



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

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

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**Antigua and**  
**Barbuda**

## Helping Commonwealth Member States and institutions use distance learning and technologies for expanding access to education and training.

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**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

Antigua and Barbuda is a small state of the Commonwealth in the Caribbean with a population of about 94,000 ([World Bank](#), 2022).

COL's work in Antigua and Barbuda is primarily in the areas of higher education through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) network, Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F), technology-enabled learning and skills for work. Learners from Antigua and Barbuda are also participating in COL's free, open online courses and benefitting from other available resources.

## PARTNERS

COL's partners in Antigua and Barbuda include:

- Ministry of Education, Sports and Creative Industries
- Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs
- Antigua State College

## KEY CONTACTS

### FOCAL POINT

**Dr Patricia J.A. Benn**  
Lecturer  
Antigua State College

## COL ACTIVITIES BETWEEN JULY 2021 - MAY 2023

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 16 blended courses developed and offered at Antigua State College.
- 200 farmers have built critical skills to improve their livelihoods.

## BUILDING NATIONAL RESILIENCE

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

COL supported the attendance of members from all 12 commonwealth Caribbean countries to a meeting 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. Participants 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.

30 teachers from Antigua and Barbuda completed the "Teaching and Learning with Aptus" online course in September 2021.

COL is supporting Antigua State College in strengthening its capacity in open distance and eLearning (ODeL) as part of a special ICT augmentation process to build institutional resilience. Activities to-date include:

- three-week online workshop on facilitating blended and online learning was held in November 2022, where 27 teachers (1M/26F) participated.
- 16 blended courses offered to learners. [Feb2023]
- workshop on Blended course development was conducted May 2-5, 2023, where 23 teachers participated.

## IMPROVING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

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

COL has been working with the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs to enhance food security and ensure long-term agricultural sustainability in the country. With support from COL's Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) programme, some 200 local farmers have already built critical skills to improve their livelihoods.

CARIBBWIIN (a non-profit organization part of the Global Women Investors & Innovators Network) in collaboration with COL, hosted a 2-day conference that dealt with value chain management and basic entrepreneurship, giving participants the opportunity to exhibit their products. (Sep2022)

254 students enrolled in the 16 blended courses being offered at Antigua State College. [Feb2023]

## 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. One delegate from Antigua and Barbuda 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. Mr Owolabi Elabanjo, Chief Agricultural Extension Officer Government of Antigua and Barbuda, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs, Agricultural Extension Division was sponsored by COL and invited to also participate at COL's L3F pre-conference meeting.

The **Regional Focal Points Meeting for the Caribbean** was held in Kingston, Jamaica from 30-31 January 2023. COL Focal Point, Dr Patricia J.A. Benn, Antigua State College, 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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