



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

COUNTRY REPORT
2021-2023 |
CARIBBEAN/AMERICAS



Jamaica

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 member countries' efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG4. It's supporting governments and institutions in the Caribbean 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 (Caribbean: Antigua & Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago) 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 (SfW); Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) and GIRLS Inspire.

The work in these sectors complements the three pathways of change COL is focusing on in achieving impact for each Caribbean member state. These are:

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

INTRODUCTION

Jamaica is the most populated Caribbean Commonwealth nation, with over 2.8 million people ([World Bank, 2022](#)).

COL's work in Jamaica is primarily in the areas of higher education through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) network, Lifelong Learning for Farmers, skills for work, and technology-enabled learning. The University of the Commonwealth Caribbean (UCC) offers COL's Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration and Master of Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programmes and serves on the programmes' academic and executive governing boards. Learners from Jamaica are also participating in COL's free, open online courses and benefitting from other available resources.

PARTNERS

COL's partners in Jamaica include:

- Ministry of Education and Youth
- Caribbean Maritime University
- Jamaica Teaching Council (JTC)
- Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA)
- Sam Sharpe Teachers College (SSTC)
- University of the West Indies, Mona
- University of the Commonwealth Caribbean (UCC)
- University Council of Jamaica (UCJ)

KEY CONTACTS

COL FOCAL POINT

Dr Phylcia Marshall
Assistant Chief Education
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COL ACTIVITIES BETWEEN JULY 2021 - MAY 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

- 400 farmers benefitted from training through mobile devices.
- Three TVET institutions have developed institutional ODL strategies and action plans.

BUILDING NATIONAL RESILIENCE

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

Through a series of online and offline discussions, COL followed up on a meeting between the Minister of Education and COL's President, to help develop a concept note to establish virtual open schooling in Jamaica. A related Memorandum of Understanding is currently under review by the Ministry's legal team.

COL is supporting the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ) to develop, and pilot open licensed materials for capacity-building activities in online and blended contexts for quality assurance personnel in 35 educational institutions across Jamaica. The learning resources will be available through the UCJ website for institutions to access and use.

- UCJ hosted a series of three workshops to disseminate standards in distance education. The workshops also provided an opportunity for administrators, academic managers and faculty of tertiary-level institutions to assess where their institutions were in relation to each standard. A total of 500 participants attended three workshops in hybrid and virtual modes in June 2022.

COL supported the attendance of members from all 12 commonwealth Caribbean countries to a meeting with Caribbean Association of National Training Authorities (CANTA) to review, validate and approve the Quality Assurance Criteria and Guidelines for the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) (2023), as well as engage the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) with the aim of approving the reviewed Quality Assurance Criteria and Guidelines for the CVQ. Participants came from ministries, TVET councils, and National Training Agencies. [May 2023]

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS

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

COL's Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration and Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) Programme's goal is to deliver high-quality learning and professional development opportunities – with our Commonwealth Partner Institutions – that complement existing MBA/MPA programmes. The University College of the Caribbean is a partner institution. In mid-2022, nine-course materials were redeveloped. They include Enterprise Information Systems and Digital Strategy, Management in Organization, People and Talent Management, Operations Management, New Public Management and Governance, Data Analysis for Decision making, Marketing Management, Accounting Issues and Financial Management for Business Decisions, and Disaster Management.

COL supported the Caribbean Maritime University (CMU) to offer the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) "Designing and Delivering Online Assessments" course to the CMU Faculty to strengthen capacity among Faculty to design, develop and administer assessments online and equip selected Faculty with the professional knowledge and skills such that they can train additional CMU-based and community college-based faculty. 18 lecturers completed the course in the first cohort in July 2021. Faculty Lead offered the second cohort in July 2022 and 12 faculty members completed it.

40 staff members from Sam Sharpe Teachers College enrolled for the "Designing and Developing Online Assessment" course. 13 participants completed the course in October 2021. The College has indicated that they will offer the course independently in 2022.

COL held a planning meeting with Professor Michael Taylor, a climate change expert and Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology at the University of the West Indies in Mona, Jamaica for the development of a climate literacy massive open online course (MOOC) that will be jointly offered in July 2023. This is an activity that will further advance COL's Green Learning Agenda.

702 mentors were trained by Jamaica Teaching Council (JTC) and exposed to synchronous/asynchronous training on boys' education. An e-book, titled, Teaching Boys Effectively, has been compiled and shared with all mentors for their interaction and feedback.

The Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies (CANTA) collaborated with COL and UNESCO-UNEVOC to build the capacity of TVET practitioners to utilise appropriate open and distance learning (ODL) approaches and technology for an inclusive TVET delivery. TVET institutions from Jamaica participated in the project in 2021-2022. Ascot High School, Jose Marti Technical High School and Marcus Garvey Technical High School have developed institutional ODL strategies and action plans.

IMPROVING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

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

COL supporting Jamaica Teaching Council (JTC) in boy's empowerment.

- enabled 77 boys to join the boys' peer mentorship programme which aims to empower schoolboys to support and inspire each other within their Quality Education Inner Circle (QEIC) to become productive citizens. [Jul2022]
- JTC distributed around 26,147 Boys' Journals in 76 schools in seven regions. The Boys' Journal is a life planning guide, helping the boys to set life goals and follow them through. [Aug2022]
- 974 boys between the ages of 15-18 years from different schools engaged to be a part of the Boys' Education Empowerment Project (BEEP). They created and distributed the boys' journal, which is a life planning guide for them to set life goals and provided sessions to the boys on how to use this effectively. [Feb2023]

COL is collaborating with Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) to bridge the learning gaps that exist in the life of resource-limited farmers and in their enterprises to help them become more business-oriented farmers. Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) is the foundation of agricultural transformation which COL is laying with partners in Jamaica.

- A series of workshops were conducted in early 2022 in different Parishes in Jamaica, including the Needham Pen Farmers Association.
- 400 farmers from rural Jamaica benefitted from an eight-week training programme sponsored by COL on how to treat farming as a business and to maximise their earning potential. Using a combination of face-to-face and open and distance learning, the

programme involved the use of mobile devices to train and mentor participants into higher levels of professionalism in agriculture.

During 2021-2022, 39 new students enrolled in the 2-year CEMBA/MPA programme at the University College of the Caribbean.

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. Five delegates from Jamaica 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. Four were sponsored by COL who were invited to participate in COL pre-conference meetings. Participants included: Noel Brown, Caribbean Maritime University; Kelleen Johnson-Davis, Caribbean Maritime University; Jerome Petrona Miller, The University of the West Indies Open Campus; Schontal Moore, The University of the West Indies; Racquel Wright, Caribbean Maritime University.

Jamaica hosted COL's **Regional Focal Points Meeting for the Caribbean** in Kingston from 30-31 January 2023. Focal Points from 10 countries participated. The Minister of Education, Youth and Information, the Honourable Ms Fayval Williams gave the inaugural address in which she stated that the future of education is uncertain, and countries must be open and ready and noted that COL has been the one reliable agency that is helping countries to be ready for this uncertain future by making use of open and distance learning, open educational resources and appropriate technologies for education. The CEO from JTC was also present for many of the sessions as an observer. The meeting set out to update Focal Points on COL's work in the region and wider Commonwealth, to consult with them on regional and national priorities and to discuss the role of education in promoting a green learning agenda. Many of the regional and national priorities identified by the Focal Points reflect those in COL's Strategic Plan 2021-2027. Common areas of concern included food security and training related to climate-smart agriculture; male underperformance and the need for pedagogies tailored to meet their needs; access to OER aligned with the national curriculum; the need to strengthen special needs and inclusive education; increase demand for TVET; and capacity building and technical support for institutions in ODL and digital pedagogies.

The Caribbean TVET Conference took place in Jamaica from May 16-19, 2023, with the theme of "TVET: Building Resilience for Sustainable Development in Disruptive Times." COL's President/ CEO delivered a keynote speech on 'building workforce resilience in disruptive times'.

PUBLICATIONS OF RELEVANCE

Report on the Regional Focal Points Meeting – Caribbean <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5288>



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