



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING



COL in the Commonwealth

2018–2020 HIGHLIGHTS

MALAWI

LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

TARGETS 2021



Improved sustainable livelihoods
300,000 PEOPLE



470
ORGANISATIONS
Improved organisational
capacity to leverage ODL

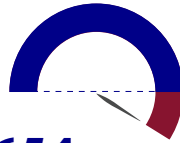


1.4 million
PEOPLE
Increased and equitable
access to, and use of, quality
learning opportunities

ACHIEVED BY 2020



257,484 people



654 organisations

Target
EXCEEDED



880,039 people



Introduction

Since its creation some 30 years ago, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has become a true catalyst for positive change for a third of the world's population. Our vision of “learning for sustainable development” means that learning must lead to social inclusion, economic growth and environmental conservation. This aligns COL's work with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote learning opportunities for all.”

COL harnesses the potential of open, distance and technology-enabled learning to help Member States accelerate progress towards achieving development outcomes.



To achieve outcomes and impact, COL has led six paradigm shifts:

- If the child cannot go to school, the school comes to the child.
- Technology-enabled learning can break open the ivory towers of tertiary education.
- Open educational resources (OER) are the answer to closed and costly textbooks.
- The digital divide can be transformed into a digital dividend.
- Literacy is not always a precondition for learning.
- The social capital of the mother is the most important determinant in bringing girls to school.

What are COL's key success factors? COL aligns its work with global priorities and ensures that it stays relevant to Member States' needs and priorities. COL is relevant, responsive and results oriented. The 2018–2020 Country Highlights summarise COL's progress towards achieving SDG4.

Professor Asha S. Kanwar
President and Chief Executive Officer
Commonwealth of Learning



Highlights

Working in two sectors, Education and Skills, with Gender as a crosscutting theme, COL uses pioneering models and approaches to achieve impact.

- COL has developed an innovative employability framework to strengthen and evaluate the impact of higher education institutions on graduates' employability, with a focus on industry and labour-market engagement.
- GIRLS Inspire has reached close to 81,000 girls and young women in remote and unreached communities, providing schooling and skilling them for livelihoods.
- The Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) model is being upscaled in partnership with national banks, moving from the meso to the macro level.
- The Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) programme is now being implemented across the Commonwealth.
- Ambitious projects to improve gender equality in two Commonwealth regions have been launched. These holistic models are based on community mobilisation and address areas such as capacity building in education, gender-based violence, health, empowerment, economic opportunities, and policy.
- Blockchain technology, built according to open standards, was used to issue certificates for massive open online courses (MOOCs) in different disciplines.
- COL has developed a comprehensive solution for data resilience in education for small states facing climate-related disasters.
- The ninth Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF9), held in Edinburgh, brought together close to 550 thought leaders, policy makers and practitioners to share best practices and harness innovation for change, with a view to providing employability skills to young people, offering a quality education to all regardless of circumstances, and identifying practical ways for technology to speed up our progress.



MALAWI

COL works with partners in Malawi to expand access to quality education and lifelong learning for all. Mr Armoogum Parsuramen, Founder-President, Global Rainbow Foundation, Mauritius, represents Africa on COL's Board of Governors, and Mrs Ruth Samati-Kambali, Acting Deputy Director, Malawi College of Distance Education, is COL's Focal Point for Malawi.

COL's current work in Malawi is primarily in the areas of gender, higher education, and open and innovative schooling. Malawi benefits from programmes under the aegis of the Southern African Development Community Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE). Learners from Malawi have also benefited from open online courses and other COL resources.

The following are the highlights from 2018 to 2020.



Programmes

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Higher Education initiative works with ministries and higher education institutions (HEIs) to increase equitable access to tertiary education and to address the needs of industry and national development through the use of policies, systems, models and gender-responsive learning resources.

COL is implementing a Higher Education Integrated Model at the University of Malawi (UNIMA). A programme design workshop was held at UNIMA in August 2018 to identify specific projects for the implementation of this model. Following a series of stakeholder meetings in April 2019, an academic workload model and a five-year business and marketing plan for open and distance learning (ODL) activities have been developed and submitted to UNIMA. In May 2019, a training workshop in online course development was carried out, which resulted in the development of blueprints for five courses.

A high-level roundtable for vice chancellors and heads of ODL was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in May 2018. There were 31 vice chancellors and representatives from 19 countries in attendance, including one from Malawi. The meeting was co-hosted by Asia eUniversity.

COL launched a new regional community of practice (CoP) for quality assurance in ODL, involving HEIs and national quality assurance agencies from seven southern African countries, including Malawi. Following the CoP's launch at a meeting in South Africa in April 2018, a task force was formed to draft quality assurance guidelines and pilot them. Subsequently, pilot studies of quality guidelines at seven institutions, including UNIMA, were completed.

As well, COL sponsored faculty from the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources to complete the Certificate in Designing and Facilitating eLearning, at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH (VUSSC)

Initiated by ministers of education of developing small states of the Commonwealth, VUSSC supports the collaborative development and sharing of OER to promote learning for sustainable development.

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

OPEN AND INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING (OIS)

OIS increases access to secondary education, especially for out-of-school youths. COL's approach focuses on the training of teachers in eLearning and the use of OER, improving

the management of open schools, and supporting the use of appropriate technologies in teaching and learning.

Following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) in November 2018, COL started implementing the OIS model in Malawi. A separate agreement was signed with Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE) as the implementing partner.

Subsequent content development has resulted in the creation of OER resources. A workshop at MCDE in June 2019 on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) resulted in the development of an M&E strategy. COL has also provided support to cascade M&E training to 46 centre managers and coordinators who will be involved in 15 schools in the piloting phase.

MoEST also nominated five people for the University of Malawi's Certificate in Online Teaching, which started in April 2019. This is an important part of the support provided within the OIS model; having learned how to develop digital OER content, content developers then learn about the possibilities of working fully online.

As well, in October 2019, COL organised a study visit to the Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) for two members of MCDE and one representative from MoEST to learn from NAMCOL's experience in delivering open and distance education.

GENDER

COL's Gender initiative supports partners in mainstreaming gender and in implementing holistic projects to address specific gender issues. It aims to tackle the distinct challenges faced by girls/women and boys/men in regions where they are most disadvantaged, while also shifting the social norms that create and perpetuate gender inequalities.

COL has been working with the Centre for Research and Development Initiative (CERADI) and the Commonwealth Network Against Child Marriages (CONACEM) through the Concerned Youth Organisation (CYO) on a programme called Lifelong Learning for Mothers. It is based on COL's Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) programme and also integrates open schooling. Aimed at improving the lives of women and girls, it is implemented in the Mchinji District of Malawi.

In the framework of the project, CERADI staff completed training on information and communication technologies (ICT) and ODL learning strategies in October 2018. As well, CERADI identified 199 groups to work with over the next three years. Meetings were held with Airtel and Telekom Malawi for the distribution of the learning resources via text messages. A total of 150 facilitators have been trained in the use of ODL and M&E, and 15 group representatives and ten CERADI staff have been trained in gender-sensitive learning resources. Close to 5,000 members were reached and trained in financial literacy, savings and entrepreneurship using ODL materials; 150 groups have been linked to mobile provider Airtel Malawi.

After the inception phase, which was introduced by CERADI, COL developed a holistic conceptual framework, theory of change, and logic model. Stakeholder meetings were held in Mchinji and Lilongwe in February 2019 to consult with all prospective partners on the project documentation and get their feedback on the M&E framework developed by COL, as well as to identify the partners with whom to work in the next phase. Baseline tools were also developed.

To implement the next phase of the project, COL has engaged CYO, which has conducted a series of inception meetings/stakeholder briefings. COL is also in the process of engaging CERADI as a second partner for this phase.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING (TEL)

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

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

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION (SADC-CDE)

Hosted by the Botswana Open University, SADC-CDE promotes training and development in ODL and increases the provision of quality distance education in southern Africa.

In January 2019, SADC-CDE held a workshop on non-formal education in Botswana with participants from eight countries in the region, including Malawi. The goal was to sensitise them to ODL, as well as to ICT in non-formal education programmes. Participants developed draft institutional action plans for non-formal ODL programmes.

In February 2019, SADC-CDE and the Botswanan NGO Gender Links organised a gender-sensitisation workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa. Participants included academics and administrators of ten institutions from Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles and South Africa.

In July 2019, SADC-CDE sponsored three staff from Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources to enrol in the Certificate for Distance Education Practitioners programme to augment their skills, competencies and knowledge.



Events and Special Activities

REGIONAL MEETING OF COL FOCAL POINTS

The Africa and Mediterranean regional meeting of COL's Focal Points took place on 24–25 September 2018 in Gaborone, Botswana to strengthen the effectiveness of COL's work in addressing key priorities for education and training in the region, and to share information about developments related to learning for sustainable development. Mrs Ruth Samati-Kambali, Acting Deputy Director, Malawi College of Distance Education, represented Malawi at the meeting.

GIRLS INSPIRE STAKEHOLDER MEETING

In February 2019, COL, in collaboration with Tanzania's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, co-hosted the GIRLS Inspire end-of-project meeting for preventing child, early and forced marriages. Attendees also included representatives from the ministries of gender in Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Tanzania. The outcomes of the project and lessons learned were shared, along with a roadmap on how to engage policy makers and partners to integrate this initiative into national programmes for preparing women and girls for employment and entrepreneurship.



MEETINGS AT THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

In June 2019, COL's Education Specialist: Open Schooling had a series of meetings in Lilongwe with the MoEST to explore the ongoing development of the OIS model in Malawi. The meetings involved senior ministry officials as well as staff of MCDE, the implementing agency.

MOOC ON INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN BUSINESS

The two offerings of COL's MOOC on *Introduction to Sustainable Development in Business*, organised in collaboration with the Open University of Mauritius in May–June 2019 and November–December 2019, attracted 11 participants from Malawi.

PCF9

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

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

COL sponsored two delegates from Malawi to attend the forum. Professor Edrinne Kayambazinthu, UNIMA, attended the *Higher Education* workshop hosted by COL in Edinburgh ahead of PCF9.



PCF9 Edinburgh Statement

Forum partners from over 60 countries believe that it is possible to significantly accelerate progress towards the aim and targets of SDG4 by prioritising the following collective actions now:

1. **Accomplishment at scale**

Mobilise an emergency response to ensure that all children in the Commonwealth, including girls, learners with different abilities, and learners from vulnerable and marginalised communities, experience a quality education focused on accomplishment, knowledge exchange and the continued ability to learn.

2. **Skills for productive lives**

Urgently create learning opportunities for marginalised, excluded, vulnerable and out-of-school young people to build skills for leading a productive life, embracing technology to enhance employability, entrepreneurship and confidence, and bridging accessible formal, non-formal and informal education.

3. **Creating new digital dividends**

Develop new, innovative, flexible modes of education to foster creativity, imagination and peer knowledge exchange, increase reach and ensure no one is left behind, through the use of appropriate media and delivery, including blended approaches to digital learning.

4. Teachers as skilled agents of change

Teachers and teacher educators are the main agents of change for quality education and can be supported to catalyse action in their schools, communities and colleges as respected professionals who model lifelong learning. To do this we propose:

Creating **alternative, flexible and technology enabled pathways into teaching** to resolve the shortage of skilled and motivated teachers;

Expanding low-cost, highly effective ways to **support school-based teacher professional development** to build change capacity and capability within regional and national educational systems.

5. Positively disrupt higher education

Support innovation for quality higher education; **strengthen the technology-enabled learning ecosystem** throughout the Commonwealth, including the scope to develop professional skills, recognition, validation and verification of experiential and prior learning through micro-credentialing and blockchain technology; expand the reach of open education for dispersed audiences; and improve barrier-free access to tertiary education.

6. Challenging assessment

Radically relook at assessment models: build a culture of assessment to support employability and micro-entrepreneurship.

Our ambition is to achieve this through:

Bold inclusive collaboration;

Bringing together the diverse groups of critical thinkers, innovators and practitioners who can collaboratively make change happen by delivering quality education and lifelong learning for all;

Making greater use of data, evidence and storytelling to galvanise political will for enabling policies and well-resourced implementation plans;

Sustaining the momentum;

Building an active network of learning, support and action starting now.

Sustaining and building our momentum for change, we aim to bring our key commitments to the fore of the policy agenda through the Conference of Commonwealth



New Publications and Resources

In 2018–2020, COL produced a number of publications and resources, including:

***Knowledge Series: Designing and Implementing Micro-Credentials:
A Guide for Practitioners***

As online learning and MOOCs become mainstream, it is important to explore new forms of credentialing. This publication offers a step-by-step guide to plan, design and implement micro-credentials and badges in diverse contexts and provides greater flexibility in the journey of the new learner-earner through a skills and capability framework.

A Blueprint and Toolkit for School-Based Teacher Development: SECONDARY

This toolkit is for implementing school-based teacher development as a way to improve the performance of schools and raise the achievement of children. This valuable resource includes a detailed framework, which can be adapted to the context of a particular country, region, district or school, and offers practical daily activities for teachers.

Guidelines on the Development of Open Educational Resources Policies

This new publication provides specific tools to analyse current contexts and policy environments, understand issues related to copyright and licensing, and align policy in support of Sustainable Development Goal 4. The guidelines present a systematic process for designing and implementing OER policies and measuring their impact.

A Guide to Integrating Employability in Higher Education Institutions: The Commonwealth of Learning's Employability Model

This publication provides clear guidelines on how to integrate employability pathways into instructional systems. From career counselling to career support, the guide demonstrates how institutions can prepare graduates for employment or entrepreneurship.

Gender Scorecard 2.0: Instructions and Templates

This is a tool to audit the capacity of institutions to mainstream gender. It helps with analysing existing policies and practices and developing clear steps for the effective promotion of gender equity.

All COL publications can be found on its open-access repository at oasis.col.org.



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