



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

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



Barbados

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

Barbados is a small state of the Commonwealth and the most eastern of the Caribbean islands, with a population of just over 281,000 ([World Bank](#), 2022).

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

PARTNERS

COL's partners in Barbados include:

- Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training
- Ministry of Labour and Social Partnership Relations
- Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies (CANTA)
- Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO)
- University of the West Indies Open Campus

COL ACTIVITIES BETWEEN JULY 2021 - MAY 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

- National programme launched to scale up skilling based on the success of COL's Skills Online partnerships with Coursera, Grow with Google and Udemy.
- Two TVET institutions have developed institutional ODL strategies and action plans.

BUILDING NATIONAL RESILIENCE

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

The COL-Coursera Workforce Recovery project was introduced to skill and reskill citizens around the Commonwealth. Building on the success of this partnership, Barbados is one of three governments in the Caribbean that launched a national programme to scale upskilling.

KEY CONTACTS

BOARD MEMBER

Senator the Honourable Kay S. McConney

Minister of Education,
Technological and Vocational
Training

FOCAL POINT

Dr Ramona Archer-Bradshaw

Chief Education Officer
Ministry of Education,
Technological and Vocational
Training

A 2-day meeting was held in Barbados from February 27-28, 2023 in partnership 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. COL supported the attendance of members from all 12 commonwealth Caribbean countries - 23 government officials (10M/13F) who 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.

COL supported the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) to develop and offer two online training courses on the Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy and Development Framework and Multi-Hazard Risk Management Guide for the Caribbean Tourism Sector. The courses are now available on the CTO learning hub: the Caribbean Tourism Institute. [May2022]

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 Barbados participated in the project in 2021-2022. Both Barbados Community College and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Institute of Technology have developed institutional ODL strategies and action plans.

IMPROVING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

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

COL's partnerships with Coursera, Udemy and Grow with Google continue 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, 127 certificates have been issued to learners from Barbados under the Skills Online programme.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

COL invited Sherry Maynard from the University of the West Indies to participate in the **4th Pan-Commonwealth Training Programme on Women and Leadership in ODL** in August 2022, in Penang, Malaysia, including an online workshop earlier in the year. The workshop theme was 'Women Leaders: Shaping the future for a sustainable world' with three sub-themes-Leadership, ICTs and Climate Change.

The **Regional Focal Points Meeting for the Caribbean** was held in Kingston, Jamaica from 30-31 January 2023. COL's Focal Point, Dr Ramona Ericka Archer-Bradshaw, Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education, Technological & Vocational Training, 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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