



## FOCUS ON MALDIVES



# 2021-24



COL's work in the Maldives is primarily in the areas of higher education through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) network, technology-enabled learning, and benefits from programmes under the activities of the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA). Learners from the Maldives are also benefitting from COL's free, open online courses and other openly available resources.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Minister of Education for the Maldives, Dr Ismail Shafeeu, co-chaired a COL Session at the 22CCEM Meeting of Education Ministers in London, UK on the topic of Digitalisation and the Future of Education.
- 200 AptusPi devices distributed among teachers in 74 schools to provide offline access open educational resources (OER).
- National Institute of Education supported under IT Augmentation project to develop national resilience and integrate blended learning and OER.

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. We support the governments and institutions in the use of appropriate, affordable technologies to improve and expand learning for sustainable development. During its current plan (2021-27), 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 currently 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 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; 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 member country. These are:

1. Building National Resilience
2. Strengthening Institutions
3. Improving Lives and Livelihoods.

## KEY CONTACTS

### FOCAL POINT

Mr Ahmed Mausoom  
Education Development Professional Foreign  
Relations Section  
Ministry of Education

## PARTNERS

COL's partners in Maldives include:

- Ministry of Education
- National Institute of Education
- Islamic University of Maldives
- Villa College

## REGIONAL CENTRE

COL's regional centre, the [Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia \(CEMCA\)](#), is located in India and was established in 1994 to promote the meaningful, relevant, and appropriate use of media to serve the education and training needs of Commonwealth member states of Asia. Over the years, COL-CEMCA widened its scope to embrace emerging educational technologies, and through activities with partners in eight countries, has helped institutions leverage ODL for increased access to education and building capacity for accreditation. COL-CEMCA has been a) building the capacity of institutions to transition to online and blended learning; b) Supporting gender-responsive skills development for livelihoods; and c) developing innovations in a range of technologies from Community Radio to AI-based solutions for reaching the last mile.

COL-CEMCA's Advisory Council is responsible for broad policy formulation in the programme areas. It also provides informed guidance, monitors and evaluates COL-CEMCA's progress, and suggests ways and means for improving its performance. Representatives from Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Malaysia, Singapore, and Sri Lanka currently serve on the Council.

## BUILDING NATIONAL RESILIENCE

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

On 17 May 2024, the Minister of Education for the Maldives, Dr Ismail Shafeeu, co-chaired a COL Session with the Minister of Education (Seychelles) at the 22nd Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (22CCEM) in London, UK on the topic of Digitalisation and the Future of Education. The high-level meeting included a large group of Commonwealth Education Ministers and officials considering the digital divide, digital skills and case studies of success in digital transformation.

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

In partnership with the Ministry of Education, a three-week online course concluded in September 2022 on the use of COL's AptusPi, a low-cost device that allows educators and learners to connect to digital learning platforms and content without the need for grid electricity or Internet access. Sixty-seven teachers completed the course. Two-hundred AptusPi devices were distributed among teachers in 74 schools to provide offline access to OER.

## STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS

COL is supporting partner institutions to strengthen its ODL systems and capacities for providing quality education and training.

### Using OER and blended learning to improve quality

COL supported the Islamic University of Maldives (IUM) to undertake a systematic approach to institutionalising TEL through policy development and capacity building. Using a baseline study, IUM developed and approved a TEL policy as a collaborative process. With COL support, an institutional OER Repository was developed for the University.

COL is supporting the National Institute of Education (NIE) to mainstream TEL and to improve the quality of teaching and learning through the IT Augmentation project. 23 (16F/7M) faculty staff participated in the Workshop on

“Policy Development for TEL” in March 2023. In May 2023, the Director (Education) conducted a workshop on ‘Blended Learning Design and Open Educational Resources’ which was attended by 26 faculty and staff members (7M/19F).

Villa College, with the support of COL, organised a workshop in late 2021 on the H5P tool for creating interactive digital learning materials. 26 teachers participated in this workshop.

Over 120 teachers from Maldives have engaged in several teacher training COL MOOCs.

## 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. The Tenth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF10), the first-ever hybrid Forum, was held in Calgary, Canada from 14–16 September 2022. The Honourable Dr Aishath Ali, Minister of Education and the Honourable Ahmed Mujahid, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education, Government of the Republic of Maldives, were both active participants at PCF10. Dr Ali chaired the keynote address, "Building Resilience" and was part of the Panel: Transforming Education for Climate Change. Both Ministers also participated in the Ministerial Roundtable organised by COL.

COL-CEMCA's Advisory Council (CAC) functions as an advisory body of COL on COL-CEMCA's affairs and is responsible for broad policy formulation in the programme areas. The Advisory Council meets once a year keeping in view the exigencies of the business. Mr Ahmed Mausoom from the Ministry of Education, Maldives, participated in the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Advisory Council Meeting organised by COL-CEMCA in New Delhi, India, in December 2022 and 2023.

COL's Regional Focal Points Meeting for Asia was held in New Delhi, India from 27–28 December 2022. COL Focal Point, Mr Mausoom, participated in the two-day meeting.

Mr Hussain Majid of the Ministry of Education, Maldives, participated in the International Conference on Perspectives and Innovations in Open and Distance Learning (ODL). The conference was jointly organised by the National Institute of Open Schooling and COL-CEMCA in April 2024 in India. This hybrid event

brought together over 250 participants, including educators, researchers, policymakers, and industry experts from five Commonwealth nations, to explore the latest trends and innovations in ODL. It included three Plenary Sessions, two Virtual Technical Sessions, 14 in-person Technical Sessions, and an Open House discussion on international collaboration in ODL.

COL-CEMCA organised a month-long online workshop on 'Design Thinking and Innovation in Teaching and Training' to assist higher education and vocational training institutions in the capacity building of their faculty members/trainers. The workshop was attended by 114 participants from five countries (Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Maldives, and Sri Lanka), who were educators from technical and engineering streams, business schools, and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) network.

COL, in partnership with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), India organised an international workshop in June 2023 with a focus on the adoption of the gender-green teacher (GGT) programme. The workshop attracted 49 principals and senior professors from Africa (The Gambia, Ghana, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Uganda) and Asia (Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka). As part of the workshop, each participating institution developed an action plan to implement the GGT programme in their respective countries, ensuring that the acquired knowledge and skills translate into practical teaching strategies.

## PUBLICATIONS OF RELEVANCE

**Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) Annual Report: 2022-2023**  
<http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5614>

**Commonwealth Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) Annual Report: 2021-2022**  
<http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5301>

**Gender Profile 2023: Maldives**  
<http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5543>

**Handbook on Online Education in Commonwealth Asia (CEMCA)**  
<http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5259>

**Report of the Baseline Study on Technology-Enabled Learning at the Islamic University of Maldives**  
<http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5257>

**Report on Baseline Study of Technology-Enabled Learning at the National Institute of Education**  
<http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5379>

**Report on the Regional Focal Points Meeting – Asia**  
<http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5228>

**Transforming Education for Climate Action: Report to Commonwealth Ministers of Education**  
<https://doi.org/10.56059/11599/4068>



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