

Professor Peter Scott,
President,
Commonwealth of Learning,
September 2024.

bio: Peter's background is as a Professor of Knowledge Media and university executive: he has worked at Sheffield University and the Open University, UK; University of Technology Sydney, Australia; and Athabasca University, Canada.

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COL asks the Commonwealth:

- **to speak with one voice** on Education;
- **to focus on learning** innovation and digitisation;
- and **to raise the priority of learning** as a change agent in the agenda of the Commonwealth Heads of Government.



Empowering women and girls through learning takes collaboration, innovation and community

Image credit: Khomas Directorate of Adult Education, Namibia, 2023

Learning allows a focus on solutions

It is tempting to talk symptoms, but a shocking world needs us to speak innovation

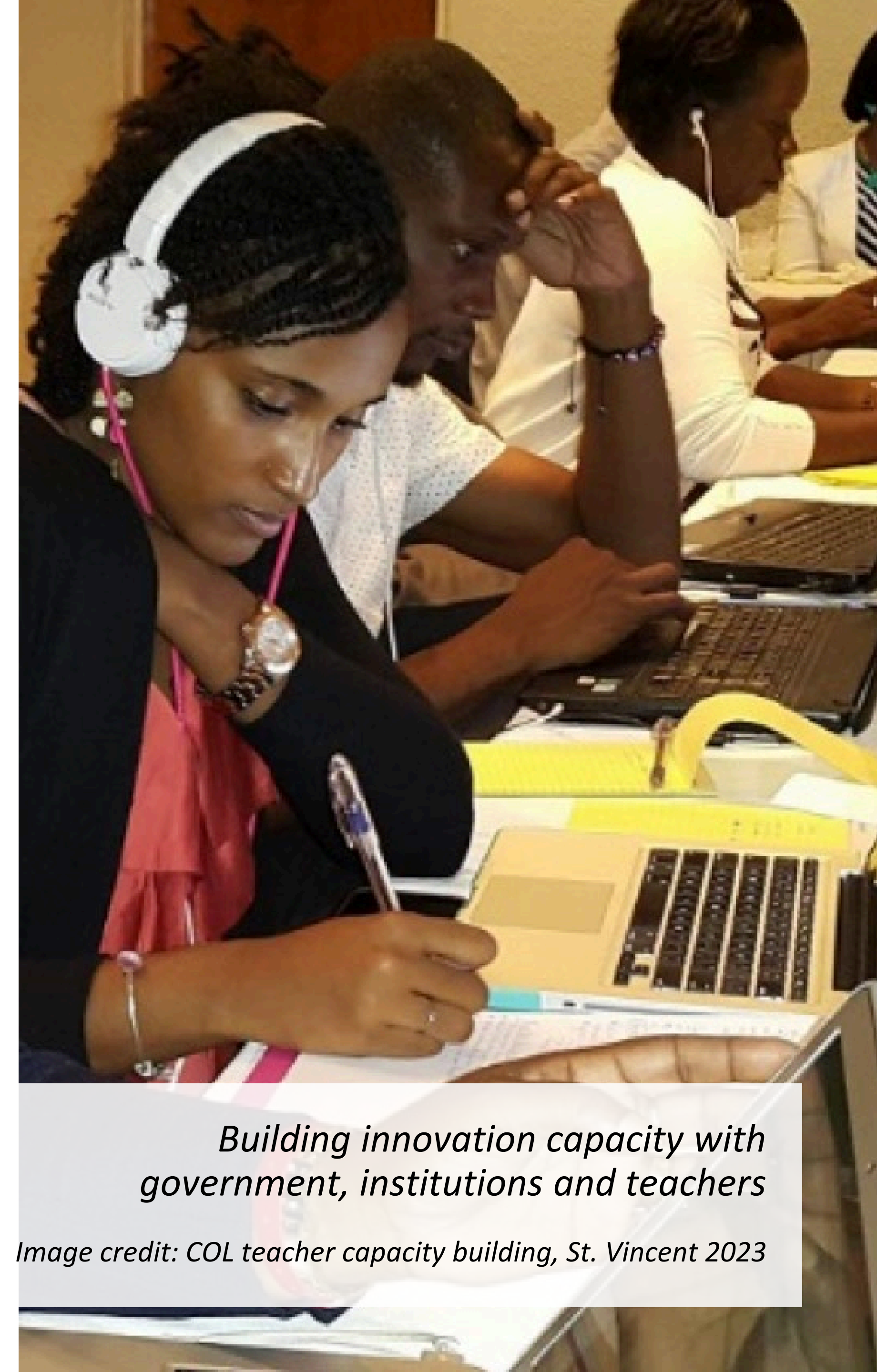
- Recognising problems is important, but don't just focus on symptoms.
- Learning systems must be resilient, but they also **create resilience** to a world of shocks.
- innovative solutions needed to fix systemic issues holding us back.



Commonwealth of Learning

innovate to change

- COL is an intergovernmental organisation established to “widen access to opportunities for learning”.
- As a thought-leader in open learning and innovation we build capacity in open educational practices and resources, driving change in collaboration with all the government and educational institutions of the Commonwealth.
- We start with *converting disadvantage into advantage via learning* to transform learning institutions, practices & life.
- A team of advisors and experts in ~30 countries each year, driving change with member nations.



Building innovation capacity with government, institutions and teachers

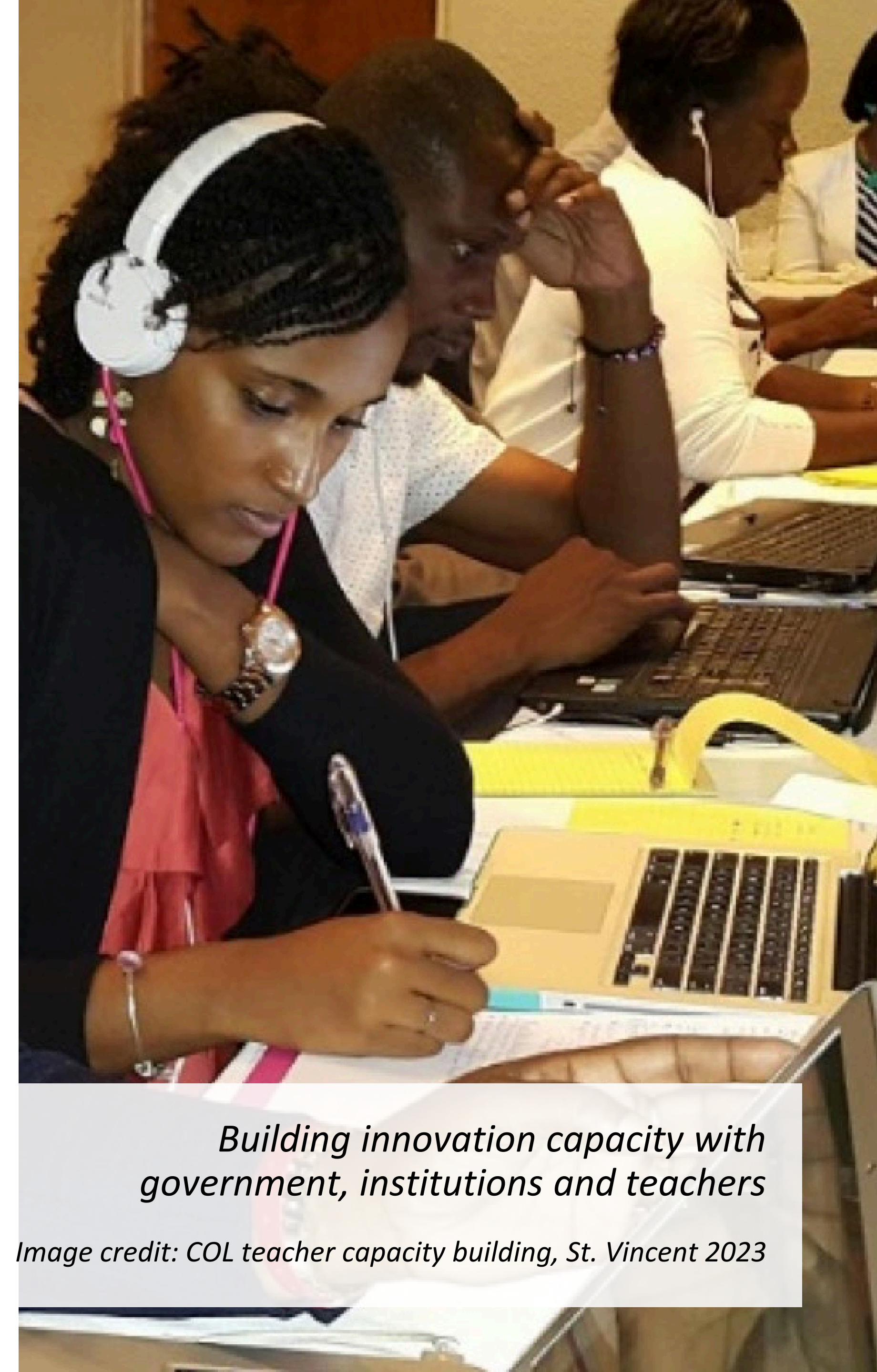
Image credit: COL teacher capacity building, St. Vincent 2023

Commonwealth of Learning

innovate to change

Over the last 3 years:

- Ministries & regulators: 60 policies in 30 nations
6,400 officials and staff trained in 32 countries
- Institutions: 165 policies & 31,000 staff trained
800 new/improved courses, 9,600 resources
- Learners: 710,000 enrolled plus 34,000 women and girls plus 8,500 disengaged boys in active learning, in over 41,000 communities



Building innovation capacity with government, institutions and teachers

Image credit: COL teacher capacity building, St. Vincent 2023

Digitisation

for appropriate innovation

- Heads of Commonwealth Governments are urged to champion a common digitisation agenda, leading with the integration of digital tools and openness in education systems.
- Classical distance learning has shown how effective open and collaborative methods can be. As now it is the online, networks and mobile connection, and today AI, that offer a step change. **Jump the gap.**
- Digitisation is an invaluable prerequisite to quickly narrow the equity gap at scale and reasonable cost. **Leadership needed now.**

*The world urgently needs digital development,
TVET learners in Kenya already in the digital class*

Image credit: COL



Targeting disadvantage

Innovate to change

- support policies that target specific chronic disadvantage barriers, including gender, disability and underperforming, disconnected boys.
- empower disenfranchised women and girls via communities.
- engage disaffected boys in their own words, not the words of school.



Disengaged youth work on creative business ideas

YUT PAWA, Youth Challenge Programme Vanuatu, 2023

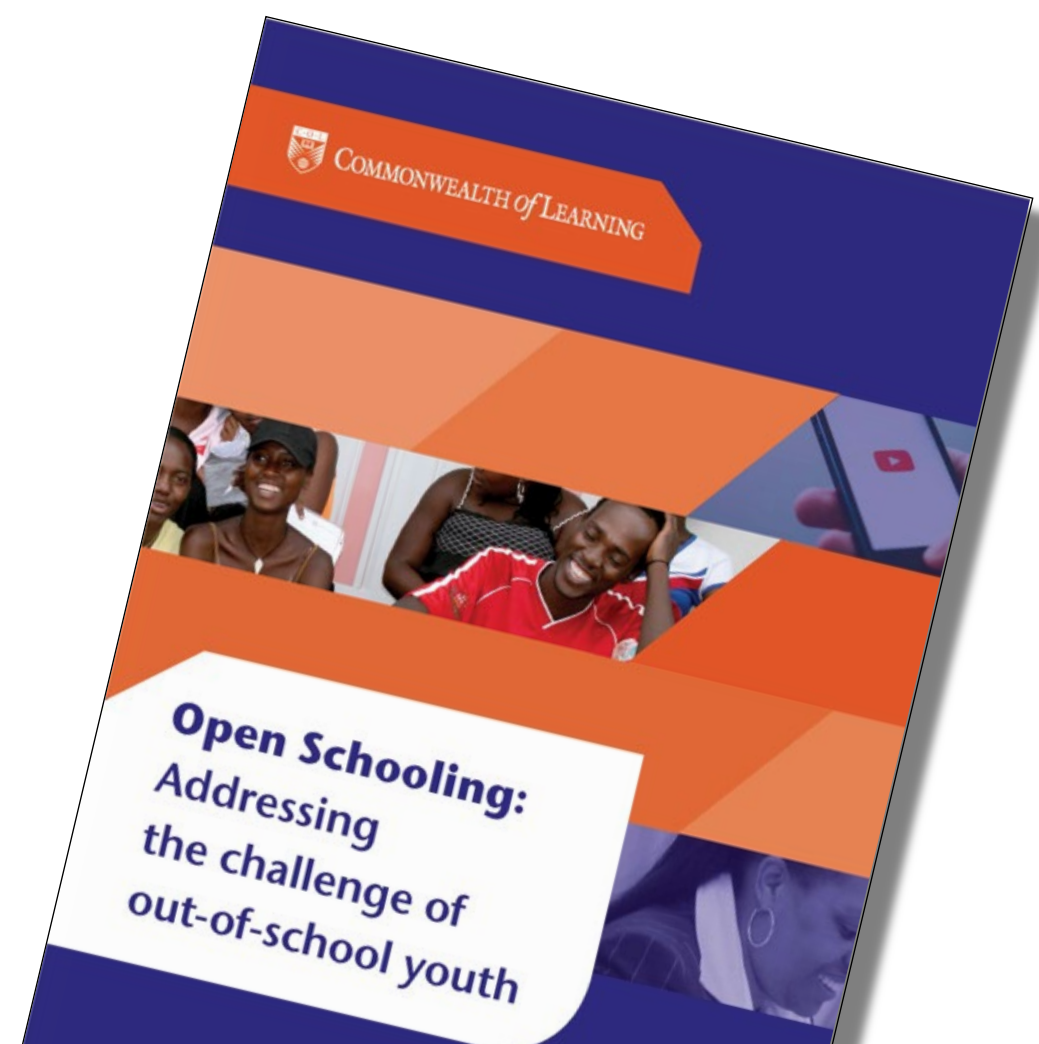
Image credit: Marama Youth Foundation

<https://www.v-lab.org/yut-pawa.html>

Open for School

Innovate to change

- bold policies and new models required to increase Open Schooling and address the growing numbers of young people not in employment, education or training.
- Learn from OS to 'think differently'



Disappointingly NEET - one in five young people, or 20.4 per cent globally, were 'Not in Employment, Education or Training' in 2023, that's nearly 64 million young people. 2/3 female.



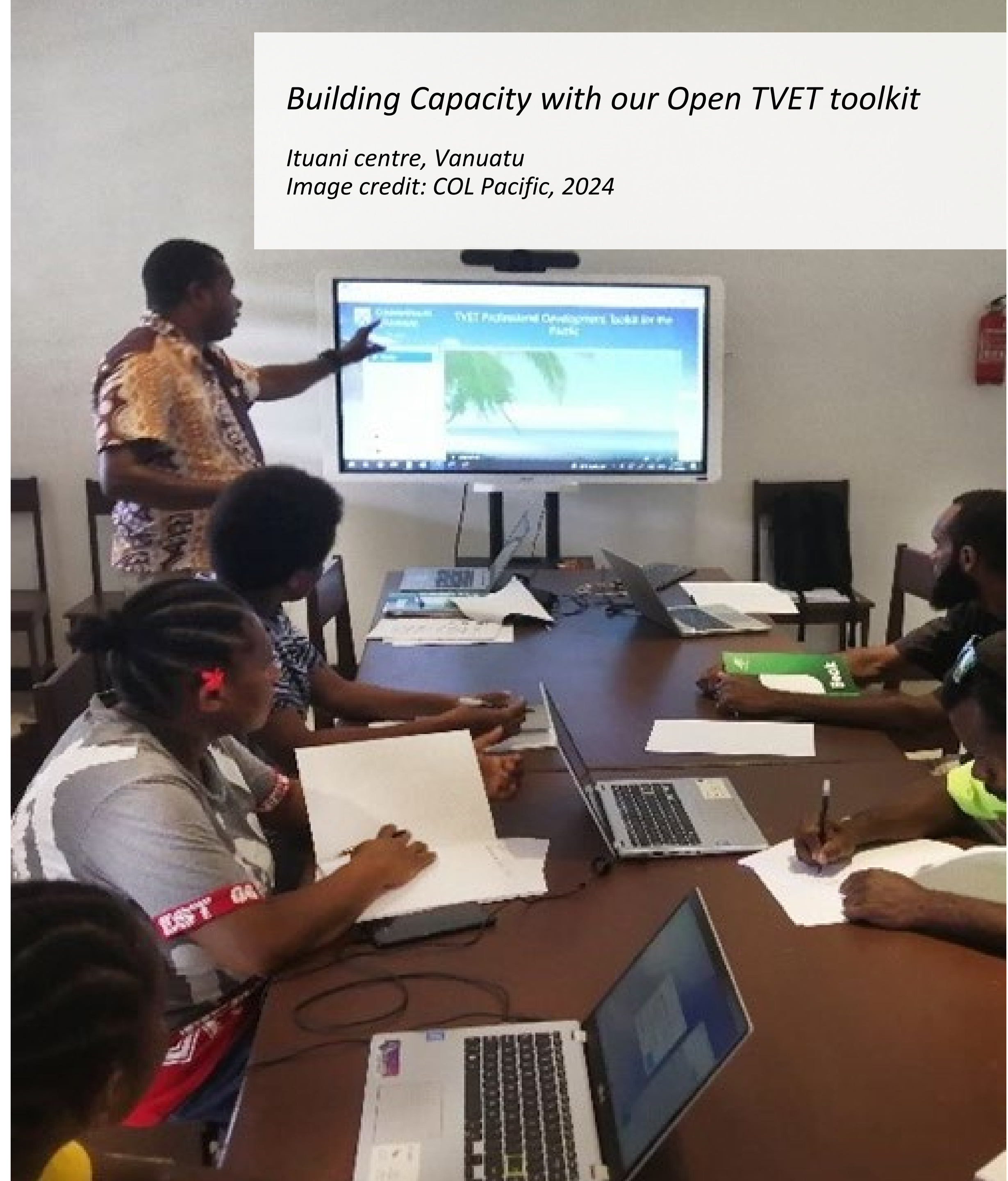
Girls inspired by Open ICT

*YAPO, Tanzania, 2023
Image credit: COL*

Open for Skill

Innovate to change

- adopt a pan-Commonwealth Open TVET competency-based training & assessment system to build the resilience of vocational education and strengthen skills development
 - *Design for transportability*
 - *Microcredentialed*
 - *Common quality assurance*



Open for Tertiary

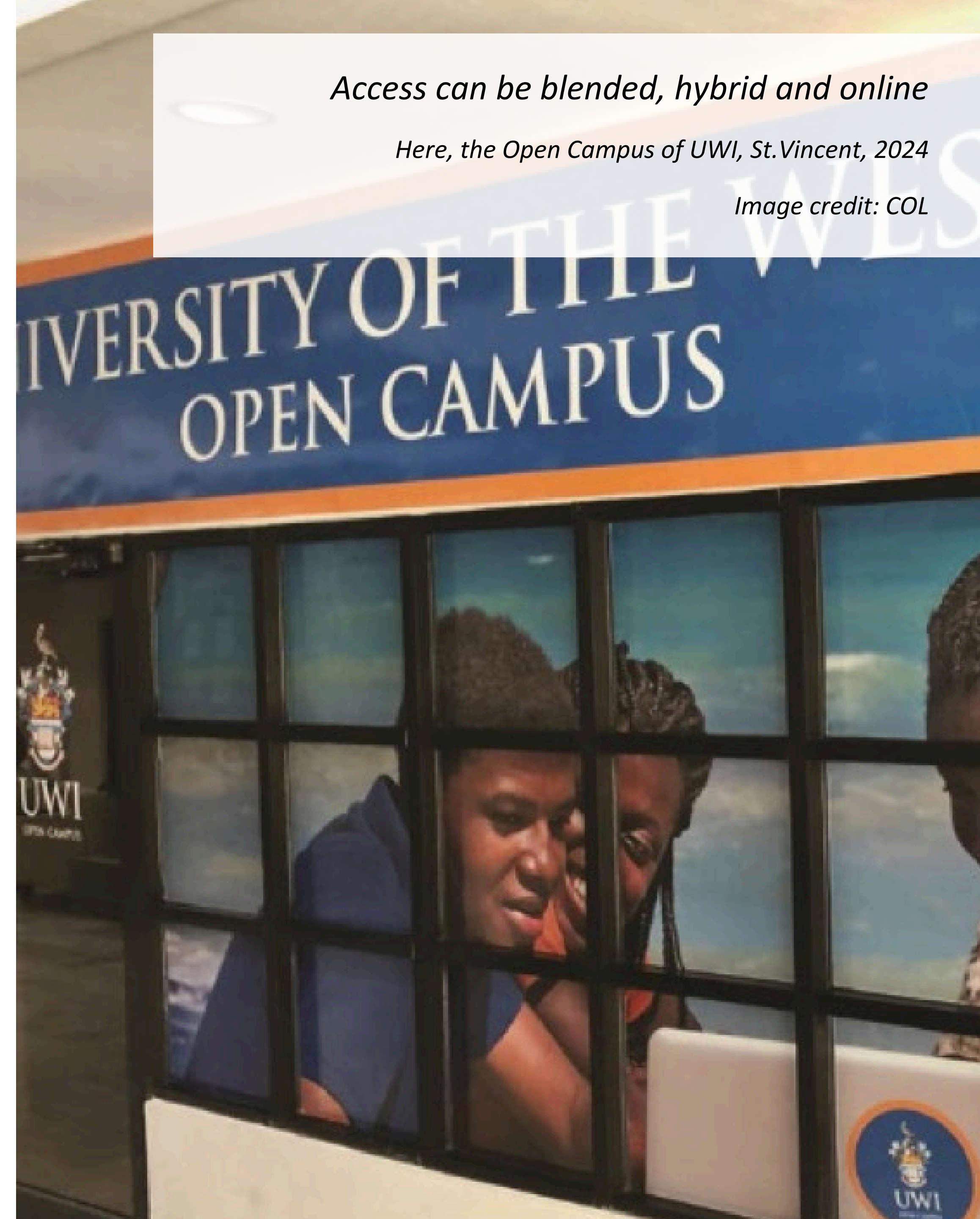
Innovate to change

- The Commonwealth requires integrated open tertiary education to increase open and *flexible access to adults*
 - *Universal Credit for Commonwealth credential portability*
 - *Common QA for all tertiary programmes*
 - *Skills <> Curriculum Integration*
 - *Online learning design standards to maximize impact*

Access can be blended, hybrid and online

Here, the Open Campus of UWI, St. Vincent, 2024

Image credit: COL



Open for Climate

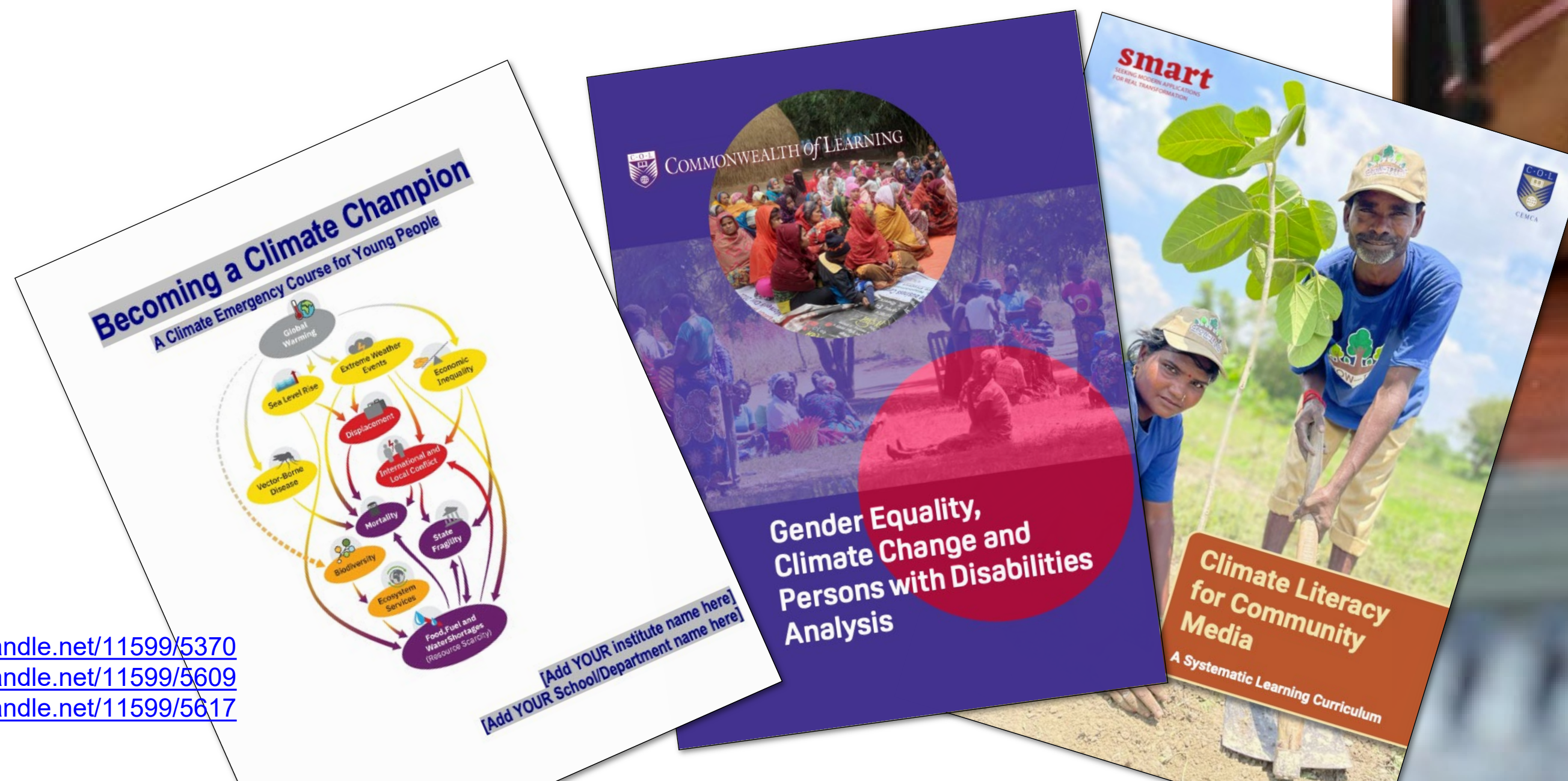
Innovate to change

- invest in open education to foster climate resilience and drive collective action towards a sustainable future
- mindsets must change and learning changes minds

Storytelling for Climate engagement and change

Climate Literacy for Community Media: Module 9, 2023

Image credit: COL CEMCA, India



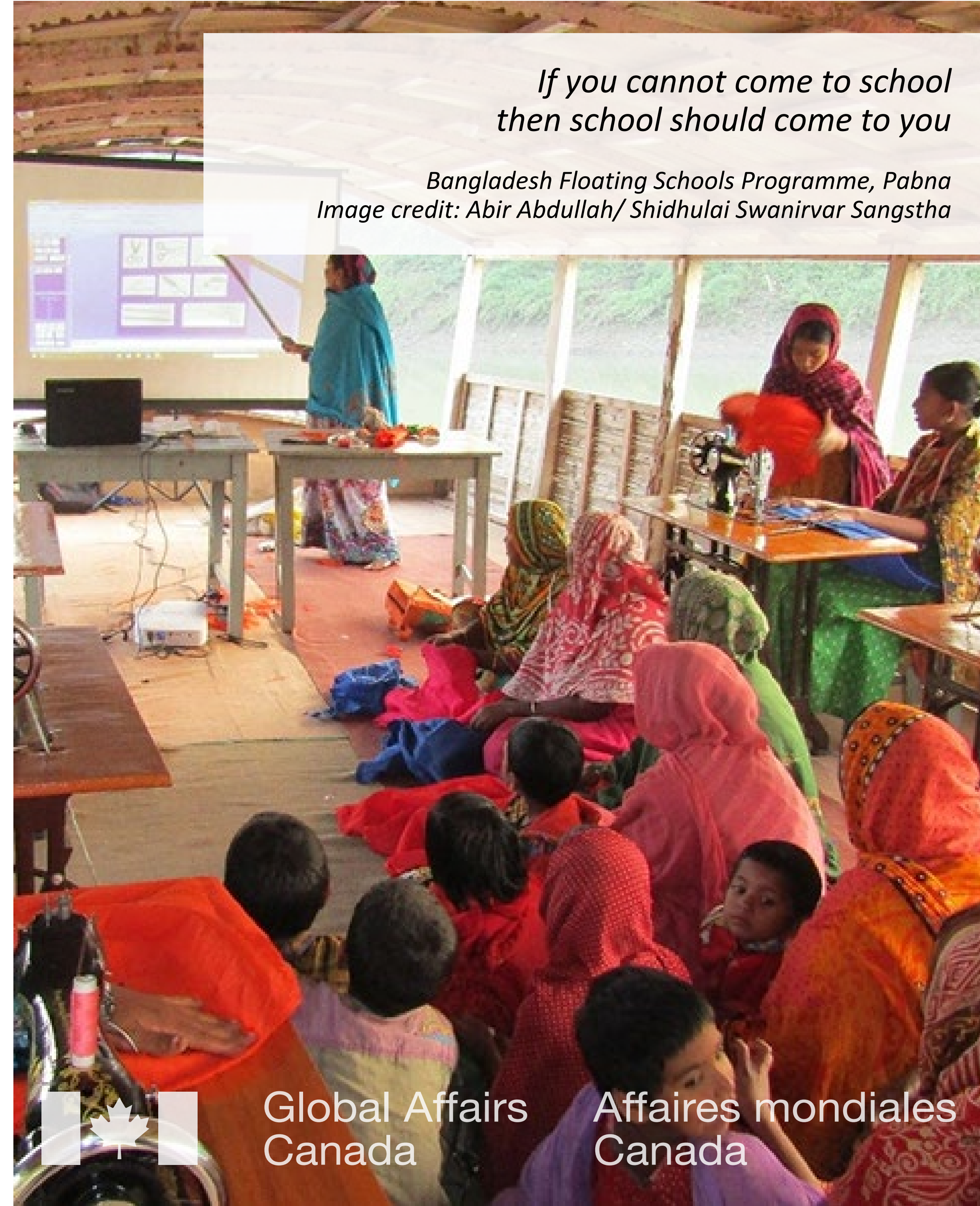
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Open vs Conventional

Innovate to change

- The conventions of education invest most in those who can succeed, because their parents have already been successful. The alternative, *Open Education*, creates social resilience by reaching into the huge reservoir of learning access inequity, *creating successful parents*.
- Conventional classroom-only approaches are effective, but **replicate the gap**.
- COVID exposed this, now clear for all to see...
make conventional learners or make lifelong learners?
- *Increase your %GDP on education, yes ...*

BUT for innovation!



*If you cannot come to school
then school should come to you*

*Bangladesh Floating Schools Programme, Pabna
Image credit: Abir Abdullah/ Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha*



Global Affairs
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