



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING



COL in the Commonwealth

2018–2020 HIGHLIGHTS

SEYCHELLES

LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

TARGETS 2021



Improved sustainable livelihoods
300,000 PEOPLE



470
ORGANISATIONS
Improved organisational
capacity to leverage ODL

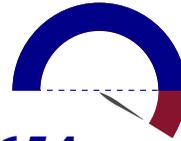


1.4 million
PEOPLE
Increased and equitable
access to, and use of, quality
learning opportunities

ACHIEVED BY 2020



257,484 people



Target
EXCEEDED

654 organisations



880,039 people



Introduction

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

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



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

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

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

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



Highlights

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

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



SEYCHELLES

COL works with partners in Seychelles to expand access to quality education and lifelong learning for all. Mr Armoogum Parsuramen, Founder-President, Global Rainbow Foundation, Mauritius, represents Africa on COL's Board of Governors. Ms Marie-Reine Hoareau, Technical Advisor, International Relations, Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, and Mr John Lesperance, Special Advisor to the Minister for Education and Human Resource Development, are COL's Focal Points for Seychelles.

COL's current work in Seychelles is primarily in the area of higher education, mainly through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Seychelles benefits from activities organised under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE). Learners from Seychelles have also benefited from open online courses and other COL resources.

The following are the highlights from 2018 to 2020.



Programmes

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH (VUSSC)

Seychelles 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 supporting institutions to offer VUSSC courses and programmes, while promoting the use of the Transnational Qualifications Framework.

COL supported the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development in its capacity-building activities aimed at assisting in the development of teacher education

and training via the Seychelles Institute of Teacher Education. In the framework of this initiative, a *Guide for Tutors* and a *Programme Handbook* have been developed to support online and blended learning learners and tutors. Over 40 master tutors and tutors have been trained in online and blended learning, and over 200 teachers have benefited from an ICT course.

COL has provided assistance in the development of five eLearning courses for the Diploma in Education programme and in the repurposing of the Master in Educational Leadership programme.

As well, COL has provided support to the Seychelles Nurses and Midwives Council to enable nurses and midwives to enrol in continuing professional education eLearning modules offered through the World Continuing Education Alliance's online platform.

The University of Seychelles has also signed a letter of understanding with the Commonwealth Higher Education Consortium, indicating its intention to offer a Diploma in Youth Work.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Higher Education initiative works with ministries and higher education institutions to increase equitable access to tertiary education and to address the needs of industry and national development through the use of policies, systems, models and gender-responsive learning resources. In Seychelles, COL supported the review of the Tertiary Education Act. Relevant recommendations were subsequently submitted to the Tertiary Education Commission.

The University of Seychelles joined the CEMBA/CEMPA (Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration and Commonwealth Executive Master of Public Administration) consortium in December 2019 and will start offering the CEMBA/CEMPA programmes in May 2020.

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION (SADC-CDE)

Hosted by Botswana Open University, SADC-CDE promotes training and development in open and distance learning (ODL) and increases the provision of quality distance education in southern Africa.

In February 2019, SADC-CDE and Botswana’s Gender Links NGO organised a gender sensitisation workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa. Participants included academics and administrators from ten institutions in Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles and South Africa.

In July 2019, SADC-CDE sponsored two staff from the Seychelles Institute for Teacher Education to enrol in the Certificate for Distance Education Practitioners programme to augment their skills, competencies and knowledge.



Events and Special Activities

REGIONAL MEETING OF COL FOCAL POINTS

The Africa and Mediterranean regional meeting of COL’s Focal Points took place on 24–25 September 2018 in Gaborone, Botswana to strengthen the effectiveness of COL’s work in addressing key priorities for education and training in the region, and to share information about developments related to learning for sustainable development. Ms Marie-Reine Hoareau, Technical Advisor, International Relations, Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, represented Seychelles at the meeting.

MOOC ON INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN BUSINESS

In collaboration with the Open University of Mauritius, COL organised a MOOC on *Introduction to Sustainable Development in Business*, and six learners from Seychelles joined the course’s first offering, in May–June 2019.

VISIT TO THE JAMES MICHEL BLUE ECONOMY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

In June 2019, COL’s Education Specialist: VUSSC visited the James Michel Blue Economy Research Institute at the University of Seychelles to plan a second offering of a MOOC on the blue economy. This MOOC raises awareness about the importance of governing, managing and using oceans, seas, lakes and rivers in ways that lead to sustainable growth.

PCF9

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

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

The participation of His Excellency Danny Faure, President of the Republic of Seychelles, underscored the importance of PCF9. At the forum, President Faure delivered an inspiring address on “Empowering Youth – Our Common Wealth.”

Under the auspices of PCF9, COL hosted a ministerial roundtable with participation from six education ministers.

COL sponsored five delegates from Seychelles to attend the forum. As well, Dr Justin Valentin, Vice Chancellor, University of Seychelles, attended a workshop hosted by COL's VUSSC in Edinburgh ahead of PCF9.





PCF9 Edinburgh Statement

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

1. **Accomplishment at scale**

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

2. **Skills for productive lives**

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

3. **Creating new digital dividends**

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

4. Teachers as skilled agents of change

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

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

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

5. Positively disrupt higher education

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

6. Challenging assessment

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

Our ambition is to achieve this through:

Bold inclusive collaboration;

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

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

Sustaining the momentum;

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

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



New Publications and Resources

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

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

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

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

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

Guidelines on the Development of Open Educational Resources Policies

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

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

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

Gender Scorecard 2.0: Instructions and Templates

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

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



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February 2020