

REPORT OF THE REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS MEETING - CARIBBEAN

Kingston, Jamaica | August 30-31, 2018



COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING



- Antigua and Barbuda
- Bahamas, The
- Barbados
- Belize
- Canada
- Dominica
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Jamaica
- St Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- St Vincent and The Grenadines
- Trinidad and Tobago



Caribbean Region Focal Points and COL Staff - August 2018

CARIBBEAN Regional Focal Points Meeting August 30-31, 2018

Theme:

Learning for sustainable development

Objectives:

1. Strengthen the effectiveness of COL's strategic plan and programme activities in addressing key priorities for education and training in the Caribbean.
2. Refine COL's approach to meet the education and training priorities of the Caribbean during 2018-2021.

Sub-objectives

1. Share and review COL's work in the Caribbean 2015-2018
2. Identify key sector priorities for each country within the framework of COL's strategic plan
3. Determine COL's role in addressing the priorities
4. Discuss the role of Focal Points and ways to improve engagement and partnerships in-country
5. Understand COL's Logic Model and monitoring and evaluation process and recommend programme activities for next triennium

6. Share information about developments relating to education and training for sustainable development in the Caribbean

Overview

Caribbean COL focal points met with COL leadership and staff for the mid-programme review and consultation meeting for 2015 – 2018. The meeting was held in Kingston, Jamaica on Thursday and Friday 30th and 31st August 2018. Nine of twelve Caribbean countries were represented: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and The Bahamas. A representative from the Commonwealth Secretariat (COMSEC) was also present as an observer.

The meeting proceeded as outlined in the programme attached as [Appendix 1](#). The outcomes of the meeting will inform the ongoing work of COL and its partners in the Caribbean over the next three years. By designing the programme such that the Focal Points were actively involved and by drawing on their feedback from Day 1 to shape the sessions in Day 2, the COL team was able to ensure that the meeting met its objectives. At the same time, Focal Points left the meeting with a clearer understanding of how they can work with COL to support their individual country priorities and an accelerated enthusiasm for COL's work in the Caribbean.

Report of the CARIBBEAN Regional Focal Points Meeting August 30-31, 2018

Table of Contents

Welcome & Opening Session	5
Session 1: Participants' Expectations and Overview of COL	8
Session 2: COL's Programme	9
Session 3: Country Reports	10
Session 4: Role of Focal Points	12
Session 5: Summary and end of day wrap up	13
Welcome Dinner.....	13
Session 6: Recap of the Previous Day	14
Session 7: Country Priorities – COL's Response	14
Session 8: Sustainable Development & Sustainable Livelihoods	15
Session 9: Aptus – Classroom without Walls	16
Session 10: Focus on OER	17
Session 11: COL's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	17
Session 12: Post-2021 Strategic Priorities	18
Session 13: Summary of Discussions and Way Forward	19
Appendices:	
Appendix 1: Programme.....	21
Appendix 2: Welcome and Opening Remarks by Professor Asha Kanwar, President, COL...	24
Appendix 3: List of consolidated priorities.....	27
Appendix 4 Caribbean Focal Points Contact List	30

August 30, 2018: Day 1

Welcome & Opening Session

Welcome: Professor Asha Kanwar, President & CEO, COL

The opening ceremony of the Focal Points Meeting for the Caribbean took place in the Sir



Alexander Bustamante Suite of the Pegasus Hotel in New Kingston. In attendance were four COL representatives, nine Focal Points, an observer from COMSEC and invited guests from partner institutions in Jamaica - UWI, UTech and RADA.

The COL President welcomed all the participants and thanked Jamaica's Minister of Education Youth and Information, The Honourable Ruel Reid, for agreeing to host and address the meeting. She acknowledged the support that the host country, Jamaica had provided to COL over the years, making special reference to the Honourable Burchell Whiteman's service as Chair of the COL Board of Governors. She expressed gratitude to the Focal Points for their continued support and the important role they played as COL ambassadors throughout the region. She further acknowledged the contribution of Focal Points from Barbados and Grenada who serve on the Management Committee of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

The President emphasized COL's mission to promote learning for sustainable development using technologies. In reviewing the impact of COL's work in the region for the period 2015-2018, she described the impact and benefits resulting from sustained engagement with partners and targeted interventions and activities. Citing examples from across the region she highlighted a variety of policy, curriculum and capacity building activities ranging from skills

development through text messaging with farmers in Jamaica, to the development of OER policy and the availability of open textbooks for students in Antigua and Barbuda to the implementation of COL's open school model in Belize. She closed her address by reminding the gathering of the four key purposes of the two-day meeting:

1. For COL to hear about the key priorities of Caribbean countries and how COL can address them
2. For COL to present a summary of its activities in each country.
3. To remind focal points of COL's purpose, objectives and programmes
4. To promote Commonwealth-wide cooperation and to remind us of our shared values and our common identity as citizens of the Commonwealth.

The full text of Professor Kanwar's opening remarks can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

Guest: The Honourable Ruel Reid, CD, JP - Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Jamaica



Minister The Hon Ruel Reid was formally introduced by the Focal Point from Jamaica Dr Phylcia Marshall.

In his address, the Minister focused on his vision for education in Jamaica. He explained that traditional, rigid educational structures were responsible for educational issues such as low enrolment and male under-achievement and it was therefore important to develop a holistic, agile and flexible education system. This, he argued was central to preparing Jamaica's youth to respond to the challenges emerging in the fourth industrial revolution.

He emphasized the importance of investing in early childhood education. He cited research that points to health and brain development of infant children being among important determinants of students performing well in secondary and tertiary education. On this basis, the Minister said that the Jamaican government was taking a holistic approach to education by integrating health and family welfare.

By way of example, he shared with the meeting details of the *Jamaica Brain Builders Programme* launched in July 2018 at a cost of approximately \$540 million by the ministry, in partnership with the Early Childhood Commission (ECC). The objective of the programme he explained, is to reduce cognitive learning challenges among infants in the country. It is also a framework for action in the first 1,000 days of a child's life, which starts from conception in the womb to age two years. Under this initiative, the Early Childhood Commission is responsible for establishing 126 Brain Builder Centres - two in each constituency - across the island. This initiative he argued, would give Jamaica's infant children a solid start in life by ensuring early intervention and attending to their health and total development needs - nutrition, stimulation, social protection and welfare protection.

Another example of policy initiatives designed to focus on the holistic development of students is the introduction of the *Primary Exit Profile* and the *National School Leaving Certificate*. He described the latter as a certificate on which data on the performance and participation of students in co-curricular activities over their five years of secondary education is documented. The certificate will capture all the subjects students take and their academic achievement as well as their involvement in social, cultural and sporting activities and their behavior while in school.

In his address, the Minister complimented COL for enhancing flexible learning opportunities and he declared his support for the Focal Points meeting which he said would help the region's countries to share their experiences and strengthen the Caribbean partnership.

Dr Patricia Benn, Focal Point for Antigua and Barbuda thanked the Minister on behalf of the meeting.

Following his address, the Minister and President of COL held a brief meeting in which he promised to attend the PCF 9 in 2019



Dr Phylicia Marshall, COL Focal Point Jamaica, The Hon Ruel Reid, Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Prof Asha Kanwar President COL and Dr K Balasubramanian, VP COL conversing following the Minister's address at the Opening Session of the COL Focal Points Meeting – Caribbean in Kingston.

Session 1: Participants' Expectations and Overview of COL

Rapporteurs: Dr. P. Benn & Ms. M. Sears

Participants' Expectations

Facilitator: Dr K Balasubramanian

This session was designed to encourage the Focal Points to voice their expectations about the two-day meeting and ensure that the programme as planned would address their concerns. The session began with an icebreaker in which the VP asked individuals to pair up and then introduce each other.



Dr. Patricia Benn (Antigua and Barbuda) and Andrew Augustine (Grenada)

This interactive session increased the comfort level among the participants as it gave them an opportunity to engage with each other and get to know one another. It also prepared them for the second activity where they were asked to share their expectations. Among the expectations that they shared were the need to become more familiar with the work that COL does across the region and the Commonwealth generally; understand their role as Focal Points more clearly; and learn about how individual institutions can benefit from COL programmes, initiatives and partnerships with institutions in other countries. In addition, they identified two areas in need of attention: increasing COL's visibility in the Caribbean and maintaining momentum and commitment to COL'S work. These expectations and concerns were recorded and noted for discussion in later sessions.

Overview of COL: Promoting Learning for Sustainable Development

Facilitator: Professor Asha Kanwar

The purpose of Professor Kanwar's presentation was to provide the Focal Points with background and context so that they could better understand how COL operates and what COL does. She began with an overview of COL's vision, mission and strategic plan and explained how promoting learning for sustainable development – economic growth, social inclusion, environmental conservation - was at the centre of COL's work. Drawing on Commonwealth and global data related to employment trends, issues such as illiteracy, out of school youth, gender inequality and climate change, and figures describing internet penetration and mobile phone ownership, she drew attention to the importance of SDG 4 and COL's mandate to improve and expand learning for sustainable development using strategies that leverage new and existing technology.

She included a brief history of the organisation, its mandate, how it is structured, governed and funded. In addition, she described the approach taken to strategic planning and gave participants many examples of successful initiatives supported by COL across the Commonwealth and in particular throughout the Caribbean, in both the Education and Skills sectors. She pointed to the important role that COL has played in promoting the development and use of OER. In closing she informed the Focal Points about the ninth Pan Commonwealth Forum, being organised in collaboration with the Open University, UK scheduled for September 9-12 2019 in Edinburgh Scotland.

Following the presentation there was a brief discussion among focal points on the concept of learning for sustainable development and what it means in practice. The focal points reiterated the importance of ensuring that countries in the region understand COL's focus and approach.

Session 2: COL's Programme

Facilitator: Dr K Balasubramanian

Rapporteur: Mrs. K. Best & Dr. Y. Palma

As a follow-up to Professor Kanwar's overview of COL's strategic plan, Dr Bala's session on COL's programme gave the Focal Points more detail about the programmes and special initiatives at COL. He began by explaining COL's Theory of Change and then explained how this drives the models and work being pursued by the seven programmes (Open schooling, Teacher Education, Higher Education, VUSSC, Technical Vocational Skills Development, Learning for Farmers and Technology Enabled Learning), the special projects (Girls Inspire and

OER for Skills Development) and the Gender programme. The latter he noted, is a cross-cutting theme for COL's objective of promoting Learning for Sustainable Development. In expanding on the various initiatives, he referenced several ongoing projects in the Caribbean such as Open Schooling in Belize, the adoption of OER in Antigua and the work that the TVSD initiative did in the region to enhance the quality of TVET. He also encouraged Focal Points to examine other initiatives such as the Blue Economy course developed by the University of Seychelles with support from COL but which has relevance for the countries of the Caribbean.

In response to this session, Focal Points remarked on the number and range of resources COL provided, the activities that it was engaged in and the impact it was making. They appreciated the session for the insight it provided into how the programmes operate and the impact they make and for the opportunity to learn about initiatives being undertaken in their neighbouring countries.



Session 3: Country Reports

Facilitator: Dr Johan Hendrikz

Rapporteurs: Mr. A. Augustine & Ms. P. LaFleur

A key objective for the triennial Focal Points Meeting was to identify the priorities in each region with a view to determining how COL could support them; this session was designed to elicit from Focal Points individually and collectively how COL could assist them to meet these priorities. The session was also important as a means of having the Focal Points buy into the purpose of the meeting.

In preparing for this session, each Focal point had submitted a country report focused on three areas (i) an overview of COL's position in their respective country (ii) identification of the challenges for COL working in the country and (iii) suggestions on how COL could refine its approach for the next three-year period. Dr Hendrikz began the session by inviting each Focal Point to give a five-minute presentation based on their response to these areas. These individual country presentations provided an opportunity for each Focal Point to learn about neighbouring countries' priorities and COL's activities.

Chief among the recommendations that Focal Points made for refining COL's approach in the 2018-2021 period were the need for support and training for all Ministries in strategic planning, policy development and monitoring and evaluation; a focus on technology enabled learning; and attention to vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Arising from the individual reports, there were 105 priorities spread across eight programme areas. In order to consolidate the 105 priorities Dr Hendrikz engaged participants in an exercise designed to have them agree on common priorities and thereby reduce the number. He achieved this by organizing the participants into two groups, each with responsibility for those priorities in either the Education or Skills sector. Each group was asked to examine the priorities and select no more than three per programme area for the Caribbean as a region. This activity generated much enthusiasm and lively discussion; the end result was that the groups reached consensus and submitted a list of common priorities. The lists of common priorities that they submitted formed the basis for Session 7: *Country Priorities – COL's Response* scheduled for the following day.



Session 4: Role of Focal Points

Facilitator: Dr. M. Newman

Rapporteur: Dr. P. Marshall & Mr. G. Anthony

The purpose of this session facilitated by COL'S ES for VUSSC, was to elicit from the Focal points their understanding of their role as ambassadors for COL; understand the challenges they face as Focal Points; and collaboratively identify concrete ideas for how COL can better support them in their role. In earlier sessions, Focal Points had shared that they did not feel sufficiently familiar with COL and the work it did across the Commonwealth. This lack of familiarity was especially difficult for new Focal Points. Given this background and the fact that one of the key roles of a Focal Point is to disseminate information about COL, the first activity was a fun quiz designed to acquaint Focal Points with key facts about COL and its work.



Focal Points then identified several key challenges they faced such as having multiple and sometimes competing roles with other partners; not being aware of COL activities within their own countries; and having to work across institutions and sectors/Ministries especially for programmes that focused on non-formal education. Interestingly, these challenges had been identified by the Focal Points in the Pacific Meeting earlier in 2018. However, the Caribbean Focal Points added three other challenges. One Focal Point expressed her challenge thus: *“COL is not always on the radar – by this she was referring to the fact that COL’s presence and visibility are not continuously felt, that COL does not always get recognition for the work it does and that persons do not have a clear understanding of how innovative COL is. The other*

Focal Points endorsed her concern. Another common challenge related to securing buy-in. Although OER and ODL are gaining traction, in some countries Focal Points still face the challenge of communicating with and engaging senior policy-makers. One Focal Point expressed it thus: *Focal Points need additional backing from COL*. Focal Points also identified what they termed *time constraints* as a challenge. This was discussed in relation to competing interests and priorities. They used the example of how time-consuming it was just to follow up on the country's contribution to COL. Several participants mentioned that their substantive responsibilities gave them limited time to engage with COL in-country activities in the way they would like.

The ensuing discussion yielded four suggestions as to what COL can do to assist Focal Points in being more effective. They requested that COL

- ask Ministers to appoint a co-focal point to understudy and assist the primary focal point. This would also ensure continuity
- set up a WhatsApp group for Caribbean FPs so they can communicate and interact with each other easily. It was generally felt that BaseCamp was too cumbersome
- encourage/invite Focal Points to participate in any COL training taking place in-country. This was in response to the observation that often FPs do not have a sufficiently thorough understanding of the areas that COL focuses on i.e. ODL and OER
- consider including a Focal Point Corner in Connections. This would serve to connect the FPs, keep one another abreast of COL happenings in their respective countries and highlight Focal Point movements and achievements.

Session 5: Summary and end of day wrap up

Dr Bala led the summary of the day's sessions and thanked the facilitators and Focal Points for their input. Interestingly, the Focal Points were engaged to the extent that they opted to continue working beyond the formal summary and wrap-up session in order to complete the group work on consolidating the priorities for the region.

Welcome Dinner

The welcome dinner was well attended by focal points and friends of COL including representatives from Jamaican partner organisations RADA and UTECH as well as consultants and others who have been advocates for and friends of COL in the region.

August 31, 2018: Day 2

Session 6: Recap of the Previous Day

Rapporteurs from the previous day gave a short recap of what was discussed on Day One.

Session 7: Country Priorities – COL’s Response

Facilitator: Dr Johan Hendrikz and M. Newman

Rapporteur: Ms. B. Neptune

The purpose of Session 7 was to use the feedback from Focal Points to identify where COL should target its support for the Caribbean. The session started with each group presenting their priorities for the sector they represented.



The group with responsibility for identifying priorities for the Education sector identified five major areas: training in curriculum design, delivery and evaluation for online learning/ODL with the use of OER for teachers and teacher educators; development of policy for online learning and OER; access to all the courses offered by COL; development of an accreditation system for quality assurance purposes; assistance in using OER to develop open textbooks. The Skills sector group identified the following priorities: technical assistance in national and institutional policy development and strategic planning for TVET and competency-based learning models; development of new curricula and learning resources in support of livelihoods in the formal and informal economies; completion and implementation of climate Smart curriculum for extension officers in extension delivery and farmers to adopt technology; technical assistance and support in the development of gender responsive policies, strategies, curricula, and teaching/learning materials; provision of capacity building opportunities for the training of personnel at different levels of the education system in effective implementation

of ICT strategy. A full list of consolidated priorities for each sector can be viewed in [Appendix 3](#).

Following the group presentations, the President, Vice President and other COL staff, together with the Focal Points, explored the priorities through discussion, comments and questions. The output of this session was a summary of the priorities of the Caribbean as identified by the Focal Points and a commitment from COL that these will be considered in planning COL's involvement in the Caribbean over the next three years.

Session 8: Sustainable Development & Sustainable Livelihoods

Facilitator: Dr K Balasubramanian

Rapporteur: Dr. P. Benn & Mrs. K. Best

The purpose of this session facilitated by the VP, was to share with the Focal Points how COL's work is linked to the SDGs, particularly SDG #4, and to draw attention to the urgent need to strengthen the role of education in achieving the SDGs.

Citing global and regional statistics, he highlighted the inequitable distribution of wealth and the disproportional impact that poverty, hunger, illiteracy and environmental disasters continue to have on the most vulnerable and marginalized segments of the world's population. Among the statistics that he cited were several related to the Caribbean such as unacceptably high poverty rates in fifteen of eighteen countries. He shared a graphic highlighting the five key elements that led to the development of the SDGs: People, Peace, Planet, Partnership and Prosperity and shared with participants the 2018 SDG index Country Profiles. Using the Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica and Barbados profiles as examples he pointed out that the Index Country Profile describes each country's progress towards achieving the SDGs and indicates areas requiring faster progress.

Focal Points responded favourably commenting on the value of the profiles. A brief discussion ensued about the ways in which COL's programmes and activities reflect an understanding of learning for sustainable development, as a process that aims to meet human development goals and bring about empowerment through learning in both formal and non-formal settings. The VP also reminded the participants about the several examples referred to in previous presentations that illustrate how COL's work addresses aspects of sustainable development specifically equity, economic empowerment and environmental protection.

Session 9: Aptus – Classroom without Walls

Facilitators Dr Johan Hendrikz

Rapporteur Ms. M. Sears

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Facilitators Dr Johan Hendrikz

Rapporteur Ms. M. Sears

Dr Hendrikz did a brief session on the Aptus. He started the session by explaining the technology aspect of the device. He then engaged the Focal Points by presenting a mini-e-learning lesson to illustrate the pedagogy involved when using the Aptus in a classroom situation. He gave examples of how Aptus can provide a controlled learning environment for K-12 learning as well as community-based learning initiatives and made mention of how Mozambique is using it.

The session was well received. Focal Points exchanged ideas about how such a device could add value to teaching and learning experiences and generally showed interest in using the Aptus in their countries. They asked questions about the process for downloading information to the Aptus and how to obtain the Aptus. They were advised to contact COL, express their interest and submit a proposal outlining the role of the Aptus as part of the structured approach to a country initiative.



Session 10: Focus on OER

Facilitator: Prof Asha Kanwar

Rapporteurs: Dr. Y. Palma & Ms. P. LeFleur

Professor Kanwar led the session on OER, the main purpose of which was to apprise Focal Points of some basic information about OERS, the challenges and benefits associated with OER adoption and to encourage the promotion and use of OER in the Caribbean. She began the presentation by providing a brief history of the OER movement and tracing the role played by a series of high level international consultations in fostering awareness and use of OER – from the 2002 UNESCO Forum through to the Paris Declaration in 2012, and the 2nd OER World Congress in Slovenia in 2017.

She then shifted attention to developments and priorities in Latin America and the Caribbean. Although adoption of OER had initially been slow in the region, there were signs that this was shifting. By way of example, she mentioned Antigua and Barbuda, who, through their Open Textbook project stood as an example of how OER can be a viable alternative to costly textbooks. Chief among the priorities identified for the region were the need for better connectivity; national policies to guide OER; increased capacity to use and contribute to OER; accessible content for people with disabilities; OER in national languages.

The final section of the presentation focused on basic information about OER, what it is, the benefits it can bring and how copyright and licensing works. Focal Points found this section of the presentation especially important because, as they explained in an earlier session, one of their challenges as Focal Points was not knowing enough about this area of COL's work. Given that COL is a leader in the field, they perceived this as a gap in their knowledge and so were appreciative for the opportunity to learn more about OER. The exchange that followed suggested that they recognised that one of their roles as COL Focal Points was to advocate for OER. The general consensus was that as Focal Points they should seek to foster awareness among decision- makers and practitioners and encourage OER policy development and capacity building.

Session 11: COL's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Facilitators: Dr K Balasubramanian

Rapporteur: Mr. A Augustine & Dr. P. Marshall

The purpose of this session, led by the Vice-President, was to familiarize Focal Points with COL's results- based management framework and to emphasise the importance of considering concrete outcomes and not just the completion of activities, as part of monitoring and evaluation.

Dr Bala began the session by examining the broader context of educational development activities and the importance of asking whether, as an organisation, we are yielding cost efficiency and cost effectiveness in relation to our inputs. He explained the importance of identifying the causal links among inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact in order to visualize the logic of an intervention and demonstrated how the results chain was working in the Open Schooling project in Belize. He shared COL's RBM framework, drawing attention to the intended outcomes, 2021 targets and performance indicators. In discussing the RBM he underscored the shift in COL's approach from outputs to outcomes and explained the implications of this shift for how monitoring and evaluation was being planned and carried out. He reminded the Focal Points that requests for courses and workshops in isolation were no longer entertained and that such activities needed to be integrated into a larger project plan linked to specific outcomes.

There was a brief question and answer session following the presentation.

Session 12: Post-2021 Strategic Priorities

Facilitator: Dr K Balasubramanian

Rapporteurs: Mr. G. Anthony & Ms. B. Neptune

This session was designed to encourage the Focal Points to share their thoughts and views about what COL's priorities ought to be beyond 2021 with a view to informing the new strategic plan. Most of the ideas that they shared did not differ significantly from the current priorities. Chief among their suggestions were the following

- continued focus on building institutional and human resource capacity
- more attention to teacher education
- retaining the spotlight on TVET and support for STEM
- increased support for fostering awareness and development of OER policy
- development of content
- capacity building in M&E design and implementation
- assistance with repurposing face-to-face courses for online delivery
- promotion of cross-sectoral initiatives

Following an extensive discussion about possible modifications or changes to COL's 2015-2021 theme - *Learning for Sustainable Development* - the consensus was to retain it as is.

Session 13: Summary of Discussions and Way Forward

Facilitators: Dr K Balasubramanian, Dr Johan Hendrikz and M. Newman

The closing session was led by Dr Bala. Participants were asked to individually share key ‘takeaways’ emerging from the meeting. These are captured by country in the table below

Country	Key Takeaway
Antigua and Barbuda	The critical role of the Focal Point in selling and securing visibility for COL’s programmes and in ensuring sustainability of programmes
Bahamas, The	Importance of ensuring all stakeholders and decision makers are on board when programmes are planned.
Barbados	Refresher in role of Focal point and insight into priorities in other Caribbean countries
Belize	The Aptus is a solution to both connectivity and bandwidth issues.
Grenada	A clearer idea of how innovative COL has been over the years
Guyana	OER knowledge is important for a Focal Point. Importance of understanding COL’s vision and strategies and to share with other policy makers and senior stakeholders
Jamaica	The need to seek assistance with repurposing face-to-face courses for online delivery in order to reach more persons and remain relevant
St Lucia	Broad scope of COL and knowledge about COL programmes in other countries
St Vincent and the Grenadines	A clearer idea of what COL does and what its direction is for the future

Arising from the closing discussion were four recommendations related specifically to the work of Focal Points. These were to

- Explore the possibility of appointing a co-focal point, someone who would serve as an understudy and possibly someone from a sector or Ministry other than education. This would address the challenge of communicating with other Ministries identified earlier in the meeting and at the same time facilitate continuity and follow-up actions at the national level at the end of the Focal Point’s tenure.
- Invite Focal Points to participate in training taking place within a country. This would serve to fill some of the knowledge and skill gaps that Focal Points had identified in the meeting, especially in relation to OER
- Create a more engaging communication channel. Although BaseCamp was already in place, the general feeling was that a WhatsApp group would be more convenient. The ES for VUSSC agreed to establish the group

- Provide a dedicated space for Focal Point news and updates. The President suggested that COL could organize a Focal Point Corner in *Connections*.

In her parting remarks, Professor Kanwar thanked the Focal Points for their active participation, their willingness to share and their valuable inputs. She reminded them of the key role their contributions played in shaping the next strategic plan and promised that COL would follow up on the recommendations they had made with respect to their role and function as Focal Points. She reiterated her appreciation for their dedication to the mission and COL's commitment to providing ongoing support to the Caribbean.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Programme

Date: Thursday 30th August

Time: 08.30 – 16.30

Time	Session	Format	Facilitator/Presenter
08:30 - 09:00	Arrival and Registration		M. Newman & J. Hendrikz
09:00 - 10:00	Welcome & Opening Session Welcome: <i>Professor Asha Kanwar</i> , President, COL Introduction of Guest: <i>Dr P. Marshall</i> , COL Focal Point Jamaica Guest: <i>The Honourable Ruel Reid</i> , CD, JP - Minister of Education, Youth and Information Word of Thanks		M. Newman
10:00 – 10:45	Focal Points Photo and Health break		All
HEALTH BREAK			
10:45 - 12:00 SESSION 1	Housekeeping & Rapporteurs Introduction of Participants Participants' Expectations COL's Expectations and Adoption of the Programme Overview of COL: Vision, Mission, Strategic Plan	Feedback Presentation and Plenary discussion	J. Hendrikz, M. Newman K Bala A. Kanwar <i>Rapporteurs – Dr. P. Benn & Ms. M. Sears</i>
12:00 - 12:30 SESSION 2	COL's Programme	Plenary presentation and discussion	K. Bala <i>Rapporteurs – Mrs. K. Best & Dr. Y. Palma</i>
12:30-13:30	LUNCH		

13:30-15:15 SESSION 3	Country Reports Where can COL add value? How can we collaborate to gain efficiencies and economies of scale?	Review Country Reports Identify commonalities and differences	J. Hendrikz <i>Rapporteurs – Mr. A. Augustine & Ms. P. La Fleur</i>
15:15-15:30	HEALTH BREAK		
15:30-16:15 SESSION 4	Role of Focal Points How much do you know about COL?	Quiz Pair and group discussion Plenary presentation	M. Newman <i>Rapporteur – Dr. P. Marshall</i>
16:15-16:30 SESSION 5	Summary and wrap-up of day Housekeeping		K. Bala
18:30	WELCOME DINNER HOSTED BY COL		

Date: Friday 31st August

Time: 08.30 – 16.45

Time	Session	Format	Facilitator/Presenter
08:30-09:00 SESSION 6	Recap of the previous day	3 Key Points from each Rapporteur team	K. Bala Rapporteurs from Day 1
09:00 -10:30 SESSION 7	Country Priorities – COL’s Response Identifying country and regional priorities for COL programme	Discussion	J Hendrikz, M. Newman <i>Rapporteurs – Ms. B. Neptune & Mr. G. Anthony</i>
10:30 – 10:50	HEALTH BREAK		
10:50 -11:50 SESSION 8	Sustainable Development and Sustainable Livelihoods	Presentation Focus Group discussions	K. Bala <i>Rapporteurs – Dr. P. Benn & Mrs. K. Best</i>
11:50 – 12:15 SESSION 9	Aptus – Classroom without Walls	Demonstration and discussion	Johan Hendrikz <i>Rapporteur – Ms. M. Sears</i>
12:15-13:15	LUNCH		

Time	Session	Format	Facilitator/Presenter
13:15-14:00 SESSION 10	Focus on OER Global development, best practice and way forward	Presentation Plenary discussion	A. Kanwar <i>Rapporteurs – Dr. Y. Palma & Mr. A. Augustine</i>
14:00 – 14:45 SESSION 11	COL’s Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Theory of change	Presentation Plenary discussion	K. Bala, J Hendrikz, M. Newman <i>Rapporteurs - Mr. G. Anthony & Dr. P. Marshall</i>
14:45-15:00	HEALTH BREAK		
15:00- 16:00 SESSION 12	Post-2021 Strategic Priorities	Presentation Plenary discussion	K. Bala <i>Rapporteurs – Ms. P. La Fleur & Ms. B. Neptune</i>
16:00 – 16:45 SESSION 13	Summary of Discussions & Way Forward	Presentation Plenary discussion	K. Bala, J Hendrikz, M. Newman <i>Rapporteurs from Day 2</i>

Appendix 2: Welcome and Opening Remarks by Professor Asha Kanwar, President, COL

Hon Minister; Distinguished Focal Points, Colleagues, It is a great pleasure to be here in Jamaica for the Caribbean Focal Points meeting. We are very grateful to the Hon Minister for agreeing to host the meeting and for making the time to be with us today. We also appreciate the support of our Focal Point Dr Phylicia Marshall in organising this regional event. Thanks to each and every one of you for travelling long distances to be here. I am pleased to note that we have 9 Focal Points from the 12 Member States. Jamaica is a very important member of the Commonwealth and over the years has been a consistent supporter of COL. We were very fortunate to have had the Hon Burchell Whiteman, your former education minister on our Board first in his capacity as a representative of the Caribbean and then as the Chair of our international Board of Governors. Thank you, Jamaica for your contributions, both financial and intellectual. As you know COL was established by Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1987 to help Member States institutions and organisations to expand the scale, efficiency and quality of learning by harnessing the potential of technologies. Over our 30 years of service to the Commonwealth, we have constantly renewed ourselves to remain relevant to your needs. Today most governments are accelerating efforts to achieve SDG 4 which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030. We need more trained teachers as only 70% primary teachers in the Caribbean region are trained. Most countries in the LAC guarantee 12 years of free and compulsory education—how can we encourage boys to complete secondary school? All these interventions require innovative approaches and that is where COL has a role. The theme of COL’s current strategic plan is ‘learning for sustainable development’. COL believes that learning must lead to economic growth, social inclusion and environmental conservation. And this can be achieved at speed and scale by harnessing the potential of technologies. As we are at the mid-point of our six-year Strategic Plan, we are organising four regional meetings this year. These Focal Points meetings are very important events in the life of COL, which is why you see four of us here. This is usually not possible as we have only a small group of specialists. All the Commonwealth small states in the Caribbean are members of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth or VUSSC. The idea for VUSSC was proposed by Ministers of Education and COL was assigned the responsibility of implementing this initiative. Today VUSSC has grown into a robust network dedicated to expanding access to tertiary education. It has been a powerful forum for connecting the Commonwealth and promoting Commonwealth collaboration. This network of 31 small states is supported by a Management Committee in which Karen Best from the Barbados and Pauleen Finlay of Grenada play a key role. The small states decide what courses are to be developed and shared.

Antigua State College, Barbados Community College, Belize Teachers College, RADA, Jamaica, Open Campus, UWI and the Police Academy and Caribbean Public Health Agency in T&T all offer VUSSC-developed courses. These relate to disaster management, business and entrepreneurship, sustainable tourism and agriculture, to name a few. Please make full use of these free quality-assured resources. You'll be interested to note that a COL-study in Botswana showed that the carbon emissions of VUSSC students were 1/3rd compared to that of campus-based students. In addition to this pan-Commonwealth initiative, COL has been making special efforts to deepen its work in each of your countries and this targeted approach is beginning to deliver results. COL has several activities in our host country Jamaica. Let me refer to just three. In partnership with the Rural Agricultural Development Authority, COL facilitated the skills development of over 600 farmers in Irish potato production and marketing through the use of text messaging. Ninety teachers and managers from HEART Trust/National Training Agency participated in a COL online capacity-building course in flexible skills development. COL's Commonwealth Executive MBA/MPA is offered by the University of the Commonwealth Caribbean. In Antigua & Barbuda, COL has worked with the Ministry to develop and implement an OER policy. As a result, students in Antigua State College saved ECD 704 per semester in costs and learning outcomes improved by 5.5%. COL has supported capacity building in OER for Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines COL's open/innovative school model is being implemented in Belize and Trinidad & Tobago. In Belize, COL is working with the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture to expand access to secondary schooling. Resources are being developed for 14 school subjects. In an open school in Belize, research shows that every dollar invested has resulted in \$ 8 worth of perceived benefits to students. The first cohort of out of school youth in a remote fishing village in Trinidad & Tobago graduated through a COLsupported open school. The entire curriculum was structured around fisheries which addressed the livelihoods needs of the young people. Skills development is a major priority for most Commonwealth governments and there is a need to increase the number of trained and certified Assessors in the Caribbean. The Barbados TVET Council, the NTA T&T and Grenada partnered with COL to develop online resources for CVQ Assessor Training and 26 persons from these three countries completed the programme. Another training workshop on sustainable development in TVET attracted 42 participants from 7 countries including St Kitts and Nevis. COL recently organised a symposium on Boys' Education with the University of Guyana, UNICEF and CARICOM which deliberated on the under-representation and underperformance of boys and the solutions for empowering boys. This resulted in a Communique which we will share with stakeholders in the region. Hon Minister, your idea of the Primary Exit Profile to assess academic and critical thinking capabilities could encourage more boys to continue into the secondary stream. These are some examples of COL's partners and our work. What do we hope to achieve at this meeting? Let me outline four key objectives. One, we need to hear

from you what your priorities are and how these can be addressed by COL. Two, this is also an opportunity for us to present a summary of what we have done in your countries since 2015 and we have given you an interim report. The final report will be presented to Ministers of Education at the 21st CCEM.

Three, these face-to-face meetings are an excellent forum to remind you of COL's purpose, its organization and its programmes. Since you are our ambassadors in the field, it is important that you know what we do. Four, as a Commonwealth organization, it is part of our mission to promote Commonwealth-wide cooperation. The Commonwealth is often referred to as a family of nations that works through consensus, respect and understanding. These meetings serve to remind us of our shared values and our common identity as citizens of the Commonwealth. In addition, these meetings allow us to introduce our staff to you. We have a policy of rotation, under which old staff members leave making way for new colleagues from other Commonwealth countries. Let me then introduce you to our Vice President Dr Bala—Dr Mairette Newman from the host country who joined us recently to lead our work in VUSSC and Dr Johannes Hendriks from South Africa our Senior Advisor, Open/Innovative schooling. Let me thank you all once again for your presence and for being COL's voice and visibility in the field. We are very grateful to the Hon Minister and his team for their warm hospitality and support. Let me extend a warm welcome to each one of you.

Appendix 3: List of consolidated priorities

Consolidated list of Priorities: Education Sector

Areas	Priorities
Higher Education	1. Training in Curriculum design, delivery and evaluation for online learning/ODL with the use of OER
	2. Development of Policy for online learning and OER
	3. Facilitate the development of an Accreditation system for quality assurance purposes
VUSCC	1. Training in Curriculum design, delivery and evaluation for online learning/ODL with the use of OER
	2. Create awareness and access to all the courses offered by COL
	3.
Teacher Education	1. Facilitating training for teacher educators to teach prospective teachers.
	2. Facilitate the training of teacher educators/ teachers in the use of ODL
	3. Facilitating teacher educators/teachers to develop, access, and use OERs
Secondary Education (Open Innovative Schooling)	1. Assist in the creation of guidelines for the development of open school
	2. Assist in using OER to develop Open textbooks
	3.

Key: Countries – Numbers

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|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Antigua and Barbuda | 2. Bahamas |
| 3. Barbados | 4. Belize |
| 5. Dominica | 6. Grenada |
| 7. Guyana | 8. Jamaica |
| 9. Saint Kitts and Nevis | 10. Saint Lucia |
| 11. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines | 12. Trinidad and Tobago |

Consolidated list of Priorities: Skills Sector

Areas	Priorities	Countries
TVSD	1. Develop capacity of teachers and Curriculum to deliver quality and relevant TVSD training courses, programs and certification options using FaB TVSD Model	
	2. Technical Assistance in national and institutional policy development and strategic planning for TVET and competency based learning models	
	3. Support the development of new curricula and learning resources in support of livelihoods in the formal and informal economies	
Agriculture (L3F)	1. Completion and implementation of Climate Smart curriculum for extension officers in extension delivery and farmers to adopt technology. Extension delivery modules currently include Farmer Field School, commodity specific training (apiculture, aquaculture, poultry)	
	2. Technical expertise in the provision of the Diploma in Sustainable Agriculture via blended learning	
	3. Leverage the use of the distributed ICT centers and mobile technology to support skills training for farmers	
TEL & OER	1. Develop ICT in education and OER policies and strengthen policy implementation	
	2. Provide capacity building opportunities for the training of personnel at different levels of the education system in effective implementation of ICT strategy	

	3. Technical expertise and training in Online program delivery	
Gender	1. Provide technical assistance and support in the development of gender responsive policies, strategies, curricula, and teaching/learning materials	
	2. Expose institutions to specific ODL gender-based initiatives to improve learning outcomes targeted at boys/men and girls/women	
	3. Ensure equitable access to all training opportunities and in particular, those supported by Technology-Enabled Learning approaches	

Key: Countries – Numbers

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|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Antigua and Barbuda | 2. Bahamas |
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| 5. Dominica | 6. Grenada |
| 7. Guyana | 8. Jamaica |
| 9. Saint Kitts and Nevis | 10. Saint Lucia |
| 11. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines | 12. Trinidad and Tobago |

Appendix 4 Caribbean Focal Points Contact List

Antigua and Barbuda	Dr. Patricia Benn Deputy Principal Antigua State College (ASC)
Bahamas	Ms. Michelle Sears Assistant Director Ministry of Education
Barbados	Mrs. Karen Best Chief Education Officer Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
Belize	Dr. Yvonne Palma Education Officer Employment Training & Education Services (ETES) Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture
Grenada	Mr. Andrew Augustine Senior Human Resource Development Officer Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development
Guyana	Ms. Patrice LaFleur Secretary-General Guyana National Commission for UNESCO
Jamaica	Dr. Phylicia Marshall Assistant Chief Education Officer, Tertiary Unit Ministry of Education, Youth and Information
Saint Lucia	Mr. Germain Anthony Curriculum Specialist for ICT Integration Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms Beverly Neptune Chief Education Officer (Ag.) Ministry of Education, Reconciliation and Ecclesiastical Affairs
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