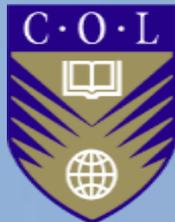


The Role of Focal Points



Dr Mairette Newman

Education Specialist: VUSSC, Commonwealth of Learning

Regional Focal Points Meeting - CARIBBEAN

Jamaica | 30-31 January 2023

Understanding the Role of the COL Focal Point

- What roles do Focal Points perform
 - for COL ?
 - for their country?
- What challenges do Focal Points face?
- What can COL do to better support Focal Points in their role?



Group photo from 2020 meeting in St Lucia



**How much do we know about
the Commonwealth of Learning?**

Quiz

Can you correctly name
these COL staff members



**Ms Waranuch “Nicky”
Tanubamrungsuk,
Programme Assistant
VUSSC**

- **Dr Venkataraman Balaji,
Vice-President**



Who is the Caribbean representative on COL's Board of Governors?

- Senator the Honourable Kay S. McConney
Minister of Education, Technological and Vocational Training
Barbados





TOP RESOURCES FOR:

- > [MINISTERS & OFFICIALS](#)
- > [INSTITUTIONS](#)
- > [LEARNERS](#)

SEARCH



Learning for Sustainable Development

WHO WE ARE | WHAT WE DO | WHAT WE OFFER

What is COL's tagline

The Commonwealth of Learning empowers people through learning that leads to economic growth, social inclusion and



Search



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True or False?

COL is voluntarily funded by member countries



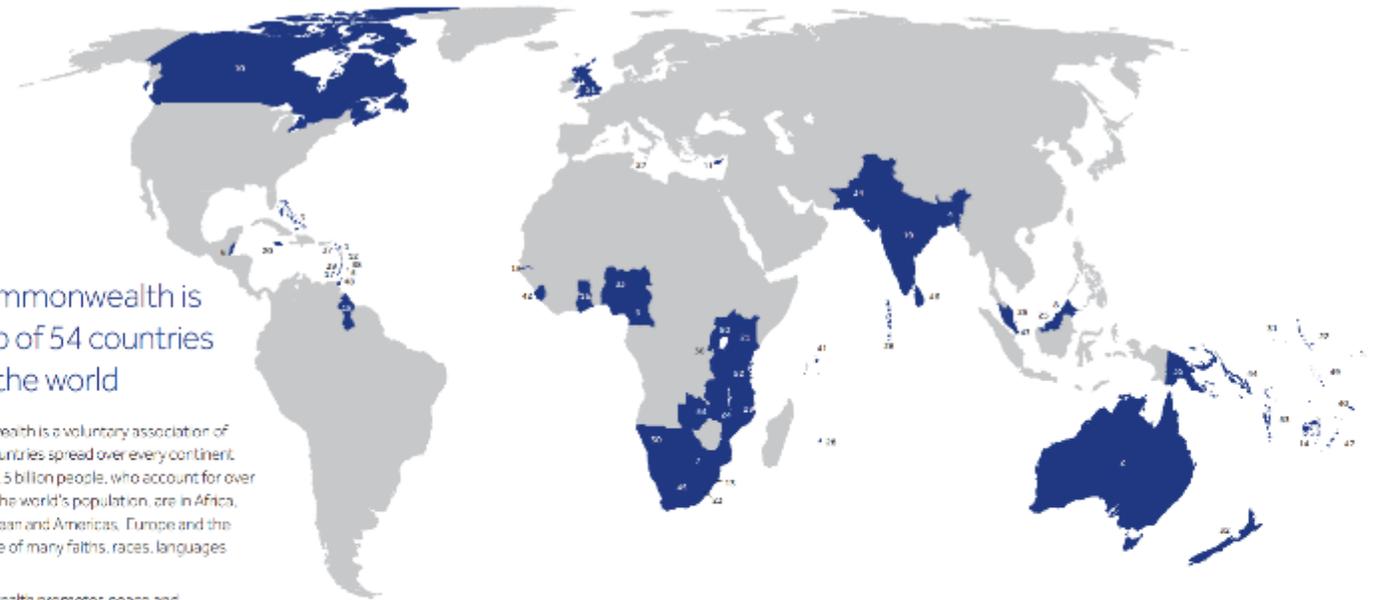
The Commonwealth

The Commonwealth is made up of 54 countries around the world

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of independent countries spread over every continent and ocean. Its 2.5 billion people, who account for over 30 per cent of the world's population, are in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Americas, Europe and the Pacific. They are of many faiths, races, languages and cultures.

The Commonwealth promotes peace and international co-operation, democracy and good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and the improvement of lives through economic and social development.

These values and aspirations are described in the Charter of the Commonwealth. The Charter expresses the commitment of member countries to the development of free and democratic societies and the promotion of peace and prosperity to improve the lives of all Commonwealth people. It also acknowledges the role of civil society in supporting the goals and values of the Commonwealth.



MEMBER COUNTRY	CAPITAL	MEMBER COUNTRY	CAPITAL	MEMBER COUNTRY	CAPITAL
1 ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	St. John's	21 CHINA	Beijing	40 SAHARA	Agadez
2 AUSTRALIA	Canberra	22 COCOTE	Tarawa	41 SENEGAL	St. Louis
3 THE BAHAMAS	Nassau	23 LESOTHO	Maseru	42 SERBIA	Belgrade
4 BANGLADESH	Dhaka	24 MALAWI	Lilongwe	43 SINGAPORE	Singapore
5 BARBADOS	Bridgetown	25 MALAYSIA	Kuala Lumpur	44 SOUTH AFRICA	Pretoria
6 BELIZE	Belize City	26 MALDIVES	Malé	45 SRI LANKA	Columbo
7 BOTSWANA	Gaborone	27 MALTA	Valletta	46 TUNISIA	Tunis
8 BRUNEI DARUSSALAM	Bandar Seri Begawan	28 MALIBU	Port Louis	47 UGANDA	Kampala
9 CANADA	Ottawa	29 MALDIVES	Malé	48 UZBEKISTAN	Tashkent
10 CHINA	Beijing	30 NETHERLANDS	Amsterdam	49 VANUATU	Port Vila
11 CYPRUS	Nicosia	31 NEPAL	Nepal	50 ZAMBIA	Lusaka
12 DOMINICA	Roseau	32 NEW ZEALAND	Wellington	51 UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND	London
13 EGYPT	Cairo	33 NIGERIA	Abuja	52 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	Washington, DC
14 FIJI	Suva	34 PAKISTAN	Islamabad	53 VANUATU	Port Vila
15 THE GAMBIA	Banjul	35 PARAGUAY	Asunción	54 ZAMBIA	Lusaka
16 GHAANA	Akroa	36 PERU	Lima		
17 GHANA	Akroa	37 PHILIPPINES	Manila		
18 GUINIA	Conakry	38 POLAND	Warsaw		
19 HONG KONG	Hong Kong	39 PORTUGAL	Lisbon		
20 JAMAICA	Kingston				

Photo: Commonwealth Secretariat Maps in Minutes™
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COL organises its work into two major sectors:
can you list the initiatives under each sector?

Education

- Open Schooling
- Teacher Education
- Higher Education
- VUSSC.

Skills

- Skills for Work
- Lifelong Learning for Farmers
- Girls Inspire



Name two initiatives that are cross-cutting?

Technology-enabled learning

Gender



OAsis, COL's Open Access Repository

Search the repository ...

Search

<https://oasis.col.org>

What is the name of COL's open access repository?

- What is the name of the scholarly journal that COL publishes three times per year?

- What is the name of the COL newsletter that you receive three times per year?

The Journal of Learning for Development (JL4D)



In 2022 COL launched a new platform offering short self-paced micro-courses

What is the name of that platform?

Micro-courses for Success

Building 21st century skills for teaching, learning and employability

Join for Free



Introduction to Open Schooling



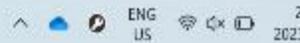
Motivating and Supporting Online Learners



Quality Assurance of Blended and Online Learning



Foundations of Assessing Learners Online



COL COMMONS

<https://colcommons.org/>

COL has a regional office in Delhi called CEMCA.



About Us What We Do Resources Media Centre Strategic Plan

Commonwealth of Learning

Hosted by the Government of Canada and headquartered in Vancouver, Canada, The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is the world's only intergovernmental organisation solely concerned with the promotion and development of distance education and open learning. COL helps developing Commonwealth countries increase their access to learning using distance education and appropriate technologies.

In 1987, Commonwealth Heads of Government received a report entitled, Towards a Commonwealth of Learning: A proposal to create the University of the Commonwealth for Co-operation in Distance Learning. Based on the findings of that report and a subsequent one from a working group chaired by John Danie, leaders agreed to establish a Commonwealth institution to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.

Their vision was that the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) should be in the vanguard of using OCL and information and



The Commonwealth of Learning empowers people through learning that leads to economic growth, social inclusion and environmental cooperation.



COL reaches over 7000 vulnerable girls in 100 schools for a livelihood
Using business: The Power of the Profession
Building the Right Experience for Young Teachers in Teachers in Rural Teacher Day

There are four other regional centres . Where are they located?

- Botswana – SADC-CDE
- Fiji - PACFOLD
- Nigeria - RETRIDOL
- Malta – 3CL



Understanding the Role of the COL Focal Point

- What roles do Focal Points perform
 - for COL ?
 - for their country?
- What challenges do Focal Points face?
- What can COL do to better support Focal Points in their role?



Focal Point Branding



From your knowledge and/or experience, what one word best describes the role of the focal point?

COL Focal Points

COL's direct link to each country

Africa & the Mediterranean



Asia



Pacific



Caribbean



Form two groups and discuss the following questions for sharing in plenary (10 mins)

- What do you think are the key roles of the Focal Point?
- What are the tasks and duties that the Focal Point is required to perform?
- What are the challenges that Focal Points face?
- How can COL support you in addressing these challenges?



Key roles and tasks carried out by the Focal Point - what others have said

- Share up-to-date information with COL about national ODL needs and priorities
- Inform COL of regional plans and frameworks and other development partner activities
- Flag areas where new initiatives and interventions could be considered
- Provide advice and guidance to COL
- Disseminate information about COL within the country
- Advocate for ODL, OER, COL -*"your vote of confidence for COL"*
- Raise awareness among institutions, organisations and Ministries regarding COL assistance or support
- Brief Ministers and other senior officials on COL issues
- Assist in securing country contributions to COL
- Meet and arrange in-country visits for COL staff

Key challenges experienced by Focal Points – what others have said

- Not always aware of COL activities in country
- COL information not always passing through Focal Points
- Sustainability of Focal Points. Ministries of Education should keep Focal Points informed
- Delays regarding payment to COL are sometimes at the Ministry of Finance
- COL works in non-formal education & training, involves Ministries other than Education
- MoE staff is small and people wear several hats and are stretched
- Officials take up many roles, some Focal Points have different roles with partners (e.g.UNESCO)

What does COL do to support Focal Points?



- Shares Country Reports
- Provides information on COL
- Publishes the list of FPs on COL website
- Informs FPs of COL staff activities and visits in- country
- Facilitates triennial meetings
- Administers a Caribbean FP WhatsApp group

What can COL do to help Focal Points be more effective?

- Inform Focal Points on how we spend the country contribution
- Copy relevant reports to ALL officials concerned (sometimes Focal Points do not receive information)
- Ensure Focal Points are notified of all activities in country
- Encourage contributions to website and social media
- Other suggestions?





Thank you



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