



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

COUNTRY REPORT
2021-2023 | **CARIBBEAN**
& AMERICAS



Trinidad and
Tobago

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

Trinidad & Tobago is a small state of the Commonwealth, with a largely rural population of over 1.5 million ([World Bank](#), 2022).

COL's work in Trinidad and Tobago is primarily in the areas of higher education through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) network, open schooling, skills for work, gender equality, technology-enabled learning. Learners from Trinidad and Tobago are also participating in COL's free, open online courses and benefitting from other available resources.

PARTNERS

COL's partners in Trinidad and Tobago include:

- Ministry of Education
- University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT)
- University of the West Indies, St Augustine
- Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP)

KEY CONTACTS

FOCAL POINT

Ms Anna M. Singh
Director, Curriculum Planning
and Development Division
Ministry of Education

COL ACTIVITIES BETWEEN JULY 2021 - MAY 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

- National programme launched to scale upskilling based on the success of COL's Skills Online partnerships with Coursera, Grow with Google and Udemy. 9,790 learners have enrolled with 4,060 certificates being issued.

BUILDING NATIONAL RESILIENCE

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

The collaboration between COL and Coursera, Grow with Google and Udemy helped to expand the reach of partners to offer courses to their learners that they would otherwise not have been able to offer. Furthermore, because of the success of the initiative, Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme successfully promoted the programme and the cabinet approved resources for an additional 300 licenses from Coursera. The licenses are being used as part of the new national programme.

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 Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, Minister of Education, was a member of this high-level panel who provided guidance and contributed to the discussions.

A meeting was held with ministers the Hon Nyan Gadsby-Dolly and Hon Lisa Morris-Julian to discuss how COL could support the development of a national open school and propose strategies for learning remediation as schools reopen. (Sep2021)

Government officials from Trinidad and Tobago were sensitised on quality assurance of ODL courses. [Aug2022]

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.

The Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) has submitted a draft of its strategic plan for Technology-Enabled Learning. [Aug2022]

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 Trinidad and Tobago participated in the project in 2021-2022.

COL is supporting the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) to strengthen institutional capacity to design, develop and deliver MOOCs, particularly in areas that contribute to national development in Trinidad and Tobago. A three-day workshop “Supporting MOOC Development at UTT” held in April 2023, saw 38 Faculty, and staff from Quality Assurance, Instructional Support and Technical Support units come together to begin building a series of MOOCs, the first of which “Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management for Law Enforcement” will be offered later in the year.

38 academic and senior administrative staff from the University of Trinidad and Tobago participated in the workshop on MOOC Design and Delivery held between April 17–19, 2023.

IMPROVING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

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

COL's partnership with Coursera, Udemy and Grow with Google continues to offer nominated learners this vast range of courses - a pathway for lifelong learning and growth and enhancing skills for employment and entrepreneurship. Since July 2021, 9,790 learners from Trinidad & Tobago have enrolled with 4,060 certificates being issued.

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. Three delegates from Trinidad and Tobago attended the **Tenth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF10)**, the first-ever hybrid Forum held in Calgary, Canada from 14-16 September 2022. All three were sponsored by COL. They included: Amia Conrad Christopher, Ministry of Education; Leroy Hill, University of West Indies - St. Augustine; Patrice Parris Searles, The National Training Agency.

The **Regional Focal Points Meeting for the Caribbean** was held in Kingston, Jamaica from 30-31 January 2023. COL's Focal Point Mrs Anna M. Singh from the Ministry of Education participated. The meeting set out to update everyone on COL's work in the region and wider Commonwealth, to consult 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 but 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.

PUBLICATIONS OF RELEVANCE

Report on the Regional Focal Points Meeting – Caribbean (2023) <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5288>



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