COL in the Commonwealth

2015-2018
COUNTRY REPORTS
COL in the Commonwealth

COUNTRY REPORTS 2015–2018
Acknowledgements

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Compilation and Coordination
Dr Nancy George, Consultant
Dr Obinna Okwelume, Communications Manager

Design and Production
Ania Grygorczuk, Designer/Production Coordinator
Alex Hennig, Consultant
Dr Dania Sheldon, Consultant

Direction
Professor Asha S. Kanwar, President and Chief Executive Officer
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COL in the Commonwealth: 2015–2018 Country Reports summarises COL’s activities over the last three years (2015–2018), succinctly detailing what we have achieved in each Member State and across the Commonwealth. The reports describe not only COL’s recent activities in developing countries but also how its work supports the international development priorities of partner countries: Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

Bearing in mind the launch of a new set of post-2015 development goals, COL transitioned from “Learning for Development” to “Learning for Sustainable Development” to align itself with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG4, which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” Therefore, COL continues to use its expertise in distance education and technology-based approaches to promote lifelong learning that leads to economic growth, social inclusion and environmental conservation.

COL in the Commonwealth: 2015–2018 Country Reports begins with a Pan-Commonwealth section, which describes COL’s initiatives under “Education” and “Skills.” This is followed by a section containing a brief report for each region: Africa, Asia, Caribbean and Americas, Europe and the Pacific. The third section details COL’s activities for each country within these regions.

COL’s five core strategies to achieve outcomes and impact are: partnerships, capacity, materials, models and policy. Focusing on these core strategies, the reports for this triennium categorise COL’s activities in education, skills, gender, partnerships and special events, to better present how our work contributes to outcomes.

Most of COL’s recent initiatives and projects are already showing demonstrable results in expanding and improving opportunities for education and training, helping rural communities achieve greater prosperity and contributing to skills development.

The production of COL in the Commonwealth: 2015–2018 Country Reports was made possible through collective effort and collaboration. Partners on the ground have diligently provided COL with updates. 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 am very grateful to everyone involved for their valuable input.

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

Foreword
370,000+ LEARNERS Reached
(Over 50% Women)

110+ INSTITUTIONS
Adopted COL Models and Materials

280+ PARTNERS in 42 Countries

2,200+ Learning Resources, Materials and Curricula
Collaboratively Developed

A++ RATING by DFID
Overview of COL and its activities across the Commonwealth 2015–2018

Located in British Columbia, Canada, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is an intergovernmental organisation that serves the education and training needs of the 52 independent states that comprise the Commonwealth and their combined population of 2.4 billion, of whom more than 60 per cent are under the age of 30.

Working collaboratively with governments in all Commonwealth Member States, COL has the mandate to promote the use of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies. COL leverages its impact through a wide range of partnerships that include institutions, national organisations, international development agencies and non-governmental organisations. Partners include the Commonwealth Secretariat, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and UN Women. COL also works with donor agencies such as the World Bank, regional organisations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), national and regional distance education associations, industry, and private sector foundations such as The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

COL’s overarching approach — especially its focus, scope and types of specific programmes and projects — is directed by its Strategic Plan, which is reviewed at the mid-term and evaluated at the end of the plan period. COL practises results-based management (RBM) and believes in meticulous planning and continuous monitoring and evaluation. COL’s “Theory of Change” model identifies the areas to be addressed and defines its roadmap to achieve selected goals.

COL and the Sustainable Development Goals

In its outcomes-based Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL articulates its commitment to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all, believing that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). COL’s theme of promoting “Learning for Sustainable Development” aligns itself with SDG4, a stand-alone goal that aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”

The three underlying principles of SDG4 are:

i. Education is a fundamental human right and an enabling right.

ii. Education is a public good.

iii. Gender equality is inextricably linked to the right to education for all.

As a Commonwealth intergovernmental organisation, COL also operates within the framework of the Commonwealth Charter, which lays special emphasis on education, the importance of young people, the needs of small states, and gender equality. All these concerns are integrated in COL’s initiatives, projects and services.

COL believes that if the global community is to achieve quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030, it will need to adopt innovative approaches and harness the potential of information and communication technologies (ICT). COL uses this approach in its programmes, which are divided into two sectors, Education and Skills, with Gender as a cross-cutting theme.
Education

The Education sector is working in all regions of the Commonwealth. The stakeholders in this sector range from girls and women in challenging environments to open universities, teacher education institutions and ministries of education. The Education sector is strengthening its comprehensive, project-based approach to achieve systemic impact. There is a strong focus on open educational resources (OER) and the promotion of gender mainstreaming in all activities. Discussions were initiated with partners to integrate sustainable development approaches into policies and programmes. The GIRLS Inspire project, aimed at preventing child, early and forced marriage and reaching unreached girls and women, is now well established and is having a positive impact on sustainable development.

OPEN/INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING

Overview

While many Commonwealth countries have made tremendous progress in achieving universal primary education, 100% transition from primary to secondary level has not been possible in several others. Lack of teachers, infrastructure and resources contributes to this challenge. Open schooling has emerged as a viable alternative to supplement and complement secondary education. Not only is this more flexible and cost-effective, but open schooling offers both academic and skills-based curricula. COL has been promoting this approach across the Commonwealth.

The new approach to open schooling at COL is more holistic and focuses on the training of teachers in eLearning, using OER, improving the management of open schools and supporting the use of appropriate technologies in teaching and learning. This involves integrating the open schooling approach into mainstream schools to enable many out-of-school youths to access formal education.

Activities

In 2017, the ministries of education in Belize, Mozambique, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu and Zambia signed agreements to integrate open schooling in their education systems. The Open Schooling initiative has also been working with partners to follow up on the outcomes of COL-supported programmes through research studies, and to promote peer auditing for quality assurance. Another important activity is the strengthening of the Commonwealth Open Schooling Association, through increased member engagement and social media presence.

TEACHER EDUCATION

Overview

The Teacher Education initiative works with governments, teacher education institutions, teachers and other stakeholders to improve the preparation and development of both teachers and teacher educators. The ultimate beneficiary of teacher education efforts is the learner, through better learning outcomes. The initiative is evolving into a comprehensive package, the “Teacher Futures” model, to stimulate holistic development in school-based, in-service teacher training.
Activities

Open Educational Resources for English Language Teaching, the Commonwealth Certificate for Teacher ICT Integration, diagnostic tools for special needs education in the Caribbean, and capacity building for teacher educators were some of the major activities implemented. As a result, more than 500 teachers were trained in East Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. Under the new “Teacher Futures” model, major projects have been launched in Kiribati, Nigeria, Seychelles and Sierra Leone.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Overview

The Higher Education initiative works with ministries of education and higher education institutions (HEIs) to increase equitable participation through the adoption of open and distance learning (ODL) policies, systems, models, quality assurance mechanisms and gender-responsive learning resources to address industry and national development needs.

Activities

The Higher Education initiative provides a holistic model to help HEIs to increase access, enhance quality, integrate sustainability and improve the employability of graduates. The model was launched in Namibia and Zambia in 2017. The initiative continues to support the development of quality assurance policies, frameworks and systems at the institutional and national levels, as well as provide capacity building in ODL and materials development. Through this initiative, COL sponsors learners in legislative drafting and online course design programmes.

Additionally, in collaboration with Asia e University, COL organised a high-level round table of vice chancellors of universities in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific to share insights and experiences in leadership, quality, technology and best practices in higher education.

COL is collaborating with ten HEIs across the Commonwealth to offer the Commonwealth Executive Master’s in Business Administration and Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programmes. At the end of 2017, the cumulative student enrolment reached 30,000, of which more than 13,000 learners had already graduated.

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Overview

Ministers of education directed COL to develop the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) to promote human resource development and strengthen tertiary institutions.

VUSSC is a consortium of 30 Member States that are collaborating to develop and deliver eLearning materials through their tertiary institutions in order to improve access to quality higher education.

Activities

The number of learners enrolled in VUSSC-developed full-time courses and programmes continues to grow, with more than 1,800 learners in 23 institutions in 14 countries. A total of 64 new modules were either developed or adapted from existing OER to increase the number of available courses that participating institutions can use. The Transnational Qualifications Framework supports the mobility of students and qualifications across institutions and discipline areas.
**GIRLS INSPIRE**

**Overview**

GIRLS Inspire is a special project supported by the Governments of Australia and Canada. It aims to break the cycle of child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) by increasing access to education and training for girls and women through open, distance and technology-based learning in select Commonwealth countries with a high prevalence of child marriage. It also aims to reach the unreached women and girls in remote rural locations.

**Activities**

The GIRLS Inspire project has strengthened the organisational capacity of nine partners in Bangladesh, India, Mozambique, Pakistan and Tanzania. The project developed community awareness about the benefits of girls’ education and the harmful impact of CEFM and reached about 72,000 community members in over 180 communities and villages. As a result, GIRLS Inspire has delivered 104 life skills and vocational skills training courses and created 237 safe learning environments for over 32,530 female participants, with over 6,029 successfully transitioning to employment and income opportunities. The project contributed to the prevention of child marriages for 447 girls in Bangladesh, Mozambique and Pakistan.

**Skills**

The Skills sector works to improve learning for livelihoods across all Commonwealth regions. Taking both top-down and bottom-up approaches, initiatives within the Skills sector engage with governments, educational institutions, civil society and community-based organisations to develop policies, capacities and courses that support employability, entrepreneurship and empowerment. COL’s interventions are implemented in both formal and non-formal learning settings by mainstreaming holistic models that demonstrate the pathway along the social value chain from learning to development. Its activities are further strengthened through the “OER for Skills Development” project supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

**LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS (L3F)**

**Overview**

The L3F initiative aims to establish an ICT/ODL-based system for continuous learning among marginalised farming communities, particularly women, leading to improved knowledge, empowerment and sustainable livelihoods. The model embodies a multidimensional approach to human resource development that holistically integrates social capital, financial capital and human capital to spiral a self-sustaining and self-replicating development process.

**Activities**

The focus during this triennium has been upscaling L3F to macro institutions and strengthening existing partner initiatives to evolve into self-sustaining
business enterprises, with special attention given to the Pacific and Caribbean regions. L3F created quality learning opportunities for over 370,000 individuals throughout the Commonwealth, leading to higher levels of socio-economic empowerment as well as the ability to run successful business enterprises and practice sustainable farming.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING (TEL)

Overview

The TEL initiative aims to encourage more institutions to integrate TEL and OER policies and practices to improve teaching and learning for innovation and skills development. This will enable more governments and organisations to adopt policies and strategies for achieving speed and scale in learning opportunities.

Activities

In co-operation with governments and partner institutions, TEL activities included: the development of national and institutional ICT in education and OER policies$strategies; the development of advanced ICT skills courses for employability; capacity building for course writers and curriculum designers; and implementing TEL in three institutions through a systematic approach of baseline study, policy development, technical advice and capacity building.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (TVSD)

Overview

The TVSD initiative supports partners in all five Commonwealth regions to harness technology so as to increase access to improved quality skills training. COL builds capacity in both formal and non-formal skills training through flexible and blended approaches to achieve quality and scale.

Activities

TVSD has been supporting partners to develop national and institutional open, distance and flexible learning policies, build capacity and support eLearning course development. The results of these interventions are tracked through tracer studies carried out by partners. New skills training courses have been developed in the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions, and more learners are gaining access to non-formal courses. To date, 557 teachers are integrating technology in their practice, and more than 41,000 learners across the Commonwealth have been reached. Training resources for the integration of sustainable development in technical/vocational education and training have been developed.

OER FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Overview

OER constitute a key priority in COL’s Strategic Plan. COL has been actively working with UNESCO and like-minded organisations to implement the ten recommendations from the 2012 Paris OER Declaration. The long-term vision is that more institutions/organisations within the Commonwealth will develop and use OER-based courses and materials to give their citizens access to quality education and training for sustainable livelihoods. With additional funding from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, COL has strengthened its leadership in OER in this triennium through this project.
Activities

The activities this year focused on OER policy development/implementation, capacity building and OER course development. Nine provincial OER policies were developed during a national workshop in Sri Lanka, and 20 provincial OER guidelines were developed for provinces in Botswana and Cameroon.

Activities have resulted in 649 policy makers being sensitised to OER, and 17 OER-based skills courses that were developed by partners. Moreover, the initiative has been supporting the development of OER courses in life skills and non-formal/informal OER learning materials for farming communities.

Gender

Overview

Gender as a cross-cutting theme aims to harness the potential of ODL to expand access to education and improve learning outcomes for girls/women and boys/men by integrating a gender perspective into ODL practice and delivery. The cross-cutting activities of the initiative focus on building capacity for gender mainstreaming among partners in both formal and non-formal education. COL has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UN Women and is working with international partners to develop and implement holistic programmes aimed at addressing issues such as women’s empowerment and boys’ underperformance.

Activities

Emphasis was placed on assisting partner institutions with identifying gender gaps and finding ways to address these gaps, using COL’s Institutional Gender Scorecard as the key tool for driving this process. Partners were also supported to develop gender-responsive policies and strategies for mainstreaming gender. A Commonwealth-wide study on the current situation of boys’ underperformance was completed, and a new model to address the specific challenges and learning needs of at-risk boys was developed. A study was completed on the role of gender in co-operatives.

Services

ELEARNING FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS (ELIO)

Overview

ELIO provides online professional development courses to international organisations on a fee-for-service basis. ELIO has been customising and providing award-winning eLearning since 2006 to organisations such as the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Labour Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF, the World Bank and the World Health Organization, among others. This triennium, ELIO expanded its role by developing and offering its own courses and by pursuing externally funded projects.
Activities

eLIO implemented its new Essential Skills for International Organisations programme. The first six courses were adapted from COL OER and were successfully marketed to the World Bank. Course delivery for international organisations resulted in a record number of 1,707 learners in 31 cohorts with a completion rate of more than 80%. COL entered into an agreement with Women Deliver, an international NGO, to create an online version of its Young Leaders programme and to develop a massive open online course (MOOC) for its Deliver for Good campaign.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY (KM&T)

Overview

The KM&T team supports COL programmes with innovations in mobile and learning technologies. Aptus is a multipurpose micro-server designed to enable access to digital learning materials of all kinds, even when connectivity to power or data networks is minimal or non-existent. It was developed at COL as a prototype of open-source hardware. Its current configuration supports the delivery of digital video streams to about 20 users simultaneously and can host a Moodle service as well. KM&T also supports a MOOC management system for institutions in developing countries, as well as MOOCs for the food and agriculture sector.

Activities

Aptus was deployed by a team of researchers at the National University of Samoa to test for ease of use and overall learning experience. Results showed that it was rated very highly for both aspects. A more powerful version of Aptus was developed and has been deployed in Open Schooling and GIRLS Inspire activities in Mozambique as well as Trinidad and Tobago. Through the portal MOOC4DEV, institutions in Malta and Nigeria were supported to offer courses. MOOCs in agriculture, offered in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK), attracted over 13,000 learners from 62 countries, and a trial MOOC for senior secondary students had an enrolment of 54,150 learners. COL also facilitated a partnership between India and Seychelles for training in MOOCs and ICT.

Regional Centres

COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE FOR ASIA

Overview

In response to needs expressed by the Commonwealth countries of the Asian region for more effective utilisation of educational media resources, COL established the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) in New Delhi. CEMCA works to devise
appropriate learning solutions that maintain a balance between the aspirations of its diverse stakeholders and available resources. It works in education and skills development, with a special focus on community media, particularly community radio.

Activities

CEMCA worked with 46 institutions in Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka to improve the capacity to leverage ODL for increased access to learning. It helped HEIs in two countries to adopt OER and ODL policies. Similarly, technical and vocational institutions were supported to enhance their capacity to reach large numbers of learners through ICT and ODL. Stakeholders in community radio stations were trained in developing audio content related to women’s health and nutrition. CEMCA supported India’s Ministry of Human Resource Development to generate a discussion paper on OER policy.

REGIONAL TRAINING AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR DISTANCE AND OPEN LEARNING

Overview

In partnership with the National Open University of Nigeria, COL promotes ODL capacity building by supporting the Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning (RETRIDOL) in West Africa. The RETRIDOL mandate includes engaging in and supporting ODL research activities, as well as ODL capacity building, while serving as a centre of expertise for Nigeria and West Africa.

Activities

RETRIDOL has conducted training in online facilitation and tutoring, as well as policy formulation for dual-mode universities. Its work plan was revised to strengthen ODL in dual-mode universities in West Africa, in alignment with COL’s higher education model. Several workshops aimed at supporting dual-mode institutions were held.

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY – CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

Overview

The Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE) is supported by the Botswana Ministry of Education and hosted by the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (now Botswana Open University). The centre was established to increase the provision of quality distance education in Southern Africa, support research and undertake and promote training and development in ODL.

Activities

SADC-CDE has been engaged in various capacity-building activities, including an online project management course and a Master of Education course through the Open University of Tanzania. SADC-CDE presented its draft strategic plan to COL and has launched courses on monitoring and evaluation and on eLearning. An online course on project management was completed by ODL practitioners from Botswana, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. A new multilingual website with the three SADC languages (English, French and Portuguese) was launched. Through COL’s technical assistance, the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning made a smooth transition to becoming the Botswana Open University, effective 1 December 2017.
PACIFIC CENTRE FOR OPEN AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING FOR DEVELOPMENT

Overview

The Pacific Centre for Open and Flexible Learning for Development (PACFOLD) is hosted by the University of the South Pacific (USP) and 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.

Activities

During the 8th Pan-Commonwealth Forum, stakeholders from the Pacific region discussed strategies to strengthen the role of PACFOLD in achieving learning for sustainable development. PACFOLD Learn, an online community for strengthening flexible and open learning, was launched. PACFOLD participated in several forums organised by the National University of Samoa, USP and the Matuaileoo Environment Trust Inc., a non-profit organisation in Samoa. An action plan for 2017 was also developed. PACFOLD launched an online course on flexible skills development, with 266 teachers from seven Pacific Commonwealth countries.

COMMONWEALTH CENTRE OF CONNECTED LEARNING

Overview

COL serves in an advisory capacity on the International Advisory Board of the Commonwealth Centre of Connected Learning (CCCL), a Maltese foundation created in 2017, which facilitates connected learning in Commonwealth and European member states. This purpose resonates with COL’s interest in technology-enabled and connected learning.

Activities

CCCL facilitated the development of an open access policy for the University of Malta that was formally approved in September 2017. The International Advisory Board (IAB) of CCCL, which is chaired by COL’s President and CEO, held its first meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Malta’s Minister for Education and Employment participated in the meeting as a special invitee. The IAB gave specific advice to CCCL in programme matters, the mobilisation of financial resources and the development of strategic partnerships.
AFRICA REGION

Botswana
Cameroon
Eswatini
Gambia
Ghana
Kenya
Lesotho
Malawi
Mauritius
Mozambique
Namibia
Nigeria
Rwanda
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
South Africa
Tanzania
Uganda
Zambia
The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is actively engaged in 18 Commonwealth Member States across the continent of Africa. The region has a population of approximately 489 million people. Among the 18 Member States, Nigeria has the largest population, with about 173 million in 2013, while Seychelles has the smallest, with approximately 93,000. The populations of the other 16 countries are in the millions.

Almost all of these countries have made positive progress in their education systems in moving toward achieving universal primary education, and they are committed to continuing to improve their education systems under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

COL focuses on adding value to the countries’ efforts to reach the SDGs, particularly SDG4. It supports the Commonwealth governments and institutions of Africa in the use of appropriate, affordable technologies to improve and expand learning for sustainable development. Its initiatives in formal education include emphasis on quality and inclusive secondary and higher education and the strengthening of teacher development programmes. In the area of skills, COL supports the expansion of access to technical and vocational education, the reinforcement of non-formal education in agriculture, and technology-enabled learning. These initiatives have been designed to achieve socially inclusive and gender-sensitive human resource development at lower economic and environmental costs.

COL’s major regional initiatives in the African Commonwealth countries between 2015 and 2018 are outlined below.

- The Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE) operates in partnership with the Botswana Ministry of Education and is hosted by the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (now Botswana Open University). It undertakes and promotes training and development in open and distance learning (ODL), supports research activities in ODL and increases the provision of quality distance education in Southern Africa. COL assisted the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning with transitioning into an open university (effective 1 December 2017) by providing technical advice, reviewing the institution’s systems and supporting capacity building.

- In partnership with the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), COL promotes ODL capacity building by supporting the Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning (RETRIDOL), located in West Africa. RETRIDOL has been supporting West African higher education institutions in transitioning to dual-mode provision.

- Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) is an initiative that supports the economic improvement of small-scale farmers, who are primarily women. L3F focuses on the economic and social inclusion of farmers, training them in the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and assisting them in gaining entrepreneurial skills. L3F is scaling up in Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The initiative has contributed to strengthening food security among participating communities and households in these Member States.

- The Innovation in Vocational Education and Skills Training (COL–INVEST) Africa partnership aims to: i) improve the quality of technical and vocational education and training (TVET); ii) achieve better ICT infrastructure management; iii) integrate technology into teaching and learning;
iv) establish new organisational structures to achieve efficiency; v) increase access to skills training for people working in the informal sector so as to improve livelihoods; vi) impact the provision of training for the informal sector through the formal TVET system; and vii) incorporate gender mainstreaming. Institutions in Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia are INVEST Africa partners.

• The GIRLS Inspire initiative focuses on girls’ education and economic inclusion and works to provide viable alternatives to the early and forced marriages of young women. The initiative is being implemented in Mozambique and Tanzania, as well as countries across the Asia region, raising awareness in communities with a high prevalence of child, early and forced marriage, and providing skills development opportunities to girls and women, equipping them for sustainable livelihoods.

• The Commonwealth Open Schooling Association – African Chapter is a community of practice that supports the introduction and operation of open schooling in African countries of the Commonwealth.

• The Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration and Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) are flexible and modular programmes geared towards delivering high-quality learning and professional development opportunities in participating countries. The CEMBA/CEMPA programmes are designed for part-time study by busy working professionals, in response to the growing demand for postgraduate level education in business and public administration. The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, in Ghana, the Open University of Mauritius, Botswana Open University and NOUN offer the CEMBA/CEMPA.

• The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) supports the collaborative development and sharing of open educational resources (OER) to promote learning for sustainable development. Seven small African states — Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone and Swaziland — are members of VUSSC. VUSSC provides resources for educators that include courses, guidebooks, toolkits and a Transnational Qualifications Framework.

• COL and Singapore’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs organise workshops to build the capacity of teacher educators and education practitioners in the use of ICT to improve teaching and learning. This annual initiative, under the Singapore Cooperation Programme, was held in Singapore in August 2017 and hosted 18 participants from ten Commonwealth countries, including partners from the Africa region.

• COL in collaboration with the University of Cape Town, South Africa has developed the conceptual framework and seven modules for the Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) programme to build the capacities of teachers and learners to use digital skills for lifelong learning throughout the Commonwealth.

• The Africa OER Regional Consultation, which provided opportunities for African delegates to learn more about OER and contribute to the 2nd World OER Congress, was held in March 2017 in Port Louis, Mauritius.
Botswana

Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1966
- **Population:** 2,021,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 84% (2009)
- **GDP:** 2.8% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 109
- **Official languages:** Setswana, English
- **Currency:** Pula

Geography

- **Area:** 582,000 sq km
- **Coastline:** none
- **Capital city:** Gaborone

Public spending on education was eight per cent of GDP in 2009. There are ten years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary five. Some 93 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2008). The school year starts in January. The Brigades movement was founded in 1963 in Serowe by Patrick van Rensburg to provide vocational training in skilled trades for early school-leavers.

There are about 30 vocational and technical training centres, four teacher-training colleges, two colleges of education and one university, the University of Botswana. A second public university, the Botswana International University of Science and Technology, is under construction at Palapye. It opened in August 2012, initially admitting a few hundred students, and is based at the Oodi College of Applied Arts and Technology until the Palapye campus is ready.

The Institute of Development Management was established in 1974 as a regional institution with campuses in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. Other tertiary institutions include Botswana College of Agriculture, Botswana Institute of Administration and Commerce, and Botswana Open University (BOU). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 95 per cent (2010).

In 1997, Botswana hosted the 13th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, in Gaborone. Commonwealth education ministers meet every three years to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest.

**SOURCE:** http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Africa.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for Botswana is Ms Fancy Amey, Director, Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE), BOU (formerly Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning, BOCODOL).

NOTABLE MENTION

Dr Daniel Tau is a COL Honorary Fellow.

**Strategic Plan 2015–2021**

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.
COL’s work in Botswana is primarily in the areas of higher education and tertiary education through BOCODOL (now BOU) and the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth. Other priority areas include open educational resources (OER) and skills development.

**Education**

**OPEN/INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING**

The Memorandum of Understanding between COL and the Ministry of Education on SADC-CDE continues to June 2018. COL’s Senior Adviser: Open/Innovative Schooling held meetings with officials of SADC-CDE and BOCODOL (now BOU) in November and December 2017 on several planned projects.

**VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

Strengthening and improving the quality and scope of existing tertiary institutions is key for small states. The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) partnership represents 30 small states of the Commonwealth dedicated to expanding access to tertiary education. Botswana continues to be a member of VUSSC. 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 delivering VUSSC courses and programmes and on promoting the use of the Transnational Qualifications Framework.

Thirty-five learners graduated with a master’s degree in educational leadership at BOCODOL (BOU) after having successfully completed the programme. All graduates are in employment, and one has been admitted to a PhD programme at the University of Botswana.

A study comparing ODL learners at BOCODOL (BOU) and learners from a similar face-to-face programme at another institution found that the most of the ODL students were first-generation graduate students. The other interesting findings of the study were:

- ODL students had significantly lower carbon-related emissions than their face-to-face counterparts, mainly due to reduced travel requirements.
- The ODL programme appeared to reduce the opportunity cost for ODL students, compared to the cost for face-to-face leaners.

**Skills**

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocation education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Forty-five teachers from Botswana participated in both courses.

COL supported the development of draft OER guidelines for the ten regional operations offices of Botswana’s Ministry of Education and Skills Development by organising advocacy and sensitisation sessions. The aim of this activity was to provide direction in the use of OER for quality teaching and learning in the general education system.

**Gender**

During 2016–2017, BOCODOL pilot-tested the Institutional Gender Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming developed by COL. The resulting gender mainstreaming efforts will lead to gender-sensitive higher education programmes and policies.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society
organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL supports SADC-CDE, a regional centre in Southern Africa, in partnership with the Botswana Ministry of Education. Previously hosted by BOCODOL and now by BOU, the centre undertakes and promotes training and development in ODL, supports research activities in ODL, and increases the provision of quality distance education in Southern Africa.

COL’s partners in Botswana include:

- Botswana Open University (formerly BOCODOL)
- Ministry of Basic Education
- Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education

**Special Events**

**2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS**

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Africa Regional Consultation was held in Port Louis, Mauritius in March 2017. Mrs Fancy Amey, the COL Focal Point for Botswana, Ms Grace Muzila, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Basic Education, and Mr Taolo Tsimanyane, Acting Deputy Director of the Department of Information Communication Technology and Media Services, Ministry of Basic Education, Botswana attended.

**8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)**

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. COL supported the participation of Ms Ivy Rose Mathew, Ms Bantu Lulu Morolong, Mr Daniel Tau and Ms Unity Dow in PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, ODL, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

**Looking Ahead: 2021**

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Botswana to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


**Digital Learning: Reforming Teacher Education to Promote Access, Equity and Quality in Sub-Saharan Africa** provides an overview of the present and future impact of digital learning on teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report describes digitally enhanced programme innovations that can be identified in many institutions across the region, as well as three phases to full-scale adoption of new digital technologies.

**Gender Profile: Botswana** is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

**The Impact of ICT on the Costs and Economics of Distance Education: A Review of the Literature** examines relevant literature on costing since 2000 as well as on costing OER and MOOCs, mobile learning and distance education in developing countries.

**Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming** is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

**Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries** is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

**Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework** is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

**Open and Distance Learning Quality Assurance in Commonwealth Universities** offers insights and findings on how quality assurance is currently being practised in open universities in the Commonwealth, from the perspectives of policy makers, leaders and practitioners in open and distance education institutions.

**Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017**, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.
Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016 is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

The State of Open Universities in the Commonwealth: A Perspective on Performance, Competition and Innovation critically examines specialist ODL universities in the Commonwealth.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1995
- **Population:** 22,254,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 92%
- **GDP:** 0.0% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 152
- **Official languages:** French, English
- **Currency:** CFA franc

Geography

- **Area:** 475,442 sq km
- **Coastline:** 402 km
- **Capital city:** Yaoundé
- **Population density (per sq km):** 47

Public spending on education was 3.1 per cent of GDP in 2012. There are six years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises six years and secondary seven, with a first cycle of four years. School attendance is lower in the Far North Region, where the population is partly nomadic. Some 57 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2010). The school year starts in September. Many secondary schools are bilingual, with instruction in both French and English. Faith schools play an important role in the education system and are partly subsidised by the government.

The public universities are the University of Yaoundé (founded in 1962), the University of Douala (1977, Coastal Region), the University of Ngaoundéré (1982, Adamawa Region), the University of Buea (1992, South-West Region, English medium), the University of Dschang (1993, West Region) and the University of Maroua (2008, Far North Region). The most prominent is the University of Yaoundé, which now comprises two separate universities (University of Yaoundé I and University of Yaoundé II) on several campuses. The École Normale Supérieure of the University of Yaoundé I is the leading school for teacher education. The many private institutions offering tertiary education include the Catholic University of Central Africa (1989, Yaoundé), Bamenda University of Science and Technology (1995, North-West Region) and Université des Montagnes (2000, Bangangté, West Region). The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 0.70:1 (2011). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 83 per cent (2007).

**SOURCE:** http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as regional representative for Africa.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for Cameroon is Professor Ivo Leke Tambo, Secretary General, Ministry of Basic Education.

NOTABLE MENTION

Professor Ajaga Nji is a former COL Adviser.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.
COL’s work in Cameroon is primarily in the areas of higher education and open educational resources (OER) for skills development.

Education

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Higher Education initiative works to build human resources for social and economic development across the Commonwealth. It supports higher education institutions and ministries in capacity building, policy development and curriculum reform. COL worked with the University of Buea to develop an institutional open and distance learning (ODL) and quality assurance policy.

COL continued to help policy makers, institutions and leaders in higher education harness the potential of ODL and technology, to enable them to cope with the increasing demand for quality higher education in the face of rising costs and diminishing public funding. COL has developed action plans aligned with the priorities of specific countries, including Cameroon, to increase access to quality higher education and forge partnerships with international and regional organisations to leverage impact.

Skills

**TECHNOLOGY ENABLED LEARNING**

COL worked with Cameroon’s Ministry of Basic Education and Ministry of Secondary Education to launch a national advocacy and sensitisation project, introducing OER to over 300 policy makers in the country’s ten regions. Further, ten regional OER guidelines were drafted, catering to the specific needs of Anglophone and Francophone regions. Phase 1 of the Upskill Project for Nursing and Paramedical Professionals in Cameroon was initiated in 2017 to enhance the skills of nurses and para-medical professionals such as midwives and public health officers.  

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education, developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Nine teachers from Cameroon participated in both courses.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in the Republic of Cameroon include:

- Ministry of Basic Education
- Ministry of External Relations
- Ministry of Higher Education
- Ministry of Secondary Education
- University of Buea
- University of Yaoundé

Special Events

**2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS**

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Africa Regional Consultation was held in Port Louis, Mauritius in March 2017. Professor Ivo Leke Tambo, the COL Focal Point for Cameroon, attended.
8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. COL supported the participation of Mr Afutendem Lucas Nkwetta at PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL looks forward to continuing its work with its partners and is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all, believing that access to learning opportunities will lead to:

• improved sustainable livelihoods;
• increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
• improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Cameroon to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


Digital Learning: Reforming Teacher Education to Promote Access, Equity and Quality in Sub-Saharan Africa provides an overview of the present and future impact of digital learning on teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report describes digitally enhanced programme innovations that can be identified in many institutions across the region, as well as three phases to full-scale adoption of new digital technologies.
Gender Profile: Cameroon is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries of how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

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Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016 is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is intended for authorities responsible for quality assurance and institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. Its objective is to facilitate credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
**Key Facts**

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1968
- **Population:** 1,250,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 99%
- **GDP:** 0.8% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 148
- **Official languages:** siSwati, English
- **Currency:** Lilangeni

**Geography**

- **Area:** 17,364 sq km
- **Coastline:** none
- **Capital city:** Mbabane
- **Population density (per sq km):** 72

Public spending on education was eight per cent of GDP in 2011. There are seven years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary five, the latter having cycles of three and two years. Some 67 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2010). The school year starts in January.

The University of Swaziland offers degrees in agriculture, commerce, education, health sciences, humanities, sciences and social sciences and incorporates the Institute of Distance Learning. Swaziland College of Technology provides diploma and certificate courses in building, business, education and engineering. The Vocational and Commercial Training Institute offers business and technical training. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 1.00:1 (2011). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 94 per cent (2010). There is a national library and a mobile library service for remoter parts of the country.

**SOURCE:** http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

**COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Africa.

**COL FOCAL POINT**

The COL Focal Point for Eswatini is Mr Earnest Simelane, Acting Chief Inspector – Tertiary Education, Ministry of Education and Training.

**NOTABLE MENTION**

His Majesty King Mswati III, who is Chancellor of the University of Eswatini, conferred an Honorary Doctorate of Education on the President and CEO of COL, Professor Asha Kanwar, at a convocation held in October 2016.

Professor Lydia Makhubu is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

**Strategic Plan 2015–2021**

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Eswatini is primarily in the area of tertiary education, through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.
Teacher educators from Eswatini participated at a five-day training workshop at the Singapore National Institute of Education in May 2016. The training supported teacher educators in integrating information and communication technologies (ICT) into their programmes as a key strategy to improve quality in education. COL provided support to Swaziland to train 540 teachers in using educational technology in teaching and learning through the University of Eswatini.

Eswatini is a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Initiated by and built with the support of ministers of education of developing small states of the Commonwealth, VUSSC supports the collaborative development and sharing of open educational resources (OER) to promote learning for sustainable development. VUSSC supported the Swaziland Education Council to develop the Swaziland Qualifications Framework (SQF). The structure of the SQF has been benchmarked against regional and international structures such as the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework and the Transnational Qualifications Framework. VUSSC is also working with the University of Eswatini to develop blended learning materials and enhance eLearning capacity among staff across a number of departments.

VUSSC continues to support the collaborative development and sharing of OER to promote learning for sustainable development. VUSSC is helping the University of Eswatini (UNESWA) to institutionalise OER. More than 130 UNESWA staff were involved in capacity-building activities; as a result, programmes are being repurposed in three areas. One significant area is nursing, where the OER courses developed are being offered for a Bachelor of Nursing Science.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. One teacher from Swaziland participated in the TEL MOOC offered in November–December.

Recognising that the Commonwealth is a diverse and geographically dispersed association, COL supports a regional centre in Southern Africa called the Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education, in partnership with the Botswana Ministry of Education. Hosted by Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (now Botswana Open University), the centre undertakes and promotes training and development in open and distance learning (ODL), supports research activities in ODL and increases the provision of quality distance education in Southern Africa.

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL partners in Eswatini with the University of Eswatini.
**Special Events**

COL President and CEO, Professor Asha Kanwar, delivered the keynote address at the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa conference, held at UNESWA in September 2015. She spoke on the topic “Widening Access to Education in the Commonwealth: What Have We Learned?”

**2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS**

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The Africa Regional Consultation was held in Port Louis, Mauritius in March 2017. Fikile Mdluli, Acting Chief Inspector for Tertiary Education, Ministry of Education and Training, attended.

**8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)**

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. The Eswatini delegates to PCF8 were Mr Phineas Magagula, Mr Shokahle Roster Dlamini, Ms Nokuthula Thembi Vilakata and Mr Njabuliso Nsibande.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

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- improved sustainable livelihoods;
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COL looks forward to working with Swaziland to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
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Gender Profile: Swaziland is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

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For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Ghana

Key Facts
- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1957
- **Population:** 25,905,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 87%
- **GDP:** 3.2% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 138
- **Official language:** English
- **Currency:** Cedi

Geography
- **Area:** 238,537 sq km
- **Coastline:** 539 km
- **Capital city:** Accra
- **Population density (per sq km):** 109

Public spending on education was eight per cent of GDP in 2011. There are 11 years of compulsory education, starting at age four. Primary school comprises six years and secondary seven, the latter having cycles of three and four years. Some 72 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2008). The school year starts in September.

The longest established public universities are: the University of Ghana (Legon, Accra, established 1948); Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (Kumasi, 1952); the University of Cape Coast (1962); the University for Development Studies (main campus at Tamale, 1992); the University of Education (Winneba, 1992); and the University of Mines and Technology (Tarkwa, 2004). Other major tertiary institutions include the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (Achimota, Accra, 1961). There are also many teacher-training colleges, polytechnics and specialised tertiary institutions, and many private universities. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 0.60:1 (2012). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 81 per cent (2010).

In 1977, Ghana hosted the 7th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, in Accra. Commonwealth Education Ministers meet every three years to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as regional representative for Africa.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for Ghana is Professor Jophus Anamuah-Mensah, OVC.

NOTABLE MENTION

The Honourable Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Professor Akilagpa Sawyerr is a former member of COL’s Board of Governors.

Mrs Esi Sutherland-Addy is a COL Honorary Fellow and former member of COL’s Board of Governors.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Ghana is primarily in the areas of higher education, Lifelong Learning for Farmers and technical and vocational skills development.

Education

HIGHER EDUCATION

COL’s Higher Education initiative supports policy makers, institutions and leaders in harnessing the full potential of open and distance learning (ODL) through the use of technology. This, in turn, enables them to cope with the increasing demand for quality higher education in the face of rising costs and diminishing public funding. COL is working with Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) to offer the Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration and Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programmes. The flexible and modular CEMBA/CEMPA programmes are geared towards delivering high-quality learning and professional development opportunities in participating countries.

Skills

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS (L3F)

COL is supporting the rollout of L3F initiatives in five districts in the Upper East Region of Ghana. The project, which is being implemented in partnership with the Garu Presbyterian Agriculture Station (GPAS), will reach 4,000 small-scale farmers in its first phase. The objective is to reach 50,000 small-scale farmers by June 2021. The project has two main goals:

- To improve the economic status and livelihood security of marginalised farming communities, particularly women.
- To strengthen the capacity of Presbyterian Agriculture Stations in their application of the ICT-based L3F model in facilitating the social and financial inclusion of marginalised communities, particularly women.

L3F involving 640 members in north Ghana found that the financial literacy programme has resulted in a strong table-banking movement in the region. The main partners developed operating plans, identified marginalised groups, and developed gender-responsive management information systems and financial information systems with strategies for internalising the learning from model building.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (TVSD)

The TVSD initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to better skills training. A key aspect of the programme is the capacity building of partner organisations in course design and materials development. A comprehensive baseline study of open and distance flexible learning in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) was prepared in 2015. The College of Technology, Kumasi (COLTEK), Koforidua Technical University (KTU), and Takoradi Technical University (TTO) are members of COL’s INVEST Africa initiative, which is committed to increasing access to high-quality, flexible and blended skills training in support of sustainable livelihoods.

KTU has 55 members engaged in informal learning and collaboration in the associated online community of practice. The university has been recognised by the African Union as having one of the ten most promising models in TVET for the 21st century, and it continues to achieve the highest level of outcomes as a partner of COL’s TVSD initiative. More than 5,000 students from KTU have been engaged in formal online education programmes. A KTU tracer study revealed that nearly 1,000 artisans have improved their sustainable livelihoods through flexible non-formal training. COL-supported training was conducted by two members of KTU. The other two institutions — COLTEK and TTO — became INVEST Africa partners in 2015.

As part of teachers’ capacity building within INVEST Africa partner institutions, COL facilitated a workshop where participants developed 16 course plans integrating sustainable development principles into TVET. Participants from Ghana attended the workshop.

In this triennium, COL developed a set of resources that integrate sustainable development principles into TVET as part of teachers’ capacity building in INVEST Africa partner institutions. Sixteen course plans that
integrate the sustainable development principles of economic growth, environmental conservation and social inclusion were developed at a workshop in June hosted by the Kenya Technical Trainers’ College. The workshop included 30 educators from seven countries — Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia — and resulted in plans for cascading the training to other teachers.

Getenergy is a UK-based organisation that specialises in education and training for the oil and gas industry. In 2015–2016, COL provided technical support for innovation in teaching and learning at TTO through Getenergy’s Field Ready model, which focuses on preparing young people to meet the demanding international employment standards of the oil and gas industry. KTU is the pilot partner institution of Getenergy for the Field Ready model. As part of the initial training, COL facilitated sessions for Takoradi Technical University (TTU) heads of department and teaching staff on the COL model for flexible TVET through appropriate technology. It organised a workshop to introduce the flexible TVET model and to share monitoring and evaluation protocols. Twenty-two senior managers and teachers participated in workshop sessions. Participants were enthusiastic about integrating technology at TTU in a more flexible model, which includes developing new online courses for which there is high student demand and creating an artisan programme. Four people from TTU participated in the Flexible Skills Development online course for West Africa from October to December 2017.

In a tracer study conducted by KTU, graduates from the COL-supported artisan programmes reported increases in quality-of-life indicators, including confidence, self-esteem, living conditions and ownership of goods.

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017; 54 teachers from Ghana participated in both courses.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Ghana include:

- General Agricultural Workers’ Union of TUC
- Koforidua Technical University
- Ministry of Education
- Presbyterian Church of Ghana

**Special Events**

COL President and CEO Professor Asha Kanwar met with Ghana’s Honourable Minister of Education, Professor Naana Opoku-Agyemang, in Accra in August 2016. The two leaders discussed skills development for girls, open schooling and higher education. In November 2017, COL’s President welcomed to COL headquarters Ghana’s High Commissioner to Canada, H.E. Joseph Ayikoi Otoo, and his delegation and briefed them on COL’s work in Member States, particularly Ghana. The High Commissioner has requested further COL support in agriculture and skills development.

**2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS**

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing
sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Africa Regional Consultation was held in Port Louis, Mauritius in March 2017. Mr Joshua Mallet, Director of the Centre for National Distance Learning and Open Schooling, attended.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. COL supported the participation of the Honourable Naana Jane Opoku-Aygemang, Mr Samuel Okae-Adjei and Mr Buckman Akuffo at PCF8.

KTU’s Director of the Institute for Open and Distance Learning attended a workshop in monitoring, evaluation and learning at PCF8, during which he presented his plan for conducting tracer studies of KTU students completing KTU programmes. The KTU Vice Chancellor also attended PCF8, and COL sponsored a staff member to make a joint presentation.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society and provides a roadmap for accelerating progress towards achieving SDG4. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.
Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved sustainable livelihoods;
- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Ghana to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


*Digital Learning: Reforming Teacher Education to Promote Access, Equity and Quality in Sub-Saharan Africa* provides an overview of the present and future impact of digital learning on teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report describes digitally enhanced programme innovations that can be identified in many institutions across the region, as well as three phases to full-scale adoption of new digital technologies.

*Gender Profile: Ghana* is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

*Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming* is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

*Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries* is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

*Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework* is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.
**Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017**, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

**Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016** is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

**Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation**, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

**Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET** (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Kenya

Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1963
- **Population:** 44,354,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 82% (2009)
- **GDP:** 0.6% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 147
- **Official languages:** Kiswahili, English
- **Currency:** Kenyan shilling

Geography

- **Area:** 582,646 sq km
- **Coastline:** 536 km
- **Capital city:** Nairobi
- **Population density (per sq km):** 76

Public spending on education was 6.7 per cent of GDP in 2010. There are eight years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises six years and secondary six, with cycles of two and four years. The school year starts in January.

Among Kenya’s many higher education institutions are: the University of Nairobi; Kenyatta University (main campus Nairobi, other campuses at Kitui, Mombasa and Ruiru); Moi University (in Eldoret since 1984); Egerton University (the principal agricultural university, with its main campus at Njoro); Nakuru (established as a university in 1987); Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (in Juja since 1994); and a growing number of private universities. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 0.70:1 (2009). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 93 per cent (2010).

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL Board of Governors

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Africa.

COL Focal Point

The COL Focal Point for Kenya is Mr Charles Obiero, Senior Deputy Director, Directorate of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Notable Mention

Professor Peter E. Kinyanjui is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Kenya primarily addresses farmer and teacher education, open educational resources (OER) and technical and vocational education.
**Education**

**OPEN/INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING**

Open/innovative schooling is a supplementary or complementary model of schooling that uses a range of flexible approaches based on open and distance learning (ODL) to provide structured teaching and learning opportunities. It focuses on training teachers in eLearning, using OER, improving the management of open schools and supporting the use of appropriate technologies in teaching and learning. In Kenya, COL supported Elimu Digital Media to develop 117 science and 96 vocational television programmes, which are available online and broadcast on Elimu Digital Media.

In 2017, COL launched impact studies of two Elimu Digital Media projects: enabling quality secondary science education through ICT and media; and enabling access to skill-based education for out-of-school youths.

**TEACHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.

Open Resources for English Language Teaching (ORELT) materials are being used to improve the teaching of English in Kenya, reaching 300 teachers and 714 students. ORELT comprises a collection of open educational resources (OER) — including multimedia resources that are available online and offline — that supports classroom teaching in junior secondary schools.

Three East African universities, including Egerton University in Kenya, in August 2016 collectively launched a project called DigiTeacher. This project addresses the challenges arising from the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching and learning in the region. Through the DigiTeacher project, the three universities are designing a Postgraduate Diploma/Certificate in ICT Integration in Education.

In response to market demands that require innovative educational methods, Kenyatta University in 2016 transformed the course materials in its teacher training course from simple print-based modules to vibrant, multimedia e-content. Twenty-one teacher-educators have been trained in a wide array of topics, including OER, social media, models of technology integration, and planning for technology integration.

**Skills**

**LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS**

COL’s Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) programme is important to Kenya’s rural population because it helps these communities find appropriate technology-based solutions to improve their livelihoods. L3F also empowers vulnerable rural women and their families to gain knowledge, create their own self-directed learning process, organise themselves to solve the challenges of food security, and improve their living conditions. The L3F initiative is in its eighth year of activity in Kenya. It expanded in 2015–2017 to reach three new counties: Kakamega, Busia and Siaya.

An L3F study in Kenya showed that a 1 per cent increase in empowerment can increase the profits of enterprises by 2.3 per cent. The study also revealed that L3F farmers have higher average empowerment scores than their non-L3F counterparts. The study found that combining learning with social and financial capital was the critical success factor for empowerment.

COL further supported one of the L3F partners, Siaya SEED SACCO, to promote L3F in Kenya. This will enable the organisation to continue with its efforts at championing the integration of L3F in Kenya’s cooperative sector. In September 2017, COL received an invitation from RAFIKI Microfinance (a deposit-receiving microfinance bank in Kenya) to discuss strategies for adopting L3F.
TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The use of flexible and blended learning approaches can increase equitable access to quality technical and vocational skills development. COL works with organisational partners and governments to create contextualised, high-quality models using educational media and technology to increase and expand skills development. An ICT review was carried out for 44 technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions in Kenya. The review highlighted some challenges and provided recommendations to address them.

In this triennium, COL developed a set of resources that integrates sustainable development principles into TVET as part of teachers’ capacity building in INVEST Africa partner institutions. Since teacher capacity building is a key component of this initiative, COL has facilitated a range of online and face-to-face capacity-building activities to support teachers in creating e-portfolios and providing evidence of their new competencies. COL-trained people cascade their knowledge and skills to their colleagues. Sixteen course plans that integrate the sustainable development principles of economic growth, environmental conservation and social inclusion were developed at a workshop in June hosted by the Kenya Technical Trainers’ College. The workshop included 30 educators from seven countries — Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia — and resulted in plans for cascading the training to other teachers. Kenya has adopted the COL flexible and blended (FaB) TVET model and increased their partnership to 44 institutions.

Successful integration of the new teaching and learning model requires the involvement and leadership of national TVET agencies and ministry officials; COL therefore has focused on capacity building for this group, and currently 63 policy advisers are building their skills and knowledge in flexible TVET approaches. National Champions have been appointed in Kenya, Nigeria and Zambia, and they are in the process of developing plans and strategies to support FaB TVET integration in their countries.

At a five-day workshop in Nakuru, Kenya in May 2016, six INVEST Africa Master Champions worked in collaboration with COL’s Open Educational Resources Adviser to train 36 new Champions in the FaB TVET model and in open, distance and flexible learning institutional policy. Last year, more than 8,000 learners across the seven countries benefited from flexible skills training programmes. COL supported Thika Technical Training Institute in capacity building for a tracer study to collect data on the outcomes for learners.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February and November–December 2017; 75 teachers from Kenya participated in both courses.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Kenya include:

• Egerton University
• Elimu Digital Media
• Kenya AIDS Intervention Prevention Project Group
• Kenya Institute of Special Education
• Kenya National Farmers Federation
• Kenya Technical Trainers College
• Kenyatta University
• Masai Technical Training Institute
• Ministry of Education
• Siaya SEED Savings and Credit Cooperative
• Ugunja Community Resource Centre
Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Africa Regional Consultation was held in Port Louis, Mauritius in March 2017. Mr Charles Obiero, Senior Deputy Director, Directorate of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Ms Catherine Ngugi, Project Director, OER Africa, attended.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016.

COL supported a 15-member Kenyan delegation to participate in PCF8. The members of the Kenyan delegation were: Mr Elvis Kerabu Ameyia, Ms Pauline Chege, Ms Frida Kanana Erastus, Ms Anne Polly Kthinji, Mr Francis Macharia, Mr Bashir Mursal, Ms Jackline Nyrere, Mr Robert Okinda, Mr Abdi Tiony, Mr Francis Wambua, Mr Anthony Wanjala, Ms Nancy Achieng Makokha, Mr Vitalis Ogemah, Mr Charles Obiero and Ms Grace Apondo Otieno.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.
Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved sustainable livelihoods;
- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Kenya to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


*Boys’ Underperformance in Education: Revisiting the Issue in the Commonwealth*, published by COL in 2017, follows up on a 2006 report and addresses the factors that are critical to understanding boys’ underperformance in Commonwealth countries since 2006. It contains case studies from nine countries, including Kenya.

*Digital Learning: Reforming Teacher Education to Promote Access, Equity and Quality in Sub-Saharan Africa* provides an overview of the present and future impact of digital learning on teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report describes digitally enhanced programme innovations that can be identified in many institutions across the region, as well as three phases to full-scale adoption of new digital technologies.

*Gender Profile: Kenya* is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

*Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming* is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

*Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries* is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

*Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework* is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring...
and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016 is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is intended for authorities responsible for quality assurance and institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. Its objective is to facilitate credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

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Lesotho

Key Facts

- Joined Commonwealth: 1966
- Population: 2,074,000 (2013)
- Primary enrolment: 82%
- GDP: 2.8% p.a. 1990–2013
- UN HDI world ranking: 162
- Official languages: Sesotho, English
- Currency: Loti

Geography

- Area: 30,355 sq km
- Coastline: none
- Capital city: Maseru
- Population density (per sq km): 68

Public spending on education was 13 per cent of GDP in 2008. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary five, the latter having cycles of three and two years. Some 66 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2010). The school year starts in March.

Higher education institutions include the National University of Lesotho, the Lesotho Institute of Public Administration and Management, the Lesotho College of Education, Lerotholi Polytechnic and Lesotho Agricultural College. Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 92 per cent (2010).

Source: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL Board of Governors

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Africa.

COL Focal Point

The COL Focal Point for Lesotho is Dr H. Manthoto Lephot'o, Pro Vice-Chancellor, National University of Lesotho.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Lesotho is primarily in the areas of higher education and tertiary education, through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth. Agreed priorities also include gender, open educational resources (OER) and OER policy development.

Education

Higher Education

Representatives from Lesotho participated in a workshop on Developing Criteria for Peer Auditing for five Commonwealth countries, which led in 2016 to the development of an inter-institutional framework for quality assurance.

In October 2015, COL’s Education Specialist, Higher Education visited Lesotho and found that the university has adopted quality assurance and open and distance learning (ODL) policies. In 2017,
COL conducted a workshop to develop institutional internal quality assurance mechanisms and a training manual with the Council of Higher Education, and over 15 institutions in Lesotho participated.

**VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

Lesotho continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Initiated by and built with the support of 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.

NUL is now offering distance education programmes as a result of COL’s support over the last few years. As a first step, COL helped NUL to build its capacity for offering ODL programmes, then supported the university in developing its own materials and using or adapting VUSSC materials. Also, when the ODL programmes were ready to be offered, COL provided support for the university faculty via online facilitation. COL supported the development and contextualisation of three programmes at NUL, including two diplomas — in Communication Studies and in Business Management — and a Bachelor of Arts in Business and Entrepreneurship. A programme on Environmental Management for Sustainable Development has also been developed.

In October 2016, two workshops on Content Development were held at NUL with 37 participants. A workshop to further support NUL in improving its capacity to offer ODL courses was held in October 2017 and attended by 45 participants. COL continues to work with NUL on programme development and OER.

**Regional Centre**

**SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY – CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION**

COL supports a regional centre in Southern Africa called the Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education, in partnership with the Botswana Ministry of Education. Hosted by Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (now Botswana Open University), the centre undertakes and promotes training and development in ODL, supports research activities in ODL and increases the provision of quality distance education in Southern Africa.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Lesotho include:

- Lesotho Council on Higher Education
- Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre
- Ministry of Education and Training
- National University of Lesotho

**Special Events**

**2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS**

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Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Africa regional consultation was held in Port Louis, Mauritius in March 2017. Dr H. Manthoto Lephoto, the COL Focal Point for Lesotho, attended.

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A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

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COL looks forward to working with Lesotho to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


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**Gender Profile: Lesotho** is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

**Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming** is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

**Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries** is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

**Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework** is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

**Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017**, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

**Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016** is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’S OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

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Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is intended for authorities responsible for quality assurance and institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. Its objective is to facilitate credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Malawi

Key Facts

- Joined Commonwealth: 1964
- Population: 16,363,000 (2013)
- Primary enrolment: 97%
- GDP: 1.5% p.a. 1990–2013
- UN HDI world ranking: 174
- Official language: English
- Currency: Malawi kwacha

Geography

- Area: 118,484 sq km
- Coastline: none
- Capital city: Lilongwe
- Population density (per sq km): 138

Public spending on education was five per cent of GDP in 2011. There are eight years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises six years and secondary six, with cycles of four and two years. Some 51 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2010). The school year starts in January.

The University of Malawi comprises: Chancellor College (located in Zomba); the College of Medicine (Blantyre); Bunda College of Agriculture (Lilongwe); and the Polytechnic (Blantyre). Mzuzu University (opened in 1999) and the University of Livingstonia (2003, with campuses in Livingstonia and Ekwendeni) are located in the Northern Region. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 0.60:1 (2011). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 72 per cent (2010).

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Africa.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for Malawi is Mrs Ruth Samati-Kambali, Acting Deputy Director, Malawi College of Distance Education.

NOTABLE MENTION

Dr Fred Gennings Wanyavinkhumbo Msiska, at Mzuzu University, held a UNESCO–COL Chair in Open and Distance Learning.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Malawi is primarily in the area open and innovative schooling, teacher education and higher education. Agreed priorities in Malawi include these areas as well as open educational resources (OER), and technical and vocational skills development.
**Education**

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

The Higher Education initiative of COL supports policy makers, institutions and leaders in harnessing the full potential of open and distance learning (ODL) through the use of technology; this, in turn, enables them to cope with the increasing demand for quality higher education, as well as rising costs and diminishing public funding. COL organised an ODL policy formulation workshop for the University of Malawi at which the policy was developed; it has been approved by the university.

**OPEN/INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING**

Open schooling is increasingly recognised as a viable solution to the growing demand for equitable access to secondary education, especially for girls and marginalised groups in remote locations. COL’s Open/Innovative Schooling initiative focuses on training teachers in eLearning, using OER, improving the management of open schools and supporting the use of appropriate technologies in teaching and learning.

Open/innovative schooling is a supplementary or complementary model that provides structured teaching and learning opportunities. In 2017, COL conducted a workshop for 35 senior staff from open schools in the southern region of Malawi on the management of open schools. COL also organised a stakeholder workshop to discuss a draft ODL policy for Malawi.

COL contracted NotesMaster — a freely accessible eLearning network for OER — to support staff training and content development in Malawi, Mozambique and Seychelles. Fourteen staff members were involved in the training and 12 subjects were developed as OER. COL’s Senior Advisor for Open Schooling visited Malawi to discuss open and innovative schooling, meeting with representatives from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Malawi College of Distance Education and two open schools.

**TEACHER EDUCATION**

COL’s teacher education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.

COL supported teacher educators from the University of Malawi to attend a five-day training workshop on information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching and learning, at the National Institute of Education, Singapore, in May 2016. The training supported teacher educators in integrating ICT into their programmes as a key strategy to improve quality in education.

**Skills**

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February and November–December 2017. Five teachers from Malawi participated in both courses.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.
COL’s partners in Malawi include:

- Centre for Research and Development Initiative
- Malawi College of Distance Education
- Ministry of Education
- University of Malawi

**Special Events**

**2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS**

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Africa Regional Consultation was held in Port Louis, Mauritius in March 2017. Mrs Ruth Samati-Kambali, Acting Deputy Director of Malawi College of Distance Education, attended.

**8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)**

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Mr Gibson Masache represented Malawi at the PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

**Looking Ahead: 2021**

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved sustainable livelihoods;
- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Malawi to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


Digital Learning: Reforming Teacher Education to Promote Access, Equity and Quality in Sub-Saharan Africa provides an overview of the present and future impact of digital learning on teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report describes digitally enhanced programme innovations that can be identified in many institutions across the region, as well as three phases to full-scale adoption of new digital technologies.

Gender Profile: Malawi is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

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Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

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Mauritius

Key Facts
- Joined Commonwealth: 1968
- Population: 1,244,000 (2013)
- Primary enrolment: 98% (2012)
- GDP: 3.5% p.a. 1990–2013
- UN HDI world ranking: 63
- Official language: English
- Currency: Mauritius rupee

Geography
- Island of Mauritius: 1,864 sq km
- Rodrigues: 104 sq km
- Total area, incl. other islands: 2,040 sq km
- Coastline: 177 km
- Capital city: Port Louis
- Population density (per sq km): 610

Public spending on education was four per cent of GDP in 2012. There are 12 years of compulsory education, starting at age five. Primary school comprises six years and secondary seven, the latter having cycles of three and four years. Some 97 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2010). The school year starts in January. Education is free at the primary and secondary levels, partly subsidised at the pre-primary level and heavily subsidised at the tertiary level.

A review of tertiary education in 2009/2010 found a rapidly expanding sector with some 42,260 students attending 61 institutions, 11 of these publicly funded. The sector centres on the University of Mauritius (UoM), which comprises faculties of agriculture, engineering, law, management, science (including the Department of Medicine), and social sciences and humanities. Other institutions include: the University of Technology (operational from September 2001); the Mauritius Institute of Education (for teacher training); Mahatma Gandhi Institute (courses in Asian culture); the Open University of Mauritius (higher and continuing professional education; established in July 2012, incorporating Mauritius College of the Air); and Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Medical College (established at Belle Rive in 1999). The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 1.30:1 (2011). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 97 per cent (2010).

Mauritius hosted the 18th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Port Louis in August 2012. Commonwealth Education Ministers meet every three years to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Africa.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for Mauritius is Mrs Jayavadee Sooben, Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research.
Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Mauritius is primarily in the areas higher education, Lifelong Learning for Farmers, technology-enabled learning and the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth. Agreed priorities are open educational resources (OER) and OER policy development.

Education

Higher Education

COL’s Higher Education initiative works to cultivate human resources for social and economic development across the Commonwealth. It supports higher education institutions and ministries in capacity building, policy development and curriculum reform.

COL is working with the Open University of Mauritius (OUM) to offer the Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration and Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMP) programme. OUM also holds a seat on the programme’s Executive Governing Board and Academic Board. The biennial meetings for both boards were held in Botswana in October 2015, with representatives from OUM in attendance. Discussions included how distance education was being deployed for effective human resource development in the ten participating countries of the Commonwealth. OUM renewed its CEMBA/CEMP licence for 2017–2022.

COL supported OUM to develop a course on Sustainable Business Development, as part of CEMBA/CEMP. COL Education Specialist, eLearning, facilitated a workshop on course development at OUM in November 2017.

A learner support and assessment workshop was successfully conducted for 22 academics at OUM. Four delegates from the Mauritian tertiary education sector visited OUM, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia and Asia University, also in Malaysia, in May 2017 to discuss higher education strategies and online higher education models, including teacher training.

A mock internal quality assurance (QA) audit of OUM was conducted in October 2017 with 39 participants. Subsequently, a QA policy and implementation plan development workshop was conducted. In December 2017, a QA policy validation workshop and a monitoring and evaluation workshop were held with OUM.

Teacher Education

COL provided support to the Distance Education and Teachers’ Training in Africa Conference held at the Mauritius Institute of Education in July 2015. The conference theme was “The Future We Want: Teacher Development for the Transformation of Education in Diverse African Contexts.”

In December 2016, UoM’s Centre for Innovative Lifelong Learning (CILL) trained 13 staff from the Seychelles Institute of Teacher Education in the design, development and implementation of blended learning. The university also supported the development of four courses for the Diploma in Education. Seventy-eight lecturers from UoM, the University of Seychelles and the University of Eswatini completed an eight-week online course on Developing and Teaching Online and Blended Courses, which was offered by the CILL.

COL organises annual teacher development workshops with the National Institute of Education, Singapore with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the 2017 event on “Capacity Building for Teacher Educators and Education Practitioners in Using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for Pedagogical Development,” Mr Marday Pyneandeep, Mauritius Institute of Education, participated.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

Mauritius continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth...
(VUSSC). Initiated by and built with the support of ministers of education in developing small states of the Commonwealth, VUSSC supports the collaborative development and sharing of OER to promote learning for sustainable development. Thirty-seven senior officials from nine countries enrolled in a VUSSC-developed online Postgraduate Diploma in Quality Assurance, which is being offered in partnership with UoM. Further, UoM has agreed to offer a new VUSSC programme, Environmental Management for Sustainable Development, and will partner with the University of Seychelles to expand access to the programme.

**Skills**

**LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS**

COL’s Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) empowers farming communities through the use of open and distance learning (ODL) and flexible and blended learning on topics ranging from good agricultural practices to financial literacy. Representatives from the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare joined fellow L3F partners to consolidate their activities for the previous three years and plan their activities for 2015–2017.

COL is working with the Department of Extension and Training at the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI) in Mauritius to build capacity among extension staff to employ interactive information and communications technologies (ICT) and ODL materials in farmer extension. This support has enabled FAREI to develop its strategy for extending its outreach with respect to training and information dissemination. FAREI received an additional CAD 20,300 from the parent ministry to further develop and replicate the strategy.

FAREI has established information kiosks with multi-access points at five strategic locations within the country. A business/technical ODL course on hydroponics is being developed whereby interested farmers/agro-entrepreneurs may access both agro-economic and technical information on hydroponic technology.

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

COL organised a strategy meeting that was held in Mauritius in January 2016 to develop advanced ICT skills courses collaboratively. Experts from Commonwealth open universities participated in a two-day strategy meeting to discuss the development of ICT skills courses. With the support of COL, UoM organised a workshop on advanced ICT skills course development in November 2017. UoM is developing four advanced skills courses to be offered to youths in Mauritius for employment and entrepreneurship. The courses under development are: i) Digital Marketing, ii) Internet of Things and Cloud Computing, iii) Computer Security, Forensic and Ethical Hacking and iv) R Programming and Big Data Analytics.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February and November–December 2017. In all, 116 teachers from Mauritius participated in both courses.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Mauritius include:

- Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research
- Open University of Mauritius
- University of Mauritius
Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Africa Regional Consultation was held in Mauritius in March 2017, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research. The Honourable Leela Devo Dookhun, Minister, inaugurated the meeting. Because the consultation was held in Mauritius, there was a large Mauritian representation. The following participants from Mauritius comprised the delegation.

- Dr K. S. Sutkon, Director-General, OUM
- Mrs Vandanah Gooria, Lecturer, Academic Affairs Division, OUM
- Ms Anuradha Gungadeen, Programme Coordinator for Educator’s Licence, Centre for Open and Distance Learning, Mauritius Institute of Education
- Mrs Nema Devi Goorah, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. COL supported the participation of Ms Teenah Jutton, Mr Mohammed Issak Jutton and Mr Yousra Banoor Rajabalee at PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.
Looking Ahead: 2021

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- improved sustainable livelihoods;
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COL looks forward to working with Mauritius to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


Boys’ Underperformance in Education: Revisiting the Issue in the Commonwealth, published by COL in 2017, follows up on a 2006 report and addresses the factors that are critical to understanding boys’ underperformance in Commonwealth countries since 2006. It contains case studies from nine countries, including Mauritius.

Digital Learning: Reforming Teacher Education to Promote Access, Equity and Quality in Sub-Saharan Africa provides an overview of the present and future impact of digital learning on teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report describes digitally enhanced programme innovations that can be identified in many institutions across the region, as well as three phases to full-scale adoption of new digital technologies.

Gender Profile: Mauritius is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

COL’s Journal of Learning for Development published “A Social Partnership Model to promote Educators’ Development in Mauritius through Formal and Informal Capacity-building Initiatives,” which looks at how the research activities of two projects in Mauritius helped to alleviate the suffering of those living in vulnerable conditions.
Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

Open and Distance Learning Quality Assurance in Commonwealth Universities offers some insights and findings on how quality assurance is currently being practised in open universities in the Commonwealth, from the perspectives of policy makers, leaders and practitioners in open and distance education institutions.

Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

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Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is intended for authorities responsible for quality assurance and institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. It aims to facilitate credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.

The State of Open Universities in the Commonwealth: A Perspective on Performance, Competition and Innovation critically examines specialist open and distance learning universities in the Commonwealth.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Mozambique

Key Facts

Joined Commonwealth: **1995**

Population: **25,834,000** (2013)

Primary enrolment: **86%** (2012)

GDP: **3.7%** p.a. 1990–2013

UN HDI world ranking: **178**

Official language: **Portuguese**

Currency: **Mozambique metical**

Geography

Area: **799,380 sq km**

Coastline: **2,470 km**

Capital city: **Maputo**

Population density (per sq km): **32**

There are seven years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary five, the latter having cycles of three and two years. Some 31 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2011). The school year starts in January.

Tertiary education is provided at Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (in Maputo), Universidade Pedagógica (Maputo, with branches in Beira and Nampula), Instituto Superior de Relações Internacionais (Maputo) and Universidade Lúrio (established in 2006, with campuses at Nampula, Pemba and Niassa, in the three most northerly provinces). Private tertiary institutions include the Higher Polytechnic and University Institute (1996, Maputo, with a branch in Quelimane), Catholic University (1997, Beira) and Higher Institute for Science and Technology of Mozambique (1997, Maputo).

The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 1.60:1 (2011). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 72 per cent (2010).

**SOURCE:** http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Africa.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for Mozambique is Mr Sérgio Cossa, Head, Planning Department, National Institute of Distance Education.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Mozambique is primarily in the areas of higher education, open schooling, technical and vocational skills development, and the schooling and skilling of girls.
**Education**

**OPEN/INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING**

Open schooling is increasingly recognised as a viable solution for the growing demand for equitable access to secondary education, especially for girls and marginalised groups in remote locations. COL’s Open/Innovative Schooling is a supplementary or complementary model of schooling that uses a range of flexible approaches, based on open and distance learning (ODL), to provide structured teaching and learning opportunities. It focuses on training teachers in eLearning, using open educational resources (OER), improving the management of open schools and supporting the use of appropriate technologies in teaching and learning. COL is working with the National Institute of Distance Education to expand open schooling in Mozambique.

A framework for the implementation of open schooling was developed in 2017 and teachers were trained accordingly. The training of 18 literacy teachers and three district technicians created enabling conditions for the start of the classes. Negotiations were concluded in February 2017 for the training of 17 teachers/course writers from the Ministry of Education and Culture to develop five school subjects as eLearning OER over a period of ten months. The face-to-face workshop, which marked the start of the ten-month process, took place in March 2017 in Maputo, Mozambique. Workshops with instructors, directors and ministry staff were facilitated in July 2017 to build capacity for planning eLearning and developing materials; 33 people participated in the workshops.

In August 2017, representatives from ministries of education in Belize, Mozambique, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu and Zambia — who have signed agreements with COL to work together to improve the quality of teaching and learning in mainstream and open schools through eLearning and to broaden access to schooling for out-of-school youths — met in Singapore to share experiences in the implementation of COL’s Open/Innovative Schooling model. This meeting provided an opportunity for the participants to align country implementation strategies, find common solutions to challenges and identify innovative ways to increase the programme’s momentum.

**TEACHER EDUCATION**

Two officials from the Ministry of Education and Culture participated in the annual Teacher Education programme organised by COL and the Government of Singapore in August 2017. The five-day workshop in Singapore was conducted by the National Institute of Education on behalf of the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

An ODL policy formulation workshop was successfully conducted for the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane.

**Skills**

**TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

The Technical and Vocational Skills Development initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to improved quality skills training. A key aspect of the programme is the capacity building of partner organisations in course design and materials development. COL is working with the National Directorate for Professional Technical Education to build capability amongst five technical and vocational education and training institutes in Mozambique to pilot online learning. Six Mozambican partner institutions are members of COL’s INVEST Africa network, which is committed to increasing access to high-quality, flexible and blended skills training in support of sustainable livelihoods.

COL developed a set of resources that integrates sustainable development principles into technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as part of teachers’ capacity building in INVEST Africa partner institutions. Sixteen course plans that integrate the sustainable development principles of economic growth, environmental conservation and social inclusion were developed at a workshop in June 2017, hosted by the Kenya Technical Trainers’ College. The workshop included 30 educators from seven countries — Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia — and resulted in plans for cascading the training to other teachers.
The Don Bosco Higher Institute (DBHI) has been a member of the INVEST Africa partnership since 2013. As a result of COL’s capacity building, they have developed and delivered their TVET teacher training qualification for online delivery.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING
Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February and November–December 2017. Six teachers from Mozambique participated in both courses.

Gender

GIRLS INSPIRE
GIRLS Inspire is a partnership between COL and community organisations in Bangladesh, India, Mozambique, Pakistan and Tanzania to address the barriers keeping girls and women from full participation in society. Because girls are critical agents for social change and global development, closing the gender gap during adolescence in education, economic activity and health will significantly increase national economic growth and well-being. But barriers such as child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), distance to school, security concerns, cultural values and the costs of schooling all prevent girls and women from participating in educational opportunities. GIRLS Inspire’s three-year project, funded by the Government of Canada, focuses on preventing CEFM in Mozambique through open, distance and technology-based education. Ending CEFM is crucial to Mozambique accelerating progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

With partner agencies Ajuda de Desenvolvimento de Povo para Povo (ADPP) and Associação Progresso (Progresso), 16 community-agreed safe learning environments were established, and 242 agreements were signed with parents and spouses to allow girls to attend school. Partnerships with the Institute of Labour and the National Institute for Employment and Vocational Training resulted in mobile classes, which enabled hitherto unreach girls to participate in vocational courses.

Through the safe learning spaces and mobile classes, 870 women and girls completed skills training and 1,230 girls reintegrated into formal schooling, setting them on the path to greater earning ability. In addition, through life skills workshops on sexual and reproductive health, family planning and HIV/AIDS, girls learned about young mothers who experienced complications in early pregnancies. A total of 171 girls accessed family planning services. To date, 15 girls have participated in internships and 11 girls are in income-generating activities.

Through 77 events, GIRLS Inspire raised awareness in all sections of the community about CEFM, domestic violence, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health. Community radio, national TV spots, debates, role-playing and presentations, community meetings and community performances by cultural groups reached at least 12,303 community members. In addition, a GIRLS Inspire project was featured on national TV and seen by over half a million people.

Forty-two ADPP staff members have been trained as community facilitators, monitoring and evaluation officers, data collectors and course material developers. Twenty-two Progresso staff were trained in gender mainstreaming and other ways of supporting women and girls. Fifteen exchanges with external agencies yielded excellent results, including: i) a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with the Ministry of Health to develop life skills courses on sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS; and ii) MoUs signed with the Ministry of Labour to allow the use of their mobile training facilities and allow linkages with internship and work placements. Progresso also continually discusses coordination of the project with the Ministry of Education and the Direcções Provinciais da Educação e Desenvolvimento Humano.

So far, Progresso and ADPP have stopped 22 child marriages through the GIRLS Inspire project.

Partnerships
Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and
engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Mozambique include:

• Associacao Progresso
• ADPP Mozambique
• Ministry of Education and Human Development
• National Institute of Distance Education
• Universidade Eduardo Mondlane

**Special Events**

**2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS**

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Africa Regional Consultation was held in Port Louis, Mauritius in March 2017. Mr Sérgio Cossa, the COL Focal Point for Mozambique, attended.

**8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)**

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Ms Helvia Momade represented Mozambique at PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.
Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved sustainable livelihoods;
- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Mozambique to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


**Digital Learning: Reforming Teacher Education to Promote Access, Equity and Quality in Sub-Saharan Africa** provides an overview of the present and future impact of digital learning on teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report describes digitally enhanced programme innovations that can be identified in many institutions across the region, as well as three phases to full-scale adoption of new digital technologies.

**Gender Profile: Mozambique** is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

**Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming** is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

**Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries** is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

**Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework** is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.
Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016 is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Namibia

Key Facts

- Joined Commonwealth: **1990**
- Population: **2,303,000** (2013)
- Primary enrolment: **88%**
- GDP: **2.1%** p.a. 1990–2013
- UN HDI world ranking: **127**
- Official language: **English**
- Currency: **Namibia dollar**

Geography

- Area: **824,269 sq km**
  (including Walvis Bay, 1,124 sq km)
- Coastline: **1,570 km**
- Capital city: **Windhoek**
- Population density (per sq km): **3**

Public spending on education was 8.4 per cent of GDP in 2010. There are ten years of compulsory education, starting at age seven. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary five, the latter having cycles of three and two years. In 1993, English replaced Afrikaans as the main language of instruction. The country’s constitution stipulates the provision of free education until the age of 16 or completion of primary education. Some 84 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2009). The school year starts in January.

The principal tertiary institution is the University of Namibia, established in 1993, with its main campus in Windhoek and nine other campuses across the country. The university offers courses in agriculture and natural resources, economics and management sciences, education, engineering and information technology, medical and health sciences, and law.

There are also polytechnics, technical and agricultural colleges, and four national teacher-training colleges. The Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) provides open and distance learning (ODL). The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 1.30:1 (2008). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 93 per cent (2010). There are extensive adult literacy programmes.

SOURCE: [http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries](http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries)

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as regional representative for Africa.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for Kenya is Mr Charles Obiero, Senior Deputy Director, Directorate of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Namibia is primarily in the areas of open and innovative schooling, teacher education, technology-enabled learning, and higher education through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).
**Education**

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Higher Education initiative supports policy makers, institutions and leaders in harnessing the full potential of ODL through the use of technology, which in turn enables them to cope with the increasing demand for quality higher education in the face of rising costs and diminishing public funding. COL organised a learner-support project preparation workshop in South Africa in September 2016.

COL, in collaboration with the University of Namibia, organised a project design workshop in November 2017 to launch the pilot of the COL Higher Education model. Fifty-one participants attended.

**OPEN/INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING**

Open schooling is increasingly recognised as a viable solution to the growing demand for equitable access to secondary education, especially for girls and marginalised groups in remote locations. COL’s Open/Innovative Schooling initiative focuses on training teachers in eLearning, using OER, improving the management of open schools and supporting the use of appropriate technologies in teaching and learning.

COL’s Senior Adviser: Open/Innovative Schooling visited NAMCOL in 2017. During the visit, the Open/Innovative Schooling model was shared with senior management of the college. Discussions with NAMCOL covered the areas of eLearning strategy, quality assurance and the use of NotesMaster — a freely accessible eLearning network for open educational resources (OER).

Namibia is an active member of the Commonwealth Open Schools Association (COMOSA), a community of practice.

**TEACHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.

COL supported the participation of teacher educators from Namibia at a five-day training workshop on information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching and learning, held at the Singapore National Institute of Education in May 2016. The training helped teacher educators integrate ICT into their programmes as a key strategy to improve quality in education.

**VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY OF SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

Namibia continues to be 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 offering VUSSC courses and programmes while promoting the use of the Transnational Qualifications Framework. In this triennium, COL, in partnership with NAMCOL, offered a six-week online course on Developing and Teaching Online and Blended Courses for representatives from various post-secondary institutions in Namibia.

Representatives from Namibia participated in a workshop on formulating criteria for peer auditing for five Commonwealth countries, which led to the development of an inter-institutional framework for quality assurance. NAMCOL, in collaboration with the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (now Botswana Open University), is now assisting the Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre and the Mozambique Institute of Open and Distance Education with developing quality criteria to conduct peer audits in their respective institutions.
Skills

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017; 62 teachers from Namibia participated in both courses.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Namibia include:
• Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
• Namibia Qualifications Authority
• Namibian Open Learning Network Trust
• Namibian College of Open Learning
• University of Namibia

capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The African Regional Consultation was held in March 2017 in Port Louis, Mauritius. Dr Heroldt Murangi, Director of NAMCOL, participated.

8TH PAN COMMONWEALTH FORUM (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Mr Heroldt Murangi represented Namibia at PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

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Looking Ahead: 2021

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Publications and Resources

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Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is targeted to authorities responsible for quality assurance and those institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. The TQF facilitates credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Nigeria

Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1960 (suspended 1995–1999)
- **Population:** 173,615,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 64% (2010)
- **GDP:** 2.6% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 152
- **Official language:** English
- **Currency:** Naira

Geography

- **Area:** 923,768 sq km
- **Coastline:** 853 km
- **Capital city:** Abuja
- **Population density (per sq km):** 188

There are nine years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises six years and secondary six, each with two cycles of three years. Some 80 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2009). The school year starts in September.

By October 2013, the National Universities Commission (NUC) had accredited 40 federal universities, 38 state universities and 51 private universities, including four federal universities of technology, three federal universities of agriculture and the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). The longest-established universities are the University of Ibadan (1948), the University of Nigeria (Nsukka, 1960), Ahmadu Bello University (Zaria, 1962), the University of Lagos (1962) and Obafemi Awolowo University (Ile-Ife, 1962). The first state university, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, was founded in 1979 and the first private universities in 1999. Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 72 per cent (2010).

In 1968, Nigeria hosted the 4th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, in Lagos. Commonwealth Education Ministers meet every three years to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Her Excellency Ms Mariam Yalwaji Katagum, Ambassador/Permanent Delegate, Permanent Delegation of Nigeria to UNESCO (Paris), is a member of the COL Board of Governors and serves as the Deputy Chair.

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Africa.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for Nigeria is Mrs M. A. Ameh, Assistant Director, Bilateral Agreements, Commonwealth and African Affairs Branch, Federal Ministry of Education.

NOTABLE MENTION

Professor Olugbemiro Jegede is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Professor Michael Omolewa is a COL Honorary Fellow and former member of the COL Board of Governors.

The late Dr Alhaji Hafiz S. Wali was a COL Honorary Fellow and a member of COL’s Founding Board of Governors.

Dr M. M. Bunza is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.
Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Nigeria is primarily in the areas of higher education, teacher education, technology-enabled learning and technical and vocational skills development.

COL President and CEO, Professor Asha Kanwar, met with the Honourable Minister of Education, Malam Adamu Adamu, and the Vice Chancellor of NOUN, Professor Abdalla Uba Adamu, in late July 2016 to discuss how COL can support the minister’s priority of bringing out-of-school youths back to education. In January 2017, Professor Kanwar delivered the inaugural speech, “Open Educational Resources: An Innovation in Higher Education?” at a two-day open and distance learning (ODL) skills training programme organised by the University of Ibadan, where she also facilitated a technical training session with Professor Olugbemiro Jegede.

TEACHER EDUCATION

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to be able to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.

In June 2017, COL and the National Teachers’ Institute (NTI) in Kaduna jointly held a capacity-building workshop on the Green Teacher programme. The workshop was intended to revive the idea of a Green Teacher programme at NTI, first suggested in 2008. The 31 participants were drawn primarily from NTI’s academic departments but included two representatives of the Federal Ministry of Education and one representative of the Federal Ministry of Environment. The outcome of the workshop was a work plan for the implementation of the Green Teacher programme.

A Materials Development Workshop for the Green Teacher programme was organised by NTI with support from COL. The workshop, held in September 2017, was a follow-on to the COL–NTI capacity-building workshop on the Green Teacher programme held earlier in the year. The main objective of the workshop was to develop modules for the Green Teacher programme. The current round of support for NTI Kaduna is directed towards completion of module development, capacity building for technology-based delivery, and support for the programme, as well as a series of preparatory activities to launch the Green Teacher Nigeria programme.
Skills

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD) initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to improved quality skills training. The use of flexible and blended learning approaches can augment equitable access to quality TVSD. Through TVSD initiative, COL works with organisational partners and governments to create contextualised, high-quality models using educational media and technology to strengthen and expand skills development.

An important component of the programme is the capacity building of partner organisations in course design and materials development. Twenty-nine Nigerian institutions are members of COL’s INVEST Africa network, which is committed to increasing access to high-quality, flexible and blended skills training in support of sustainable livelihoods.

In this triennium, COL developed a set of resources that integrates sustainable development principles into technical and vocational education and training as part of teachers’ capacity building in INVEST Africa partner institutions. In all, 80 staff and managers from 29 Nigerian polytechnics plus officers from the National Board for Technical Education completed the Flexible Skills Development online course during 2015–2017.

Sixteen course plans that integrate the sustainable development principles of economic growth, environmental conservation and social inclusion were developed at a workshop in June 2017, hosted by the Kenya Technical Trainers’ College. The workshop included 30 educators from seven countries — Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia — and resulted in plans for cascading the training to other teachers.

INVEST Nigeria partner meetings were held in 2015 and 2017 at the National Board for Technical Education, in Kaduna. Seventy rectors and representatives from 29 partner institutions attended in 2017. Participants reviewed a flexible and blended (FaB) learning model and its implementation in their institutions. A FaB action plan was developed, and a National eLearning Strategy is being reviewed.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

COL’s Technology-Enabled Learning initiative encourages institutions to integrate technology-enabled learning and OER practices to improve teaching and learning for innovation and skills development. As part of the Advanced ICT Skills Development project, NOUN is working with five other open universities in Africa and Asia to develop courses related to web-application and mobile-application development.

COL supported NOUN in organising a course development workshop in September 2016 to develop two courses for advanced ICT skills development. By the end of 2017, NOUN, with support from COL, had completed the development of two courses: i) Image Design and Animation and ii) Java Programming.

As part of the advanced ICT course development project started with six open universities, these form a collection of courses to be launched by educational institutions in the Commonwealth.

NOUN partnered with COL and the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur to offer its first massive open online course (MOOC). The five-week course, titled The History and Philosophy of Science, ran from June to August 2016. The course included a total of 387 learners, most of whom already had a degree. Approximately 22 per cent of the learners received certificates of participation or competence.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a MOOC for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocation education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February and November–December 2017; 136 teachers from Nigeria participated in both courses.

In September 2017, COL supported NUC in developing and validating a national policy on OER for higher education.
Recognising that the Commonwealth is a diverse and geographically dispersed association, COL has established regional centres to support capacity building in the field. In partnership with NOUN, COL promotes ODL capacity building by supporting the Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning (RETRIDOL) in West Africa. The RETRIDOL mandate includes engaging in and supporting ODL research activities and ODL capacity building while serving as a centre of expertise for Nigeria and West Africa.

COL supported an ODL policy formulation workshop for ten public dual-mode universities in Nigeria. The workshops generated ten draft policy documents.

RETRIDOL conducted a train-the-trainers induction workshop in collaboration with NOUN in Abuja from May–June 2017 to train senior university staff in various components of transformation from conventional to dual-mode universities.

**Regional Centre**

**REgional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Nigeria include:

- Federal Ministry of Education
- National Open University of Nigeria
- National Teachers’ Institute, Kaduna
- National Universities Commission
- Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning

**Special Events**

**2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress**

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The NUC, which in March 2017 had committed to developing a National Policy on OER for Higher Education, had already developed the document by September and shared it at the Congress.

The Africa Regional Consultation was held in Port Louis, Mauritius in March 2017. The Nigerian delegates to the consultation were: Professor Garba Dahuwa Azare, Director General/Chief Executive, National Teachers’ Institute, Nigeria; the Permanent Delegate of Nigeria to UNESCO, Her Excellency Ambassador Mariam Yalwaji Katagum; Mr Imoh Sunday Egbo, Deputy Permanent Delegate, Permanent Delegation of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to UNESCO; Professor Abubakar Adamu Rasheed, Executive Secretary, NUC; and Mr Christopher Jibreel Maiyaki, Director, Executive Secretary’s Office, NUC.
8th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. The Honourable Professor Anthony Gozie Anwukah, Minister of State for Education, Nigeria, participated in the Ministerial Roundtable, where members explored learning for sustainable development. The Nigerian delegation comprised: Her Excellency Ambassador Mariam Yalwaji Katagum; Mr Ibraheem Abdul; Dr Jane-Frances Agbu; Mr Greg Onwodi; Ms Rebecca Ojedele; Mr John Okewole; Mr Adenike Oladipo; and Mr Godswill Obioma.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

Nigeria hosted PCF7 in 2013.

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

• improved sustainable livelihoods;
• increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
• improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to continuing to work with our partners in Nigeria to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


Digital Learning: Reforming Teacher Education to Promote Access, Equity and Quality in Sub-Saharan Africa provides an overview of the present and future impact of digital learning on teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report describes digitally enhanced programme innovations that can be identified in many institutions across the region, as well as three phases to full-scale adoption of new digital technologies.

Gender Profile: Nigeria is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016 is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

The State of Open Universities in the Commonwealth: A Perspective on Performance, Competition and Innovation critically examines specialist ODL universities in the Commonwealth.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Key Facts

- Joined Commonwealth: 2009
- Population: 11,777,000 (2013)
- Primary enrolment: 99%
- GDP: 2.2% p.a. 1990–2013
- UN HDI world ranking: 151
- Official language: Kinyarwanda, French, English, Swahili
- Currency: Rwanda franc

Geography

- Area: 26,338 sq km
- Coastline: none
- Capital city: Kigali

- Population density (per sq km): 474

Public spending on education was 5.1 per cent of GDP in 2013. There are nine years of compulsory education, starting at age seven. Primary school comprises six years and secondary six, with two cycles of three years. The school year starts in January. Some 37 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2009). In October 2008, the government decided to change the medium of education from French to English.

The National University of Rwanda was established in 1963 with faculties of medicine and social sciences and a teacher-training college. Faculties of law, science and technology, and the National Institute of Education followed, all now located in Butare, in the south. Among other important tertiary institutions are the Kigali Health Institute, the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology, the University of Kibungo, the Rwanda Institute of Administration and Management, and the School of Finance and Banking. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 0.70:1 (2011). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 77 per cent (2010).

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL Board of Governors

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as regional representative for Africa.

COL Focal Point

The COL Focal Point for Rwanda is Mr Théogène Kayumba, Director of Information and Communication Technology, Ministry of Education.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Rwanda is primarily in the areas of higher education, Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F), and open and distance learning (ODL).

COL President and CEO, Professor Asha Kanwar delivered a Keynote at the Distance Education and Teacher Education in Africa Conference on August 23, 2017. Following the conference, Professor Kanwar met with the Honourable Dr Papias Malimba Musafiri, Minister of Education in Rwanda to brief him about COL’s work in the country.
**Higher Education**

The Higher Education initiative of COL supports policy makers, institutions and leaders in harnessing the full potential of ODL through the use of technology, which in turn enables the institutions to cope with the increasing demand for quality higher education in the face of rising costs and diminishing public funding.

COL’s Education Specialist: Higher Education visited Rwanda and held meetings with senior staff of the University of Rwanda, including the vice chancellor, in November 2015. The meetings have led to increased collaboration between COL and the University of Rwanda and contributed towards the development of policy frameworks and systems to strengthen ODL offerings and increase access to higher education in Rwanda.

The University of Rwanda has developed an open, distance and eLearning policy that will assist in strengthening course offerings and increase access to higher education. The review and update of the draft national ODL policy was completed in 2017 to include OER provisions and sent to Rwanda’s Ministry of Education. COL supported the University of Kibungo in developing an institutional ODL policy and implementation plan.

COL conducted and published a baseline study of the status of ODL in Rwanda. The data gathered in the study are vital to the planning of projects and initiatives that support the use of open, distance and eLearning in the country. Having a deep, clear picture of current developments is also critical for the success of COL’s engagement and will ensure that the proposed projects are conceptualised based on an accurate understanding of the country’s context and what is available.

COL organised and facilitated a learner support project preparation workshop for African universities that are introducing ODL. This project aims to improve learner retention and completion rates. The workshop was attended by representatives from Rwandan universities.

**Lifelong Learning for Farmers**

COL’s L3F programme helps rural communities find appropriate technology-based solutions to improve their livelihoods. Additionally, L3F empowers vulnerable rural women and their families to gain knowledge, create their own self-directed learning process, organise themselves to solve the challenges of food security and improve their living conditions.

COL Vice President, Dr K. Balasubramanian, participated in the 7th Africa Agricultural Science Week at the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa, held in Kigali in June 2016. He presented a study and spoke on “Smallholders’ Transformation to Business Enterprise in Africa: A Reality or a Mental Illusion?” The study was based on L3F, which is implemented by the Kenya AIDS Intervention and Prevention Project Group and Makerere University, Uganda. Dr Balasubramanian spoke with representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture about the possibility of replicating the L3F model, which has been adopted in ten other Commonwealth countries, in Rwanda.

In August 2016, COL initiated discussions with Rwanda’s Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources to introduce the L3F initiative in the country. Through the L3F model, COL intends to support Rwanda in sustainable and gender-responsive agricultural development.

**Technology-Enabled Learning**

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocation education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. In all, 1,319 teachers from Rwanda participated in both courses.
Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partnerships support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partnerships include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Rwanda include:
- Ministry of Education
- University of Kibungo
- University of Rwanda

Special Events

2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The African Regional Consultation was held in Port Louis, Mauritius in March 2017.

8th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Rwanda’s delegates to PCF8 were Mr Bernard Nkuyubwatsi and Mr Evode Mukama.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.
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COL looks forward to working with Rwanda to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


Boys’ Underperformance in Education: Revisiting the Issue in the Commonwealth, published by COL in 2017, follows up on a 2006 report and addresses the factors that are critical to understanding boys’ underperformance in Commonwealth countries since 2006. It contains case studies from nine countries, including Rwanda.

Digital Learning: Reforming Teacher Education to Promote Access, Equity and Quality in Sub-Saharan Africa provides an overview of the present and future impact of digital learning on teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report describes digitally enhanced programme innovations that can be identified in many institutions across the region, as well as three phases to full-scale adoption of new digital technologies.

Gender Profile: Rwanda is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

The Journal of Learning for Development in 2016 published the study “A Critical Look at the Policy Environment for Opening up Public Higher Education in Rwanda.” The findings and recommendations are particularly important for policy makers and institutional leaders who are interested in opening up higher education in Rwanda and other settings.
Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

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Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1976
- **Population:** 93,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 94% (2012)
- **GDP:** 2.3% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 63
- **Official languages:** Creole, English, French
- **Currency:** Seychelles rupee

Geography

- **Area:** 455 sq km
- **Coastline:** 491 km
- **Capital city:** Victoria
- **Population density (per sq km):** 204

Public spending on education was four per cent of GDP in 2011. There are ten years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises six years and secondary five, the latter having cycles of three and two years. Some 94 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2010). The school year starts in January. Teaching is in Creole, French and English.

The University of Seychelles is the primary institution of higher education in the country and was established in 2009. It offers programmes in education, communication, technology and business programmes. It also hosts the James Michel Blue Economy Research Institute. Seychelles Polytechnic opened in January 1983 on the island of Mahé. It offers courses in business and the visual arts to the diploma level and has been providing first-year degree courses in conjunction with the University of Manchester, UK, since 2001. Seychelles Institute of Technology was established in Mahé in 2005–2006, incorporating the technical studies programmes of the polytechnic. Other important tertiary institutions include the National Institute of Education, the National Institute for Health and Social Studies, the Agricultural and Horticultural Training Centre, the Maritime Training Centre and Seychelles Tourism Academy. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 3.40:1 (2011). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 99 per cent (2010).

Source: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

**COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Africa.

**COL FOCAL POINT**

The COL Focal Point for Seychelles is Ms Marie-Reine Hoareau, Technical Advisor, International Relations, Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development.

**NOTABLE MENTION**

The President of the Republic of Seychelles, His Excellency Danny Faure, is a former member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Africa.
**Strategic Plan 2015–2021**

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Seychelles is primarily in the areas of higher education, through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.

**Education**

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

COL supported a review of the organisational structures, policies and legislation of the tertiary education sector of Seychelles in 2015–2016. This saw the completion of a review of the Tertiary Education Act and related Seychelles legislation and the submission of a report to the Tertiary Education Commission.

**TEACHER EDUCATION**

In partnership with the University of Mauritius, the capacity of 13 staff from the Seychelles Institute of Teacher Education was strengthened in the design, development and implementation of blended learning. As a result, four courses that are part of the Diploma in Education were developed for delivery in 2017 to train 326 in-service teachers in Seychelles and eventually reach 6,520 students every year.

**VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

Strengthening and improving the quality and scope of existing tertiary institutions is key for small states. Initiated by ministers of education of developing small states of the Commonwealth, the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) continues to support the collaborative development and sharing of open educational resources (OER) to promote learning for sustainable development.

In August 2015, a workshop was held in Seychelles on Teaching with Technology for In-Service Teachers in Seychelles secondary schools. In October 2015, a five-day in-service teacher training workshop was held for the Seychelles Institute of Teacher Education (SITE) to build the capacity of teacher educators in massive open online course (MOOC) technology and instructional design for integrating multimedia in teaching and learning; 22 participants attended.

The online course Developing and Teaching Online Courses, which started in October 2015 with 33 participants in Seychelles, was completed in December 2015. In December 2016, a workshop on interactive materials development was held at the University of Mauritius for SITE; 13 participants attended.

COL and the University of Seychelles’ James Michel Blue Economy Research Institute recently collaborated on the development of a new online course titled “Understanding the Blue Economy,” which is offered by the University of Seychelles and available to learners globally. COL’s President launched the course at the institute in March 2017. The VUSSC-developed ten-week course attracted 243 participants from 47 countries, including eight academics from the University of Seychelles.

**Gender**

With COL’s support, the Seychelles Institute of Art and Design, a VUSSC partner institution, developed a draft institutional gender policy.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.
COL’s partners in Seychelles include:

- Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development
- Seychelles Institute of Art & Design
- University of Seychelles

**Special Events**

**2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress**

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Africa Regional Consultation on OER was held in Mauritius in March 2017 and attended by COL’s Focal Point for Seychelles, Marie-Reine Hoareau.

**8th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF8)**

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in open and distance learning (ODL) to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in November 2016. COL supported the participation of the Honourable Macsuzy Mondon and Mr Justin Valentin at PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

**Looking Ahead: 2021**

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COL looks forward to working with the Republic of Seychelles to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
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Sierra Leone

Key Facts

- Joined Commonwealth: 1961
- Population: 6,092,000 (2013)
- Primary enrolment: 99%
- GDP: 0.5% p.a. 1990–2013
- UN HDI world ranking: 183
- Official language: English
- Currency: Leone

Geography

- Area: 71,740 sq km
- Coastline: 402 km
- Capital city: Freetown
- Population density (per sq km): 85

Public spending on education was three per cent of GDP in 2012. There are six years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises six years and secondary six, with two three-year cycles in each.

The principal tertiary institutions are Fourah Bay College, in Freetown, and Njala University, with campuses in Bo and Njala. These institutions, together with Milton Margai College of Education and Technology (Freetown), Eastern Polytechnic (main campus in Kenema) and other independent tertiary institutions, are all affiliated with the University of Sierra Leone. The country also has a number of teacher-training and technical/vocational institutions providing certificate and diploma courses. Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 59 per cent (2010).

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL Board of Governors

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as regional representative for Africa.

COL Focal Point

The COL Focal Point for Sierra Leone is Ms Musu Gorvie, Deputy Director, Higher Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Sierra Leone is primarily in the areas of teacher education and tertiary education.

Education

TEACHER EDUCATION

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.
Freetown Teachers College requested support from COL to train junior secondary school teachers in order to improve the quality of learning in schools. A project design workshop took place in June 2017 with 21 participants, facilitated by a consultant provided by COL. A work plan for the implementation of an integrated in-service training programme was developed.

COL is currently providing support to the Freetown Teachers College to implement a school-based in-service teacher training programme for junior secondary school teachers in Sierra Leone, under COL’s Teacher Futures programme. Through this programme, COL partners with teacher education institutions to adapt various technologies that support the professional development of teachers. In-service teachers can learn on the go and engage with peers in both local and international networks and communities of practice. During November–December 2017, a COL consultant conducted a baseline study of 13 junior secondary schools’ information and communication technologies (ICT) infrastructure, their e-readiness and teachers’ capacity for eLearning. A survey administered as part of the study revealed that despite the lack of infrastructure, most teachers showed readiness for eLearning.

COL welcomed teacher educators from Njala University at a five-day training workshop on ICT in teaching and learning, held at the Singapore National Institute of Education in May 2016. The training supported teacher-educators in integrating ICT into their programmes as a key strategy to improve quality in education.

Skills

Technology-Enabled Learning

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Three teachers from Sierra Leone participated in both courses.

Regional Centre

Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning

COL and the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) work collaboratively to support the Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning (RETRIDOL). The RETRIDOL mandate includes engaging in and supporting open and distance learning (ODL) research activities, addressing capacity-building needs in ODL and serving as a centre for expertise in ODL for Nigeria and West Africa.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partnerships support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partnerships include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Sierra Leone include:

- Freetown Teachers College
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

Special Events

2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and
equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The African Regional Consultation was held in Port Louis, Mauritius in March 2017. Mr Sahr Fillie, Principal of Freetown Teachers College, attended.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. COL supported the attendance of Kaprie J. G. Thoronka from Sierra Leone at PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

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COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


**Gender Profile: Sierra Leone** is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

**Guidelines for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of MOOCs** provides guidance to four main stakeholder groups: governments, MOOC providers, learners and accreditation agencies. These guidelines are designed to support decision-making about the sorts of quality measures that are appropriate in different contexts.

**Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming** is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

**Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries** is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries about how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

**Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework** is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

**Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017**, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

**Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016** is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

**Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation**, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.
Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is intended for authorities responsible for quality assurance and for institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. Its objective is to facilitate credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
South Africa

Key Facts

Joined Commonwealth: **1931**
(Statute of Westminster; left in 1961, rejoined in 1994)

Population: **52,776,000** (2013)

Primary enrolment: **85%**

GDP: **0.9%** p.a. 1990–2013

UN HDI world ranking: **118**

Official languages: Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Sotho, SiSwati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu

Currency: Rand

Geography

Area: **1,221,038 sq km**

Coastline: **2,800 km**

Capital city: Pretoria

Population density (per sq km): **43**

Public spending on education was 6.6 per cent of GDP in 2014. There are nine years of compulsory education, starting at age seven. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary five, the latter having cycles of two and three years.

In January 2012, the Council on Higher Education recognised 23 public universities, including two concentrating on distance education and six universities of technology. It had also registered 88 private higher education institutions, and a further 27 were provisionally registered. There are some 892,940 students in public higher education institutions, approximately 138,610 of whom are postgraduate students (2010). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 98 per cent (2007).

South Africa hosted the 16th Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers in Cape Town in December 2006. Commonwealth Education Ministers meet every three years to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest.

**SOURCE:** [http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries](http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries)

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Professor Narend Baijnath, Chief Executive Officer, Council on Higher Education, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the representative for South Africa.

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Africa.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for South Africa is Ms Trudi van Wyk, Director, Career Development and Open Learning, Department of Higher Education and Training.

NOTABLE MENTIONS

Ms Jenny Glennie is a COL Honorary Fellow and former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Professor Veronica McKay is a former COL Adviser.

The Honourable Naledi Pandor and Professor N. Barney Pityana are COL Honorary Fellows.

Dr Ihron L. Rensburg is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Mr John Samuel is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.
As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in South Africa is in the areas of higher education, open/innovative schooling, teacher education, open and distance learning (ODL) and technology-enabled learning.

**Education**

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Higher Education initiative supports policy makers, institutions and leaders in harnessing the full potential of ODL through the use of technology. This initiative in turn enables them to cope with the increasing demand for quality higher education in the face of rising costs and diminishing public funding. COL partners with institutions in South Africa, including the University of South Africa (UNISA), the University of Cape Town, the University of Pretoria and the South African Institute for Distance Education (Saide), to develop and share ODL knowledge and resources. South African experts have been commissioned by COL to provide technical advice to institutions not just in Africa but also in Asia and the Caribbean.

As part of COL’s efforts to increase access to higher education in dual-mode institutions in Africa’s Commonwealth Member States, COL brought together representatives from 13 universities for a workshop in Pretoria, South Africa to strengthen learner support. The workshop focused on introducing ODL and learner support to faculty members who were new to ODL. It also covered the implementation of an appropriate learner support system at their respective institutions.

A video titled “How Technology Developments Are Driving Change in Higher Education” was produced for presentation at the Southern African Regional Universities Association Vice Chancellors Leadership Dialogue, in Cape Town in September 2015.

In October 2015, COL President and CEO, Professor Asha Kanwar, spoke on the topic of “Growing Capacities for Sustainable Distance eLearning Provision” at the first plenary panel of the 26th International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) World Conference, hosted by UNISA in Sun City. COL also provided support to the conference. Following the conference, Professor Kanwar spoke at the High-Level Policy Forum, organised by ICDE in partnership with UNESCO, COL and the Open Education Consortium.

In March 2016 at UNISA in Pretoria, the Youth Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Open Campus of the University of the West Indies and COL, through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), convened a meeting on advancing youth work education and training. The meeting, which included representatives from a number of South African universities and organisations, involved discussions on a proposal to create a Commonwealth Consortium on Youth Work Qualifications and was held to coincide with the Commonwealth Conference on Youth Work.

At the invitation of UNISA, COL had convened a team of international experts to conduct a quality audit. COL has been requested to carry out a similar exercise during 2018.

**OPEN/INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING**

Open schooling is increasingly recognised as a viable solution to the growing demand for equitable access to secondary education. This strategy is especially useful for girls and marginalised groups, particularly in remote locations. COL’s Open/Innovative Schooling initiative focuses on training teachers in eLearning, using open educational resources (OER), improving the management of open schools and supporting the use of appropriate technologies.

In January 2017, COL sponsored a workshop on the topic of mobile technology-enabled learning for the African chapter of the Commonwealth Open Schooling Association. The workshop was held in Johannesburg and focused on the use of mobile phones in the development of learning content. Attendees came from eight Commonwealth African countries, including South Africa.
**TEACHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.

The Ministry of Education in South Africa has identified institutional partners to implement COL’s school-based teacher development programme. Discussions are at an advanced stage on a partnership between COL and the University of Fort Hare under COL’s Teacher Futures, with support from the national Department of Basic Education in Pretoria and the Eastern Cape Department of Education.

COL welcomed teacher educators from South Africa’s North-West University at a five-day training workshop on information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching and learning, at the Singapore National Institute of Education in May 2016. The training workshop supported teacher educators in integrating ICT into their programmes as a key strategy to improve quality in education.

**Skills**

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

COL encourages the integration of technology-enabled learning supported by OER policies and practices to improve teaching and learning for skills development. COL is working with the Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning at the University of Cape Town (UCT) to promote a digital education environment in Commonwealth nations. The Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) programme engages with governments, educational institutions, teachers and civil society organisations to assess digital education competencies, develop learning materials around digital education skills, provide training opportunities for teachers, and monitor student achievements and their relationships to livelihood. UCT has developed the conceptual framework and seven modules for C-DELTA.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. In all, 132 teachers from South Africa participated in both courses.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in South Africa include:
- Department of Higher Education and Training
- University of Cape Town
- University of Fort Hare
- University of South Africa

**Regional Centre**

Recognising that the Commonwealth is a diverse and geographically dispersed association, COL supports a regional centre in Southern Africa called the Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE), in partnership with the Botswana Ministry of Education. Hosted by Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (now Botswana Open University), the centre undertakes and promotes training and development in ODL, supports research activities in ODL and increases the provision of quality distance education in Southern Africa.
Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The African Regional Consultation was held in Port Louis, Mauritius in March 2017. Ms Jenny Glennie (Saide), Dr Cheryl Hodgkinson-Williams (UCT) and Dr Mark Horner (Siyavula Foundation) attended.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women and a South African, gave a keynote speech at the conference. Participants from South Africa included Dr Paul Prinsloo, Ms Cheryl Lee Brown, Ms Shafika Isaacs, Ms Happiness Mzikazi Ntuli and Mr Hendrik Kruger.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

South Africa hosted PCF2 in 2002.

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved sustainable livelihoods;
- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with South Africa to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


**Digital Learning: Reforming Teacher Education to Promote Access, Equity and Quality in Sub-Saharan Africa** provides an overview of the present and future impact of digital learning on teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report describes digitally enhanced programme innovations that can be identified in many institutions across the region, as well as three phases to full-scale adoption of new digital technologies.

**Gender Profile: South Africa** is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

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**Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries** is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries of how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

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**Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation**, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

**Open Universities in the Commonwealth: At a Glance (2017)** is a report compiling the responses to a COL-initiated survey of 27 open universities in the Commonwealth.

**The State of Open Universities in the Commonwealth: A Perspective on Performance, Competition and Innovation** critically examines specialist ODL universities in the Commonwealth.

**Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET** (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1961
- **Population:** 49,253,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 98%
- **GDP:** 2.3% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 159
- **Official languages:** Kiswahili, English
- **Currency:** Tanzanian shilling (TSh)

Geography

- **Area:** 945,090 sq km
- **Coastline:** 1,420 km
- **Capital city:** Dodoma
- **Population density (per sq km):** 52

Public spending on education was six per cent of GDP in 2010. There are seven years of compulsory education, starting at age seven. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary six, the latter having cycles of four and two years. Some 81 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2009). The school year starts in January.

The principal public universities are: the University of Dar es Salaam (established in 1970); Sokoine University of Agriculture, Morogoro (1984; previously the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry of the University of Dar es Salaam); and the Open University of Tanzania (OVT; established for distance education in 1995). There are a number of private universities, including Hubert Kairuki Memorial University, Dar es Salaam (1997, with faculties of medicine and nursing) and the International Medical and Technological University, Dar es Salaam (1995). The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 0.50:1 (2012). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 74.6 per cent (2010).

Source: [http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries](http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries)

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Africa.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for Tanzania is Dr Fidelice M. S. Mafumiko, Vice Principal/Deputy Director, Institute of Adult Education.

NOTABLE MENTION

Professor Tolly S. A. Mbwette is a COL Honorary Fellow, Honorary COL Chair and former COL Adviser.

Dr Penina Mlama is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Professor Geoffrey R. V. Mmari is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL's Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Tanzania is primarily in the areas of gender, Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F), open educational resources (OER), teacher education, technical and vocational skills development and gender, and the schooling and skilling of girls.
**Education**

**TEACHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of Member States to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes. As a part of the initiative, COL is supporting the integration of Open Resources for English Language Teaching (ORELT) in Tanzania. ORELT are learning materials collaboratively developed to support the classroom activities of teachers in junior secondary schools. They are open-content, multimedia resources in online and traditional text formats.

Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE) is part of a collaborative project that includes Egerton University, Kenya, and Busitema University, Uganda, in the development of a Post-Graduate Diploma/Certificate in ICT Integration for Teachers. In August 2016, three teacher educators from DUCE participated in the development of the programme. DUCE held a training workshop with 12 teacher educators involved in the adaptation of nine existing modules and the development of one new module. The Post-Graduate Certificate is being finalised.

Teacher educators from Tanzania’s Dar es Salaam University participated in a five-day training workshop on information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching and learning, at the Singapore National Institute of Education (NIE) in May 2016. The workshop, which was supported by COL, trained teacher educators in integrating ICT into their programmes to improve quality in education.

Three East African universities, including Dar es Salaam University College of Education, in August 2016 launched a project called DigiTeacher to tackle the challenges arising from the integration of ICT in teaching and learning in the region.

**Skills**

**LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS**

COL’s L3F initiative empowers farming communities through the use of open and distance learning (ODL) in skills ranging from farming practices to financial literacy. In Tanzania, COL is working with the Matumaini Mapya Savings and Credit Cooperative (MMSACCO) to provide training to approximately 6,700 learners on topics such as quality farming, financial literacy and small-scale enterprise development.

COL has helped MMSACCO to consolidate and strengthen its partnership with additional partners, such as Kasibante FM Radio, OUT and the Bukoba Municipal Council (BMC). MMSACCO was able to hold meetings with at least 21 policy makers and senior management to discuss the adoption of L3F by their institutions/departments. As an outcome of those meetings, MMSACCO is currently involved in building the capacity of BMC’s Ward Community Development Officers and Agriculture and Livestock Extension Officers as L3F facilitators. Kasibante FM radio is currently used in farmer education on sustainable agriculture through weekly programmes aired at times convenient for the farmers. The radio has coverage throughout the Kagera Region; hence, the educational programme reaches households beyond those directly enrolled in L3F.

L3F partners from Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania and Uganda visited a SACCO in Turiani, Tanzania. The SACCO manager reported that the performance of the table-banking groups has been exceptional. They borrow predominantly for productive purposes in agriculture and livestock, and the repayment rates to the SACCO are very high.

The Tanzanian Federation of Cooperatives (TFC) and Matumaini Mapya organised a workshop for L3F partners from Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania and Uganda to consolidate their activities for the 2012–2015 period and plan their activities for 2015–2017. During the inaugural workshop, TFC indicated that the L3F approach will be integrated in the proposed National Cooperative Bank of Tanzania. A mobile web-based application called M-Kilimo was developed with Matumaini Mapya, Tanzania, through
which 1,500 participants, mostly women, registered for mobile-based learning in the latter half of 2017.

COL committed additional funds in November 2017 to support L3F in the Kagere Region. The funds will enable COL’s partner organisation Matumaini Mapya to operationalise the use of the mobile learning platform that was established in June 2017 with COL’s support. The platform, which was officially inaugurated in November 2017, will enable Matumaini Mapya to reach at least 5,000 farmers every year.

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

OER play an important role in ensuring equitable access to quality learning materials across the Commonwealth and beyond. COL is committed to developing and promoting the use of OER amongst institutions, organisations and governments through capacity-building and advocacy programmes and the development of OER policies. During 2015–2016, COL supported OUT in developing OER policy frameworks. A workshop for the development of advanced ICT courses was held at OUT in July 2016. OUT completed the development of two courses related to the Advanced ICT Course Development project.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. In all, 50 teachers from Tanzania participated in both cohorts of the TEL MOOC.

**TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

The Technical and Vocational Skills Development initiative supports partners in harnessing technology so as to increase access to improved quality skills training. A key aspect of the programme is the capacity building of partner organisations in course design and materials development. In Tanzania, the Mbeya University of Science and Technology (MUST) is a member of COL’s INVEST Africa network, which is committed to increasing access to high-quality, flexible and blended skills training in support of sustainable livelihoods.

In this triennium, COL developed a set of resources that integrates sustainable development principles into technical and vocational education and training as part of teachers’ capacity building in INVEST Africa partner institutions. Sixteen course plans that integrate the sustainable development principles of economic growth, environmental conservation and social inclusion were developed at a workshop in June 2017, hosted by the Kenya Technical Trainers’ College. The workshop included 30 educators from seven countries — Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia — and resulted in plans for cascading the training to other teachers.

**Gender**

Gender is a cross-cutting theme in all of COL’s work. COL aims to harness the potential of ODL to expand access to education and improve learning outcomes for girls/women and boys/men by integrating a gender perspective into ODL practice and delivery. The focus is on building capacity for gender mainstreaming among partners in both formal and non-formal education. COL is working with MUST to develop an institutional gender policy. COL has reviewed and provided feedback on a draft institutional gender policy for MUST. The university has developed roadmaps for gender mainstreaming using COL’s Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming, has completed the scorecard and has developed strategies for mainstreaming gender.

**GIRLS INSPIRE**

GIRLS Inspire is a partnership between COL and community organisations in Bangladesh, India, Mozambique, Pakistan and Tanzania to address the barriers keeping girls and women from full participation in society. Because girls are critical agents for social change and global development, closing the gender gap in education, economic activity and health during adolescence will significantly increase national economic growth and well-being. But barriers such as child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), distance to school, security concerns, cultural values and the costs of schooling all prevent girls and women from participating in educational opportunities. GIRLS Inspire’s three-year project, funded by the Government of Canada, focuses on preventing CEFM...
in Tanzania through open, distance and technology-based education. Ending CEFM is crucial to Tanzania achieving eight of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In partnership with the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) and Kiota Women’s Health and Development (KIWOHEDE), the GIRLS Inspire project is being implemented in three regions where the prevalence of child marriage is 40–51%.

A baseline study determined that 66 per cent of participants did not know of an institution in or near their community that offered open, distance and technology-based education to girls. To begin addressing this gap, IAE and KIWOHEDE are working directly with communities to shift perspectives on CEFM and girls’ education, paving the way to reintegrate women and girls into education through ODL. At least 1,400 women and girls have registered for schooling and skills training. Through KIWOHEDE, 238 women and girls have commenced training through satellite centres.

Thirty-six workshops and other events organised in this triennium have addressed CEFM and the importance of girls’ education. So far, these have reached at least 712 key stakeholders, including government officials, community leaders and elders. Three advocacy videos were developed and are currently in use. In addition, ceremonies and celebrations were held in Bunju, Dar es Salaam and Shinyanga on International Day of the Girl Child (2016) and in Dar es Salaam on International Women’s Day (2017).

IAE and KIWOHEDE have established new social media presences using multimedia on Twitter and Instagram. They have also used capacity-building exercises to train staff in multimedia development and topics such as child protection and the reunification of vulnerable children.

Eighty staff have been trained in CEFM issues, child protection policies, monitoring and evaluation, multimedia development, and technology integration. Furthermore, a support group called Community Champions for Change has been trained to build sustainability at the grassroots level. IAE and KIWOHEDE each developed an organisational gender policy as well as gender-sensitive learning materials, which had not existed prior to the GIRLS Inspire project. Beyond their own organisations, they engaged in 12 consultative meetings with national, regional and local stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, UNESCO and the Prime Minister’s Office – Local Government Authority. Recent press coverage indicates that the project has gained attention among key stakeholders.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Tanzania include:

- Institute of Adult Education
- Kiota Women Health and Development Organization
- Matumaini Mapya Savings and Credit Cooperatives
- Mbeya University of Science and Technology
- Ministry for Education, Science and Technology
- Open University of Tanzania

**Special Events**

**2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress**

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing...
sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Africa Regional Consultation was held in Port Louis, Mauritius in March 2017. Dr Kassimu Nihuka, Deputy Director Responsible for Academic, IAE, attended.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

• improved sustainable livelihoods;
• increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
• improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Tanzania to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


Digital Learning: Reforming Teacher Education to Promote Access, Equity and Quality in Sub-Saharan Africa provides an overview of the present and future impact of digital learning on teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report describes digitally enhanced programme innovations that can be identified in many institutions across the region, as well as three phases to full-scale adoption of new digital technologies.

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Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

The State of Open Universities in the Commonwealth: A Perspective on Performance, Competition and Innovation critically examines specialist ODL universities in the Commonwealth.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Key Facts

 Joined Commonwealth: 1962
 Population: 37,579,000 (2013)
 Primary enrolment: 91%
 GDP: 3.3% p.a. 1990–2013
 UN HDI world ranking: 164
 Official languages: English, Kiswahili
 Currency: Uganda shilling

Geography

 Area: 236,000 sq km
 including 36,330 sq km of inland water
 Coastline: none
 Capital city: Kampala
 Population density (per sq km): 207

Public spending on education was three per cent of GDP in 2012. There are seven years of primary education, starting at age six, followed by six years of secondary, the latter having cycles of four and two years. The government phased in free primary schooling from 1997 and free secondary from 2007. Some 25 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2010). The school year starts in February.

Makerere University (1922) and Mbarara University of Science and Technology (1989) are the longest-established public universities. More recent ones include Kyambogo University (2003), Gulu University (2004) and Busitema University (2007). The principal private universities include Busoga University (1999), Islamic University in Uganda (1988), Kampala International University (2001), Uganda Christian University (1997) and Uganda Martyrs University (1993).

The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 0.30:1 (2011). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 87 per cent (2010).

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Africa.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for Uganda is Ms Jolly Uzamu-kunda, Assistant Commissioner, Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Sports.

NOTABLE MENTION

Professor Julius N. Odurkene is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Uganda is primarily in the areas of higher education, Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F), teacher education, and technical and vocational skills development.
**Education**

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Higher Education initiative works to develop human resources for social and economic development across the Commonwealth. It supports higher education institutions and ministries in capacity building, policy development and curriculum reform. COL worked with Busitema University to develop an institutional quality assurance policy and supported the university in the development of institutional policies for open and distance learning (ODL).

**TEACHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of Member States to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.

As a part of the initiative, COL offers the Commonwealth Certificate for Teacher ICT Integration (CCTI), which prepares teachers to integrate a range of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the classroom to enhance students’ learning experience. It also increases school managers’ involvement in the ICT implementation process. In Uganda, 30 teachers have successfully completed the CCTI programme.

COL is also supporting the integration of Open Resources for English Language Teaching (ORELT) in Uganda. ORELT are learning materials collaboratively developed to support the classroom activities of teachers in junior secondary schools. They are open-content, multimedia resources in online and traditional text formats. A study was conducted to evaluate the impact of ORELT use in three schools in Uganda. More than 2,800 students were found to be benefiting from exposure to ORELT materials in the three schools.

Teacher educators from Busitema University participated in a five-day training workshop on ICT in teaching and learning, at the Singapore National Institute of Education (NIE) in May 2016. The workshop, which was supported by COL, trained teacher educators in integrating ICT into their programmes to improve quality in education.

In August 2016, three East African universities, including the Dar es Salaam University College of Education, Tanzania, launched a project called DigiTeacher to address the challenge of low capacity in the integration of ICT in teaching and learning in the region.

**Skills**

**LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS**

COL’s L3F empowers farming communities through the use of ODL and flexible and blended learning. The L3F initiative has been active in Uganda for more than seven years. One of the key partners in the L3F programme in Uganda is the Agricultural Innovation System Brokerage Association (AGINSBA). AGINSBA developed the L3F Mobile Learning Platform, which has served as a strong community of practice and has contributed to upscaling L3F activities in Uganda and other East African countries. AGINSBA, in partnership with the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at Makerere University, is also developing high-quality ODL resources for farmers. Approximately 17,000 farmers have been reached through L3F learning resources directly and indirectly across 80 districts of Uganda.

Makerere University has developed business plans for savings and credit cooperatives (SACCOs) established under L3F, and these plans are being converted into course materials for members. L3F partners from Uganda visited the SACCO in Turiani, Tanzania. The SACCO manager reported that the performance of the table-banking groups had been exceptional. They borrowed predominantly for productive purposes in agriculture and livestock, and the repayment rates to the SACCO were very high.

The Tanzanian Federation of Cooperatives (TFC) and Matumaini Mapya, Tanzania organised a workshop for L3F partners from Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania and Uganda to consolidate their activities for the 2012–2015 period and plan their activities for 2015–2017.
A mobile web-based platform called m-Omulimisa, developed by Makerere University with COL support, has reached 15,300 farmers in Uganda. In the last quarter of 2017, COL committed further funds to support L3F in Uganda and enable Makerere University and its partner, AGINSBA, to scale up L3F to other macro-level institutions. Already, the Uganda Christian University and World Vision Uganda have institutionalised L3F and are using m-Omulimisa in their community outreach programmes.

**TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

The Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD) initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to improved quality skills training. A key aspect of the programme is the capacity building of partner organisations in course design and materials development. In Uganda, Makerere University Business School (MUBS) is a member of COL’s INVEST Africa network, which is committed to increasing access to high-quality, flexible and blended skills training in support of sustainable livelihoods.

Through the TVSD initiative, COL facilitated a workshop to introduce the INVEST Africa partnership and the flexible and blended model of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to 33 potential partner institutions and TVET system stakeholders in September 2015. More than 200 teachers, including teachers from MUBS, were trained in instructional design for flexible and blended learning.

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

COL’s Technology-Enabled Learning initiative aims to encourage more institutions to integrate technology-enabled learning and open educational resources (OER) practices to improve teaching and learning for innovation and skills development. COL organised a workshop on Developing Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL) Policy at Uganda Management Institute (UMI), Kampala in November 2017. The workshop was facilitated by COL’s Education Specialist: eLearning. With the active involvement of UMI’s internal stakeholders, a draft TEL policy was developed.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017; seven participants from Uganda took the TEL MOOC in November–December.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Uganda include:

- Agricultural Innovation System Brokerage Association
- Busitema University
- KampaBits
- Kyambogo University
- Makerere University
- Ministry of Education and Sports
- Siaya SEED Sains and Credit Cooperative
- Uganda Management Institute
Special Events

2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The African Regional Consultation was held in Port Louis, Mauritius in March 2017. Mr Lyazi Robinson Nsumba, Director Basic and Secondary Education, Ministry of Education and Sports, participated.

8th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. The Uganda delegation to the PCF8 comprised Mr Moses Muhwezi, Ms Carol Seera, Mr Samuel Ndeda Siminyu, Mr Moses Tenywa and Mr James Ssenabulya.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, open and distance learning, access and equity, teacher education, and OER. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved sustainable livelihoods;
- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Uganda to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


**Digital Learning: Reforming Teacher Education to Promote Access, Equity and Quality in Sub-Saharan Africa** provides an overview of the present and future impact of digital learning on teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report describes digitally enhanced programme innovations that can be identified in many institutions across the region, as well as three phases to full-scale adoption of new digital technologies.

**Gender Profile: Uganda** is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

**Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming** is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

**Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries** is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries of how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

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For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
**Key Facts**

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1964
- **Population:** 14,539,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 94%
- **GDP:** 2.0% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 141
- **Official languages:** English
- **Currency:** Kwacha

**Geography**

- **Area:** 752,614 sq km including 36,330 sq km of inland water
- **Coastline:** none
- **Capital city:** Lusaka
- **Population density (per sq km):** 22

Public spending on education was one per cent of GDP in 2012. There are seven years of compulsory education, starting at age seven. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary five, the latter having cycles of two and three years. Some 53 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2012).

Public universities include the University of Zambia (established in Lusaka in 1965), Copperbelt University (Kitwe, 1986) and Mulungushi University (Kabwe, 2008). There are a number of private universities, including Zambia Open University (Lusaka, 2004) and Cavendish University (Lusaka, 2004). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 74 per cent (2010).

**SOURCE:** http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

**COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

The Honourable Dr Unity Dow, Minister of Basic Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Africa.

**COL FOCAL POINT**

The COL Focal Point for Zambia is Ms Bridget Moya, Acting Director, Open and Distance Education, Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education.

**Strategic Plan 2015–2021**

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’S work in Zambia is primarily in the areas of higher education, open/innovative schooling and technical and vocational skills development.

**Education**

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Education Specialist: Higher Education visited Zambia in November 2017 and in collaboration with the University of Zambia organised a project design workshop, with participants from the Ministry of General Education, the Zambian Qualifications Authority, the Higher Education Authority, Copperbelt University, Zambian Christian University, Zambian Open University, Texila American University, Zambia...
College of Distance Education and Mulungushi University. A total of 34 participants attended.

A policy for open and distance learning (ODL) was completed for the University of Zambia with COL’s support. The policy will help guide the university as it manages an increasing number of students accessing university education through distance learning.

**OPEN/INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING**

Open/innovative schooling is a supplementary or complementary model of schooling that uses a range of flexible approaches based on ODL to provide structured teaching and learning opportunities. It focuses on training teachers in eLearning, using open educational resources (OER), improving the management of open schools and supporting the use of appropriate technologies in teaching and learning. COL is partnering with Zambia’s Ministry of General Education to train teachers in the development of eLearning content and OER in several school subjects and to expand open schooling in the country. COL’s support in Zambia puts special focus on out-of-school youths; however, it is anticipated that the project will also impact mainstream schools, improving throughput and reducing dropout rates.

Discussions started in February 2017 with the Ministry of General Education regarding the training of teachers in technology-enabled learning and the development of eLearning OER for their schools. Workshops were planned to train 25 staff in the development of 13 school subjects as eLearning OER over a period of ten months. The face-to-face workshop, which marked the start of the ten-month process, took place in May 2017 in Zambia. An agreement for two training workshops on the development of learning resources on mobile phones was signed. These workshops took place in June and December 2017.

Two officials from the ministry were invited to attend the annual Teacher Education Project, hosted by COL and the Government of Singapore in August 2017. The five-day workshop in Singapore was conducted by the National Institute of Education on behalf of the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Following this workshop, representatives from the ministries of education in Belize, Mozambique, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu and Zambia — countries that have signed agreements with COL to collaborate on improving the quality of teaching and learning in mainstream and open schools through eLearning and to broaden access to schooling for out-of-school youths — met in Singapore to share experiences in the implementation of COL’s Open/Innovative Schooling model in mainstream and open schools. This provided an opportunity for the participants to align country implementation strategies, find common solutions to challenges and identify innovative ways to increase the model’s momentum.

COL’s Senior Adviser: Open/Innovative Schooling visited Zambia’s Ministry of Education regarding progress with Phase 1 of the Open/Innovative Schooling model and the implementation of Phase 2. The second phase has been accepted, and the process to identify 15 pilot schools has started. An agreement was reached with the ministry to identify two officials for a study visit to the Namibian College of Open Learning and to the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (now Botswana Open University). COL also provided input on a draft “Strategy for Out-of-School Children’s and Girls’ Education in Zambia.”

**Skills**

**TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

The Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD) initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to better skills training. A key aspect of the programme is the capacity building of partner organisations in course design and materials development. A comprehensive baseline study of open and distance flexible learning in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) was prepared in 2015. Twenty-five institutions from Zambia are members of COL’s INVEST Africa initiative, which is committed to increasing access to high-quality flexible and blended skills training in support of sustainable livelihoods.

COL facilitated partner meetings in 2015, 2016 and 2017 to support the INVEST Africa partnership and the flexible and blended model of TVET in partner institutions and TVET system stakeholders. At the request of the Ministry of Higher Education, COL has supported
the development of TVET open, distance and flexible learning policy guidelines, and a team of stakeholders recently completed their draft “National TVET Open and Distance Learning Policy Guidelines.” The draft was discussed at a meeting of INVEST Zambia principals in October 2017 and is being implemented.

Another team from the Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) joined the workshop, co-facilitated by COL, where they developed guidelines for TVET flexible course development, which will set the structure for continued capacity building in the flexible TVET model in Zambia. More than 200 teachers have been trained in instructional design for flexible and blended learning. The final stakeholder consultations were held by the Technical Team, comprising officers from the ministry, TEVETA, as well as TVET and ODL universities and institutions.

INVEST Africa partners met in November 2017 in Lusaka, Zambia. In attendance were 24 TVET stakeholders, including 20 institutional principals or ODL coordinators, the ministry and TEVETA. The outcome was a review of Zambia’s national TVET open, distance and flexible learning policy guidelines and implementation plan.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. A total of 37 teachers from Zambia participated in both courses.

Regional Centre

SOUTHERN AFRICA DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY – CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

The Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education is located in Botswana and serves Southern Africa. The centre was established to undertake and promote training and development in ODL, engage in and support research activities in ODL, increase the provision of quality distance education in Southern Africa, and build and maintain a resource base on ODL with up-to-date information. A representative from Zambia serves on the centre’s advisory committee.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Zambia include:

- The Copperbelt University
- Ministry of General Education
- Ministry of Higher Education
- Technical and Vocational Teachers College
- University of Zambia
- Zambia Agricultural Research Institute

Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.
The African Regional Consultation was held in Port Louis, Mauritius in March 2017. Ms Bridget Moya, Ministry of General Education, attended.

**8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)**

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Two delegates from Zambia attended PCF8 – Mr Isaac Manda and Mr Mutale M. Kapyanga.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, open and distance learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

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COL looks forward to working with Zambia to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

**Publications and Resources**

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


- *Boys’ Underperformance in Education: Revisiting the Issue in the Commonwealth*, published by COL in 2017, follows up on a 2006 report and addresses the factors that are critical to understanding boys’ underperformance in Commonwealth countries since 2006. It contains case studies from nine countries, including Zambia.

- *Digital Learning: Reforming Teacher Education to Promote Access, Equity and Quality in Sub-Saharan Africa* provides an overview of the present and future impact of digital learning on teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report describes digitally enhanced programme innovations that can be identified in many institutions across the region, as well as three phases to full-scale adoption of new digital technologies.
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ASIA REGION

Bangladesh
Brunei Darussalam
India
Malaysia
Pakistan
Singapore
Sri Lanka
The Asia region of the Commonwealth is the most populous, with approximately 1.72 billion people. Among the seven Member States across South and East Asia, India has the largest population, with about 1.3 billion in 2017, while Brunei Darussalam has the smallest, with about 430,000. The populations in the other five countries are in the millions.

The region has shown promising economic growth with increases in GDP ranging from five to seven per cent. The Asian Development Bank argues that innovation, human capital and infrastructure are the three pillars that will sustain growth and help translate it into development (https://www.adb.org/publications/asian-development-outlook-2017-middle-income-challenge). These three pillars require strong education, learning and training systems.

Asia has made rapid progress in primary, secondary and tertiary education during the last three decades. However, globalisation, increasing population and dynamic changes in markets and technology have necessitated a much stronger emphasis on quality primary, secondary and higher education as well as skills development at both speed and scale. Non-formal education is also crucial since large numbers of people are in agriculture and the rural economy.

COL focuses on adding value to countries’ efforts towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG4. It supports the Commonwealth governments and institutions in Asia in the use of appropriate, affordable and accessible technologies to improve and expand learning for sustainable development. Its initiatives in formal education includes an emphasis on inclusive quality secondary and higher education and the strengthening of teacher development programmes. In the area of skills, COL supports the expansion of access to technical and vocational education, the reinforcement of non-formal education in agriculture, and technology-enabled learning. These initiatives have been designed to achieve socially inclusive and gender-sensitive human resource development at lower economic and environmental costs.

COL’s major regional initiatives in the Asian Commonwealth countries between 2015 and 2018 are outlined below.

- Based in New Delhi, the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) promotes the meaningful, relevant and appropriate use of media and technology to serve the education and training needs of the Commonwealth Member States of Asia. CEMCA works in education and skills development, with a focus on community media, particularly community radio. Through activities with partners in Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, CEMCA has helped institutions improve their capacity to leverage open and distance learning (ODL) for increased access to education.

- COL’s Technology-Enabled Learning initiative encourages institutions to integrate technology-enabled learning and open educational resources (OER) practices to improve teaching and learning for innovation and skills development. As part of the Advanced ICT Skills Development project, Indira Gandhi National Open University is working with five other open universities in Africa and Asia to develop courses in web application development and mobile application development.

- Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) supports the economic improvement of small-scale farmers, who are primarily women. L3F focuses on the economic and social inclusion of farmers, training them in the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and assisting them in
gaining entrepreneurial skills. The L3F initiative links the capacity building of farming communities, particularly women, to social and financial capital through the use of ODL and flexible and blended learning. L3F has a network of partners across India and Sri Lanka.

• GIRLS Inspire is a project that provides vulnerable and hard-to-reach women and girls with opportunities to complete their schooling and receive skills training that will enable them to have sustainable livelihoods. The initiative, which in the Asia region works in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, aims to end child, early and forced marriage in rural communities and addresses other barriers that prevent girls’ full participation in society.

• The Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration and Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programmes are the outcome of collaboration between COL and four open universities in South Asia: Allama Iqbal Open University (Pakistan), Bangladesh Open University, Indira Gandhi National Open University (India) and the Open University of Sri Lanka. The flexible and modular CEMBA/CEMPA programmes are geared towards delivering high-quality learning and professional development opportunities in participating countries.

• Supported by COL, the Open University of Malaysia (OUM) has been working with five other open universities in Africa and Asia to develop courses related to web applications and mobile application development.

• COL’s Open/Innovative Schooling initiative has been supporting the National Institute of Open Schooling (India) and the Open School of Bangladesh Open University to develop an institutional peer-to-peer-review initiative between the two institutions.

• COL’s Gender initiative has been supporting partner institutions in the Asian region to implement the Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming.

• COL and Singapore’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a workshop to build the capacity of teacher educators and education practitioners in the use of ICT to improve teaching and learning. This annual initiative, under the Singapore Cooperation Programme, was held in Singapore in August 2017 and hosted 18 participants from ten Commonwealth countries.

• The Asia Regional OER Consultation, which provided opportunities for Asian delegates to learn more about OER and contribute to the 2nd World OER Congress, was held in December 2016.

• The 8th Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF8) on Open Learning was organised with the OUM in Kuala Lumpur in November 2016. Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices. One outcome of the conference was the 2016 Kuala Lumpur Declaration, a set of recommendations for policy makers and practitioners.
Bangladesh

Key Facts

- Joined Commonwealth: 1972
- Population: 156,595,000 (2013)
- Primary enrolment: 92%
- GDP: 3.7% p.a. 1990–2013
- UN HDI world ranking: 142
- Official language: Bangla
- Currency: Taka

Geography

- Area: 143,998 sq km
- Coastline: 580 km
- Capital city: Dhaka
- Population density (per sq km): 1,087

Public spending on education was two per cent of GDP in 2008. There are five years of compulsory primary education and eight years of free education, starting at age six. Almost all primary schools are government managed. Secondary schools comprise a first cycle of three years and a second cycle of four years. Some 66 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2009). The school year starts in January. A parallel system of madrassa education offers Islamic instruction from primary level up to postgraduate level.

The main public universities are the University of Dhaka (established in 1921), the University of Rajshahi (1954), Bangladesh Agricultural University (1961, located in Mymensingh), the University of Chittagong (1966) and the University of Jahangirnagar (1970, in Savar, Dhaka). There are also several private universities in Dhaka, including North South University and Independent University. The Bangladesh Open University (BOU) provides distance learning for a wide range of students at secondary and tertiary levels. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 0.70:1 (2011). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 77 per cent (2010).

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Honourable Nurul Islam Nahid, Minister of Education, People’s Republic of Bangladesh, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Asia.

COL FOCAL POINT

Ms Shahnaz Samad, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Education, serves as the COL Focal Point.

NOTABLE MENTION

Professor M. Aminul Islam is a COL Honorary Fellow. Professor Dr Abdul Mannan is a former COL Advisor.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Bangladesh is in the areas of higher education, technical and vocational skills development, open educational resources (OER), OER policy development and technology-enabled learning. COL recently launched GIRLS Inspire, a project to provide schooling and skills development to some
of the world’s most vulnerable and hard-to-reach girls. COL is working with community organisations in Bangladesh to leverage the power of open and distance learning (ODL) to end the cycle of child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) and to address barriers that prevent girls’ economic participation. The following are the highlights of some of COL’s work in this triennium.

Education

HIGHER EDUCATION

COL’s Higher Education initiative works to develop human resources for social and economic development across the Commonwealth. It supports higher education institutions and ministries in capacity building, policy development and curriculum reform. COL is working with BOU to offer the Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration and Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programme. BOU was one of COL’s first partner institutions to offer this programme, and the university holds a seat on the programme’s Executive Governing Board and Academic Board. COL also offers support to other higher education institutions in Bangladesh to adopt and implement ODL techniques and OER.

Skills

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The Technical and Vocational Skills Development initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to improved quality skills training. A key aspect of the programme is the capacity building of partner organisations in course design and materials development. In Bangladesh, COL is working with Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), an organisation committed to empowering members of rural communities through education. DAM operates Community Learning Centres where members, mostly women, receive skills training leading to improved livelihoods. DAM has continued to offer five vocational skills training packages developed in the previous triennium, on vermi-composting, poultry rearing, nurseries, batik printing and flower gardening. Two other NGOs took up courses developed by DAM and trained 2,400 people through Community Learning Centres and mobile libraries.

In this triennium, DAM has developed three pre-vocational courses aimed at livelihood skills for women. More than 7,000 people have been trained.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

OER play an important role in ensuring equitable access to quality learning materials across the Commonwealth and beyond. COL encourages the integration of technology-enabled learning supported by OER policies and practices to improve teaching and learning. Working with Access2Information, in the Prime Minister’s Office, and with BOU, COL organised a national consultation on OER policy for Bangladesh in November 2016. Prior to this, a country report was prepared. Based on the deliberations in the national consultation and the country report, a draft OER policy was developed and presented to the Ministry of Education for consideration.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocation education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Significantly, 903 teachers from Bangladesh participated in both cohorts of the TEL MOOC.

Gender

Gender is a cross-cutting theme in all of COL’s work. COL aims to harness the potential of ODL to expand access to education and improve learning outcomes for girls and women, as well as boys and men, by integrating a gender perspective into ODL practice and delivery. The focus is on building capacity for gender mainstreaming among partners in both formal and non-formal education.

GIRLS INSPIRE

GIRLS Inspire is a partnership between COL and community organisations in Bangladesh, India, Mozambique, Pakistan and Tanzania to address the
barriers keeping girls and women from full participation in society. Because girls are critical agents for social change and global development, closing the gender gap in education, economic activity and health during adolescence will significantly increase national economic growth and well-being. But barriers such as CEFM, distance to school, security concerns, cultural values and the costs of schooling all prevent girls and women from participating in educational opportunities. Thanks to grants from the governments of Australia and Canada, COL is using ODL and technology in Bangladesh to support the schooling and skills training of girls and women, improve their livelihoods and end CEFM. These efforts will contribute to Bangladesh achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

COL's partner agency Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha (SSS) used solar-powered boat schools and floating libraries, equipped with Internet-linked laptops, multimedia projectors and educational materials, docking at villages to provide on-board training. A total of 13,578 girls were trained in life and vocational skills. SSS also helped 1,602 girls to access microloans and 4,389 girls and women to gain income-generating opportunities. Without these boat schools, these girls had no chance of an education or employment opportunities. SSS held evening shows on their education boats, reaching over 10,764 community members and addressing topics such as gender equality, the prevention of early marriage, the elimination of domestic violence and exploitation, and productive employment opportunities for women.

Since its inception in 1978, another partner, the Centre for Mass Education in Science (CMES), has created awareness programmes to combat CEFM. However, COL’s GIRLS Inspire enabled them to extend their reach and impact. Through 233 community events, they reached 154,510 community members on topics such as human rights, repression, reproductive health and the impact of CEFM. Through CMES, 1,800 women and girls completed life skills training and locally relevant vocational training. CMES also developed work opportunities: all 1,800 women and girls attended job fairs to learn about markets and employment. In addition, 132 Memoranda of Understanding were signed with prospective employers. The CMES programme enabled 418 girls to obtain micro-loans, 1,426 girls to participate in internships and 1,015 to become self-employed.

Moreover, SSS now has an “equality, diversity and inclusion” policy, and CMES has a gender policy. CMES also held two exchanges with advocates for GIRLS Inspire at regional and national forums attended by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and at gender forums attended by other local and international NGOs. So far, CMES has stopped 150 child marriages through the GIRLS Inspire project.

**Regional Centre**

**COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE FOR ASIA**

Recognising that the Commonwealth is a diverse and geographically dispersed association, COL has established regional centres to support capacity building in the field. The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) is COL’s regional centre for Asia, promoting the use of electronic media resources for distance education in Asian Commonwealth countries. CEMCA fully aligns itself with COL programmes while retaining its regional focus, and it devises appropriate learning solutions while maintaining a balance between the aspirations of its diverse stakeholders and the available resources.

CEMCA serves as a regional networking and collaboration centre for ODL and technology-enabled learning services. In this triennium, CEMCA assisted BOU in developing and implementing a comprehensive OER policy to mainstream the use of OER in teaching and learning. Thirty-five academic leaders and 90 ODL professionals from BOU were trained during August and September 2015 to use and create OER materials.

CEMCA in partnership with Rupantar has supported the launching of web radio programmes in five community radio stations to strengthen skills development in rural communities.

The annual meeting of the CEMCA Advisory Council was held in New Delhi in December 2015 and 2016, and in Sri Lanka in December 2017, with members from Bangladesh in attendance to provide strategic direction to CEMCA and review its annual progress.
Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Bangladesh include:
- Access to Information
- Bangladesh Open University
- Centre for Mass Education in Science
- Dhaka Ahsania Mission
- Ministry of Education
- Rupantar
- Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha

Special Events

2nd WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Asian Regional Consultation was held in Kuala Lumpur in December 2016. Ms Shahnaz Samad, the COL Focal Point for Bangladesh, and Professor Mustafa Kamal Azad, BOU, attended.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016.

COL sponsored ten people from Bangladesh to attend the forum, including Dr Zobaida Akhtar of the BOU, Hassan Banu of CMES, Professor Dr Md. Kabirul Islam of Daffodil International University, Hurain Jannat of CMES, Professor Mostafa Azad Kamal of BOU, Shahnewaz Khan of DAM, Professor Dr Mohammad A. Mannan of BOU, Suprakash Paul of SSS, Mohammad Rezwan, also of SSS, and Md. Abdus Sattar of BOU.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society relating to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.
Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

• improved sustainable livelihoods;
• increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
• improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Bangladesh to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

Gender Profile: Bangladesh is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries of how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016 is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the
study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

*Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation*, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

*Reaching the Unreached through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan* is the final report to Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on the work that has taken place in the Reaching the Unreached Project since January 2016.

*The State of Open Universities in the Commonwealth: A Perspective on Performance, Competition and Innovation* critically examines specialist ODL universities in the Commonwealth.

*Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET* (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Brunei Darussalam

Key Facts

- Joined Commonwealth: 1984
- Population: 418,000 (2013)
- Primary enrolment: 92%
- GDP: −0.5% p.a. 1990–2013
- UN HDI world ranking: 30
- Official language: Malay
- Currency: Brunei dollar

Geography

- Area: 5,765 sq km
- Coastline: 161 km
- Capital city: Bandar Seri Begawan
- Population density (per sq km): 73

Public spending on education was 3.5 per cent of GDP in 2013. The primary component of a new education system was introduced during 2009–2011. Under this system, there are six years of primary school, starting at age six and leading to Primary School Assessment, or Penilaian Sekolah Rendah. Depending on a student’s academic ability, this is followed by either four or five years of secondary school, leading to the Brunei/Cambridge or London Edexcel International GCE O-level exams. The school year starts in January.

Upon the establishment of the Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) in Bandar Seri Begawan in 1985, local pursuit of degree courses became possible. The government nevertheless continued to award scholarships to qualified Bruneian citizens to undertake courses of study not yet available at UBD, and many Bruneians continue their studies in other Commonwealth Member States or non-Commonwealth countries, such as the USA. Other institutions at the tertiary level include: the Jefri Bolkiah College of Engineering, in Kuala Belait; the Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University, in Bandar Seri Begawan; and the Institut Teknologi Brunei, also in Bandar Seri Begawan. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 1.70:1 (2011). There is virtually no illiteracy among people aged 15–24.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL Board of Governors

The Honourable Nurul Islam Nahid, Minister of Education, People’s Republic of Bangladesh, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Asia.

COL Focal Point

The COL Focal Point is Awang Julaihi bin Mohamad, Acting Executive Secretary, Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council.

Notable Mention

Pehin Dato’ Abu Bakar Apong is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Dato’ Paduka Haji Ali Hashim Haji Daud is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Dato’ Paduka Haji Abdul Razak bin Haji Muhammad was a member of COL’s Founding Board of Governors.

Hj. Mohd. Denis bin Hj. Roslee is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with
Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

**Higher Education**

The Ministry of Education provided a scholarship to Mr Emmanuel Okondu of Nigeria to study in the Master of Public Health programme at UBD. He completed the programme in December 2016.

**Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth**

Brunei Darussalam continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (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. VUSSC is committed to the collaborative development of open content resources for education, training and capacity building, and the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) to broaden access to education. New VUSSC courses at the certificate, diploma and degree levels have been made available to partners.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Brunei Darussalam include:
- Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council
- Ministry of Education
- Universiti Brunei Darussalam

**Special Events**

**2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress**

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Asia regional consultation was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in December 2016. Mr Julaihi Mohammad, the COL Focal Point for Brunei Darussalam, attended.

**8th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF8)**

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in open and distance learning (ODL) to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society on topics that include lifelong learning, ODL, access and equity, teacher education, OER and more. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

Brunei Darussalam hosted PCF1 in 1999.
Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved sustainable livelihoods;
- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Brunei Darussalam to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

*Gender Profile: Brunei Darussalam* is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

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Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

The Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is intended for authorities responsible for quality assurance and institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. It aims to facilitate credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
India

Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1947
- **Population:** 1,252,140,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 93% (2011)
- **GDP:** 4.7% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 135
- **Official languages:** Hindi, English
- **Currency:** Indian rupee

Geography

- **Area:** 3,287,263 sq km
- **Coastline:** 7,520 km
- **Capital city:** New Delhi
- **Population density (per sq km):** 381

Public spending on education was 3.4 per cent of GDP in 2012. There are nine years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises five years and secondary seven, the latter having cycles of three and four years. The school year starts in April.

There are: some 44 “central” universities, under the Department of Higher Education in the Ministry of Human Resource Development; 345 state universities, under the state governments, the three oldest of which — the universities of Calcutta, Madras and Mumbai — date back to 1857; 100 institutions of national importance recognised and granted autonomous status by the Department of Higher Education; and 233 private universities (2017). The gender parity index in higher education is 0.94 (2017). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 86.14 per cent (2014).

Source: [http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries](http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries)

COL Board of Governors

Mr. K. K. Sharma, Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), represents India on the COL Board of Governors.

COL Focal Point

Mr Madhu Ranjan Kumar, Joint Secretary (DL, BP & A), Department of Higher Education, MHRD, is the COL Focal Point.

Notable Mention

Mr R. P. Agrawal is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

The late Mr Sudeep K. Banerjee was a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Mr B. S. Baswan is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Mr B. K. Chaturvedi is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Ms Vibha Puri Das is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Mr P. R. Dasgupta is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Mr M. K. Kaw is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Dr Abdul Waheed Khan is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Professor Badri Nath Koul is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Father T. V. Kunnunikal is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Mr Mahesh Chandra Pant is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Professor Vasireddy Sivalinga Prasad is a COL Honorary Fellow.

The late Professor G. Ram Reddy was a a member of COL’s Founding Board of Governors.
Mr Abhimanyu Singh is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Ms Chetna Vijay Sinha is a COL Honorary Fellow.

The late Professor V. C. Kulanadai Swamy was a COL Honorary Fellow.

Professor Ram G. Takwale is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Mr Ashok Thakur is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Mr S. C. Tripathi is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in India is primarily in the areas of higher education, teacher education, technical and vocational skills development, technology-enabled learning, Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F), open schooling and girls’ education. India is also home to the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA).

Education

OPEN/INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING

Open/innovative schooling is a supplementary or complementary model of schooling that uses a range of flexible approaches based on open and distance learning (ODL) to provide structured teaching and learning opportunities. It focuses on training teachers in eLearning, using open educational resources (OER) and improving the management of open schools, as well as supporting the use of appropriate technologies in teaching and learning. In this triennium, COL initiated and supported a workshop hosted by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) for senior staff of NIOS and Bangladesh Open University’s Open School to develop quality criteria and plan for peer-to-peer quality audits between the two institutions.

In January 2018, Ms Anshul Kharbanda, Academic Officer: Accountancy, NIOS, joined COL as an intern for three months to study best practices in open schooling around the Commonwealth and propose a plan of action for further collaboration between COL and NIOS.

TEACHER EDUCATION

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.

COL is working with the Centre for Environmental Education (CEE) in India on the use and development of OER materials for the Green Teacher Programme, which promotes sustainable development education in schools and teacher education institutions. The resources are being used by teachers and teacher educators to inculcate environmental concerns in children from the early stages. The CEE has provided expertise for the development of the Green Teacher Programme in Nigeria.

COL’s Director: Technology and Knowledge Management served as a resource person in a workshop on deploying massive open online courses (MOOCs) for science education for teachers. The workshop, which was organised by the National Programme on Technology Enabled Learning (NPTEL) in Chennai, India, was held in September 2015 to develop a pool of trainers and content creators using available OER.

IT For Change, Bangalore completed Creating and Repurposing OER Using FOSS: A How-To Guide for Teachers and Learners with COL support. This toolkit provides activities on how to reuse and remix OER that are in text, audio, video and image formats. Teachers are introduced to free open source software (FOSS) for remixing media types.
LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS

COL’s L3F initiative empowers farming communities using ODL and flexible and blended learning. In India, the L3F initiative is working in partnership with four organisations to build capacity among farmers (mostly women) in skills and financial literacy. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development partnered with COL and encouraged cooperative banks to adopt the L3F model.

In the state of Tamil Nadu, 1,114 L3F participants, of whom 80 per cent were women, received credit amounting to USD 800,000 after undergoing financial literacy training. In addition, COL’s emphasis on technology-enabled learning (TEL) has helped to connect more than 4,900 farmers in Tamil Nadu and enabled them to share their experiences through social media. A study in India found that the profit efficiency of L3F farmers is nine times higher than that of non-L3F farmers.

COL’s L3F partners in India — Vidiyal, the Mann Deshi Foundation, Arul Anandar College (AAC) and the Reddiyarchadtram Seed Growers Association (RSGA) — reached a total of 29,628 new learners. At the Mann Deshi Foundation, the COL-developed Aptus device was a very effective tool in farmer education. A weekly average of 1,719 women vendors interacted with the Aptus device to transact over USD 525,000 in credit.

Also, following Vidiyal’s successful advocacy, 15 organisations adopted L3F. Vidiyal helped improve the capacity of these new organisations to integrate L3F strategies in their policies and programmes and to produce learning materials. RSGA is facilitating credit-based learning programmes with the active participation and support of 14 additional organisations. The Farmers’ Producer Company, formed by L3F women, has established a meat shop utilising an equity grant received from the Small Farmers’ Agri-Business Consortium. The L3F initiative has continued to strengthen women’s capacity via voicemail messages, supporting the continuous training they receive in goat rearing, business management and corporate literacy.

AAC initiated a Certificate Course on Multimedia for Lifelong Learning and ODL, in which 25 students were enrolled. Using theory, lab-based and field-based approaches, the programme equipped learners with the necessary skills and expertise. AAC also trained staff and other L3F non-governmental organisations in multimedia-based ODL content development. COL’s Education Specialist conducted an assessment of the L3F project by AAC and discussed strategies for the college to lead other tertiary institutions in integrating L3F in their academic programmes.

COL supported a three-day capacity-building workshop for the L3F community in Chennai to help them convert text, video, images and voice messages to OER so as to make a difference in the non-formal/informal education sector, using their OER repository, called L3F Pedia, a central location for farming information. In the workshop participants developed three draft OER policies and planned ways to make content more accessible to the farming community through OER and technology.

The three partner organisations — AAC, RSGA and Vidiyal — conducted an extensive needs analysis among farming communities to identify the skills gaps to be addressed; this resulted in the identification of 50 critical skills areas. Based on these areas, the partners have developed 150 OER-based learning objects in the native Tamil language using multimedia techniques. The use of multimedia to create this content in a native language helps illiterate farmers to follow the content easily.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The Technical and Vocational Skills Development initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to improved quality skills training. A key aspect of the programme is the capacity building of partner organisations in course design and materials development. In India, COL works with several institutions focusing on skills training for women in order to integrate them into the workforce. COL supported the State Resource Centre (SRC) in Kerala, India to develop a Certificate in Community Development by distance learning to build the capacity and capability of community development workers. Thus far, they have enrolled more than 350 preraks in the programme. In 2017, COL conducted training on OER and Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning, with the SRC, in preparation for a tracer study. The
SRC team has continued to develop new programmes with the distance learning model and has more than 2,600 learners.

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

COL’s TEL initiative encourages institutions to integrate TEL and OER practices to improve teaching and learning for innovation and skills development. As part of the Advanced ICT Skills Development project, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) is working with five other open universities in Africa and Asia to create courses in web and mobile application development. IGNOU completed two courses: i) Introduction to Mobile Architecture and ii) introduction to Windows and iOS. COL also recently developed and presented a draft policy on OER for higher education to India’s MHRD.

COL facilitated the formation of a consortium of well-known institutions to offer MOOCs in agriculture (agMOOCs). Thus far, the consortium has offered five courses. Topics include entrepreneurship, the agriculture value chain, and integrated pest management. They are offered via the mooKIT platform, designed by the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur.

COL’s Education Specialist: eLearning conducted one workshop each at the SNDT Women’s University, Mumbai, and IGNOU, New Delhi, in April 2016. The SNDT Women’s University developed and adopted a TEL policy based on COL’s intervention. COL’s Director: Technology and Knowledge Management was a key resource person in a major review of agMOOCs and facilitated discussions at the workshop, held in May 2016.

Two workshops — on Course Development for the Diploma in Animation and Multimedia, held at Odisha State Open University (OSOU) in November 2016, and on Course Development in Media-Related Areas, at Centurion University of Technology and Management (CUTM), conducted in September–October 2016 — provided capacity building for the development of nine skills-development courses. OSOU organised a review workshop in July 2017 to finalise the Diploma in Animation and Multimedia course. In January 2018, OSOU announced the launch of the programme.

CUTM organised a two-day review workshop in March 2017 for finalising the learning materials (print and videos) for the four vocational courses being developed at the university. COL conducted a baseline study and organised a two-day policy development workshop on TEL at the Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies (RGUKT) in March 2017. The draft policy was handed over to the university for comments and further approval. COL also organised a capacity-building workshop at RGUKT in Nuzvid, Andhra Pradesh, India in June 2017 on the development of blended learning courses using the Moodle learning management system, as part of the implementation of the TEL policy. COL organised a workshop on Blended Course Development Using Moodle, at RGUKT in November 2017. This workshop was a follow-up on TEL policy implementation at RGUKT, where teachers were developing blended courses using Moodle to offer these in the semester beginning January 2018. Twenty courses are being offered, to about 3,500 learners.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a MOOC for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Significantly, 476 teachers from India participated in both cohorts of this TEL MOOC.

**Gender**

Gender is a cross-cutting theme in all of COL’s work. COL aims to harness the potential of ODL to expand access to education and improve learning outcomes for girls and women, as well as boys and men, by integrating a gender perspective into ODL practice and delivery. The focus is on building capacity for gender mainstreaming among partners in both formal and non-formal education.

**GIRLS INSPIRE**

GIRLS Inspire is a partnership between COL and community organisations in Bangladesh, India, Mozambique, Pakistan and Tanzania to address the barriers keeping girls and women from full participation in society. Because girls are critical agents for social change and global development, closing the gender gap in education, economic activity and health during adolescence will significantly increase national economic growth and well-being. But barriers such
as child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), distance to school, security concerns, cultural values and the costs of schooling all prevent girls and women from participating in educational opportunities. Thanks to a grant from the Government of Australia, COL is using ODL and technology to support the schooling and skills training of girls and women in India. These efforts are crucial to India accelerating progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

GIRLS Inspire partnered with the Mann Deshi Foundation, which is dedicated to empowering female entrepreneurs and their communities. The project enabled them to expand their reach to more girls and women. The Mann Deshi Foundation created mobile training centres using two buses equipped with self-learning materials, laptops and vocational training equipment. In addition, 41 gender-sensitive courses were developed on life skills and vocational skills, and delivered face-to-face and via community radio. In total, 6,033 girls across 150 villages were trained in at least three subjects each.

Community workshops on girls’ education, gender equality, health and hygiene, and the impact of child marriage built trust between the communities and the project. Participants included nurses, Accredited Social Health Activists, mayors, village workers, advocates, doctors and teachers. Tablets and multimedia presentations facilitated the sharing of previous work and successes in other villages. A strong storytelling approach was used, which led to greater buy-in from parents and husbands. The Mann Deshi Foundation’s radio station reaches 170,000 householders across 104 villages in Maharashtra, in their local dialects. The team developed radio content on health skills and financial literacy and produced 14 modules on various topics, such as income and expenditure, savings, banking, the importance of education, loan repayment, HIV/AIDS and child marriage. Based on a sample from 31 villages, the community radio programme reached an estimated 42,798 people in 31 villages alone, at least 4,000 of whom were girls and women.

After their life skills and vocational training, 312 girls were in income-generating opportunities as interns, employees or entrepreneurs as part of this project. Learning financial management and having access to banking was critical to their sustained success and economic independence. By the end of the project, 490 girls and women had opened bank accounts.

Regional Centre

COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE FOR ASIA (CEMCA)

Based in New Delhi, CEMCA promotes the meaningful, relevant and appropriate use of media and technology to serve the education and training needs of the Commonwealth Member States of Asia. Over the years, CEMCA has widened its scope to embrace emerging educational technologies so as to cover formal, non-formal and informal learning at all levels. CEMCA fully aligns itself with COL programmes while retaining its regional focus.

CEMCA has trained 90 faculty members from the Central University of Hyderabad, Netaji Subhas Open University and Uttarakhand Open University in e-content development. Twenty content writers and editors received training to develop materials using OER for a professional development course titled “Inclusive Education” at Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU). CEMCA so far has assisted the following universities in India with developing institutional OER policies:

- Central University of Himachal Pradesh
- Netaji Subhas Open University
- Odisha Open University
- Uttarakhand Open University

In December 2015, a report on the status of state open universities in India formed the background document for a meeting of vice chancellors from these institutions and discussed the theme of “Reforming ODL in India.” CEMCA convened a meeting of the vice chancellors of state open universities in collaboration with MHRD to discuss the implementation of OER policy and development and the sharing of OER. CEMCA also facilitated a national consultation workshop for OER policy in March 2017 and with COL support submitted to MHRD a draft national OER policy for higher education.

CEMCA supported capacity building for teachers at the Central University of Punjab in e-content
development using Moodle. With COL support, Uttarakhand Open University developed learning materials for the Post-Graduate Diploma in Cyber Security and released them as OER.

CEMCA helped Telangana State to develop an OER policy, which has been submitted to the state government for final approval. CEMCA is assisting Telangana state to implement the Government of India’s ICT@ School initiative. As part of this, a secondary-level ICT course was developed as a teacher handbook.

Under CEMCA’s Life Skills for Engineers initiative and in collaboration with COL and the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, 19 faculty members were trained in December 2017 in the effective use and management of the mooKIT platform to deliver MOOCs.

A toolkit for career guidance based on job roles identified by the National Skill Development Corporation, India was developed and field tested with 230 girls in secondary schools. This programme, supported by the IKEA Foundation and UNDP, aims to equip girls for financial independence through employment and entrepreneurship. The University of Kashmir in collaboration with CEMCA has launched a skills development programme for 250 youths, mostly women. CEMCA supported capacity building for 790 vocational trainers in activity-based learning and 418 students in generic employability skills.

Under the Science for Women’s Health and Nutrition project supported by the Department of Science and Technology, CEMCA conducted a baseline survey of five community radio stations, in which 5,000 women were surveyed, and CEMCA helped these radio stations to produce 50 sample programmes.

CEMCA carried out several capacity-building activities on OER for teachers at the BOSCH Vocational Centre, Bangalore.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in India include:

- Arul Anandar College
- Australian Skill Development Education Pvt. Ltd
- Bilaspur University
- BOSCH Limited
- Central University of Himachal Pradesh
- Centurion University of Technology and Management
- Chetana Institute for the Mentally Handicapped
- Department of School Education, Telangana
- Department of Science and Technology, Government of India
- Digital Empowerment Foundation
- First Impressions Resources Pvt Ltd
- Foundation for MSME Clusters
- Gopalganj-Debiana Fisherman Cooperative Society Limited
- Graphic Era Hill University
- Indian Institute of Skill Development
- Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur
- Indira Gandhi National Open University
- International College, Kolkata
- IT for Change, Bangalore
- Karnataka State Open University
- Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University
- M.S Swaminathan Research Foundation
- Educational Technology and Management Academy
- Mann Deshi Foundation
- Ministry of Human Resource Development
- National Institute of Open Schooling
- Netaji Subhas Open University
- Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society
- Odisha State Open University
- Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies
• Reddiar Chatram Seed Growers Association
• Save the Children
• Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Women’s University
• Siliguri Global Engineering Institute
• Skill Council for Green Jobs
• State Resource Center, Kerala
• Tata Institute of Social Sciences
• The Energy and Resources Institute
• United Nations Development Programme
• University of Hyderabad
• University of Kashmir
• Uttarakhand Open University
• Vidiyal

Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The Ljubljana OER Action Plan 2017 provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Asian Regional Consultation was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in December 2016. Dr B. K. Bhadri, Assistant Educational Adviser, MHRD, and Dr Mangala Sunder Krishnan, Professor, Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, attended.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

The Indian delegation to PCF8 comprised Ms Chetna Sinha, Mr Indrajit Banerjee, Ms Namrata Chandramohan Bali, Ms Phalachandra Bhandigadi, Mr Swaraj Chellappan Asari, Mr Kuntal De, Ms Anita Devraj, Mr Mohammed Zahed Ali Farooqui, Mr Ashok Gaba, Mr Vijaya Lakshmi, Ms Naga Sai Ravi Mula, Mr Pooya Murada, Mr Ferindand Peter, Mr Tadinada Venkata Prabhakar, Mr Arallimarad Prabhuraj, Mr Satish Rastogi, Ms Vanita Shinde, Ms Jayashree Shinde, Mr R. Sreedher, Mr Mangala Sunder Krishnan, Mr Venkata Suresh Pachigolla, Mr Thamizoli Perumal, Mr K. T. Revathy, Mr Ujjwala Tripti Tirkey, Mr B. K. Bhadri, Mr Sukanta Kumar Mahapatra, Mr S. K. Prasad, Ms Anita Ranjan Rout, Mr Chandra Bhushan Sharma, Mr Manoj Kumar Thakur, Mr Anil Kumar and Ms Padmaja Pancharatnam.

India hosted PCF6 in 2010.
COL IN THE COMMONWEALTH: 2015–2018

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved sustainable livelihoods;
- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with India to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

Gender Profile: India is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries of how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

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Open Educational Resources (OER) Guide for Students in Post-Secondary and Higher Education was published in 2016 as a guide, particularly for students in small states of the Commonwealth, to evaluating and using OER.
Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016 is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

Reaching the Unreached through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan is the final report to Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on the work that has taken place in the Reaching the Unreached Project since January 2016.

The State of Open Universities in the Commonwealth: A Perspective on Performance, Competition and Innovation critically examines specialist ODL universities in the Commonwealth.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Key Facts

Joined Commonwealth: 1957
Population: 29,717,000 (2013)
GDP: 3.5% p.a. 1990–2013
UN HDI world ranking: 62
Official language: Malay
Currency: Malaysian ringgit

Geography

Area: 329,758 sq km
Coastline: 4,680 km
Capital city: Kuala Lumpur
Population density (per sq km): 90

Public spending on education was 5.9 per cent of GDP in 2011. There are six years of compulsory education, starting age six. Primary school comprises six years and secondary seven, the latter having cycles of three and four years. Some 99 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2009). The school year starts in January and comprises two terms.

The tertiary sector comprises 20 public universities, 22 polytechnics, 37 community colleges, and many private universities and colleges, located throughout the country (2013). The longest-established universities are the University of Malaya (Kuala Lumpur, 1905) and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia in Skudai (Johor, 1904 as the Technical School, becoming a university in 1972). Open and distance education is provided by the Open University Malaysia, which was established as a private university by a consortium of 11 public universities in 2000, and Wawasan Open University, established in 2006. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 1.30:1 (2010).

Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 98 per cent (2010).

Malaysia hosted the 17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Kuala Lumpur in June 2009, marking 50 years since the first conference was held in Oxford, UK in 1959. Commonwealth education ministers meet every three years to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Honourable Nurul Islam Nahid, Minister of Education, People’s Republic of Bangladesh, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Asia.

COL FOCAL POINT

YBhg Datin Paduka Ir. Siti Hamisah Binti Tapsir, Director General, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education, is the COL Focal Point for Malaysia.

NOTABLE MENTION

Tan Sri Dato’ Emeritus Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan is a COL Honorary Fellow and former COL President and CEO.

Professor Dato’ Dr Ansary Ahmed is a former COL Advisor.

YBhg Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Anuwar Ali is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Professor Dato’ Wong Tat Meng is a COL Honorary Fellow.
Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Malaysia is primarily in the areas of higher education and technology-enabled learning.

Education

Higher Education

COL’s Higher Education initiative works to develop human resources for social and economic development across the Commonwealth. It supports policy makers, institutions and leaders to harness the full potential of open and distance learning (ODL) through the use of technology. It also supports higher education institutions and ministries in capacity building, policy development and curriculum reform, which in turn enable them to cope with the increasing demand for quality higher education in the face of rising costs and diminishing public funding. COL is working with Wawasan Open University (WOU) to offer the Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration and Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration and Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programme. This flexible, modular programme is geared towards delivering high-quality learning and professional development opportunities in participating countries. WOU also holds a seat on the programme’s Executive Governing Board and Academic Board.

In March 2016, a high-level summit of vice chancellors of open universities from around the Commonwealth was held in Kuala Lumpur in collaboration with Asia e University, at which 19 countries were represented. COL facilitated a study visit of four delegates from the tertiary education sector in Mauritius to Open University Malaysia (OUM), Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia and Asia e University in May 2017 to discuss their higher education strategies, online higher education models, teacher training and areas of collaboration among the institutions.

Skills

Technology-Enabled Learning

COL’s Technology-Enabled Learning initiative aims to encourage more institutions to integrate technology-enabled learning and open educational resources (OER) practices to improve teaching and learning for innovation and skills development. As part of the Advanced ICT Skills Development project, OUM has developed two courses: i) Principles of Design and ii) Digital Imaging as OER; this collaborative project with five other open universities in Africa and Asia aims to offer courses related to web application development and mobile application development.

In November 2016, COL’s Adviser: Open Educational Resources conducted a pre-conference workshop at the 8th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning titled “Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Android App Development: Hands-on Workshop on Mobile IT Application Inventor 2.” The workshop was a successful field test of COL’s Educational App Development Toolkit for Teachers and Learners; 17 participants developed 14 Android applications during the three-day workshop.

COL’s Adviser: Open Educational Resources also co-facilitated a three-day workshop on “Designing and Delivering Online Courses and MOOCs” at WOU, which was attended by 30 participants from Malaysian and Indian universities.

A report titled Towards National Policy Guidelines for OER in Malaysia was completed in this triennium, and a national consultation on OER policy was held in November 2016 in collaboration with Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia. Based on these, a draft national OER policy was submitted to the Ministry of Higher Education in May 2017. Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. In all, 27 teachers from Malaysia participated in both cohorts of the TEL MOOC.
Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Malaysia include:

- Asia eUniversity
- Ministry of Higher Education
- Open University Malaysia
- Universiti Malaysia Sabah
- Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia
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The Asian Regional Consultation, organised jointly with Asia e University, was held in Kuala Lumpur in December 2016. The following participants attended the consultation: Professor Dr Hazman Shah Abdullah, Malaysian Qualifications Agency; Dr Fong Soon Fook, Universiti Malaysia Sabah; Professor Rozhan M. Idrus, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia; Associate Professor Dr Janet Woo Tai Kwan, OUM; Professor Dato’ Ansary Ahmed, Ms Wan Lidiana Lidia Wan Abu Bakar, Dr Roshaya Mohamad, Professor John Arul Phillips, and Mr Bala Kumar Thambiah, all from Asia e University; and Professor Madhulika Kausik and Dr Andy Liew Teik Kooi of WOU. YB Datuk Dr. Mary Yap, the Honourable Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Malaysia, delivered the valedictory address at the event.

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COL presented OUM with the Award of Excellence for Open and Distance Education Materials: Category A. This award acknowledges the excellence of materials in print, audio, video or a combination of these. OUM was recognised for its course “Object-Oriented Programming,” offered in the Faculty of Science and Technology to students undertaking the Bachelor of Information Technology and other IT-related programmes.

The Award of Excellence for Open and Distance Education Materials: Category B was presented to Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. This award honours the achievements of colleagues who have designed and developed exemplary study materials through the innovative use and reuse of OER. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia received the award for the MOOC “Rethinking Teaching; Redesigning Learning,” offered by the Faculty of Education.

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Pakistan

Key Facts


Population: 182,143,000 (2013)

Primary enrolment: 72%

GDP: 1.8% p.a. 1990–2013

UN HDI world ranking: 146

Official languages: Urdu

Currency: Pakistan rupee

Geography

Area: 796,095 sq km
  excluding territory in Jammu and Kashmir, whose status is in dispute

Coastline: 1,050 km

Capital city: Islamabad

Population density (per sq km): 229

Public spending on education was two per cent of GDP in 2012. There are five years of primary education, starting at age five, and seven years of secondary, the latter having cycles of three and four years. Some 52 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2010).

In October 2013, the Higher Education Commission recognised 151 degree-awarding institutions, 84 in the public sector. Allama Iqbal Open University was established in 1974, becoming Asia’s first open university. Fatima Jinnah Women’s University, Rawalpindi, opened in 1998 and was Pakistan’s first university exclusively for women. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 0.90:1 (2011). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 71 per cent (2009). There is an extensive literacy programme.

In 1994, Pakistan hosted the 12th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Islamabad. Commonwealth Education Ministers meet every three years to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL Board of Governors

The Honourable Nurul Islam Nahid, Minister of Education, People’s Republic of Bangladesh, serves as the regional representative for Asia.

COL Focal Point

Professor Dr Arshad Ali, Executive Director of Pakistan’s Higher Education Commission, is the COL Focal Point.

Notable Mention

Professor Dr Atta-ur-Rahman, FRS, is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

The Honourable Zubaida Jalal is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Professor Naveed Akhtar Malik is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Ms Shahnaz Wazir Ali is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.
Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Pakistan includes the areas of technology-enabled learning, higher education, and the schooling and skilling of girls through the GIRLS Inspire initiative.

Education

HIGHER EDUCATION

COL’s Higher Education initiative works to enhance human resources for social and economic development across the Commonwealth. It supports higher education institutions and ministries in capacity building, policy development and curriculum reform. COL’s Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration and Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programme is offered by Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), which also holds a seat on the programme’s Executive Governing Board and Academic Board.

Skills

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

With COL support, AIOU completed the development of two courses: i) Introduction to Web Development and ii) Web Programming (Client-Side Scripting). As part of the advanced ICT course development project that was started with six open universities, these courses will be launched by educational institutions in the Commonwealth.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education, developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. In all, 72 teachers from Pakistan participated in both courses.

Gender

GIRLS INSPIRE

GIRLS Inspire is a partnership between COL and community organisations in Bangladesh, India, Mozambique, Pakistan and Tanzania to address the barriers girls and women face that prevent their full participation in society. Because girls are critical agents for social change and global development, closing the gender gap in education, economic activity and health during adolescence will significantly increase national economic growth and well-being. But barriers such as child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), distance to school, security concerns, cultural values and the costs of schooling all prevent girls and women from participating in educational opportunities. Thanks to grants from the governments Australia and Canada, COL is using open and distance learning (ODL) and technology in Pakistan to support the schooling and skills training of girls and women, improve their livelihoods and end CEFM.

One of COL’s partners in Pakistan, the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC), reached out to girls in their homes to register them in mobile and stationary training centres. SPARC provided life skills and vocational skills training to the girls for up to six weeks. Sixty safe learning environments for girls were established. In total, 9,598 girls and women from 180 communities/villages were reached, and all completed a locally relevant vocational course for employability.

Daily sessions are delivered by social mobilisers from COL’s partner Bedari to enhance girls’ confidence and build their knowledge about decision making, entrepreneurship, financial management, health, social rights, the consequences of CEFM and other topics vital for their self-growth; 240 girls have completed self-growth sessions. Job fairs, career counselling and referrals to banks for financial aid have resulted in 115 girls securing microloans, 443 girls being involved in internship opportunities and 101 engaging in income-generating activities.
To increase community understanding about the harmful effects of CEFM and the numerous benefits of stopping it, Bedari and SPARC reached 7,937 community members and held 313 meetings and events, including 18 theatre performances, with stakeholders. They also formed committees of prominent community members, distributed pamphlets and made door-to-door visits.

A total of 128 staff members were trained in technology integration, gender mainstreaming, child protection strategies, ODL, content development and delivery, and monitoring and evaluation. Bedari and SPARC established 17 exchanges with other civil society individuals and organisations. These included local, regional and national government officials, the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority of Punjab, and a network of 49 legal councils, whose volunteer lawyers promote and protect human rights. Nationally, Bedari lobbied against CEFM at meetings with parliamentarians, the National Council for Social Welfare, and the Child Rights Movement and at forums such as the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Alliance. Bedari also developed the documentary *A Tale of Two Marriages*, which was seen by more than 120 community members and stopped the marriage of one teenage girl.

So far, Bedari has stopped six child marriages through the GIRLS Inspire project.

### Regional Centre

**COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE FOR ASIA**

COL’s Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) continues to promote the use of electronic media resources for distance education in the Commonwealth Asian countries. The Vice Chancellor of AIOU is a member of the CEMCA Advisory Council, which meets annually to review progress and provide future direction to CEMCA.

### Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partnerships support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Such partnerships include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Pakistan include:

- Allama Iqbal Open University
- Bedari
- Higher Education Commission
- Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
- Virtual University of Pakistan

### Special Events

#### 2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Asia Regional Consultation was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in December 2016. Professor Naveed A. Malik, Rector of the Virtual University of Pakistan, attended.

#### 8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in
November 2016. Delegates from Pakistan included: Mr Adnan Riaz, Mr Hamid Ali Nadeem, Mr Moiz Uddin Ahmed Siddiqui, Mr Naveed A. Malik, Ms Sabeen Almas, Ms Sadia Hussain, Mr Safeer Khan, Mr Raffat Shuja and Mr Shabab Khan.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

3rd E-Learning and Distance Education Conference

In March 2016, the President and Chief Executive Officer of COL, Professor Asha Kanwar, delivered a keynote speech titled “Skilling Our Youth” at the 3rd E-Learning and Distance Education conference, organised by the Virtual University of Pakistan.

AIOUInternational Seminar

Professor Kanwar visited Pakistan again in May in 2016. At an international seminar on the Development of a National Policy for ODL, organised by AIOU, she gave the keynote speech and had meetings with the chairman and executive director of Pakistan’s Higher Education Commission. COL is a key player in national ODL policy development in Pakistan, and Professor Kanwar’s visit strengthened existing partnerships with both AIOU and the Commission.

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

• improved sustainable livelihoods;
• increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
• improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Pakistan to address its specific challenges in education while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

**Gender Profile: Pakistan** is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

**The Impact of the Commonwealth of Learning, 2006–2015** documents and analyses the impact of COL’s initiatives and makes recommendations on future directions for the institution.

**Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming** is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

**Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries** is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries of how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

**Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework** is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

**Open Educational Resources (OER) Guide for Students in Post-Secondary and Higher Education** was published in 2016 as a guide, particularly for students in small states of the Commonwealth, to evaluating and using OER.

**Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017**, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

**Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016** is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

**Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation**, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

**The State of Open Universities in the Commonwealth: A Perspective on Performance, Competition and Innovation** critically examines specialist ODL universities in the Commonwealth.

**Understanding Open Educational Resources**, by Neil Butcher and Andrew Moore, is a series of lessons designed for teachers in low-resource classrooms, explaining how they can use OER to support classroom learning.

**Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET** (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
**Key Facts**

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1965
- **Population:** 5,412,000 (2013)
- **GDP:** 3.5% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 9
- **Official languages:** English, Malay, Tamil, Chinese (Mandarin)
- **Currency:** Singapore dollar

**Geography**

- **Area:** 699 sq km (including 63 small islands)
- **Coastline:** 193 km
- **Capital city:** Singapore
- **Population density (per sq km):** 7,742

Public spending on education was three per cent of GDP in 2013. By the 1990s, primary education was virtually universal. There are six years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises six years and secondary four, the latter having two cycles each of two years. Secondary education is streamed at three levels, according to measured ability, leading to junior college or vocational institutions. Some 99 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2008).

The principal universities are the National University of Singapore (founded in 1905), Nanyang Technological University (1981, as Nanyang Technological Institute), Singapore Management University (2000), Singapore Institute of Technology (2009) and Singapore University of Technology and Design (inaugurated in May 2012). The National University of Singapore has 36,000 students from 100 countries, Nanyang Technological University 33,500 and Singapore Management University some 7,200. SIM University, a private institution founded in 2005, offers academic programmes aimed at working professionals. There are several other private universities, most of which are in partnership with business schools or technology institutes in Europe or the USA.

Other tertiary institutions include the National Institute of Education (founded in 1950 as the Teachers’ Training College, becoming part of Nanyang Technological University in 1991), Singapore Polytechnic (1954), Ngee Ann Polytechnic (1963), Temasek Polytechnic (1990), Nanyang Polytechnic (1992), the Institute of Technical Education (1992) and Republic Polytechnic (2002). Cooperation between industry and technological education is well developed, and retraining and education for older adults is an important goal. There is virtually no illiteracy among people aged 15–24.

**SOURCE:** http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

**COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

The Honourable Nurul Islam Nahid, Minister of Education, People’s Republic of Bangladesh, serves as the regional representative for Asia on the COL Board of Governors.

**COL FOCAL POINT**

Ms Lay Kheng, Senior Officer, International Relations, Planning and International Cooperation, Ministry of Education, serves as the COL Focal Point.

**Strategic Plan 2015–2021**

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Singapore is in the areas of open/innovative schooling, teacher education and technology-enabled learning.

Education

OPEN/INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING

In August 2017, COL’s Senior Adviser: Open Schooling conducted a workshop with ministerial representatives from five countries where the Open/Innovative Schooling (OIS) model is implemented (Belize, Mozambique, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu and Zambia). The purpose of the workshop, organised at Singapore’s National Institute of Education (NIE), was to share experiences in the implementation of COL’s OIS model in mainstream and open schools, and to provide an opportunity for these participants to align country implementation strategies, find common solutions to challenges, and identify innovative ways to increase the programme’s momentum. The workshop deepened participants’ understanding of the OIS model and created a network among the countries where it is being used.

TEACHER EDUCATION

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.

COL’s Education Specialist: Teacher Education visited the Singapore NIE in May 2016 and participated in the training of 29 teacher educators from Africa. This training focused on supporting teacher educators in their integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in their curricula and classes. ICT integration is a major component in the enhancement of curricula and the adoption of open and distance learning (ODL) methodologies.

Skills

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a MOOC for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Five teachers from Singapore participated in both courses.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partnerships support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partnerships include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Singapore include the Ministry of Education.
Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

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A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

• improved sustainable livelihoods;
• increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
• improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Singapore to promote cooperation and share best practices with other Commonwealth countries, especially in teacher education, skills development and technology-enabled learning.
COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

*Gender Profile: Singapore* is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

*The Impact of the Commonwealth of Learning, 2006–2015* documents and analyses the impact of COL’s initiatives and makes recommendations on future directions for the institution.

*Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming* is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

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*Understanding Open Educational Resources*, by Neil Butcher and Andrew Moore, is a series of lessons designed for teachers in low-resource classrooms, explaining how they can use OER to support classroom learning.

*Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET* (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Sri Lanka

Key Facts

- Joined Commonwealth: 1948
- Population: 21,273,000 (2013)
- Primary enrolment: 94%
- GDP: 4.6% p.a. 1990–2013
- UN HDI world ranking: 73
- Official languages: Sinhala, Tamil
- Currency: Sri Lanka rupee

Geography

- Area: 65,610 sq km
- Coastline: 1,340 km
- Capital city: Colombo
- Public spending density (per sq km): 324

Public spending on education was 1.7 per cent of GDP in 2012. There are nine years of compulsory education, starting at age five. Primary school comprises five years and secondary eight, the latter having two cycles of four years. Some 97 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2010). The school year starts in January.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) recognises 15 public universities and 17 higher education institutes, and there are four other public universities that come under other departments of government (2013). Leading universities include: the University of Colombo, which was established — as the University of Ceylon — in 1942, when Ceylon Medical College (founded in 1870) and Ceylon University College (1921) were merged; the University of Kelaniya; the University of Peradeniya; and the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), which provides courses through distance learning. Technical colleges offer courses up to the diploma level in engineering and business.

The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 1.80:1 (2011). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 98 per cent (2010).

In 1980, Sri Lanka hosted the 8th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, in Colombo. Commonwealth education ministers meet every three years to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Honourable Nurul Islam Nahid, Minister of Education, People’s Republic of Bangladesh, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for Asia.

COL FOCAL POINT

Mr S. U. Wijerathne, Additional Secretary, Planning and Performance Review, Ministry of Education, is the COL Focal Point.

NOTABLE MENTION

Professor Uma Coomaraswamy is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Dr Tara de Mel is a former member of COL’s Board of Governors.

Mr H. M. Sirisena is a former member of COL’s Board of Governors.

Professor D. S. Wijeyesekera is a former member of COL’s Board of Governors.
As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Sri Lanka revolves around the areas of gender, higher education, Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) and open educational resources (OER).

**Strategic Plan 2015–2021**

**Education**

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Higher Education initiative works to foster human resources for social and economic development across the Commonwealth. It supports higher education institutions and ministries in capacity building, policy development and curriculum reform. COL is working with OUSL to offer the Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration and Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programme. OUSL also holds a seat on the programme’s Executive Governing Board and Academic Board.

In 2015–2016, COL supported a Quality Enhancement Tools Workshop for the University of Jaffna in Sri Lanka, where 13 tools were developed. COL’s Education Specialist for Higher Education visited the University of Jaffna in November 2016 to facilitate a workshop on the development of quality enhancement tools, as part of addressing the COL Review and Improvement Model’s external verification recommendations, adopted by the university’s senate. The process enhanced the institution’s pursuit of a continuous quality improvement approach.

**TEACHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.

COL’s Vice President visited Sri Lanka in December 2015, meeting with the Additional Secretary and Focal Point in the Ministry of Education and briefing him about COL activities. He also met with the Vice Chancellor and professors of OUSL and identified strategies for strengthening teacher education. He reviewed the L3F activities of OUSL, the University of Ruhuna and MOBITEL. These meetings helped strengthen the link between COL and the Sri Lankan government.

COL supported two workshops for advanced information and communication technologies (ICT) course development at OUSL in August 2015 and July 2016. In 2016, COL commissioned a consultant to work with the Ministry of Education to develop OER in English Language Teaching.

**Skills**

**LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS**

COL’s L3F initiative empowers farming communities through the use of open and distance learning (ODL) and flexible and blended approaches. It was officially launched in Sri Lanka in 2007 and is well established now. COL contributes to the implementation of L3F in Sri Lanka through its support to OUSL and the University of Ruhuna. The focus of the University of Ruhuna in 2016 was, among other things, to increase the number of farmers involved in mushroom production, expand the use of ODL for farmer extension, and strengthen the human resource capacity of agriculture divisions in ICT-based extension.

The project supported: the development of gender-sensitive ODL materials; facilitator training in ODL materials development and participatory learning skills; blended learning on mushroom production; strengthening of the voicemail system for mobile-based learning; workshops in entrepreneurship and business-plan development; the creation of links between L3F participants and financial institutions, including state banks; capacity building for Agricultural Extension Field Workers and for Extension Officers in ICT-based extension and L3F; and the offering of a
computer-literacy training course for female students at the University of Ruhuna.

More than 5,500 participants accessed learning resources, which led to both increased production and improved mushroom yields. Telecommunication companies such as MOBITEL and Ericsson Telecommunication partnered with OUSL and the University of Ruhuna to provide technical and infrastructural facilities. The Department of Export Agriculture, the Department of Agriculture and financial institutions were also actively involved in L3F in Sri Lanka.

In 2017, the Ministry of Telecommunication and Digital Infrastructure spearheaded a country-wide scale-up of L3F, with technical support from OUSL and the University of Ruhuna. The ministry and MOBITEL employed a full-time staff member responsible for the expansion of L3F. The University of Colombo has joined OUSL and the University of Ruhuna in the L3F consortium and is helping to expand L3F to the Batticaloa district. Ericsson Telecommunication donated 20 computers for an ICT centre in Batticaloa, to support the digital literacy of girls from L3F households.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The Technical and Vocational Skills Development initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to improved quality skills training. A key aspect of the programme is the capacity building of partner organisations in course design and materials development. In this triennium, COL partnered with the University of Vocational Technology to develop a National Diploma in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Teacher Education by distance learning. The University of Vocational Technology continues to offer this programme.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

With COL’s support, OUSL completed the development of two courses: i) Introduction to Android and ii) Programming with Python. As part of the advanced ICT course development project started with six open universities, these courses form a collection to be launched by educational institutions in the Commonwealth.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February and November–December 2017; 64 teachers from Sri Lanka participated in both cohorts of the TEL MOOC.

In 2015, a National Workshop on the Participatory Video Storytelling Programme was implemented by the Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum in partnership with the Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya. The objective of this programme was to build the capacity of youths to produce community videos on issues affecting underprivileged communities in Sri Lanka and disseminate them through social media. This programme aimed to provide knowledge and skills on community learning and its relevance for producing community videos. The programme engaged 20 youths from Sinhalese, Muslim and Tamil backgrounds, who were given eight days of training on producing community videos highlighting various social, cultural, economic and political issues affecting communities in different regions across Sri Lanka.

OER play an important role in ensuring equitable access to quality learning materials across the Commonwealth and beyond. COL is committed to developing and promoting the use of OER among institutions, organisations and governments through capacity-building and advocacy programmes and the development of OER policies.

A paper stemming from COL’s OER-based eLearning professional development online course at the Open University of Sri Lanka received an ICDE Prize for Innovation and Best Practice – 2015 at the 26th ICDE World Conference, held at Sun City, South Africa in October 2015. In January 2016, a capacity-building workshop on the use/reuse of OER took place in Sri Lanka in collaboration with OUSL; 24 academics participated.

In 2016, with COL support and the guidance of the Ministry of Education, OUSL undertook an advocacy programme to promote the development of draft OER policies for Sri Lanka’s nine provincial ministries of education (PMoE). The policies aimed to provide direction in the use of OER and increase access to, as
Within a six-month period, the project built awareness among key stakeholders of the concept and impact of OER, advocated for the necessity and benefits of provincial OER policies for education, initiated the process of drafting OER policies for each province, identified champions in each province to draft the policies, and provided ongoing online support to those champions, leading to final draft policies. During this intervention, approximately 60 policy makers country-wide were involved in the development of the final drafts for the nine provinces.

As a follow-up, COL provided support to a three-day National Workshop on Provincial OER Policy Implementation, which brought together 42 key stakeholders to finalise the provincial policies for potential adoption and implementation. Key results of the workshop included: detailed procedures for policy implementation in each provincial council, including key resource persons within the PMoE and Provincial Directorates of Education; and timelines for implementing the plan in the nine provinces.

In early 2017, OUSL completed a 12-part video-based course on Instructional Video Production for Teaching and Learning. This is a hands-on course on how to use technologies such as smart phones to capture, edit and publish high-quality instructional videos for teaching and learning.

Gender is a cross-cutting theme in all of COL’s work. COL aims to harness the potential of ODL to expand access to education and improve learning outcomes for girls and women, as well as boys and men, by integrating a gender perspective into ODL practice and delivery. The focus is on building capacity for gender mainstreaming among partners in both formal and non-formal education.

Three universities in Sri Lanka conducted gender audits and developed gender roadmaps using COL’s Institutional Gender Scorecard. COL is now working with 12 additional universities in Sri Lanka to support this process in their institutions. In 2015–2016, the University of Peradeniya pilot-tested COL’s Institutional Gender Scorecard and the University of Ruhuna developed a gender roadmap to address its gender audit findings.

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Sri Lanka include:

- Ministry of Telecommunication and Digital Infrastructure
- Open University of Sri Lanka
- Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum
- University Grants Commission
- University of Peradeniya
- University of Ruhuna

Special Events

2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Asia Regional Consultation was held in December 2016 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Waradana De Silva, K. G. H. Uditha Ratnayake, Nalin Danushka Suraweera Arachchige and Nanda Wanniarachchi were Sri Lanka’s COL-supported participants at PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE FOR ASIA ADVISORY COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

Sri Lanka hosted the 17th Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia Advisory Council annual meeting at OUSL, Colombo on 11 December 2017. Members representing Bangladesh, India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka were in attendance.

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

• improved sustainable livelihoods;
• increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
• improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Sri Lanka to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

*Gender Profile: Sri Lanka* is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

*The Impact of the Commonwealth of Learning, 2006–2015* documents and analyses the impact of COL’s initiatives and makes recommendations on future directions for the institution.

*Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming* is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

*Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries* is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries of how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

*Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework* is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

*Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017*, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

*Open Educational Resources (OER) Guide for Students in Post-Secondary and Higher Education* was published in 2016 as a guide, particularly for students in small states of the Commonwealth, to evaluating and using OER.

*Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016* is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

*Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation*, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

*The State of Open Universities in the Commonwealth: A Perspective on Performance, Competition and Innovation* critically examines specialist ODL universities in the Commonwealth.

*Understanding Open Educational Resources*, by Neil Butcher and Andrew Moore, is a series of lessons designed for teachers in low-resource classrooms, explaining how they can use OER to support classroom learning.

*Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET* (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: [http://oasis.col.org](http://oasis.col.org).
CARIBBEAN AND THE AMERICAS REGION

Antigua and Barbuda
Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
Dominica
Grenada
Guyana
Jamaica
St Kitts and Nevis
Saint Lucia
St Vincent and the Grenadines
Trinidad and Tobago
The Commonwealth of Learning

CARIBBEAN AND THE AMERICAS REGION

The Caribbean and the Americas region of the Commonwealth comprises 13 Member States. One is Canada, ten are island nations, one is located in Central America (Belize) and one is in South America (Guyana). The region has a population of approximately 42 million. Among the 13 Member States across the region, Canada has the largest population, with about 35 million in 2013, while St. Kitts and Nevis has the smallest, with about 54,000. The populations of Jamaica and of Trinidad and Tobago are in the millions, while the other nine countries are in the tens or hundreds of thousands.

Canada hosts COL’s headquarters, facilitating Canadian government support, and serves on the COL Board of Governors as a major donor. All other countries in the region are confronting development issues addressed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), not least of which is the threat of climate change.

COL focuses on adding value to the countries’ efforts to reach the SDGs, particularly SDG4. It supports the Commonwealth governments and institutions of the Caribbean in the use of appropriate, affordable technologies to improve and expand learning for sustainable development. Its initiatives in formal education include emphasis on quality and inclusive secondary and higher education and the strengthening of teacher development programmes. In the area of skills, COL supports the expansion of access to technical and vocational education, the reinforcement of non-formal education in agriculture, and technology-enabled learning. These initiatives have been designed to achieve socially inclusive and gender-sensitive human resource development at lower economic and environmental costs.

COL’s major regional initiatives in the Commonwealth Caribbean countries between 2015 and 2018 are outlined below:

• The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) serves all the Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean region. Initiated by the ministers of education of developing small states of the Commonwealth, VUSSC supports the collaborative development and sharing of open educational resources (OER) to promote learning for sustainable development. VUSSC is committed to the collaborative development of open resources for education, training and capacity building and promotes the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to broaden access to education. Through VUSSC, COL supported the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in revising its regional open and distance learning policy for the Caribbean, in alignment with the CARICOM Human Resource Development 2030 Strategy.

• COL’s Open/Innovative Schooling initiative focuses on training teachers in eLearning, using OER, improving the management of open schools and supporting the use of appropriate technologies. Belize and Trinidad and Tobago have adopted the Open/Innovative Schooling model.

• The Open Textbook Forum was held in October 2015 in Antigua and Barbuda, and representatives from several of the Caribbean countries participated. The forum included a series of workshops that focused on the development of OER policies and the strengthening of open textbook initiatives in the region. This forum was one of the initiatives featuring and promoting OER.

• The Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration and Public Administration
CEMBA/CEMPA programmes are the outcome of collaboration between COL and several Member States. Initially, five courses were generously contributed by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in India. Then, the whole complement of 22 courses was developed by curriculum designers and writers from Australia, Canada, Hong Kong SAR, India, New Zealand and Sri Lanka. The flexible and modular CEMBA/CEMPA programmes are geared towards delivering high-quality learning and professional development opportunities in participating countries. Both Guyana and Jamaica have institutions offering the CEMBA/CEMPA.

- The Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD) initiative uses flexible and blended learning approaches to increase equitable access to quality TVSD. COL has worked with national training authorities from Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago to develop the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) Assessor Training as OER. Launched in February 2017, the online training aims to improve the efficiency and affordability of this qualification, which all teachers and trainers working in CVQs are required to have.

- COL, partnering with the Joint Board of Teacher Education in the Caribbean region, has developed diagnostic instruments for children with special learning needs. Guidelines for Online Assessment for Teachers and Teacher Educators are being finalised for the Caribbean region.

- The Caribbean and the Americas OER Regional Consultation, which provided opportunities for delegates to learn more about OER and contribute to the 2nd World OER Congress, was held in April 2017 in Brazil.
Antigua and Barbuda

Key Facts
- Joined Commonwealth: 1981
- Population: 90,000 (2013)
- Primary enrolment: 85%
- GDP: 0.7% p.a. 1990–2013
- UN HDI world ranking: 61
- Official language: English
- Currency: Eastern Caribbean dollar

Geography
- Area:
  - Antigua: 280 sq km
  - Barbuda: 161 sq km
  - Redonda: 1.6 sq km
- Coastline: 153 km
- Capital city: St. John’s
- Population density (per sq km): 203

Public spending on education was three per cent of GDP in 2009. There are 11 years of compulsory education, starting at the age of five. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary five. Some 91 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2007). The school year starts in September. The government administers the majority of the schools.

Antigua State College in St. John’s provides technical and teacher education, GCE A-Level and first-year University of the West Indies courses. Antigua and Barbuda is a partner in the regional University of the West Indies, which has its main campuses in Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 2.00:1 (2011).

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS
H.E. Hubert J. Charles, Ambassador/Special Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dominica, serves on the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for the Caribbean.

COL FOCAL POINT
The COL Focal Point is Dr Patricia Benn, Deputy Principal, Antigua State College.

NOTABLE MENTION
Ms Peecheeta Spencer, former Principal of Antigua State College, is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021
As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Antigua and Barbuda is primarily in the areas of higher and tertiary education through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth, lifelong learning for farmers, open schooling and technology-enabled learning.

Education

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH
Antigua and Barbuda continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Initiated by ministers of education of
developing small states of the Commonwealth, VUSSC supports the collaborative development and sharing of open educational resources (OER) to promote learning for sustainable development.

VUSSC is committed to the collaborative development of open resources for education, training and capacity building, and the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) to broaden access to education. Eleven new VUSSC courses are now available to partners, including Antigua State College.

Skills

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS (L3F)

COL formalised its partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs (MALFBA) of the government of Antigua and Barbuda in November 2016. As a result of this partnership, COL is working with Antigua and Barbuda’s Agricultural Extension Division and the Support for Women and Youth in Agriculture Project, a joint initiative of the Ministry of Social Transformation and Human Resource Development (MSTHRD) and MALFBA to strengthen the agricultural sector and provide livelihoods for poor and vulnerable women and youths. In June 2017, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between COL and MALFBA to launch COL’s Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) in Antigua and Barbuda. The L3F model empowers farming communities through the use of open and distance learning (ODL) and flexible and blended learning.

To support the two ministries in adopting L3F, COL implemented the following activities:

• building the capacity of staff from the two ministries in the use of gender-sensitive and ICT-based L3F strategies in farmer education — including the development of web-based and mobile phone-based learning materials and the utilisation of Aptus in the agricultural extension system;

• conducting baseline surveys and learner needs assessments in selected communities within the twin-island country;

• identifying a group of 200 small-scale farmers (at least 60 per cent women) from the assessed communities and establishing strong, gender-sensitive social learning capital among the group through mobilisation, sensitisation and leadership development;

• conducting stakeholder interactive meetings with selected institutions within the agricultural, ICT and financial value chains to invite their participation in the L3F programme through a win-win framework;

• strengthening the capacity of MALFBA in developing multimedia-based ODL materials;

• involving trained extension officers of both ministries in conducting a six-month literacy programme for the 200 selected farmers, with a specific focus on strengthening social and financial capital and establishing sustainable agribusiness enterprises to enable them to become model entrepreneurs;

• monitoring the performance of the 200 farmers over the six-month period to chart their ability to improve their farming practices, function in groups, access and manage financial resources, and establish and run profitable micro-level agribusiness enterprises; and

• evaluating the outputs and outcomes of this L3F pilot phase to inform the strategies for implementing the L3F model nationally.

L3F in Antigua and Barbuda recorded significant success, with extension staff from MALFBA and MSTHRD gaining capacity in the use of ICT and ODL in farmer extension. Two hundred farmers drawn from the South West, South East, South Central, North East and North West agricultural districts also gained essential agricultural, economic and livelihood skills. The programme created a forum for constructive engagement among a large array of stakeholders from within other government departments (agriculture, social transformation, finance), ICT companies and the financial sector towards jointly addressing identified community needs.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

COL encourages the integration of technology-enabled learning supported by OER policies and practices to improve teaching and learning for skills development. Seventeen teachers from Antigua and Barbuda participated in the Open Textbook Forum held in October 2015. With support from COL,
Antigua and Barbuda’s Ministry of Education, Science and Technology developed two courses on entrepreneurship. These courses were an outcome of the Open Textbook Forum, which focused on developing OER policies and strengthening open-textbook initiatives in the Eastern Caribbean region.

A study commissioned by COL in Antigua and Barbuda found that the use of open textbooks at Antigua State College resulted in a number of benefits for learners, including decreased student costs, improved learning outcomes and increased engagement.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocation education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017; 105 teachers from Antigua and Barbuda participated in both courses.

**Special Events**

**2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress**

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments. The recommendations of the Congress have the potential to strengthen the educational system in Antigua and Barbuda.

The Caribbean and the Americas Regional Consultation was held in Brazil in April 2017. COL’s Focal Point for Antigua and Barbuda, Dr Patricia Benn, participated.

**8th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF8)**

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. COL supported the attendance of Dr Patricia Benn and Jacqueline Peters Richardson.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society on topics related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Antigua and Barbuda include:

- Antigua State College
- Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

• improved sustainable livelihoods;
• increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
• improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with our partners in Antigua and Barbuda to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including:

*Boys’ Underperformance in Education: Revisiting the Issue in the Commonwealth,* published by COL in 2017, follows up on a 2006 report addressing the factors that are critical to understanding boys’ underperformance in Commonwealth countries since 2006. It contains case studies from nine countries, including Antigua and Barbuda.

*Gender Profile: Antigua and Barbuda* is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

*Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming* is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

*Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries* is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

*Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework* is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.
Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016 is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is intended for authorities responsible for quality assurance and institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. It aims to facilitate credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.

Technology-Enabled Learning in the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries: A Baseline Study examines the current status of technology-enabled learning in the 12 Commonwealth Caribbean countries, including a country profile for Antigua and Barbuda.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series), published in 2017, is a COL–UNESCO publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

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The Bahamas

Key Facts

- Joined Commonwealth: 1973
- Population: 377,000 (2013)
- Primary enrolment: 98%
- GDP: −0.3% p.a. 1990–2013
- UN HDI world ranking: 51
- Official language: English
- Currency: Bahamian dollar

Geography

- Area: Total 13,939 sq km
- Coastline: 3,540 km
- Capital city: Nassau
- Population density (per sq km): 27

There are 12 years of compulsory education, starting at age five. Primary school comprises six years and secondary six. Some 89 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2009). The school year starts in September.

The College of The Bahamas (now the University of The Bahamas), the country’s leading higher education institution, provides a diverse curriculum with courses leading to bachelor’s degree level. The Eugene Dupuch Law School opened in September 1998 as a part of the University of the West Indies (UWI). It offers the same curriculum as the Norman Manley Law School in Jamaica and the Hugh Wooding Law School in Trinidad and Tobago. UWI has an extramural department in Nassau and main campuses in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Other government-assisted higher technical and professional schools and private colleges provide clerical, secretarial, accounting and computer training.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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Professor Clement Sankat is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point is Ms Michelle Sears, Education Officer, The Bahamas Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s areas of focus in The Bahamas are in eLearning and tertiary education, the latter through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

The Bahamas continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). The VUSSC partnership represents 30 small states of the Commonwealth dedicated to expanding access to tertiary education. 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.

VUSSC is committed to the collaborative development of open resources, training and capacity building, and the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) to broaden access to education. The emphasis is now on delivering VUSSC courses and programmes while promoting the use of the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF). COL has supported the development of the TQF, which has been shared among the VUSSC member institutions to compare their quality assurance standards. Eleven new VUSSC courses have been made available to partners during this triennium.

At the 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, held in The Bahamas, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between COL, the Commonwealth Secretariat – Youth Affairs, and UWI’s Open Campus to work together to convert the diploma and degree in Youth Work programmes to OER. The bachelor’s degree course on Youth in Development Work has been uploaded to an eLearning platform. This course was developed by UWI in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and COL.

Skills

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

COL encourages the integration of technology-enabled learning supported by open educational resources (OER) policies and practices to improve teaching and learning for skills development. Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocation education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Significantly, 87 teachers from The Bahamas participated in both courses.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

In The Bahamas, COL’s partners include the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Caribbean and the Americas Regional Consultation was held in São Paolo, Brazil in April 2017.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in open and distance learning (ODL) to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Denise Gaspard-Richards of the Open Campus at UWI presented a paper entitled “Effectiveness of Agile Design in Wrap-Around Content Development.” COL supported the attendance of Ms Erecia Hepburn from The Bahamas at PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil
society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the next Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

**COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS ANNUAL MEETING**

The annual meeting of the COL Board of Governors took place in The Bahamas in June 2016, coinciding with the 19th CCEM. Leading up to the CCEM, COL organised a special meeting of ministers and senior officials from the small states to brief them about VUSSC. COL Board members and ministers discussed future directions for VUSSC and suggested that courses be developed on the blue economy, climate change, youths and skills. The Honourable Jerome Fitzgerald, The Bahamas Minister of Education, Science and Technology, chaired the event. The proposed course on Understanding the Blue Economy has since been developed and offered online by the University of Seychelles.

**Looking Ahead: 2021**

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- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
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COL looks forward to working with The Bahamas to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

**Publications and Resources**

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Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016 is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

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Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is intended for authorities responsible for quality assurance and institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. It aims to facilitate credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.

Technology-Enabled Learning in the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries: A Baseline Study examines the current status of technology-enabled learning in the 12 Commonwealth Caribbean countries, including a country profile for The Bahamas.

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For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1966
- **Population:** 285,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 97% (2011)
- **GDP:** 0.9% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 59
- **Official language:** English
- **Currency:** Barbados dollar

Geography

- **Area:** 431 sq km
- **Coastline:** 97 km
- **Capital city:** Bridgetown
- **Population density (per sq km):** 661

Public spending on education was 5.6 per cent of GDP in 2012. There are 11 years of compulsory education, starting at age five. Primary school comprises six years and secondary five. Computers are widely available to schools. Some 93 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2010). The school year starts in September.

The University of the West Indies (UWI) has a campus at Cave Hill, Barbados as well as in Jamaica and in Trinidad and Tobago. A UNESCO Chair in Educational Technologies was established in 1999 at the Barbados campus. Other tertiary institutions include: the Barbados Community College, with its Hospitality Institute; Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic; and Erdiston Teachers’ Training College. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 2.50:1 (2011). There is virtually no illiteracy among people aged 15–24.

In 1990, Barbados hosted the 11th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, in Bridgetown. Commonwealth Education Ministers meet every three years to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

H.E. Hubert J. Charles, Ambassador/Special Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dominica, serves on the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for the Caribbean.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point is Mrs Karen Best, Chief Education Officer, Barbados Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation.

NOTABLE MENTION

Dr Luz Longsworth, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the Open Campus at the University of the West Indies, is a COL Honorary Fellow. Dr Longsworth was awarded the title of Honorary Fellow in 2016 at the 8th Pan Commonwealth Forum, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s priorities in Barbados include higher education through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth, open educational resources (OER), technology-enabled learning and OER policy development. COL has supported the development of an information and communication technologies (ICT) policy and a regional open and distance learning (ODL) policy framework.
**Education**

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Education Specialist for Higher Education visited Barbados in September 2015 and held meetings with the COL ODL Chair and his team at the UWI Open Campus. Among the topics discussed were the development of an open access programme, a research study on ODL users and potential users in the Caribbean, internal staff capacity building for quality assurance, and the application of COL’s Review and Improvement Model to ensure quality at the UWI Open Campus.

COL supported the Hospitality Institute of Barbados Community College in conducting capacity building. The instructors will use their new skills to develop online and blended courses in tourism.

**TEACHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.

COL, partnering with the Joint Board of Teacher Education in the Caribbean region, has developed diagnostic instruments for children with special learning needs. Dr Patricia Saul, from Erdiston Teachers’ Training College, participated in a consultative meeting to discuss the development of the tools.

**VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

Barbados is a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). The VUSSC partnership represents 30 small states of the Commonwealth dedicated to expanding access to tertiary education. 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 delivering VUSSC courses and programmes while promoting the use of the Transnational Qualifications Framework.

Three workshops were held in Barbados in collaboration with Barbados Community College during 2016: Using ICT for Language Training, Online Course Design/Development and Online Teaching Strategies; there were 48 participants. Barbados Community College has been utilising VUSCC courses such as Sustainable Agriculture.

**Skills**

**TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

The Technical and Vocational Skills Development initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to improved quality skills training. COL works with organisational partners and governments to create contextualised, high-quality models using educational media and technology to scale up skills development.

COL worked with national training authorities from Barbados, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago to develop the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) Assessor Training as online OER. Launched in February 2017, the online training aims to improve the efficiency and affordability of this qualification, which all teachers and trainers working in CVQs are required to have. Officers from the TVET Council Barbados have been trained in online course development and facilitation as well as Moodle administration.

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocation education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Significantly, 168 teachers from Barbados participated in both courses.
Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Barbados include:

- Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
- TVET Council Barbados

Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments. The Caribbean and the Americas Regional Consultation was held in São Paulo, Brazil in April 2017.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Denise Gaspard-Richards of the Open Campus UWI presented a paper entitled “Effectiveness of Agile Design in Wrap-Around Content Development.”

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.
Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

• improved sustainable livelihoods;
• increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
• improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Barbados to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the triennium, including the following:

*Gender Profile: Barbados* is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

*Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming* is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

*Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries* is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how massive open online courses (MOOCs) might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

*Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning's Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework* is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

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Technology-Enabled Learning in the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries: A Baseline Study examines the current status of technology-enabled learning in the 12 Commonwealth Caribbean countries, including a country profile for Barbados.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
### Belize

#### Key Facts
- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1981
- **Population:** 332,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 96%
- **GDP:** 2.0% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 84
- **Official language:** English
- **Currency:** Belize dollar

#### Geography
- **Area:** Total 22,965 sq km
- **Coastline:** 386 km
- **Capital city:** Belmopan
- **Population density (per sq km):** 14

Public spending on education was 6.6 per cent of GDP in 2010. There are ten years of compulsory education, starting at age five. Primary school, which is free of charge, comprises six years and secondary six. Some 91 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2010). The school year starts in September.

The University of Belize opened in 1986. Belize also participates in the regional University of the West Indies (UWI), which has its main campuses in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Galen University, in San Ignacio, is a private university partnered with the University of Indianapolis, in the USA. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 1.60:1 (2011).

**SOURCE:** [http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries](http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries)

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### COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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Professor Clement Sankat is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

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### COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for Belize is Dr Yvonne Palma, Education Officer, Employment Training and Education Services, Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture.

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### Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL is working in the areas of higher education (through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth, VUSSC), open/innovative schooling, open educational resources (OER), OER policy development, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), teacher education and technology-enabled learning.
**TEACHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to be able to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.

COL, partnering with the Joint Board of Teacher Education in the Caribbean region, has developed diagnostic instruments for children with special learning needs.

**OPEN/INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING**

Open schooling is increasingly recognised as a viable solution to the growing demand for equitable access to secondary education. This is especially true for girls and marginalised groups, particularly in remote locations. COL’s Open/Innovative Schooling (OIS) initiative focuses on training teachers in eLearning, using OER, improving the management of open schools and supporting the use of appropriate technologies.

The Canada–Caribbean Chapter of the Commonwealth Open Schooling Association, in collaboration with COL, held its first regional conference on open schooling in mid-August 2015 in Belize. The theme was “Innovative Schooling: Transforming Pedagogy, Increasing Access, to Ensure Learning.” One hundred and thirty participants, mostly from Caribbean countries, attended the conference, where they shared best practices and learned about new software platforms for educators.

COL is working with the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture to expand open schooling in Belize to include 11 evening division schools. COL’s work in Belize will have a special focus on out-of-school youths while continuing to impact mainstream schools by improving throughput and reducing dropout rates.

In March 2017, COL organised a workshop on open schooling management and policy for the directors of all evening division schools and institutes for TVET.

COL is supporting the development of 14 school subjects as eLearning OER over a period of ten months. A resource development workshop enabled 39 staff to build their capacity in technology-enabled learning and the development of eLearning OER content for their schools.

In August 2017, representatives from the ministries of education in Belize, Mozambique, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu and Zambia — who have signed agreements with COL to work together to improve the quality of teaching and learning in mainstream and open schools through eLearning, and to broaden access to schooling for out-of-school youths — met in Singapore. They shared their experiences in the implementation of COL’s OIS model in mainstream and open schools and had the opportunity to align country implementation strategies, find common solutions to challenges and identify innovative ways to increase the programme’s momentum. Phase 1 of the OIS model is now fully operational in Belize, and the process of developing learning resources is in progress.

**VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

Belize continues to be a member of VUSSC. The VUSSC partnership represents 30 small states of the Commonwealth dedicated to expanding access to tertiary education. 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 delivering VUSSC courses and programmes while promoting the use of the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF).

A meeting with Belize’s Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture and institution officials took place during 2015 to strengthen the National Qualifications Framework and link it with the TQF. The eLearning programme Developing and Teaching Online Courses attracted 26 participants, including teachers and educational managers.

Preliminary meetings were held with representatives of the University of Belize to develop a course on educational leadership and to strengthen the university’s quality and learner support system in an integrated manner.
VUSSC is committed to the collaborative development of open content resources for education, training and capacity building, and the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to broaden access to education. Eleven new VUSSC courses have been made available to partner institutions.

Skills

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
The use of flexible and blended learning approaches can increase equitable access to quality technical and vocational skills development. To support increased access, COL works with organisational partners and governments to create contextualised, high-quality models using educational media and technology to scale up skills development.

COL is working with the national training authorities of Belize and other countries in the region to develop the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) Assessor Training curriculum. The training programme, which was launched as an online course in February 2017, aims to improve the efficiency and affordability of the basic training that all teachers and trainers working in CVQs are required to have.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING
COL encourages the integration of technology-enabled learning supported by OER policies and practices to improve teaching and learning for skills development. COL initiated the development of an OER policy with Belize’s Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture. This policy establishes a roadmap for an ICT in education strategy and its implementation in Belize.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocation education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February and November–December 2017; 34 teachers from Belize participated in both courses.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Belize include the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture.

Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS
COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Caribbean and the Americas Regional Consultation was held in São Paulo, Brazil in April 2017. Dr Yvonne Palma, the COL Focal Point for Belize, attended.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)
Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in open and distance learning (ODL) to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Denise
Gaspard-Richards of the Open Campus at UWI presented a paper entitled “Effectiveness of Agile Design in Wrap-Around Content Development.” COL supported the attendance of Dr Lorna McKay at PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, ODL, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

• improved sustainable livelihoods;
• increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
• improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Belize to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including:

*Boys’ Underperformance in Education: Revisiting the Issue in the Commonwealth*, published by COL in 2017, follows up on a 2006 report and addresses the factors that are critical to understanding boys’ underperformance in Commonwealth countries since 2006. It contains case studies from nine countries, including Belize.

*Gender Profile: Belize* is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

*Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming* is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

*Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries* is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.
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Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

Value for Money Review and Social Return on Investment Analysis examines the impact of the open schooling programmes in Belize and Vanuatu. The study concluded that the programmes achieved a social return on investment of $8.59 for every dollar invested.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Dominica

**Key Facts**

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1978
- **Population:** 72,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 92% (2010)
- **GDP:** 1.8% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 93
- **Official language:** English
- **Currency:** Eastern Caribbean dollar

**Geography**

- **Area:** 750 sq km
- **Coastline:** 148 km
- **Capital city:** Roseau
- **Population density (per sq km):** 96

Public spending on education was four per cent of GDP in 2010. There are 12 years of compulsory education, starting at age five. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary five. Some 91 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2010). The school year starts in September.

Further education is provided at a teacher-training college, a nursing school and at the regional University of the West Indies, which has a branch in Dominica and main campuses in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Dominica State College, a publicly funded institution, offers programmes leading to GCE A-level, certificates and associate degrees, plus a large and diverse programme of continuing education for mature students.

**COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

H.E. Hubert J. Charles, Ambassador/Special Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dominica, serves on the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for the Caribbean.

**COL FOCAL POINT**

The COL Focal Point for Dominica is Mrs Chandler Hyacinth, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development.

**Strategic Plan 2015–2021**

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Dominica is primarily in the areas of higher education, open educational resources (OER), OER policy development, open/innovative schooling, teacher education and technical and vocational education and training.

**Education**

**TEACHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national
and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.

COL, partnering with the Joint Board of Teacher Education in the Caribbean region, has developed diagnostic instruments for children with special learning needs.

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Dominica continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). The VUSSC partnership represents 30 small states of the Commonwealth dedicated to expanding access to tertiary education. 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. VUSSC is committed to the collaborative development of open content resources for education, training and capacity building, and the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to broaden access to education. The emphasis is now on delivering VUSSC courses and programmes while promoting the use of the Transnational Qualifications Framework. Eleven new VUSSC courses have been made available.

Dominica State College is involved with VUSSC and received intensive training in ICT for education.

Skills

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The use of flexible and blended learning approaches can increase equitable access to quality technical and vocational skills development. To support increased access, COL works with organisational partners and governments to create contextualised, high-quality models using educational media and technology to scale up skills development.

COL is working with the national training authorities of countries in the region to develop the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) Assessor Training curriculum. The Caribbean Association of National Training Authorities is key to these developments.

The training programme, which was launched as an online course in February 2017, aims to improve the efficiency and affordability of the basic training that all teachers and trainers working in CVQs are required to have.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

Dominica participated in the Open Textbook Forum, held in October 2015 in Antigua and Barbuda. The forum included a series of workshops that focused on the development of OER policies and the strengthening of open textbook initiatives in the region.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocation education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Three teachers from Dominica participated in both courses.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Dominica include the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development.

Special Events

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A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

**Looking Ahead: 2021**

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved sustainable livelihoods;
- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Dominica to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including:

*Gender Profile: Dominica* is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

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*Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework* is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

*Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017*, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

*Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016* is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

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*Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)* is intended for authorities responsible for quality assurance and institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. It aims to facilitate credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.

*Technology-Enabled Learning in the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries: A Baseline Study* examines the current status of technology-enabled learning in the 12 Commonwealth Caribbean countries, including a country profile for Dominica.

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For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
**Key Facts**

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1974
- **Population:** 106,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 87% (2010)
- **GDP:** 1.8% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 79
- **Official language:** English
- **Currency:** Eastern Caribbean dollar

**Geography**

- **Area:** 344.5 sq km
- **Coastline:** 121 km
- **Capital city:** St. George’s
- **Population density (per sq km):** 307

Grenada has 12 years of compulsory education, starting at age five. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary five. The school year starts in September.

T. A. Marryshow Community College was established in 1988 when Grenada National College merged with several other tertiary institutions, including Grenada Teachers College, Grenada Technical and Vocational Institute, and the Institute for Further Education. T. A. Marryshow Community College hosts an open campus of the regional University of the West Indies (UWI). UWI has its main campuses in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. St. George’s University — founded in 1977 — is an offshore American university specialising in medicine. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 1.40:1 (2009).

**Strategic Plan 2015–2021**

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Grenada focuses on higher education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), teacher education and open educational resources (OER).

**Education**

**TEACHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national
and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes. COL, partnering with the Caribbean region’s Joint Board of Teacher Education, has developed diagnostic instruments for children with special learning needs.

**VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

Grenada continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (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. VUSSC is committed to the collaborative development of open resources for education, training and capacity building, and the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to broaden access to education.

VUSSC is working with the Grenada National Accreditation Board in the development of an operational manual and accreditation toolkits. VUSSC also supports the board in capacity building. Grenada can access various VUSSC courses, including a massive open online course (MOOC) on the Blue Economy, which is relevant to small island states. VUSSC is currently working with institutions such as St. George’s University and T. A. Marryshow Community College, Grenada.

**Skills**

**TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

The use of flexible and blended learning approaches can increase equitable access to quality technical and vocational skills development (TVSD). To support increased access, COL works with organisational partners and governments to create contextualised, high-quality models that use educational media and technology to scale up skills development. COL’s TVSD initiative helps partners harness technology to increase access to higher-quality skills training.

COL worked with national training authorities from Barbados, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago to develop the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) Assessor Training as OER. Launched in February 2017, the online training aims to improve the efficiency and affordability of this qualification, which all teachers and trainers working in CVQs are required to have. Thirty-five participants from five institutions in five Caribbean countries, including Grenada, completed the Facilitating Online Courses training in November 2017.

T. A. Marryshow Community College has a strategic objective to use technology in open, distance and flexible learning approaches to increase access to and improve the quality of its programmes. TVSD is supporting capacity building in online learning.

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

Grenada participated in the Open Textbook Forum, which was held in October 2015 in Antigua and Barbuda. The forum included a series of workshops that focused on the development of OER policies and the strengthening of open textbook initiatives in the region. An open textbook project was completed at the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a MOOC for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered from January–February 2017 and November–December 2017; 69 teachers from Grenada participated in both courses.

Capacity building, materials development and policy support for sharing OER and promoting open and distance learning (ODL) are under way. COL has supported the development of Caribbean Community Standards for Teaching and Teacher Education, ICT policy development, a regional ODL policy framework and a national ODL policy for T. A. Marryshow Community College.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in
communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Grenada include:
- Grenada National Accreditation Board
- Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development

Special Events

2nd WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Caribbean and the Americas Regional Consultation was held in April 2017 in São Paulo, Brazil. Mrs Michelle Peters George, Grenada’s Deputy Chief Education Officer, Examinations Unit, Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, participated in the consultation.

8th PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Denise Gaspard-Richards of the Open Campus at UWI presented a paper entitled “Effectiveness of Agile Design in Wrap-Around Content Development.” COL supported the attendance of Dr Pauleen Finlay at PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society relating to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.
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Looking Ahead: 2021

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

*Boys' Underperformance in Education: Revisiting the Issue in the Commonwealth*, published by COL in 2017, follows up on a 2006 report addressing the factors that are critical to understanding boys’ underperformance in Commonwealth countries since 2006. It contains case studies from nine countries, including Grenada.

*Gender Profile: Grenada* is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

*Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming* is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

*Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries* is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

*Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework* is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

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_Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016_ is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

_Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation_, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

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Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1966
- **Population:** 800,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 72%
- **GDP:** 3.0% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 121
- **Official language:** English
- **Currency:** Guyana dollar

Geography

- **Area:** 214,970 sq km
- **Coastline:** 459 km
- **Capital city:** Georgetown
- **Population density (per sq km):** 4

Public spending on education was three per cent of GDP in 2012. There are nine years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises six years and secondary five, the latter having cycles of three and two years. Some 83 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2008). The school year starts in September.

Tertiary institutions include: the University of Guyana (established in 1963), which has law and medical schools, plus campuses in Turkeyen, Georgetown, and Tain Corentyne, Berbice (in the east of the country); Cyril Potter College of Education, based at UG’s Turkeyen campus, with branches in Linden, New Amsterdam and Rose Hall; Guyana College of Agriculture; and the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre at Georgetown (which trains youth workers from Commonwealth countries in the region). UG also provides adult education programmes. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 2.40:1 (2011).

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

H.E. Hubert J. Charles, Ambassador/Special Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dominica, serves on the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for the Caribbean.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for Guyana was vacant as of January 2018.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s priorities in Guyana are in higher education, open educational resources (OER), teacher education, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). COL has a partnership with the University of Guyana to offer the Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration and Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programme. Capacity building, materials development and policy support for sharing OER and promoting open and distance learning (ODL) are under way. COL is also supporting Guyana in providing costing and financing for open schools, and in monitoring and evaluation for the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.
**Education**

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

The University of Guyana (UG) is a partner institution in the CEMBA/CEMPA programme and holds seats on the Executive Governing Board and the Academic Board. The biennial meetings for both boards were held in Botswana in October 2015. The UG Vice Chancellor, Professor Jacob Opadeyi, and the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Mr O’Neil Greaves, were in attendance at the respective meetings. Discussions included how distance education was being deployed for effective human resource development in the institutions of the ten participating countries of the Commonwealth that offer the CEMBA/CEMPA degrees. Guyana has recently extended its contract to offer the CEMBA/CEMPA for five years.

**TEACHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes. COL, partnering with the Joint Board of Teacher Education in the Caribbean region, has developed diagnostic instruments for children with special learning needs. Ms Allison Blair, from Cyril Potter College of Education, participated in a consultative meeting to discuss the development of the diagnostic tools.

Guidelines for Online Assessment for Teachers and Teacher Educators are being finalised for the Caribbean region.

**VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

Guyana continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Initiated by ministers of education of developing small states of the Commonwealth, the VUSSC partnership includes all 30 small states of the Commonwealth and is dedicated to expanding access to tertiary education.

VUSSC is committed to the collaborative development of open resources for education, training and capacity building, and the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to broaden access to education and 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 delivering VUSSC courses and programmes while promoting the use of the Transnational Qualifications Framework. UG has been participating in VUSSC events and courses.

**Skills**

**TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

The use of flexible and blended learning approaches can increase equitable access to quality technical and vocational skills development. To support increased access, COL works with organisational partners and governments to create contextualised, high-quality models using educational media and technology to scale up skills development.

COL is working with the national training authorities of countries in the region to develop the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) Assessor Training curriculum. Guyana is a member of the Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies, which is key to these developments. The training programme, launched as an online course in February 2017, aims to improve the efficiency and affordability of the basic training that all teachers and trainers working in CVQs are required to have.

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017; 38 teachers from Guyana participated in both courses.
Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Guyana include:

- Guyana National Commission for UNESCO
- Ministry of Education
- University of Guyana

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Denise Gaspard-Richards of the University of the West Indies’ Open Campus presented a paper titled “Effectiveness of Agile Design in Wrap-Around Content Development.” COL supported the participation of Ms Kim Spencer in PCF8.

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Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

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For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Key Facts

- Joined Commonwealth: 1962
- Population: 2,784,000 (2013)
- Primary enrolment: 82% (2010)
- GDP: 0.5% p.a. 1990–2012
- UN HDI world ranking: 96
- Official language: English
- Currency: Jamaican dollar

Geography

- Area: 10,991 sq km
- Coastline: 1,020 km
- Capital city: Kingston
- Population density (per sq km): 253

Public spending on education was 6.1 per cent of GDP in 2012. There are six years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises six years and secondary five. Some 95 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2009). The school year starts in September.

The regional University of the West Indies (UWI, established in 1946) has its principal campus at Mona, near Kingston, and other main campuses in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago. The Norman Manley Law School (1973) is located on the Mona campus of UWI. Some 50 other tertiary institutions — public and private — were registered with the University Council of Jamaica in 2011, including: the Management Institute for National Development; the University of Technology; the College of Agriculture, Science and Education; Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts; G. C. Foster College of Physical Education and Sports; Knox Community College; and Northern Caribbean University (a university since 1999, it is located in Mandeville and owned by the Seventh-Day Adventists). The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 2.30:1 (2009). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 95 per cent (2010).

In 1974, Jamaica hosted the 6th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, in Kingston. Commonwealth Education Ministers meet every three years to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest.

Source: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL Board of Governors

H.E. Hubert J. Charles, Ambassador/Special Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dominica, serves on the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for the Caribbean.

The Honourable Burchell Whiteman, OJ, is a COL Honorary Fellow and former Chair of the COL Board of Governors.

The Honourable Sir Alister McIntyre is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Dr Marlene Hamilton is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

COL Focal Point

The COL Focal Point for Jamaica is Dr Phylicia Marshall, Assistant Chief Education Officer, Tertiary Unit, Ministry of Education, Youth and Information.

Notable Mention

The late Dr Dennis H. Irvine was a COL Honorary Fellow.
Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Jamaica is primarily in the areas of gender, higher education, lifelong learning for farmers, teacher education, technical and vocational skills development, and tertiary education through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.

Education

HIGHER EDUCATION

COL’s Higher Education initiative works to develop human resources for social and economic development across the Commonwealth. It supports higher education institutions and ministries in capacity building, policy development and curriculum reform. COL’s Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration and Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programmes are offered by the University College of the Caribbean (UCC). UCC also holds a seat on the programme’s Executive Governing Board and Academic Board.

The biennial meetings of the CEMBA/CEMPA Executive Governing Board and Academic Board were held in Botswana in September 2015. Discussions included how distance education was being deployed for effective human resource development in the ten participating countries of the Commonwealth.

TEACHER EDUCATION

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for better learning outcomes. COL, partnering with the Caribbean region’s Joint Board of Teacher Education, is developing diagnostic instruments for children with special learning needs.

In October 2015, 30 teachers from the University of Technology, Jamaica participated in workshops on the monitoring and evaluation of OER. A COL Education Specialist participated in a consultative meeting with teacher educators in March 2016 to discuss the development of these diagnostic tools, which will help teachers identify children with special needs. The development of the assessment instruments will contribute to the provision of relevant materials for teachers and for teacher training and will promote greater integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching and learning.

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Jamaica continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Initiated by ministers of education of developing small states of the Commonwealth, VUSSC supports the collaborative development and sharing of open educational resources (OER) to promote learning for sustainable development. VUSSC is committed to the collaborative development of open resources for education, training and capacity building, and the use of ICT to broaden access to education.

Browns Town Community College, Knox Community College, Montego Bay Community College and Shortwood Teachers’ College are some of the institutions that participate in VUSSC events and courses. Sixteen educationists completed an online course on Developing and Teaching Online Courses.

Skills

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS

COL’s Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) initiative empowers farming communities, particularly women, through the use of open and distance learning (ODL), linking the process with social and financial capital. COL has partnered with the Rural Agricultural
Development Authority (RADA) to implement the L3F programme since 2014. COL is currently supporting RADA in a range of activities that include building staff capacity in instructional design and ODL course development, facilitating capacity building in farming communities and leaders, and developing and delivering mobile-based learning.

COL’s Education Specialist for Agriculture and Livelihoods visited Jamaica in August 2016 to assess the progress of L3F implementation and discuss strategies for scaling up. Discussions were held on the need to strengthen RADA’s capacity in the development and delivery of quality gender-sensitive L3F approaches so that it could take a lead in increasing the use of L3F in other Caribbean countries. As a result of this visit, an increased number of government, civil society and private organisations recognised the value of L3F, new partnerships were created and marginalised communities were able to access learning.

In the latter half of 2017, RADA facilitated the skills development of 647 farmers in Irish potato production and marketing, through the use of text messaging. Stakeholder workshops connected eight farmer groups with the agribusiness industry. The Agri-Business certificate, launched in collaboration with UWI, was completed by 20 RADA extension officers. RADA also held training for ten of its officers in instructional design and ODL.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD) initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to better skills training. To support greater access, COL works with organisational partners and governments to create contextualised, high-quality models using educational media and technology to scale up skills development. A key aspect of the programme is the capacity building of partner organisations in course design and materials development. COL is working with the Human Employment and Resources Training Trust, National Training Agency (HEART Trust/NTA) to build teachers’ and managers’ capacity in flexible skills development. The use of flexible and blended learning approaches can increase equitable access to quality TVSD. With COL’s support, HEART Trust/NTA has now completed a national flexible learning strategy and it is being implemented.

COL’s Education Specialist for TVSD participated in the 3rd International Conference on TVET in the Caribbean (May 2017), sharing progress in the development of online OER for Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) Assessor Training. Participation in the conference built relationships of potential benefit for TVSD in the Caribbean region and brought sensitisation about CVQ Assessor Training to a wider audience.

COL is working with national training authorities in the region to develop the CVQ Assessor Training curriculum. Jamaica is a member of the Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies, which is key to these developments. Launched as an online course in February 2017, the training programme aims to improve the efficiency and affordability of the basic training that all teachers and trainers working in CVQs are required to have. HEART Trust/NTA is adopting these OER materials for the delivery of their own CVQ assessor training.

Ninety teachers and managers from the HEART Trust/NTA participated in a COL online capacity-building course in flexible skills development. This course is part of the ongoing collaboration between COL and HEART Trust/NTA to support the latter’s commitment to “the systematic design, development and delivery of an integrated, flexible and responsive TVET system, enabling a productive workforce for national priorities and global competitiveness.”

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017; 32 teachers from Jamaica participated in both courses.

COL’s Vice President, Dr K. Balasubramanian, gave a keynote speech at EduVision’s ICT in Education Conference 2016 in Ocho Rios, Jamaica (October 2016), increasing COL’s visibility and strengthening existing partnerships.
Gender

Gender is a cross-cutting theme in all COL’s work. COL aims to harness the potential of ODL to expand access to education and improve learning outcomes for girls/women and boys/men by integrating a gender perspective into ODL practice and delivery. The focus is on building capacity for gender mainstreaming among partners in both formal and non-formal education. COL supported RADA in Jamaica in the development and implementation of a gender equality policy. This policy will guide RADA in its efforts to mainstream gender in policies, research, extension activities and monitoring and evaluation.

STUDY ON LEARNING OF AT-RISK BOYS IN JAMAICA

A baseline data report on at-risk boys in Jamaica was completed in 2015, and a project was undertaken to develop strategies to address the specific learning needs of at-risk boys in order to improve their life chances in two communities in Jamaica. An environmental scan was undertaken in 2015–2016 to map which development stakeholders were working on targeted interventions that address the learning needs of at-risk boys in Jamaica and what each stakeholder was specifically undertaking.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Jamaica include:

- Christina Potato Growers Cooperative Association
- Frazer-Cascade Producer and Marketing Organisation (PMO)
- Joint Board for Teacher Education
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Information
- PANOS Caribbean
- Rural Agricultural Development Authority
- University Council of Jamaica
- University of the Commonwealth Caribbean

Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Caribbean and the Americas Regional Consultation was held in São Paulo, Brazil in April 2017. Dr Phylicia Marshall, the COL Focal Point and the Assistant Chief Education Officer of the Tertiary Unit in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, participated in the consultation on behalf of Jamaica.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016.

Denise Gaspard-Richards of the UWI Open Campus presented a paper entitled “Effectiveness of Agile
Design in Wrap-Around Content Development.” COL supported the attendance of Dr Phylicia Marshall and Ms Michelle Desguottes at PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

PCF4 was held in Jamaica in 2006.

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

• improved sustainable livelihoods;
• increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
• improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Jamaica to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

*Boys’ Underperformance in Education: Revisiting the Issue in the Commonwealth*, published by COL in 2017, follows up on a 2006 report addressing the factors that are critical to understanding boys’ underperformance in Commonwealth countries since 2006. It contains case studies from nine countries, including Jamaica.

*Gender Profile: Jamaica* is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

*Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming* is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

*Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries* is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

*Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework* is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

*Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017*, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

*Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016* is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

*Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation*, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

*Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)* is intended for authorities responsible for quality assurance and institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. It aims to facilitate credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.
Technology-Enabled Learning in the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries: A Baseline Study examines the current status of technology-enabled learning in the 12 Commonwealth Caribbean countries, including a country profile for Jamaica.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

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St. Kitts and Nevis

Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1983
- **Population:** 54,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 81% (2012)
- **GDP:** 1.6% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 73
- **Official language:** English
- **Currency:** Eastern Caribbean dollar

Geography

- **Area:** Total 261.6 sq km
  - St. Kitts 168.4 sq km
  - Nevis 93.2 sq km
- **Coastline:** 135 km
- **Capital city:** Basseterre
- **Population density (per sq km):** 206

There are 12 years of compulsory education, starting at age five, offered by state, private and church schools. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary five, with the latter having cycles of three and two years. Some 74 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2009).

St. Kitts and Nevis participates in the regional University of the West Indies (UWI), which has its main campuses in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 2.10:1 (2008).

**COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

H.E. Hubert J. Charles, Ambassador/Special Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dominica, serves on the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for the Caribbean.

**COL FOCAL POINT**

The COL Focal Point for St. Kitts and Nevis is Mr Daryll Lloyd, Education Officer, Ministry of Education, Basseterre, St. Kitts.

**Strategic Plan 2015–2021**

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL's work in St. Kitts and Nevis is primarily in the areas of gender, tertiary education through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth, teacher education, open educational resources (OER), OER policy development and technical and vocational skills development.

**Education**

**TEACHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers...
and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.

COL, partnering with the Caribbean region’s Joint Board of Teacher Education, has supported the development of diagnostic instruments for children with special learning needs.

**VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

St. Kitts and Nevis continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (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. The VUSSC partnership includes all 30 small states of the Commonwealth. 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 delivering VUSSC courses and programmes while promoting the use of the Transnational Qualifications Framework.

VUSSC is supporting institutions to develop and share need-based content for education, training and capacity building, and the effective use of ICT to broaden access to education.

**Skills**

**TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

The use of flexible and blended learning approaches can increase equitable access to quality technical and vocational skills development. To support increased access, COL works with organisational partners and governments to create contextualised, high-quality models using educational media and technology to scale up skills development.

COL is working with national training authorities of countries in the region to develop the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) Assessor Training curriculum. St. Kitts and Nevis is a member of the Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies (CANTA), which is key to these developments. The first cohort was completed in 2017, and it aims to improve the efficiency and affordability of the basic training that all teachers and trainers working in CVQs are required to have. Key officers from the national training agencies have been trained in Moodle administration, and the CANTA eLearn Moodle is now hosted by UWI at St. Augustine.

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

COL encourages the integration of technology-enabled learning supported by OER policies and practices to improve teaching and learning for skills development. Mr Darryl Lloyd, COL Focal Point, and Ms Debbie Isaac, Senior Education Officer from St. Kitts and Nevis, participated in the Open Textbook Forum held in St. John’s, Antigua and Barbuda in October 2015. The forum included a series of workshops focused on the development of OER policies and the strengthening of open textbook initiatives in the region.

**Gender**

In October 2015, COL’s Gender Equality Manager met with representatives from the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture, other government agencies and community-based organisations to explore possibilities for addressing the learning needs of at-risk boys in St. Kitts and Nevis.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society...
organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in St. Kitts and Nevis include the Ministry of Education.

Special Events

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The Caribbean and the Americas Regional Consultation was held in São Paulo, Brazil in April 2017.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in open and distance learning (ODL) to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Denise Gaspard-Richards of the Open Campus at UWI presented a paper titled “Effectiveness of Agile Design in Wrap-Around Content Development.” Mr Daryll Lloyd from St. Kitts and Nevis attended PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved sustainable livelihoods;
- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with St. Kitts and Nevis to address its educational priorities while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

*Gender Profile: St. Kitts and Nevis* is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

*Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming* is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

*Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries* is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

*Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework* is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

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*Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016* is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

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*Technology-Enabled Learning in the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries: A Baseline Study* examines the current status of technology-enabled learning in the 12 Commonwealth Caribbean countries, including a country profile for St. Kitts and Nevis.

*Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET* (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

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Saint Lucia

Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1979
- **Population:** 182,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 82%
- **GDP:** 1.1% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 97
- **Official language:** English
- **Currency:** Eastern Caribbean dollar

Geography

- **Area:** 616 sq km
- **Coastline:** 158 km
- **Capital city:** Castries
- **Population density (per sq km):** 295

Public spending on education was four per cent of GDP in 2012. There are ten years of compulsory education, starting at age five. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary five, the latter having cycles of three and two years. Some 92 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2010). The school year starts in September.

The Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, at Castries, offers a diverse range of courses — including associate degree, diploma and certificate courses — and 89 per cent of its students are female (2011). Saint Lucia shares in the regional University of the West Indies (UWI), which has its main campuses in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 1.70:1 (2011).

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

H.E. Hubert J. Charles, Ambassador/Special Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dominica, serves on the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for the Caribbean.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for Saint Lucia is Mr Germain Anthony, Curriculum Specialist for ICT Integration, Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Saint Lucia is primarily in the areas of technology-enabled learning, technical and vocational skills development, and tertiary education through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.

Education

TEACHER EDUCATION

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims at improving the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers
and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes. COL, partnering with the Caribbean region’s Joint Board of Teacher Education, has developed diagnostic instruments for children with special learning needs.

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Saint Lucia continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Initiated by and built with the support of 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. The VUSSC partnership represents 30 small states of the Commonwealth dedicated to expanding access to tertiary education. 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.

VUSSC is committed to the collaborative development of open content resources for education, training and capacity building, and the use of ICT to broaden access to education. The emphasis is now on delivering VUSSC courses and programmes while promoting the use of the Transnational Qualifications Framework. Eleven new VUSSC courses have been made available to partners during this triennium.

Skills

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The use of flexible and blended learning approaches can increase equitable access to quality technical and vocational skills development. To support increased access, COL works with organisational partners and governments to create contextualised, high-quality models using educational media and technology to scale up skills development. The Technical and Vocational Skills Development initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to improved quality skills training. COL provided training to instructors at Sir Arthur Lewis Community College in the design of online courses, using a flexible and blended model for technical and vocational education and training.

COL is working with the national training authorities of countries in the region to develop the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) Assessor Training curriculum. Saint Lucia is a member of the Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies, which is key to these developments. The training programme, launched as an online course in February 2017, aims to improve the efficiency and affordability of the basic training that all teachers and trainers working in CVQs are required to have.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

COL’s Technology-Enabled Learning initiative aims to encourage more institutions to integrate technology-enabled learning and OER practices to improve teaching and learning for innovation and skills development. COL in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development is supporting the development of an ICT in education policy for Saint Lucia.

Saint Lucia participated in the Open Textbook Forum, held in October 2015 in Antigua and Barbuda. The forum included a series of workshops that focused on the development of OER policies and the strengthening of open textbook initiatives in the region. In March 2016, COL conducted a three-day workshop on OER and open textbook creation at the Saint Lucia Ministry of Education. The workshop focused on the development of an open textbook that supports the Grade 5 mathematics syllabus as described in the Saint Lucia curriculum, through the use of free, quality resources.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocation education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. In all, 32 teachers from Saint Lucia participated in both cohorts of this TEL-MOOC.
Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Saint Lucia include Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development.

Special Events

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Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in open and distance learning (ODL) to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Denise Gaspard-Richards of the Open Campus at UWI presented a paper entitled “Effectiveness of Agile Design in Wrap-Around Content Development.” COL supported the participation of Mr Germain Mattheo Anthony from Saint Lucia in PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE 19TH CONFERENCE OF COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION MINISTERS

During the 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, COL organised a roundtable on MOOCs, which was chaired by the Honourable Dr Robert Lewis, Saint Lucia’s Minister of Education, Human Resource Development and Labour. Speakers included: Professor Daphne Koller, President and Co-founder of Coursera; Mr Martin Bean, CBE, Vice Chancellor and President of RMIT; and Dr V. Balaji, COL’s Director of Technology and Knowledge Management. The roundtable was held to brief ministers and senior officials about new developments in online learning.
Looking Ahead: 2021

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Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

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*Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming* is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

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St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1979
- **Population:** 109,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 95% (2012)
- **GDP:** 2.5% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 91
- **Official language:** English
- **Currency:** Eastern Caribbean dollar

Geography

- **Area:** Total 389.3 sq km
  - St. Vincent: 334 sq km
  - The Grenadines: 45.3 sq km
- **Coastline:** 84 km
- **Capital city:** Kingstown
- **Population density (per sq km):** 280

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

H.E. Hubert J. Charles, Ambassador/Special Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dominica, serves on the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for the Caribbean.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for St. Vincent and the Grenadines is Ms Beverley Neptune, Chief Education Officer (Ag.), Ministry of Education, Reconciliation and Ecclesiastical Affairs.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is primarily in the area of tertiary education, through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.

Education

TEACHER EDUCATION

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims at improving the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models.
for improved learning outcomes. COL, partnering with the Caribbean region’s Joint Board of Teacher Education, has developed diagnostic instruments for children with special learning needs.

### VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH

St. Vincent and the Grenadines continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Initiated by and built with the support of ministers of education of developing small states of the Commonwealth, VUSSC supports the collaborative development and sharing of open educational resources (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 delivering VUSSC courses and programmes while promoting the use of the Transnational Qualifications Framework.

VUSSC is committed to the collaborative development of open content resources for education, training and capacity building, and the use of ICT to broaden access to education. Eleven new VUSSC courses have been made available to partners during this triennium.

### Skills

#### TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The use of flexible and blended learning approaches can increase equitable access to quality technical and vocational skills development. To support increased access, COL works with organisational partners and governments to create contextualised, high-quality models using educational media and technology to scale up skills development.

COL is working with national training authorities of countries in the region to develop the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) Assessor Training curriculum. St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a member of the Caribbean Association of National Training Authorities, which is key to these developments. The training programme, launched as an online course in February 2017, aims to improve the efficiency and affordability of the basic training that all teachers and trainers working in CVQs are required to have. Learners from St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College completed COL’s Facilitating Online Courses training in December 2017.

#### TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocation education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Significantly, 62 teachers from St. Vincent and the Grenadines participated in both cohorts of the TEL-MOOC.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines participated in the Open Textbook Forum, held in October 2015 in St. John’s, Antigua and Barbuda. The forum included a series of workshops that focused on the development of OER policies and the strengthening of open textbook initiatives in the region. With COL’s support, St. Vincent and the Grenadines developed an open textbook on chemistry.

### Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in St. Vincent and the Grenadines include the Ministry of Education, National Reconciliation, Ecclesiastical Affairs and Information.
Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Caribbean and the Americas Regional Consultation was held in São Paulo, Brazil in April 2017. Ms Beverly Neptune, the COL Focal Point for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, participated.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in open and distance learning (ODL) to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Denise Gaspard-Richards of the Open Campus at UWI presented a paper titled “Effectiveness of Agile Design in Wrap-Around Content Development.” COL supported the attendance of Mr Nigel McAllister Scott from St. Vincent and the Grenadines at PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved sustainable livelihoods;
- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with St. Vincent and the Grenadines to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

*Gender Profile: St. Vincent and the Grenadines* is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

*Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming* is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

*Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries* is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

*Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework* is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

*Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017*, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

*Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016* is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

*Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation*, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

*Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)* is intended for authorities responsible for quality assurance and institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. It aims to facilitate credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.

*Technology-Enabled Learning in the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries: A Baseline Study* examines the current status of technology-enabled learning in the 12 Commonwealth Caribbean countries, including a country profile for St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

*Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET* (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Trinidad and Tobago

Key Facts

- Joined Commonwealth: **1962**
- Population: **1,341,000** (2013)
- Primary enrolment: **95%** (2010)
- GDP: **3.5%** p.a. 1990–2013
- UN HDI world ranking: **64**
- Official language: **English**
- Currency: **Trinidad and Tobago dollar**

Geography

- Area: Total **5,128 sq km**
  - Trinidad: **4,828 sq km**
  - Tobago: **300 sq km**
- Coastline: **362 km**
- Capital city: **Port of Spain**
- Population density (per sq km): **262**

There are six years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary five, the latter having cycles of three and two years. Some 89 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2009). The school year starts in September.

Tertiary institutions include the St. Augustine campus of the regional University of the West Indies (UWI), which also has main campuses in Barbados and Jamaica. At St. Augustine, UWI offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses in agriculture, education, engineering, humanities, law (the Hugh Wooding Law School), medical sciences, sciences and social sciences. The University of Trinidad and Tobago was established in 2004 and includes the Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry. Other tertiary institutions include the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts, and the Polytechnic Institute, the latter providing adult education in the evenings and sharing premises with a sixth-form government school. There is virtually no illiteracy among people aged 15–24.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

**COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

H.E. Hubert J. Charles, Ambassador/Special Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dominica, serves on the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for the Caribbean.

Professor Clement Sankat is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

**COL FOCAL POINT**

The COL Focal Point for Trinidad and Tobago is Ms Saleema Hyatali, Head, Teaching and Teacher Development Division, Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education.

**NOTABLE MENTION**

Dr Olabisi Kuboni is a COL Honorary Fellow.

**Strategic Plan 2015–2021**

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Trinidad and Tobago is focused on open educational resources (OER) for skills development, open/innovative schooling, teacher education,
technical and vocational skills development, and the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.

Education

TEACHER EDUCATION

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of Member States to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.

Partnering with the Caribbean region’s Joint Board of Teacher Education, COL developed diagnostic instruments for children with special learning needs. Dr Elna Carrington Blaides from UWI, Trinidad and Tobago, participated in a consultative meeting to discuss the development of the diagnostic tools.

OPEN/INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING

In August, 2017, representatives from the ministries of education in Belize, Mozambique, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu and Zambia — who have signed agreements with COL to work together to improve the quality of teaching and learning in mainstream and open schools through eLearning and to broaden access to schooling for out-of-school youths — met in Singapore to share experiences in the implementation of COL’s Open/Innovative Schooling model in mainstream and open schools. This provided an opportunity for these participants to align their countries’ implementation strategies, find common solutions to challenges and identify innovative ways to increase the momentum of the programme.

In February 2017, COL trained 24 technical personnel identified by the Ministry of Education, Trinidad and Tobago to use Aptus, an offline server developed by COL.

The Catholic Education Board of Management, the Caribbean Fisheries Training and Development Institute and COL launched an open school to focus on practical skills training for students in Matelot, Trinidad. The Matelot Innovative Community Open School, which officially opened in November 2015, targets young people who have dropped out of school, offering them training and certification in boat engine repairs, fish handling/processing and net mending. Courses and training were developed following consultations with Matelot residents who showed an interest in fields related to the fishing industry.

The Matelot Innovative Community Open School celebrated its first graduating class in April 2017. Several community leaders, including the Archbishop Joseph Harris and COL’s Senior Adviser: Open Schooling, attended the ceremony, where 20 graduates received certificates.

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Trinidad and Tobago continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (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.

VUSSC is committed to the collaborative development of open resources for education, training and capacity building, and the use of ICT to broaden access to education. The emphasis is now on delivering VUSSC courses and programmes while promoting the use of the Transnational Qualifications Framework. Eleven new VUSSC courses have been made available to partners during this triennium.

Thirty-three participants from Trinidad and Tobago (from the Caribbean Public Health Agency, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Administration, Public Service Academy, and Trinidad and Tobago Policy Academy) took part in an online course, Developing and Teaching Online Courses, during October–December 2015. This was developed by COL to support instructors in designing and implementing quality online and blended learning experiences.
Nominated by the Ministry of Education, a representative from the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago participated in a review workshop on the Environmental Management for Sustainable Development programme, in June 2016 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. VUSSC has developed a full bachelor’s degree programme in Environmental Management for Sustainable Development, with three exit points at certificate, diploma and degree levels. The purpose of the workshop was to review and update the course materials to reflect the context of Commonwealth small states.

Skills

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The use of flexible and blended learning approaches can increase equitable access to quality technical and vocational skills development (TVSD). To support increased access, COL works with organisational partners and governments to create contextualised, high-quality models using educational media and technology to increase skills development.

COL is working with the national training authorities of countries in the region to develop the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) Assessor Training curriculum. Trinidad and Tobago is a member of the Caribbean Association of National Training Authorities, which is key to these developments. The training programme, launched as an online course in February 2017, aims to improve the efficiency and affordability of the basic training that all teachers and trainers working in CVQs are required to have.

COL is partnering with the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP), a vocational training organisation in Trinidad and Tobago, to establish a flexible and blended technical and vocational education and training model for more efficient delivery of quality training. The blended online CVQ Life Skills programme was launched in 2017 with more than 100 learners. Additional courses are being developed. COL’s TVSD initiative and YTEPP are also partnering with the National Centre for Persons with Disability to develop a new food-preparation CVQ by online learning for persons with disabilities.

COL’s Education Specialist: TVSD met with Trinidad and Tobago’s Minister of Education, the Honourable Anthony Garcia, in May 2017 to brief him about COL’s activities supporting technical and vocational education and training institutions in the country.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

COL encourages the integration of technology-enabled learning supported by OER policies and practices to improve teaching and learning for skills development. Trinidad and Tobago participated in the Open Textbook Forum, which was held in October 2015 in Antigua and Barbuda. The forum included a series of workshops that focused on the development of OER policies and the strengthening of open textbook initiatives in the region.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocation education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. In all, 41 teachers from Trinidad and Tobago participated in both courses.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Trinidad and Tobago include:

- Catholic Management Board of Education
- Caribbean Fisheries Training and Development Institute
- MIC Institute of Technology
Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Caribbean and the Americas Regional Consultation was held in April 2017 in São Paulo, Brazil. Ms Saleema Hyatali, Teaching and Teacher Development Division, Ministry of Education, attended.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in open and distance learning (ODL) to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Denise Gaspard-Richards of the Open Campus at UWI presented a paper titled “Effectiveness of Agile Design in Wrap-Around Content Development.” COL supported the participation of Mr Steve Warner at PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

• improved sustainable livelihoods;
• increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
• improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Trinidad and Tobago to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

*Gender Profile: Trinidad and Tobago* is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

*Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming* is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

*Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries* is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

*Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework* is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

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*Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016* is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

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*Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)* is intended for authorities responsible for quality assurance and institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. It aims to facilitate credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.

*Technology-Enabled Learning in the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries: A Baseline Study* examines the current status of technology-enabled learning in the 12 Commonwealth Caribbean countries, including a country profile for Trinidad and Tobago.

*Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET* (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Cyprus
Malta

EUROPE REGION
The Commonwealth of Learning

EUROPE REGION

The Europe region of the Commonwealth comprises only three Member States. The region has a population of approximately 65 million people. The United Kingdom, which supports COL’s work through annual contributions and serves on the COL Board of Governors, has the largest population, with about 63 million in 2013. Cyprus has a population of about 1.1 million, and Malta is less than half that, at 429,000.

COL focuses on adding value to the efforts of the countries in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG4. It is supporting the Commonwealth governments and institutions in Europe to use appropriate, affordable and accessible technologies to improve and expand learning for sustainable development. Its initiatives in formal education include emphasising quality and inclusive secondary and higher education and strengthening teacher development programmes. In the area of skills, COL supports the expansion of access to technical and vocational education, the reinforcement of non-formal education in agriculture, and technology-enabled learning. These initiatives have been designed in a such manner that socially inclusive and gender-sensitive human resource development can be achieved at lower economic and environmental costs.

COL’s major regional initiatives in the European countries between 2015 and 2018 are outlined below.

• Initiated by the ministers of education of developing small states of the Commonwealth, the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) supports the collaborative development and sharing of open educational resources (OER) to promote learning for sustainable development. VUSSC is committed to the development of open-content resources for education, training and capacity building, and promotes the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) to broaden access to education. Malta and Cyprus are VUSSC members.

• The Commonwealth Centre for Connected Learning is an international foundation set up by the Ministry for Education and Employment in Malta in collaboration with COL. It operates as a knowledge hub for a global network of groups, agencies, institutions, educators and activists interested in the rapid deployment of programmes for connected learning in the Commonwealth and the European Union. COL serves in an advisory capacity on the centre’s International Advisory Board.

• The European OER Regional Consultation was organised in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, which was held in Slovenia in September 2017. The Regional Consultations were organised in partnership with UNESCO and the Government of Slovenia with the generous support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. They followed a central theme of “OER for Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education: From Commitment to Action,” reflecting a strong focus on the role of OER in achieving SDG4. They explored strategies and solutions to the challenges of mainstreaming OER. The Europe Regional Consultation was held in Valletta, Malta in February 2017. Ministers, officials and experts from a total of 24 countries participated in this important consultation, which was co-hosted by the Ministry of Education and Employment, Malta.
Cyprus

Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1961
- **Population:** 1,141,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 98%
- **GDP:** 0.9% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 32
- **Official languages:** Greek, Turkish
- **Currency:** Euro (€)

Geography

- **Area:** 9,251 sq km
- **Coastline:** 648 km
- **Capital city:** Nicosia
- **Population density (per sq km):** 123

Public spending on education was seven per cent of GDP in 2010. There are nine years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises six years and secondary six, with two three-year cycles in each. There are many private schools. Some 95 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2007). The school year starts in September.

The University of Cyprus is a bilingual (Greek and Turkish) university that opened in 1992. The other public universities are Cyprus University of Technology (2007) and the Open University of Cyprus (2002). Private universities include: the European University Cyprus (2007), which developed out of Cyprus College (1961); Frederick University (2007), which developed out of the Frederick Institute of Technology (1965); Neapolis University (Paphos, 2010); and the University of Nicosia (2007), which developed out of Intercollege (1980). Other tertiary institutions include the Cyprus Forestry College (1951), the Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus (1966), the Higher Technical Institute (1968), the Mediterranean Institute of Management (1976, postgraduate), a nursing school, and the Cyprus International Institute of Management (1990). The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 0.90:1 (2010). There is virtually no illiteracy among people aged 15–24.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL Focal Point

The COL Focal Point for Cyprus is Professor George Papadopoulos, Dean, Department of Computer Science, University of Cyprus.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Cyprus is primarily in the area of higher education through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth and in technology-enabled learning.

Education

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

Cyprus continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Initiated by and built with the support of ministers of education in developing small states of the Commonwealth, VUSSC supports the collaborative development and sharing of open educational
resources (OER) to promote learning for sustainable development. The VUSSC partnership represents 30 small states of the Commonwealth dedicated to expanding access to tertiary education.

COL held discussions with CyprusInno, the largest bi-communal digital platform connecting all Cypriot entrepreneurs, about offering VUSSC entrepreneurship courses.

VUSSC is committed to the collaborative development of open-content resources for education, training and capacity building, and the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) to broaden access to education. 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 delivering VUSSC courses and programmes while promoting the use of the Transnational Qualifications Framework. Eleven new VUSSC courses have been made available.

Skills

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocation education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Five teachers from Cyprus participated in both courses.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Cyprus include:
• Ministry of Education and Culture
• University of Cyprus

Special Events

COL welcomed the Cyprus High Commissioner to Canada, H.E. Pavlos Anastasiades, at their headquarters in Metro Vancouver, Canada in May 2016.

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Europe Regional Consultation was held in Valletta, Malta in February 2017. Mr Thanasis Hadzilacos, Professor of Educational Technology and Director of the Educational Technology Lab, Open University of Cyprus, attended.

8TH PAN COMMONWEALTH FORUM (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in open and distance learning (ODL) to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society on topics that include lifelong
COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved sustainable livelihoods;
- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Cyprus to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

### Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


* **Gender Profile: Cyprus** is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

* **Guidelines for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of MOOCs** provides guidance to four main stakeholder groups: governments, MOOC providers, learners and accreditation agencies. These guidelines are designed to support decision making about the sorts of quality measures that are appropriate in different contexts.

* **Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming** is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation's policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.
Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how massive open online courses (MOOCs) might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016 is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

The Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is intended for authorities responsible for quality assurance and institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. It aims to facilitate credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of information and communication technologies in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
**Key Facts**

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1964
- **Population:** 429,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 95% (2012)
- **GDP:** 2.4% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 39
- **Official languages:** Maltese, English
- **Currency:** Euro (€)

**Geography**

- **Area:** 316 sq km
  - including Comino (3 sq km) and Gozo (67 sq km)
- **Coastline:** 253 km
- **Capital city:** Valetta
- **Population density (per sq km):** 1,358

Public spending on education was seven per cent of GDP in 2010. There are 11 years of compulsory education, starting at age five. Primary school comprises six years and secondary seven, the latter having cycles of five and two years. The numerous church schools are subsidised by the government. Some 80 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2008). The school year starts in September.

Courses at the University of Malta (founded in 1592 as the Jesuits’ College) include architecture, arts, diplomatic studies, education, engineering, law, medicine, sciences and theology. G. F. Abela Junior College (University of Malta) was established at Msida (greater Valletta) in 1995 to provide two-year pre-university courses. Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology offers a very wide range of vocational and professional education, with its main campus at Paola (greater Valletta). The International Maritime Law Institute is based in Malta. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 1.40:1 (2010). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 98 per cent (2005).

**SOURCE:** http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

**COL FOCAL POINT**

The COL Focal Point for Malta is Dr Alexander Grech, Executive Director, Commonwealth Centre for Connected Learning, Ministry for Education and Employment.

**NOTABLE MENTION**

The Reverend Professor Peter Serracino Inglott is a member of COL’s Founding Board of Governors.

**Strategic Plan 2015–2021**

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Malta is primarily in the area of tertiary education, through the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth Centre for Connected Learning.
**Education**

**VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

Malta is a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). The VUSSC partnership represents 30 small states of the Commonwealth dedicated to expanding access to tertiary education. In the past few years, VUSSC has connected institutions through online technologies to promote eLearning and the sharing of educational resources using collaborative and multi-institutional partnerships.

COL and Malta signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in November 2015. One of the objectives of the MoU is to use the VUSSC Transnational Qualifications Framework for the recognition of digital learning.

**Skills**

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered from January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Four teachers from Malta participated in both courses.

**Regional Centre**

**COMMONWEALTH CENTRE FOR CONNECTED LEARNING**

The Commonwealth Centre for Connected Learning (CCCL) is a joint venture between Malta’s Ministry for Education and Employment and COL. Set up as a foundation in 2017, it operates as a knowledge hub for a global network of groups, agencies, institutions, educators and activists interested in the rapid deployment of programmes for connected learning in the Commonwealth and the EU. COL serves in an advisory capacity on the centre’s International Advisory Board.

In January 2017, COL’s Director of Technology and Knowledge Management was invited to participate in a plenary panel of the EU Presidency Conference on Digital Education, organised in partnership with the CCCL.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Malta include:

- Commonwealth Centre for Connected Learning
- Ministry of Education and Employment
- National Commission for Further and Higher Education

**Special Events**

**2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS**

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.
The Europe regional consultation was held in Valletta, Malta in February 2017. Malta was represented by the Honourable Mr Evarist Bartolo, Minister for Education and Employment (MEDE); Mr Joseph Caruana, Permanent Secretary, MEDE; Dr Alex Grech, Executive Director, CCCL; Mr George Borg, Director General, Educational Services, MEDE; Mr Martin Debattista, Institute for Tourism Studies; and Mr Godfrey Baldacchino, Pro Rector, University of Malta.

**8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)**

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in open and distance learning (ODL) to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. COL supported the attendance of COL’s Focal Point for Malta, Dr Alexander Grech, and of Mr Jesmond Xuereb.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society that relate to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

**COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING (CHOGM), 21–29 NOVEMBER 2015**

The Chair of the COL Board of Governors, Dr Linda Sissons, led the COL delegation to CHOGM, held in Malta. COL’s President reported COL’s work at the two meetings of Commonwealth foreign ministers during CHOGM, made three presentations at the Women’s and Business Forums, and held key meetings with ministers and senior officials from Canada, the UK and Australia. COL’s Vice President made two presentations at the Women’s and Youth Forums.

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved sustainable livelihoods;
- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Malta to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:


**Gender Profile: Malta** is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

**Guidelines for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of MOOCs** provides guidance to four main stakeholder groups: governments, MOOC providers, learners and accreditation agencies. These guidelines are designed to support decision making about the sorts of quality measures that are appropriate in different contexts.

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PACIFIC REGION

Fiji
Kiribati
Nauru
Papua New Guinea
Samoa
Solomon Islands
Tonga
Tuvalu
Vanuatu
The Pacific region of the Commonwealth comprises 11 Member States, nine of which are scattered throughout the Pacific Ocean. As the two developed countries, Australia and New Zealand support COL's work through annual contributions and partnerships and serve on the COL Board of Governors in the major donor category. Australia has also supported COL in providing skills development training for unreached women and girls in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. All other countries in the Pacific region are small island developing states that are confronting the realities of climate change. These nine small island states have modest populations, ranging from Tuvalu and Nauru (10,000 each) to Papua New Guinea (7.3 million).

COL focuses on adding value to the countries’ efforts to reach the SDGs, particularly SDG4. It supports the Commonwealth governments and institutions of the Pacific in the use of appropriate, affordable technologies to improve and expand learning for sustainable development. Its initiatives in formal education include emphasis on quality and inclusive secondary and higher education and the strengthening of teacher development programmes. In the area of skills, COL supports the expansion of access to technical and vocational education, the reinforcement of non-formal education in agriculture, and technology-enabled learning. These initiatives have been designed to achieve socially inclusive and gender-sensitive human resource development at lower economic and environmental costs.

COL’s major regional initiatives in the Pacific Commonwealth countries between 2015 and 2018 are outlined below.

- The Pacific Centre for Flexible and Open Learning for Development (PACFOLD), based in Fiji, is a centre for capacity building in open and distance learning (ODL) in the region. COL and the University of the South Pacific (USP) work collaboratively in supporting PACFOLD. The centre’s priorities include: advocacy and capacity building for flexible and open learning for sustainable development; the development of regional and national policies on open, distance and flexible learning; and research in flexible and open learning. In 2017, PACFOLD launched an online course on flexible skills development, with 266 teachers from Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu enrolling.

- The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) serves the Commonwealth small states in the Pacific region. Initiated by the ministers of education of developing small states of the Commonwealth, VUSSC supports the collaborative development and sharing of open educational resources (OER) to promote learning for sustainable development.

- COL's Aptus technology, which is a low-cost, off-grid, offline virtual classroom technology — a classroom without walls — has undergone trials at local institutions in Fiji and is being used in Fiji, Kiribati and Samoa. The technology can be used to address the unique challenges faced by local educational institutions and practitioners working in an environment with limited or no Internet access. It enables teachers and students to access quality digital materials such as: Wikipedia for schools, which contains over 6,000 articles; 2,000 Khan Academy videos; and a library of free books, in addition to content uploaded by the teachers. Aptus is currently being explored as a platform for OER in Fiji's secondary schools and a "library-on-the-go" to serve students in rural or remote locations enrolled in distance learning programmes at Fiji National University.
• A new online course titled “Understanding the Blue Economy”, developed through VUSSC in collaboration with the James Michel Blue Economy Research Institute at the University of Seychelles, was launched in March 2017. More than 1,500 learners signed up for a massive open online course (MOOC) titled “Climate Change and Pacific Island”, developed by COL in partnership with USP and UNESCO. This MOOC was made available to learners globally in August – October 2015. Approximately 70 per cent of participants were from countries in the Pacific. Both courses are of particular interest to small island states.

• An eLearning workshop, co-facilitated by COL, on eLearning pedagogies and materials development using ODL and OER, was held in May 2016 at USP and attended by participants from Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu.

• A regional workshop for participants from nine Pacific countries, on OER course design for technical and vocational education and training (TVET), was held in June 2017 in Suva, Fiji. The workshop was hosted by the Pacific Technical and Further Education institute at USP and aimed to strengthen TVET in the region using OER. The workshop was designed to address the needs and priorities of the Pacific island states. Twenty-six TVET educators from 12 partner institutions attended.

• COL supported a workshop organised at USP in May 2017 to enable the university to develop an OER policy. The two-day workshop was attended by 28 staff members from various faculties and disciplines.

• A three-day workshop on “OER Integration in Courses” was held at USP in August 2017. This was organised by the Centre for Flexible Learning, USP, as a follow-up to the OER policy developed in May 2017. USP has incentivised OER integration in its courses, with 30 teachers to date supported in this project.

• The Pacific OER Regional Consultation, which provided opportunities for delegates to learn more about OER and contribute to the 2nd World OER Congress, was held in Auckland, New Zealand in May 2017.
**Key Facts**

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1970 (rejoined in 1997 after ten-year lapse)
- **Population:** 881,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 97%
- **GDP:** 1.2% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 88
- **Official language:** English
- **Currency:** Fiji dollar

**Geography**

- **Area:** 18,333 sq km
- **Coastline:** 1,130 km
- **Capital city:** Suva
- **Population density (per sq km):** 48

Public spending on education was four per cent of GDP in 2011. There are ten years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises six years and secondary seven, the latter having cycles of four and three years. Some 91 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2008). The school year starts in January.

The main campuses of the regional University of the South Pacific (USP) and Fiji National University (FNU) are located in Suva. USP has further campuses in Fiji at Labasa and Lautoka. FNU, which has many campuses across the country, was formally established in 2010 through the merger of seven tertiary institutions: the College of Advanced Education; the College of Agriculture (Koronivia campus); the Institute of Technology (Samabula campus, Suva); the Lautoka Teachers College (Lautoka campus); the School of Medicine (Suva); the School of Nursing (Suva); and the Training and Productivity Authority. The oldest of these institutions, the School of Medicine (established in 1885) and the School of Nursing (1893), were merged in 2010 to become the Fiji National University College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences.

SOURCE: [http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries](http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries)

**COL Board of Governors**

Letuimanu’asina Dr Emma Kruse Va’ai, Chief Executive Officer, Samoa Qualifications Authority, represents the Pacific on the COL Board of Governors.

**COL Focal Point**

The position of COL Focal Point for Fiji was vacant as of January 2018.

**Notable Mention**

Professor Rajesh Chandra is a COL Honorary Fellow.

**Strategic Plan 2015–2021**

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Fiji over the past three years has focused on promoting open educational resources (OER), policy development and course design, as well as identifying innovations to support teaching and learning in both formal and informal education settings.
Education

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Fiji is a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). The VUSSC partnership represents 30 small states of the Commonwealth dedicated to expanding access to tertiary education. In the past few years, VUSSC has connected institutions through online technologies to promote eLearning and the sharing of educational resources using collaborative and multi-institutional partnerships.

During May 2016, COL co-facilitated an intensive week-long workshop on eLearning pedagogies and materials development using open and distance learning (ODL) and OER, with the support of the Teachers’ Educational Resource and E-learning Centre (TEREC) at USP. Participants were from Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu.

COL supported USP to offer MOOC on “Climate change and Pacific Islands” in August – October 2015.

Skills

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Technology-enhanced, flexible and blended approaches to technical and vocational skills development (TVSD) can contribute to improvements in access, gender, quality and efficiency indicators. Experience with using these approaches is not widespread in institutions and ministries in Commonwealth countries. The core challenges that COL’s TVSD programme seeks to address are inadequate quality in and low access to technical and vocational education and training (TVET), especially for women.

In June 2017, COL welcomed participants from nine Pacific countries to a four-day regional workshop in Suva on OER course design for TVET. Created to address the needs and priorities of the Pacific island states, the workshop was hosted by the Pacific Technical and Further Education institute at USP and aimed to strengthen TVET in the region through the use of OER. Twenty-six TVET educators from 12 partner institutions attended.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

COL’s Aptus technology is an off-grid, offline virtual classroom — a classroom without walls. Through Fiji’s Higher Education Commission, Aptus has undergone trials at local institutions. As a result of their success, it is currently being explored as a platform for OER in Fiji’s secondary schools and as a “library-on-the-go” to serve students in rural or remote locations enrolled in distance learning programmes at FNU.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017; 67 teachers from Fiji participated in both courses.

Regional Centre

PACIFIC CENTRE FOR OPEN AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING FOR DEVELOPMENT

COL and USP work collaboratively in supporting the Pacific Centre for Flexible and Open Learning for Development (PACFOLD), a regional centre located in Fiji. The centre’s priorities include: advocacy for and capacity building in flexible and open learning for sustainable development; the development of regional and national policies on open, distance and flexible learning; and research in flexible and open learning.

The online community PACFOLD Learn was launched in early 2017. It is a collaboration between COL, USP and James Cook University and serves as an online space for sharing and collaboration in learning for sustainable development through flexible, technology-based approaches. In 2017, PACFOLD offered an online course on Flexible Skills Development, with participants from across the region.
Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Fiji include:
• Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts
• Pacific Centre for Flexible and Open Learning for Development
• University of the South Pacific

Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments. COL supported the participation of the Director of PACFOLD in the Congress.

The Pacific Regional Consultation was held in Auckland, New Zealand in May 2017 and was attended by three participants from Fiji: Mr Laisiasa Merumeru of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Mr Matai Tagicaki of PACFOLD and Dr Ian Thomson of USP’s TEREC.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016.

COL conferred the designation of COL Honorary Fellow on Professor Rajesh Chandra, Vice Chancellor and President of USP, in recognition of his contributions to ODL in the Pacific. COL also sponsored two additional participants from Fiji: Mr Hasmukh Lal and Mr Ian Thomson, both from USP.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

INSTITUTIONAL OER POLICY DEVELOPMENT

COL assisted USP in developing a policy for OER, through a workshop organised at the university in May 2017. The workshop was attended by 28 staff members from various faculties and disciplines.

COL supported a three-day workshop at USP on OER Integration in Courses, from 28–30 August 2017. This workshop was organised by USP’s Centre for Flexible Learning as a follow-up to the OER policy developed in May 2017 with COL’s support. USP is funding 30 teachers to develop OER-based courses.

NATIONAL OER POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Working with Fiji’s Higher Education Commission, COL provided technical advice for the development of a national OER policy.
COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved sustainable livelihoods;
- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Fiji to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

Looking Ahead: 2021

Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

A Baseline Study on Technology-Enabled Learning in the Commonwealth Pacific Island Countries: Report presents an overview of the developments related to technology-enabled learning in the nine Commonwealth countries of the Pacific. It includes a country profile for Fiji.

Certificate in Community Development Programme. With support from COL, USP has developed materials for three courses in the Certificate in Community Development programme, which are available as OER.

COL Review of Flexible Learning at the University of the South Pacific was published in November 2015. USP asked COL to lead an international panel to review the efficiency and effectiveness of its flexible learning education programmes. The report offers recommendations, commendations and affirmations of progress that can contribute to USP’s further development.

Gender Profile: Fiji is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming is a self-assessment tool that can support ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

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For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1979
- **Population:** 102,000 (2013)
- **GDP:** 0.9% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 133
- **Official language:** English
- **Currency:** Australian dollar

Geography

- **Area:** 811 sq km
- **Coastline:** 1,140 km
- **Capital city:** Tarawa

Population density (per sq km): 124

There are nine years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises six years and secondary six, with two three-year cycles in each. The school year starts in January.

Three organisations run by the Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development offer vocational training: the Institute of Technology (established in 1970) in technical and administrative skills; the Fisheries Training Centre (1989) in maritime, fishing and language skills, for those who seek employment on Japanese fishing vessels; and the Marine Training Centre in merchant maritime skills. Kiribati is a partner in the University of the South Pacific (USP), which has its main campus in Suva, Fiji and a campus in Tarawa, Kiribati, with some 3,000 students enrolled in a wide range of courses using the university’s distance-learning facilities. A training college for primary teachers and an extramural centre of USP are also located in Tarawa.

**COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Letuimanu’asina Dr Emma Kruse Va’ai, Chief Executive Officer, Samoa Qualifications Authority, represents the Pacific region on the COL Board of Governors.

**COL FOCAL POINT**

The COL Focal Point for Kiribati is Mrs Kaaro Neeti, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education.

**NOTABLE MENTION**

The Honourable Teima Onorio is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

**Strategic Plan 2015–2021**

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Kiribati is primarily in the areas of teacher education, tertiary education and skills development through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.

**Education**

**TEACHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative, school-based teacher development programmes supported by information and...
communication technologies (ICT). Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities to develop scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.

In this triennium, the Ministry of Education in Kiribati identified institutional partners to implement COL’s school-based teacher development programme. In collaboration with the Kiribati Teachers College (KTC) in Tarawa, COL launched the Teacher Futures programme, which was officially initiated in November 2017 by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Mrs Kaaro Neeti and the Principal, KTC, Mr Aberaam Tebitaki. This was followed by a capacity-building workshop to sensitise KTC staff on the tenets of the Teacher Futures programme and prepare the attending teacher-educators for participation in a global community of practice.

**VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

Kiribati continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Initiated by ministers of education of developing small states of the Commonwealth, VUSSC supports the collaborative development and sharing of open educational resources (OER) to promote learning for sustainable development. The VUSSC partnership represents 30 small states of the Commonwealth dedicated to expanding access to tertiary education.

VUSSC is committed to the collaborative development of open resources for education, training and capacity building, and the use of ICT to broaden access to education. In the past few years, VUSSC has connected institutions through online technologies to promote eLearning and the sharing of educational resources using multi-institutional partnerships. The emphasis is now on delivering VUSSC courses and programmes while promoting the use of the Transnational Qualifications Framework.

COL’s President launched the Blue Economy course at the University of Seychelles’ Blue Economy Institute in March 2017. By the end of April 2017, the course was available to anybody, anywhere in the world as a new massive open online course (MOOC) developed through VUSSC and titled “Understanding the Blue Economy.” The ten-week course attracted 243 participants from 47 countries. It will be of particular interest to small island states, such as Kiribati. A number of participants from Kiribati participated in a MOOC on Climate Change, offered by USP in collaboration with COL and UNESCO.

**Skills**

**TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

The use of flexible and blended learning approaches can increase equitable access to quality technical and vocational skills development. In this regard, COL works with organisational partners and governments to create contextualised, high-quality models using educational media and technology to strengthen skills development.

In June 2017, COL welcomed participants from nine Pacific countries to a regional workshop on OER course design for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) held in Suva, Fiji. The workshop was hosted by the Pacific Technical and Further Education Institute at USP and aimed to strengthen TVET in the region through the use of OER. The four-day workshop was the third in a series designed to address the needs and priorities of the Pacific island states. Twenty-six TVET educators, including two from Kiribati Institute of Technology, attended the workshop.

The Pacific regional workshop on OER course design for TVET covered: instructional video production for online courses and MOOCs; using free and open-source software to repurpose various types of OER media formats; and understanding the Moodle learning management system through Moodle Cloud.

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a MOOC for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education, developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered from January–February 2017 and November–December 2017; 27 teachers from Kiribati participated in the MOOC held in November–December.
COL’s open-source hardware Aptus was deployed extensively by the Ministry of Education in 2016. Aptus enables learners in remote locations with limited or no connectivity to access high-quality digital OER using their own mobile devices. The content in Aptus was customised to suit the requirements of secondary schools in Kiribati.

**Regional Centre**

**PACIFIC CENTRE FOR FLEXIBLE AND OPEN LEARNING FOR DEVELOPMENT**

COL and USP work collaboratively in supporting the Pacific Centre for Flexible and Open Learning for Development (PACFOLD), a regional centre for capacity building in open and distance learning (ODL) in the Pacific. The centre’s priorities include: advocacy and capacity building for flexible and open learning for sustainable development; the development of regional and national policies on open, distance and flexible learning; and research in flexible and open learning.

The online community PACFOLD Learn was launched in early 2017. It is a collaboration between COL, USP and James Cook University and serves as an online space for sharing and collaboration in learning for sustainable development through flexible, technology-based approaches. In 2017, PACFOLD offered an online course on Flexible Skills Development, attracting participants from across the region.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL partners in Kiribati with the Ministry of Education.

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**Special Events**

**2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS**

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Pacific regional consultation was held in Auckland, New Zealand in May 2017. The Honourable David Collins, Minister for Education, and Mrs Kaaro Neeti, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, participated. The Honourable Minister also participated in the 2nd World OER Congress.

**8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)**

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society on topics related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.
Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

• improved sustainable livelihoods;
• increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
• improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Kiribati to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

Publications and Resources

COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

A Baseline Study on Technology-Enabled Learning in the Commonwealth Pacific Island Countries: Report presents an overview of the developments related to technology-enabled learning in the nine Commonwealth countries of the Pacific. It includes a country profile for Kiribati.

Gender Profile: Kiribati is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries on how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.
Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016 is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is intended for authorities responsible for quality assurance and institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. Its objective is to facilitate credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Key Facts

Joined Commonwealth: 1968
Population: 10,000 (2013)
Official language: English
Currency: Australian dollar

Geography

Area: 21.3 sq km
Coastline: 30 km

Population density (per sq km): 476

There are 11 years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises six years and secondary six, with cycles of four and two years. The school year starts in January.

Students go overseas for higher education, mainly to Australia and New Zealand, and scholarships are available for this. Nauru is a partner in the regional University of the South Pacific (USP), which has a centre in Nauru, with its main campus in Suva, Fiji.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Letuimanu’asina Dr Emma Kruse Va’ai, Chief Executive Officer, Samoa Qualifications Authority, represents the Pacific on the COL Board of Governors.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point is Dr Maria Gaiyabu, Secretary for Education, Department of Education.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Nauru is primarily in the area of tertiary education, through the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth, and in technical and vocational skills development.

Education

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Nauru continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). The VUSSC partnership represents 30 small states of the Commonwealth dedicated to expanding access to tertiary education. In the past few years, VUSSC has connected institutions through online technologies to promote eLearning and the sharing of educational resources using collaborative and multi-institutional partnerships.

Skills

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The Technical and Vocational Skills Development initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to better quality skills training. A key aspect of the programme is the capacity building of partner organisations in course design and materials development.
In June 2017 in Suva, Fiji, COL welcomed participants from nine Pacific countries to a regional workshop on open educational resources (OER) course design for technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Designed to address the needs and priorities of the Pacific island states, the four-day workshop was hosted by the Pacific Technical and Further Education institute at USP and aimed to strengthen TVET in the region through the use of OER. Twenty-six TVET educators from 12 partner institutions attended, including two from Nauru Secondary School, Department of Education: Ruka Reweru and Floria Detabene.

COL assisted USP in developing a policy for OER through a workshop organised at the university on 25 and 26 May 2017. The workshop was attended by 28 staff members from various faculties and disciplines.

COL supported a three-day workshop at USP on OER Integration in Courses, in August 2017. This workshop was organised by the Centre for Flexible Learning, USP, as a follow-up to the OER policy developed in May 2017. USP is offering funding to 30 teachers to develop OER-based courses.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Three teachers from Nauru participated in the November–December TEL MOOC.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector. COL partnerships assist in improving and extend teaching and learning services to people in the developing Commonwealth.

COL’s partners in Nauru include:
• Department of Education
• University of the South Pacific

Regional Centre

PACIFIC CENTRE FOR FLEXIBLE AND OPEN LEARNING FOR DEVELOPMENT

COL and USP work collaboratively in supporting the Pacific Centre for Flexible and Open Learning for Development (PACFOLD), a regional centre for capacity building in open and distance learning (ODL) in the Pacific. The centre’s priorities include: advocacy and capacity building for flexible and open learning for sustainable development; the development of regional and national policies on open, distance and flexible learning; and research on flexible and open learning.

The online community PACFOLD Learn was launched in early 2017. It is a collaboration between COL, USP and James Cook University and serves as an online space for sharing and collaboration in learning for sustainable development through flexible, technology-based approaches. In 2017, PACFOLD offered its online course on Flexible Skills Development, with participants from across the region.

Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing
sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

**8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)**

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in November 2016.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society relating to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

**Looking Ahead: 2021**

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved sustainable livelihoods;
- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Nauru to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

* A Baseline Study on Technology-Enabled Learning in the Commonwealth Pacific Island Countries: Report presents an overview of the developments related to technology-enabled learning in the nine Commonwealth countries of the Pacific. It includes a country profile for Nauru.

* Certificate in Community Development programme. With support from COL, USP has developed materials for three courses in the Certificate in Community Development programme, which are available as OER.

* Gender Profile: Nauru is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

* Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

* Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries of how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

* Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

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* Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016 is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

* Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

* Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is intended for authorities responsible for quality assurance and institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. Its objective is to facilitate credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.
Review of Flexible Learning at the University of the South Pacific was published in November 2015, after USP had asked COL to lead an international panel to review the efficiency and effectiveness of the university’s flexible learning education programmes. The report offers recommendations, commendations and affirmations of progress that can contribute to USP’s further development.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

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Papua New Guinea

Key Facts

- Joined Commonwealth: 1975
- Population: 7,321,000 (2013)
- GDP: 1.9% p.a. 1990–2013
- UN HDI world ranking: 157
- Official language: English
- Currency: Kina

Geography

- Area: 462,840 sq km
- Coastline: 5,150 km
- Capital city: Port Moresby
- Population density (per sq km): 16

There are 12 years of school education, comprising six years of primary and six of secondary, with cycles of four and two years. The school year starts in January.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) has four public universities: the University of Papua New Guinea (Port Moresby), Papua New Guinea University of Technology (Lae), the University of Goroka (Goroka), which trains teachers, and the University of Natural Resources and Environment (Kerevat, East New Britain), which trains people for agriculture and natural resource management. The longest-established private universities include Divine Word University, founded by the Roman Catholic Church, in Madang, and Pacific Adventist University, in Boroko, Port Moresby, founded by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. The National Polytechnic Institute, in Lae, is one of several tertiary institutions offering courses in technical and vocational education. Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 68 per cent (2010).

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Letuimanu‘asina Dr Emma Kruse Va‘ai, Chief Executive Officer, Samoa Qualifications Authority, represents the Pacific on the COL Board of Governors.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Points for Papua New Guinea are Mr Anthony Rayappan, Deputy Principal Services of Flexible, Open and Distance Education, Department of Education, and Mr Charles Mabia, Assistant Director, Institutional Development Branch, Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology.

NOTABLE MENTION

The Honourable Dame Carol Kidu is a COL Honorary Fellow and former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Papua New Guinea is primarily in the area of technical and vocational skills development and tertiary education, through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.
Education

HIGHER EDUCATION
As part of COL’s Higher Education initiative, five staff at the University of Papua New Guinea received COL scholarships that enabled them to enrol in the eLearning certificate offered by New Zealand’s Open Polytechnic.

In March 2017, COL and the University of Seychelles launched a new massive open online course (MOOC) titled “Understanding the Blue Economy,” which was developed through VUSSC. The course is of particular interest to small island states and was made available to learners globally starting in June 2017.

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH
Papua New Guinea is a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Initiated by ministers of education of developing small states of the Commonwealth, VUSSC supports the collaborative development and sharing of open educational resources (OER) to promote learning for sustainable development. The University of Papua New Guinea and representatives of the government have been participating in VUSSC events and courses.

Skills

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
The Technical and Vocational Skills Development initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to improved quality skills training. A key aspect of the programme is the capacity building of partner organisations in course design and materials development.

In June 2017, COL welcomed participants from nine Pacific countries to a regional workshop on OER course design for technical and vocational education and training (TVET), held in Suva, Fiji. The four-day workshop was hosted by the Pacific Technical and Further Education institute at the University of the South Pacific (USP) and aimed to strengthen TVET in the region through the use OER, to address the needs and priorities of the Pacific island states; 26 TVET educators, including representatives from PNG, attended the workshop.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING
Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a MOOC for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocation education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Four teachers from PNG participated in both courses. A number of people from PNG participated in the MOOC Climate Change and Pacific Islands, offered by USP in collaboration with COL and UNESCO.

Gender

COL is currently working with two partners in PNG on a programme to support skills development and sustainable livelihoods for young women and their communities. COL has received a project proposal from the Young Women’s Christian Association of PNG, who will take the lead in this activity. We are in the programme design phase and aim to commence project activities with an initial targeted cohort in February 2018.

Regional Centre

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COL and USP work collaboratively in supporting the Pacific Centre for Flexible and Open Learning for Development (PACFOLD), a regional centre for capacity building in open and distance learning (ODL) in the Pacific. The centre’s priorities include: advocacy and capacity building for flexible and open learning for sustainable development; the development of regional and national policies on open, distance and flexible learning; and research in flexible and open learning.
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**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partnerships support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partnerships include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector. COL partnerships assist in improving and extend teaching and learning services to people in the developing Commonwealth.

COL partners in Papua New Guinea with the Department of Education.

**Special Events**

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The Pacific Regional Consultation was held in Auckland, New Zealand in May 2017. COL sponsored the attendance of Mr Charles Mabia, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Policy and Research Wing of the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, as PNG’s representative.

**8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)**

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in November 2016. COL sponsored the attendance of Mr Michael Pepen from PNG at PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.
Published in 2015:

A Baseline Study on Technology-Enabled Learning in the Commonwealth Pacific Island Countries: Report presents an overview of the developments related to technology-enabled learning in the nine Commonwealth countries of the Pacific. It includes a country profile for Papua New Guinea.

Certificate in Community Development programme. With support from COL, USP has developed materials for three courses in the Certificate in Community Development programme, which are available as OER.

COL Review of Flexible Learning at the University of the South Pacific was published in November 2015, after USP asked COL to lead an international panel to review the efficiency and effectiveness of its flexible learning education programmes. The report offers recommendations, commendations and affirmations of progress that can contribute to USP’s further development.

Gender Profile: Papua New Guinea is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

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COL looks forward to working with Papua New Guinea to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
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For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1970
- **Population:** 190,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 95%
- **GDP:** 1.9% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 106
- **Official language:** Samoan
- **Currency:** Tala or Samoan dollar

Geography

- **Area:** 2,831 sq km
- **Coastline:** 403 km
- **Capital city:** Apia
- **Population density (per sq km):** 67

Public spending on education was six per cent of GDP in 2008. There are eight years of compulsory education, starting at age five. Primary school comprises six years and secondary seven, the latter having cycles of two and five years. The government began to introduce free education in 2009. As well as state schools, there are several faith schools. Some 77 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2010). The school year starts in February.

The principal tertiary institution within the country is the National University of Samoa (NUS), which was established in Apia in 1984. Samoa was one of the founders of the regional University of the South Pacific (USP), which has its main campus in Suva, Fiji. At the Alafua Campus in Apia are the university’s Samoa Centre, School of Agriculture and Food Technology, and Institute for Research, Extension and Training in Agriculture. The Alafua Campus was established as the university’s agricultural campus in 1977. The USP Samoa Centre relocated from Malifa, where it had been launched in 1976, to the Alafua Campus in 1998. Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 99 per cent (2010).

**SOURCE:** http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Letuimanu’asina Dr Emma Kruse Va’ai, Chief Executive Officer, Samoa Qualifications Authority, represents the Pacific on the COL Board of Governors.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for Samoa is Dr Ioana Chan Mow, Associate Professor, Computing Education, National University of Samoa.

NOTABLE MENTION

The Honourable Fiamé Naomi Mata’aafa is a COL Honorary Fellow and former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Samoa is primarily in the areas of tertiary education through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth, technical and vocational skills development, and technology-enabled learning. The work includes promoting open educational resources (OER) policy development and course design, as well as identifying innovations to support teaching and learning in both formal and informal education settings.
**Education**

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

COL’s Higher Education initiative works to build human resources for social and economic development across the Commonwealth. It supports higher education institutions and ministries in capacity-building, policy development and curriculum reform. COL sponsored nine students from Samoa to follow the COL-supported legislative drafting course for professionals, which is offered by USP.

**VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

Samoa continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (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.

Over the period 2016–2017, COL worked with NUS in response to the university’s request that some of its programmes and qualifications be registered on the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) developed by VUSSC.

In May 2016, COL and NUS discussed the delivery of new VUSSC courses at NUS. To date, NUS has offered the VUSSC Diploma in Sustainable Agriculture twice and has taken steps to align its courses with the TQF. COL is also working with the Centre of Maritime Studies on course development related to fishing technology and fisheries science. A programme in Environmental Management for Sustainable Development has been developed and was launched in Samoa in September 2017.

**Skills**

**TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

The Technical and Vocational Skills Development initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to improved quality skills training. With the help of COL and other agencies, Matuailpeoo Environment Trust Inc. (METI) is providing local solutions to national challenges. COL’s interventions have improved their organisational capacity through support for resource-based, flexible learning, which blends carefully designed materials with collaborative community learning under the guidance of a facilitator. That 636 people were trained in 2016 indicates there has been increased access to quality learning opportunities. Learners have reported that the training is impacting their livelihoods through improvements to health, income and empowerment. Following the programme on life skills and kitchen gardens, 132 out of 636 learners immediately started a kitchen garden, and all 636 joined village co-operatives — the main vehicle for METI’s continued engagement with the community.

A COL workshop was held in June 2017 on the topic of OER for Skills Training. It was a capacity-building activity to develop the skills of technical and vocational education and training educators in the development of flexible learning materials incorporating OER. The workshop, which was the third in a series, was held in Fiji. Nine Pacific countries, including Samoa, were represented.

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

COL’s Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL) initiative aims to encourage more institutions to integrate TEL and OER practices to improve teaching and learning for innovation and skills development. COL is supporting NUS with a project to institutionalise TEL at the university. Policy development and capacity building in the integration of technology in teaching and learning at the university are key components of the project. A baseline study was conducted to develop TEL policy. COL’s Education Specialist: eLearning facilitated a workshop on TEL policy development from 21 to 24 May 2017 at NUS. As a follow-up to the TEL policy developed at NUS, and to assist teachers with planning and developing blended courses that could be used by learners, a capacity-building workshop on developing blended learning courses using Moodle was organised at NUS from 10 to 12 August 2017.

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a MOOC for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February and November–December 2017. Four teachers...
from Samoa participated in both courses. A number of people from Samoa participated in a MOOC on climate change, offered by USP in collaboration with COL and UNESCO.

COL’s Aptus technology is an off-grid, offline virtual classroom — a classroom without walls. A structured trial was conducted on Aptus at NUS, starting in July 2016. The trial involved a total of 226 students enrolled in a foundation course on computer studies. At NUS, most students have access only to the public computers in the library. Aptus was expected to increase the reach of library materials, since it can be loaded with a large amount of digital resources and then deployed in classrooms. The research team hailed the possibilities offered by Aptus as a “monumental breakthrough” for education in Samoa.

Regional Centre

PACIFIC CENTRE FOR FLEXIBLE AND OPEN LEARNING FOR DEVELOPMENT

COL and USP work collaboratively in supporting the Pacific Centre for Flexible and Open Learning for Development (PACFOLD), a regional centre for capacity building in open and distance learning (ODL) in the Pacific. The centre’s priorities include: advocacy and capacity building for flexible and open learning for sustainable development; the development of regional and national policies on open, distance and flexible learning; and research in flexible and open learning.

The online community PACFOLD Learn was launched in early 2017. It is a collaboration between COL, USP and James Cook University and serves as an online space for sharing and collaboration in learning for sustainable development through flexible, technology-based approaches. In 2017, PACFOLD offered a course in Flexible Skills Development, with participants from across the region.

Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Pacific Regional Consultation was held in Auckland, New Zealand in May 2017. COL sponsored Dr Ioana Chan Mow, COL’s Focal Point, as Samoa’s representative at the consultation.
COL IN THE COMMONWEALTH: 2015–2018
8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in November 2016. COL sponsored the attendance of Ms Rasela Tufue-Dolgoy and Ms Lineta Tamnikaiyaroi from Samoa at PCF8.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

COMMONWEALTH WOMEN’S AFFAIRS MINISTERIAL MEETING, 7–8 SEPTEMBER 2016

The Vice President of COL made a presentation at the 11th Commonwealth Women’s Affairs Ministerial Meeting on the role of women’s empowerment in the advancement of business enterprises in Samoa. He also met with the Minister of Women’s Development as well as officials and other stakeholders to brief them about COL’s work. Many Commonwealth women’s development and gender ministries learned about opportunities to collaborate with COL, opening up new avenues for partnership. Some of the women’s development ministries requested COL’s assistance in building their capacity for measuring empowerment and social impact.

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all, believing that access to learning opportunities will lead to:

• improved sustainable livelihoods;
• increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
• Improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Samoa to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.

Publications and Resources

COL has released a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

A Baseline Study on Technology-Enabled Learning in the Commonwealth Pacific Island Countries: Report presents an overview of the developments related to technology-enabled learning in the nine Commonwealth countries of the Pacific. It includes a country profile for Samoa.

Certificate in Community Development programme. With support from COL, USP has developed materials for three courses in the Certificate in Community Development programme, which are available as OER.
Gender Profile: Samoa is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries of how MOOCs might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and the preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework is a practical toolkit intended for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment. It enables practitioners to develop context-appropriate survey instruments to measure empowerment based on COL’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework.

Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016 is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

Referencing Tool for the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is intended for authorities responsible for quality assurance and institutions wanting to register their programmes/qualifications on the TQF. Its objective is to facilitate credit transfer and learners’ mobility within VUSSC partner countries, comparing qualifications frameworks and establishing relationships between them.

Review of Flexible Learning at the University of the South Pacific was published in November 2015, after USP had asked COL to lead an international panel to review the efficiency and effectiveness of the university’s flexible learning education programmes. The report offers recommendations, commendations and affirmations of progress that can contribute to USP’s further development.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1978
- **Population:** 561,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 93%
- **GDP:** 0.5% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 157
- **Official language:** English
- **Currency:** Solomon Islands dollar

Geography

- **Area:** 28,370 sq km
- **Coastline:** 5,310 km
- **Capital city:** Honiara
- **Population density (per sq km):** 20

Public spending on education was 9.9 per cent of GDP in 2010. There are six years of primary education and seven years of secondary, the latter having cycles of three and four years.

Solomon Islands College of Higher Education offers: teacher training; finance; nursing; secretarial studies; a range of technical subjects related to Solomon Islands’ economy, such as marine and fisheries studies, forestry and agriculture; and some first-year university courses. Solomon Islands is a partner in the regional University of the South Pacific (USP), which has its main campus in Suva, Fiji, and a campus in Honiara, Solomon Islands. A bill establishing Solomon Islands National University was passed in 2012.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL Board of Governors

Letuimanu’asina Dr Emma Kruse Va’ai, Chief Executive Officer, Samoa Qualifications Authority, is the regional representative for the Pacific on the COL Board of Governors.

COL Focal Point

The COL Focal Point for Solomon Islands is Mr James Bosamata, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Solomon Islands is primarily in the area of tertiary education, through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth. The work includes promoting open educational resources (OER) policy development and course design, as well as identifying innovations to support teaching and learning in both formal and informal education settings.
### Education

**VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

Solomon Islands continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (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.

Solomon Islands National University (SINU) is now offering a Bachelor in Business Entrepreneurship, one of the most popular programmes developed by VUSSC. The programme, which gives students the choice of three levels — certificate, diploma or degree — is registered on the VUSSC Transnational Qualifications Framework.

A training workshop was organised at SINU in May 2016. As a result, SINU organised another training session in June 2016 for all their academic staff, focused on converting conventional materials to open and distance learning (ODL) formats and to OER.

### Skills

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Seven teachers from Solomon Islands participated in both courses.

The Pacific regional workshop on OER course design for technical and vocational skills development was held in Suva, Fiji, in June 2017. COL’s Adviser: OER conducted the workshop, which covered: instructional video production for online courses and MOOCs; using free and open source software to repurpose various types of OER media formats; and understanding the Moodle learning management system through MoodleCloud. Ms Doris Riaatake Dakei, TVET Curriculum Officer, and Ms Tracy Waihere, a teacher at Tuvaruhu TVET School, Solomon Islands, participated in the workshop.

### Regional Centre

**PACIFIC CENTRE FOR FLEXIBLE AND OPEN LEARNING FOR DEVELOPMENT**

COL and USP work collaboratively in supporting the Pacific Centre for Flexible and Open Learning for Development (PACFOLD), a centre for capacity building in ODL in the Pacific region. PACFOLD’s priorities include advocacy and capacity building for flexible and open learning for sustainable development, the development of regional and national policies on open, distance and flexible learning, and research in flexible and open learning.

The online community PACFOLD Learn was launched in early 2017. It is a collaboration between COL, USP and James Cook University and serves as an online space for sharing and collaboration in learning for sustainable development through flexible, technology-based approaches.

Another recent MOOC, on Climate Change and Pacific Islands, attracted more than 1,500 learners. It was offered by COL in partnership with USP and UNESCO. Approximately 70 per cent of the participants were from countries in the Pacific.

### Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partnerships support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partnerships include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector. COL partnerships assist in improving and extending teaching and learning services to people in the developing Commonwealth.
COL’s partners in Solomon Islands include:
• Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development
• Solomon Islands National University

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Looking Ahead: 2021
COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:
• improved sustainable livelihoods;
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Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series) is a COL–UNESCO 2017 publication presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Tonga

**Key Facts**
- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1970
- **Population:** 105,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 90%
- **GDP:** 1.6% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 100
- **Official languages:** Tongan, English
- **Currency:** Pa’anga or Tongan dollar

**Geography**
- **Area:** 748 sq km
- **Tongatapu:** 256 sq km
- **Coastline:** 419 km
- **Capital city:** Nuku‘alofa
- **Population density (per sq km):** 140

There are nine years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises six years and secondary six, with cycles of four and two years. More than 95 per cent of primary students attend state schools, while about 90 per cent of secondary students attend church schools. Some 90 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2005). The school year starts in February.

Tonga is a partner in the regional University of the South Pacific (USP), which has its main campus in Suva, Fiji, and a campus at ‘Atele, about 7 km from Nuku‘alofa, where some 1,400 students are enrolled each semester for preliminary, foundation and degree courses using the university’s distance-learning facilities. Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 99 per cent (2006).

**COL Board of Governors**
Letuimanu‘asina Dr Emma Kruse Va’ai, Chief Executive Officer, Samoa Qualifications Authority, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for the Pacific.

**COL Focal Point**
The COL Focal Point for Tonga is Lady Siatukimoana Vaea, Deputy Chief Executive Officer for Post-Secondary Education, Tonga Institute of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Training.

**Notable Mention**
The late Dr S. Langi Kavaliku was a COL Honorary Fellow.

**Strategic Plan 2015–2021**
As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Tonga is primarily in the areas of Lifelong Learning for Farmers, technology-enabled learning, technical and vocational skills development, and tertiary education through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.
**Education**

**VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

Tonga continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Initiated by and built with the support of ministers of education of developing small states of the Commonwealth, VUSSC supports the collaborative development and sharing of open educational resources (OER) to promote learning for sustainable development.

**Skills**

**LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS (L3F)**

L3F in Tonga endeavours to improve the financial inclusion of farming communities, particularly women, in the economy. L3F is being implemented in partnership with Tonga Business Enterprise Centre (TBEC), and the Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. L3F was initiated in Tonga for the first time with guidance from the National Reserve Bank of Tonga, with the pilot phase being directed toward building TBEC’s capacity in the development and delivery of multimedia-based open and distance learning (ODL) courses. Activities undertaken included the training of TBEC staff in the development of gender-sensitive ODL courses on financial literacy, packaging them in multimedia formats and disseminating them to farming communities. The pilot phase of the initiative reached 200 learners; the aim is to replicate it throughout Tonga.

With COL’s support, TBEC brought together nine partners to support L3F, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, the Department of Local Government, civil society organisations, exporters and ICT service providers. These partnerships will be helpful as the project progresses to scale. The organisation developed a financial literacy course in both print-based and mobile phone-based formats. The print-based course is reaching 202 learners (40 per cent women), while the mobile phone-based course is being delivered to at least 100 participants via text messages. The messages are transmitted through two mobile service providers — Digicel and Tonga Communications Corporation. The majority of project participants have also expressed a preference for using radios for learning, and this will be integrated in the next project phase. The unique aspect of L3F in Tonga is that it has attracted young people (ages 20–49) on a wide scale and may therefore provide a model for sharing with other Commonwealth regions that are still struggling to attract youths to agriculture.

**TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

The Vice President of COL visited Tonga in September 2016, and from that visit, key areas were identified where COL could assist in Tonga, including: i) building capacity in OER and developing courses in OER; ii) supporting the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in developing a policy framework for OER; and iii) strengthening eLearning, particularly the capability to use Moodle.

As a result, a workshop was organised in collaboration with MOET to build capacity and develop a national OER policy for Tonga. The COL Adviser on OER conducted a workshop in Nuku’alofa on Strategic OER Implementation, at the Tonga Institute of Education (TIOE) and the Tonga Institute of Higher Education (TIHE), in collaboration with MOET. In all, 34 full-time teachers, including senior management from TIOE and TIHE, participated in the workshop.

The Pacific regional workshop on OER course design held in Fiji in June 2017 covered: instructional video production for online courses and massive open online courses (MOOCs); using free and open source software to repurpose various types of OER media formats; and understanding the Moodle learning management system through MoodleCloud. Nine Pacific countries, including Tonga, were represented. The workshop was used as a successful field test of the new 12-part video course on Instructional Video Production and the new *Creating and Repurposing OER Using FOSS: A How-To Guide for Teachers and Learners*, developed by the Open University of Sri Lanka. These sessions resulted in participants gaining all the necessary skills to develop more video-based materials on their own using available technologies such as smart phones and open source software.
Under the Strategic OER Implementation in Tonga project, 20 teachers from TIOE and TIHE were trained in developing and delivering OER-based online courses. A COL consultant worked virtually with the teachers during the pre-workshop session to develop detailed course blueprints for four OER-based online courses: Thinking and Learning Skills, Working and Social Skills, Information Technology, and Restorative Practices in Education.

A hands-on workshop was conducted at TIHE in November 2017, where the course development teams from the two institutions developed approximately 60–70 per cent of the course materials to be delivered online. COL set up two Moodle platforms for TIHE and TIOE. During the hands-on workshop, the teachers were trained in developing and delivering courses online using Moodle. The four courses are now set up on Moodle and are being finalised for delivery. The next phase of the project concentrates on delivering the courses and skilling the teachers in assessing learning outcomes.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a MOOC for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. One teacher from Tonga participated in the TEL MOOC offered in November–December 2017.

Participants from Tonga joined COL and USP for a week-long workshop on eLearning pedagogies and materials development using ODL and OER, at USP in May 2016.

Regional Centre

PACIFIC CENTRE FOR FLEXIBLE AND OPEN LEARNING FOR DEVELOPMENT

COL and USP work collaboratively in supporting the Pacific Centre for Flexible and Open Learning for Development (PACFOLD), a regional centre for capacity building in ODL in the Pacific. The centre’s priorities include: advocacy and capacity building for flexible and open learning for sustainable development; the development of regional and national policies on open, distance and flexible learning; and research in flexible and open learning.

The online community PACFOLD Learn was launched in early 2017. It is a collaboration between COL, USP and James Cook University and serves as an online space for sharing and collaboration in learning for sustainable development through flexible, technology-based approaches. In 2017, PACFOLD offered the Flexible Skills Development course, with participants from across the region.

Another recent MOOC, Climate Change and Pacific Islands, offered by USP in partnership with COL and UNESCO, attracted more than 1,500 learners. Approximately 70 per cent of the participants were from countries in the Pacific.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector. COL partnerships assist in improving and extending teaching and learning services to people in the developing Commonwealth.

COL’s partners in Tonga include:

• Ministry of Education and Training
• Tonga Business Enterprise Centre

Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

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to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Pacific Regional Consultation was held in Auckland, New Zealand in May 2017. Ms Seilose Fifita, Principal, TIHE, participated.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. COL supported the attendance of Ms Seilose Fifita as Tonga’s representative.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

Looking Ahead: 2021

COL is committed to promoting equitable access to quality lifelong learning for all — believing, in effect, that access to learning opportunities will lead to progress in achieving:

- improved sustainable livelihoods;
- increased and equitable access to and use of quality learning opportunities; and
- improved organisational capacity to leverage ODL.

COL looks forward to working with Tonga to address its specific challenges while also supporting broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and provide Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
COL has issued a number of publications and resources over the past three years, including the following:

A Baseline Study on Technology-Enabled Learning in the Commonwealth Pacific Island Countries: Report presents an overview of the developments related to technology-enabled learning in the nine Commonwealth countries of the Pacific. It includes a country profile for Tonga.

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Tuvalu

Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1978
- **Population:** 10,000 (2013)
- **GDP:** 1.7% p.a. 1990–2013
- **Currency:** Australian dollar; Tuvaluan dollar

Geography

- **Area:** 26 sq km
  - although the atolls extend in a chain 595 km long
- **Coastline:** 24 km
- **Capital city:** Funafuti
- **Population density (per sq km):** 385

There are seven years of compulsory education, starting at age six. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary six, the latter having cycles of four and two years. There are ten state primary schools, two on the island of Vaitupu and one on each of the other eight inhabited islands. There is one state secondary boarding school on Vaitupu, with about 600 students, and one private secondary school run by the Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu. The school year starts in February.

The Maritime Training Institute, on Funafuti, was founded in 1979 and provides vocational and technical training for those seeking employment on ships and fishing boats, and in-service training for serving seamen. The Technical Education Centre offers training in building trades. Tuvalu is also a partner in the regional University of the South Pacific (USP), which has its main campus in Suva, Fiji, and a campus on Funafuti.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL Board of Governors

Letuimanu’asina Dr Emma Kruse Vaa'ai, Chief Executive Officer, Samoa Qualifications Authority, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative of the Pacific.

COL Focal Point

The COL Focal Point is Mr Neaki Letia, Director, Education Department, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Tuvalu is primarily in the areas of technical and vocational skills development (TVSD) and tertiary education, through the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth. The work includes promoting open educational resources (OER) policy development and course design, as well as identifying innovations to support teaching and learning in both formal and non-formal education settings.
\textbf{Education}

\textbf{VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH}

Tuvalu continues to be a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (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. Eleven new courses were developed by VUSSC during this triennium and are available to partners.

\textbf{Skills}

\textbf{TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT}

The TVSD initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to improved quality in skills training. COL conducted an extensive study for the Department of Education, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports on the education development challenges and potential for flexible and open learning in Tuvalu. The report provided a baseline and identified key areas in which COL is best placed to support Tuvalu, through collaboration with the ministry. COL is currently assisting with the development of a full TVSD programme for use in communities and schools. Four OER courses have been developed for the programme and are currently in use.

Support for the development of skills training courses in Tuvalu continued, with a second workshop to create OER course materials in 2016. Fifteen teachers and the head of the Kaupule (Island Council) from Nanumaga attended. Four course teams completed drafts of courses on Horticulture, Working with Concrete, Basic Sewing and Basic Painting. The first two were adaptations of existing COL OER, and full drafts were completed during the workshop. The COL consultant continued to work remotely with the teams for the second two courses.

In December 2016, COL’s Education Specialist for TVSD visited Tuvalu to work with the Acting Director of Education and nine teachers working on new TVSD course development. A workshop was held to discuss principles of sustainable development, OER, and TVSD monitoring, evaluation and learning protocols, including tracer studies. The Education Specialist also facilitated a focus group discussion to identify the definition of sustainable livelihoods.

In 2017, the OER course materials for the new Tuvalu TVSD Programme were finalised and offered. Eight out-of-school young people enrolled in a painting course being run at Nauti Primary School. On Nanumaga Island, 18 people set up small-scale poultry keeping using existing COL OER and built new concrete structures on the island as a result of their learning from the TVSD courses. This included a new office building for the Kaupule.

COL held a further workshop in Tuvalu with ten teachers to continue the development of new courses for the programme. Draft TVSD courses have been produced for English, Maths, Life Skills and Ethics — known as service courses for all technical programmes. Training was provided in the use and development of OER. Tracer studies for the new programmes have been planned.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education asked COL to assist with developing a full TVSD programme for use in communities and in schools for Grades 7 to 9, in accordance with the new Tuvalu Education Sector Plan 2016–2020. In June 2017, COL welcomed participants from nine Pacific countries to a regional workshop on OER course design for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Suva, Fiji, attended by 26 TVET educators, including two representatives from Tuvalu.

\textbf{Regional Centre}

\textbf{PACIFIC CENTRE FOR FLEXIBLE AND OPEN LEARNING FOR DEVELOPMENT}

COL and USP work collaboratively in supporting the Pacific Centre for Flexible and Open Learning for Development (PACFOLD), a centre for capacity building in open and distance learning (ODL) in the Pacific. The centre’s priorities include: advocacy and capacity building for flexible and open learning for sustainable development; the development of regional
and national policies on open, distance and flexible learning; and research in flexible and open learning.

The online community PACFOLD Learn was launched in early 2017. It is a collaboration between COL, USP and James Cook University and serves as an online space for sharing and collaboration in learning for sustainable development through flexible, technology-based approaches. In 2017, PACFOLD offered a Flexible Skills Development course, with participants from across the region.

Another recent MOOC, Climate Change and Pacific Islands, attracted more than 1,500 learners. It was offered by USP in partnership with COL and UNESCO. Approximately 70 per cent of the participants were from countries in the Pacific.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector. COL partnerships assist in improving and extend teaching and learning services to people in the developing Commonwealth.

COL partners in Tuvalu with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

**Special Events**

**2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress**

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The 2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments. COL supported the participation of the Director of PACFOLD in the Congress.

The Pacific Regional Consultation was held in Auckland, New Zealand in May 2017.

**8th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF8)**

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in November 2016. COL supported the attendance of Ms Neaki Letia as Tuvalu’s representative.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.
COL IN THE COMMONWEALTH: 2015–2018

Looking Ahead: 2021

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Key Facts

Joined Commonwealth: 1980
Population: 253,000 (2013)
GDP: 0.6% p.a. 1990–2013
UN HDI world ranking: 131
Official languages: Bislama, English, French
Currency: Vatu

Geography

Area: 12,190 sq km
Coastline: 2,530 km
Capital city: Port Vila
Population density (per sq km): 21

Public spending on education was seven per cent of GDP in 2008. Since 2010, primary education, in French or English, has been provided free of charge. Primary school comprises six years and secondary seven, the latter in cycles of four and three years. Some 71 per cent of pupils complete primary school (2008). The school year starts in February.

Vanuatu is a partner in the regional University of the South Pacific (USP), which has its main campus in Suva, Fiji, and the Emalus Campus in Port Vila, Vanuatu, where 700–1,000 students per semester are enrolled for certificate, diploma, degree and postgraduate courses using the university’s distance-learning facilities. The university’s law school and teaching programmes in Pacific languages and early childhood education are based at the Emalus Campus.

Institutions offering tertiary education include: the Institute of Technology, which offers courses in business and technical education; the Institute of Teacher Education; and the College of Nursing Education. All are located in Port Vila. Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 94 per cent (2010).

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Letuimanu’asina Dr Emma Kruse Va’ai, Chief Executive Officer, Samoa Qualifications Authority, is a member of the COL Board of Governors as the regional representative for the Pacific.

COL FOCAL POINT

The COL Focal Point for Vanuatu is Mr Reginal Garoleo, Principal Education Officer, Teacher Education Directorate, Ministry of Education and Training.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL’s work in Vanuatu is primarily in the area of open/innovative schooling, technical and vocational skills development (TVSD), and tertiary education through the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth. Over the past three years, COL’s work has included promoting open educational resources (OER) policy development and course design, as well as identifying innovations to support teaching and learning in both formal and non-formal education settings.
OPEN/INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING

Open/innovative schooling is a supplementary or complementary model of schooling that uses a range of flexible approaches, based on open and distance learning (ODL), to provide structured teaching and learning opportunities. It focuses on training teachers in eLearning, using OER, improving the management of open schools and supporting the use of appropriate technologies in teaching and learning. COL is partnering with Vanuatu’s Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) to train teachers in the development of eLearning content and OER in several school subjects and to expand access to quality schooling in the country. COL’s support in Vanuatu will have a special focus on out-of-school youths; however, it is anticipated that the project will also impact mainstream schools by improving throughput and reducing dropout rates.

The COL Senior Advisor for Open Schooling visited Vanuatu in September 2016 to start negotiations about how COL’s Open/Innovative Schooling (OIS) initiative can be more involved in Vanuatu. Negotiations began on:

- expanding the OIS initiative in Vanuatu;
- staff training in eLearning and the development of OER learning content, especially in the area of technical and vocational training; policy development support for open schooling;
- staff training at all levels in the management of open schools; and
- a pilot programme in the use of Aptus.

In 2016, negotiations continued with MoET and with NotesMaster (a freely accessible eLearning network for OER) regarding the training of teachers in technology-enabled learning and the development of eLearning OER content for their schools. The output was an agreement between COL and MoET for the training of 30 teachers/course writers from the ministry by NotesMaster to develop nine school subjects as eLearning OER over a period of 12 months. A face-to-face workshop initiating the 12-month process took place in March 2017 in Vanuatu.

The ministry nominated two staff for the E-Learning Certificate offered by New Zealand’s Open Polytechnic. These learners are sponsored by COL.

The Commonwealth Open Schooling Association (COMOSA) Pacific Chapter Chair, Glendan Ilaisa, has attended the first virtual coordinators meeting of the reorganised COMOSA.

Ministries of education in Belize, Mozambique, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu and Zambia have signed agreements with COL to work together to improve the quality of teaching and learning in mainstream and open schools through eLearning and to broaden access to schooling for out-of-school youths.

COL brought representatives from these five countries together, including two representatives of Vanuatu’s MoET, to Singapore in August 2017 to share experiences in the implementation of COL’s OIS model in mainstream and open schools. This provided an opportunity for the participants to align country implementation strategies, find common solutions to challenges and identify innovative ways to increase the programme’s momentum. The five-day workshop in Singapore was conducted by Singapore’s National Institute of Education on behalf of the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

COL in November 2017 signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with Vanuatu’s MoET to support curriculum writers with Internet connectivity. In January 2018, COL signed another MoA with the ministry to provide a stipend for the writers. With COL’s support, MoET is in the process of finalising an ODL policy.

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Vanuatu is a member of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (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. COL is working with Vanuatu to align their National Qualifications Framework with VUSSC’s Transnational Qualifications Framework.
Skills

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The TVSD initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to improved quality skills training. COL is helping MoET to adapt an existing COL OER course in small engine maintenance for the Vanuatu context and is assisting with the process of registering the course as an accredited programme in the newly reformed, competency-based education and training system, the Vanuatu National Qualifications Framework. This registration involves completing course accreditation with new occupational standards and a variety of approval processes with the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority. A COL consultant travelled to Sanma Province to facilitate further materials development in print and guided a local video crew in producing video content for the course.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocation education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Significantly, 22 teachers from Vanuatu participated in both courses.

Regional Centre

PACIFIC CENTRE FOR FLEXIBLE AND OPEN LEARNING FOR DEVELOPMENT

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Partnerships

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COL’s partners in Vanuatu include:

• Ministry of Education and Training
• University of the South Pacific
Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

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PARTNER COUNTRIES

Australia
Canada
New Zealand
United Kingdom
**Key Facts**

Joined Commonwealth: **1931**  
(Statute of Westminster)

Population: **23,343,000** (2013)

GDP: **1.8%** p.a. 1990–2013

UN HDI world ranking: **2**

Official languages: **English**

Currency: **Australian dollar**

**Geography**

Area: **7,682,395 sq km**

Coastline: **25,800 km**

Capital city: **Canberra**

Population density (per sq km): **3**

Public spending on education was 5.1 per cent of GDP in 2011. Responsibility for education lies with the states, and education systems vary. There are 11 years of compulsory education, starting at age five. The school year starts in January.

There are 39 universities, 37 of which are public institutions, with more than one million students enrolled (2013). The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 1.40:1 (2010). There is virtually no illiteracy among people aged 15–24.

In 1971, Australia hosted the 5th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, in Canberra. Commonwealth Education Ministers meet every three years to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest.

**SOURCE:** [http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries](http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries)

**COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Mr Martin Bean, CBE, Vice Chancellor and President, RMIT University and COL Honorary Fellow, is a member of the COL Board of Governors.

**NOTABLE MENTIONS**

The late Professor James A. Maraj was COL’s founding President and CEO.

Professor James Taylor is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Professor Malcolm Skilbeck is a former member of COL’s Founding Board of Governors.

Ms Ali Gillies is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Professor Clifford D. Blake is a COL Honorary Fellow and former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Professor Richard Johnson is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

**COL FOCAL POINT**

Ms Peta Compton, Policy Officer in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, is the COL Focal Point for Australia.

**Strategic Plan 2015–2021**

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

The Australian government provides resources and financial support to projects around the globe.
through 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 Board of Governors.

COL works in 47 developing countries of the Commonwealth. It has a strategic plan for the Pacific, which is currently being implemented. In partnership with the University of the South Pacific, COL supports the Pacific Centre for Flexible and Open Learning for Development (PACFOLD), a regional centre located in Fiji. The centre’s priorities include: advocacy for and capacity building in flexible and open learning for sustainable development; the development of regional and national policies on open, distance and flexible learning; and research in flexible and open learning.

Some of COL’s work related to Australia’s international development priorities are highlighted below.

**Education**

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

In this triennium, COL commissioned Emeritus Professor Colin Latchem of Australia to conduct research aimed at gaining an up-to-date overview of the different policies, systems and practices of open and distance learning (ODL) quality assurance (QA) in national QA and accreditation agencies, as well as universities in the Commonwealth. In light of the findings, Professor Latchem was able to make recommendations on QA standards and procedures for policy makers and senior decision makers responsible for ODL at national and institutional levels. The research led to the publication of a report in February 2016 titled *Open and Distance Learning Quality Assurance in Commonwealth Universities: A Report and Recommendations for QA and Accreditation Agencies and Higher Education Institutions*.

**OPEN/INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING**

Open/innovative schooling is a supplementary or complementary model of schooling that uses a range of flexible approaches, based on ODL, to provide structured teaching and learning opportunities. It focuses on training teachers in eLearning, using open educational resources (OER), improving the management of open schools and supporting the use of appropriate technologies in teaching and learning. In this triennium, COL facilitated a twinning arrangement between Open Access College, Australia and the Ministry of Education and Training in Vanuatu.

**Skills**

**TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

Technology-enhanced, flexible and blended approaches to technical and vocational skills development (TVSD) can contribute to improvements in access, gender, quality and efficiency indicators. Experience with using these approaches is not widespread in institutions and ministries in Commonwealth countries. The core challenges that COL’s TVSD programme seeks to address are inadequate quality in and low access to technical and vocational education and training (TVET), especially for women.

In this triennium, COL, in partnership with James Cook University, Australia and the University of the South Pacific, Fiji, developed the PACFOLD Learn online community. PACFOLD learn provides an online space for people working in open, distance and flexible learning for sustainable development to share and collaborate through flexible, technology-based approaches.

In 2017, Professor Latchem edited a publication prepared jointly by COL and UNESCO. The book is the outcome of fruitful cooperation between the two organisations and brings together the work of several leading experts, presented as a series of case studies from around the world showcasing the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and novel forms of open, flexible and technology-enhanced learning in TVET.

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

COL’s Technology-Enabled Learning initiative encourages institutions to integrate technology-enabled learning and OER practices to improve teaching and learning for innovation and skills development. Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education
developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017; 12 teachers from Australia participated in both courses.

Gender

REACHING THE UNREACHED PROJECT

Thanks to a grant from the Government of Australia, the Reaching the Unreached project used ODL and technology to support the schooling and skills training of girls and women in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. These efforts have improved the livelihoods of girls and women and given them a sense of agency and empowerment. The project’s aim was to provide educational opportunities to women and girls who had either never attended school or dropped out due to barriers such as child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), distance to school, cultural barriers, security concerns and the cost of schooling. In communities throughout Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, 25,284 women and girls completed life skills and vocational skills training, with 4,724 of the participants successfully moving into income-generating activities after the training.

On completion of the project in 2017, a baseline–endline report was published based on data collected during activities undertaken to train unreached women and girls in these countries. In comparing the baseline and endline data relating to women’s and girls’ empowerment and their achievement of sustainable livelihoods, the report revealed some key achievements.

The results on empowerment indicated that at baseline, only 36.7 per cent and 23.6 per cent of the surveyed community members felt that the roles of women and girls in decision making in the family and the community, respectively, were good or very good. At endline, this had increased to 94.5 per cent and 93.1 per cent, respectively. Only 19 per cent of the women and girls in the survey at baseline indicated that their ability to make decisions about their health was good or very good. At endline, this had risen to 97 per cent.

The results on achieving sustainable livelihoods indicated that at baseline, only 33.7 per cent of the community members surveyed rated the community’s support for women’s and girls’ education as good to very good. At endline, the respondents overwhelmingly rated their community’s support as good or very good, at 97.9 per cent. Only 39.8 per cent of community members reported at baseline that the learning resources available to women and girls in their community were gender-sensitive, which included facilities being safe for women and girls in terms of distance from their homes and the provision of acceptable ablution facilities. At endline, 93.8 per cent of community members reported the prevalence of gender-sensitive learning resources. At baseline, 28 per cent of the women and girls reported that they did not feel safe walking home from the learning facilities in their community. At endline, 98 per cent reported feeling safe in this context. Thanks to this project, not just the women and girls have benefited — their families and the entire community have as well.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in Australia include:

• Charles Sturt University
• Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Australia
• The Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia

Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of
Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Senior policy makers and stakeholders from 111 countries participated in the Regional Consultations, which identified nine groups of stakeholders for mainstreaming OER. A survey on OER received responses from 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders, resulting in the publication of *Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017*. The outcomes of the Regional Consultations and the Global Report shaped the deliberations at the 2nd World OER Congress. The outcome document of the Congress — the Ljubljana OER Action Plan 2017 — provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Pacific Regional Consultation was held in Auckland, New Zealand in May 2017. Dr Carina Bossu, ASCILTE Fellow Lecturer – Learning and Teaching, Tasmanian Institute of Learning and Teaching, University of Tasmania, Australia, and Ms Robin Wright, Copyright Manager, Swinburne University of Technology, Australia, attended.

### 8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Several ministers of education from Commonwealth countries participated.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

### MEETINGS

In November 2016, COL sponsored the International Council of Open and Distance Education (ICDE) Presidents’ Summit, held at Charles Sturt University in Australia.

COL’s Vice President gave a keynote address at the conference of the Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia in Melbourne in February 2017. He spoke about lifelong learning and called on the ODL community to give more attention to non-formal learning.

Johanna Funk, a research associate from Charles Darwin University in Australia, visited COL in April 2017 and met with COL’s Education Specialists: Technical and Vocational Skills Development and eLearning. Ms Funk’s visit to COL was to learn about COL’s work in OER and how this could assist her work on OER in Australia.

### Looking Ahead: 2021

In this triennium, COL identified several relevant international priorities for Australia, based on information from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Australia, including:

- Climate change
- Environment and sea law
- Gender equality
- Human rights
- Indigenous peoples

COL looks forward to its continued partnership with Australia, working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and providing Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
The State of Open Universities in the Commonwealth: A Perspective on Performance, Competition and Innovation is a report critically examining one of the marvels of modern higher education: specialist open and distance learning universities.

Technology-Enabled Learning Implementation Handbook provides a strategy to engage in a systematic process of critical thinking, decision making, implementation and reflection on TEL. It offers three questionnaires to be used for analysing TEL infrastructure and usage by stakeholders — teachers and students.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series), published in 2017, is a COL–UNESCO work presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
Canada

Key Facts

- **Joined Commonwealth:** 1931 (Statute of Westminster)
- **Population:** 35,182,000 (2013)
- **Primary enrolment:** 95% (2010)
- **GDP:** 1.3% p.a. 1990–2013
- **UN HDI world ranking:** 8
- **Official language:** English, French
- **Currency:** Canadian dollar

Geography

- **Area:** Total 9,976,000 sq km
- **Coastline:** 202,100 km
- **Capital city:** Ottawa
- **Population density (per sq km):** 4

Public spending on education was 5.4 per cent of GDP in 2011. Education policy varies with province, but the period of compulsory education generally starts at age six. Most primary and secondary schooling is publicly funded. The school year starts in September.

Post-secondary education expanded rapidly during the 1980s and 1990s; women have shown the faster increase and now outnumber men. The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada represents 98 Canadian public and private not-for-profit universities and university-degree-level colleges (2013). There is virtually no illiteracy among people aged 15–24. There are more than 1,000 public libraries, containing more than 70 million volumes.


Commonwealth Education Ministers meet every three years to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Ms Janet L. Ecker, a former Minister of Finance and Minister of Education, Ontario, is a member of the COL Board of Governors.

NOTABLE MENTION

D. Dominique A.M.X. Abrioux is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Mr Gerry Armstrong is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

The Honourable Iona Campagnolo, O.C., is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Ms Denise Chong is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Ms Robin Ciceri is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

The late Dr Glenn Crombie was a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Sir John Daniel, O.C., is a COL Honorary Fellow, former COL President and CEO, and a member of COL's Founding Board of Governors.

Dr Glen M. Farrell is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Mr Don Hamilton is a member of COL's Board of Governors.

Mr Shell Harvey is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Dr H. Ian Macdonald, O.C., is a COL Honorary Fellow and a former Chair of the COL Board of Governors.

Dr Rory McGreal is Honorary COL Chair: Athabasca University.
The late Dr Lewis Perinbam, O.C., was a former Chair of the COL Board of Governors.

Ms Tina Sartoretto is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Ms Jodi White is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Strategic Plan 2015–2021

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

COL has been based in Vancouver, Canada since its establishment in 1987, when the Canadian government offered to host the organisation in British Columbia. As a major donor, Canada has a seat on COL’s Board of Governors. Canada delivers support to countries and regions around the world through Global Affairs Canada, which has identified several 2017–2018 priorities for advancing Canada’s international development agenda; these include helping developing countries create inclusive and green economic growth by targeting programming for the poorest, most vulnerable and most marginalised and boosting the economic empowerment of women. Global Affairs Canada, formerly the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, has been instrumental in COL’s integration of results-based management and gender mainstreaming in its organisational processes.

Most of COL’s work is implemented in 47 developing countries of the Commonwealth. Scores of Canadian consultants have provided technical advice to institutions in these countries related to open and distance learning (ODL), open educational resources (OER), technology-enabled learning and curriculum design. Some of COL’s work related to Canada’s international development priorities are highlighted below.

Education

Higher Education

COL’s Higher Education initiative supports policy makers, institutions and leaders in harnessing the full potential of ODL through the use of technology, which in turn enables them to cope with the increasing demand for quality higher education in the face of rising costs and diminishing public funding.

COL is a community partner of the Centre for Community Engaged Learning (CCEL) at the University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada and applies for student intern support for various projects, which are free of charge to COL and support the students’ experiential learning. CCEL collaborates with students, staff, faculty and community partners to work through complex community-based issues. Their programmes place students in community settings (non-profits and inner-city schools) either as a required part of an academic course or through voluntary co-curricular placements, giving them hands-on, immersive experiences. Since COL became CCEL’s community partner in 2017, interns from UBC have participated in conducting research and attended consultation meetings with COL’s partners in Bangladesh, India, Mozambique, Pakistan and Tanzania.

Open/Innovative Schooling

The Open/Innovative Schooling initiative has been introduced successfully in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific to complement, or as an alternative to, the conventional school system. Open/innovative schooling is the physical separation of the school learner from the teacher, and the use of unconventional teaching methodologies and information and communications technologies (ICT).

COL supported the Gwen Lizarraga Open School in Belize and facilitated a twinning project between this school and the Fraser Valley Distance Education School, in British Columbia. The Canada–Caribbean Chapter of the Commonwealth Open School Association (COMOSA) organised an Open Schooling Conference in Belize in 2015.

COL’s Senior Adviser: Open Schooling visited Open School BC, Canada in April 2017 to discuss twinning and the participation of Caribbean open schools in
a British Columbia conference on eLearning. The meeting has led to increased and more effective capacity support for ODL from the partners and the establishment of a community of practice.

Skills

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

COL’s Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL) initiative aims to focus on increasing access to quality teaching and learning by supporting policy formulation and innovation in the application of ICT in education, and the development of ICT skills. In June 2016, COL signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Athabasca University, Canada to develop and offer a massive open online course (MOOC) on TEL from 2017 to 2021.

COL, in partnership with Athabasca University, offered the Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning course for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education. The MOOC was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017. Over 5,000 learners from the Commonwealth, including 219 from Canada, participated in the TEL MOOC. COL continues to develop new MOOCs with Athabasca University.

In 2017, the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) completed the Research on Open Educational Resources for Development (ROER4D) project, funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada. The project led to the publication of the book *Promoting Use and Contribution of Open Educational Resources* in 2017.

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS

COL’s Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) initiative empowers farming communities using ODL and flexible and blended learning. The support of Global Affairs Canada enabled COL and its partners to scale up the L3F initiative in Ghana and Tanzania. The following are some of the interesting results achieved in the project:

9,178 participants from smallholder farming communities (more than 60 per cent of whom are women) have built their capacities through intensive and extensive learning with a blended learning approach, utilising mobile phones, radios, CDs and group-based learning. Participants have acquired skills and knowledge in financial literacy, enterprise management, sustainable agriculture, credit planning, livestock management and gender issues.

9,178 participants (more than 60 per cent of whom are women) in Tanzania and Ghana have accessed credit through various financial institutions. Due to L3F, participants accessed CAD 828,000 worth of credit.

3,463 participants of two Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs), facilitated by the Tanzania Federation of Cooperatives, also accessed credit.

Some institutions, including banks, SACCOs, radio stations and a mobile phone company, supported the programme with subsidised and free services to deliver learning materials in Tanzania.

More than 5,700 women own livelihood assets in their name due to enhanced participation in socio-economic organisations.

Sample surveys and focus-group discussions indicated that the income from 5,700 L3F households had increased by 29 per cent over a three-year period. There was also evidence of an increase in food consumption in these households.

Gender

GIRLS INSPIRE

Girls and women continue to remain seriously disadvantaged across the Commonwealth. The Canadian government’s international advocacy efforts to prevent child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) are already drawing attention to this major challenge. Such efforts will help developing countries to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 5, which the global community has adopted.

GIRLS Inspire is a partnership between COL and community organisations in Bangladesh, India, Mozambique, Pakistan and Tanzania to address the barriers keeping girls and women from full participation in society. Thanks to funds from the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada, COL used...
ODL and technology in this triennium to support the schooling and skills training of girls and women in Bangladesh, Mozambique, Pakistan and Tanzania. Some examples of the achievements of partners in these countries are described below.

In Bangladesh, COL’s partner Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha (SSS) used solar-powered boat schools and floating libraries, equipped with Internet-linked laptops, multimedia projectors and educational materials, docking at villages to provide on-board training. A total of 13,578 girls were trained in life and vocational skills. SSS also helped 1,602 girls to access microloans and 4,389 girls and women to gain income-generating opportunities. Without the boat schools, these girls had no chance of an education or employment opportunities. SSS held evening shows on their education boats, reaching over 10,764 community members and addressing topics such as gender equality, preventing early marriage, eliminating domestic violence and exploitation, and generating productive employment opportunities for women.

In Mozambique, the Safe Spaces and Mobile Classes Project, implemented by partner agencies such as Ajuda de Desenvolvimento de Povo para Povo (ADPP) and Associação Progresso (Progresso), has helped establish 16 community-agreed safe learning environments. Through the safe learning spaces and mobile classes, 870 women and girls completed skills training and 1,230 girls reintegrated into formal schooling, setting them on the path to greater earning ability. In addition, through life skills workshops on sexual and reproductive health, family planning and HIV/AIDS, girls learned about young mothers who had experienced complications in early pregnancies. A total of 171 girls accessed family planning services. To date, 15 girls have participated in internships and 11 girls are in income-generating activities.

In Pakistan, the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC), reached out to girls in their homes to register them in mobile and stationary training centres. SPARC provided life skills and vocational skills training to the girls for up to six weeks. Sixty safe learning environments for girls were established. In total, 9,598 girls and women from 180 communities/villages were reached, and all completed a locally relevant vocational course for employability. Job fairs, career counselling and referrals to banks for financial aid have resulted in 115 girls securing microloans, 443 girls being involved in internship opportunities and 101 engaging in income-generating activities. Another partner, Bedari, developed the documentary *A Tale of Two Marriages*, which was seen by more than 120 community members and stopped the marriage of one teenage girl.

In partnership with the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) and Kiota Women’s Health and Development (KIWOHEDE), both in Tanzania, the GIRLS Inspire project is being implemented in three regions where the prevalence of child marriage is 40–51 per cent.

A baseline study determined that 66 per cent of participants did not know of an institution in or near their community that offered open, distance and technology-based education to girls. To begin addressing this gap, IAE and KIWOHEDE are working directly with communities to shift perspectives on CEFM and girls’ education, paving the way to reintegrate women and girls into education through ODL. At least 1,400 women and girls have registered for schooling and skills training. Through KIWOHEDE, 238 women and girls have commenced training through satellite centres. Thirty-six workshops and other events organised in this triennium have addressed CEFM and the importance of girls’ education. So far, these have reached at least 712 key stakeholders, including government officials, community leaders and elders.

GIRLS Inspire hosted a webinar on sustainability and the environment in January 2018 with Jennifer Long of Yale Secondary School in Abbotsford, British Columbia. In the webinar, Ms Long shared her experiences in sustainability, from working with an environmental school to making environmental studies and activism accessible for learners.

### Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.
Through its service initiative — eLearning for International Organisations (eLIO) — COL has engaged dozens of Canadian experts in education and development in fee-for-service professional development courses and projects that use online learning. Through this service, Canadian experts have provided technical assistance to ministries and institutions around the Commonwealth, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNESCO, UNICEF, the International Labour Organization, the World Bank, Women Deliver, the Norwegian Red Cross, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Council of Europe.

COL’s partners in Canada include:

- Athabasca University
- CanHealth
- Global Affairs Canada

Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Senior policy makers and stakeholders from 111 countries participated in the Regional Consultations, which identified nine groups of stakeholders for mainstreaming OER. A survey on OER received responses from 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders, resulting in the publication of Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017. The outcomes of the Regional Consultations and the Global Report shaped the deliberations at the 2nd World OER Congress. The outcome document of the Congress — the Ljubljana OER Action Plan 2017 — provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

The Caribbean and the Americas Regional Consultation was held in São Paulo, Brazil in April 2017. Professor Rory McGreal, UNESCO/COL/ICDE Chair in OER at the Centre for Distance Education, Athabasca University, Canada, attended.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Denise Gaspard-Richards of the University of the West Indies’ Open Campus presented a paper titled “Effectiveness of Agile Design in Wrap-Around Content Development.”

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

MEETINGS

In May 2016, COL’s President and CEO, Professor Asha Kanwar, was invited to be a speaker at a luncheon for Commonwealth High Commissioners organised by H.E. Dr Sulley Gariba, the Ghanaian High Commissioner to Canada in Ottawa. While in Ottawa, Professor Kanwar briefed Diane Jacovella, Associate DM for Foreign Affairs, Sarah Fountain Smith, Assistant DM for Global Issues and Development, and their colleagues on COL’s impact.

Professor Kanwar also made a plenary presentation at the opening of the World Conference on Online Learning, in Toronto, Canada. The event was organised by Canada’s Contact North and the ICDE in October 2017.
Looking Ahead: 2021

In this triennium, COL identified several relevant international priorities for Canada, including these set by Global Affairs Canada:

- Contribute to international peace, security and humanitarian assistance through renewed leadership and constructive international engagement.
- Reinforce Canada’s relations with the United States and other key bilateral partners to advance Canadian interests.
- Strengthen Canada’s contribution to a more just, inclusive and sustainable world.
- Contribute to inclusive Canadian and global prosperity through increased and diversified international trade and foreign direct investment.

COL looks forward to its continued partnership with Canada, working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and providing Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
New Zealand

Key Facts

Joined Commonwealth: 1931 (Statute of Westminster)

Population: 4,506,000 (2013)

GDP: 1.5% p.a. 1990–2013

UN HDI world ranking: 7

Official languages: English, Maori

Currency: New Zealand dollar

Geography

Area: 270,500 sq km

Coastline: 15,130 km

Capital city: Wellington

Population density (per sq km): 17

Public spending on education was 7.4 per cent of GDP in 2012. There are 12 years of compulsory education, starting at age five. Primary school comprises six years and secondary seven, the latter having cycles of four and three years. The school year starts in January.

 Universities New Zealand recognises eight government-funded universities, with a total student enrolment of about 180,000 in 2011: Auckland University of Technology; Lincoln University (near Christchurch, South Island); Massey University (campuses in Auckland, Palmerston North and Wellington); University of Auckland; University of Canterbury (in Christchurch, South Island); University of Otago (main campus in Dunedin, South Island); University of Waikato (main campus in Hamilton); and Victoria University of Wellington.

There are many colleges of education across the country, and the University of Waikato has its own School of Education. The tertiary sector also includes 20 polytechnics and institutes of technology, all offering degree courses. The Maori Education Trust — established in 1961 as the Maori Education Foundation — awards scholarships and grants to encourage Maori participation in tertiary education. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 1.50:1 (2010). There is virtually no illiteracy among people aged 15–24.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Dr Linda Sissons, CNZM, is Chair of the COL Board of Governors.

The Right Honourable Sir Lockwood Smith, KNZM, former High Commissioner of New Zealand to the United Kingdom, Ghana, Ireland and Nigeria, is a member of the COL Board of Governors.

NOTABLE MENTIONS

Ms Shona E. Butterfield, CNZM, is a COL Honorary Fellow and former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Dr Robin Day is Honorary COL Chair: Otago Polytechnic.

Mr William L. Renwick is a former member of COL’s Founding Board of Governors.

Dr Caroline Seelig is a COL Honorary Fellow and former COL Advisor.

Ms Jenny Williams is a former COL Advisor.

COL FOCAL POINT

Mr Matthew Allen, Development Manager – Multilateral, Partnerships, Humanitarian and Multilateral Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand, is the COL Focal Point for New Zealand.
As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

New Zealand is a major contributor to COL’s budget and is represented on COL’s Board of Governors. The country provides support and expertise to COL’s initiatives in the Pacific region and contributes to Pan-Commonwealth activities.

COL works in 47 developing countries of the Commonwealth. It has developed a strategic plan for the Pacific that is being implemented.

Some of COL’s work related to New Zealand’s international development priorities are highlighted below.

**Education**

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

In March 2016, COL signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (OPNZ) to provide opportunities for participants from across the Commonwealth to complete the Certificate in Designing and Facilitating E-Learning (Level 5) offered by OPNZ. This agreement continues up until December 2018. The scholarships are offered by COL, and learners are nominated by COL partners from Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Over 60 learners have so far benefitted from the scholarship.

**OPEN/INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING**

COL Senior Adviser: Open Schooling visited Te Kura Correspondence School in October 2017 to explore possible regional cooperation between distance schools in Australia and New Zealand and the Open Schooling initiative of the Ministry of Education and Training in Vanuatu.

**Skills**

**TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

COL’s Technology-Enabled Learning initiative aims to focus on increasing access to quality teaching and learning by supporting policy formulation and innovation in the application of ICT in education, and the development of ICT skills. Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a MOOC for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocation education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017; six teachers from New Zealand participated in both courses.

In 2017, COL became a partner of OERu — an independent, not-for-profit network that offers free online courses for students worldwide. Through the OER Foundation, based at Otago Polytechnic, the OERu network continually works towards:

- widening access to and reducing the cost of tertiary study for learners everywhere, especially for those who are excluded from the formal education sector;
- covering the operational cost of institution-based OERu services on a cost-recovery basis (or using alternative revenue sources);
- providing pathways for students to achieve credible credentials for approved courses based solely on open educational resources (OER); and
- optimising the visibility and impact of the community service mission required of tertiary education institutions.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.
COL partners in New Zealand with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Special Events

2nd WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

COL organised six Regional Consultations on OER leading up to the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress, hosted by the Government of Slovenia in Ljubljana in partnership with UNESCO and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Senior policy makers and stakeholders from 111 countries participated in the Regional Consultations, which identified nine groups of stakeholders for mainstreaming OER. A survey on OER received responses from 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders, resulting in the publication of Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017. The outcomes of the Regional Consultations and the Global Report shaped the deliberations at the 2nd World OER Congress. The outcome document of the Congress — the Ljubljana OER Action Plan 2017 — provides recommendations to stakeholders in five strategic areas: building the capacity of users to find, reuse, create and share OER; language and cultural issues; ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality OER; developing sustainability models; and developing supportive policy environments.

New Zealand hosted the Pacific Regional Consultation in Auckland in May 2017. The following stakeholders attended the Regional Consultation: Dr Linda Sissons, COL’s Chair and Chief Executive, Primary ITO, Member of Education New Zealand Board; Ms Karina Bird, Senior Professional Adviser, New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI); Dr Robin Day, Lead Assessor, Capable NZ Chair in OER, COL Chair, OER Foundation, Otago Polytechnic; Ms Mandy Henk, Public Lead, Creative Commons Aotearoa; Dr Wayne Macintosh, Director, International Centre for Open Education, Otago Polytechnic; Ms Amy McAteer, Principal Development Manager, Education, Sustainable Economic Development Division, Pacific and Development Group, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade; and Dr Caroline Seelig, Chief Executive, OPNZ.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Several education ministers from Commonwealth countries participated.

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity, teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

PCF3 was held in New Zealand in 2004.

MEETINGS

During COL’s Board of Governors annual meeting in June 2017, Dr Linda Sissons, CNZM, was re-appointed Chair for a second three-year term. Dr Sissons is Chief Executive of Primary ITO and has extensive experience in the education sector, including with the Wellington Institute of Technology and OPNZ. She was first appointed Chair in July 2014, after previously serving as Deputy Chair and as New Zealand’s representative on the Board.
In this triennium, COL identified several relevant international priorities for New Zealand, based on information from the New Zealand Aid Programme, including:

- Advocate at the global level for policies that support sustainable development in small island developing states.
- Engage with Pacific partners on economic and social policies that promote sustainable development and effective implementation.
- Strengthen the development impact of New Zealand’s domestic and international policy positions.
- Work with the Pacific to develop effective regional approaches to regional issues.
- Negotiate and implement policy agreements that improve the ability of Pacific Island countries to trade in goods, services and labour.

COL looks forward to its continued partnership with New Zealand, working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and providing Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
United Kingdom

Key Facts

Population: 63,136,000 (2013)
GDP: 1.5% p.a. 1990–2013
UN HDI world ranking: 14
Official languages: English
Currency: Pound sterling

Geography

Area: 243,305 sq km
  England 130,395; Scotland 78,313; Wales 20,754; Northern Ireland 13,843
Coastline: 12,400 km
Capital city: London
Population density (per sq km): 259

Public spending on education was six per cent of GDP in 2010. There are 12 years of compulsory education, starting at age five. Primary school comprises six years and secondary seven, with cycles of three and four years. The school year starts in September.

After the age of 16, when it is no longer compulsory, most young people stay in education, either at school or at further education colleges, and may then go on to higher education institutions. In England, the Education and Skills Act 2008 raised the age of compulsory participation in education to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015. According to the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, there are more than 300 institutions providing higher education courses, including universities, colleges of higher education and further education colleges. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 1.40:1 (2010). There is virtually no illiteracy among people aged 15–24.

SOURCE: http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Mr Steve Hillier, Department for International Development, is a member of the COL Board of Governors.

Lord David Terence Puttnam, CBE, serves on the COL Board of Governors as the appointee of the Commonwealth Secretary-General.

Dr Joanna Newman, Secretary General, Association of Commonwealth Universities, is an Advisor to the COL Board of Governors.

NOTABLE MENTION

Dame Jocelyn Barrow is a member of COL’s Founding Board of Governors.

Mr Desmond Bermingham is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Dr Chris Berry is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Dr Felicity Binns is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Ms Jo Bourne is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

The late Right Honourable Lord (Asa) Briggs of Lewes was a COL Honorary Fellow and founding Chair of the COL Board of Governors.

The late Dr Anastasios Christodoulou was a member of COL’s Founding Board of Governors.

Dr Marshall Elliott is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Professor Brenda M. Gourley is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Dr Myra Harrison is a COL Honorary Fellow and a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Dr Roger O. Iredale is a member of COL’s Founding Board of Governors.
Ms Janet Jenkins is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Dr David Levesque is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

Professor Stephen Matlin is a former member of the COL Board of Governors.

The late Dr Roger Mills was a COL Honorary Fellow.

Dr Roslyn Morpeth is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Dr Hilary Perraton is a COL Honorary Fellow.

The late Right Honourable Lord (Walter L. M.) Perry of Walton was a COL Honorary Fellow.

The late Professor Donald F. Swift was a COL Honorary Fellow.

Professor John Tarrant is a COL Honorary Fellow.

Mr Robert Whitby, Department for International Development, served on the COL Board of Governors.

The late Lord (Michael) Young of Dartington was a COL Honorary Fellow.

COL works in 47 developing countries of the Commonwealth. It commissions UK consultants to provide expertise and advice to various COL partners. COL’s Journal of Learning for Development (JL4D) has Professor Alan Tait of The Open University (OU) and Anne Gaskell as Editor Emeritus and Chief Editor, respectively. COL shares a link with OU, as its former President and CEO Sir John Daniel was the Vice Chancellor of OU for 11 years. In 2017, OU conferred a DLitt (honoris causa) on the current President and CEO, Professor Asha Kanwar.

DFID has supported the integration of results-based monitoring, gender and value for money into COL’s organisational processes. In its annual review of results, COL received an A++ rating from DFID for 2015–2016 for exceeding expected outputs and outcomes.

Some of COL’s work related to the UK’s international development priorities is highlighted below.

**Education**

**Strategic Plan 2015–2021**

As outlined in COL’s Strategic Plan 2015–2021, COL works in two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender as a cross-cutting theme. 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 — in some cases, all five.

The United Kingdom (UK) is a major contributor to COL’s budget and an important source of leadership and expertise in education and development. As a major donor, the UK has a seat on COL’s Board of Governors. The UK delivers international aid through the Department for International Development (DFID). The UK’s development priorities focus on achieving the United Nations’ Global Goals, making British aid more effective by improving transparency, openness, value for money, climate and the environment, education, the empowerment of girls and women, economic growth, governance, conflict mitigation, health, water and sanitation.

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**Higher Education**

In November 2017, as part of its youth dialogues series, Wilton Park — an executive agency of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the UK — organised a conference on higher education and employability, in collaboration with the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), the Commonwealth Secretariat (COMSEC), the University of Pretoria and the National Research Foundation. The conference was attended by several higher education specialists from the region, including vice chancellors of universities, as well as staff from Oxford University. COL’s Education Specialist: Higher Education presented a paper on the role of technology in higher education.

COL, in partnership with ACU, the Staff and Educational Development Association, and the University of Edinburgh, is working on the Partnership for Enhanced and Blended Learning project, which focuses on developing degree courses to be shared between East African universities to address critical academic staff shortages in certain departments. The project was submitted to DFID for funding and approved in August 2017. COL will provide capacity building in quality assurance.
OPEN/INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING

In April 2017, COL engaged NotesMaster, UK to implement a project to develop open educational resources (OER) in Zambia. COL is working with the Ministry of General Education and the Directorate of Open and Distance Education on this project, which runs up to May 2018. The project’s overall goal is to provide open secondary school and vocational education to out-of-school youths and adults through virtual classrooms in Belize, Mozambique, Vanuatu and Zambia.

TEACHER EDUCATION

COL’s Teacher Education initiative aims to improve the capacity of partner countries to deliver quality learning opportunities for sustainable development through innovative school-based, technology-supported teacher professional development programmes. Under its flagship programme, Teacher Futures, COL works with teacher education institutions, teachers and teacher communities towards scalable national and cross-national teacher development models for improved learning outcomes.

In 2016, COL commissioned Emeritus Professor of Education at OUUK Bob Moon and Charmaine Villet of the University of Namibia to produce a report titled Digital Learning: Reforming Teacher Education to Promote Access, Equity and Quality in Sub-Saharan Africa. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the present and future impact of digital learning on teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. It focuses on student-teachers and teachers, and its central argument is that existing institutional structures will be insufficient to meet the scale of demand for well-prepared, qualified teachers. The report describes digitally enhanced programme innovations that can be identified in many institutions across the region, as well as three phases to full-scale adoption of new digital technologies.

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) partnership represents 30 small states of the Commonwealth dedicated to expanding access to tertiary education. 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.

During the 19th Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers in June 2015, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between COMSEC, COL and the University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus to cooperate on converting the UWI undergraduate degree and diploma in Youth Development Work into OER. The trio also agreed to facilitate the development of a consortium of academic institutions that will increase access to youth work education and training resources in the Commonwealth, and to facilitate the process of sharing resources and enhancing capacity among consortium members. The consortium was formally launched by the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, at the opening ceremony of the 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting, in Kampala, Uganda in August 2017. There are 16 initial participating universities from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Europe.

In this triennium, the OER Research Hub at OOUK conducted a study on the use of VUSSC’s OER. The study revealed that educators in the small states of the Commonwealth not only are using the VUSSC OER within their teaching more than resources from other sources; they also are using the resources to develop their professional practice to an extent not apparent in the responses from educators using OpenLearn and Saylor.org.

Skills

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD) initiative supports partners in harnessing technology to increase access to improved quality skills training. The use of flexible and blended learning approaches can augment equitable access to quality TVSD. Through the TVSD initiative, COL works with organisational partners and governments to create contextualised, high-quality models using educational media and technology to strengthen and expand skills development.
COL partnered with Getenergy Limited, UK in 2017 to pilot the Field Ready programme, training young people for employment in the oil and gas industry in Ghana. This project is ongoing.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

COL’s Technology-Enabled Learning initiative encourages institutions to integrate technology-enabled learning and OER practices to improve teaching and learning for innovation and skills development. Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), a massive open online course (MOOC) for teachers in secondary, post-secondary and vocational education developed in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, was offered in January–February 2017 and November–December 2017; 42 teachers from the United Kingdom participated in both courses.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to COL’s work. Strategic partnerships allow COL to broaden its reach and engage at global, regional and national levels, while implementation partners support COL’s work in communities and institutions across Commonwealth Member States. Partners include multilateral organisations, regional bodies, national governments, government agencies, foundations, civil society organisations, public and private (not-for-profit) institutions and the private sector.

COL’s partners in the United Kingdom include:

- Association of Commonwealth Universities
- Commonwealth Secretariat
- Department for International Development
- The Open University

Special Events

2ND WORLD OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CONGRESS

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The Europe Regional Consultation was held in Valletta, Malta in February 2017. Mr Joe Wilson, Co-founder, Open Scotland, Glasgow, attended.

8TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF8)

Under the theme “Open, Online and Flexible Learning: The Key to Sustainable Development,” PCF8 brought together the best minds in ODL to discuss issues of common interest, exchange ideas and explore best practices, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November 2016. Denise Gaspard-Richards of the UWI Open Campus presented a paper titled “Effectiveness of Agile Design in Wrap-Around Content Development.”

A key outcome of PCF8 was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which presents a set of ten recommendations for governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society related to lifelong learning, access and equity,
teacher education, OER and quality. It will be brought to the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (20CCEM) and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for further consideration and implementation.

PCF5 was held in the UK in 2008.

MEETINGS

Every year, COL’s President and CEO is invited to present COL’s work at induction programmes for newly appointed diplomats in London, organised by COMSEC and the Commonwealth Foundation. These meetings are an opportunity to strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders. The President also presents COL’s annual report to the annual meetings of the COMSEC Board of Governors and the Education Ministers’ Action Group via teleconference.

COL’s Director, Technology and Knowledge Management, Dr V. Balaji, participated in the final meeting of the Steering Committee for 20CCEM at Marlborough House, London in 2017 to identify concrete areas of collaboration.

Looking Ahead: 2021

In this triennium, COL identified relevant international priorities for the United Kingdom using information from the Department of International Development, including:

- Promoting global prosperity
- Tackling extreme poverty and helping the world’s most vulnerable
- Delivering value for money

COL looks forward to its continued partnership with the United Kingdom, working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and providing Commonwealth citizens with greater access to quality education and training through open, distance and technology-enabled learning.
Publications and Resources

Boys’ Underperformance in Education: Revisiting the Issue in the Commonwealth, published by COL in 2017, follows up on a 2006 report addressing the factors that are critical to understanding boys’ underperformance in Commonwealth countries since 2006. It contains case studies from nine countries.

Curriculum for Digital Education Leadership: A Concept Paper proposes a holistic approach to conceptualising digital education leadership. The Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) programme, a long-term COL project to promote a digital education environment in Commonwealth Member States, will provide a framework for fostering digital learning and will develop skilled citizens for lifelong learning.

Digital Learning: Reforming Teacher Education to Promote Access, Equity and Quality in Sub-Saharan Africa is a report that provides an overview of the present and future impact of digital learning on teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The focus of the report is on student-teachers and teachers, and its central argument is that existing institutional structures will be insufficient to meet the scale of demand for well-prepared, qualified teachers.

Gender Profiles is part of a series that provides country-specific compilations of gender-related data for a number of indicators, including health, education, economic participation and more.

Guide to Developing Open Textbooks, published in 2016, has been developed to assist teachers, teaching support personnel and educational technology administrators to: understand the value of open education, OER and open textbooks for teaching and learning; appreciate the potential value of developing an open textbook platform; select appropriate technology to build an open textbook platform, using either existing services offered free on the Internet or open source tools, based on local needs and resources; and build, manage and maintain an open textbook platform.

A Guide to Virtual Universities for Policy-Makers is designed to clarify the virtual university concept for policy makers and provides a conceptual framework for establishing a virtual university. The guide will help policy makers to look critically at the evolution of virtual universities and assist them in planning a virtual university.

Guidelines for Online Assessment for Educators give an overview of education in developing countries and include some theoretical analysis of the concept of online assessment.

Guidelines for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of MOOCs provides a set of guidelines designed to support decision making about the sorts of quality measures that are appropriate for MOOCs in different contexts. These MOOC quality guidelines can be used by governments, accreditation agencies, institutions and learners with an interest in developing, running, accrediting or participating in MOOCs, to improve quality assurance and accreditation.

The Impact of ICT on the Costs and Economics of Distance Education: A Review of the Literature examines the relevant literature on costing since 2000 as well as on costing-relevant aspects of open educational resources, MOOCs, mobile learning and distance education in developing countries.

Institutional Scorecard for Gender Mainstreaming is a self-assessment tool that can help with ongoing audits of an organisation’s policies and strategies to promote a gender-balanced workplace culture. This comprehensive and systematic tool can be used by all institutions to develop or improve their gender-responsive policies and mechanisms.

Kavya: Inspired by Stories, Stories to Inspire, published in 2016, is a collection of stories by the Mann Deshi Foundation in India, one of COL’s partner organisations. The stories give us a look into the lives of girls, parents and community members who are responding to age-old traditions and cultures that preclude girls from having the right to make decisions about their own lives. The stories are based in one country, but they are relevant to girls all around the world who are constrained by the limitations imposed by similar cultures and traditions.
Making Sense of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries is a COL–UNESCO publication designed to raise the general awareness of policy makers in developing countries about how MOOCs might address QA currently being practiced in open universities in the Commonwealth, from the perspectives of policy makers, leaders and practitioners in open and distance education institutions.

Open Educational Resources: From Commitment to Action provides the outcomes of the six regional consultations and global surveys conducted prior to the 2nd World OER Congress. This report offers a framework for both understanding the current status of OER worldwide and identifying concrete actions to mainstream OER to achieve SDG4.

Open Educational Resources: Global Report 2017, published by COL in 2017 in preparation for the 2nd World OER Congress, provides state-of-the-art information in the field of OER globally by analysing the responses of representatives of 102 governments and over 600 stakeholders. This authoritative source on the status of OER in the world was produced with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The report focuses on mainstreaming OER to achieve SDG4.

Open Educational Resources in the Commonwealth 2016 is the result of a study conducted as part of COL’s OER for Skills Development project, supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The objective of the study was to collect baseline data from Commonwealth institutions with respect to the development, use and reuse of OER.

Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs and Transformation, published with UNESCO in 2016, presents 15 case studies contributed by 29 OER researchers and policy makers from 15 countries across six continents and examines the implementation of the 2012 OER Paris Declaration through the thematic lenses of policy, costs and transformation.

Open Universities in the Commonwealth: At a Glance, published in 2017, is a report based on the responses of 27 open universities that participated in a survey assessing the current impact of ODL institutions.

Promoting Use and Contribution of Open Educational Resources, published in 2017, is a research monograph showing that higher education teachers in India have positive attitudes towards OER and are motivated to use and share their resources for altruistic reasons. Based on research data, the monograph presents a model for OER uptake and integration in teaching and learning in India.

Setting Standards, Maintaining Quality: Quality Assurance Policies for Open Schooling is a volume reflecting the passion and expertise of a diverse range of people from different contexts, each of whom brought a unique perspective to the project. It expands COL’s repertoire of QA publications by adding the open schooling dimension.

The State of Open Universities in the Commonwealth: A Perspective on Performance, Competition and Innovation is a report critically examining one of the marvels of modern higher education: specialist open and distance learning universities.

Technology-Enabled Learning Implementation Handbook provides a strategy to engage in a systematic process of critical thinking, decision making, implementation and reflection on TEL. It offers three questionnaires to be used for analysing TEL infrastructure and usage by stakeholders — teachers and students.

Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET (in the Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning series), published in 2017, is a COL–UNESCO work presenting a series of case studies from around the world that highlight the use and role of ICT in the transformation of technical and vocational education and training.

For all COL publications, go to: http://oasis.col.org.
LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABLE 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 sustainable development

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

COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING (COL)

4710 Kingsway, Suite 2500
Burnaby, BC V5H 4M2 Canada
Phone +1 604 775 8200 / Fax +1 604 775 8210
info@col.org
www.col.org
@col4d
facebook.com/COL4D/
instagram.com/commonwealthoflearning/