



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

**COUNTRY REPORT**  
2021-2023 | **AFRICA**

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**Mauritius**

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

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**The Commonwealth of Learning (COL)** is focused on adding value to African member countries' efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG4. It's supporting the governments and institutions of Africa in the use of appropriate, affordable technologies to improve and expand learning for sustainable development.

During its current plan (2021-2027), COL will:

- i) build on its expertise in ODL, OER and TEL to play a more influential role in national policy development and implementation;
- ii) invest in innovations and research;
- iii) support the digital transformation of institutions and organisations;
- iv) promote gender equality; and
- v) implement a rigorous monitoring and evaluation plan.

COL's work is organised into two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender Equality and Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL) as cross-cutting initiatives.

The Education sector supports formal education from secondary to tertiary levels across the Commonwealth, particularly in the small states in Africa (Botswana, The Gambia, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles) and has four initiatives: Open Schooling; Teacher Education; Higher Education and the Virtual University for Small States of The Commonwealth (VUSSC).

The Skills sector supports formal, non-formal and informal education and training to equip learners for livelihoods and has three initiatives: Skills for Work; Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) and GIRLS Inspire.

The work in these sectors complements the three pathways of change COL is focusing on in achieving impact for each African member country. These are:

1. Building National Resilience
2. Strengthening Institutions
3. Improving Lives and Livelihoods.

## INTRODUCTION

An island off the southeast coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean, Mauritius is a small state of the Commonwealth, with a population of over 1.2 million ([World Bank](#), 2022).

COL's work in Mauritius is in the areas of higher education and technology-enabled learning. Mauritius is part of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) network and benefits from programmes offered by the Southern African Development Community's Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE), COL's regional centre. Learners from Mauritius are also participating in COL's free, open online courses and benefitting from other available resources.

## PARTNERS

COL's partners in Mauritius include:

- Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology
- Academy for Design and Innovation (formerly Fashion and Design Institute)
- Global Rainbow Foundation
- Higher Education Commission (HEC)
- Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE)
- Open University of Mauritius
- Université des Mascareignes
- University of Mauritius
- University of Technology, Mauritius

## KEY CONTACTS

### COL FOCAL POINT

**Mr Youdhisteer Munbodh**  
Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Education, Tertiary  
Education, Science &  
Technology

**Professor Kiran Bhujun**  
Director  
Ministry of Education, Tertiary  
Education, Science &  
Technology

## COL ACTIVITIES BETWEEN JULY 2021 - MAY 2023

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 7,285 certificates have been issued to learners from Mauritius through COL's Skills Online project.
- Mauritius Institute of Education implemented the institutional policy for technology-enabled learning developed with COL support.
- Report on "Technology-Enabled Learning at Four Public Higher Education Institutions of Mauritius" published.

## **BUILDING NATIONAL RESILIENCE**

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

A presentation of the draft open educational resources (OER) Policy was organised by the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology in November 2021 via Zoom. COL President and CEO, the Honourable Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Education, and Education Specialist: eLearning were in attendance. 13 persons (8 females and five males were in attendance). [Nov2021]

In collaboration with the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) to promote digital education skills amongst students and teachers, COL's award-winning Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) programme was implemented in Mauritius in 2022. This included 114 teachers from the primary and secondary schools in Mauritius who received training. COL's C-DELTA platform received the Brandon Hall Gold Excellence in Learning Award 2021.

COL organised a national consultation in May 2022 to seek feedback on the OER policy draft where 37 participants attended the workshop organised by the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, to finalise the policy. The National OER policy developed with COL's support has now been adopted by the Cabinet on 23 December 2022.

With COL's support, the Higher Education Commission (HEC), developed the "HEC Integrated Quality Standards, Policies and Procedures Manual for Approval to Establish a Higher Education Institution, Institutional Registration and Programme Accreditation", which has been approved by the Commission.

COL President & CEO, Professor Asha Kanwar, presented a virtual address to ministers and attendees at the Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting (CLMM), hosted by the Government of Mauritius in November 2022. She spoke about how distance and online learning can open up access to quality legal education...at a fraction of the cost of campus provision. As an example, the Legislative Drafting programme developed with COL support, is designed for the novice, as well as the seasoned drafter, to learn practical skills in translating government policies into clear and effective laws that can be understood and applied by a variety of stakeholders.

## **STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS**

**COL is supporting partner institutions to strengthen its ODL systems and capacities for providing quality education and training.**

COL's Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration and Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) Programme's goal is to deliver high-quality learning and professional development opportunities – with our Commonwealth Partner Institutions – that complement existing MBA/MPA programmes. The Open University of Mauritius is a partner institution. In mid-2022, nine-course materials were redeveloped. They include Enterprise Information Systems and Digital Strategy, Management in Organization, People and Talent Management, Operations Management, New Public Management and Governance, Data Analysis for Decision making, Marketing Management, Accounting Issues and Financial Management for Business Decisions, and Disaster Management.

The Academic Board (AB) meeting and the Executive Governing Board (EGB) meeting of the CEMBA/MPA were held in Mauritius in May 2022. 11 participants from the CEMBA/CEMPA partner institutions, including COL President and Director: Education, COL, attended the AB meeting, while 12 participants attended the EGB meeting.

In January 2022, COL and Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) hosted a webinar on Innovative Practices in School-Based Teacher Mentoring, where the panellists discussed the rationale for the mentoring competency framework as well as key highlights in the process of developing the framework and the micro-credential. The webinar attracted 61 participants from The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Uganda, including ministry officials, teacher educators, teachers and other education stakeholders.

Mauritius is one of 10 countries highlighted in the COL/UNESCO publication “Smart Education Strategies for Teaching and Learning: Critical Analytical Framework and Case Studies”, published in September 2022.

Teachers from Mauritius participated in the COL MOOC on cybersecurity training for teachers (November 2022).

In June 2022, COL facilitated a workshop in collaboration with the HEC to develop guidelines for technology-enabled learning strategies for harmonising TEL activities in tertiary education institutions in Mauritius. 36 (19F/17M) heads of the institutions and senior staff members attended the workshop and policy guidelines have been finalised. The report on “Technology-Enabled Learning at the Four Public Higher Education Institutions of Mauritius” was published in May 2023 on the findings conducted at the University of Mauritius, Open University of Mauritius, University of Technology and Université des Mascareignes.

COL supported MIE to conduct a five-week workshop on Developing Blended Courses, where 16 faculty members (4m, 12f) were trained. [Dec 2022]

COL is supporting the Academy for Design and Innovation (formerly the Fashion Design Institute) to convert skills-based courses for online delivery.

- 24 Faculty members received training on Developing and Teaching Online Courses. Eight courses have been converted for online delivery.
- 22 (13m, 9f) faculty members enrolled in the “Designing Online Assessments Course”. [Feb 2023]
- Seven Faculty members (3m, 4f) from the Academy of Design and Innovation have completed the Designing and Developing Online Assessments Course. [Apr 2023]

## REGIONAL CENTRE: SADC-CDE

26 senior officials comprising representatives from universities participated in the high-level workshop on developing effective OER policies for the SADC region, from 20-21 June 2022 in Gaborone.

In February 2022, a seminar was organised on "The Future of open and distance e-learning (ODEL) in higher education institutions in the 21st Century: Challenges and opportunities" to sensitize the institution staff at 16 SADC member states (including 11 Commonwealth countries).

## IMPROVING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

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

COL's VUSSC initiative is working with the Global Rainbow Foundation:

- First offering of a ten-week course titled, "Capacity Building for NGOs in the Disability Sector" was developed and delivered. It was comprised of five topics: Disability Rights Awareness, NGO management, Project Management, Community-based Rehabilitation Inclusion Development and Policy Advocacy. Second offering with 325 enrolled ran from January 10 to April 18, 2022. 54 completed the course with eight learners being from Mauritius. In the third offering, 234 (130 m, 104 f) persons enrolled from 25 countries (21 Commonwealth countries)
- "Ethical and Inclusive Reporting" course developed. This short course explores media reporting of disability as a human rights issue. It introduces media practitioners, broadcast and print journalists and other communication professionals to the skills and approaches necessary for inclusive and sensitive reporting. The first offering took place from 28 March to 13 May 2022 (36 enrolled, four completed).

COL's Skills for Work initiative entered into an agreement in 2021 with the HEC and the MoETEST in Mauritius to offer 3,000 scholarships to learners between 2021 and 2023. This large-scale scholarship programme for the island offers a pathway for lifelong learning and growth, as well as the enhancement of skills for employment and entrepreneurship. Each year, two cohorts of learners are admitted and provided with a licence that allows them to attend online courses from the Coursera, Udemy, and Grow with Google learning platforms for about six months. Learners in the first cohort had enrolled in almost 8,000 courses. To date, 7,285 certificates have been issued to learners from Mauritius.

During 2021-2022, 19 students graduated from the two-year CEMBA/MPA programme at the Open University of Mauritius and 31 new students enrolled in the programme.

## SPECIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The HEC organised an **award ceremony** to felicitate the learners of the first cohort of COL's scholarship awardees for their achievement in completing courses from the Coursera, Udemy, and Grow with Google learning platforms. The event was attended by the Honourable Vice Prime Minister and Minister of MoETEST, Mrs Leela Devi Dookun Luchoomun and COL President & CEO.

COL's Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning is held triennially and is co-hosted with different partners in different regions of the Commonwealth. 13 delegates from Mauritius registered for the **Tenth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF10)**, the first-ever hybrid Forum held in Calgary, Canada from 14-16 September 2022. Five were sponsored by COL. The Honourable Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of MoE/TEST was conferred a COL Honorary Fellow. In addition, took part in the Ministerial Roundtable and chaired the keynote address for Fostering Lifelong Learning. Other participating delegates included: Deewakarsingh Authelsingh, Special Education Needs Authority; Goonesh Kumar Bahadur, University of Mauritius; Radha Rani Baichoo, Mauritius Institute of Education; Hansa Devi Bedacee-Dindoyal, Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology; Ajeevsing Bhooloa, Mauritius Institute of Education; Tomal Kumar Chadeea, Open University of Mauritius; Rubeena Doomun, Open University of Mauritius; Anuradha Gungadeen, Mauritius Institute of Education; Sandhya Gunness, University of Mauritius; Romeela Mohee, Higher Education Commission; Bhima Ramkissoon, MIE; Kaviraj Sharma Sukon, Open University of Mauritius.

The **Regional Focal Points Meeting for Africa and Europe** was held in Seychelles from 20-21 February 2023. Official representatives from 20 Commonwealth countries in the region participated in the two-day meeting, including Mr Youdhisteer Munbodh.

## PUBLICATIONS OF RELEVANCE

Smart Education Strategies for Teaching and Learning: Critical Analytical Framework and Case Studies <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/4464>

Report on the Baseline Study of Technology-Enabled Learning at the Mauritius Institute of Education <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5256>

Report on the Regional Focal Points Meeting - Africa and Europe <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5316>

Technology-Enabled Learning at the Four Public Higher Education Institutions of Mauritius <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5359>



4710 Kingsway, Suite 2500  
Burnaby, BC V5H 4M2  
Canada

Tel: +1.604.775.8200  
Fax: +1.604.775.8210  
E-mail: [info@col.org](mailto:info@col.org)  
Web: [www.col.org](http://www.col.org)