Education, Heritage and Arts, and various members of the TVET team at the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC).

COL and FHEC have identified Fulton Adventist University College as the educational institution to develop a Skills in Demand model that blends workplace-based and online learning. This will be used to train TVET educators across Fiji, including on remote islands. Fulton and COL have agreed to work together to develop and deliver

an online version of Fiji’s National Certificate in Teaching TVET (NCTTVET) programme. In May 2019, a consultant visited Fulton to facilitate a project design workshop, and in September 2019, a second consultant facilitated a learning design workshop to build the institution’s staff capability to design and develop fully online courses. COL consultants are continuing to support Fulton as they prepare to pilot fully online TVET teacher training in 2020.

TVSD has been offering ongoing online training courses on *Facilitating Online Courses* and *Flexible Skills Development* to learners across the Commonwealth, and participants from Fiji regularly join in.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING (TEL)

This initiative aims to encourage more institutions to integrate TEL and OER policies and practices to improve teaching and learning for skills development. Activities of the TEL initiative focus on the individual, institutional and country levels.

Dr Deepak Prasad from Fiji National University (FNU) participated in the Technology-Enabled Learning Community of Practice Meeting, and Dr Shikha Raturi from USP participated in the *Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) Training of Trainers Workshop*, both hosted by COL in New Delhi, India in December 2018.

COL’s Education Specialist: eLearning visited Fiji in March 2019 and delivered a public lecture on “OER in the Pacific” at FNU.

COL continues to support FNU in TEL implementation. Assistance has been given in the development of blended courses, and FNU has signed an agreement to develop the Community of Practice for TEL — which aims to provide space for all institutions throughout the Commonwealth to collaborate, learn from and interact with each other. In collaboration with FNU, COL launched the TEL Community of Practice online platform to develop a network of teachers across the Commonwealth who are adopting technology-enabled and blended learning practices in their teaching.

In June 2019, COL supported a workshop for 40 FNU educators, with a focus on designing, implementing and facilitating problem-based learning experiences. As part of the efforts by FNU to mainstream TEL, COL also supported a two-day workshop on eModeration in October 2019. The aim was to build the capacity of teachers in facilitating blended and online courses.

In partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, COL has been organising a MOOC on *Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning*. In 2018–2019, a total of 1,051 participants from Fiji joined the course’s third and fourth offerings.

GENDER

COL’s Gender initiative supports partners in mainstreaming gender and in implementing holistic projects to address specific gender issues. It aims to tackle the distinct challenges faced by girls/women and boys/men in regions where they are most disadvantaged, while also shifting the social norms that create and perpetuate gender inequalities.

In the framework of this initiative, COL hosted the Pan-Commonwealth Training Programme on Women and Leadership in ODL, in Malaysia. Dr Adi Atelaite Eci Kikau Nabalarua, FNU, and Ms Sujlesh Sharma, USP, participated in the training in 2018, while Dr Zakia Ali-Chand, FNU, and Ms Charlotte Anne Taylor, USP, attended the 2019 session.

THE PACIFIC CENTRE FOR LEARNING FOR DEVELOPMENT (PACFOLD)

Hosted by USP, PACFOLD is a “network of networks” to empower Pacific communities through lifelong learning. The centre’s priorities include advocacy and capacity building for flexible and open learning for sustainable development, as well as the development of national and regional ODL policies.

From April to July 2018, COL and PACFOLD organised a series of capacity-building workshops in four countries in the region. Teachers and officials in Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands and the Kingdom of Tonga were trained in TEL, OER and the use of COL’s offline, off-grid Aptus device for “classrooms without walls.”

In collaboration with PACFOLD and the Commonwealth Higher Education Consortium for Youth Work, COL convened a regional workshop in Suva, Fiji on *Professionalising Youth Work in the Pacific* in June 2019. Thirty-two participants from ministries and local and regional youth organisations gathered to discuss regional priorities and challenges related to youths in the Pacific. The main objective of the workshop was to draw upon participants’ knowledge of youth work and familiarisation with the Youth Work courses developed by The University of the West Indies. Participants collaborated to devise competencies and practices to contextualise curricular content and repurpose these

courses for consumption in the South Pacific. From Fiji, there were 15 representatives from ten institutions who participated in the workshop.

In partnership with USP's Centre for Flexible Learning and PACFOLD, and New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, COL organised two in-country consultations in October 2019 in Papua New Guinea and Kiribati. The purpose of these consultations was to present proposed initiatives to key stakeholders and experts, validate the areas of focus, and ensure that they will meet the needs of the learners in the two countries. The consultations sought feedback and helped to build consensus around the initiatives, aimed at providing educational opportunities through open and flexible learning opportunities.



Events and Special Activities

MEETING WITH FIJI'S EDUCATION MINISTER

Under the auspices of the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, held in Nadi, Fiji in February 2018, COL's President and CEO, Professor Asha Kanwar, met with the Fijian Attorney-General and Minister for Education, Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum. They explored a range of initiatives that COL could undertake in partnership with the Fijian government to strengthen learning for sustainable development in the country.

REGIONAL MEETING OF COL FOCAL POINTS

The Pacific regional meeting of the COL Focal Points took place on 16 and 17 February 2018 in Nadi, Fiji to strengthen the effectiveness of COL's work in addressing key priorities for education and training in the region, and to share information about developments related to learning for sustainable development.

PACIFIC REGIONAL WORKSHOP

A regional workshop to identify priority activities in skills development was organised at Shangri-La's Fijian Resort from 13 to 15 August 2019 by COL in partnership with PACFOLD and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), New Zealand. The focus was on resilience education, youths and gender. The workshop was convened by Dr Som Naidu,

Director of PACFOLD, and it was attended by Mr Jone Nemani, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Government of Fiji, and Mr Tom Haig, Senior Advisor, MFAT, New Zealand.

PCF9

Close to 550 policy makers, practitioners and thought leaders from across the Commonwealth and beyond gathered at the historic Murrayfield Stadium in Edinburgh, Scotland for the ninth Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF9), themed *Innovations for Quality Education and Lifelong Learning*. It was organised from 9 to 12 September 2019 in partnership with The Open University, UK.

The four days of insightful keynote addresses, engaging plenary panels, informative parallel sessions, and other programme highlights provided a unique opportunity to bridge traditional divides between borders and sectors. Discussions centred around four key sub-themes: *Opening Up Education, Equity and Inclusion, Technology and Employability*, and delegates appreciated the focus on new forum features — artificial intelligence, youth and girls' education and learners with special abilities.

Under the auspices of PCF9, COL hosted a ministerial roundtable with participation from six education ministers. At PCF9, New Zealand's MFAT, COL and USP organised a workshop on skills development in the Pacific.

COL sponsored seven delegates from Fiji to attend the forum. There were four participants from Fiji at the Regional Centres' Directors meeting, hosted by COL in Edinburgh ahead of PCF9. One participant from Fiji attended the post-forum meeting hosted by TVSD, and there was one delegate from Fiji at the Technology-Enabled Learning Partners' Meeting.

MOOCs ON INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN BUSINESS AND FUNCTIONAL NUMERACY

A total of 59 participants from Fiji joined the second offering of the *Introduction to Sustainable Development in Business* MOOC, which was co-organised by COL and the Open University of Mauritius in November–December 2019.

Recognising the need to improve numeracy skills among youths in the South Pacific region, PACFOLD created a MOOC entitled *Functional Numeracy*. It ran for five weeks in February–March 2020 and attracted 387 participants, of whom 156 hailed from Fiji.





PCF9 Edinburgh Statement

Forum partners from over 60 countries believe that it is possible to significantly accelerate progress towards the aim and targets of SDG4 by prioritising the following collective actions now:

1. **Accomplishment at scale**

Mobilise an emergency response to ensure that all children in the Commonwealth, including girls, learners with different abilities, and learners from vulnerable and marginalised communities, experience a quality education focused on accomplishment, knowledge exchange and the continued ability to learn.

2. **Skills for productive lives**

Urgently create learning opportunities for marginalised, excluded, vulnerable and out-of-school young people to build skills for leading a productive life, embracing technology to enhance employability, entrepreneurship and confidence, and bridging accessible formal, non-formal and informal education.

3. **Creating new digital dividends**

Develop new, innovative, flexible modes of education to foster creativity, imagination and peer knowledge exchange, increase reach and ensure no one is left behind, through the use of appropriate media and delivery, including blended approaches to digital learning.

4. Teachers as skilled agents of change

Teachers and teacher educators are the main agents of change for quality education and can be supported to catalyse action in their schools, communities and colleges as respected professionals who model lifelong learning. To do this we propose:

Creating **alternative, flexible and technology enabled pathways into teaching** to resolve the shortage of skilled and motivated teachers;

Expanding low-cost, highly effective ways to **support school-based teacher professional development** to build change capacity and capability within regional and national educational systems.

5. Positively disrupt higher education

Support innovation for quality higher education; **strengthen the technology-enabled learning ecosystem** throughout the Commonwealth, including the scope to develop professional skills, recognition, validation and verification of experiential and prior learning through micro-credentialing and blockchain technology; expand the reach of open education for dispersed audiences; and improve barrier-free access to tertiary education.

6. Challenging assessment

Radically relook at assessment models: build a culture of assessment to support employability and micro-entrepreneurship.

Our ambition is to achieve this through:

Bold inclusive collaboration;

Bringing together the diverse groups of critical thinkers, innovators and practitioners who can collaboratively make change happen by delivering quality education and lifelong learning for all;

Making greater use of data, evidence and storytelling to galvanise political will for enabling policies and well-resourced implementation plans;

Sustaining the momentum;

Building an active network of learning, support and action starting now.

Sustaining and building our momentum for change, we aim to bring our key commitments to the fore of the policy agenda through the Conference of Commonwealth



New Publications and Resources

In 2018–2020, COL produced a number of publications and resources, including:

***Knowledge Series: Designing and Implementing Micro-Credentials:
A Guide for Practitioners***

As online learning and MOOCs become mainstream, it is important to explore new forms of credentialing. This publication offers a step-by-step guide to plan, design and implement micro-credentials and badges in diverse contexts and provides greater flexibility in the journey of the new learner-earner through a skills and capability framework.

A Blueprint and Toolkit for School-Based Teacher Development: SECONDARY

This toolkit is for implementing school-based teacher development as a way to improve the performance of schools and raise the achievement of children. This valuable resource includes a detailed framework, which can be adapted to the context of a particular country, region, district or school, and offers practical daily activities for teachers.

Guidelines on the Development of Open Educational Resources Policies

This new publication provides specific tools to analyse current contexts and policy environments, understand issues related to copyright and licensing, and align policy in support of Sustainable Development Goal 4. The guidelines present a systematic process for designing and implementing OER policies and measuring their impact.

A Guide to Integrating Employability in Higher Education Institutions: The Commonwealth of Learning's Employability Model

This publication provides clear guidelines on how to integrate employability pathways into instructional systems. From career counselling to career support, the guide demonstrates how institutions can prepare graduates for employment or entrepreneurship.

Gender Scorecard 2.0: Instructions and Templates

This is a tool to audit the capacity of institutions to mainstream gender. It helps with analysing existing policies and practices and developing clear steps for the effective promotion of gender equity.

All COL publications can be found on its open-access repository at oasis.col.org.



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