



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

# **COL in the Commonwealth**

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**2012–2015  
The Bahamas**

# Acknowledgements

All COL Education Specialists and their Programme Assistants as well as CEMCA colleagues have contributed to the development of the country reports which make up the volume *COL in the Commonwealth: 2012-2015 Country Reports*. This country report is an excerpt from the volume. The following people are thanked in particular for their role in the design and publication of these reports.

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## **Compilation and Coordination**

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## **Direction and Editing**

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# Foreword


*COL in the Commonwealth: 2012-2015 Country Reports* summarises COL's activities over the last three years (2012-2015) and captures what we have achieved in each Member State and across the Commonwealth.

This volume is the result of a collaborative process that began in 2011 with extensive partner consultations. Following these consultations, a *Country Action Plan* was developed to guide COL's work in each country. The reports contained in this volume describe the implementation of these plans and highlight COL's achievements during this three year plan.

The reports cover all Member States of the Commonwealth, showing not only what COL has done in developing countries but also how its work aligns with the international development priorities of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The reports are grouped under four regions: Africa and the Mediterranean, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Each regional section contains a brief regional report as well as the reports for each country within that region. The Pan-Commonwealth section describes COL's Initiatives, under the two sectors: 'Education' and 'Livelihoods and Health'. The reports for this triennium categorise COL activities according to our five core strategies: partnerships, capacity, materials, models and policy, in order to better present how our work contributes to outcomes. 'COL in Action' highlights real life examples to illustrate how COL's work impacts on people, groups and institutions in developing countries.

Most of the initiatives that COL pursued during this triennium are showing demonstrable results in expanding and improving opportunities for education and training, building healthier communities, helping rural communities achieve greater prosperity, and contributing to skills development. As the external Impact Evaluation report states: 'COL has had a major impact on individuals including farmers...faculty members, institutional leaders in formal and non-formal learning, selected policy makers and educational administrators'(S. Murgatroyd with J. Tully, 2015). The external Outcome Evaluation concludes that 'all the Initiatives moved successfully forward, on time and within budget' (N. Kemp and G. Farrell, 2015). Both evaluations confirm that COL is highly respected and well regarded in the field.

The production of *COL in the Commonwealth: 2012-2015 Country Reports* was made possible through collective effort and collaboration. Partners on the ground have diligently provided updates to COL. COL staff have tracked and assessed results obtained from partners through a thorough monitoring and evaluation process. COL's advanced knowledge management systems have enabled us to capture information from numerous sources and synthesise this into the reports that make up this volume. I must particularly commend Alexis Carr for her diligent work in filtering the masses of raw data and converting them into a coherent and meaningful narrative.



Professor Asha S. Kanwar  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Commonwealth of Learning



# THE BAHAMAS



## CONTEXT

The Bahamas is a small state of the Commonwealth, with a population of just under 380,000. Gross enrolment ratios are high for both primary and secondary education. The Bahamas contributes regularly to COL's budget and participates in numerous COL activities.



## AGREED PRIORITIES

- ▶ Develop capacity within the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries to use distance learning for farmer training, for ongoing professional development for technical staff resident in rural areas, and to link rural farming communities with agricultural credit programmes in the capital
- ▶ Provide training for teachers in creating professional development resources
- ▶ Provide support for the College of The Bahamas Distance Education Plan



## OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY COL

- ▶ 11 new VUSSC courses made available



## COL'S WORK RELATED TO MDG TARGETS

### National MDG Targets Addressed by COL

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

### COL's Work on The Bahamas's MDG Targets

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



## QUICK NOTES

### COL Focal Point:

- ▶ Ms Michelle Sears, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

### Areas of COL's Work in The Bahamas:

- ▶ Open Schooling
- ▶ Teacher Education
- ▶ Higher Education
- ▶ Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD)
- ▶ Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)
- ▶ Healthy Communities
- ▶ eLearning



## HIGHLIGHTS

COL has identified five core strategies to achieve outcomes and impact: partnerships, capacity, materials, models and policy. In practice, most COL activities incorporate more than one of these strategies and, in some cases, all five. However, for ease of reference, activities have been classified in only one of the five categories.

**PARTNERSHIPS**

COL partners with government agencies, public institutions, civil society and other organisations to improve and extend teaching and learning services to people in the developing Commonwealth.

- ▶ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- ▶ College of The Bahamas (CoB)
- ▶ Broadcasting Corporation of The Bahamas

**CAPACITY**

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

- ▶ Participatory Approaches to Disaster Awareness Campaigns
- ▶ Regional OER workshop
- ▶ Cost and Financing for Open Schools
- ▶ Monitoring and Evaluation for VUSSC

**MATERIALS**

Materials refer to learning and teaching resources including course materials, toolkits and frameworks. Materials are produced through collaboration with partners, or by partners themselves with COL support.

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

**MODELS**

A model is a coherent set of structures and processes that has been shown to work in more than one context to achieve specific results. Models can range from broad approaches to more specific instruments.

- ▶ Transnational Qualifications Framework

**POLICIES**

A policy is a high-level statement of ambition that specifies the outcomes to be achieved and that guides decision-making through a defined course of action. COL supports the development of policy for organisations and institutions as well as for governments.

- ▶ CARICOM Standards for Teaching and Teacher Education
- ▶ ICT Policy Development
- ▶ Regional ODL Policy Framework



## LOOKING FORWARD: 2015–2021

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

- ▶ Piloting of "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD) using the Aptus technology
- ▶ Provision of technical assistance with the preparation of policy documents

- ▶ Provision of training in instructional design and online instruction to personnel of the College of The Bahamas and the Department of Education
- ▶ Provision of support in evaluating the impact of distance learning initiatives such as those of the Broadband Learning Corporation (BLC)

## Appendix: COL Activities in The Bahamas

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### PARTNERSHIPS

#### VUSSC (Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth)

The Bahamas is a member of VUSSC.

#### College of The Bahamas: Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD)

At the invitation of **Mr Edward Bethel**, Director of the Distance Education Unit, COL visited the College of The Bahamas (CoB) in February 2014. The purpose of the visit was to meet with staff and administrators to discuss the expansion of distance and flexible learning to increase access to college programmes. The draft Distance Education Unit Strategic Plan was reviewed and revised. Possibilities for a partnership between COL and CoB are being discussed with a view to improving faculty skills in eLearning and extending college preparatory programmes to the family islands.

#### Ministry of Education, Science and Technology: Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD)

COL met with the COL Focal Point **Ms Michelle Sears**, **Mr Marcellus Taylor**, Deputy Director of Transformational Development and Planning, and other colleagues at the **Ministry of Education, Science and Technology** to discuss the COL programme and possible areas of partnership. The new Education Professional Development Institute and Agricultural Institute were discussed as potentially benefiting from distance and flexible learning approaches.

#### Ministry of Education, Science and Technology: Open Schooling

COL had a meeting with officials from the **Ministry of Education, Science and Technology** to discuss the establishment of open schooling in The Bahamas and an open schooling proposal that had been previously drafted.

### PARTNERSHIPS: MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

#### Regional Focal Points Meeting

**Ms Michelle Sears**, Education Officer of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, attended the meeting.

#### VUSSC Interlocutors Meeting

The VUSSC Interlocutors meet every three years to review developments, achievements and lessons learned. The VUSSC Interlocutors Meeting coincides with the Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF). PCF7 was held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 2 to 6 December 2013. At this meeting, Interlocutors participated in a half-day impact evaluation workshop with COL's impact

evaluators, Dr Stephen Murgatroyd and Ms Janet Tully. Highlights of the Interlocutors Meeting included a discussion of the post-MDGs (Millennium Development Goals), current VUSSC resources, and the importance of gender in the VUSSC initiative. At the close of the meeting, the following countries expressed interest in offering VUSSC courses: Barbados, Vanuatu, Namibia, St. Lucia, Antigua & Barbuda, Maldives, Grenada and Dominica. **The Bahamas** was not represented at this meeting.

### CAPACITY

#### Participatory Approaches to Disaster Awareness Campaigns

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

#### Regional OER Workshop

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

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

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- ▶ define a roadmap for the development of effective, practical OER country policies and plans in the Caribbean.

**Ms Michelle Sears** of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and COL's Focal Point attended the workshop.

### Cost and Financing for Open Schools

To ensure sustainable open schools that will increase access to learning opportunities, it is important that open schools adopt the correct systems and policies. Key among these is a cost and financing system. **Dr Pandora Johnson** of the College of The Bahamas attended a cost and financing workshop in Barbados from 12 to 17 August 2013.

### VUSSC Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop

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

## MATERIALS

### Research Report on Community Learning in the Eastern Caribbean

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

### New VUSSC Courses

During 2013–2014, 11 VUSSC courses were completed including: Master's in Educational Leadership, Bachelor's in Business and Entrepreneurship, Diploma in Agriculture, Linux for IT Managers, Facilitating Online Instruction, and Sustainable Tourism. Courses are available to all VUSSC member states on the VUSSC website. Approximately 49,000 people have been reached or trained, including senior officials, educators and over 1,300 learners enrolled in VUSSC-developed courses and programmes.

#### *VUSSC Postgraduate Diploma in Education*

Senior officials of the small states identified a need to develop a teacher education programme, especially at the postgraduate level, to help address the acute shortage of teachers in most of the small states and the lack of training programmes in most teacher training institutions. COL therefore facilitated

a workshop, in collaboration with the National University of Samoa, to develop a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). It ran from 17 June to 3 July 2013 in Samoa, with 28 participants from 14 countries. Much of the course was developed using OER.

#### *Associate Degree in Hospitality and Tourism*

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

## MODELS

### Transnational Qualifications Framework

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

## POLICIES

### Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Standards for Teaching and Teacher Education

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

### Regional ODL Policy Framework

In collaboration with the University of the West Indies (UWI), COL facilitated a roundtable from 19 to 22 June 2012 at the UWI campus in Barbados. Twelve participants from Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, and St. Vincent & The Grenadines attended the roundtable. The draft Regional ODL Policy Framework for the Caribbean, which resulted from the workshop, was circulated to the non-represented stakeholders in the Caribbean, including CARICOM, for their comments.

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

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



## **LEARNING FOR DEVELOPMENT**

COL is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.

**VISION:** To be the foremost global agency that promotes learning for development

**MISSION:** To help governments and institutions to expand the scale, efficiency and quality of learning by using open, distance and technology-based approaches

**CORE STRATEGIES:** Partnerships, capacity, materials, models and policies

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