

The Millennium Development Goals

World leaders, meeting at the United Nations in 2000, set eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that aim to transform the condition of humankind in the 21st century. These Goals now guide the policies of Governments and the priorities of development agencies (www.developmentgoals.org).

Achieving the MDGs will require a massive expansion of human learning. Traditional methods of education and training cannot address the scope and scale of the task. Technology has already revolutionised other areas of human life and the world must now harness it to learning and teaching.

COL is the only international intergovernmental agency that focuses exclusively on using technology to expand the scope and scale of human learning. It operates on the premise that knowledge is the key to individual freedom and to cultural, social and economic development. It helps Governments to develop policies that make innovation sustainable and to build systems or applications that expand learning and works in partnership with other international and bilateral organisations working on the MDGs.

COL is a small agency. It achieves high impact through its focus on technology; placing special emphasis on open and distance learning (ODL) because of its proven effectiveness.

COL starts from the premise that the use of human reason, and the knowledge that flows from it, is the key to enabling all people to enjoy healthy and decent lives. As a world leader in the new field of knowledge management, COL has a special mission to help people access and use knowledge that can help them.

The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals does not depend on knowledge and learning alone. Political decisions, for example to make trading arrangements more equitable for developing countries, also have a vital role. However, ready access to usable knowledge can enable people in developing countries, from farmers to academics, to take rapid advantage of favourable changes.

Development depends on the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge by everyone. COL believes that technology can greatly facilitate these processes. The techniques of open and distance learning give farmers the know-how to improve their livelihoods and rural women the knowledge to raise a healthy family. Schoolnets create communities of practice among teachers and give children access to the best materials. E-learning and the knowledge media are gradually enriching the curriculum for all universities.

COL is an effective partner in combining knowledge and technology to advance development. www.col.org/mdgs

Across the globe,

more than 135 million children do not have access to primary education. Of those who do, many are taught by poorly trained teachers in ill-equipped schools with no learning materials, laboratories or libraries, and will not complete primary school education. Over one billion adults, most of them illiterate, have never received or benefited from education when they were young. Many others require new skills to function in a new and ever-changing global environment. Access to post-secondary education is no more than three percent of the relevant age group in many developing countries.

Education

offers the best strategy to break the cycle of poverty, misery and violence. But conventional means alone are unable to meet this challenge. Open and distance learning, coupled with the application of appropriate information and communications technologies, can play a central role in delivering education at all levels to all peoples, providing them with the chance for a brighter future.

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL)

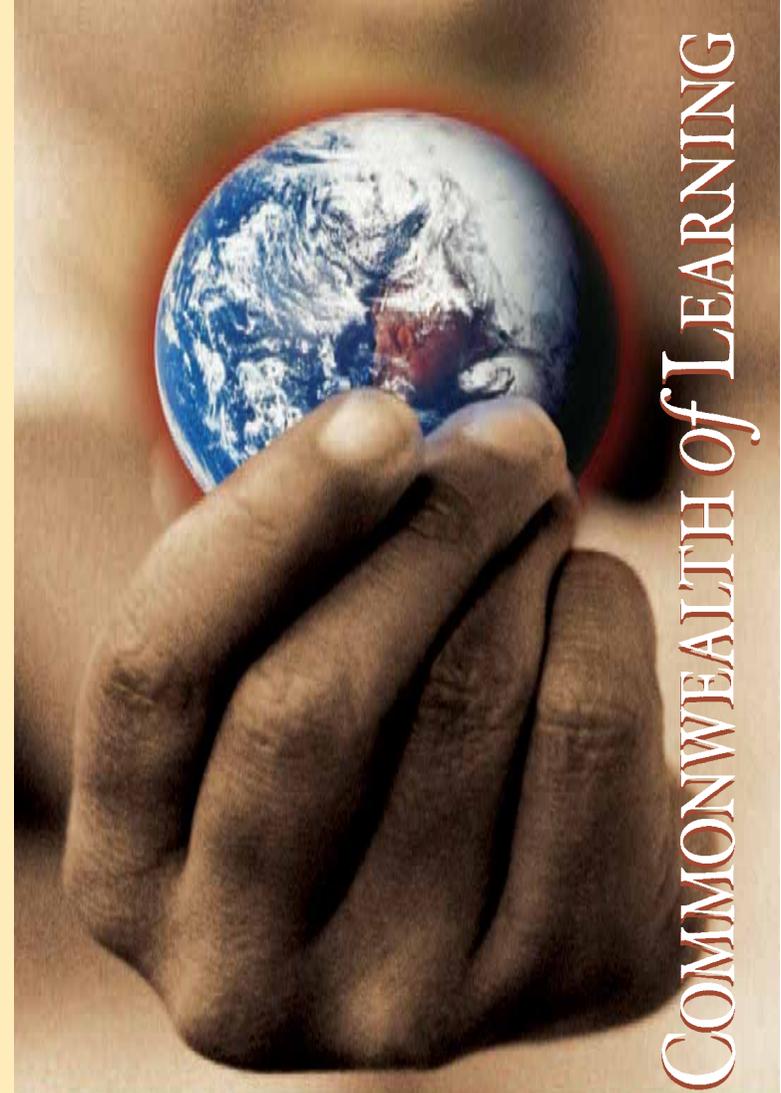
employs open learning and distance education to increase access to education and training. COL collaborates with governments and educational institutions and works with national and international development agencies, national and regional distance education associations and open universities and schools around the Commonwealth. Through its model-building programmes, COL has:

- enhanced access to learning in more than 40 countries;
- influenced the development of open schools and universities;
- conducted training seminars and studies;
- established an extensive network of education and technology specialists; and
- facilitated systemic changes in the delivery of education and influenced government policy.



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COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENTS FINANCIALLY SUPPORT COL ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS.
MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS HAVE INCLUDED AUSTRALIA, BRITAIN, BRITISH COLUMBIA,
BRUNEI, CANADA, INDIA, NEW ZEALAND AND NIGERIA.



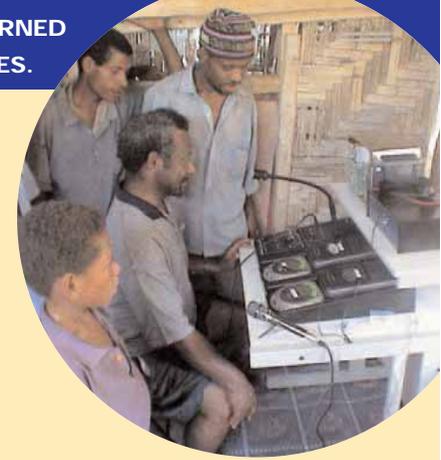
COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING



OPEN & DISTANCE
Learning for
Development

ACCESS TO EDUCATION
ACCESS TO A BETTER FUTURE

WWW.COL.ORG



COL works with Commonwealth nations to improve access to quality education and training

Through its own resources and its extensive networks, the Commonwealth of Learning provides a wealth of services and collaborative opportunities for **policy makers, institutions and distance education practitioners** to encourage the development of, and help enhance, the use of open and distance learning (ODL) policies, systems and applications.



COL's MISSION focuses on helping Commonwealth member states to use technology as a means of increasing the scope, scale, quality and impact of their education and training systems. The application of technology through ODL techniques has shown its power and value in many countries and for many purposes.



Programme areas

ODL Policies – fostering the adoption and implementation of open and distance learning policies within the broader educational and human resource development strategies and policies of member nations.

ODL Systems Development – assisting in the development of open and distance learning systems that build on existing capacity or assist in creating new capacity appropriate for the contexts of member states.

ODL Applications – demonstrating how open and distance learning applications can benefit individual learners, institutions and member states by accelerating human resource development.

Knowledge Management – providing knowledge services and resources to support all of COL's operations and distance educators world-wide.

COL CAN HELP WITH:

- Development of educational policies
- National and regional fora
- Teacher training programmes
- Literacy and livelihood/skills training
- Rural development, agricultural education and environmental management
- Programmes for orphaned and vulnerable children
- Quality assurance and institutional capacity-building
- Training of distance educators
- Educational technology applications
- Non-formal and health education
- Facilitating multi-provider delivery consortia
- E-learning

COL OFFERS:

- Internship and attachment programmes
- Start-up guides and training manuals
- Knowledge resources and publications
- Web and Internet services
- Commonwealth-wide materials licensing
- Large-scale project management/co-ordination (fee-for-service)
- Course delivery and design (fee-for-service)

EXAMPLES:

- Regional ODL centres (Nigeria and Botswana, clearing house for regional experience and available expertise)
- Southern Africa teacher training programme (STAMP 2000+)
- Commonwealth Executive MBA/MPA programme
- Commonwealth Electronic Network for Schools and Education (CENSE)
- Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia
- Information Resource Centre
- COL Knowledge Finder (Internet search tool)
- Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning
- Regional institutes (African vice-chancellors, heads of teacher training agencies)
- Support for distance education professional associations
- Commonwealth of Learning Media Empowerment programme (COLME)
- Community radio and video
- Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (under development)
- Poverty Reduction Outcomes Through Education Innovations and Networks programme (COL-PROTEIN, supporting innovative uses of ODL to address poverty alleviation in rural areas)

