



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

**COUNTRY REPORT**  
2021-2023 | **ASIA**

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**Maldives**

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

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**The Commonwealth of Learning (COL)** is focused on adding value to member states' efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG4. It's supporting the governments and institutions of the Commonwealth 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 (Brunei Darussalam and Maldives) 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 member state in the Commonwealth. These are:

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

## INTRODUCTION

Maldives is a small island nation with a population of just over 500,000 ([World Bank](#), 2022).

COL's work in the Maldives is primarily in the areas of higher education through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) network, technology-enabled learning, and benefits from programmes under the aegis of the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA). Learners from the Maldives are also benefitting from COL's free, open online courses and other available resources.

## PARTNERS

COL's partners in Maldives include:

- Ministry of Education
- Islamic University of Maldives (IUM)
- National Institute of Education
- Villa College

## KEY CONTACTS

### COL FOCAL POINT

**Mr. Ahmed Mausoom**  
Education Development Professional  
Foreign Relations Section  
Ministry of Education

## REGIONAL CENTRE

The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) is located in New Delhi, India and was established to promote cooperation and collaboration in the creation and use of multiple media resources for Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and skills development in the Commonwealth countries of Asia. Its activities revolve around COL's Strategic Plan 2021-27, but at the same time, CEMCA retains its regional focus, considering the challenges and requirements of Asian Commonwealth countries.

CEMCA's Advisory Council meets annually and functions as an advisory body on CEMCA's affairs and is responsible for broad policy formulation in the programme areas. The Council meets once a year and membership is rotated among the members in Commonwealth Asia.

During the 2021-2027 plan, CEMCA will:

1. Build the capacity of institutions to transition to online and blended learning;
2. Support gender-responsive skills development for livelihoods; and
3. Develop innovations in a range of technologies from Community Radio to AI-based solutions for reaching the last mile.

## COL ACTIVITIES BETWEEN JULY 2021 - MAY 2023

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The Honourable Dr Aishath Ali, Minister of Education and the Honourable Ahmed Mujahid, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education, were both active participants at PCF10.
- TEL policy implemented at the Islamic University of Maldives.
- Online course on deploying COL's AptusPi, a micro-server of OER for less-connected contexts, was delivered to 67 teachers in 74 schools.

### BUILDING NATIONAL RESILIENCE

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

COL initiated several high-level panels on Climate Change and Education to support Member countries in advancing climate action (through policy, capacity, resources and research). This resulted in the [Transforming Education for Climate Action: Report to Commonwealth Ministers of Education](#), published in August 2022. The Honourable Dr Aishath Ali, Minister of Education, was a member of this high-level panel who provided guidance and contributed to the discussions.

### STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS

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

CEMCA organised a month-long online workshop on 'Design Thinking and Innovation in Teaching and Training' to assist higher education and vocational training institutions in the capacity building of their faculty members/trainers. This workshop was conducted in November 2021. The workshop was attended by 114 participants from five countries (Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Maldives, and Sri Lanka) who were educators from technical and engineering streams, business schools, and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) network.

Villa College, with the support of COL, organised a workshop in late 2021 on the HTML5 Package tool to create, share and reuse content and applications for online learning. 26 teachers participated.

In partnership with the Ministry of Education, a three-week online course concluded in September 2022 on the use of COL's AptusPi, a low-cost device that allows educators and learners to connect to digital learning platforms and content without the need for grid electricity or Internet access. 67 teachers completed the course.

COL supported the Islamic University of Maldives (IUM) in undertaking a systematic approach to institutionalising TEL through research, consultation, capacity building, and monitoring and

evaluation. IUM approved their institutional policy for TEL and a baseline study report was published in March 2023.

COL is supporting the National Institute of Education (NIE) for Technology-enabled learning (TEL) implementation and to enhance the impact of ICTs for teaching and learning by increasing access and improving quality. To date, 23 (16F/7M) faculty staff participated in the Workshop on “Policy Development for TEL” in March 2023.

## SPECIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

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 held in Calgary, Canada from 14-16 September 2022. Both the Honourable Aishath Ali, Minister of Education and the Honourable Ahmed Mujahid, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education were in attendance. Hon. Dr Aishath Ali chaired the keynote address “Building Resilience” and was part of the Panel: Transforming Education for Climate Change. Both also participated in the Ministerial Roundtable that was organised by COL.

CEMCA held their **22<sup>nd</sup> Advisory Council Meeting** in New Delhi on 26 December 2022, with members from Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Maldives and Sri Lanka in attendance. A major concern expressed was that despite the fact that distance learning had been embraced globally during the pandemic, the negative perceptions relating to the quality of this mode of delivery continue to persist. CEMCA Director mentioned that despite the challenges confronted during the pandemic, CEMCA was able to reach out to a significant number of learners. Ongoing activities included supporting higher education institutions to implement Open Educational Resources (OER) policies and help enhance pedagogical skills among teachers/trainers of Technical and Vocational Education institutions in Commonwealth Asia. Council members noted CEMCA’s contribution to ODL in the region and outlined the priorities for the future. Mr Ahmed Mausoom, Ministry of Education, Maldives, sought COL’s support in spreading community education and parental awareness around vocational and skills-based courses.

The **Regional Focal Points Meeting for Asia** was held in New Delhi, India, on 27-28 December 2022. COL Focal Point Mr Ahmed Mausoom from the Ministry of Education participated in the two-day meeting.

## PUBLICATIONS OF RELEVANCE

Report of the Baseline Study on Technology-Enabled Learning at the Islamic University of Maldives  
<http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5257>

Commonwealth Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) Annual Report: 2021-2022  
<http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5301>

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) Achievement Report: July - November 2022  
<http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5345>

Blended Learning Policy: Templates for Higher Education Institutions in Commonwealth Asia (CEMCA) <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5319>

Handbook on Online Education in Commonwealth Asia (CEMCA) <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5259>

Report on the Regional Focal Points Meeting – Asia <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5228>



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