



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

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



Belize

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

Belize is a small state of the Commonwealth with a population of about 405,000. It is the only Commonwealth state that lies within Central America. Much of the country's natural environment is unspoilt, and there is a strong emphasis on environmental education ([World Bank](#), 2022).

COL's work in Belize 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 and technology-enabled learning. Learners from Belize are also participating in COL's free, open online courses and benefitting from other available resources.

PARTNERS

COL's partners in Belize include:

- Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology
- Ministry of Youth, Sports and Transport (MYST)
- University of Belize

COL ACTIVITIES BETWEEN JULY 2021 - MAY 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

- 200 boys received 'life skills training'

KEY CONTACTS

FOCAL POINT

Dr Yvonne Palma
Director, Tertiary and Post
Secondary Education Services
Ministry of Education, Culture,
Science and Technology

BUILDING NATIONAL RESILIENCE

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

COL trained 65 Belize Ministry staff in open school management and 19 Ministry staff in M&E ahead of an ongoing pilot using 15 AptusPi devices in 15 schools. An M&E strategy and baseline report were also completed ahead of the pilot.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology to promote digital education skills amongst students and teachers, the Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) programme was implemented in Belize. This included a three-week training of trainers workshop for teachers from 21 schools in Belize. 41 teachers (25 male and 16 female) participated in the online training. COL's C-DELTA platform received the Brandon Hall Gold Excellence in Learning Award 2021.

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.

Trainers from the University of Belize have offered training to UB lecturers and Faculty from other government institutions on COL's course "Designing and Developing Online Assessments." To date, 22 persons have successfully completed the course, while an additional 40 are enrolled in the current cohort. [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 Belize participated in the project in 2021-2022. Participants from Belize completed the course on 'Leadership for ODL in TVET.' On successful completion of the course, participants were equipped with abilities to (1) develop/review their ODL strategies, (2) develop action plans for implementation of the strategies and (3) implement the strategies/action plans.

COL conducted two workshops for ten staff members at the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Transport (MYST) in Belize on Results Based Management (RBM). [Apr2023]

IMPROVING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

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

COL's collaboration with the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Transport (MYST), through a project, 'Technology Training for at-Risk Males 14-17 years in Belize', is supporting young men in Belize City with the opportunity for gainful employment, as well as facilitating many to return to school.

- provided training to 200 underserved boys in 'life skills training' to increase quality education opportunities and support their re-entry into school. [Oct2022]
- engaged 34 businesses for boys to apply for a 6-month apprenticeship for skills training in graphic design and customer service. [Feb2023]

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. One delegate from Belize, Maxine McKay from the University of Belize, 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.

The **Regional Focal Points Meeting for the Caribbean** was held in Kingston, Jamaica from 30-31 January 2023.

PUBLICATIONS OF RELEVANCE

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



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