



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

COUNTRY REPORT
2021-2023 | **AFRICA**



Lesotho

Helping Commonwealth Member States and institutions use distance learning and technologies for expanding access to education and training.

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is focused on adding value to African member countries' efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG4. It's supporting the governments and institutions of Africa in the use of appropriate, affordable technologies to improve and expand learning for sustainable development.

During its current plan (2021-2027), COL will:

- i) build on its expertise in ODL, OER and TEL to play a more influential role in national policy development and implementation;
- ii) invest in innovations and research;
- iii) support the digital transformation of institutions and organisations;
- iv) promote gender equality; and
- v) implement a rigorous monitoring and evaluation plan.

COL's work is organised into two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender Equality and Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL) as cross-cutting initiatives.

The Education sector supports formal education from secondary to tertiary levels across the Commonwealth, particularly in the small states in Africa (Botswana, The Gambia, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles) and has four initiatives: Open Schooling; Teacher Education; Higher Education and the Virtual University for Small States of The Commonwealth (VUSSC).

The Skills sector supports formal, non-formal and informal education and training to equip learners for livelihoods and has three initiatives: Skills for Work; Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) and GIRLS Inspire.

The work in these sectors complement the three pathways of change COL is focusing on in achieving impact for each African member country. These are:

1. Building National Resilience
2. Strengthening Institutions
3. Improving Lives and Livelihoods.

INTRODUCTION

Lesotho is a small Commonwealth state with a largely rural population of over 2.3 million ([World Bank, 2022](#)).

COL's work in Lesotho is in the areas of higher education and technology-enabled learning. Lesotho is a part of the [Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth \(VUSSC\)](#) network and benefits from programmes offered by COL's regional centre, the [Southern African Development Community's Centre for Distance Education \(SADC-CDE\)](#). Learners from Lesotho are also participating in COL's free, open online courses and other available resources.

PARTNERS

COL's partners in Lesotho include:

- Ministry of Education and Training
- Council on Higher Education (CHE)
- Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre
- National University of Lesotho (NUL)

KEY CONTACTS

COL FOCAL POINT

Mr Monaheng Mohale
Director
Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre

COL ACTIVITIES BETWEEN JULY 2021 - MAY 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

- National University of Lesotho (NUL) implementing COL's institutional employability framework.

BUILDING NATIONAL RESILIENCE

COL is working with governments to use gender-responsive ODL policies and strategies for increasing equitable access to quality learning.

The Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre finalised its draft national ODL policy.

COL supported the Council for Higher Education (CHE) in drafting policies on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Recognition of Current Competencies (RCC) and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT).

- sensitisation workshop with 46 participants, March 2022.
- policy validation workshop with 65 participants, May 2022.
- policy implementation workshop with 23 participants, May 2022.
- dissemination workshop with 22 participants. Policies drafted, June 2022.

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS

COL is supporting its partner institutions to strengthen its ODL systems and capacities for providing quality education and training.

National University of Lesotho (NUL) implementing COL's institutional employability framework.

NUL developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) with COL support. This included 11 staff members (2M/9F) receiving training on the management of gender-based violence. [May2022]

COL is supporting the Centre for Teaching and Learning at NUL towards improved quality of teaching and learning by strengthening the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) through the provision of enabling infrastructure, including green technology. Targeted capacity-building focused on the development of OER and TEL policy, employability framework and development of blended learning courses and authentic assessment processes are underway.

Teachers from Lesotho have participated in the COL MOOC on cybersecurity training for teachers.

REGIONAL CENTRE: SADC-CDE

26 senior officials comprising representatives from Universities participated in the high-level workshop on developing effective OER policies for the SADC region, 20-21 June 2022 in Gaborone.

In February 2022, a seminar was organised on "The Future of open and distance e-learning (ODEL) in higher education institutions in the 21st Century: Challenges and opportunities" to sensitise the institution staff at 16 SADC member states (including 11 Commonwealth countries).

IMPROVING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

COL provides learners, especially from disadvantaged groups, access to learning and resources for improved livelihoods.

Learners from Lesotho are participating in COL's free, open online courses.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Professor Olusola Isaac Fajana from NUL participated in the **High-Level Roundtable for Vice Chancellors & Heads of ODL Institutions** from 29 - 30 July 2022 in Penang, Malaysia.

COL's Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning is held triennially and is co-hosted with different partners in different regions of the Commonwealth. The **Tenth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF10)**, the first-ever hybrid Forum, was held in Calgary, Canada from 14-16 September 2022. PCF11 is planned to be held in Botswana in 2025.

The **Regional Focal Points Meeting for Africa and Europe** was held in Seychelles from 20-21 February 2023. Official representatives from 20 Commonwealth countries in the region participated in the two-day meeting, including Mr Monaheng Mohale.

PUBLICATIONS OF RELEVANCE

Report on the Regional Focal Points Meeting - Africa and Europe <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5316>



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