

# **The right to education means the right to a qualified teacher**

**Video Message**

**World Teachers' Day  
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**by  
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Greetings from the Commonwealth of Learning as we celebrate World Teachers' Day. This year's theme – "The right to education means the right to a qualified teacher" – was chosen to mark the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, where education is recognised as a fundamental right—where no one must be left behind. Qualified teachers are critical to helping us achieve this aspiration.

But even today there are an estimated 262 million children and youth still out of school globally, and according to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, the world needs almost 69 million new teachers if we are to realise SDG 4—which means achieving inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030. It will not be possible to train these numbers through conventional means. Innovative and alternative approaches are required. By harnessing the potential of technologies, COL has worked with governments and institutions around the world to increase the number of qualified teachers by providing effective training at lower costs.

How can we close the 'teacher gap' and increase the number of trained and qualified teachers? Let me highlight some of COL's interventions in addressing these challenges.

First, retraining and reskilling teachers in the age of technology is important. COL developed the Commonwealth Certificate for Teacher ICT Integration, to help teachers to integrate ICT into teaching policies and practices. Mr Edward Ayo, a teacher at Dara Christian High School in Uganda, benefitted from this programme. After completing the course, Mr Ayo used game-based and project-based learning in teaching biology and chemistry, which resulted in better learning outcomes, even for students who had previously scored poorly. COL launched massive open online courses on 'An Introduction to Technology enabled Learning' in partnership with Athabasca university, Canada and more than 5000 teachers around the world were able to update their pedagogical knowledge and skills.

Second, COL promotes the development and use of Open Education Resources or OER, especially for teacher training. In response to the challenges of teaching English in Africa, COL developed Open Resources for English Language Teaching to provide high quality multimedia resources. This has created a community of teachers in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda who use these resources as well as develop, adapt and share their own materials. This has resulted in improved learner participation and engagement. COL launched the Green Teacher programme in

India and Nigeria to help teachers inculcate environmental concerns among children from the early stages. This content is OER and can be adopted/adapted by teachers anywhere in the world.

Third, COL worked with UNICEF to train teachers in Child Friendly Schools methodologies in eight countries. In Nigeria, this project was integrated in the national pre-service teacher training programme. Research shows that this has resulted in improved teaching outcomes for the teacher trainees and better performance of students in maths.

All these interventions have resulted in more qualified teachers and improved teaching practices.

The poet Yeats once said, “Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire.” I’m sure all of us remember that teacher who inspired us to go beyond the confines of our reality and reach for the stars! COL salutes the hard work and dedication of teachers around the world and will continue to support them as they inspire citizens of the Commonwealth to become lifelong learners. As we reflect on our progress and find ways to address remaining challenges, let us collaborate and work together to ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn from a qualified teacher who opens up the infinite possibilities and excitement of our wonderful world.

Happy Teachers’ Day!