



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING



COL in the Commonwealth

2018–2020 HIGHLIGHTS

BARBADOS

LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

TARGETS 2021



Improved sustainable livelihoods
300,000 PEOPLE



470
ORGANISATIONS
Improved organisational
capacity to leverage ODL

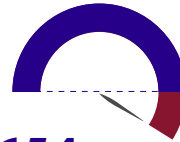


1.4 million
PEOPLE
Increased and equitable
access to, and use of, quality
learning opportunities

ACHIEVED BY 2020



257,484 people



654 organisations



880,039 people



Introduction

Since its creation some 30 years ago, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has become a true catalyst for positive change for a third of the world's population. Our vision of “learning for sustainable development” means that learning must lead to social inclusion, economic growth and environmental conservation. This aligns COL's work with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote learning opportunities for all.”

COL harnesses the potential of open, distance and technology-enabled learning to help Member States accelerate progress towards achieving development outcomes.



To achieve outcomes and impact, COL has led six paradigm shifts:

- If the child cannot go to school, the school comes to the child.
- Technology-enabled learning can break open the ivory towers of tertiary education.
- Open educational resources (OER) are the answer to closed and costly textbooks.
- The digital divide can be transformed into a digital dividend.
- Literacy is not always a precondition for learning.
- The social capital of the mother is the most important determinant in bringing girls to school.

What are COL's key success factors? COL aligns its work with global priorities and ensures that it stays relevant to Member States' needs and priorities. COL is relevant, responsive and results oriented. The 2018–2020 Country Highlights summarise COL's progress towards achieving SDG4.

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



Highlights

Working in two sectors, Education and Skills, with Gender as a crosscutting theme, COL uses pioneering models and approaches to achieve impact.

- COL has developed an innovative employability framework to strengthen and evaluate the impact of higher education institutions on graduates' employability, with a focus on industry and labour-market engagement.
- GIRLS Inspire has reached close to 81,000 girls and young women in remote and unreached communities, providing schooling and skilling them for livelihoods.
- The Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) model is being upscaled in partnership with national banks, moving from the meso to the macro level.
- The Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) programme is now being implemented across the Commonwealth.
- Ambitious projects to improve gender equality in two Commonwealth regions have been launched. These holistic models are based on community mobilisation and address areas such as capacity building in education, gender-based violence, health, empowerment, economic opportunities, and policy.
- Blockchain technology, built according to open standards, was used to issue certificates for massive open online courses (MOOCs) in different disciplines.
- COL has developed a comprehensive solution for data resilience in education for small states facing climate-related disasters.
- The ninth Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF9), held in Edinburgh, brought together close to 550 thought leaders, policy makers and practitioners to share best practices and harness innovation for change, with a view to providing employability skills to young people, offering a quality education to all regardless of circumstances, and identifying practical ways for technology to speed up our progress.



Barbados

COL works with partners in Barbados to expand access to quality education and lifelong learning for all. His Excellency Hubert John Charles, Resident Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates for Dominica, represents the Caribbean Region on COL's Board of Governors.

COL's current work in Barbados is primarily in the areas higher education through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth, as well as technical and vocational skills development, and technology-enabled learning. Learners from Barbados have benefited from COL's open online courses and other resources.

The following are the highlights from 2018 to 2020.



Programmes

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH (VUSSC)

Barbados continues to be a member of VUSSC. Initiated by ministers of education of developing small states of the Commonwealth, VUSSC supports the collaborative development and sharing of OER to promote learning for sustainable development.

In the past few years, VUSSC has connected institutions through online technologies to promote eLearning and the collaborative sharing of educational resources using multi-institutional partnerships. The emphasis is now on supporting institutions to offer VUSSC courses and programmes while promoting the use of the Transnational Qualifications Framework.

COL's Education Specialist: VUSSC has been providing technical advice to the Caribbean Tourism Organisation with a view to supporting a climate-smart and sustainable Caribbean tourism industry.

With assistance from COL, the University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus is developing *Zero to Hero*, a programme aiming to increase the number of secondary school learners who qualify to enter the workforce or tertiary education in the Caribbean by enabling non-completers, early school leavers and young persons whose education has been disrupted to take competency-based courses through mobile, blended and online modalities in areas related to digital entrepreneurship.

As well, the partnership between COL and UWI's Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Economic and Social Studies (SALISES) seeks to strengthen staff capacity to develop and deliver an online MSc degree in Development Studies. The purpose of the project is to expand access to the MSc in Development Studies through facilitating the conversion of learning materials for its online delivery. Sixty-seven faculty, coaches and administrators from the three SALISES locations in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago participated in face-to-face and online training activities held between May and August 2019.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (TVSD)

COL's TVSD initiative supports partners in harnessing ODL to increase access to demand-driven, competency-based skills training. TVSD is increasingly focused on innovative models that use ODL for theory, with practical skills development organised in workplaces and communities.

TVSD has been offering ongoing online training across the Commonwealth via three courses: *Facilitating Online Courses*, *Flexible Skills Development* and *Blended Learning in the Classroom*. Learners from Barbados have benefited from these course offerings.

As part of a regional initiative, COL has supported the TVET Council Barbados, the Grenada National Training Agency and the National Training Agency of Trinidad and Tobago to develop and deliver a recognised, competency-based certification system known as the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ). An online CVQ Assessor Training course aimed at standardising training across the region and increasing the number of qualified assessors has been developed, and five participants from Barbados joined in.

As well, COL is supporting the development of the *Caribbean Vocational Qualification Verifier Training* online programme. In June 2018, a five-day materials development workshop took place in Barbados with participants from the Grenada National Training Agency, the National Training Agency of Trinidad and Tobago, and the TVET Council Barbados.

In June 2018, TVSD held a regional workshop on *Sustainable Development in TVET* in Barbados. There were 19 participants from seven countries, including three attendees from the TVET Council Barbados.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING (TEL)

This initiative aims to encourage more institutions to integrate TEL and OER policies and practices to improve teaching and learning for skills development. Activities of the TEL initiative focus on the individual, institutional and country levels.

Dr Claudette Fongkong-Mungal from University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus, Barbados participated in the *C-DELTA Training of Trainers* workshop held in New Delhi, India in December 2018.

In partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, COL has been offering a MOOC on *Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning*. In 2018–2019, a total of 91 participants from Barbados joined the course’s third and fourth offerings.



Events and Special Activities

MOOC ON INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN BUSINESS

One participant from Barbados joined the MOOC on *Introduction to Sustainable Development in Business*, which was offered jointly by COL and the Open University of Mauritius in May–June 2019.

REGIONAL MEETING OF COL FOCAL POINTS

The Caribbean regional meeting of the COL Focal Points took place on 30 and 31 August 2018 in Kingston, Jamaica to strengthen the effectiveness of COL’s work in addressing key priorities for education and training in the region and to share information about developments related to learning for sustainable development. Mrs Karen Best, Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training, represented Barbados at the meeting.

REGIONAL WORKSHOP: WOMEN IN ICT

Mid-career women from tertiary institutions across the Caribbean came together for the *Women in ICT: The Future of Work in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)* workshop from 11 to 13 June 2019 in Nassau, The Bahamas. Facilitated by COL and hosted by the Ministry of Education, The Bahamas, the event explored current technologies and trends in education, such as OER, and the role of AI in enhancing these technologies. It also used a gender lens to examine the threats and opportunities for AI in education. One participant from Barbados attended the workshop.

NINTH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM (PCF9)

Close to 550 policy makers, practitioners and thought leaders from across the Commonwealth and beyond gathered at the historic Murrayfield Stadium in Edinburgh, Scotland for PCF9, themed *Innovations for Quality Education and Lifelong Learning*. It was organised from 9 to 12 September 2019 in partnership with The Open University, UK.

The four days of insightful keynote addresses, engaging plenary panels, informative parallel sessions, and other programme highlights provided a unique opportunity to bridge traditional divides between borders and sectors. Discussions centred around four key sub-themes, *Opening Up Education, Equity and Inclusion, Technology and Employability*, and delegates appreciated the focus on new forum features: artificial intelligence, youth and girls' education and learners with special abilities. Under the auspices of PCF9, COL hosted a ministerial roundtable with participation from six education ministers.

COL sponsored three delegates from Barbados to attend PCF9. As well, Ms Karen Best, Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training, attended the Interlocutors' Meeting hosted by VUSSC in Edinburgh ahead of PCF9. Ms Marlyn Rawlins from the TVET Council Barbados participated in the workshop on *Establishing and Improving Workplace-Based Plus Open and Distance Learning Models of TVET Practice*, hosted by COL's TVSD initiative, in the framework of PCF9.





PCF9 Edinburgh Statement

Forum partners from over 60 countries believe that it is possible to significantly accelerate progress towards the aim and targets of SDG4 by prioritising the following collective actions now:

1. **Accomplishment at scale**

Mobilise an emergency response to ensure that all children in the Commonwealth, including girls, learners with different abilities, and learners from vulnerable and marginalised communities, experience a quality education focused on accomplishment, knowledge exchange and the continued ability to learn.

2. **Skills for productive lives**

Urgently create learning opportunities for marginalised, excluded, vulnerable and out-of-school young people to build skills for leading a productive life, embracing technology to enhance employability, entrepreneurship and confidence, and bridging accessible formal, non-formal and informal education.

3. **Creating new digital dividends**

Develop new, innovative, flexible modes of education to foster creativity, imagination and peer knowledge exchange, increase reach and ensure no one is left behind, through the use of appropriate media and delivery, including blended approaches to digital learning.

4. Teachers as skilled agents of change

Teachers and teacher educators are the main agents of change for quality education and can be supported to catalyse action in their schools, communities and colleges as respected professionals who model lifelong learning. To do this we propose:

Creating **alternative, flexible and technology enabled pathways into teaching** to resolve the shortage of skilled and motivated teachers;

Expanding low-cost, highly effective ways to **support school-based teacher professional development** to build change capacity and capability within regional and national educational systems.

5. Positively disrupt higher education

Support innovation for quality higher education; **strengthen the technology-enabled learning ecosystem** throughout the Commonwealth, including the scope to develop professional skills, recognition, validation and verification of experiential and prior learning through micro-credentialing and blockchain technology; expand the reach of open education for dispersed audiences; and improve barrier-free access to tertiary education.

6. Challenging assessment

Radically relook at assessment models: build a culture of assessment to support employability and micro-entrepreneurship.

Our ambition is to achieve this through:

Bold inclusive collaboration;

Bringing together the diverse groups of critical thinkers, innovators and practitioners who can collaboratively make change happen by delivering quality education and lifelong learning for all;

Making greater use of data, evidence and storytelling to galvanise political will for enabling policies and well-resourced implementation plans;

Sustaining the momentum;

Building an active network of learning, support and action starting now.

Sustaining and building our momentum for change, we aim to bring our key commitments to the fore of the policy agenda through the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM), the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and PCF10.



New Publications and Resources

In 2018–2020, COL produced a number of publications and resources, including:

***Knowledge Series: Designing and Implementing Micro-Credentials:
A Guide for Practitioners***

As online learning and MOOCs become mainstream, it is important to explore new forms of credentialing. This publication offers a step-by-step guide to plan, design and implement micro-credentials and badges in diverse contexts and provides greater flexibility in the journey of the new learner-earner through a skills and capability framework.

A Blueprint and Toolkit for School-Based Teacher Development: SECONDARY

This toolkit is for implementing school-based teacher development as a way to improve the performance of schools and raise the achievement of children. This valuable resource includes a detailed framework, which can be adapted to the context of a particular country, region, district or school, and offers practical daily activities for teachers.

Guidelines on the Development of Open Educational Resources Policies

This new publication provides specific tools to analyse current contexts and policy environments, understand issues related to copyright and licensing, and align policy in support of Sustainable Development Goal 4. The guidelines present a systematic process for designing and implementing OER policies and measuring their impact.

***A Guide to Integrating Employability in Higher Education Institutions:
The Commonwealth of Learning's Employability Model***

This publication provides clear guidelines on how to integrate employability pathways into instructional systems. From career counselling to career support, the guide demonstrates how institutions can prepare graduates for employment or entrepreneurship.

Gender Scorecard 2.0: Instructions and Templates

This is a tool to audit the capacity of institutions to mainstream gender. It helps with analysing existing policies and practices and developing clear steps for the effective promotion of gender equity.

All COL publications can be found on its open-access repository at **oasis.col.org**.



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