



Who is the Commonwealth of Learning (COL)?

COL's mission is to help Commonwealth Member States and institutions harness the potential of distance learning and technologies to expand access to education and training and address the education challenges of today.



For COL, learning is the key to sustainable development and must lead to opportunities for economic growth, social inclusion and environmental conservation.

Serving the Commonwealth

COL is an intergovernmental organisation that was established by the Commonwealth Heads of Government when they met for CHOGM in 1987 in Vancouver, Canada. Its headquarters are in Metro Vancouver, with a regional office, the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), in New Delhi.



16 million lower secondary school youth out of school*

400 million illiterate adults*

19 million more teachers needed by 2030**

...across the Commonwealth

Education Initiatives

- **Higher Education** – Supports the development and implementation of open and distance learning (ODL) policies and systems, promotes curriculum reform in support of employability, provides technical assistance to open universities and conventional institutions, advises institutions on quality assurance systems, facilitates collaboration in the use of ODL and Open Educational Resources (OER), and supports professional development.
- **Open/Innovative Schooling** – Develops curriculum content using OER and educational technologies, primarily targets out-of-school children, enhances the quality of conventional schooling through the introduction of models like virtual schooling, improves learner retention and success rates through open schools, and enhances organisational capacity.
- **Teacher Education** – Aims to improve quality of teaching and learning outcomes through programmes for teachers and teacher educators, increases institutional capacity in using ODL and information and communication technology (ICT), and develops and scales up the adoption and adaptation of OER for school-based teacher development.
- **Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)** – Identifies industry-responsive education and training opportunities for young people, supports institutional collaboration in developing and sharing OER, leverages ODL and technologies to address climate change and environmental issues, and supports institutions in adopting and delivering VUSSC programmes.

* Commonwealth Secretariat. (2017). *Commonwealth Education Policy Framework*. Retrieved from <https://www.thecommonwealth-educationhub.net/policyframework/>

** Commonwealth Secretariat. (2018). *Proceedings of the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers*. Retrieved from <https://www.acu.ac.uk/publication/download?publication=767>

Skills Initiatives

- **Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F)** – Uses ODL and ICT to build the capacity of farmers and promotes sustainable development with an emphasis on livelihoods security, social and gender equity, and environmental sustainability.
- **Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD)** – Supports broad capability building to help policy makers, managers, and teaching and administrative staff use technology for flexible skills development, focuses on workplace learning combined with ODL models to ensure learners achieve theoretical and practical competency, and increases access to TVSD across the Commonwealth.
- **Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL)** – Develops ICT in education and OER policies and strengthens policy implementation, bolsters research on technology-enabled learning for evidence-based advocacy and decision-making, uses technology-enabled learning for programme delivery and promotes the use of open technologies and OER for skills development.

COL Special Projects

OER – Supports institutions at different levels of the educational spectrum in OER capacity building, the integration of ICT in teaching and learning, policy development for OER and the development of relevant courses by repurposing OER.

GIRLS Inspire – Supports schooling and skills development for some of the world’s most vulnerable and hard-to-reach women and girls using open, distance and technology-enabled learning.



Impacting the Lives of People



Ruksana is a 15-year-old girl who was arranged to be married. The Rights Reporters in Flood-Prone Areas, a group constituted by COL’s partner, Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha

(SSS), in collaboration with the community, came to her rescue and the marriage was stopped. The SSS then enrolled her for training in tailoring. Today, she is one of the busiest girls in the village and receives many orders from neighbours and friends. – *Pangasia village, Bangladesh*

COL launched the ‘ICT for Youth Employability’ project with KampaBits, Uganda to train young learners and



persons with disabilities (PWDs) and prepare them for entrepreneurship and employment. **Innocent Kusiima** gained programming skills and said, “If my parents had believed

in me to perform well in school even though I have a hearing impairment, I would have learned this earlier than [age] 24. Now is the first time [that] I am getting to do what I have always wanted.”

Through strengthening capacity to build resilience in education, COL assists **Dominica** with its efforts to become a ‘climate resilient nation.’ Two projects are



underway: a climate resilience public awareness campaign and training for educational institutions and agencies in the use of the cloud for protecting vital data.

Brent Eneri is a lecturer at Kiribati Teachers College (KTC) who participated in COL’s ‘Teachers Futures’ programme. After acquiring skills in course design and online facilitation, Brent developed his first online course on pedagogy and assisted fellow lecturers in developing their courses. He showed them how to search for OERs and upload content to Moodle.



Lecturers plan to use **Aptus**, a COL-designed mobile server with its own WiFi, to deliver courses on other islands.