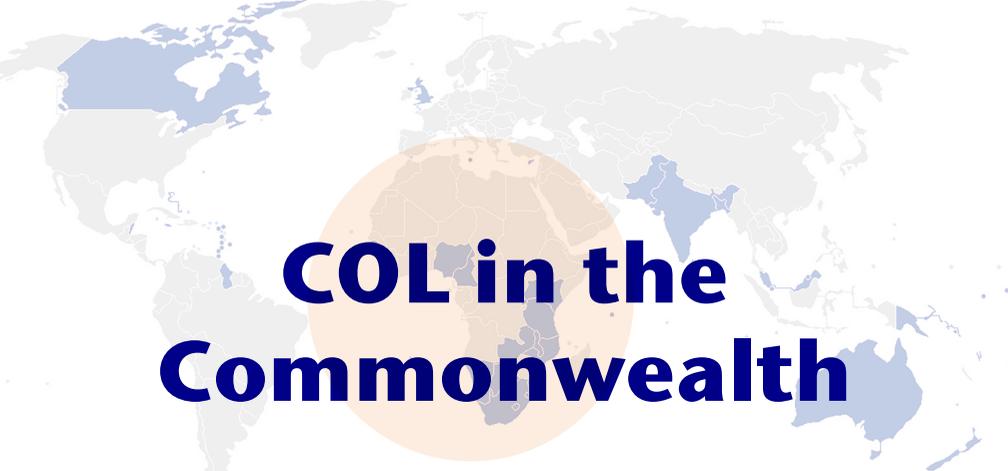




COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING



COL in the Commonwealth

2018–2020 HIGHLIGHTS

SOUTH AFRICA

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.



SOUTH AFRICA

COL works with partners in South Africa to expand access to quality education and lifelong learning for all. Professor Narend Bajjnath, Chief Executive Officer, South Africa Council on Higher Education, is the Deputy Chair of COL's Board of Governors. Mr Armoogum Parsuramen, Founder-President, Global Rainbow Foundation, Mauritius, represents Africa on COL's Board of Governors. Professor Mpine Makoe, Institute for Open and Distance Learning, University of South Africa, serves as COL Chair, and Ms Trudi van Wyk, Chief Director: Social Inclusion, Equity, Access and Quality, Department of Higher Education and Training, is COL's Focal Point for South Africa.

COL's current work in South Africa is primarily in the areas of higher education, teacher education, and technology-enabled learning (TEL). Learners from South Africa have benefited from COL's open online courses and other resources.

The following are the highlights from 2018 to 2020.



Programmes

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Higher Education initiative works with ministries and higher education institutions (HEIs) 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.

A high-level roundtable for vice chancellors and heads of open and distance learning (ODL) was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in May 2018. There were 31 vice chancellors and their representatives from 19 countries in attendance, including one representative from the University of South Africa (UNISA). The meeting was co-hosted by Asia eUniversity.

Since February 2019, COL has been guiding UNISA in extensive self-review activities together with an international panel of quality assurance experts. These activities were initiated to prepare UNISA for its institutional review by South Africa's Council on Higher Education in 2020.

Various preparatory workshops were conducted by COL in 2019, and a panel meeting was held in London, UK in July to develop the audit framework and guidelines for the self-review process. An institutional trial audit of UNISA, conducted by COL in December 2019, marked a critical milestone in this collaborative project between the two institutions.

In December 2019, in partnership with UNISA's Department of Institutional Research and its Business Intelligence Unit, COL organised a workshop in Pretoria to share an employability readiness model, which had been developed by COL with the Department of Planning and Quality Assurance and the various UNISA colleges.

As well, South Africa was the host of a meeting in April 2018, to launch a new regional community of practice for quality assurance in open and distance learning, involving HEIs and national quality assurance agencies from seven southern African countries. A task force was formed to draft and pilot quality assurance guidelines. Subsequently, pilot studies of quality guidelines at seven institutions (BOU, NUL, OUM, UNAM, UNESWA, UNIMA and UNZA) were completed. A follow-up workshop was conducted in Johannesburg in December 2019 for representatives from the national qualification authorities of Botswana, eSwatini, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and Zambia to finalise and validate the employability toolkit and the employability indicators to be used by national qualification agencies in the quality assessment of HEIs.

TEACHER EDUCATION

The Teacher Education initiative works with partner institutions to improve teacher quality and achieve better learning outcomes for students. Through the Teacher Futures model, it works with governments, teacher education institutions, schools and other partners to deliver quality learning opportunities through in-service, technology-enabled teacher professional development.

In collaboration with South Africa's Department of Basic Education, COL organised a four-day planning forum for professional development in digital learning in September

2018 at the Alice Campus of the University of Fort Hare (UFH) to develop a strategy and action plan for Teacher Futures – South Africa, with a focus on digital education in the country. The forum was facilitated by SchoolNet South Africa.

A series of professional development workshops on *Digital Literacy for Teachers* and *Initiation of Communities of Practice* followed in February 2019 at three separate school venues in the Amathole District of the Eastern Cape, along with a learning design workshop in Hogsback.

Subsequently, participants from UFH and the Eastern Cape Department of Education have registered for the Commonwealth Certificate of Teacher ICT Integration (CCTI). The objective is to allow lecturers at UFH experience studying the CCTI programme as a student, under the mentorship of online tutors from SchoolNet South Africa, before they train as online tutors themselves.

As well, 28 school management team members and district education leaders in the Eastern Cape Province completed a four-month *Change Leadership for Digital Learning* course. A total of 60 teachers from ten schools in Amathole District, Eastern Cape Province completed a course on *Using Digital Learning Resources in the Classroom*, which was designed to guide them to effectively integrate curriculum-aligned digital content into their lessons. With support from COL, on-site training has been conducted at Nzululwazi High School and Sakhululeka High School, Eastern Cape.

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. As part of a tripartite Commonwealth initiative with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the University of the West Indies Open Campus, VUSSC has repurposed and made available online certificate, diploma and undergraduate degree programmes in Youth Work Development to universities that are members of the Commonwealth Higher Education Consortium for Youth Work. The University of Venda is a member of the Consortium. COL's Education Specialist: VUSSC facilitated sessions on institutional readiness and the Transnational Qualifications Framework at the *Technical Workshop* hosted by the partners in London, UK in June 2018.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING (TEL)

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

In collaboration with COL, SchoolNet South Africa conducted a three-day workshop in January 2019 to build teacher capacity to develop digital education skills using COL's Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) platform. Hosted at the University of Johannesburg, the workshop was attended by 35 public and private school teachers, as well as members of education faculties from across South Africa.

Representatives from South Africa participated in two meetings with a TEL focus hosted by COL in New Delhi, India in December 2018. Mr Andrew Moore from Neil Butcher & Associates, South Africa, participated in the Technology-Enabled Learning Community of Practice Meeting, while Ms Omashani Naidoo from SchoolNet South Africa and Ms Catherine Thabisa Mayisela from the University of Cape Town attended the *C-DELTA Training of Trainers Workshop*.

Under the aegis of TEL, COL has been offering a MOOC on *Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning*, in partnership with Athabasca University, Canada. A total of 29 learners from South Africa benefited from the third and fourth course offerings, in 2018–2019.



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.

SADC-CDE GENDER SENSITISATION WORKSHOP

Hosted by Botswana Open University, the Southern African Development Community Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE) promotes training and development in ODL and increases the provision of quality distance education in Southern Africa. In February 2019, SADC-CDE and Gender Links, a Botswanan 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.

QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR TEACHER TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Thirty-seven stakeholders from various universities and teacher education institutions in seven African countries, including South Africa, came together for the *Train-the-Trainers Workshop on Quality Assurance for Teacher Training and Professional Development* organised by the African Council for Distance Education at the Open University of Tanzania in March 2019. The workshop focused on the need for schools of education within universities and other institutions to develop resilient mechanisms to improve teacher development. Organised with support from COL, it examined evidence-based quality assurance practices in higher education overall, and teacher training and professional development in particular.



MOOC ON INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN BUSINESS

The two offerings of COL's MOOC on *Introduction to Sustainable Development in Business*, which was organised in collaboration with the Open University of Mauritius in May–June 2019 and November–December 2019, attracted 20 participants from South Africa.

PCF9

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

The four days of insightful keynote addresses, engaging plenary panels, informative parallel sessions, and other programme highlights provided a unique opportunity to bridge traditional divides between borders and sectors. Discussions centred around four key sub-themes: *Opening Up Education, Equity and Inclusion, Technology and Employability*, and delegates appreciated the focus on new forum features — artificial intelligence, youth and girls' education and learners with special abilities. Under the auspices of PCF9, COL hosted a ministerial roundtable with participation from six education ministers.

A major highlight of the forum was the conferment of the title of COL Honorary Fellow on eight eminent individuals, including Professor Mandla Makhanya, UNISA's Principal and Vice Chancellor, in recognition of his contribution to lifelong learning in the Commonwealth.

COL sponsored nine delegates from South Africa to attend the forum. One delegate from South Africa attended a *Higher Education* workshop, and three delegates participated in the *Teacher Education* workshop — both hosted by COL 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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