



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

COUNTRY REPORT
2021-2023 | **AFRICA**



Sierra Leone

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 African member countries' efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG4. It's supporting the governments and institutions of Africa 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 in Africa (Botswana, The Gambia, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and Seychelles) 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 African member country. These are:

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

INTRODUCTION

Sierra Leone is a country in West Africa with a population of more than 8.6 million people ([World Bank, 2022](#)).

COL's work in Sierra Leone is in the areas of higher education, teacher education, lifelong learning for farmers and technology-enabled learning and benefits from programmes offered by the Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning (RETRIDOL), COL's regional centre. Learners from Sierra Leone are also participating in COL's free, open online courses and have access to other available resources.

PARTNERSHIPS

COL's partners in Sierra Leone include:

- Ministry of Technical and Higher Education
- Camp Women Multi-Purpose Organisation (CWMPO)
- Freetown Polytechnic (formerly Freetown Teachers College)
- Milton Margai Technical University (MMTU)
- Njala University Teaching Service Commission
- Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)
- University of Sierra Leone

KEY CONTACTS

COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Honourable Prof. Dr. Alpha T. Wurie
Minister of Technical and Higher Education

COL FOCAL POINT

Mrs Musu Gorvie
Deputy Chief Technical and Higher Education Officer, Ministry of Technical and Higher Education

COL ACTIVITIES BETWEEN JULY 2021 - MAY 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

- ODL policy for Tertiary Education Institutions in Sierra Leone approved for implementation.

BUILDING NATIONAL RESILIENCE

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

COL's Higher Education initiative is supporting the Tertiary Education Commission on strengthening ODL and online provisions in Sierra Leone.

- In mid-2022, a high-level consultative meeting was held, which included 134 participants, of which 50 were ministry staff. A workshop followed in November 2022 to review the ODL policy, where 71 government officials participated.
- a draft ODL policy for Sierra Leone was developed with COL support. [Feb 2023]
- ODL policy for Tertiary Education Institutions in Sierra Leone was approved for implementation. [May 2023]

A Ministerial and Development Partners' dialogue on two National Programs geared towards attaining sustainable self-sufficiency in Poultry Production and processing and strengthening the supply chain for Cassava Industrialisation in Sierra Leone was organised by COL's Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) initiative's partner, Camp Women Multi-Purpose Organisation (CWMPO).

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS

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

COL's Educational Podcasting for Innovative Classrooms (EPIC) platform supports online podcast streaming as well as collaboration spaces for in-country teacher communities of practice and includes a country group for Sierra Leone, where resources are being piloted for online and offline access, including dial-in and radio broadcast.

Freetown Polytechnic held a workshop on Learners Support in late July 2021 with the objective to register participants to the learning management system (LMS) and develop learning materials for upload to the LMS. 80 participants attended the workshop.

COL supported a policy development workshop at the Freetown Polytechnic in June 2022, where participants contributed to the evolving policy for implementation of open, distance and technology-enabled learning at the institution. The workshop attracted a total of 35 deans of schools, heads of departments as well as lecturers at the polytechnic. A senior official of the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education played a lead role.

COL's Lifelong Learning for Farmers' partner, Camp Women Multi-Purpose Organisation (CWMPO), held a capacity-building workshop in August 2022 for 49 stakeholders focusing on "Gender Gaps in Agriculture" and "Lifelong Learning for Farmers Capacity enhancement and empowerment of non-government officials."

COL's Teacher Education initiative organised a hybrid pre-PCF10 workshop that introduced participants to concepts and models for teacher training at scale, including COL strategies and models using open, distance and technology-enabled learning. The event was attended by 19 participants representing 12 different institutions in The Gambia, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Trinidad & Tobago. Discussions focussed on a range of innovations for teacher development in low-income and other disadvantaged communities. These included the use of massive open online courses (MOOCs), radio and podcasts to reach more teachers, and having the assistance of language translators and assistive technologies and other offline resources to improve the quality of learning resources. Samba Moriba from Freetown Polytechnic was invited by COL to participate in this workshop.

Freetown Polytechnic hosted a three-day training workshop for 29 staff (25M/4F) on ODL course materials development in April 2023.

COL is supporting Milton Margai Technical University (MMTU) in the development and implementation of their ODL policy. [Apr 2023]

COL is supporting Njala University in the development and implementation of their ODL policy. A consultative workshop was held with 20 management and staff members in April 2023, and a draft ODL policy was developed.

Regional Centre: RETRIDOL

Monthly ODL discourse held on 10 August 2021 on the topic "African regional approach to ODL and Quality Assurance: The ACDE-QAAA". The number of participants was 107. Presenters included Professor Asha Kanwar and Professor Nebath Tanglang.

Six monthly webinars from January - June 2022 on various education topics were conducted with the participation of 663 institutional and government staff.

Four monthly discourse webinars were held from December 2022 to March 2023.

IMPROVING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

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

Teachers from Sierra Leone have participated in COL MOOCs on inclusive teaching and learning (September 2022) and cybersecurity training for teachers (November 2022).

SPECIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Professor Aliyageen Mohamed Alghali from TEC participated in the **High-Level Roundtable for Vice Chancellors & Heads of ODL Institutions** from 29-30 July 2022 in Penang, Malaysia.

Fatmata Vincent from Freetown Polytechnic was invited 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.

COL's Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning is held triennially and is co-hosted with different partners in different regions of the Commonwealth. One delegate from Sierra Leone registered for the **Tenth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF10)**, the first-ever hybrid

Forum held in Calgary, Canada from 14-16 September 2022. Samba Moriba from Freetown Polytechnic was sponsored by COL.

The **Regional Focal Points Meeting for Africa and Europe** was held in Seychelles from 20-21 February 2023. Official representatives from 20 Commonwealth countries in the region participated in the two-day meeting, including Ms Musu M Gorvie.

PUBLICATIONS OF RELEVANCE

Report on the Regional Focal Points Meeting - Africa and Europe <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5316>



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