

Commonwealth of Learning THREE-YEAR PLAN 2012-2015

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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2. FOREWORD

This Plan takes COL to 2015, the target date set for the achievement of a number of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Those goals were agreed at the United Nations in 2000 and since then COL has devoted much of its work to their achievement. This Plan, like its immediate predecessors, is entitled *Learning for Development*.

To support its presentation to the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth COL provided two documents to each Member State. One was a brochure describing COL's contribution to the attainment of each of the MDGs. The other was a report detailing how COL had assisted that particular country in the previous two years.

In 2012-2015 COL will continue this tradition of thinking globally and acting locally. Achieving development goals takes time. Most of the initiatives that COL has pursued through its last two triennial plans are now showing demonstrable results in expanding and improving education and training, building healthier communities and helping rural people to greater prosperity. Those initiatives continue in this new plan with an even clearer focus on outcomes and impact.

Continuity and consistency is reassuring, but change is constant, not least because COL's mission involves using technology to expand and improve education. Evolving technologies are making COL's models for enhancing learning ever more powerful. Mobile phones are remarkable tools for rural development. Open educational resources enable world-class materials to be versioned for local use. eLearning delivers these resources to ever larger numbers of people. Knowledge management is increasingly sophisticated.

But development is about people. The purpose of development is to increase the freedoms that people enjoy. In turn, new freedoms make people more effective agents of development. This is the virtuous upwards spiral that COL seeks to encourage by working with its many governmental, institutional and individual partners. We are grateful for their past support and we look forward to working with them to turn this plan into reality.

The Hon. Burchell Whiteman, O.J.
Chair, Board of Governors

Sir John Daniel
President & CEO

3. COL'S IMPACT SO FAR

COL's founding document, *Towards a Commonwealth of Learning* (the Briggs Report), proposed that 'any learner anywhere in the Commonwealth shall be able to study any distance teaching programme available from any bona fide college or university in the Commonwealth'. Although ahead of its time for the 1980s, 25 years later this aspiration is becoming reality through the creation, sharing and re-purposing of Open Educational Resources (OER), which are now a central feature of COL's work.

Another concept endorsed by Heads of Government when they established COL in 1987 was a *University of the Commonwealth for Cooperation in Distance Education*. At the triennial conference of Commonwealth Ministers of Education in 2000 the Ministers from the 32 smallest countries created the *Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)* which helps hundreds of teachers to acquire sophisticated ICT skills and facilitates the cooperative development of eLearning courses and materials for their tertiary institutions. The Transnational Qualifications Framework developed by the VUSSC also advances the broader ideal of sharing courses across the whole Commonwealth.

These are two examples of the progressive achievement of overarching goals that were set for COL by Heads of Government when they established it. More generally, COL's aims and impact fall naturally into two periods. Expanding and improving higher education were the main focus of its first decade. In that period COL was the catalyst for initiatives such as the University of the West Indies Distance Education Centre (UWIDEC), a medical education network in Malaysia, the Open University of Tanzania, a tele-conferencing network at the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), the restructuring of extension studies at the University of the South Pacific and the Centre for Distance Learning at the University of Mauritius.

The 1990s also saw the creation of the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) in New Delhi, the development, with the Commonwealth Secretariat, of a programme in Legislative Drafting and the inauguration of the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme to enable selected practitioners from 15 developing Commonwealth countries to undertake graduate studies in distance education with IGNOU.

In 2000 the Millennium Declaration and the World Forum on Education for All set specific goals for the development of education and training at all levels. In progressively aligning its work to this international agenda in its second decade, COL gave new priority to enhancing secondary education and to helping countries expand less formal learning opportunities aimed at improving health and reducing poverty. The theme *Learning for Development* was adopted to capture both the focus and scope of COL's work.

World leaders set 2015 as a common target for attaining a number of the Millennium Development Goals that were agreed in 2000. Sustainable and self-replicating development takes time, so COL has emphasised continuity in its programming overall, while making adjustments in the light of feedback, monitoring and evaluation.

Each programme sector shows examples of the success of this approach. After a decade of commitment to open schooling COL is now the world's leading source of practical expertise on this important approach. This is a vital contribution to formal education because coping with the

‘secondary surge’, which has been created by the steady progress in achieving universal primary education, is now a major preoccupation for many governments.

Similarly, a decade of work on Lifelong Learning for Farmers, through action research in several countries, has yielded a model that demonstrably empowers poor people to become more prosperous. Observing this success, other stakeholders are now replicating the model in various countries.

During its second decade COL also became increasingly adept at incorporating the principles of results-based management into its work. That process continues so that assertions about COL’s impact can now be backed by an expanding corpus of evaluation data.

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4. THE PROGRAMME

“One of COL’s hallmark characteristics – one that sets it apart, particularly from donors and larger international organisations – is its disposition to listen and build interventions around partner needs.”
Patrick Spaven, Stakeholder Survey, 2010.

This Three-Year Plan sets the strategic direction and provides the overall framework for guiding COL’s work from 2012 to 2015. *Learning for Development* continues to be the theme of COL’s work. Following the development economist and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, COL understands development as freedom. Increasing the freedoms that men and women enjoy is a definition of development and greater freedom empowers people to be more effective agents of development. In concrete terms COL uses the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Education for All (EFA) goals and the Commonwealth priorities of peace, democracy, equality and the rule of law as its framework for action.

COL’s mission is to help governments expand the scope, scale and quality of learning by using appropriate technologies, particularly those subsumed in the general descriptor open and distance learning (ODL). This mission is translated into a Logic Model that sets out the results that COL will achieve over the medium- and long- terms through its impact and outcome statements. Success will be measured against the performance indicators identified. COL will work within the framework of the Logic Model while remaining flexible and responsive to new and specific needs as they occur.

The programme is the product of broad and intensive consultations with stakeholders. It reflects feedback from COL Focal Points, Board members and staff, as well as partners and other stakeholders, together with continuous monitoring and evaluation, the results of a mid-term stakeholder survey and lessons from an external evaluation. In the light of these consultations COL will continue to work in two sectors: *Education* and *Livelihoods & Health*, but will focus on seven programme initiatives instead of the eight in the previous TYP.

The *Education* sector helps countries improve the scope, scale and quality of formal instruction at all levels through the use of learning technologies. This sector has four initiatives: Open Schooling; Teacher Education; Higher Education and the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

The *Livelihoods & Health* sector works in both formal and non-formal learning environments. It helps communities, civil society and institutions to improve the livelihoods and health of their members by using learning technologies to enhance skills, share knowledge and develop new economic opportunities. It has three initiatives: Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD), Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) and Healthy Communities.

eLearning (previously the eighth programme area) and Gender are crosscutting themes which underpin and complement all seven initiatives.

Focal Points Meetings

Four regional meetings were held in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific regions to consult country Focal Points on the content of this Three-Year Plan. Their consensus was that COL should continue to focus on the two sectors in its present programme. Stakeholders in all four regions indicated clearly that COL should continue to work in open and distance learning (ODL) policy and policy advocacy; capacity

building; quality assurance; support to open schools, teacher education, higher education, VUSSC, TVSD, agricultural extension, community health, and mLearning and eLearning.

In the **Caribbean** region there was an emphasis on developing regional rather than national ODL policies, developing a Caribbean Qualifications Framework and sharing success stories in the region. Other priority areas are capacity development in the use of ICT, leadership training and open schools. Addressing the issue of boys' underachievement was a key gender-related priority.

The priorities expressed in the **Africa and Mediterranean** meeting were quality assurance, the development of national ODL policies and promoting indigenous knowledge. Most countries wanted COL to continue capacity development in all aspects of ODL, integrating ICTs for eLearning and OER development and re-use. The region stressed the need to empower women for leadership roles.

The **Asian** Focal Points urged COL to support capacity development in lifelong learning, skills development, teacher training in eLearning, open schooling, dual-mode operations in universities, mutual recognition of qualifications/credit transfers and community health/hygiene. Other priority areas included entrepreneurship for youth, digital literacy and strengthening the farming community in new agricultural areas. The gender concern in the region was increasing female foeticide, lack of access to secondary schools for girls, and boys' underperformance, especially in South East Asia.

The **Pacific** region emphasised integrating ICT into teaching and learning, building human resource capacity in TVSD and teacher training in ODL through intensive in-country programmes. There was concern at the increasing number of out-of-school youth and the need to provide open schooling opportunities to them. The gender issue highlighted across the different countries of the region was violence against women.

Mid-term Stakeholder Survey

Another important input into this TYP was a mid-term stakeholder survey. This was a rapid assessment of views and experiences of COL's behaviour as an organisation, among a range of stakeholders, partners and staff. The overall view was that 'COL is seen as a more effective organisation than three years ago. Its current staff are praised for their experience and energy. COL is also seen to be more focused and results-oriented.'

However, there were certain areas identified in which COL could perform better. These are:

- advocacy of ODL with governments
- enhance work in farming & TVSD
- more work in small states
- improved presence in the Pacific
- proactive approach to gender

4.1 Education Sector

Open Schooling

“It is time for us to pursue open schooling in order to expand access to education and lifelong learning. This form of education delivery is very cost effective as well as helpful in increasing school completion and literacy rates.”

Minister of Secondary Education H.E. Bapes Bapes, Cameroon, 2010

Compared to the global coverage of 65% participation in secondary schools, the gross enrolment ratio in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) is only 30%. Secondary schools do not have the capacity to absorb the growing surge of pupils who complete primary schooling, thanks to advance made in achieving UPE. Open Schooling is therefore, increasingly recognised as a viable solution to address the growing demand for secondary education and promote equitable access, especially for girls and other marginalised social groups in remote geographical locations. Governments are experiencing increased pressure to redefine the way in which secondary education can address societal needs through the diversification of the curriculum. Critical to achieving these goals is the availability of not only academic but also technical and vocational programmes. Open schools have tremendous potential in this regard.

Over the next three years COL will continue to work with ministries and institutions to:

- introduce and expand open schooling as a means of providing learning opportunities, particularly for girls and out-of-school youth
- increase enrolment and performance by adopting new policies and systems
- introduce technical and vocational subjects to attract learners who would otherwise have been excluded, and
- support policies that promote the development, adoption and use of open education resources (OER).

Teacher Education

“COL's support to the National Teachers' Institute (NTI) Kaduna, has ... energised programme development capability of professional staff ... and deepened many teacher educators' knowledge of ODL across the country.”

Prince Ademola Olude, deputy director, NTI, Kaduna.

Achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015 requires well-trained teachers of good quality. Globally about 10 million teachers will be required; Sub Saharan Africa will need 3.4 million teachers. Addressing the demand for more teachers and enhancing teacher quality are matters of concern to all governments in the developing countries of the Commonwealth. COL has been providing technical assistance to teacher training institutions and ministries of education to enhance the quality of their programmes and increase the number of teachers trained.

COL's Teacher Education Initiative will continue to:

- advocate the use of ODL in teacher education and develop the capacity of teachers and teacher educators in different aspects of ODL;
- support ministries and institutions to harness the potential of ODL and ICT and thereby strengthen and expand teacher education institutions;
- support institutions to design and implement quality programmes;
- work with institutions and QA agencies to develop and implement QA Frameworks; and
- collaborate with international partners and training institutions to promote the development, adoption and use of open educational resources (OER).

Higher Education

“COLRIM is much more useful than the regular Quality Assurance process because it probes a lot more and is a better way of teaching what quality means.”

Uma Coomaraswamy, former Vice Chancellor
Open University of Sri Lanka

Many developing countries aspire to increase Age Participation Rates (APRs) in Higher Education to the OECD average of 40-50% for sustainable economic development. Many countries in South Asia have APRs of less than 15% while the average in SSA is less than 10%. COL has worked with governments and institutions to promote greater access to higher education and improve the quality of the delivery and management of their programmes through the use of ODL. COL will continue to support policymakers, institutions and leaders in higher education to harness the potential of open and distance learning to enable them to cope with the challenges arising out of the increasing demand for higher education, rising costs, diminishing public funding and the need to maintain high levels of quality.

COL will:

- support the development and implementation of ODL policy, both at the national and the institutional levels;
- provide technical assistance to new open universities and support the transition of conventional institutions to dual mode;
- strengthen leadership development for both women and men in higher education;
- enable the development of quality policy in higher education institutions through the implementation of low-cost quality assurance models; and
- support the adoption and use of OER.

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

“Now I see that I can move from providing training for a few persons in my country to becoming a teacher of many, across nations. I have gained new skills, a new perspective, a vision of what is possible and how limitations of size, money and distance can be overcome if people are willing to work together and share resources.”

Singapore workshop participant, 2007

Many small states do not have adequate provision for tertiary level education. As a result, there is a high migration rate. The average migration rate from small states is 44% compared to the Commonwealth average of 18%. Strengthening and improving the quality of existing tertiary institutions is therefore a key priority. The VUSSC partnership represents 32 small states of the Commonwealth dedicated to expanding access to tertiary education. In the past few years VUSSC has tried to connect institutions through online technologies to promote eLearning and the sharing of educational resources using collaborative and multi-institutional frameworks.

COL will continue to:

- provide support to strengthen the capacity of faculty members to facilitate the delivery of VUSSC courses through their institutions;
- develop cost effective models for the creation of content through collaboration and the use of technology;

- support the development of systems to provide support to learners for ensuring successful implementation of ODL in small states;
- work with international partners and stakeholders to promote and institutionalise open educational resources; and
- collaborate with qualifications authorities and quality assurance bodies to ensure successful implementation of the TQF and encourage the recognition of courses and learner credentials.

4.2 Livelihoods & Health Sector

Technical and Vocational Skills Development

“We have learned that it is possible to teach skills training courses through distance and flexible learning and this excites us! We will be able to reach many more students – especially those in the informal sector who never had the opportunity to take technical courses.”

Abdi Ali Aden, Principal
Masai Technical Training Institute, Kenya

Youth unemployment is a global challenge. Forty five per cent of the world’s young people are without work, many of them young women. In Africa alone, the challenge is to find productive employment for seven to 10 million new entrants to the labour market every year. COL has demonstrated that with the use of ICT and flexible and blended approaches, equitable access to quality technical and vocational skills development can be increased. The role of Technical and Vocational Skill Development (TVSD) in creating a skilled workforce of lifelong learners for the informal and formal economy is constantly challenged by the urban-rural divide, gender divide and differential access to resources leading to the exclusion of large numbers of learners from skills training systems.

In order to address this challenge, COL will:

- work with institutional partners to create contextualised models for using educational media and technology in TVSD;
- provide training for policy makers, managers, teaching and administrative staff;
- assist in national and institutional policy development and strategic planning; and
- support the development of new curriculum components and new courses as OER.

Lifelong Learning for Farmers

“Through ... the Lifelong Learning for Farmers initiative, we started learning from mobile phones in our languages and dialects. Through such a learning process we were able to repay 80% of the loan amount to the bank within two years in a five year repayment schedule.”

A Memorandum signed by 25,000 women and men from Self-Help Groups,
Tamil Nadu to Reserve Bank of India

More than 500 million members of the rural workforce in agriculture have limited access to training opportunities. The Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) approach offers the opportunity to strengthen livelihoods and empower the poorer sections of agricultural societies. So far, COL has promoted networking and capacity development in livestock, horticulture and agriculture, leading to higher incomes in rural societies. COL will continue its efforts to facilitate self-replication and scaling-up processes for

L3F to reach marginalised communities in many more countries. Under the L3F model, COL plays a catalytic role in bringing together governments, institutions, civil society, and the private sector to build the capacity of the communities through gender-sensitive ODL.

COL will:

- scale up the model from small communities to larger geographical regions such as districts and provinces;
- strengthen policy advocacy strategies with governments, industries and financial institutions;
- promote dialogue with international development and national agencies for replicating the L3F approach; and
- pay specific attention to smaller nations in the Caribbean and Pacific.

Healthy Communities

“They feel the COL programme belongs to them; it is their own initiative. That is why they are eager to participate and bring more ideasIn their communities they came up with this idea: Can we have a media programme to share with more communities, to share outside of our specific communities?”

Florida, head group mobiliser in Mchinji, Malawi

Health is a major challenge in the developing Commonwealth. The rate of HIV infection in Commonwealth countries is more than twice the world average. The Commonwealth accounts for 60% of maternal and 40% of infant deaths in the world. Communities throughout the developing Commonwealth have urgent needs for health and development education. Traditional approaches to this type of education are challenged by the sheer scale of learning needs. COL’s Healthy Communities initiative increases access to learning opportunities by and for female and male citizens and healthcare workers in developing regions of the Commonwealth. With an emphasis on local priorities, collaboration and participation, the initiative has enabled better individual and community responses to maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS, non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes, environmental and other health and development challenges, particularly those faced by women and youth in resource poor areas.

COL will continue to:

- enhance local, collaborative and participatory approaches to community learning programmes in health;
- develop the capacities of various agencies working at the local level to design, deliver and evaluate non-formal ODL programmes using community media, particularly radio and mobile devices; and
- work with a range of partner organisations to provide access to new and enhanced learning opportunities for large numbers of citizens in the Commonwealth.

4.3 Cross-Cutting Themes

eLearning and gender are the two most significant common themes underpinning all seven initiatives.

eLearning

“... an innovative approach for delivering well-designed, learner-centered, interactive, and facilitated learning environment to anyone, anyplace, anytime by utilising the attributes and resources of various

digital technologies along with other forms of learning materials suited for an open, flexible, and distributed learning environment."

B.H. Khan, 2005

Although the phenomenal increase of mobile technologies has reduced the digital divide, the issue of connectivity continues to loom large. While there are over 80 persons out of every 100 in America with access to the internet, the number drops to a paltry 10 persons per hundred in Africa. It is therefore important to encourage the use of accessible, affordable and appropriate technologies in support of eLearning. eLearning aims to build the capacity of governments, institutions and individuals in the use of ICT for learning in both formal and non-formal contexts and will complement the work of all initiatives. Many governments are looking for technical advice in ICT policy development and in the adoption of appropriate technologies for teaching and learning. COL's work will continue to raise the levels of digital literacy and facilitate the creation of high quality learning materials made available as open education resources (OER). COL will further emphasise the use of OER and will develop both models and capacity in how this can be done effectively.

COL will:

- develop eLearning capacity in governments, institutions and communities;
- maximise economies of scale in both the delivery and management of eLearning;
- develop cost-effective models of eLearning;
- promote the development and use of OER; and
- provide technical advice on emerging technologies and their implications for learning outcomes.

Gender

"I was totally unequipped for a job ... Distance education has helped me rebuild my life [after being widowed]. I can take care of my children and give them the education and facilities that my husband and I had hoped they would have."

Anuradha Datt, India

One-third of the world's poor live in the Commonwealth and two-thirds of those are women. Poverty has a female face. COL recognises that the advancement of the goals of gender equality and women's empowerment are central to its agenda of learning for development. For COL, gender equality is a cross-cutting corporate goal which requires that both women's and men's views, interests and needs shape its programmes. Open and distance learning can be especially helpful for women and girls to access educational opportunities while also fulfilling other responsibilities; COL uses it to help promote gender equality.

COL has adopted gender mainstreaming as an organisational strategy. Implementing a mainstreaming strategy includes the identification of gender-specific activities and initiatives, as appropriate, whenever girls/women or boys/men are in a particularly disadvantageous position. A gender equality perspective is taken at all stages of the programme cycle – planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – to ensure that the initiatives offer equal opportunities, benefits and participation to girls/women and boys/men.

During the next Three-Year Plan, COL will:

- continue to harness the potential of open, distance and technology-mediated learning to expand access to quality education for girls/women and boys/men;

- promote the development of gender sensitive policies, systems and materials;
- Integrate gender concerns in all its initiatives and support at least one gender-related activity in each initiative;
- track gender-related data and results;
- develop capacity in gender, internally and among partners; and
- be proactive in disseminating COL's work on gender to stakeholders.

4.4 Core Strategies

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 and in some cases, all five.

Partnership

Partnership refers to a dynamic relationship between organisations and institutions based on mutually agreed goals with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. COL leverages its modest resources through partnerships in virtually everything that it does. COL has two main types of partnerships. Upstream or strategic partnerships enable COL to broaden its vision and complement its resources. Such partnerships can be with multilateral organisations (e.g. UNESCO), regional bodies (e.g. ECOWAS), national governments or commercial organisations (e.g. Microsoft). Downstream partnerships come into play at the implementation level. COL partners with government agencies, public institutions, civil society and other organisations to improve and extend teaching and learning services to people in the developing Commonwealth. Both kinds of partnerships are based on collaboration and shared values and goals.

COL will expand its circle of partners by promoting:

- both south-south and north-south collaboration;
- public-private partnerships; and
- regional and international cooperation.

Capacity

Capacity development refers to processes which enable people and organisations to achieve their objectives more effectively. This can mean training but also networking and other processes that enable and empower people and organisations to develop appropriate policies, adopt and adapt models, and develop and use materials. In short, capacity development pervades all COL activities. It focuses primarily on human resource development.

COL will continue to:

- invest in the capacity development of partners in all aspects of ODL, including policy;
- develop capacity particularly in the use of appropriate technologies; and
- promote sustainability by developing capacity in monitoring & evaluation and gender mainstreaming.

Materials

By materials COL means learning and teaching resources. These can be course materials, toolkits and frameworks for quality or policy-making. Course materials – and often also the toolkits and frameworks – are produced by partners with COL support.

During this Three-Year Plan, COL will:

- publish all its own materials as open education resources (OER);
- promote the development and use of OER by others; and
- build capacity in material development.

Models

A model is a coherent set of structures and processes which has been shown to work in more than one context to achieve specific results. Models can range from broad approaches – such as L3F or the blended application of community radio for achieving health-related outcomes – to more specific instruments such as COL RIM or the COL ID template.

COL will strive to innovate and achieve scale by:

- developing new models relevant to 21st century challenges; and
- promoting the replication of models, particularly through south-south cooperation.

Policies

A policy is a high-level statement of ambition that specifies the outcomes to be achieved and guides decision-making through a definite course of action. COL supports the development of policy for organisations and institutions as well as governments.

COL will continue to:

- support regional and national ODL and ICT policies;
- build capacity to develop institutional and organisational policies; and
- promote the effective implementation of policy.

4.5 Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA)

“I came as a raw hand to participate in the CEMCA baseline survey. I never knew anything before about nutritious meals. Now I follow the [radio] programmes and also wait for repeat broadcasts so that I can complete my notes. I am very grateful to Vishnu Community Radio Station for making a difference in my life and home. I also thank CEMCA for asking our needs and views.”

Anasuya Alluri, Enamadaru Village, Andhra Pradesh.

CEMCA was established in 1995 to encourage, develop and foster the exchange and sharing of educational media techniques and resources, with a focus on educational television. Over the years, in step with rapidly changing advances in educational technology, CEMCA widened its scope to embrace emerging educational technology formats, even while broadening the scope of education itself to cover formal, non-formal, and lifelong education, and extending it to all levels of open and distance learning. Currently CEMCA fully aligns itself with the COL programme, with initiatives in both sectors: Education and Livelihoods & Health. With a small staff of seven people, CEMCA retains its regional focus and devises appropriate learning solutions while trying to maintaining a balance between the aspirations of its stakeholders and its own modest resources. Promoting appropriate and low-cost technology options underpin all CEMCA’s interventions.

CEMCA will:

- support the articulation of policies that promote the development, adoption and use of open educational resources (OER);
- develop capacity in ODL at all levels of education;
- collaborate with quality assurance bodies to ensure the development and effective deployment of quality multimedia materials;
- design and create systems and models for sustainable community media initiatives;
- empower women in media literacy, health, democracy and leadership;
- create and support a network of clearinghouses for content exchange through multiple platforms, formats and media; and
- support research on emerging technologies including use of mobile devices for effective use by ODL students.

4.6 Regional Support

Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning (RETRIDOL)

RETRIDOL is located at the National Open University of Nigeria and supported by COL to develop capacity in ODL in West Africa. Even though it has a regional remit, its services are being requested across the continent. RETRIDOL develops annual work plans with COL based on national and regional needs and implements these by conducting workshops in eLearning, quality assurance, learner support, multi-media, leadership training and research methods in ODL. RETRIDOL promotes ODL research by publishing the *West African Journal of Open and Flexible Learning*.

COL will continue to support and strengthen RETRIDOL.

Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE)

SADC-CDE is hosted by the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) with the remit to develop ODL capacity in the Southern African region. SADC-CDE develops annual work plans in consultation with COL and regional partners and implements these by holding training workshops for ODL practitioners, supporting effective delivery of ODL programmes, offering scholarships in distance education, research and gender, fostering collaborations and promoting ODL research. COL supports the activities jointly agreed upon in the annual work plan.

COL will continue to support the SADC-CDE and encourage it to establish itself as a key agent of COL in the region.

4.7 eLearning for International Organisations

“Great course (Writing Effectively) with very useful materials. On top of that to have a tutor that can be contacted by email was very much appreciated. From my point of view, the tutor was as important as the material.”

UNHCR Learner

The COL eLearning for International Organisations (eLIO) initiative responds to the capacity enhancement needs of international organisations through a fee-for-service arrangement.

The eLIO team customises eLearning solutions to address the specific training needs of international organisations. These solutions use open, distance and technology mediated learning to provide equitable and quality professional development opportunities for women and men working in the field, and at headquarters. Success rates for the learners have been over 80%, thanks to the effective combination of quality course materials and personalised delivery.

Courses in effective communication, report writing, operational data management and debt management remain in high demand – and gender mainstreaming and youth development have been added to the existing repertoire.

Building upon stakeholders' repeated contracts and support, eLIO will continue to:

- update existing courses and develop new ones;
- deliver courses on the COL Virtual Learning Environment COL-VLE (an open source web-based Moodle platform; and
- increase its reach through improved services and word-of-mouth marketing by its stakeholders.

5. LOGIC MODEL

Please see separate file located at:

www.col.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/LogicModel_2012-2015_DRAFT.pdf

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6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

“Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted.”

Albert Einstein

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is an integral part of Results-Based Management (RBM). COL adopted the RBM approach with its 2003-2006 Three-Year Plan. Since then it has been regularly developing and improving its M&E, learning from its own and others’ experiences. It consists of the following main components:

1. *Clarifying realistic expected results*

At the level of its Three-Year Logic Model, COL defines nine key outcomes – one for each initiative and crosscutting theme – that contribute to its Impact:

A substantial and equitable increase in the number of Commonwealth citizens acquiring the knowledge and skills for leading productive and healthy lives, through formal and non-formal open and distance learning opportunities.

The Logic Model defines the expected results and is COL’s central planning and communication framework.

2. *Monitoring through performance indicators*

Several performance indicators – with targets – are identified for each Initiative and for eLearning and gender through a rigorous, collaborative process. Indicators are linked to feasible data sources and instruments.

3. *Alignment of planning, monitoring and evaluation*

COL works with annual logical frameworks at the activity level. Their output indicators – which evolve over the three-year period – relate logically to the outcomes specified in the Logic Model.

4. *Integrating evaluation*

Every initiative identifies, before the inception of the Three-Year Plan – a key activity or theme to undergo an evaluation. This usually involves both a formative mid-term review and a summative evaluation in the final year of the plan. COL also commissions a comprehensive external evaluation of its Three-Year Plan activities and results.

5. *Analysing, reflecting and incorporating lessons*

Both the monitoring and the evaluations inform decision-making, at operational and strategic levels. The evaluations in the final year are timed to feed into decisions on the next Three-Year Plan.

6. *Reporting to stakeholders*

COL reports evidentially to different stakeholder groups in ways that are meaningful to them. For example, it reports by country, activity and initiative to Ministers of Education, the Board of Governors, Focal Points and partners among a range of stakeholders. It reports progress on key performance indicators; and its evaluations are published.

During this TYP, COL will:

- develop and implement an M&E strategy for each Initiative;
- support selected partners in monitoring outputs and outcomes on an on-going basis;
- use the COL Gender Keys to track gender-related results;
- report to COL's Board of Governors on an annual basis; and
- commission a summative external evaluation at the end of the triennium.

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7. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Effective stakeholder engagement enables COL to leverage its modest resources and enhance its impact. COL maintains close links with a diverse range of stakeholders: Member States, partner institutions and organisations, donors and individuals. In order to develop a more systematic and interactive relationship with Member States, COL has established a network of Focal Points, Honorary COL Chairs and COL Advisors. These three networks complement each other and provide COL with an increased visibility and leadership in the field.

7.1 Focal Points

Under this initiative, each Minister of Education in the Commonwealth is invited to nominate a Focal Point. The role of the Focal Point is to interact with COL, coordinate with other ministries (agriculture, health, etc.), disseminate COL-related information to interested stakeholders and keep the Ministers briefed about COL's work. This network extends to all Commonwealth countries and has become an important feature of COL's planning and reporting processes. Triennial regional meetings of Focal Points enable COL to get first-hand information of country priorities that contribute to the development of COL's next Three-Year Plan. The Focal Points have given COL valuable visibility and a strong presence in the field.

COL will continue to strengthen its network of Focal Points during the next TYP.

7.2 Country Action Plans and Country Reports

In order to address the unique needs of each country, COL develops Country Action Proposals based on extensive in-country consultations. These are then discussed with Focal Points and country partners, before being confirmed as *Country Action Plans*, against which progress is tracked annually.

At the end of each triennium, COL prepares *Country Reports* which consolidate and present the work that COL has done in each individual country. These country reports are compiled in a compendium entitled *COL in the Commonwealth* which is then submitted to all Ministers of Education and stakeholders, in a spirit of transparency and accountability.

COL will continue to implement this process over the next triennium.

7.3 Honorary COL Chairs

The network of COL Chairs seeks to establish COL's academic presence in the field by encouraging research and capacity-development activities in ODL and ICT-enhanced education. Although the Chair is an honorary position, the incumbent can apply to COL for funding relating to areas of COL's interest. The five Chairs set up in institutions in Canada, Malawi, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Tanzania and are all joint UNESCO-COL Chairs, tying into UNESCO's Chairs programme.

COL will further strengthen and extend this network over the next Three-Year Plan to all regions of the Commonwealth.

7.4 COL Advisors

COL has a network of 12 Advisors across the Commonwealth comprising eminent ODL and development professionals. They are a valuable resource for consultations and advice on COL's future plans and provide intelligence and insight into the nuances of the changing socio-political and educational developments in their respective regions. Member States seeking advice on ODL and technology-mediated learning can turn to the Advisors for guidance. They are goodwill ambassadors for COL, providing expertise in ODL and development.

COL will support and renew this network over the Three-Year Plan.

7.5 Knowledge Media and Communications Media

In communicating with stakeholders and the wider public, COL employs a variety of media as appropriate. COL is continuing to increase its use of Web 2.0 technologies, taking advantage of opportunities for user interactivity, blogging, audio, video, RSS/news feeds and engaging in popular social media sites.

COL's website, newsletters (*Connections/EdTech News* and *EduComm Asia*) and electronic resources are among the world's foremost sources of knowledge on ODL. COL's publications and resources are also available on a CD-ROM.

Governance and financial information – including Board minutes, financial statements and the President's quarterly reports to the Board – is also available on the COL website (www.col.org/GovInfo).

COL's Information Resource Centre indexes large numbers of documents about ODL and international development from quality-assessed external sources. This index is available through COL's Knowledge Finder.

COL will continue to produce and disseminate high-quality freely accessible publications and resources.

7.6 Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning and COL Awards

COL's biennial Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF) has become one of the world's top international conferences on learning and global development.

Forums are generally held biennially and each is co-hosted with a partner in a different region of the Commonwealth. The five-day programme is designed to address ODL's role in widening educational access, bridging the digital divide and advancing the social and economic development of communities and nations at large. Thanks to an active sponsorship programme and low registration fees, most participants come from developing countries. COL presents its Excellence in Distance Education Awards and confers Honorary Fellowships at each forum.

The Seventh Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF7) will take place in late November 2013, in Abuja, Nigeria, co-hosted by the Federal Ministry of Education. The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is the lead partner institution.

8. MANAGING FOR RESULTS

8.1 Accountability and oversight

Accountability and effective use of resources remain paramount for COL. Accountability entails reporting to the Board of Governors, Commonwealth Ministers of Education (CCEM), Commonwealth Heads of Government and Foreign Minister (CHOGM) and other partners, internal monitoring of performance against indicators, adherence to plans and budgets, as well as compliance with operational policies and procedures. It entails performance monitoring, making adjustments as needed and conducting periodic evaluations of reported results and responding to recommendations from evaluations.

COL, using the Three-Year Plan as the basis for accountability, will:

- continue to adhere to documented functions, authority and accountability between the Board and senior management;
- adhere to the established reporting cycle for communication with the Board and its Committees; engage in an annual financial statement audit; perform independent evaluations and prepare management responses on implementation of recommendations;
- maintain a robust information retrieval system to track and provide information on the status at COL's work and progress towards targets set; and
- review and update policies and procedures as required in a changing landscape.

8.2 Critical Success Factors and Risk Management

COL serves the Member States of the Commonwealth through its mission, *Learning for Development*, and contributes to equitable and gender-nuanced expansion of the reach of educational and training systems. As a small organisation with a large mandate, COL leverages its present strengths while minimising risks present in operating in a fast-changing world. As in the last triennium, the following factors require attention.

Financial stability

COL is dependent upon voluntary contributions from the Member States. By late 2011, the number of such donors had touched 44, a historical high for COL. It is significant that no donor ceased contribution through the fiscal triennium 2009-2012 in spite of the global economic crisis. Retaining the confidence and contributions of the Member States, at a time when some will experience continued economic challenges, is critical to the successful implementation of the 2012-2015 plan.

Risk: Global financial crises continue to affect a number of nations. Some Member States may find it difficult to continue funding at the same level. Any interruption of contribution by a major donor can seriously compromise COL's capacity to deliver its programme outcomes, and a decline in the number of contributors will affect COL's image.

Mitigation strategy: Maintain COL's established reserve, within limits approved by the Board, through prudent budget management. Seek additional contributions consistent with the mission, *Learning for Development*. Develop a strategic plan, synergised with the RBM framework, to alter, curtail or terminate initiatives should contributions decline.

Managing expectations

The significant increase in the number of donors and their continued financial contributions through a period of economic crisis reflects the goodwill and respect of the stakeholders towards COL for its ability to fulfill its promises and to deliver results within accepted timeframes. This also reflects raised stakeholder expectations.

Risk: Not being able to deliver on the long wish-lists of Member States may adversely affect the reputation and credibility of COL.

Mitigation strategy: Initiate and engage in strategic communication with designated Focal Points in Member States on COL's specific mission and mandate so that the requests are focused on COL's areas of competence. Use Country Action Plans to focus attention on activities approved for the Three-Year Plan. Distribute activities geographically and temporally under the TYP to meet the expectations.

Partnerships

The substantial social capital that COL has accumulated through its partnerships provides considerable leverage to its modest budget. COL has also accumulated considerable experience in working with a diverse range of partners, large and small, institutional and field-based. Working with large partners was previously considered a risk to COL's visibility and ability to deliver results in a timely manner; however, as results from the two previous TYP's show, this is no longer a significant risk.

Risk: Some partners may be under-resourced in terms of capabilities and institutional aspects and may not be able to meet the deliverables in a timely manner.

Mitigation strategy: Focus on articulated strengths and needs of partners and synergise them with the priorities of the approved initiatives. Emphasise follow up. Maintain credible and effective communication among partners

Technology as an emerging issue

COL is a small organisation that is focused on the use of technology to enhance learning and to expand its reach. Careful identification of appropriate technologies and their judicious use and deployment are critical to the success of COL's mission.

Risks: Not being able to keep up to date in a rapidly changing technology scene can lead to obsolescence of COL's technology systems and advisory services. An equally significant risk is that COL recommends and/or deploys technologies that are not relevant to the context and may contribute to widening of the divides and gaps, especially in gender terms.

Mitigation strategy: Sustain and advance staff and specialists' capability to sense changes. Sensitise staff and partners about total costs of ownership in technology-mediated learning activities. Identify and build robust platforms and systems that are future-proof and vendor-proof.

Leadership and visibility factors continue to be important as in the past. COL has been able to develop and implement an intelligent stakeholder strategy that has ensured its visibility among development organisations of the Commonwealth. COL has also been successful in implementing a competitive compensation package for international staff and in developing a viable succession planning strategy. These will be further strengthened.

8.3 Resource Management

Comprehensive, results-based operational plans (logical frameworks, or “logframes”) derived from the Three-Year Plan will guide the allocation of resources. The alignment and integration of the strategic three-year plan with the resources needed and operational plans prepared provide for coherent planning, budgeting and reporting on the allocation and utilisation of resources in line with planned results.

COL will ensure:

- continued monitoring of transparent and competitive procurement methods;
- strengthened programme design through leveraging of resources and cost-sharing with partners;
- consistent monitoring and evaluation;
- continued use of national/regional expertise and technologies wherever possible in the execution of its work while balancing this with the availability of national/regional expertise;
- the building of local capacity and aligning with Commonwealth and country priorities;
- responsible financial management to achieve value for money, which is COL’s underlying principle for use of funds; and
- that COL’s operations at all levels are guided by the importance of ensuring gender equality, women’s empowerment and culturally-sensitive approaches.

8.4 Human resource management

COL’s ability to be successful in fulfilling its mission depends on the commitment and professionalism of its staff. To enhance delivery and effectiveness, human resources have to be aligned with the needs of the organisation so that the skills mix and staff capacity meet organisational requirements. COL will continue to operate with a small core staff of about 45, including its staff at CEMCA in New Delhi, India. Staff turnover is expected to remain low over the life of the this Three-Year Plan with vacancies arising under the rotation policy, from time to time, for professional staff in the international category. While potentially disruptive to programme delivery, this policy makes succession planning reasonably timely and ensures new talent and approaches to COL’s work. COL will also continue to make use of fixed and non-fixed terms depending on the nature of the job and the services required. Together, these give COL the capability to respond to emerging needs, to scale up and down the staff complement when circumstances warrant and to hire the right expertise when it is needed.

COL completed a review of its job grading system in 2011 which will serve COL’s human resource requirements well in this triennium. A culture of performance-based pay is now widely accepted at COL and COL is committed to recognising staff performance through pay increments. COL must stand by its pledge that its staff is its most important resource. COL will also strive to adjust compensation for any inflation over the period of the plan subject to availability of resources and approval by the Board.

COL will:

- maintain and continue to attract a stable, highly qualified and motivated workforce that actively delivers on results;
- build on the competency framework developed in the previous plan to ensure that staff have capacities to implement the plan with on-going staff development for all staff grades combined with on-going performance assessment;
- put timely succession planning in place for rotation positions to minimise the time that a position might be vacant;

- achieve gender and diversity benchmarks set for professional staff;
- enhance the human resource information system developed in 2011 to provide timely information on human resource matters;
- be committed to the principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all citizens of the Commonwealth; and
- endorse professional merit as the primary guiding principle combined with gender equity, and within the constraints of its size, the need for an appropriate balance of regional and national backgrounds from around the Commonwealth for internationally recruited positions.

8.5 Financial Resources – Needs and Flows

Planning and delivering COL's three-year programme requires predicable and assured future funding. Voluntary contributions from Member States have accounted for up to 80% of COL's funding. The average number of countries contributing annually per triennium has been on the increase since 2006-2009 from 22 countries in 2006-2009 to over 40 in the 2009-2012 triennium. COL has increased the number and level of voluntary contributions by maintaining close links with each member state and ensuring that its programme provides value in meeting the national priorities of the contributors while remaining within COL's mandate. A list of contributing countries is contained in Appendix 2.

Australia confirmed at CHOGM in October 2011 that it will be re-joining COL as a financial funding partner. If the United Kingdom extends its earlier offer to contribute 30% of the total funds provided by Commonwealth countries, the aggregate of funding will increase from 2010-2011 funding levels of \$8 million to over \$9 million annually. Such an increase will serve as funding incentives for other countries keeping in mind factors outside of COL's control such as the state of the economy in each country and globally as well as national priorities.

Additional contributions comprised of (i) grants in support of approved programme initiatives and (ii) fee-for-service work are expected to make up close to 20% of revenues in 2012-2015 (XX in 2009-2012). Additional contributions are essential if COL is to increase the impact of its programme and reach its longstanding \$12 million resource target. COL's policy for additional contributions ensures that funds will be received and spent in alignment with the priorities of this Three-Year Plan and that they do not have a disproportionate effect on the overall level of programme and administrative support required in any area.

An appropriate level of costs will be recovered from these additional activities to sustain optimal levels of support for core activities. Grants must cover the additional costs of the extra work involved while fee-for-service activities will aim for full-cost recovery.

Miscellaneous revenues will account for the balance – mainly comprised of interest on investments, royalties and licensing fees from earlier works and other support. These are not expected to increase from previous plan levels given low interest rates and COL's OER policy.

COL has built and recently increased its reserve fund, for use in the event of unexpected events, and is committed to prudent budget management and to seeking additional contributions in support of the programme.

COL will:

- retain the confidence and the contributions of Member States, at a time when some will experience even more economic challenges than in the previous plan, and aim to increase their contributions;
- aim to increase the number of multi-year commitments;
- aim to increase additional contributions by strengthening cooperation with intergovernmental institutions, bilateral donors, development banks, foundations and diversify the source of contributions in line with programme sectors; and
- continue to maintain adequate cash reserves for unexpected events and times.

Revenue Requirements for 2012-15 (estimated)

Source CAD millions	Fiscal Years			Total 2012-2015	Total 2009-2012*
	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015		
Voluntary	\$ 9.0	\$ 9.2	\$ 9.5	\$27.2	\$24.5est
Additional	2.0	2.1	2.3	6.7	6.0est
Miscellaneous	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.5est
Total	\$11.2	\$11.5	\$12.0	\$34.5	\$31.0est

*See Appendix 3

8.6 Governance

“Learning is necessary for human survival. It enhances the development of identity and adaptability of learners. Education includes training in the language and skills necessary to perform specific tasks and the development of critical thinking, problem solving and creativity that enable the learner to deepen understanding and use knowledge wisely.”

COL Governance Manual

COL’s Board of Governors has provision for up to 14 members consisting of the Chair, major donor representatives, regional representatives from the four regions of the Commonwealth as well as the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, the Secretary-General’s appointee and the President of COL (ex-officio). The Memorandum of Understanding establishing COL and signed by Commonwealth Governments in 1988 gives the Board of Governors general responsibility for determining the principles, policies and priorities that guide COL in its activities. This includes approval of the strategic plans and annual work programmes, the monitoring of their implementation and the evaluation of the results. In fulfillment of their accountability to member countries of the Commonwealth, COL reports to meetings of Commonwealth Ministers of Education and Heads of Government (including Foreign Ministers) on the activities of COL.

COL’s Governors will:

- monitor the overall performance of COL along with contributions from Member Governments and make appropriate representations when they are delayed;
- assist in the sourcing of new revenue sources as appropriate; and
- monitor effective risk management strategies.

See current Board membership (Appendix 4)

8.7 Knowledge Management and Information Technology

COL's internal Knowledge Management (KM) and Information Technology (IT) systems are designed on the principle of compatibility with the needs and requirements of a small organisation and its partners, the majority of which are in developing countries. Corporate business continuity and data and information integrity are key factors in the operation of its IT and KM systems. Appropriate risk management procedures are implemented and reviewed periodically. COL ensures that it is free to move its own data across service providers to avoid potential vendor lock-in.

During 2012–2015, COL will continue to provide highly reliable network services to staff and specialists and will assist in the scaling up and scaling out of ODL-relevant technologies developed by COL and its partners. COL will work with partners to build scenarios and options to deploy and make use of shared virtual infrastructure for ODL, with a special focus on small states and small island nations.

A comprehensive, semantically-enabled records and document management system will be built as an integral component of the corporate Intranet. Platforms for collaboration with consultants with co-creation features will be available and new features developed. The COL Virtual Learning Environment will be continually augmented with relevant new features. Trial systems for new learning management and learner-oriented social networking platforms and online repositories and directory services will be available. Trials with open source software for re-use of open educational resources (OER) will be encouraged.

COL continues its advocacy for OER with a focus on re-use through open licences. Partner concerns with intellectual property/copyright for digital learning materials and their need for information on open licenses will be addressed through advisory support.

APPENDIX 1: External Evaluation of COL

Excerpted from the Evaluation of the Commonwealth of Learning 2009-2012 Plan, conducted by Patrick Spaven. Report date: 13 December 2011

Findings and conclusions

Open Schooling

13. The Initiative promotes open schooling as a means of providing increased access to learning opportunities at secondary level and supports countries to plan and implement it. In this triennium COL has undertaken an ambitious portfolio of work including multi-faceted support to new and aspiring open schools; the first institutionalised networking of open schools through the Commonwealth Open Schools Association (COMOSA) and an on-line community; and a challenging project to build capacity for OER production in six countries, which attracted funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.
14. In common with other COL Initiatives, not all the open schooling interventions have borne fruit within the expected time-frames, and some have stalled for a variety of reasons. COL has learnt from the difficulties it has faced, and has responded flexibly.
15. Set in the context of this relatively new terrain, COL is undoubtedly a very important and valued partner in the open schooling sector in the developing Commonwealth.

Teacher education

16. COL's Teacher Education Initiative promotes and supports the use of ODL to increase access to, and the quality of, teacher education. COL's work is currently an eclectic mix. It is not difficult for COL to find footholds; but it has not always found it easy to obtain leverage in this subsector, particularly with strategic partners.
17. Its flagship work has been a project in partnership with UNICEF to integrate the concept of "Child Friendly Schools" in several countries, mostly in Africa. The project has been well conceived and well executed.
18. COL's other work in this Initiative has been valuable, if unspectacular. COL needs to take a hard look, before the end of the next triennium, at how to optimise its contribution in this important subsector.

Higher Education

19. COL's Higher Education (HE) Initiative is broad-based, designed to support higher education institutions to have policies, systems and staff competencies that support the use of ODL for increased learner access, completion rates and enhanced content.
20. Its two most prominent areas of work in the last 2-3 years have been the revision of materials for the Commonwealth Executive Master of Business/Public Administration (CEMBA/MPA); and the development - and assistance with implementation in several HEIs - of a low-cost internal quality audit tool for HE known as the Review and Improvement Model (COL RIM).
21. The Initiative also includes oversight of RETRIDOL. An external evaluation of RETRIDOL, based in the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), found that the institute had undertaken very little work for about two years, principally because of internal management issues.
22. The HE sector is much larger and more diverse - and the distinction between distance and face-to-face education less clear-cut - than in the 1990s when COL was a major player in promoting ODL for the HE subsector. Nowadays it is increasingly difficult for COL to find a niche.

23. Besides this, the performance of COL's HE work in the recent past attracted critical comment from several stakeholders.
24. A big question for COL in the coming triennium is: should it strive to look for that niche through a continuing commitment to a free-standing HE Initiative? Or should COL contribute to the subsector more obliquely – through its championing of OER for example - and only where clear-cut opportunities arise?

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

25. The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is a group of institutions from small states – currently 33 - brought together through COL since 2005, to collaboratively develop free content resources for use in an educational context.
26. VUSSC's geographical coverage, and the apparent commitment of member countries, are impressive. Participants say they feel part of a grand enterprise. To have maintained this momentum over 6-7 years is a considerable achievement. Few organisations have the staying power to have managed this process in the way that COL has done.
27. At outcome level however the results are less impressive. Progress in the production of courses in the member countries has been slower than anticipated. The main stumbling block has been the translation of material produced in the VUSSC training and course development workshops (or “bootcamps”) into actual course modules.
28. To overcome this problem, VUSSC is now concentrating on producing complete courses at the bootcamps. This is already leading to take-up, so it seems like the right move for now.
29. VUSSC has also completed the construction of the Transnational Qualifications Framework which is designed to promote educational and labour mobility.

Skills Development

29. COL's Skills Development Initiative supports ODL for skills development particularly through new approaches that emphasise technology-enhanced, flexible and blended (FaB) teaching and learning.
30. There is a particular emphasis on skills for the informal sector which is the most neglected in many countries and yet is increasingly likely to be the destination of school leavers without higher secondary qualifications.
31. COL is making good progress with this work. Its flagship project – Flexible Skills Development for members of the Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa – is making headway, particularly in Kenya where four institutions are participating. It needs to consolidate, monitor, reflect and consult before attempting to branch out.

Learning for Farming

32. The basic aim of the innovative Learning for Farming Initiative (commonly known as L3F) programme is, through a variety of ODL and ICT methodologies, to build capacity among the rural poor which leads to more productive and sustainable farming and more secure livelihoods. Convincing banks to lend to subsistence farmers on the strength of their learning activities is the linchpin in the standard L3F model.
33. COL has successfully tested this model in South Asia. It has shown that it can – in certain circumstances - make a significance difference to people's livelihoods. Growing empowerment among the predominantly women farmers also appears to be a tangible outcome.
34. COL is testing variations on the model in other regions. It is aware that time is running out for the micro field testing of L3F and that it needs to demonstrate that it can rapidly scale up without the intensive care. COL

needs to work hard at finding advocacy platforms for L3F that engage new types of partners for up-scaling and diversifying.

Healthy Communities

35. Healthy Communities is another of COL's three highly focused – predominantly single model - Initiatives. It promotes and facilitates participatory learning – predominantly about health, and through the medium of community radio (CR).
36. COL is supporting activity in an impressive number of locations. The wide reach comes from an arms-length approach, working with intermediaries. The numbers reached at present are relatively few in any location. This is typical of the modelling phase of a COL Initiative.
37. Part of the value of COL's work in Healthy Communities is in the refinement of the model and its testing in a number of different social, cultural, economic and political contexts. As with other models, COL needs to validate it, refine it, and if appropriate diversify it, through the capture and use of evidence.

Integrating eLearning

38. Integrating eLearning is another of COL's broad-brief Initiatives, but is not sector-based. It is concerned with promoting and supporting the use of ICT in teaching and learning in both formal and non-formal contexts and at all levels.
39. Following the transfer of responsibility of WikiEducator – that had dominated the Initiative in the previous triennium - it took time for COL to identify a new direction to follow. Once this was done, however, the work gathered momentum very quickly. This was helped by two factors:
 - A strategic partnership with Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec) and Microsoft came together and took off very quickly with ICT for education work in the Caribbean.
 - The use of pre-existing models and materials that needed adapting and some re-purposing but not re-inventing.
40. The ICT4E work in the Caribbean is the largest and most coherent set of interventions in this Initiative. It has already led to some solid early outcomes in three countries, influencing policy and supporting the countries in the adoption of a competency framework for integrating ICT in school teaching.
41. COL's partners want to push on in the Caribbean and begin similar work in the Pacific. The latter may be premature without consolidation and research on outcomes. The apparent effectiveness of the partnership is an important development for COL.

CEMCA

42. The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) is COL's regional agency for Asia. It is the only unit outside Vancouver that COL manages directly. Its mission is to promote “the meaningful, relevant, and appropriate use of information and communication technologies to serve the educational and training needs of Commonwealth member states in Asia”. It received a programme budget of CDN\$350,000 in 2011. It has a diverse range of outputs, the most prominent of which is support services for CR, mainly in India but also with small steps from a standing start in Bangladesh.
43. CEMCA, in 3-4 years, has become a valued strategic partner with the Government of India in the promotion of, and support for, CR. CEMCA's direct work with CR start-ups has equipped around 100 organisations to apply for licences and begin to broadcast. CEMCA and the Government have big plans for the future of their cooperation in CR which would see CEMCA moving to an even more strategic role. This is a remarkable achievement, although understandable when the background of CEMCA's current director is taken into account.

44. COL needs to ensure CEMCA continues this effective work after the retirement of the current director in 2012 and integrate its planning and monitoring more closely with COL's RBM system.

eLearning for International Organisations (eLIO)

45. eLIO is a full-cost recovery service provided by COL which develops and delivers technology-mediated distance learning courses for the staff of international organizations like WHO, ComSec and UNHCR.
46. eLIO was not within the scope of the evaluation. However it is important to point out that the existence of the service and the way it operates has not been formally challenged in this triennium, unlike in the past.

Cross-cutting themes: gender, quality and appropriate technology

Gender

47. COL aims to be “a model organisation which mainstreams gender in all its processes and at all levels”.
48. This is an ambitious aim. In pursuing it, COL has invested a considerable amount of time and money in the last decade in creating frameworks and tools for gender mainstreaming in the organisation and its programmes. COL also provides gender-related resources for its programme partners, and other external stakeholders and members of ODL communities.
49. At the centre of the COL's gender action plan are two commitments:
 - At least one gender-related activity will be implemented in each Initiative.
 - The longitudinal study for each Initiative will provide evidence whether COL's interventions have advanced gender equality or not with appropriate data from the field.
50. The former commitment appears to have been achieved. In terms of the provision of evidence, the second commitment has not been fulfilled. Several of the evaluations failed to address the question of gender advancement and merely reported on gender balance in monitored activity such as workshops. This is not to say that COL has failed to advance gender equality through its work. It simply has not provided enough evidence except in its L3F Initiative.
51. COL should refresh the use of its Gender Keys – a simple tool for gender mainstreaming in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It also needs to choose, and possibly refine, a gender outcome statement and 3-4 indicators from the long list in its Gender Action Plan, include them in the Logic Model for the next TYP, and purposefully work towards them.

Quality and appropriate technology

52. COL has not actively monitored these two cross cutting dimensions in the triennium. There is no evidence however that it has failed to promote quality and appropriate technology in any aspect of its work. Neither of these will feature explicitly as cross-cutting dimensions in the next TYP.

Knowledge Management

53. COL's Knowledge Management (KM) unit provides knowledge services to external ODL communities and to the organisation itself.
54. The KM unit has recently re-strategised and is planning an ambitious and diverse array of new services including some that reach out to customers rather than reside on its website. In line with COL's commitment to OER, it is collaborating with ComSec to create portal access to the rapidly expanding stock of OER produced in developing countries.
55. To optimise KM's potential for internal collaboration with COL's programme work, there needs to be regular and systematic dialogue between KM and the ESs.

Results-Based Management

56. Results-Based Management (RBM) is a strategic approach to management that translates principles and components of the programme/project cycle to the level of the organisation.
57. COL adopted the RBM approach with its 2003-06 TYP. Since then it has been regularly developing and improving its approach.
58. The evaluation scrutinises in detail COL's RBM system and practices. COL has made good progress with its RBM so far. The evaluation makes a number of recommendations for improvement. That is to be expected given the relative immaturity of COL's experience with RBM. Institutionalising RBM and making it work is a long haul project.

General conclusions

59. To this evaluator, COL looks and feels like a different organisation from the one first encountered in 2005. In all the teams there is a palpable striving to be relevant and to create deep and long-term effects. There was evidence of this in the 2003-06 triennium, but it was certainly not universal. Progress was made in the 2006-09 and more since then. This does not always make COL a comfortable place to work, but it is transforming the way COL identifies, and carries out its work.
60. In particular COL understands the need to build sustainability into its interventions. Sustainability was referenced in 2005/06 but was not a dominant concern.
61. COL's RBM system has played a role in this. The sheer discipline of RBM and the constant reinforcement of messages about outcomes and sustainability have probably been the main drivers. COL has not yet found a way to fully reap the potential benefits from RBM of strategic learning, but this is not unusual for the state of maturity of COL's system.
62. Apart from RBM, the change has also been brought about through a complete renewal of ES staff. These staff were recruited to an organisation with expectations of its programmes that are radically different from 2003.
63. It is important to stress that, with this transition, COL has not lost its disposition and ability to be needs-driven and to listen to what this means for particular clients. There is always a risk - with pre-set strategic goals, more projectised working, more strategic partnerships and a drive to innovate – of becoming insensitive to local needs and inflexible. Getting the balance right is very difficult but COL seems currently to be achieving this.
64. Probably the clearest manifestation of COL's transition to more outcomes-oriented approaches is its concentration on the development and application of innovative models for ODL.
65. In its most complete form, COL's application of models would be to:
 - Apply its own thinking and experience – and occasionally research - in preparing the concept or approach for trialling.
 - Trial it in more than one institutional and geographical context – often in two or more countries or even regions.
 - Monitor, and assess or evaluate the trial and recycle the learning from this into a new version of the model.
 - Develop a strategy for replication or up-scaling.
66. In practice, COL is not always able to deliver all of these elements. The process is often messier, iterative, and incomplete. But COL is clearer in this triennium that the development and mobilisation of models are a core competence.
67. To fully realise the potential of models, COL needs to make the following improvements

- It needs to build intensive outcome monitoring and evaluation as standard into its planning for interventions with models. This will require resources.
 - It needs to put more time into researching, discussing, designing and implementing strategies for replication and up-scaling.
68. Taking into account the balance of stakeholder opinion, the logic of the extension of COL's use of models, and the learning about what works that will come from improvements in outcome monitoring and evaluation, this evaluation recommends that COL focuses even more on a small number of substantial medium to long-term interventions. These interventions should be transnational, ensuring that across its interventions all regions get a reasonable share of benefits.
69. COL is not always comfortable working with large-scale projects with pre-determined outputs and outcomes and tight deadlines. It is used to more flexible ways of operating, less full-on and less linear interventions, and emergent definitions of outputs and outcomes. COL does not have a large pool of programme funds, but this is often not a problem as COL's expertise, ideas and brokerage are what gives it its edge. Large funding packages can work against local commitment, ownership, and sustainability.
70. However COL should also not shy away from external funding opportunities, particularly where it is ready to take a model to a bigger stage. COL has shown that it can operate effectively in an external funding environment, although it should seriously consider appointing project managers in these circumstances if the scale justifies it.
71. A focus on 4-6 major interventions suggests that COL should reduce the number of Initiatives. There is no intrinsic reason why COL should remain wedded to the notion of 7-8 separate Initiatives. Although it has tended to retain specialist staff, each with responsibility for a different subsector, this also is not necessarily a "given" for COL. In particular this evaluation is recommending that it keeps under review its commitment to an Initiative devoted entirely to higher education.
72. A strong message from a wide range of informants in this evaluation is to move more resources to skills development. There is a consensus about the unmet need in this area in the developing Commonwealth – and in most countries around the world for that matter. COL is seen to be at the cutting edge of the mobilisation of ODL for skills development.
73. An expansion of work in skills development would have implications for several of COL's existing Initiatives. This may require a rethinking of the way COL configures its Initiatives. It is very important that COL's work in this area benefits from coordination and collaboration across the organisation.
74. There is a strong suggestion from some stakeholders that COL should identify and focus on "root" solutions: work which – with minimal adaptation – can support outcomes in more than one subsector. Quality assurance (QA) is a well-established root solution; and COL should consider pooling its resources and experience of QA for potential synergies across educational subsectors and beyond into informal learning.
75. OER are the obvious emerging root area. COL is working with OER in several Initiatives and in KM. It is not immediately clear how much collaboration there is within COL on OER, but there are likely to be advantages in this. It is not inconceivable that in three years' time COL has a team that works with OER across the current Initiative boundaries.
76. Policy is another root solution. Most of COL's interventions include a policy promotion component for sustainability. While this needs to be tailor-made at the level of institutions, national policy advocacy for ODL is a slower, more detached process. It may be better pursued outside the boundaries of specific Initiatives.

Principal recommendations (not already explicit in the Conclusions)

77. COL should keep its work in HE under close review. Unless it identifies and delivers interventions in the next 2-3 years which are widely recognised as making a major contribution to the subsector, the most sensible

course may be to wind down HE as a separate Initiative and contribute in other ways to the subsector where a clear rationale presents itself.

78. If COL's efforts to revive RETRIDOL begin to feel consistently like pushing water uphill, it needs to devise an exit strategy.
79. COL needs to stay with VUSSC but accelerate the transfer of ownership while reviewing – on the basis of better evidence – the mechanisms, almost certainly introducing more diversity to the model. It also urgently needs to explore sustainable funding mechanisms with its VUSSC partners.
80. COL needs to demonstrate that it can rapidly scale up L3F without the intensive care provided by the development partners. COL needs to work hard at finding advocacy platforms for L3F that don't just broadcast its messages but also engage new types of partners for up-scaling and diversifying. There is a need to demonstrate with clarity what the advantages are. This involves evidence through evaluation but also simpler communications.
81. Outcome statements in COL's TYP Logic Model need to be less generic than in 2009-12. They need to be pitched at medium-term results.
82. The TYP Performance Indicators need to be more precisely defined with accompanying technical notes explaining among other things how the indicators will be monitored.
83. COL should develop short strategic plans for each Initiative. These should be constructed for the life of the TYP – or even longer in some cases. They should be built around a logic model or theory of change (ToC) that links key actions and outputs for each "Activity" to the Initiative outcome. There would be a strong case for including intermediate outcomes in the models as well. The construction of the logic models/ToCs would best be done collaboratively both within COL and with partners.
84. COL should build Activity logframes around coherent packages of work – or projects – rather than generic types of work – such as COL's "strategies".
85. The development of outcome monitoring, in collaboration with partners, should be the main item on COL's agenda for improving its RBM system in the next TYP.
86. COL should institutionalise M&E planning with the implementation of the new TYP.
87. COL needs to consistently raise the level of its capability for commissioning evaluations. This implies
 - Being a pro-active partner in evaluation design through terms of reference and dialogue at the inception stage.
 - Improving the recruitment of evaluators by widening the pool and having sound selection criteria and processes.
88. COL should look more strategically at evaluations; and decisions about this should be shared. There is often greater value in thematic, cross-cutting evaluations which tend to continue to have relevance after specific interventions have been completed.
89. When an ES leaves, COL should have a clear medium-term framework for the area to which it intends to recruit a successor. This implies having a clear profile of the person it should be looking for; and providing an effective induction into this framework for the new ES.

APPENDIX 2: Member Governments' Contributions

Years ended June 30*	*to Dec. 15, 2011			Total
	2010	2011	2012*	
Antigua & Barbuda	\$ 6,194	\$ 4,969	\$ 5,013	\$ 16,176
Australia	-	-	-	-
The Bahamas	64,920	61,980	60,000	186,900
Bangladesh	31,704	30,990	31,164	93,858
Barbados	45,225	46,485	-	91,710
Belize	32,460	31,290	30,762	94,512
Botswana	48,960	46,485	45,783	141,228
Brunei Darussalam	-	-	-	-
Cameroon	-	-	-	-
Canada	2,600,000	2,600,000	2,600,000	7,800,000
Cyprus	18,619	15,859	16,606	51,084
Dominica	5,212	5,000	5,000	15,212
Fiji Islands	-	-	-	-
The Gambia	5,170	4,883	-	10,053
Ghana	-	185,382	60,500	245,882
Grenada	5,440	4,840	-	10,280
Guyana	16,320	15,345	15,039	46,704
India	936,004	897,541	867,416	2,700,961
Jamaica	48,690	43,947	46,040	138,677
Kenya	45,590	41,297	43,760	130,647
Kiribati	-	20,256	-	20,256
Lesotho	73,541	71,260	71,603	216,404
Malawi	-	-	-	-
Malaysia	50,531	50,000	50,000	150,531
Maldives	5,025	4,840	-	9,865
Malta	15,816	15,270	-	31,086
Mauritius	60,000	60,000	60,000	180,000
Mozambique	51,895	47,765	50,000	149,660
Namibia	40,920	58,596	80,208	179,724
Nauru	5,215	4,938	5,000	15,153
New Zealand	622,240	604,865	-	1,227,105
Nigeria	750,000	549,663	-	1,299,663
Pakistan	35,000	35,000	35,000	105,000
Papua New Guinea	16,230	-	-	16,230
Rwanda	-	13,429	-	13,429
St. Kitts & Nevis	11,622	40,668	30,700	82,990
St. Lucia	38,510	19,142	17,962	75,614
St. Vincent & The Grenadines	-	-	-	-
Samoa	64,920	61,980	60,156	187,056
Seychelles	17,490	15,345	-	32,835
Sierra Leone	-	15,192	15,000	30,192
Singapore	-	-	-	-
Solomon Islands	-	5,064	-	5,064
South Africa	250,000	250,000	250,000	750,000
Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-
Swaziland	31,800	30,540	-	62,340
Tanzania	30,343	28,594	-	58,937
Tonga	-	20,066	20,068	40,134
Trinidad & Tobago	81,150	77,475	75,195	233,820
Tuvalu	10,820	10,330	10,026	31,176
Uganda	-	14,330	-	14,330
United Kingdom	1,932,260	1,730,190	1,768,030	5,430,480
Vanuatu	-	-	-	-
Zambia	32,460	28,659	30,522	91,641
	\$ 8,138,296	\$ 7,919,750	\$ 6,456,553	\$ 22,514,599

APPENDIX 3: Summary of additional contributions received by COL

Years ended June 30*					*to Oct. 31, 2011		
				2010	2011	2012*	Total
Grants							
Commonwealth Secretariat/CFTC				464,610	22,361	33,630	520,601
Ford Foundation				-	-	78,807	78,807
Government of India - Dept. of Science & Technology				28,347	22,600	6,420	57,367
Government of India - Min. of Information & Broadcasting				136,593	84,625	-	221,218
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation				413,820	213,803	48,321	675,944
United Nations Children's Fund				304,981	786,558	90,992	1,182,531
Memorial University (Canada)				36,544	13,456	-	50,000
Other				109,711	70,642	733	181,086
Pan-Commonwealth Forum sponsorships (various)				-	82,739	-	82,739
				1,494,606	1,296,784	258,903	3,050,293
							-
Fee-based Services							
eLearning for International Organisations				575,722	558,171	143,808	1,277,701
							-
				2,070,328	1,854,955	402,711	4,327,994

APPENDIX 4: Board of Governors

Chair

The Honourable Burchell Whiteman, O.J.
Former Jamaican High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, retired Senator and former Minister of Information and former Minister of Education and Culture, Jamaica

Members

Commonwealth Secretary-General

His Excellency Mr. Kamallesh Sharma

Appointments by Major Donors

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA: Ms. Janet Ecker, ICD.D, *President, Toronto Financial Services Alliance*

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA: Ms. Vibha Puri Das
Secretary, Higher Education, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development

GOVERNMENT OF NEW ZEALAND: Dr. Linda Sissons, CNZM
Chief Executive Officer, Wellington Institute of Technology

GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA: Her Excellency Mrs. Mariam Yalwaji Katagum
Ambassador/Permanent Delegation, The Permanent Delegation of Nigeria to UNESCO

GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA: Ms. Jennifer (Jenny) Glennie
Director, South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE)

GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM: Ms. Jo Bourne
Head of Profession for Education, Education Department, Department for International Development

Regional Appointments

On the Advice of Commonwealth Ministers of Education

AFRICA: Professor Akilagpa Sawyerr
Former Secretary-General, Association of African Universities (AAU) and former Vice Chancellor, University of Ghana

ASIA: Professor Dr. Atta-ur-Rahman, FRS
Coordinator-General, OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation, COMSTECH Secretariat, Pakistan

CARIBBEAN: Professor Clement Sankat
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal, St. Augustine Campus, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago

PACIFIC: The Honourable Dame Dr. Carol Kidu
Member of Parliament and former Minister for Community Development, Women, Religion and Sports, Papua New Guinea

Appointment by the Commonwealth Secretary-General

Mr. Martin Bean
Vice Chancellor, The Open University, United Kingdom

President (Ex-Officio)

Sir John Daniel, President and Chief Executive Officer, Commonwealth of Learning

Advisor

Professor John Wood
Secretary-General, Association of Commonwealth Universities

DRAFT

APPENDIX 5: Focal Points

Antigua & Barbuda	Ms. Peecheeta Spencer
Australia	Ms. Claire Watt
The Bahamas	Ms. Michelle Sears
Bangladesh	Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam Khan
Belize	Mr. Christopher Aird

Barbados	Mr. Laurie King
Botswana	Dr. Godson Gatsha, PhD <i>*on sabbatical in Malawi</i>
Brunei Darussalam	Mr. Adinin Md Salleh
Cameroon	Professor Ivo Leke Tambo and Dr. Daniel Akume Akume
Cyprus	Professor George Angelos Papadopoulos

Dominica	Ms. Marcella Powell
The Gambia	Mr. Musa Touray
Ghana	Professor Jophus Anamuah-Mensah
Grenada	Mr. Andrew Augustine
Guyana	Ms. Inge Nathoo

India	Shri. Amit Khare,
Jamaica	Mr. Philbert Dhyll
Kenya	Mr. Omido Ongonga
Kiribati	Ms. Karabi Bate
Lesotho	Dr. H. Manthoto Lephoto

Malawi	Mrs. Bethel Sandra Masauli
Malaysia	Professor Dr. Rujhan bin Mustafa
Maldives	Dr. Ali Fawaz Shareef and Ms. Jameela Ali
Malta	Mr. George Borg
Mauritius	Mr. Vishnoorow Luximon

Mozambique	Ms. Zaida Paz Helena Baùle
Namibia	Mr. Beans Uzembua Ngatjizeko
Nauru	Dr. Maria Gaiyabu
New Zealand	Ms. Elena Procuta
Nigeria	Mrs. Loveth I. C. Amaku

Pakistan	Professor Dr. Parveen Munshi
Papua New Guinea	Mr. Ouka Lavaki
Rwanda	Dr. Erasme Rwanamiza
Samoa	Mrs. G.T.T. Afamasaga
Seychelles	Ms. Marie-Reine Hoareau

Sierra Leone	Mrs. Musu M. Gorvie
Singapore	Ms. Mandy Cheng
Solomon Islands	Mr. Bernard Rapasia
South Africa	Ms. Pat Bulling
Sri Lanka	Mr. S.U. Wijerathne

St. Kitts & Nevis	Ms. Jacqueline Flemming
St. Lucia	Dr. Rufina Frederick
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	Mrs. Susan Dougan
Swaziland	Mr. Peterson S. Dlamini
Tanzania	Mrs. Lambertha H. Mahai

Tonga	Mrs. Peaua Heimuli
Trinidad and Tobago	Ms. Lystra Sampson-Ovid and Ms. Karen Rosemin
Tuvalu	Ms. Katalina P. Taloka
Uganda	Mrs. Elizabeth K.M. Gabona
Vanuatu	Mr. John Niroa
Zambia	Mr. Victor Muyatwa

APPENDIX 6: Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BOCODOL	Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning
CCEM	Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers
CEE	Centre for Environment Education, India
CEMBA/MPA	Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration/Master of Public Administration
CEMCA	Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia
CFTC	Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
EFA	Education for All
HE/HEIs	Higher education/Higher education institutions
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT/ICTs	Information and communications technologies
IGNOU	Indira Gandhi National Open University, India
L3F	Lifelong Learning for Farmers
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MBA/MPA	Master of Business Administration/Master of Public Administration
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NOUN	National Open University of Nigeria
ODL	Open and distance learning
OER	Open educational resources
PCF	Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning
PIs	Performance indicators
QA	Quality Assurance
RBM	Results Based Management
RETRIDOL	Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning
SADC-CDE	Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education
TVSD	Technical and Vocational Skill Development
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
VUSSC	Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth
WHO	World Health Organization