



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

COL in the Commonwealth

**2012–2015
Belize**

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
Commonwealth of Learning



CONTEXT

Belize is a small state of the Commonwealth with a population of about 330,000. Much of the country's natural environment is unspoilt, and there is strong emphasis on environmental education. Teacher education is another key priority for the Government of Belize. Belize contributes regularly to COL's budget.



AGREED PRIORITIES

- ▶ Develop a national policy and strategic plan for open and distance learning (ODL), with specific implementation plans at the institutional level
- ▶ Expand the technical and human resource capacity of tertiary-level institutions to deliver courses online, including existing face-to-face courses and a national general secondary education (GED) programme
- ▶ Provide training for teachers in ODL techniques and instructional design
- ▶ Access to open courses available in the Commonwealth
- ▶ Develop teacher capacity in information and communication technologies (ICT) for teaching and learning



OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY COL

- ▶ National ICT in Education Strategy drafted
- ▶ 11 new VUSSC courses made available
- ▶ New Open School established



COL'S WORK RELATED TO MDG TARGETS

National MDG Targets Addressed by COL

- ▶ Make available the benefits of new technologies, especially for information and communications

COL's Work on Belize's MDG Targets

- ▶ VUSSC is committed to the collaborative development of open content resources for education, training and capacity-building, and the use of ICTs to broaden access to education
- ▶ Capacity-building, materials development and policy support for sharing open educational resources (OER) and promoting open and distance learning (ODL) are underway



QUICK NOTES

COL Focal Point:

- ▶ Mr Christopher Aird, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

Areas of COL's Work in Belize:

- ▶ Open Schooling
- ▶ Teacher Education
- ▶ Higher Education
- ▶ Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)
- ▶ Healthy Communities
- ▶ 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 Education, Youth and Sports
- ▶ Gwen Lizarraga High School
- ▶ University of Belize

CAPACITY

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

- ▶ Participatory Approaches to Disaster Awareness Campaigns
- ▶ Regional OER workshop
- ▶ Gender Mainstreaming for Open Schools
- ▶ Cost and Financing for Open Schools
- ▶ Regional Workshop on the Flexible and Blended Model of Skills Training
- ▶ Monitoring and Evaluation for VUSSC
- ▶ Community Learning Programme Development Training and Mentoring

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.

- ▶ Research Report on Community Learning in the Caribbean
- ▶ 11 new VUSSC courses made available
- ▶ Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit

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.

- ▶ Open School at Gwen Lizarraga High School
- ▶ Referencing of the Transnational Qualifications Framework
- ▶ Flexible and Blended model of TVET

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.

- ▶ CARICOM Standards for Teaching and Teacher Education
- ▶ Regional ODL Policy Framework
- ▶ National ICT in Education Strategy

**LOOKING FORWARD: 2015–2021**

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

- ▶ Development of technical and vocational skills, including training for teachers in vocational education
- ▶ Training of farmers through ODL, including the promotion of an inclusive, competitive and sustainable agriculture and food sector, and cross-cutting issues such as climate change and variations
- ▶ Strategic health planning and development of a health policy

Appendix: COL's Activities in Belize

PARTNERSHIPS

COMOSA (Commonwealth Open Schools Association)

Twenty-two partners signed the COMOSA constitution, including **Gwen Lizarraga High School** and the **University of Belize**.

VUSSC (Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth)

Belize is a member of VUSSC.

Centre for Open and Distance Learning at the University of Belize

A draft plan for the development of a centre for ODL at the **University of Belize** was developed with the assistance of COL. A meeting with university officials was held in March 2014 to review the draft plan.

PARTNERSHIPS: MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

Regional Focal Points Meeting

Mrs Yvonne Palma, Education Officer of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, attended 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. **Belize** was not represented at this meeting.

COMOSA Planning Meeting and Theory of Change Workshop

Bangladesh Open University, in collaboration with COL, hosted a COMOSA Planning Meeting as well as Theory of Change workshops in Dhaka from 30 September to 3 October 2014.

Ms Maxine Charishia McKay and **Ms Beverly Faber** of the University of Belize and **Ms Lorna McKay** of Gwen Lizarraga High School participated in the meeting and workshops.

CAPACITY

Participatory Approaches to Disaster Awareness Campaigns

COL co-facilitated with Ms Barbara Jacobs Small of Transformative Communication Partners (TCP) St. Lucia a session on participatory approaches to disaster awareness campaigns as part of a Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA) workshop for senior broadcast managers in the region. The CBA workshop on Emergency and Disaster Management for Broadcasters was held on 29 to 30 October 2012 in Trinidad & Tobago. The session introduced COL-TCP-Caribbean and COL's work with participatory learning communication to the participants; analysed the current situation, communication programmes and disaster awareness; shared a practical tool that illustrated COL's approach; and identified opportunities for follow-up. Thirty-seven people participated in the COL session, including attendees from across the Commonwealth Caribbean, as well as representatives of the Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Suriname, United Kingdom and United States. **Ms Amalia Mai** of Great Belize Productions (GBP) attended the workshop.

Regional OER Workshop

The Regional OER workshop was held in Jamaica from 5 to 7 November 2012. This workshop followed through on the outcomes of the Paris Declaration, which was finalised at the OER World Congress in Paris in June 2012. The purpose of the workshop was to:

- ▶ develop a common understanding of the concept of OER and its potential to contribute to improving education in the Caribbean countries;
- ▶ define concrete contributions that OER can make in achieving key regional and national educational policy objectives;
- ▶ explore the policy requirements to create an enabling environment for effective use of OER and sharing of publicly financed educational resources under open licences; and
- ▶ define a roadmap for the development of effective, practical OER country policies and plans in the Caribbean.

Ruel Amir Cima and **Deryck Sydney Satchwell** of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports attended the workshop.

Gender Mainstreaming for Open Schools

To ensure that open schools mainstream gender in their activities, COL organised a COMOSA workshop 13 to 17 March 2013 in Delhi, India, to discuss the Gender Equality Guidelines developed by a COL consultant. Attending the workshop were 19 representatives from Bangladesh, **Belize**, Botswana, Canada, Ghana, India, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and United Kingdom.

Cost and Financing for Open Schools

To ensure sustainable open schools that will increase access to learning opportunities, it is important that open schools adopt the correct systems and policies. Key among these is a cost and financing system. **Dr Lorna McKay** and **Ms Rose Pineda** attended a cost and financing workshop in Barbados from 12 to 17 August 2013.

Regional Workshop on the Flexible and Blended Model of Skills Training

From 17 to 20 February 2014, COL co-facilitated a workshop in Barbados on the Flexible and Blended model of skills training with 21 participants from 10 Caribbean countries. Equity in access to skills training was a key discussion point. **Dr Margarita Gomez** of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports attended the meeting.

VUSSC Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop

On 24 to 25 March 2014, VUSSC Interlocutors of the Caribbean region participated in a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) workshop held in Trinidad & Tobago, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Development, to evaluate the VUSSC M&E plan, update the VUSSC logic model and explore tools used for the collection and analysis of data.

Community Learning Programme Development Training and Mentoring

Three regional distance training and mentoring courses have been developed and delivered through a partnership between the Caribbean Institute of Media and Communication (CARIMAC), Transformative Communication Partners (TCP) Caribbean and COL.

The 5-week “Communication for Development (C4D): Why. How. Now.” e-course was run in February to March 2014.

One participant (a man) from the community media group (Dangriga) of the National Garifuna Council took part in the training.

The 10-week “Research for Planning” e-course was run in 2014. In April to June 2014, **one participant** (a man) from Belize was engaged in the training and mentoring course,

resulting in comprehensive plans for community learning programmes based on formative research.

MATERIALS

Research Report on Community Learning in the Eastern Caribbean

A study into the availability, quality and usage of non-formal health/development educational opportunities, specifically ODL and communication for development programmes in Jamaica and the Eastern Caribbean, was conducted by Transformative Communication Partners Caribbean between September and December 2012, with the results presented in 2013.

New VUSSC Courses

During 2013–2014, 11 VUSSC courses were completed including: 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.

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. Attending the workshop was **Ms Yvonne Palma**, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Curriculum, Instructional Materials Development, Teacher Training and Vocational Education Training.

Associate Degree in Hospitality and Tourism

In collaboration with the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), a workshop to review the Associate Degree in Hospitality and Tourism was held in Barbados from 17 to 20 March 2014. The VUSSC Education Specialist participated and co-facilitated the workshop to review and update the two courses. Sixteen institutions will be implementing the revised curriculum. **Ms Sharett Yearwood** of the University of Belize participated in the workshop.

Online Sustainable Tourism Course

In addition to the 16 institutions offering the Associate Degree programme (face-to-face), the following institutions will be offering the online Sustainable Tourism course once it has been updated: St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, **Belize**, Turks & Caicos, Barbados, Guyana, St Lucia, The Bahamas, Anguilla and Jamaica.

Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit

A regional workshop to review the draft toolkit on gender mainstreaming for teacher education institutions and get feedback on how to make it useful for teacher education institutions in the Caribbean region was held from 20 to 21 March 2014 in Kingston, Jamaica. Participants from **Belize**, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago attended.

MODELS

Open School at Gwen Lizarraga High School

At the fourth AGM of COMOSA held in Delhi, India on 16 March 2013, the Caribbean and Canada Chapter developed a strategy to support the twinning of the Fraser Valley Distance Education School with the **University of Belize** to establish and develop an open school that will support the training of women to acquire secondary education, incorporating online experiences and face-to-face instruction. The first workshop from this twinning took place 19 to 22 June 2013.

The University of Belize signed an agreement with COL to support the establishment of the open school at **Gwen Lizarraga High School**. A meeting was held with the leaders at the university to establish the support relationship to the school as well as to discuss the challenges that could be experienced. The open school was officially launched on 23 August 2013.

A workshop was held to train the teachers on open schooling, and also served as a consultative platform to ensure ownership amongst teachers. Refined Gender Guidelines are being pilot-tested with the open school. Three gender workshops in Strategic Planning, Management Systems, and Learner Support Services were held as part of this testing in 2014. In preparation for the process of developing the Gender Equality Policy, COL held a one-day workshop in November 2014 to raise more awareness about gender and to discuss an outline of a gender policy.

In the same month, COL attended a one-day workshop at the school to review the curriculum content developed by the teachers on NotesMaster; attended the launch of OER for seven subjects in the open school; and met with numerous stakeholders, including **Dr Carol Babb** from the Ministry of Education, COL Focal Point **Mr Christopher Aird**, and **Dr Cynthia Thompson** of the University of Belize to update them on COL's work in open schooling in the country.

Referencing of the Transnational Qualifications Framework

The Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) was used as a reference point to finalise the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Qualifications Framework, which was completed and referenced against the TQF. This means that all VUSSC courses offered by institutions in the Caribbean will be registered on the TQF. These qualifications will be recognised both at the regional and international levels.

Flexible and Blended model of TVET

The FaB model of flexible skills development supports the integration of technology to help TVET systems become more relevant and responsive. COL strengthens the capacity of TVET educators, managers and policy advisers, across four dimensions: strategic planning, organisational development, ICT infrastructure management and teaching and learning. Adoption of this model can lead to quality improvement in programme delivery and can lead to increased access to TVET.

The FaB model seeks to increase access to TVET through efficiency gains but also by targeting learners who are currently locked out of the TVET system. These target groups include people working in the informal sector, remote and rural dwellers and people with disabilities. Resolving inequity is a central philosophy.

POLICIES

CARICOM Standards for Teaching and Teacher Education

The Second Consultation Meeting for the finalisation and adoption of the draft CARICOM Standards for Teaching and Teacher Education was held in Trinidad & Tobago on 27 to 28 September 2012. Twenty-five participants from member states of CARICOM, including **Ms Cecilia Smith** from Ministry of Education Belize, were present at the meeting. The next stage is to adapt the standards to suit the policies and realities of each country.

Regional ODL Policy Framework

In collaboration with the University of the West Indies (UWI), COL facilitated a roundtable from 19 to 22 June 2012 at the

UWI campus in Barbados. Twelve participants from Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, and St. Vincent & The Grenadines attended the roundtable.

The draft Regional ODL Policy Framework for the Caribbean, which resulted from the workshop, was circulated to the non-represented stakeholders in the Caribbean, including CARICOM, for their comments.

To move forward on the adoption of the regional framework by member countries, COL met with Dr Morella Joseph, Programme Manager for Human Resource Development, CARICOM, on 8 May 2013 in Trinidad & Tobago. As per the action plan, the draft Regional ODL Policy Framework was presented in the ministerial meeting organised by CARICOM, from 20 to 22 May 2013, in Jamaica. The framework was endorsed by the Ministers. A workshop held from 24 to 25 March 2014 in Trinidad & Tobago reviewed the final draft before it was proposed to the meeting of Caribbean Education Ministers. **Ms Beverly Faber** attended the workshop.

The regional ODL policy has been finalised with CARICOM, and approved by the Ministers of Education. It is awaiting formal ratification.

National ICT in Education Strategy

In June 2013, COL met with key officials from the **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports** and the **University of Belize** to discuss COL support for the development of a Belize ICT in Education strategy. A one-day stakeholder consultation meeting was held in Belize City to gather input for the strategy. A draft strategy was completed in February and COL met with ministry officials in March 2014 to review it.

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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