

# Connections



*Learning for Development*



## CREATING A CHILD-FRIENDLY APPROACH TO EDUCATION



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The implementation of the UNICEF-COL Child-Friendly Schools initiative has reached an advanced stage in many of the participating countries. The activities seek to mainstream “child-first” concepts, principles and models into the pre-service and in-service teacher education curricula of 10 selected countries: Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Trinidad & Tobago and Zambia. To date, 1,800 teacher educators in seven countries have participated in Child-Friendly Schools training.

Developed by UNICEF as a response to growing global concerns about the poor quality of basic education, the Child-Friendly Schools model promotes a rights-based concept of quality that goes beyond good teaching methods and learning outcomes to include health, safety and adequacy of schools facilities and supplies.

The agreement between COL and UNICEF, signed in 2008, includes two areas of co-operation: integrating the Child-Friendly Schools model into pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula, and strengthening the roles of Teacher Resource Centres to promote Child-Friendly Schools.

Key activities have included:

- Identifying partner institutions: COL worked with partners throughout the Commonwealth, including government representatives and UNICEF offices in each country, in finding key teacher-training institutions with good partner potential.
- Identifying partner Teacher Resource Centres in the selected countries.

- Developing Child-Friendly Schools materials: Teacher educators in each country developed learning materials that adapted Child-Friendly Schools concepts and models to the culture, educational policies, practices and realities of their respective countries. Materials were also developed to train managers of Teacher Resource Centres, head teachers and other education personnel. Individuals or institutions interested in accessing these materials are invited to contact Ms. Rebecca Kinakin, COL's Project Manager, Child-Friendly Schools, at [rkkinakin@col.org](mailto:rkkinakin@col.org).
- Capacity building workshops: To date, 60 workshops have been held for pre-service and in-service teacher educators, Teacher Resource Centre managers, head teachers, school managers, education officers and education ministry staff. The workshops have focused on mainstreaming Child-Friendly Schools concepts through standards and curricula review, sensitisation and advocacy, materials development and training of teachers.

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## HAVE YOUR SAY ABOUT CONNECTIONS

As part of ongoing monitoring and evaluation efforts, COL is conducting a survey about this newsletter. We need your input to ensure *Connections* remains a relevant and useful source of information. Please lend us five minutes of your time by completing our online survey. The survey will remain active until 31 August 2011. An email option is also available.

[www.col.org/ConnectionsSurvey](http://www.col.org/ConnectionsSurvey)

CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS CONTINUED FROM COVER

- **Web presence:** A page on the COL website ([www.col.org/cfs](http://www.col.org/cfs)) serves as a platform for information and knowledge sharing. Child-Friendly Schools learning materials and reports are freely available for download and use. Project partners also use Basecamp, an online collaboration tool, to share information and documents.



EDUCATORS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO AT A CURRICULUM WRITING WORKSHOP HOSTED BY COL

- **eLearning package:** Child-Friendly Schools manuals in the Sinhalese and Tamil languages are being developed for teacher education programmes through open and distance learning (ODL) in Sri Lanka.

Partner institutions in Botswana, Lesotho, Nigeria and Swaziland have completed delivery of their Child-Friendly Schools training workshops. The other countries are continuing to implement their Work Plans.

### ENSURING LONG-TERM SUCCESS

“The Child-Friendly Schools initiative has exceeded our expectations in several ways,” said Dr. Abdurrahman Umar, COL Education Specialist, Teacher Education. “The enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated by teacher training institutions and ministries of education will help ensure the sustainability of these efforts beyond this initial capacity development partnership.”

Partners in several countries have made significant financial and in-kind contributions including time, supplies, venues, transportation, facilitator fees and accommodation to ensure the project reaches more teacher educators. Some partners are integrating the work into national education and institutional planning processes. At the University of Limpopo in South Africa, in collaboration with the South African Department of Education, the Ad-

vanced Certificate in Education – Life Orientation (ACELO) programme, an upgrading certification for in-service teachers, has already been revised to incorporate Child-Friendly Schools principles, concepts and approaches.

Plans for mainstreaming and sustaining Child-Friendly Schools are underway, particularly in Botswana, Lesotho, Nigeria and Swaziland. In these countries, governments are showing their support for adopting revised curricula and standards that are based on Child-Friendly Schools approaches.

### IGNITING PASSION

In addition to building skills and knowledge, the Child-Friendly Schools workshops have created a passion for a new approach to education, as can be seen in testimony from participants:

“The workshop has succeeded in enlisting an army – a willing and informed army – of child rights drivers. It has empowered us to appreciate our roles and has forged a new attitude in us that we can, indeed, do so many things that we previously thought we couldn’t.” (Teacher educator, Nigeria)

“We may not be able to change everything, but we can change ourselves. It starts with us. It starts with me.” (Pre-service teacher, Lesotho)

“The template, the CFS philosophy, the new skills in development materials – this workshop changes everything.” (Teacher educator, South Africa)

### RADIO EXTENDS REACH TO NOMADIC POPULATIONS

The Child-Friendly Schools initiative has sparked several exciting new developments including the use of radio to educate nomadic primary school teachers in Nigeria about Child-Friendly

Schools. The Interactive Radio Instruction initiative harnesses ODL in its best way – by targeting and benefiting some of the world’s most marginalised groups.

The nomadic population in Nigeria numbers more than nine million people, including three million school-age children. This learning programme focuses on more than 400 teachers in 110 nomadic schools in the State of Adamawa. Once the radio programmes are developed, piloted and produced, they can be easily replicated and re-used to promote Child-Friendly Schools concepts among nomadic teachers across Nigeria and other countries with nomadic populations, such as Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

Over the next year, the remaining participating countries will complete their capacity building workshops, and COL will continue to oversee monitoring and evaluation of the Child-Friendly Schools project. Meanwhile, educators in all regions of the Commonwealth are beginning to embrace a “child-friendly” approach to education that will provide significant, long-term benefits for generations to come.

[www.col.org/cfs](http://www.col.org/cfs)

## EDUCATION GOOD PRACTICE AWARDS

The Commonwealth Secretariat has launched the third Education Good Practice Awards. The awards focus on eight action areas: achieving universal primary education; eliminating gender disparities; improving quality; mitigating the impact of HIV and AIDS on education systems;

supporting education in difficult circumstances; using distance learning to overcome barriers; using education to promote sustainable development; and promoting civil paths to peace.

The deadline for submissions is 30 November 2011. The Education Good Practice

Awards will be presented during the 18th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (18CCEM) in Mauritius in August 2012.

[www.thecommonwealth.org/education](http://www.thecommonwealth.org/education)

## COL FOCAL POINTS MEET



COL hosted has hosted the first two of four meetings with regional Focal Points this year. The meeting of Caribbean region Focal Points (shown below) took place in Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago in March. The three-day meeting was co-hosted by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, and the Minister, the Honourable Fazal Karim, inaugurated the meeting. Thirteen of COL's Focal Points (key contact people in each country) or their alternatives from all 12 Caribbean Commonwealth countries attended the meeting.

Eighteen Focal Points from Africa and the Mediterranean met with COL leaders in

Port Louis, Mauritius last month (see photo above). The Honourable Dr Rajesh Jeetah, Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology, provided the opening address for the four-day meeting.

COL organises meetings of its Focal Points once during each triennium to:

- Report on what has been done in each country,
- Seek advice on emerging trends in the region and identify national priorities for COL's next strategic plan, and
- Provide a platform for networking and promoting south-south cooperation.

[www.col.org/FocalPoints](http://www.col.org/FocalPoints)



## COMMONWEALTH JUBILEE TIME CAPSULE

The Royal Commonwealth Society is creating a Commonwealth Jubilee Time Capsule. People all over the world are invited to contribute memories from the last sixty years, whether in the form of stories, photographs or films. The best will be sealed in a time capsule presented to Her Majesty

The Queen to mark her Jubilee celebrations in 2012. The rest of the content will exist online as a unique people's history of the Commonwealth available as a resource for students, teachers, historians and academics.

[www.JubileeTimeCapsule.org](http://www.JubileeTimeCapsule.org)

## INCREASING ACCESS TO ICT IN THE CARIBBEAN

COL, the Commonwealth Secretariat and Microsoft Trinidad & Tobago have signed a Letter of Understanding, agreeing to work together to harness the potential of technology and the Internet to improve education in schools in the Caribbean region.

Over the next two years, the three organisations will collaborate to improve access



SIGNING THE LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING ARE (L TO R): MR. ANTHONY MING, INFORMATICS ADVISOR, COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT, COL PRESIDENT SIR JOHN DANIEL AND MR. PRADEEP RAMAN, GENERAL MANAGER OF MICROSOFT TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

to, and use of, information and communication technology (ICT) in primary and secondary schools in 18 Caribbean countries and territories, including all 12 Commonwealth member states. The programme will provide students and teachers with training and expertise in using ICT to learn and teach, through the implementation of the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers, an internationally recognised agenda to promote ICT education. Schools will also have digital access to low-cost software through future Microsoft School Agreements and students will be able to access free e-mail addresses.

The three partners have also identified other areas of joint collaboration, including providing advocacy and policy support to governments, universities and teacher training institutions in the Caribbean, increasing access to open educational resources (OER) and facilitating online communities to share expertise and good practice.

<http://tinyurl.com/CaribbeanCollaboration>

## L3 FARMERS IMPROVES LIVELIHOODS IN KENYA

COL's Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3 Farmers) programme has been active in Kenya since 2007. As with L3 Farmers initiatives in India, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka, L3 Farmers in Kenya enables farmers to gain knowledge and access financing, leading to significant improvements in livelihoods. The key L3 Farmers partners in Kenya are Ikonzo Musanda Self Help Group, Kenya AIDS Intervention Prevention Project Group and Ugunja Community Resource Centre (UCRC). After Mrs. Immaculate Awino Ouma and her husband were displaced by civil unrest in Kenya's Central Province in 2008, Mrs. Ouma got involved with L3 Farmers. This story is excerpted from the UCRC newsletter, January-February 2011 issue.

Mrs. Ouma decided to join the Juakali Women Group (JWG), a self-help farming organisation. Through JWG, she received training in saving and loans, poultry keeping and management in October 2010 from Ugunja Community Resource Centre (UCRC) and Siaya Seed Sacco, a community banking cooperative. Within two months, Mrs. Ouma applied for a business start-up loan offered by Siaya Seed Sacco to budding entrepreneurs in the community. She used the loan to start a business with 200 birds.



MRS. AWINO, A MEMBER OF THE JUAKALI WOMEN GROUP IN KENYA

"I'm very grateful to Siaya for training members of JWG on poultry keeping and management," she said. "Now, I'm able to sustain myself economically by selling my birds to the nearby market, and I'm now eyeing the bigger market."

Asked about her level of education, she said, "I have never been to a classroom; but I'm glad to have had L3F training." L3F is an acronym for Lifelong Learning for Farmers, an initiative of the Commonwealth of Learning aimed at enhancing self-directed learning by the community itself. Generally, L3F is all about community value addition. It does this by facilitating learning in the context of socio-economic value chain. It bases its theme on the development of the community by making sure that the targeted

groups develop a clear strategy for their activities and projects. This transforms people into resource persons who achieve enough production for themselves and surplus to help others.

Broiler birds mature in eight to ten weeks and are then sold. Mrs. Ouma sold 180 of her first stock – 20 of them were lost to disease and other problems encountered during travel from the supplier. After buying the birds for 100 Kenyan shillings each and selling them for 350 Kenyan shillings each, Mrs. Ouma declares, "I'm a happy woman now."

The market for the birds is ripe, Mrs. Ouma reports. To satisfy this market, she has advised more farmers to come out and embrace the booming business. JWG has constructed 16 poultry houses in readiness for implementation of large scale poultry keeping. Members of the group have asked UCRC to continue with training and support to ensure a sustainable stable community.

As for Mrs. Ouma, she is preparing to double her next poultry purchase to 400 birds, and she has plans to venture into large scale poultry keeping. Thanks to L3F, she has quickly made the transition from displaced person to entrepreneur.

[www.col.org/L3Farmers](http://www.col.org/L3Farmers)

## VUSSC DEVELOPS FIRST DEGREE PROGRAMME

The ninth International Training and Materials Development workshop for the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) resulted in the development of a Business and Entrepreneurship programme that includes certificate, diploma and degree levels. Perhaps the most ambitious VUSSC workshop to date, this one was held in Lesotho in March and involved 24 educators from 16 countries. It was hosted by the National University of Lesotho.

As with past VUSSC "boot camps", this three-week workshop provided training in information and communication technology (ICT) skills and how to develop resources for open and distance learning (ODL) be-

fore participants even began content development. By the end, they had completed most of a three-level curriculum that allows learners to enter and exit at different points in the programme. This flexible approach



THE HONOURABLE DR. MAMPHONO KHAKETLA (PHOTO ON THE LEFT) ADDRESSES VUSSC WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS



allows them to choose whether they pursue a certificate, diploma or degree. The target audience is school leavers (ages 18–25) and mid-career professionals (ages 25–45) who are seeking education that will prepare them to become entrepreneurs in their local communities.

In her welcoming address, Lesotho's Minister of Education, the Honourable Dr. Mamphono Khaketla, told participants that the workshop could not have come at a better time as the university was reviewing the curriculum of its Bachelor in Business and Entrepreneurship programme. She said she looks forward to the university implementing the new VUSSC programme.

Workshop participants are continuing to work on the course materials, communicating online on a weekly basis until the course is complete. The programme will be available for delivery online and in face-to-face mode, with the launch expected in early 2012.

[www.col.org/vussc](http://www.col.org/vussc)

[www.vussc.org](http://www.vussc.org)

## CEMCA HOSTS COMMUNITY RADIO SAMMELAN

COL's regional agency, the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia, hosted the first National Community Radio *Sammelan* (conference) in partnership with the Government of India's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The three-day meeting in New Delhi attracted 120 people representing 90 community radio stations, government departments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The meeting also brought together international donor agencies including UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, Ford Foundation and World Bank, to help mobilise funding for community radio stations.

Inaugurating the event, the Honourable Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Ambika Soni, promised greater government attention and support for community radio. Over three days, delegates heard success stories from community radio stations. Other sessions focused on the role of international agencies in funding, content creation, developing local talent, technology and policy guidelines.

CEMCA presented the first Community Radio Awards for Good Practices in

four categories: Best Thematic Campaign, Promoting Local Culture, Sustainability and Business Model, and Community Engagement. A six-member jury comprised of broadcasters, social activists and media practitioners honoured 10 community radio stations with awards in several categories.

CEMCA also launched two new resources for community radio stations:

- *Compendium of Community Radio Stations, 2011* provides information about individual community radio stations. Contributed by the radio stations, the listings provide information about programming focus, partnerships, funding and support required. The Compendium will continue to be updated and is available at the CEMCA website.
- *Details of Functional Community Radio Stations in India* is a directory that lists the location and contact information of all community radio stations in the country. This will also be updated regularly as more community radio stations are established.

These latest activities are part of CEMCA's efforts to support the expansion of



THE HONOURABLE MINISTER FOR INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING, AMBIKA SONI, AT THE COMMUNITY RADIO SAMMELAN IN APRIL

community radio in India. The number of community radio stations has expanded from just one in 2004 to 110 in mid-2011. CEMCA's Director, Dr. R. Sreedher, launched the first station in 2004 and is recognised as a pioneer in community radio. He joined CEMCA in 2007 and now having made considerable progress in raising awareness and supporting the establishment of community radio stations, CEMCA is turning its focus to capacity building, content development and sharing of programming.

[www.cemca.org](http://www.cemca.org)

## COLLABORATING FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

COL's Healthy Communities initiative brings together groups working at the local level – media, health agencies, non-governmental organisations and community groups – to address health and development challenges through participatory learning programmes. After partnerships are formed and capacity building is initiated, COL remains involved in a supporting role. Here are recent examples of COL's activities as an ongoing partner with community learning initiatives.

### RENEWING PARTNERSHIPS IN BELIZE

COL helped to establish the *Life Updates* community learning programme in Belize in 2010. This collaboration among a community radio station, health clinics, women's groups and other community organisations had produced radio programmes that address community health issues such as diabetes, hypertension and HIV/AIDS.

COL conducted a mentoring and training visit in March 2011 that brought together new and existing partners to discuss challenges and future plans. Presentation skills training was conducted and a programme-development meeting among all

the partners was held to create a new broadcast schedule. The *Life Updates* programmes are continuing well and the partners are moving forward with a shared vision.



PATRICK PRENDERGAST FROM THE CARIBBEAN INSTITUTE OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION (CARIMAC) LED A TRAINING VISIT IN TOLEDO, BELIZE

### ENGAGING LEARNERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

COL's community media initiative in Upington in Northern Cape Province, South Africa is providing knowledge and support for people living with HIV/AIDS and their caregivers. Launched last year, the *Summer for All* community learning programme is a partnership with the Media and Training Centre (MTC) that targets more than 1,000 learners identified by non-governmental organisations and high schools.

Learner support is an important part of the community learning programme model. Alongside use of mobile telephones, referrals to websites and printed communication, face-to-face interaction is integral to mobilising both individual and community responses. While radio content is being broadcast as scheduled, engaging and supporting learners off-air has been a challenge. As part of new capacity building efforts and planning for sustainability of the initiative, the NGO partner Noord Kaap Vigs Forum (Northern Cape AIDS Forum) will assume coordination of the face-to-face learner support groups, with a focus on discussion of programme content and increasing learner numbers to the target of 1,000 by end June 2011.

"The lesson learned here is that different partners bring distinct assets and expertise to the collaboration," explained Mr. Ian Pringle, COL Education Specialist, Community Media. "Community organisations and networks are an essential and unique part of the mix in terms of supporting learning through face-to-face and mediated interaction and also making the link to mobilisation and social change. We are pleased to have a new programme partner who will work with us on this important task."

## BUILDING CAPACITY FOR FLEXIBLE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

COL's Flexible Skills Development (FSD) programme is helping technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions in Africa expand flexible and blended delivery approaches. By increasing access to quality skills development for young people and adults, the FSD programme aims to alleviate poverty. In recent months, COL has led several activities aimed at building capacity among 11 key TVET institutions in Africa.

### REVIEWING ICT INFRASTRUCTURE

At a meeting in 2010, principals from the partner institutions identified information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure as an area requiring support. COL undertook a review, conducted by consultant Mr. Nicholas Kimolo from Nairobi, Kenya. He made site visits to all 11 institutions and provided an assessment of their ICT infrastructure and plans, as well as advice on possible areas of upgrades and strategies for establishing learning management systems.

A number of common issues arose in these ICT infrastructure assessments, including:

- There is a range of student:computer ratios: the highest ratio is 1:40, and the lowest is 1:5,
- The cost of bandwidth is high for all institutions assessed,

- Unstable and unreliable power supply is a challenge,
- Unlicensed or improperly licensed software, and
- Only three institutions have an ICT support function that is independent of the ICT academic department.

The assessments also revealed the need for further support in areas such as developing learning materials, instructional design, acquiring network hosting services, acquiring lower cost bandwidth and advocacy with governments.

Feedback from the institutions has been extremely positive. COL and partners are exploring options for accessing less expensive Internet rates for these institutions. Institutions are also exploring other recommendations for action developed as part of the ICT infrastructure assessment.

### DEVELOPING CAPACITY

The Institute for Learning in the UK is offering six scholarships for staff at FSD institutions to gain UK Qualified Teacher Status. Successful applicants will participate in online professional development and spend time at the Institute in the UK later this year.

A second group of managers from TVET institutions and policy makers have com-

pleted COL's online course in the management of flexible skills development. Forty people took part in the five-week course, which helps institutions manage the change to more flexible teaching approaches.

Three teachers from each partner institution are benefiting from another online programme, "Flexible Teaching and Learning". This 10-week course will help teachers move beyond traditional teaching methods to use eLearning and other flexible teaching methods.

### COMMUNITY LEARNING NETWORK

The FSD Community Learning Network has attracted more than 180 members in its first four months of operation. This online discussion forum provides information, resources and support for people involved in open and distance learning approaches to TVET in Africa. Each of the African FSD institutions has a group space within the Community Learning Network, and there are also groups for policy makers, institutional champions, equity and gender discussions and Moodlers.

Flexible Skills Development is a partnership between COL and the Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA). To find out more, contact the COL FSD Team at [flexibleskills@col.org](mailto:flexibleskills@col.org).

## COL RIM SUPPORTS QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

COL's Review and Improvement Model (COL RIM) is helping higher education institutions across the Commonwealth conduct quality assurance audits. Trial audits at the University of Technology, Jamaica and the Open University of Sri Lanka have been completed, and a COL RIM audit has begun with a verification visit at the University of Calabar, Nigeria. The Commonwealth Secretariat has committed up to £26,000 to support COL RIM implementation at the National Institute of Health and Social Sciences in Seychelles and the University of Guyana.

COL RIM provides higher education institutions with a "do-it-yourself" approach to institutional quality audits. After leading audits of UNISA and the University of Ghana in 2007, COL concluded that the high cost of using external teams would deter many

institutions from conducting quality assurance audits. COL developed COL RIM as a cost-effective alternative to using external audit teams. Focusing on self-assessment, COL RIM helps institutions improve internal quality assurance, planning and systematic institutional improvement. A small team of consultants act as external verifiers.

The COL RIM package, consisting of a conceptual framework and handbook, is freely available from COL. For



AN INTERNATIONAL TEAM MADE A VERIFICATION VISIT TO SUPPORT COL RIM IMPLEMENTATION AT THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA IN DECEMBER 2010

more information, contact Ms. Ruvani Ameresekere, Programme Assistant at [rameresekere@col.org](mailto:rameresekere@col.org).

## OER FOR OPEN SCHOOLS ACHIEVES GOALS

COL and partners at open schools in six countries have created open educational resources (OER) for 20 secondary courses. The OER are self-learning materials that are available in both print and online formats. They were created by educators in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Seychelles, Trinidad & Tobago and Zambia.

As *OER for Open Schools* is focused on expanding access to education, the OER have been designed to be easily accessed by learners of all abilities. The online OER will be accessible to people using assistive devices such as screen magnifiers and voice recognition programmes. This attention to accessibility was inspired by a presentation at a copyright and OER workshop held in conjunction with the launch of COMOSA in November 2009. Ms. Nirmita Narasimhan, Programme Manager at the Centre for Internet and Society and someone who lives

with a visual disability, urged participants to make OER truly “open” by ensuring they are accessible to learners of all abilities.

As part of its *OER for Open Schools* initiative, COL hosted a 10-day workshop in February for 15 Master Teachers from the Zambia College of Distance Education. The teachers completed drafting and review of print OER in Commerce, Mathematics and Physical Science. COL has conducted workshops in all six countries participating in the *OER for Open Schools* initiative, providing skills development for 100 Master Teachers and supporting their efforts to develop OER in both print and eLearning versions.

Participants in COL’s *OER for Open Schools* initiative are completing the final evaluation and review of the learning materials, with the official launch expected in January 2012. The OER will be freely available for download, adaptation and use, re-



MRS. FRANCES FERREIRA, COL EDUCATION SPECIALIST, OPEN SCHOOLING (LEFT) AND MRS. CAROL WALKER, PROGRAMME ASSISTANT, WITH PRINT OER IN BRAILLE

sulting in a substantial contribution to open schooling globally. *OER for Open Schools* was funded in part by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

[www.col.org/OpenSchooling](http://www.col.org/OpenSchooling)

[www.facebook.com/OERs4OpenSchools](http://www.facebook.com/OERs4OpenSchools)

## COMMUNITY LEARNING IN KENYA

*Imanye Wivange* (Know your status, take control) is a community learning programme supported by COL that reaches as many as 5,000 active learners in 1,000 households in Kibwezi district, Kenya. Using community media, the aim of the programme is to facilitate learning about HIV/AIDS, a major health challenge in the district, through learning content on local community media reinforced through community mobilisation. The 20-minute programmes are broadcast twice a week through Radio Mang’ete. Learner support is provided through 50 community health workers attached to the local health centre. The programme is implemented by various partners who include Kenya Community Media Network (KCOMNET), Radio Mang’ete, Kibwezi District Health Office, community health workers, and the HIV/AIDS Support Group.

The *Imanye Wivange* programme has followed COL’s community learning model with great success. Read a case study by Njuki Githethwa, a community media consultant and Vice-Chair of KCOMNET.

## SUPPORTING OPEN SCHOOLS RESEARCH

At the annual general meeting of the Commonwealth Association of Open Schools (COMOSA) in Kochi, India in November 2010, COL President Sir John Daniel urged open schools to “raise their game”. One of the key areas of work identified at the meeting was research. COMOSA members are responding to the challenge with three new research initiatives.

- Exploring success factors in online learning  
This study addresses one aspect of the access issue in relation to online or eLearning in open schools. A survey will be conducted with students at a number of open schools in the Commonwealth, using both online and printed questionnaires. The research will explore what students perceive to be the pros and cons of using information and communication technology to support their studies, and how certain factors may make it more difficult for them to take part in online or eLearning programmes. Identifying these perceptions and factors will help open schools design programmes that ensure equitable access and success for out-of-school learners. This research is being conducted by COMOSA mem-

bers from Bangladesh Open University, Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL), Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL), the National Open University of Trinidad & Tobago (NOSTT), Open Access College, Australia and the University of the South Pacific.

- Open schooling potential in the Pacific  
The University of the South Pacific (USP) is conducting research supported by COL into the potential of open schooling in the island countries of the Pacific. The study, which will be completed by June 2011, is exploring issues such as dropout rates and national policies for “second chance” education in countries in the South Pacific. USP will provide recommendations for how COL can most effectively support the scaling up of open schooling in the region.
- Are open schools gender-sensitive?  
COL has commissioned a gender audit of open schools. Fifteen open schools are participating in the research, which will help establish a baseline from which to plan gender strategies and associated assistance from COL.



[www.col.org/](http://www.col.org/)  
*HealthyCommunities*

## MEASURING COL'S IMPACT: STAKEHOLDER SURVEY 2010

COL commissioned a Stakeholder Survey in 2010, using the occasion of the Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in Kochi, India as an opportunity to gather input. A results-based management and evaluation consultant, Dr. Patrick Spaven, conducted the research, which provided valuable insight into the views and experiences of COL among a range of stakeholders. By investigating how COL behaves, this survey makes direct links to accountability – and opportunities for improvement. This is a summary of Dr. Spaven's findings.

### SOLICITING STAKEHOLDER INPUT

COL's four-day Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in November 2010 attracted a representative range of COL's partners, clients, governors and resource people. Thus, it provided an appropriate opportunity to conduct a stakeholder survey. Forty-three people engaged with the survey, which included facilitated group discussions, one-on-one interviews and short self-complete questionnaires. One of the facilitated group discussions involved most of COL's Education Specialists and a range of other staff. Participants were selected to represent a range of COL's initiatives, different regions of the Commonwealth and a gender balance.

Conducting the survey at COL's conference could bring bias to the research, Dr. Spaven explains in his report. Since most of the participants in the survey are actively engaged with COL or have reason to expect to be in the future, it is likely that the results are more appreciative than for a survey conducted in a strictly randomised and anonymous manner. Despite this possible limitation, he still contends that the Stake-

holder Survey is a valid way of assessing views and experiences of COL.

### STAKEHOLDER SURVEY FINDINGS

The facilitated discussion groups, individual interviews and questionnaires provided insight into three general areas: what COL does, how COL adds value and where COL could do better.

#### What COL Does

The majority of partners value COL as a helping and guiding hand, often through a combination of contributions such as advice, capacity building and advocacy. Partners usually perceive COL's help as capacity building. Increased capacity in the partner organisation is the legacy, even if other outputs and outcomes fail to live up to their promise.

The Stakeholder survey suggests that COL has successfully mainstreamed quality in its work with partners. Given historic concerns about quality in open and distance learning (ODL), this would appear to be a major achievement.

*COL has helped us tackle the quality enigma in teacher training. It is having a huge impact on the quality of learning.*

*Stakeholder survey respondent*

Many participants found it difficult to pinpoint precisely the difference that COL is making. There was more of a feeling that COL was a long-term partner that guides and assists them in a general sense. This is

a positive finding for partner relationships, but COL needs to record and report in precise terms the results it helps its partners achieve.

#### How COL Adds Value

The survey finds that COL is valued for the following assets and behaviours:

##### Assets

- Long, deep and broad experience of ODL – and the confidence to apply it
- Effective staff
- A direct line to – and credibility with – governments

*I can't believe how small a group can have such an amount of reach.*

*Stakeholder survey respondent*

##### Behaviours

- A disposition to listen and build interventions around partner needs, rather than come with its own agenda and impose solutions
- An insistence that its partners have ownership of the programmes on which they collaborate
- The willingness and ability to be a long-term partner
- Accessibility and flexibility – a lack of bureaucracy in its dealings with partners
- Excellent communication
- A business-like, results-oriented approach that rubs off on partners
- An even-handedness towards member states of the Commonwealth





WOMEN INVOLVED IN COL'S LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS PROGRAMME IN KENYA CELEBRATE OPENING PERSONAL BANK ACCOUNTS

*At the end of five years, they [other organisations] washed their hands off, but at COL, they care for you throughout.*

*Stakeholder survey respondent*

COL is a more effective organisation than it was three years ago, the survey finds. Its current staff are praised for their experience and energy. COL is also seen to be more focused and results-oriented.

### Where COL Could Do Better

A substantial minority of the survey participants believe that COL still tries to do too much, given the limits of its resources, and spreads itself too thin. A similar small number of respondents felt that COL needs to work upstream in all of its initiatives to achieve wider impact.

A frequent comment was that COL does not always leverage the potential of its direct line to governments. This was mentioned in three contexts:

- Where countries have extensive ODL infrastructure but it is seen intrinsically to be a low quality option,
- In sections (such as farming) or sub-sectors (such as technical and vocational education and training – TVET) where ODL has less of a track record than in higher education, and
- In countries with undeveloped ODL infrastructure and policy in general – mainly small states and particularly in the Pacific.

*Be more aggressive with governments – not just Ministries of Education.*

*Stakeholder survey respondent*

People who had a view on COL's approach to gender thought it was somewhat superficial. They urged more pro-activity.

Respondents readily identified COL with the application of technology in ODL. There was broad consensus that COL promoted technology appropriately, and survey participants were grateful to COL for

showing them what to aspire to in terms of technology.

The Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning is valued without exception but is thought to need a thorough conceptual overhaul. In particular, it is seen to be formulaic with little opportunity for deep engagement with new ideas and research findings.

### MOVING FORWARD: MORE CONFIDENT ODL ADVOCACY

The strongest message from the Stakeholder Survey is that COL in general is doing the right things and doing them right. It should not change for change's sake.

Both focus group and interview participants were asked to give COL one piece of advice for its next Three-Year Plan. A plea for more advocacy with governments was the most pervasive advice, particularly from participants from Africa and small states. There was a clear assumption that COL's voice would be listened to in these environments. Advocacy for ODL in technical training and community-level livelihoods was the most urgent context for these efforts. The other area that should receive more resources than now is TVET.

"It is important for us to understand what our stakeholders think about us, both our behaviour as an organisation and the effectiveness of our work," said COL Vice President Professor Asha Kanwar. "This mid-term evaluation has been extremely useful in identifying the areas that we need to address further, particularly policy and gender."

The development of COL's next Three-Year Plan, 2012-2015 will also benefit from regional meetings of Focal Points and on-line discussions.

The full Stakeholder Survey report is available online at [www.col.org/3YP](http://www.col.org/3YP), where readers will also find the current Three-year Plan.

[www.col.org/3yp](http://www.col.org/3yp)



## CUTTING CORNERS THREATENS FUTURE OF eLEARNING

As with any rapidly developing initiative, eLearning is facing growing pains. The biggest dilemma is how to choose quality learning products without being carried away by the glitziness of the technology. And the biggest challenge is not to focus on the “e” but on the “learning”. Learning portals, digitised books posted as a PDF on a website or a print document re-designed into a screen-friendly format are not creating eLearning. They are creating an illusion of eLearning.

For eLearning to be effective, due attention must be paid to integrating content, pedagogy and technology that focuses on students’ learning. Anything less is cutting corners, which threatens the quality, effectiveness and, indeed, the future of eLearning.

A common myth about eLearning is that it’s cheap. In fact, eLearning is not easy on the pocket. It requires the same upfront investment in content creation and pedagogic discourse as any quality learning programme. It also requires a high level of sophistication in instructional design. Plus, there is the technology – how to use technology appropriately to underpin content and pedagogy is often overlooked.

The basics – learner objectives, needs, context and expectations – are crucial, along with course objectives, approaches and outcomes. Creating learner-centric, self-instructional materials that effectively guide the student in the learning process takes time and resources. Carefully produced self-instructional materials project the voice of the silent facilitator, motivating and guiding individual students in front of a computer to learn, interact, create and reflect, to name a few.

In a face-to-face setting, the mastery and recall of knowledge can be discussed, debated, queried, tested and clarified on the spot. In eLearning, where the student, peers and the teacher are physically separated, learning must take place through carefully planned activities that guide the learning process.

Furthermore, assessment, including baseline, diagnostic, formative and summative, must be carefully planned and executed in a non-contact environment. No corners to be cut!

Another area where it’s tempting to cut corners is learner support. eLearning programmes require learner support, especially if you are trying to create sustained changes in behaviour, if the learning involves complex concepts or if students would benefit from encouragement and explanation. The increasing sophistication of online environments such as discussion groups and learning management systems, as well as good old email, have ushered in a new generation of eTutors. Easy to access, knowledgeable and able to provide motivation, eTutors play an invaluable role in eLearning, particularly with learners who are in remote locations.

While eLearning is making important advances, particularly in learning for development, our challenge is to resist the temptation to think of it as quick, easy and cheap. It is an exciting road that needs a good planning and navigation system without cutting corners.

## REPLICATING SUCCESS IN COMMUNITY MEDIA

As a small organisation, COL’s reach is limited. One way of maximising effectiveness is by encouraging replication of successful models and approaches. Partners are encouraged to integrate COL

### STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY VOICES IN JAMAICA

The Caribbean Institute of Media and Communication (CARI-MAC) and community radio station ROOTS FM hosted a workshop in content creation and production skills for 25 people representing community groups and non-governmental organisations in inner-city Kingston. The aim of the initiative, which is sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is to enable community producers to create media content that raises public awareness about under-



Photo: Izzy Pitman

VOLUNTEERS FROM KARAS FM IN KEETMANSHOOP WORK ON A STORY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE

reported issues related to poverty and development. Using programme design tools shared by COL in previous training workshops, participants each created one radio programme that will be aired on ROOTS FM. This was not a “one-off” programme; the community workers will develop a series of radio programmes that deal with social issues such as parenting, substance abuse and disaster preparedness. In addition to significantly diversifying the programming on ROOTS FM, this workshop is engaging a broad range of community groups in content development.

### COMMUNITY LEARNING IN NAMIBIA

The Media and Training Centre for Health (MTC), a non-governmental organisation based in South Africa, conducted a five-day training workshop at Karas FM community radio in Keetmanshoop, Namibia, in partnership with UNESCO Windhoek. Participants learned how to produce content that reflects community needs, how to involve listeners as active contributors to content development and how to collaborate with partners in the health and development sectors.

Staff from Radio Riverside in Upington, South Africa shared their experiences implementing a community learning model supported by COL and its partner, MTC. COL encourages this type of South-South collaboration that shares best practices and builds capacity in community media for informal learning.

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Using programme design tools shared by COL in previous training workshops, participants each created one radio programme that will be aired on ROOTS FM. This was not a “one-off” programme; the community workers will develop a series of radio programmes that deal with social issues such as parenting, substance abuse and disaster preparedness. In addition to significantly diversifying the programming on ROOTS FM, this workshop is engaging a broad range of community groups in content development.



Photo: Izzy Pitman

KARAS FM VOLUNTEER REPORTER BEVERLEY STEPHANUS CONDUCTS A VOX POP INTERVIEW FOR A STORY ON UNDER-AGE DRINKING IN KEETMANSHOOP AS PART OF THE MTC TRAINING WORKSHOP

## OERu: INCREASING ACCESS TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

By Jim Taylor and Wayne Mackintosh

Existing delivery models cannot address the growing global demand for post-secondary education. Many countries do not have the resources to build the number of conventional universities that would be required to meet the future demand for tertiary education. However, the open web and free content licensing of learning materials provides a scalable and sustainable solution.

In response to this challenge, the Open Education Resource (OER) Foundation convened a strategic international planning meeting on 23 February 2011 to seed an innovation partnership that aims to create a parallel learning universe based solely on OER learning materials for students excluded from the system with flexible pathways to earn credible qualifications for their work on a fee-for-service basis. Quality assurance and institutional accreditation is the foundation on which this network is based.

With open education resources (OER), the marginal cost of replicating digital learning materials is near zero, and sharing course development costs improves cost efficiencies. Through collaboration, post-secondary institutions can harness these benefits to provide access to students excluded from the system through their community service mission.

The OER university (OERu) network aims to provide more affordable access to post-secondary education for the estimated 100 million learners in the world who are qualified for a seat in tertiary education today, but due to funding issues or lack of tertiary education provision, will not be able to gain credible qualifications.

This tertiary education network proposes that OERu students will gain free access to high-quality courses that are designed for independent study using OER. OERu learners will receive student support through a global network of volunteers and peer support using social software technologies. Students can be assessed for a fee by participating institutions and earn a credible credential.

The OER university network will comprise accredited educational institutions.

From an investment decision perspective, participation in the OERu does not require new money, but rather a reallocation of existing staff time to releasing selected development outputs under open content licenses for the OERu network. The OERu model anticipates that no more than one percent of existing budget time would be required for release under open content licenses. The institutional recurrent costs of assessment and credentialisation services will be recouped on a cost-recovery basis from student fees and/or other sources. Shared infrastructure and co-ordination for the OERu collaboration activities will be provided by the OER Foundation.

The OERu network is now recruiting founding anchor partners from around the world to join the OER Foundation, the University of Southern Queensland, Australia and Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand to commence implementation plans for the first credential, which is envisaged to be operational within the next year.

The OERu network is the means by which education at all levels can be more accessible, more affordable and more efficient. You can join the OERu network in building sustainable education futures.

*Professor Jim Taylor, AM is the former Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Learning Services), University of Southern Queensland and is professor at the Australian Digital Futures Institute at the University of Southern Queensland.*

*Dr. Wayne Mackintosh is the founding Director of the Open Education Resource Foundation and founder of WikiEducator.*

[http://wikieducator.org/OER\\_university](http://wikieducator.org/OER_university)  
<http://wikieducator.org/File:OERu.pdf>

View Sir John Daniel's video presentation to the OERu network foundation meeting in February and his subsequent blog post.

<http://vimeo.com/19268389>  
[www.col.org/blog130](http://www.col.org/blog130)

## NEW UNESCO-COL CHAIR AT ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

COL and UNESCO, in partnership with other funding contributors including the Government of Alberta, Canada, established a fifth joint Chair in January. Dr. Rory McGreal, Vice President of Research at Athabasca University, Canada, holds the UNESCO/COL Chair in Open Educational Resources (OER) at Athabasca. Dr. McGreal and his team will promote the use of OER at the institutional, national and international levels, particularly in the developing world, and conduct research to support this.

[www.col.org/chairs](http://www.col.org/chairs)

## SPECIAL AFRICAN ISSUE OF *DISTANCE EDUCATION*

The August *Distance Education* journal will be a special issue on Africa. The guest editors for this issue are Neil Butcher, South African Institute for Distance Education; Colin Latchem, open learning consultant, Australia; Lisbeth Levey, Senior Advisor to The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and Monica Mawoyo, South African Institute for Distance Education.

The special issue includes case studies and findings about professional training and incentives for staff embarking on distance education, mobile learning, distance education-based teacher training, OER development and use in African higher education, copyright law and the benefits of inter- and intra-institutional collaboration.

[www.tandf.co.uk/journals/DistanceEducation](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/DistanceEducation)

## COL BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING IN VANCOUVER



BACK ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: MS. RASHMI CHOWDHARY (REPRESENTING MS. VIBHA PURI DAS), PROFESSOR CLEMENT SANKAT, HON. DR. DAME CAROL KIDU, MR. RANSFORD SMITH (REPRESENTING COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL, MR. KAMALESH SHARMA), PROFESSOR AKILAGPA SAWYERR, HE MRS. MARIAM KATAGUM, PROFESSOR JOHN WOOD, MS. JO BOURNE

FRONT ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: MS. JANET ECKER, PROFESSOR ATTA-UR-RAHMAN, SIR JOHN DANIEL (PRESIDENT AND C.E.O.), HON. BURCHELL WHITEMAN (CHAIR), DR. LINDA SISSONS, MS. JENNY GLENNIE. MISSING FROM PHOTO: MR. MARTIN BEAN

COL's Board of Governors met this month in Vancouver. Representing major donors and all regions of the Commonwealth, the current Board includes four current or former ministers, four current or former heads of international organisations, six current or former heads of higher education institutions, three current or former ambassadors, four current or former senior civil servants and two current or former senior corporate executives. There is equal female/male membership on the Board.

The Board of Governors oversees COL's financial matters and reviews the impact that COL is having on people and institutions across the Commonwealth. It received with compliments COL's annual detailed programme-progress and financial reports (fol-

lowing the quarterly updates that it receives throughout the year), approved COL's budget and financial policies for the ensuing year, discussed long-term programme planning and reviewed human resources strategies. It also unanimously re-appointed the Honourable Burchell Whiteman, O.C. for a second three-year term as Board Chair, "with acclaim".

Programme reporting to the Board, financial statements and Board minutes are publicly available on COL's website.

[www.col.org/Board](http://www.col.org/Board)  
[www.col.org/GovInfo](http://www.col.org/GovInfo)  
[www.col.org/blog147](http://www.col.org/blog147)  
[www.col.org/bwhiteman](http://www.col.org/bwhiteman)

## BUILDING SKILLS IN BASIC TRADES IN VANUATU

In recent years, COL and the Pacific Association of Technical/Vocational Education and Training (PATVET) have developed training courses in basic trades to help meet the skills needs of small island states in the Pacific. These course materials are being adopted and used throughout the Pacific. Mr. David Lambukly, CEO of the Vanuatu National Training Council, sends this report from the island of Vanuatu.

Five training courses developed in partnership with COL have been accredited by the Vanuatu National Training Council. The COL courses in Small Business, Small Engine Maintenance, Tourism as a Business, Working with Timber and Working with Concrete are accredited at Level 2 on the National TVET



WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS IN VANUATU DISPLAY REPAIRED SMALL ENGINES

Qualification Framework. The courses are now ready for delivery by registered training providers in Vanuatu. The accreditation process was part of the Vanuatu TVET Reform initiative funded by AusAID.

The Small Engine Maintenance course was delivered in Malekula by Uripiv Rural Training Centre in 2010 and in Luganville Santo by Saint Michel Technical College last year and again in February. The 2011 training programme drew participants from local businesses based in Luganville and from rural communities across Sanma Province. There were 47 participants ranging in age from 16 to 62 and education level from Class 2 to Year 12. This is an excellent example of how flexible TVET delivery facilitates broad access!

By the end of the training, 23 pieces of small engine-based equipment – including outboard motors, chain-saws, lawnmowers, string-cutters, and generators – had been successfully repaired by the participants.

## LEARNER SUPPORT FOR OPEN SCHOOLING

To bridge the gap between distance learners and teachers, learner support is critical to the success of all open schools. COL helps open schools throughout the Commonwealth build their capacity in learner support through training such as a workshop at Bangladesh Open University (BOU) in February. Fifty faculty members attended the workshop, which used the “Manual for the Tutors of Learning Centres in Open Schools”, a resource developed at a previous BOU learner support workshop hosted by COL.

Now available in Portuguese and pan-Commonwealth versions, the manual was translated into Bengali for use at this workshop. By using training materials developed locally and communicated in the local vernacular, COL is working to introduce learning that can be easily replicated and sustained beyond COL’s involvement.

All three versions of the Manual are available on COL’s website, along with other training resources, research and reports related to open schooling.

[www.col.org/OpenSchooling](http://www.col.org/OpenSchooling)

## SUPPORTING RESEARCH IN SOUTH AFRICA



PROFESSOR ASHA KANWAR (CENTRE) WITH PARTICIPANTS AT THE RESEARCH WORKSHOP AT UNISA IN MARCH

“Developing a research proposal/report” was the subject of a two-day workshop led by COL Vice President Professor Asha Kanwar at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in March. The 35 workshop participants learned about the donor’s perspective, publication requirements and best practices in research. They developed research proposals over the two days, which underwent peer review.

While at UNISA, Professor Kanwar was the guest speaker at the 6th Lecture in the ODL Occasional Lecture Series. Her presentation provided an overview of Open

Education Models, from the opening of the University of London in 1858 to current day development with open educational resources (OER). There are new and diverse constituencies of learners today, she explained. There are more women and young learners, and they are tech savvy – increasingly, learners in developing countries use mobile phones for all of their electronic communication. Today’s learners want to work with their peers, co-operate as well as compete with them, and prefer education which was “real” rather than simply relevant.



Professor Kanwar’s speech at UNISA is at [www.col.org/speeches](http://www.col.org/speeches)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### 24th ICDE World Conference on Open and Distance Learning

Expanding horizons – new approaches to ODL

2-5 October, 2011, Bali, Indonesia

[www.ut.ac.id/icde2011](http://www.ut.ac.id/icde2011)

### The Fourteenth Cambridge International Conference on Open, Distance and e-Learning 2011

25 - 28 September 2011, Cambridge, UK

Internationalisation and Social Justice: the role of Open, Distance and e-Learning  
Presented by the Centre for Educational Research and Development, St Edmund’s College, Cambridge UK in association with The Open University and the Commonwealth of Learning.

[www2.open.ac.uk/r06/conference](http://www2.open.ac.uk/r06/conference)

## ODL FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS IN THE GAMBIA

COL partnered with the Faculty of Education at the University of The Gambia (UTG) to hold a workshop on instructional design for 30 teacher educators from the College of Education and university faculty. The week-long workshop, supported UTG’s efforts to upgrade its unqualified and under-qualified teachers in the country’s interior through open and distance learning (ODL).

The objectives of the workshop were to enhance the participants’ understanding of the use of ODL to train and upgrade teachers, and to disseminate basic skills in instructional design. Learner support and areas requiring COL’s support, including course development, management of ODL and ODL tutoring, were also explored.



PARTICIPANTS AT THE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN FOR OPEN & DISTANCE LEARNING WORKSHOP IN BANJUL, THE GAMBIA IN JANUARY 2011

## eGOVERNMENT AND ICT LITERACY



L TO R: MR. DAVID SPITERI GINGELL, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER, MALTA; MS TRUDI VAN WYK, COL EDUCATION SPECIALIST, eLEARNING, THE HONOURABLE DR. EDMOND MANSOOR, MINISTER OF STATE WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR INFORMATION, BROADCASTING, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND SPECIAL PROJECTS, ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA AND MR. ANTHONY MING, INFORMATICS ADVISOR, COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

The Commonwealth Secretariat's Governance and Institutional Development Division, in partnership with the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration, Barbados and COL, organised a regional "eGovernment & eBusiness Strategy Development" workshop for the Caribbean

in March. The workshop, held in Antigua & Barbuda, provided senior civil servants from 10 Caribbean countries with a range of emerging practices and examples of how eGovernment and eBusiness services can be undertaken by public sector organisations to strategically plan and transform their operations. COL's Education Specialist, eLearning, Ms. Trudi van Wyk, facilitated sessions on information and communication technology (ICT) literacy in government, the workforce and society.

In his opening address, the Honourable Dr. Edmond Mansoor, Antigua & Barbuda's Minister of State with responsibility for Information, Broadcasting, Telecommunications, Science and Technology and Special Projects, emphasised the importance of ICT literacy. The integration of ICT into teaching and learning is non-negotiable, he asserted, and it is the responsibility of governments to provide the enabling technological environment, including broadband services, for learning to take place.

The Government of Antigua & Barbuda is working with COL to train 300 secondary school teachers in the use of ICT in the classroom.

## OER FOR THE BAHAMAS

Thirty-two people from the College of The Bahamas, the Ministry of Education and practicing teachers participated in a one-day workshop on "Finding, Using and Re-purposing OER" in Nassau in April. The educators were introduced to the practical aspects of finding open educational resources (OER), customising them and using them in the classroom. Open licensing and quality issues were also explored as were noteworthy OER

initiatives, different sources of OER and potential use of OER in The Bahamas.

This one-day OER workshop was also delivered in Tanzania in May. The workshop materials are now available online for use by educational institutions that want to conduct OER training or by individuals to use for self-directed learning.

*OER workshop resources:*

<http://col-oer.weebly.com>

<http://oerworkshop.weebly.com>

## TEACHER STANDARDS CONSULTATION IN THE CARIBBEAN

Teacher quality was the focus of the first Consultation on the Regional Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession in Antigua & Barbuda. The two-day meeting was hosted by COL in partnership with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Senior education officers, teacher educators, teacher union representatives, teachers and principals from all 12 Commonwealth member countries, plus Montserrat, provided a critique of the "Draft Framework for Generic Teaching Performance and Academic Standards". The Consultation sought to encourage dialogue, obtain input from participants about teacher quality and empower a cadre of persons across the region to become advocates for quality assurance initiatives.

The lead presentation on related international experiences was delivered by Dr. Pauline Greaves of the Commonwealth Secretariat. Dr. Morella Joseph of the Caribbean Community Secretariat gave an historical perspective on teacher education initiatives. Dr. Paula Mark, Teacher Education Specialist and a member of the Task Force, presented an overview of quality assurance issues related to teacher development and the role of academic and teaching performance standards in maintaining quality. Following these presentations, participants were engaged in group activities discussing the introduction of the standards and the implications for current policies and practices. Participants also suggested changes to the draft teaching standards document.

The common view among participants was that the standardisation of practice is a necessary step in the harmonisation of policies and in determining equivalencies of teacher education programmes and teacher qualifications across the Caribbean.

## QUALITY IN DUAL-MODE UNIVERSITIES

Recognising that universities that offer both face-to-face and distance learning options have unique quality challenges, COL sponsored a workshop on Quality Assurance in Dual-Mode Universities in advance of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network con-

ference hosted by India's National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). Thirty people attended the day-long workshop, including representatives from quality assurance agencies and a number of state university vice chancellors. In addition

to identifying key challenges and issues for dual-mode universities, participants identified best practices in quality assurance. The workshop was facilitated by COL President, Sir John Daniel and COL Honorary Fellow Professor Ram Takwale, who is a former Chair of NAAC.



SIR JOHN DANIEL WITH THE CHANCELLOR OF SUNY, MS. NANCY L. ZIMMER

COL President Sir John Daniel was awarded an honorary degree, Doctor of Letters *honoris causa*, from State University of New York's (SUNY's) Empire State College this month. Also, as part of ESC's 40th anniversary celebration, Sir John delivered the Ernest Boyer Memorial Lecture on *Revolutions in higher education: how many dimensions of openness?* at ESC in March.

[www.col.org/speeches](http://www.col.org/speeches)

[www.col.org/blog148](http://www.col.org/blog148)

[www.col.org/blog149](http://www.col.org/blog149)

In conjunction with the COL Board of Governors meeting held in Vancouver this month, Sir John has announced that he will not be seeking an extension when his current contract with COL ends in May 2012. The Board has initiated a process to seek and appoint a successor as President and CEO of COL.

[www.col.org/blog147](http://www.col.org/blog147)

Sir John joined COL in 2004.

[www.col.org/jdaniel](http://www.col.org/jdaniel)

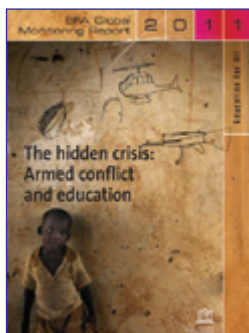
Mr. R. Thyagarajan has joined the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) as Head of Administration & Finance. He previously worked as the Deputy Registrar with Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and brings more than 30 years' experience in administration, finance and human resource development.



Mr. Gard Titlestad has been appointed Secretary General of the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE). Formerly with the Nordic Council of Ministers, Mr. Titlestad has also held positions with the European Union, the European Commission and with organisations in Norway.

## EFA GLOBAL MONITORING REPORT 2011

UNESCO has released the new 2011 Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report. "The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education" examines the damaging consequences of conflict for the EFA goals. The report sets out an agenda for protecting the right to education during conflict, strengthening provision for children, youth and adults affected by conflict, and rebuilding education systems in countries emerging from conflict. Drawing on experience from a range of countries, it identifies problems and sets out solutions that can help make education a force for peace, social cohesion and human dignity.



Governments, development agencies, civil society and the private sector are working together to reach the six EFA goals identified at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000. The annual EFA Global Monitoring Report monitors the progress of countries and identifies global challenges in order to reach the EFA goals by the year 2015.

<http://tinyurl.com/2011EFAReport>

## COL DAILY NEWS



COL's daily information service, which collects news on matters relevant to COL's mission from web-based sources throughout the world, is now available in an online newsheet format.

<http://dailynews.col.org>

## COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

Several COL staff members are contributing authors to the 2010/2011 edition of Commonwealth Education Partnerships. The new edition, published in March 2011, includes COL-contributed



articles about the COL Review and Improvement Model (COL RIM), teacher education, the campaign for Universal Primary Education, open schooling and the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.

<http://tinyurl.com/CEP2010>

## Connections

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Chair:

The Honourable Burchell Whiteman, O.J.

President & CEO: Sir John Daniel

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## THE IMPACT OF TABLET COMPUTERS IN EDUCATION



Do the iPad, PlayBook and other tablet computers have the potential to play an important role in education? That is the topic of April's Educational Technology Debate at [edtechdebate.org](http://edtechdebate.org). Some of the issues discussed include cost-effectiveness, incompatible teaching styles, connectivity challenges and the lack of culturally-specific learning materials.

One sample comment talks about the support required for technology in education:

*You could be living in a very remote area, drop a working car into my community but without a road or a highway, I won't get very far. I still need fuel, roads and a map to make the journey from one community to the next. Maybe Cisco, the World Bank and Google will join forces to help build out global network highways in areas that have little or no reliable power or internet access. Then we'll see the potential impact a lot sooner. That's one possible future.*

<http://edtechdebate.org>

## EVALUATING OPEN SOURCE ALTERNATIVES TO MICROSOFT OFFICE

Openoffice.org and LibreOffice are two open source alternatives to the Microsoft Office suite of business productivity appli-

cations. An article in InfoWorld provides a thoughtful evaluation of the two open source competitors.



<http://tinyurl.com/OpenOfficeDilemma>

## VIDEO IN EDUCATION: BEYOND LECTURE CAPTURE

The uses of video for education are many and varied.

While video lectures are available from many of the world's top scholars, "lecture capture" is just one limited way

video is being used for education. Other approaches include Khan Academy lessons, which are created expressly for video and supported by a robust website, video-based assignments, videoconferencing and video streaming.

For a thoughtful discussion of the rapidly evolving use of video in education, see Paul Stacey's "Musings on the edtech frontier" blog post:

<http://edtechfrontier.com/2011/04/01/video-edu>



## SKYPE FOR EDUCATORS

"Skype in the Classroom" is a free community that helps teachers use Skype's voice-over-Internet service to help their students learn. This new web space enables teachers to connect with each other, find partner classes and share ideas. As of 2010, Skype had 663 million registered users worldwide who use the software application to communicate by voice and video over the Internet at no cost. Microsoft's recent purchase of Skype – paying \$8.5 billion for a service which has yet to turn a profit – has captured worldwide attention.



<http://education.skype.com>