



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

COL in the Commonwealth

**2012–2015
Sri Lanka**

Acknowledgements

All COL Education Specialists and their Programme Assistants as well as CEMCA colleagues have contributed to the development of the country reports which make up the volume *COL in the Commonwealth: 2012-2015 Country Reports*. This country report is an excerpt from the volume. The following people are thanked in particular for their role in the design and publication of these reports.

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Foreword


COL in the Commonwealth: 2012-2015 Country Reports summarises COL's activities over the last three years (2012-2015) and captures what we have achieved in each Member State and across the Commonwealth.

This volume is the result of a collaborative process that began in 2011 with extensive partner consultations. Following these consultations, a *Country Action Plan* was developed to guide COL's work in each country. The reports contained in this volume describe the implementation of these plans and highlight COL's achievements during this three year plan.

The reports cover all Member States of the Commonwealth, showing not only what COL has done in developing countries but also how its work aligns with the international development priorities of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The reports are grouped under four regions: Africa and the Mediterranean, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Each regional section contains a brief regional report as well as the reports for each country within that region. The Pan-Commonwealth section describes COL's Initiatives, under the two sectors: 'Education' and 'Livelihoods and Health'. The reports for this triennium categorise COL activities according to our five core strategies: partnerships, capacity, materials, models and policy, in order to better present how our work contributes to outcomes. 'COL in Action' highlights real life examples to illustrate how COL's work impacts on people, groups and institutions in developing countries.

Most of the initiatives that COL pursued during this triennium are showing demonstrable results in expanding and improving opportunities for education and training, building healthier communities, helping rural communities achieve greater prosperity, and contributing to skills development. As the external Impact Evaluation report states: 'COL has had a major impact on individuals including farmers...faculty members, institutional leaders in formal and non-formal learning, selected policy makers and educational administrators'(S. Murgatroyd with J. Tully, 2015). The external Outcome Evaluation concludes that 'all the Initiatives moved successfully forward, on time and within budget' (N. Kemp and G. Farrell, 2015). Both evaluations confirm that COL is highly respected and well regarded in the field.

The production of *COL in the Commonwealth: 2012-2015 Country Reports* was made possible through collective effort and collaboration. Partners on the ground have diligently provided updates to COL. COL staff have tracked and assessed results obtained from partners through a thorough monitoring and evaluation process. COL's advanced knowledge management systems have enabled us to capture information from numerous sources and synthesise this into the reports that make up this volume. I must particularly commend Alexis Carr for her diligent work in filtering the masses of raw data and converting them into a coherent and meaningful narrative.



Professor Asha S. Kanwar
President and Chief Executive Officer
Commonwealth of Learning



SRI LANKA



CONTEXT

An island nation of about 20.5 million people located off the southern coast of India, Sri Lanka has high literacy rates and a strong network of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Sri Lanka has contributed to COL's budget in the past.



AGREED PRIORITIES

- ▶ Support initiatives in teacher education, quality assurance, open and distance learning (ODL) and higher education
- ▶ Promote rural community development
- ▶ Promote professional development



OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY COL

- ▶ National ODL Policy developed
- ▶ Lifelong Learning for Farmers programme scaled up
- ▶ Five online courses from five key professional development programmes for teachers and teacher educators developed



COL'S WORK RELATED TO MDG TARGETS

National MDG Targets Addressed by COL

- ▶ Make available the benefits of new technologies, especially for information and communications
- ▶ Promote gender equality and empower women
- ▶ Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

COL's Work on Sri Lanka's MDG Targets

- ▶ Policy, training and materials development in open educational resources (OER), information and communication technologies (ICTs), ODL and eLearning is underway
- ▶ The Lifelong Learning for Farmers model aims to empower women and improve the livelihoods and food security of participants



QUICK NOTES

COL Focal Point:

- ▶ Mr S.U. Wijerathne, Ministry of Education

Areas of COL's Work in Sri Lanka:

- ▶ Open Schooling
- ▶ Teacher Education
- ▶ Higher Education
- ▶ Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD)
- ▶ Lifelong Learning for Farmers
- ▶ Healthy Communities



HIGHLIGHTS

COL has identified five core strategies to achieve outcomes and impact: partnerships, capacity, materials, models and policy. In practice, most COL activities incorporate more than one of these strategies and, in some cases, all five. However, for ease of reference, activities have been classified in only one of the five categories.

PARTNERSHIPS

COL partners with government agencies, public institutions, civil society and other organisations to improve and extend teaching and learning services to people in the developing Commonwealth.

- ▶ Ministry of Education
- ▶ Ministry of Higher Education
- ▶ Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development
- ▶ Ministry of Mass Media
- ▶ Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL)
- ▶ National Science Foundation (NSF)
- ▶ Dialog
- ▶ National Apprentice & Industrial Training Authority
- ▶ National Institute of Education
- ▶ University of Jaffna
- ▶ University Grants Commission
- ▶ Department of Export Agriculture
- ▶ The Regional Development Bank
- ▶ The University of Ruhuna
- ▶ MOBITEL
- ▶ Ericsson Pvt. Ltd.
- ▶ Sri Lanka Development Journalists' Forum (SDJF)
- ▶ University of Peradeniya

CAPACITY

Capacity development pervades all COL activities and COL focuses primarily on human resource development.

- ▶ Support to Attend the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) Conference
- ▶ Support to Attend the "Radio for Equitable Education to All" seminar
- ▶ Support to attend Community Radio events
- ▶ Creation and Use of OER in Higher Education workshop
- ▶ Gender Mainstreaming in Open Schools

- ▶ Leadership Development for Women Academics
- ▶ Institutional Capacity-Building workshops on OER-Based eLearning
- ▶ Developing an Online TVET Teacher Training
- ▶ Capacity-Building on Web Radio
- ▶ ICT Leadership workshop
- ▶ Evaluation workshop on the Integration of ICT and OER in Online Education Courses
- ▶ Quality Assurance workshop
- ▶ COMOSA Planning Meeting and Theory of Change workshop
- ▶ Integration of ICT and OER into Teacher Education Programmes
- ▶ Community Learning Programme (CLP) Developer's Certificate

MATERIALS

Materials refer to learning and teaching resources including course materials, toolkits and frameworks. Materials are produced through collaboration with partners, or by partners themselves with COL support.

- ▶ Online Professional Development Courses
- ▶ OER books
- ▶ Commonwealth Executive MBA/MPA
- ▶ OER-based eLearning programme

MODELS

A model is a coherent set of structures and processes that has been shown to work in more than one context to achieve specific results. Models can range from broad approaches to more specific instruments.

- ▶ COL Review and Improvement Model (COL-RIM)
- ▶ Lifelong Learning for Farmers model

POLICIES

A policy is a high-level statement of ambition that specifies the outcomes to be achieved and that guides decision-making through a defined course of action. COL supports the development of policy for organisations and institutions as well as for governments.

- ▶ Quality Guidelines for Open Educational Resources (OER)
- ▶ National ODL Policy
- ▶ National Policy on Community Radio



SRI LANKA



LOOKING FORWARD: 2015–2021

In the lead-up to the 2014 Regional Focal Points Meeting, COL's Focal Point for Sri Lanka was asked to identify the country's top priorities and what COL can do to further support the national agenda of Sri Lanka. The following areas were identified:

- ▶ Increasing of compulsory education age up to 16 years (grade 11) from age 14 (grade 9)
- ▶ Development of full-fledged 1,000 secondary schools island-wide
- ▶ Establishment of child-friendly feeder primary school networks
- ▶ National policy development of Early Childhood Education (ECE) and care and standardisation of pre-school centres and teachers qualifications
- ▶ Improving of the content and quality of textbooks
- ▶ Upgrading of primary and secondary curriculum
- ▶ Improving of national testing and evaluation systems
- ▶ Implementation of programmes on social cohesion and peace education

Appendix: COL's Activities in Sri Lanka

PARTNERSHIPS

Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission in the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development: TVET Partnership

COL has developed a partnership with the **Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission in the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development**, with the goal of developing eLearning materials to contribute to the expansion of access to TVET. From 5 to 8 February 2013, COL had a series of meetings with key ministry officials and stakeholder institutions. COL met with officials from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development, Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission to discuss their proposal and explore possibilities for collaboration on OER eLearning materials for skills training. A meeting was held with the **Deputy Director of Training at the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA)** to discuss the possibility for collaboration on distance and eLearning. The **Institute for Engineering Technology and the Apprenticeship Training Institute** were also visited. COL also visited the **University of Vocational Technology** to discuss the possibility for collaboration on distance and eLearning for both in-service and pre-service TVET teacher training.

Quality Review of the Distance Apprenticeship Programme at the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA)

In June 2013, **Dr Gayathri Jayatilleke** from the Open University of Sri Lanka carried out a quality review of the distance apprenticeship programme at NAITA in Sri Lanka. Her report makes recommendations to improve and strengthen the quality of the programme. NAITA has substantially strengthened its team of writers and course developers for the distance apprenticeship programme.

Support for Quality Science Education in Sri Lanka

In January 2014, COL met with various stakeholders, including **OUSL, National Academy of Science of Sri Lanka (NASSL), Sri Lanka Association for Advancement of Science (SLAAS)** and **National Science Foundation (NSF)** to discuss the needs of improving the quality of science education in Sri Lanka.

Partnership Development with Dialog

On 30 January 2014, COL met with **Mr Sameera** of Dialog (a telecom company, which also runs the educational TV channel Nenasatv) regarding the request from the **Ministry of Education** to supply video programmes for the channel. A meeting between Dialog and **OUSL** was facilitated

PARTNERSHIPS: MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

7th Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF7)

COL sponsored the following people to attend the forum:

Mr Praneeth Bandara Abeysinghe, Dr Shironica Karunanayaka, Dr Sasikala Kugamoorthy and Dr Prasad Senadheera, all of OUSL.

Regional Focal Points Meeting

Mr S.U. Wijerathne represented Sri Lanka at the meeting.

CAPACITY

Support to Attend the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) Conference

Eight candidates (four men and four women) from India, Malaysia, Pakistan and **Sri Lanka** were supported to attend the AAOU conference titled "Expanding Frontiers of Knowledge Through Open Distance Learning in Changing Societies" held in Chiba, Japan, from 16 to 18 October 2012. **Dr Senadheera Prasad** of OUSL attended the conference.

Support for "Radio for Equitable Education to All" Seminar

COL supported four experts from Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan and **Sri Lanka** to attend a seminar titled "Radio for Equitable Education to All," hosted by the Distance Education Programme – Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (DEP-SSA) of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in Delhi from 27 to 29 December 2012. **Professor Vijitha Nanayakkara** of Sri Lanka participated in the conference.

Creation and Use of OER in Higher Education Workshop

At the request of the University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka and COL, in collaboration with the Open University of Sri Lanka, organised a workshop on the creation and use of open educational resources (OER) in higher education. It ran from 13 to 14 March 2013 for 37 participants from 14 state universities, comprising the entire public higher education system in the country. Participants from the **University of Jaffna** set up a Google group for all workshop participants to begin collaborating on OER development and sharing their experiences.

Gender Mainstreaming in Open Schools

To ensure that open schools mainstream gender in their activities, COL organised a COMOSA workshop from 13 to 17 March 2013 in Delhi to discuss the Gender Equality Guidelines developed by a COL consultant. Attending the workshop were 19 representatives from Bangladesh, Belize, Botswana, Canada, India, Kenya, Mozambique, New Zealand, Pakistan, **Sri Lanka**, Tanzania and United Kingdom.

Leadership Development for Women Academics Regional Workshop

COL, in collaboration with OUSL, organised a regional workshop from 18 to 20 March 2013 on leadership development for 24 senior women academics in South Asia. Facilitators of the workshop were **Professor Uma Coomaraswamy** and Professor Madhulika Kaushik. **Eighteen of the participants** were from various universities in Sri Lanka.

Institutional Capacity-Building Workshops on OER-Based eLearning

CEMCA held an institutional capacity-building workshop on OER-based eLearning from 29 January to 1 February 2013 at Wawasan Open University, Malaysia, aimed at developing competencies in integrating OER in teaching and learning, and took steps to develop a course on OER-based eLearning. Twenty-seven teachers from eight ODL institutions in the region, including from Sri Lanka, participated in the workshop. The workshop was facilitated by Professor Som Naidu of Charles Sturt University in Australia. **Dr Shironica Priyanthi Karunanayaka** of the Open University of Sri Lanka attended the workshop.

CEMCA held the second workshop on institutional capacity-building for OER-based eLearning from 9 to 14 June 2013 at WOU, Malaysia. Five modules and four case studies on OER-based eLearning were finalised for editing and deployment online. The workshop was attended by 17 participants, including attendees from India and **Sri Lanka**. The workshop was facilitated by Professor Som Naidu of Charles Sturt University in Australia.

CEMCA supporting OUSL on launching of OER-based eLearning Programme on institutional capacity-building for OER-based eLearning in which organized a training workshop for the online facilitators from 16 to 19 December 2014 at **OUSL**, Sri Lanka. Five modules on OER-based eLearning were used in the training. The workshop was attended by 40 academic staff participated. The workshop was facilitated by Professor Som Naidu of Monash University in Australia.

From 6 to 9 January 2014, CEMCA facilitated a workshop on OER-based eLearning for the prospective facilitators of the upcoming online course at the **Dr B.R. Ambedkar Open University** in Hyderabad. **Dr Shironica Karunanayaka, J.C.N. Rajendra** and **Hemali Uditha W. Rutnayake** from OUSL participated in the workshop and built their capacity in OER facilitation.

Developing an Online TVET Teacher Training Programme

COL consultant **Professor Abtar Kaur Darsha Singh** facilitated a workshop for **12 UNIVOTEC Senior Lecturers** from 27 to 31 January 2014 to provide UNIVOTEC with the expertise to develop an online TVET teacher training programme. From January to March 2015, **Dr Shironica Karunanayaka** from the Open University of Sri Lanka continued the capacity-building with this team, with additional workshop sessions and remote support for materials development. The team is developing an online National Diploma in Technical Teacher Education. This course is intended to expand access to TVET teacher training at UNIVOTEC.

ICT Leadership Workshop

On 6–7 June 2014, **seven Vice-Chancellors of Sri Lanka** and six senior leaders from India and Bangladesh attended the ICT leadership workshop organised by CEMCA and OUSL at Kandy. Instrumental in the workshop were **Mr S.B. Dissanayake**, Minister for Higher Education; **Mr S.U. Wijerathne**, Focal Point (COL); **Professor Gunapala Nanayakkara**, Director General, NIE; **Professor Uma Coomaraswamy**; and **Professor Ranjith Senaratne**, Vice-Chairman, University Grants Commission.

Evaluation Workshop on the Integration of ICT and OER in Online Education Courses

From 1 to 9 June 2014, COL held an evaluation workshop on the integration of ICT and OER in OUSL online education courses.

Quality Assurance Workshop

COL organised a Quality Assurance workshop in New Delhi from 8 to 12 September 2014. **Rasika Balasuriya** and **S. Dunaisingh**, both of NIE, participated in the workshop.

Commonwealth Open Schools Association (COMOSA) Planning Meeting and Theory of Change Workshops

Bangladesh Open University, in collaboration with COL, hosted a COMOSA planning meeting as well as Theory of Change workshops in Dhaka from 30 September to 3 October 2014. **Bellanage Sanath Pujitha** of NIE participated in the meeting and workshops.

Integration of ICT and OER into Teacher Education Programmes

A capacity-building workshop on the integration of ICT and OER into the curricula of teacher education programmes was held at **OUSL**. **Thirty-seven academic staff members** were trained.

Community Learning Programme (CLP) Developer's Certificate

Four regional distance training and mentoring courses have been developed and delivered through a partnership between COL and its Healthy Communities partners as part of the Community Learning Programme (CLP) Developer's Certificate, which will result in new CLP design and delivery.

Two editions of the 5-week "Communication for Development (C4D): Why. How. Now." e-course were run in 2013/2014. In the February to March 2014 edition, **four participants** from Sri Lanka received training.

The 10-week "Research for Planning" e-course was run in 2014. In April to June 2014, **three participants** from Sri Lanka received training.

The 5-week "Communication Channels and Media Forms" e-course was run in 2014. In August 2014, **two participants** (one woman and one man) from Sri Lanka received training resulting in completed CLP plans.

The 6-week Participatory Learning Design (blended) e-course was run in 2014. In September to October 2014, **one participant** (a man) from Sri Lanka received training, which resulted in a completed CLP design document.

The 6-week Scriptwriting and Episode Production (blended) e-course is being run in 2014/2015.

The 5-week Sustainability and Sponsorship e-course is being run in 2015.

Web Radio Workshop

CEMCA, in collaboration with **Sri Lanka Development Journalists' Forum (SDJF)** and **Post-Graduate Institute of Agriculture (PGIA) at the University of Peradeniya, Kandy**, organised a national workshop on Web Radio from 9 to 11 February 2015. Twenty participants attended this hands-on workshop, representing different universities, agriculture departments such as the **University of Colombo, University of Kelaniya, Eastern University, University of Ruhuna, University of Peradeniya, Department of Agriculture, Government of Sri Lanka**, and **Saru Community Radio**.

MATERIALS

Commonwealth Executive MBA/MPA Programmes

Initially launched in 2002, the Commonwealth Executive MBA/MPA programmes were completely updated in 2013, with 12 courses revised and 10 courses rewritten. One new elective on Business Ethics was added, taking the total number of courses available to 23. Eleven partner institutions are currently offering

the CEMBA/CEMPA programme. To date, 24,299 students have enrolled, 11,515 of whom have graduated. For the current triennium, 4,961 are reported to be enrolled, and thus far, 3,814 have graduated.

The Commonwealth Executive MBA/MPA programmes have been offered by the **Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) since their inception in 2002**. COL continues to receive updates on enrolment and graduation figures from partner institutions. In 2012–2014, OUSL had an enrolment of **57 students**, and since 2002 157 students have graduated from the programme.

Online Professional Development Courses

Five online courses from five key professional development programmes for teachers and teacher-educators at **OUSL** were developed.

OER Book

An OER book about the experiences of academics of the **Faculty of Education at OUSL** during the training and implementation of the OER Project was launched on 17 December 2014. The book, *Integrating OER in Educational Practice: Practitioner Stories*, was also released as an OER by OUSL.

MODELS

COL's Review and Improvement Model (COL-RIM)

The COL-RIM verification process was completed for **University of Jaffna (UoJ)** in March 2014. These activities were supported by COL and funded by COMSEC.

Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) Model

OUSL built the capacity of 180 extension officers of the **Department of Export Agriculture** in L3F. According to OUSL, there was a significant expansion of the extent of cultivation and the number of farmers involved in ginger and turmeric cultivation under the L3F programme in one village in the Kandy district. While ginger and turmeric were cultivated in less than 2 acres in 2010, at present more than 70 acres are under cultivation. Similarly, the number of farmers who have been growing ginger and turmeric rose from 9 during 2010 to 150 during 2012/2013. In addition, the project integrated other crops such as vanilla and orchids, and this resulted in reaching 300 village households. More than 60% of the participants are women. The project activity was expanded to two more villages adjacent to the Wathurakumbura. **The Regional Development Bank** has disbursed nearly Rs 1.7 million to the farmers as soft loan

facility to expand the cultivation. This was the first time that the bank provided a loan for ginger and turmeric cultivation in the area. The repayment of the loan at the end of the cultivation season was 100%.

MOBITEL and OUSL reached **500 women** through mobile phones on financial literacy. However, due to poor responses, an alternative strategy has been developed to focus directly on L3F participants and borrowers from banks.

The University of Ruhuna and MOBITEL launched the mushroom cultivation capacity-building programme through mobile phones, which reached **5,583 learners** throughout the country. The L3F participants in Kamburupitiya achieved an average mushroom yield of 353 g per bag from four flushes. This yield level is above the recorded average of 276.8 g per bag from four flushes in the region.

In May 2014, COL had discussions with OUSL and the **University of Ruhuna** in scaling up L3F in Sri Lanka in collaboration with the **Department of Export Agriculture, Department of Agriculture** and the **Regional Development Bank**. A field visit to a L3F village indicated that L3F had been able to contribute in the increased productivity and income for the farmers.

Ericsson Pvt Ltd, one of the major players in mobile phones, has joined OUSL in empowering girls in L3F villages by providing ICT infrastructure as well as capacity-building in L3F villages.

POLICIES

Quality Guidelines for OER

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) is engaged in developing quality guidelines for OER. The objective is to assist users of OER to assess quality from a lens devised by them using the criteria in the guidelines. A regional consultation workshop, hosted by Maulana Azad National Urdu University in Hyderabad 13 to 15 March 2013, brought together 49 experts from the Asian region to discuss and debate the necessity, usefulness, and relevance of the draft criteria and guidelines for quality OERs. **Dr Vijitha Nanayakkara**, Vice-Chancellor of OUSL, attended the meeting

National Policy for ODL in Higher Education

CEMCA participated in a roundtable meeting to review the draft policy for ODL in higher education in Sri Lanka developed by consultant, **Professor Uma Coomaraswamy**. The meeting was inaugurated by **Mr S.B. Dissanayake**, the Minister for Higher Education at the time. The **Vice-Chairman, University Grants Commission** and the **Secretary, Higher Education** were also present.

OUSL led a consultative process with government and other tertiary institutions that resulted in their National ODL Policy.

National Policy on Community Radio

CEMCA in association with **Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum (SDJF)** and the **Ministry of Mass Media** organised a national level consultation on community radio to develop recommendations for a new policy on community broadcasting in Sri Lanka.

LEARNING FOR DEVELOPMENT

COL is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.

VISION: To be the foremost global agency that promotes learning for development

MISSION: To help governments and institutions to expand the scale, efficiency and quality of learning by using open, distance and technology-based approaches

CORE STRATEGIES: Partnerships, capacity, materials, models and policies

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