



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

COL in the Commonwealth

**2012–2015
Mauritius**

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
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MAURITIUS



CONTEXT

An island off the southeast coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean, Mauritius is a small state of the Commonwealth, with a population of about 1.26 million. Mauritius' history with COL dates back to the very early days of COL, when Sir John Daniel (later, COL's third President) conducted a national consultancy in Mauritius. Also, the first President of COL, the late Professor James Maraj, served as Executive Director of the Mauritius Tertiary Education Commission, 1995–1997. The country is a regular contributor to COL's budget.



AGREED PRIORITIES

- ▶ Support reconfiguring the Mauritius College of the Air into an Open University
- ▶ Strengthen the provision of tertiary education
- ▶ Continue support through Lifelong Learning for Farmers in the development of entrepreneurship programmes for women
- ▶ Provide capacity-building in technical areas of special relevance to small states through VUSSC



OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY COL

- ▶ Lifelong Learning for Farmers model scaled up through innovative approaches such as Farmers' Kiosks
- ▶ 11 new VUSSC courses made available
- ▶ Open University of Mauritius offered the Bachelor in Business and Entrepreneurship



COL'S WORK RELATED TO MDG TARGETS

National MDG Targets Addressed by COL

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

COL's Work on Mauritius' MDG Targets

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



QUICK NOTES

COL Focal Point:

- ▶ Mrs Nema Devi Goorah, Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology

Areas of COL's Work in Mauritius:

- ▶ Open Schooling
- ▶ Higher Education
- ▶ Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)
- ▶ Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD)
- ▶ Lifelong Learning for Farmers
- ▶ eLearning



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 Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology
- ▶ Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
- ▶ Ministry of Education and Human Resources
- ▶ Tertiary Education Commission
- ▶ South African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE)
- ▶ Open University of Mauritius (OUM)
- ▶ University of Mauritius (UoM)
- ▶ Agriculture Research and Extension Unit
- ▶ Food and Agricultural Research Council
- ▶ Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute
- ▶ Mauritius Qualifications Authority

CAPACITY

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

- ▶ Rapid eLearning Techniques training
- ▶ Training in capacity-building of women through ODL
- ▶ Monitoring and Evaluation for VUSSC
- ▶ Online Content Development and Teaching workshop
- ▶ Research Skills workshop
- ▶ Gender-Based Violence course

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.

- ▶ Legislative Drafting Programme
- ▶ 11 new VUSSC courses
- ▶ VUSSC BSc in Business and Entrepreneurship
- ▶ Women and Development interactive DVDs

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)
- ▶ Transnational Qualifications Framework
- ▶ 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.

- ▶ National level OER policy development

OTHER

- ▶ Speeches and presentations



LOOKING FORWARD: 2015–2021

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

- ▶ Assurance of quality in ODL
- ▶ Capacity-building to facilitate effective integration of ICT-pedagogy in higher education
- ▶ Training to increase understanding of the use of ICT to improve contents of curriculum
- ▶ Development of an ICT policy and strategy for the Higher Education sector
- ▶ ODL and ICTs to promote science and technology for formal and non-formal education
- ▶ Developing indicators to assess the use of ICT in higher education
- ▶ Training of staff in the: pedagogical materials development; conduct of research and publication in impact-factor journals; instructional design; design of eLearning platform; quality assurance; student support and motivation; and assessment and evaluation

Appendix: COL's Activities in Mauritius

PARTNERSHIPS

COMOSA (Commonwealth Open Schools Association)

Dr Kaviraj Sharma Sukon started preliminary discussions with COL during the SADC-CDE Advisory Board meeting held in Lesotho on 18 September 2012 about establishing an open school faculty within **OUM**. In March 2014, COL had a meeting with **Dr Kaviraj Sharma Sukon** regarding assistance with the establishment of the Open School Faculty.

VUSSC (Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth)

COL has been providing ongoing support to the **University of Mauritius (UoM)** and the **Open University of Mauritius (OUM)** in the delivery VUSSC courses through their institutions.

INVEST Africa Community Learning Network

COL supports an INVEST online community of practice called the Community Learning Network (CLN) which currently has 1,182 members. **Four members are from Mauritius** and are engaged in informal learning and collaboration.

Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE)

COL and the Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work collaboratively for the period 2012–2015 to promote the work of SADC-CDE. SADC-CDE will continue to serve as a centre of expertise in ODL for Southern Africa. **Ms Sushita Gokool-Ramdoe**, Acting Head, Distance Education and Open Learning Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), has been engaged by COL for an evaluation of SADC-CDE, which is currently underway.

PARTNERSHIPS: MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

Regional Focal Points Meeting

Mrs Nirmala Nababsing, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology, represented Mauritius at the meeting.

OER Policy Forum

From 22 to 24 May 2013, COL, UNESCO and the South African Departments of Basic Education (DBE) and Higher Education and Training (DHET) hosted a Southern African OER Policy Forum in Johannesburg, South Africa, which had two main objectives:

1. to provide a forum to share ideas about the challenges being faced in enhancing access to and quality of education in

Southern Africa and about how OER may be used to tackle some of these challenges; and

2. to identify and discuss national and regional educational policies that can support OER use, as well as factors that promote or impede development and implementation of sustainable OER policies.

It is part of COL's OER policy agenda and commitment to support the implementation of the Paris OER declaration. The intention is to follow up this regional meeting with country-level consultations and workshops aimed at supporting the development of country-level OER policies. Attending the forum were **Ms Nirmala Nababsing**, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology and **Dr Sushita Gokool-Ramdoe**, Acting Head of Distance Education and Open Learning, Tertiary Education Commission.

eLearning Stakeholders Meetings

COL visited various stakeholders in June 2013 to explore areas of support for eLearning. Meetings were held with **Dr Rajesh Jeetah**, Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology; **Ms Nirmala Nababsing**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology; **Mr Ricaud Auckbur**, Director of eEducation, Ministry of Education and Human Resources; **Dr Sushita Gokool-Ramdoe**, Acting Head Distance Education and Open Learning, Tertiary Education Commission; **Dr Kaviraj Sharma Sukon**, Director-General, Open University of Mauritius; and **Dr Roshun Dhurbarrylall**, Academic Affairs Division, Open University of Mauritius.

CEMBA/CEMPA Board Meetings

COL organised face-to-face meetings of the Academic Board (AB) and the Executive Governing Board of the CEMBA/CEMPA consortium from 26 to 27 October 2013 in **Mauritius** in order to strengthen the network of CEMBA/CEMPA partners and enlarge the consortium by networking with COL partners in the region. The 24th meeting of the Academic Board and the meeting of the Executive Governing Board were held with 12 members, representing nine of the 11 partner institutions. **Dr Roshun Dhurbarrylall**, Dean Academic Affairs, Open University of Mauritius, represented Mauritius at the meeting.

VUSSC Interlocutors Meeting

The VUSSC Interlocutors meet every three years to review developments, achievements and lessons learned. The VUSSC Interlocutors Meeting coincides with the Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF). PCF7 was held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 2 to 6 December 2013. At this meeting, Interlocutors participated

in a half-day impact evaluation workshop with COL's impact evaluators, Dr Stephen Murgatroyd and Ms Janet Tully. Highlights of the Interlocutors Meeting included a discussion of the post-MDGs (Millennium Development Goals), current VUSSC resources, and the importance of gender in the VUSSC initiative. At the close of the meeting, the following countries expressed interest in offering VUSSC courses: Barbados, Vanuatu, Namibia, St. Lucia, Antigua & Barbuda, Maldives, Grenada and Dominica. Mauritius was not represented at the meeting.

SADC-CDE Meetings

The SADC-CDE Advisory Board Meeting was held in Lesotho on 18 September 2012. Board members approved the Strategic Plan for 2012–2015. **Dr Kaviraj Sharma Sukon**, a member of the Board and the Director-General of Open University of Mauritius, attended the meeting.

SADC-CDE held its Annual Board Meeting for 2013, represented by six countries, on 23 May 2013. The Board meets on a rotational basis to review its activities of the past year, approve new activities and direct the operations of the Centre. Apologies were received that Mauritius was unable to attend the meeting.

On 17 to 18 March 2014, COL attended the SADC-CDE Advisory Committee Meeting in Mauritius. **Dr Ayesha Jeewa and Dr Kaviraj Sharma Sukon** represented Mauritius at the meeting.

Tertiary Education Commission ODL Workshop

In May 2014, COL attended a workshop organized by the **Tertiary Education Commission** to showcase how Higher Education Institutions in Mauritius were using ODL to reach more people.

CAPACITY

Lifelong Learning for Farmers Rapid eLearning Techniques Training

COL engaged **Mr Mohammad Issack Santally** of the University of Mauritius to conduct a series of three-day training workshops from 5 May to 21 June 2012 for **60 officials** from the **Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (MGECDWF)** and the **Agriculture Research and Extension Unit (AREU)** in Rapid eLearning Techniques. Based on the training, the 60 participants developed Interactive Open and Distance Learning packages during July–August 2012, and the materials were reviewed on 24 August 2012. On the same day, **Ms Marie-Lise How Fok Cheung**, Permanent Secretary of MGECDWF, and **Mr J.P. Teeluck**, Director of AREU, distributed certificates to the officials who completed the training course.

Training in Capacity-Building of Women through ODL

MGECDWF trained **100 officers** in the ministry on capacity-building of women in Mauritius through ODL.

Monitoring and Evaluation for VUSSC

As part of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) strategy for VUSSC, COL organised an M&E Workshop in Lesotho from 10 to 14 December 2012. The objectives of the workshop were to:

- ▶ enhance the capacity of Interlocutors and implementers in M&E;
- ▶ provide a framework to institutionalise M&E; and
- ▶ collect data on VUSSC activities.

Attending the workshop were **Mr Roshun Dhurbarrall** of OUM and **Dr Sushita Gokool-Ramdoo** of the Tertiary Education Commission.

Online Content Development and Teaching Workshop

COL organised a five-day workshop for 28 staff on Effective Online Content Development and Teaching and conducted sessions on OER, licencing and learner support at **OUM** from 30 September to 4 October 2013.

Research Skills Workshop

A five-day workshop on research skills was held from 5 to 9 May 2014 at the **UoM**. The aim of the workshop was to empower academics to publish in reputable research journals.

Gender-based Violence Course: Training of Trainers

In 2014, **MGECDWF** in Mauritius launched a course on gender-based violence as a part of its Lifelong Learning for Farmers programme and trained **100 officers of the ministry** to integrate the course in building the capacity of women in Mauritius.

MATERIALS

Commonwealth Executive MBA/MPA Programmes

The **Open University of Mauritius (OUM)** is offering the CEMBA/CEMPA programme. 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. **Thirty-eight students from OUM** registered for the initial offering of the programme. COL continues to receive

updates on enrolment and graduation figures from partner institutions.

Legislative Drafting Programme

OUM has expressed interest in licensing COL's Legislative Drafting Programme. The Legislative Drafting Programme, developed jointly with the Commonwealth Secretariat, London, is offered by COL through partner universities in the Commonwealth. The courses were revised in 2002 and then revised and completely updated again in 2013. The student version of the programme has been converted to OER and is freely downloadable from the COL website for use by institutions, academics, learners and professionals who want to develop competencies in legislative drafting.

New VUSSC Courses

During 2013–2014, 11 VUSSC courses were completed: Master's in Educational Leadership, Bachelor's in Business and Entrepreneurship, Diploma in Agriculture, Linux for IT Managers, Facilitating Online Instruction, and Sustainable Tourism. Courses are available to all VUSSC member states on the VUSSC website. Approximately 49,000 people have been reached or trained, including senior officials, educators and over 1,300 learners enrolled in VUSSC-developed courses and programmes. **UoM** will be offering the VUSSC Master's in Educational Leadership in 2014. The **OUM** is offering the Bachelor's in Business and Entrepreneurship.

VUSSC Postgraduate Diploma in Education

Senior officials of the small states identified a need to develop a teacher education programme, especially at the postgraduate level, to help address the acute shortage of teachers in most of the small states and the lack of training programmes in most teacher training institutions. COL therefore facilitated a workshop, in collaboration with the National University of Samoa, to develop a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). It ran from 17 June to 3 July 2013 in Samoa, with 28 participants from 14 countries. Much of the course was developed using OER.

Women and Development Interactive DVDs

MGECDWF produced the first module of an interactive DVD based on the themes of the African Women's Decade, 2010–2020. The DVD was released by the **Prime Minister of Mauritius**. The ministry has worked out the contents of the second DVD, entitled "Fam ek sanzman climatik" (the role of women in mitigating the impact of climate change). The DVD is being produced in collaboration with the **Virtual Centre for Innovative Learning Technologies**.

MODELS

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

COL-RIM is currently being implemented by **UoM** and the verification phase is expected to conclude in 2015.

Transnational Qualifications Framework

The **Mauritius Qualifications Authority** has been collaborating with VUSSC in implementing the TQF and has also referenced its NQF against the TQF.

Lifelong Learning for Farmers

MGECDWF and **AREU** are undertaking activities to reach 50,000 women and farmers in women's empowerment and sustainable agriculture through the L3F initiative.

The **Mauritius Food and Agricultural Research Council (FARC)** and the affiliated **AREU** have been working with COL to support new L3F learning opportunities for farmers in Mauritius. In September 2013, COL was on hand for the launch of Farmers' Kiosks that support learning. The kiosks use multimedia to display information on good agricultural practices.

AREU launched ODL as a strategy for strengthening its extension activities. It entered into an agreement with COL to develop its capacity in eLearning using multimedia-based ODL materials and incorporating different delivery methods, including video and audio, and using mobile phone potential as an eLearning interface, given the high mobile phone penetration among the farming community.

In May 2014, COL conducted a workshop in which senior personnel from the **Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI)** and from **MGECDWF** participated and assessed the progress of the projects supported by COL. Strategies to strengthen Lifelong L3F and the role of women in agriculture and other development spheres using ODL were identified.

Based on case studies, an evaluation report of **MGECDWF** was completed during September 2014, which showed that ODL enhances a person's capacity to understand, internalise and translate knowledge acquired into concrete actions.

POLICIES

National Level OER Policy Development

In March 2014, a two-day workshop was held to develop key OER policy positions for Mauritius, formulate proposals for open licensing frameworks to be developed by the State Law Office, and identify technical requirements and a draft plan for an OER platform.

OTHER

Speeches and Presentations

The President and CEO of COL gave a video presentation on “Open University of Mauritius: A University for the 21st Century” at the inauguration of **OUM** on 22 April 2013, held in Mauritius.

The President and CEO of COL gave a keynote presentation at the COL–Tertiary Education Commission workshop on 20 May 2014, and gave an inaugural speech and presentation on COL at the Focal Points Meeting on 21 May. The President also called on the two ministers and met with key stakeholders during the visit.

In December 2014, COL Education Specialist–Teacher Education attended the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA) conference on Open and Distance Learning (ODL): Towards Sustainable Development in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region; and also presented a keynote address, “ODL Innovations and Best Practices for Sustainable Development.”

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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