Building Resilience in Small States: Commonwealth of Learning

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Round Table | Commonwealth Small States Office, Geneva, Switzerland
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Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
Vancouver, 1987
To help Commonwealth governments and institutions use technologies to improve and expand access to education and training.
Where is it?

Metro Vancouver
(HQ)

New Delhi
(CEMCA)
The number of countries contributing increased from 23 in 2003-06 to 47 currently.

Who supports COL?

- Canada
- India
- UK
- Australia
- New Zealand
- Nigeria
- South Africa
learning for sustainable development
Leveraging new and existing technologies
COL in the Commonwealth
2015–2021

Commonwealth of Learning:
DELIVERING A COMMON FUTURE
COL Focal Points
our direct link to each country
• A network rather than an institution
• Strengthen the capacity of institutions and individuals
• Use online technologies
• Create and share content

Capacity Building • Learner Support • Quality Assurance • Networking • Policy Development

COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING | VUSSC
VUSSC Statistics

32 countries

39 institutions

29,302 learners (2015-2021)
Graduation

- Full-time Diploma in Sustainable Agriculture for Small States, Samoa
- 72 BOU graduates in Certificate in Disaster Management (2016-2018)
- First cohort of 35 BOU students graduate after completing a Masters in Educational Leadership
Reduced Costs / Increased Benefits

69% less direct cost to the VUSSC students in tuition fees

Direct and indirect benefits per student in VUSSC

$7,000 USD more than the face-to-face-students per year while studying

Study of BOU learners vs. campus-based learners in a similar programme at another institution
Development of a Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) To serve learners in small states better
Championing Inclusion

Almost 500 disability practitioners, educators and communication professionals in Tonga and the seven small states in Africa have undergone disability skills training.

This course in Assistive Technologies taught me a lot. From Natural Reader to dictation capabilities to low vision-friendly fonts, I was surprised to find out there are a large number of accessibility tools already available in our typical computers,” she says. “I discovered I was only using a very small percentage of the functions of my existing computer.

Principal Education Officer for Inclusive Education in Tonga, Matelita Taufa
VUSSC

- Promote access to quality tertiary education
- Ensure opportunities for improved livelihoods
- Build institutional capacity to offer eLearning
- Register qualifications on the TQF
- Contribute to Commonwealth cooperation
A 5-year project (2020 – 2025) funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade

PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP FOR

OPEN, DISTANCE AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING

pacificpartnership.col.org
Capacity Building of Teachers

- Over 4,200 teachers from the Pacific trained
- In-country mentorship support provided
Increasing Access to OER for Teachers

One Regional and nine national Open Educational Resources (OER) repositories

https://staging.oer4pacific.org
Professional development of TVET Sector

TVET Online Toolkit to skills training for youth

Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu

pacifictoolkit.col.org
Skills and Leadership Training for Youth: Fiji

- Online training offered to youth, young women and persons with disabilities

“I am from Yasawa and there are many hotels on the island so my plan is to learn how to make soap and supply to the resort market so I can support my family”

-Testimony from learner-
There are 16 localized channels/playlists, 1,000+ OER videos from Fiji, Nauru and Samoa
Inaugural Address by the Hon. Fiame Naomi Mata'afa, Prime Minister of Samoa
Skilling and Re-skilling
COL-Coursera Workforce Recovery Programme during the Pandemic

• Over 200,000 certificates earned
• 85% reported improvements in
  • Jobs, promotions, job change
  • Confidence, employability
• 24*7 helpdesks
The Mauritius Higher Education Commission organised an award ceremony on 28 May 2022 to felicitate the learners of the first cohort of COL’s scholarship awardees for their achievement.
Top Small States during Lockdown

**CARIBBEAN**
Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, St Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago

**PACIFIC**
Samoa and Papua New Guinea

**SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**
Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia
Impact in the Caribbean

**Barbados** forged direct partnerships with providers

**Guyana** signed an MOU with Employers’ Associations for promoting employment

**Trinidad and Tobago** made budgetary provisions through the Parliament to sustain the training
9 of the top 10 countries prone to natural disasters are in the Commonwealth:
1. Vanuatu
2. Solomon Islands
3. Tonga
4. Dominica
5. Antigua and Barbuda;
6. Brunei Darussalam;
7. Guyana;
9. Papua New Guinea

Disproportionately affects the Commonwealth 32 small states most vulnerable to climate change.

Cyclone Idai, Mozambique
Classrooms affected: 3,504; Students affected: 335,132

Hurricane Dorian, The Bahamas
Devastated schools on Grand Bahama and Abacos Islands

80 per cent of Tonga population impacted by eruption and tsunami

Volcanic eruption leaves ‘entire population’ of Saint Vincent without clean water
Priorities?

• Resilient infrastructure
• Skills for the blue and green economies
• Promote climate justice
Building Resilience

public education messages on emergency readiness
Broadcast on 4 radio stations each reaching on average 26,000 listeners
Enhanced website for Office of Disaster Management

Dominica
Using Open Educational Resources for Online Learning: An Introduction

www.mooc4dev.org/Teaching4C2

Trinidad and Tobago MOOC for Teachers
Social safety nets and gender-based violence

Solomon Islands
ICT Augmentation for Small States/LDCs

- ICT resources and capacities
- Support disaster preparedness
- Introduce environmentally sustainable green technologies

Antigua and Barbuda, Eswatini, Lesotho, Maldives
Promotes ‘learning for sustainable development’

Supports innovations for affordable and accessible technologies

Serves the last person in the queue
Thank you for your contributions