Regional Focal Points Meeting: Africa

Professor Asha Kanwar
President & CEO, Commonwealth of Learning

28-29 April, 2020
Our Commonwealth

• Population 2.4 billion, more than 60% under 30
• Youth unemployment high
• 60% of the Commonwealth=small states: affected by climate change
Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
Vancouver, 1987
To help Commonwealth governments and institutions use technologies to improve and expand learning for sustainable development
Where is it?

Metro Vancouver (HQ)

New Delhi (CEMCA)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Support</th>
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<tr>
<td>Southern African Development Community Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE)</td>
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<td>Regional Training and Research Institute for Open and Distance Learning (RETRIDOL)</td>
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<td>Commonwealth Centre for Connected Learning (CCCL)</td>
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<td>Pacific Regional Centre (PACFOLD)</td>
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COL Focal Points

Our direct link to each country
Africa Focal Points
2015-2021 Strategic Plan Input

• **Strengthening skills** sector to support economic empowerment of marginalised groups

• Institutions supported to leverage ODL to provide quality higher education

• More learners have quality education through **Open learning**.

• ODL methodologies are used to provide quality training of larger numbers of **teachers and instructors**.
Two Sectors

EDUCATION

SKILLS

GENDER
Strategies

- Models
- Materials
- Capacity
- Policies
- Partnerships
COL’s Five Paradigm Shifts
If the child cannot go to school, the school comes to the child.
Open Schooling

- The physical separation of learner from the teacher
- The use of unconventional teaching methodologies, and information and communications technologies (ICTs) for scale
- Flexible approach
- Foster innovation (e.g. on-demand exams; uses of ICT)
In Belize, Social Return on Investment in open schooling showed that every US$ invested resulted in US$8 worth of benefits to students.
Technology-enabled learning can break open the ivory towers of tertiary education.
Open Educational Resources (OER) are the answer to closed and costly textbooks
One Textbook per Child?

• 1 reading textbook for 12 students

• 1 math textbook for 14 students
Impact of OER Policy

• 170+ universities participate in the OER curation, development and sharing
The digital divide can be transformed into a digital dividend
Literacy is not always a precondition for Learning
1% increase in empowerment 2.3% increase in profit.
Inputs to the planning process

- Global trends
- Inputs from the Board/partners/ stakeholders
- Evaluation
- Feedback from Focal Points
GOAL 4

ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
More at sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal
>1.5 billion

Over 90% of student population

Affected by school closure
SSA: Internet users and mobile subscriptions 2007 - 2017

Source: data.worldbank.org, retrieved on 16 April 2020
COVID-19—online learning

- Connectivity and electricity
- Access to platforms
- Content
- Capacity of teachers
Protests against eLearning

Zimbabwe: Student bodies say e-learning is unaffordable and elitist.

Everton Mutsauri, the president of the student command of the little-known Economic Freedom Fighters-Zimbabwe, has berated Great Zimbabwe University for using “Google class” and the Midlands State University for adopting WhatsApp to conduct lessons, describing the new methods as elitist.

South Africa: Calls for a national boycott of online learning.

The South African Students Congress (SASCO) has called for a national boycott of online learning, arguing that it is not equally available to all students.

Source: University World News – Student bodies say e-learning is unaffordable and elitist, published on 22 April 2020
‘New’ Normal

• Increased learning crisis: more drop-outs
• Wider digital divide
• Unemployment
Stakeholder Survey
Highlights of Findings

Which of the following strategies, outlined in COL’s current Six Year Strategic Plan, does COL do best? (Select one)

Answered: 77   Skipped: 56
COL’s next strategic plan should place more emphasis on (Select all that apply):

Answered: 76   Skipped: 57
Focal Points: Caribbean, Jan 2020

• Integrating ICTs in education
• Building the capacity of teachers
• Developing ODL and OER Policies
• Addressing boys’ underperformance
• Promoting sustainable agriculture
• Skills development
Questions

• How can COL help you respond to the COVID crisis?
• What are the new development trends?
• How can COL further your national agenda—give three priorities?
Thank You for your contributions