



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

**COUNTRY REPORT**  
2021-2023 | **PACIFIC**

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**Solomon  
Islands**

## 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 Pacific 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 the Pacific (Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu) 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 Pacific member state. These are:

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

## INTRODUCTION

The Solomon Islands is a small state of the Commonwealth consisting of nearly 1,000 islands with a population of about 725,000 ([World Bank](#), 2022).

COL's current work in Solomon Islands is primarily in the areas of gender, skills for work and tertiary education through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) network. Learners from the Solomon Islands are also participating in COL's free, open online courses and benefitting from other available resources.

## PARTNERS

COL's partners in Solomon Islands include:

- Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD)
- Don Bosco Rural Training Centre
- Solomon Islands National Council for Women (SINCW)
- Solomon Islands National University
- USP Solomon Islands Campus

## KEY CONTACTS

### FOCAL POINT

**James Bosamata**  
Deputy Secretary  
Ministry of Education and  
Human Resources Development

## COL ACTIVITIES BETWEEN JULY 2021 - JULY 2023

### HIGHLIGHTS

- **159 teachers trained to provide effective learner support in ODFL contexts.**
- **Partnership with the Don Bosco Rural Training Centre to build the capacity of TVET practitioners.**
- **Development of online learning resources for teachers: [ODL Course Catalogue](#), [National OER Collection Site](#), and [Online TVET Toolkit](#)**

In addition to COL's core activities, the Partnership for Open Distance and Flexible Learning (ODFL) in the Pacific is a 5-year project (2020–2025) funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade (MFAT) to support enhancing capacity and efficiency of education sectors in the Pacific through greater use of innovative delivery mechanisms and technology. COL, together with the Pacific Centre for Flexible and Open Learning for Development (PACFOLD), is implementing the project in the nine Commonwealth countries in the Pacific (Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu). <https://pacificpartnership.col.org>

## 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.

In July 2022, five nominated Ministry officials from the Solomon Islands participated in a workshop on policy and planning for ODFL, to improve their knowledge and capacity.

Twenty-one Government staff/officials/policymakers in the Solomon Islands were trained/sensitised on gender equality, Gender Based Violence (GBV), gender sensitive practices, and grass root advocacy in October 2022.

## STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS

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

Six courses developed and offered with 159 teachers from the Solomon Islands trained to provide effective learner support in ODFL contexts.

- Open Educational Resources for Online Learning, July 2021 (4 teachers); November 2021 (4 teachers)
- Digital Skills for OER Sharing, September 2021 (27 teachers); November 2022 (11 teachers)
- Communication Skills for Open, Distance and Flexible Learning, January 2022 (3 teachers); June 2022 (30 teachers)
- Assessment Skills for Open, Distance and Flexible Learning, April 2022 (22 teachers)
- Learner Support for Open, Distance and Flexible Learning, November 2022 (15 teachers)
- Quality Assurance for Open, Distance and Flexible Learning, February 2023 (12 teachers)

USP launched the Semester Zero programme in January 2022 to ensure a smooth transition of future students to university life. This programme was implemented using a COL-hosted Moodle platform.

The Solomon Islands OER Collection Site provides resources for teachers that can be used or adapted for their teaching. <https://slb.oer4pacific.org/>

Launched in September 2022, the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Course Catalogue offers training courses for teachers in the Pacific on various aspects of ODL. This catalogue was designed in a way that Ministries and educational institutions can have admin access and share any relevant courses for their own country. <https://www.odlcatalogue4pacific.org/>

COL has partnered with the Don Bosco Rural Training Centre to enhance the capacity of Technical and vocational education training (TVET) practitioners using the online Pacific TVET Professional

Development Toolkit, which was developed by COL. In 2023, a project design workshop is planned to discuss how the Toolkit could best support the capacity building of staff. <https://pacifictoolkit.col.org>

COL provides tuition scholarships to learners in the Pacific for USP's Legislative Drafting Programme which was developed with COL support. A total of 9 learners from the Solomon Islands have been awarded the Postgraduate Diploma in Legislative Drafting. Graduates from this programme contribute to good governance in the region.

## IMPROVING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

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

COL's partner, the Solomon Islands National Council for Women (SINCW) conducted awareness raising/public advocacy campaigns to sensitise community members, including traditional leaders on gender equality, with over 160 trained to date. By reaching communities, COL envisions greater gender equality and empowerment with improved education and livelihood, an end to the cycle of child early and forced marriage (CEFM) and of other barriers that prevent girls' economic participation. More than 100 women, girls and young men have built skills to sustain themselves and their families [May2023]. The Social Safety net App that was developed continues to provide reliable information about what social services are available, where, to whom, for what purposes and at what times. Other activities include:

- training sessions in 3 villages, namely: Ghongau Village, Bellona Island, and Rennell, which belong to Bellona (RenBel) Province. [Sep2022]
- 68 (25M, 43F) learners trained in food and nutrition; floral arts and arrangements; fabric art especially on the different types and styles of fabric dyeing. Moreover, topics on awareness and information were covered: gender equality, human rights, and gender-based violence. [Sep2022]

The MOOC on 'Assessment Skills for Open, Distance and Flexible Learning' re-offered by the University of South Pacific (USP) in March 2023 had 352 enrolments, including 26 from the Solomon Islands. [Apr2023]

## SPECIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

In March 2022, a **webinar on the TVET Toolkit** was held with seven practitioners and institutional leaders from the Solomon Islands registered, with additional TVET institutions showing interest to become partners.

A **survey on ICT access and use in the Pacific** was conducted in April 2022 with people in the Pacific, in which six people from the Solomon Islands participated. The purpose of the study was to better understand the local needs to ensure an effective and appropriate delivery of a learning program in the Pacific.

In August 2022, COL, with PACFOLD, organised a **regional workshop with NGOs** where one representative from the Solomon Islands participated. NGO representatives learned about the project on Skills and Leadership training for youth, women and persons with disabilities and were invited to submit an action plan and proposal to COL.

COL's Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning is held triennially and is co-hosted with different partners in different regions of the Commonwealth. Fourteen delegates from Fiji registered for the **Tenth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF10)**, the first-ever hybrid Forum held in Calgary, Canada from 14-16 September 2022. COL sponsored Martin Otto, Solomon Islands National University who participated in the virtual mode.

## PUBLICATIONS OF RELEVANCE

**Report of the Special Parallel Session: Strategies and Solutions for ODFL in the Pacific Region**

<http://hdl.handle.net/11599/4534>

**ICT use and access in the Pacific: Emerging Perspectives** <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5252>

**Improving the Efficacy of Mentorship with an Open Education Ecosystem**

<http://hdl.handle.net/11599/4065>

**Integrating OER in Teaching: A Guide for Teachers in the Pacific**

<http://hdl.handle.net/11599/4014>

**Reversioning OER: A Guide for Teachers in the Pacific** <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/4015>

**Guide to QA of ODFL Provision in the Pacific** <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5443>



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