



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

# Taking the Road Less Travelled

Professor Asha Kanwar  
President & CEO, Commonwealth of Learning

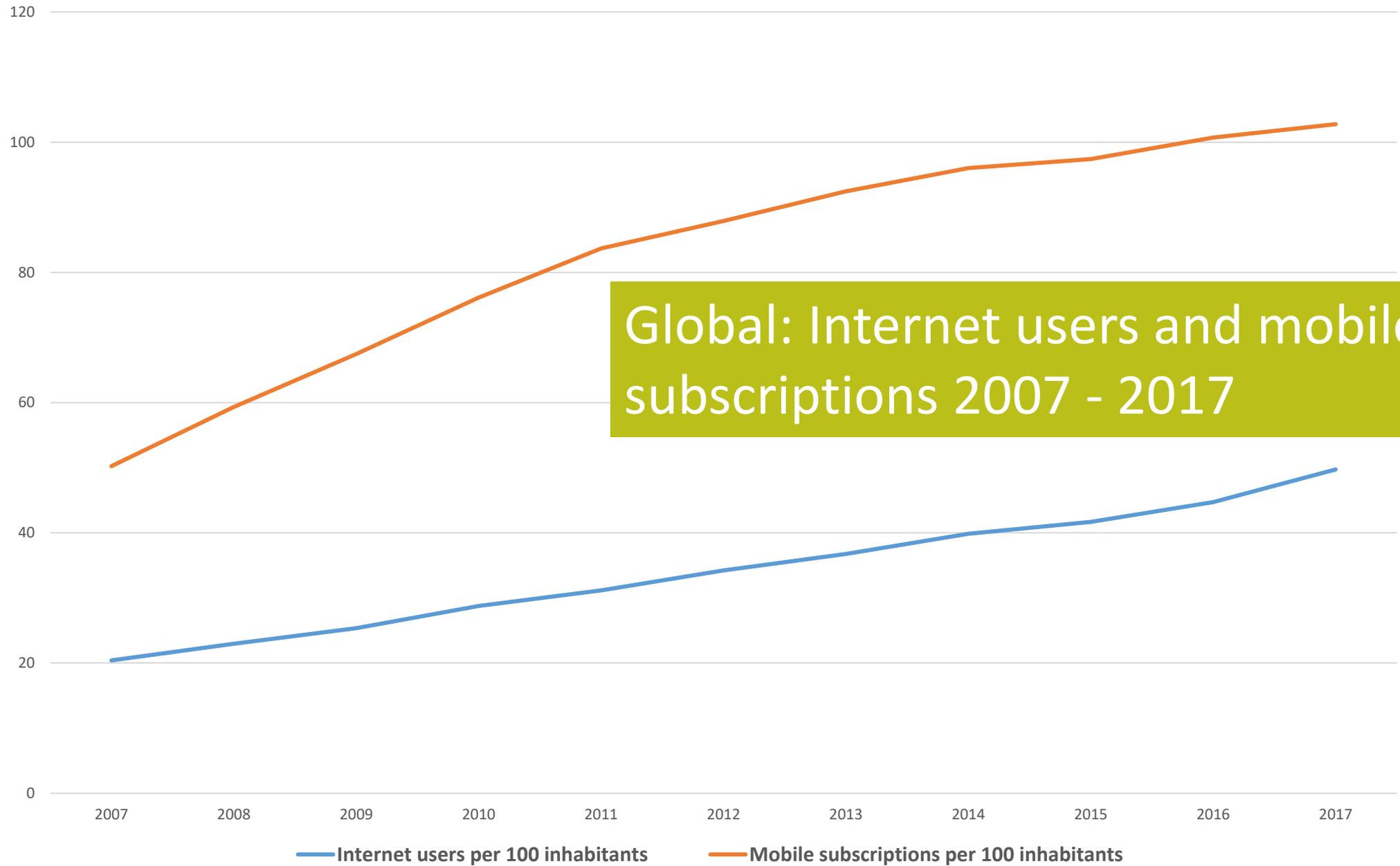
April 30, 2020

**TED<sup>x</sup>**  
KrasnayaPolyanaSalon  
x = independently organized TED event

>1.5 billion

over 90% of student population





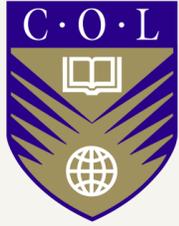
Source: [data.worldbank.org](https://data.worldbank.org), retrieved on 16 April 2020



**SOUTH AFRICA:  
CALLS FOR A  
NATIONAL  
BOYCOTT OF  
ONLINE  
LEARNING**

**ZIMBABWE: STUDENT  
BODIES SAY E-LEARNING  
IS UNAFFORDABLE AND  
ELITIST**





# COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING



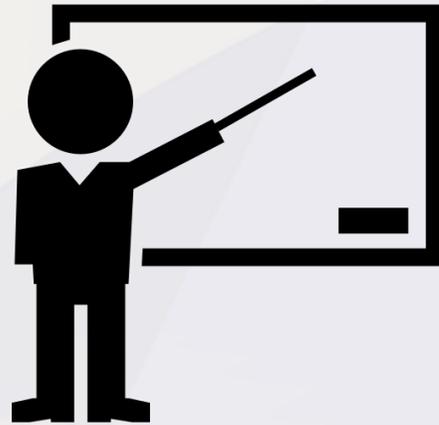
Helping Commonwealth governments and institutions use distance learning and technologies to expand access to education and training

1

# Mainstreaming Open & Distance Learning (ODL)



# DISTANCE EDUCATION



# OPEN LEARNING

= fewer barriers



DISTANCE EDUCATION

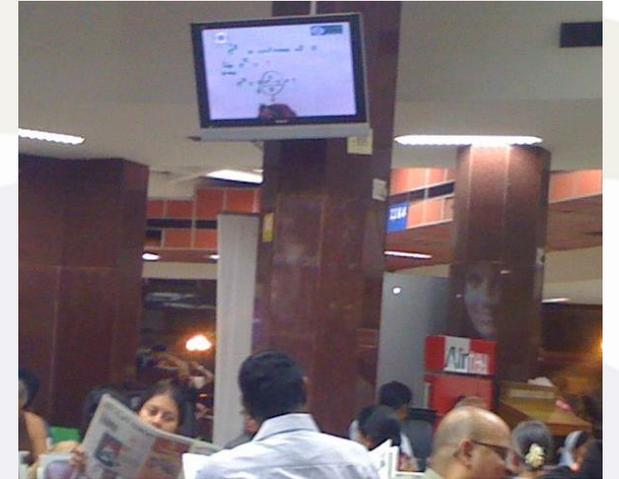
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BUT, they are complementary

Therefore: **ODL**

# ODL in Practice

- Flexible entry
- Study at own pace, place and time
- Content available in print, audio, video and IT
- Support from Tutors



the **no**  
significant  
difference  
phenomenon

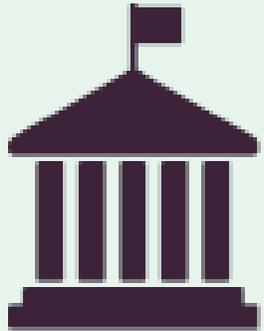
as reported in 355  
research reports, summaries  
and papers a comparative research  
annotated bibliography  
on technology for distance education

1999

compiled by  
Thomas L. Russell  
Office of Instructional Telecommunications  
North Carolina State University

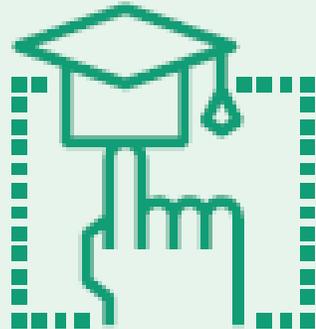


# Open Universities Still Open



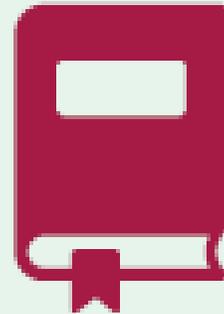
27

Universities



2,497

Programmes



18,342

Courses



4,464,751

Students



**1.3 million** in service teachers  
trained online



*If the learner  
cannot go to  
school,  
the school comes  
to the learner*

“I left school in year 5 when I got married at the age of 12. I am now 22 and have 3 children. I went back to school so that I could help my children with their schoolwork.”





**ODL students have  
one-third carbon  
footprint compared to  
campus-based  
students**

2

Leave no  
one behind





Photo credit: Abir Abdullah / Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha, Bangladesh

# CommonwealthWiseWomen (CWW)

The impacts of globalisation, technological advancement, climate change and now COVID-19 challenge organisations to find ways to contribute to sustainable leadership, while working towards gender equality. One strategy to build a foundation for successful leadership is to engage young women and girls at an early age or stage in their career and create networking opportunities through mentoring. Studies have shown that a good mentoring program can help young women and girls become successful in their field of interest as well as excel in leadership.

(STEMconnector, 2019)

[ABOUT CWW](#)

# CommonwealthWiseWomen.org



India  
0.56%



South Africa  
1%



3

From digital  
divide to digital  
dividend



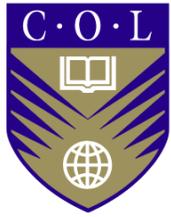




agMOOCs



# MOOC4D



# Aptus

AN ENABLER OF MOBILE LEARNING

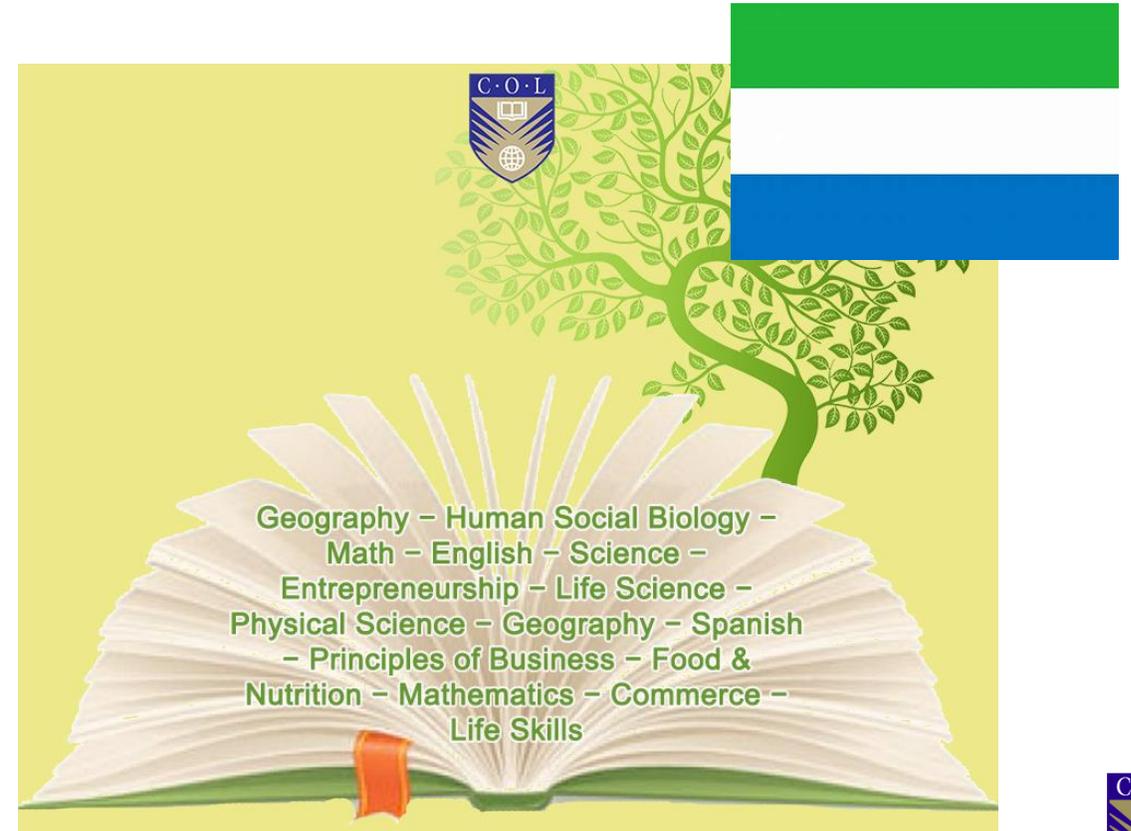




## Tonga: Restoring classroom teaching following Cyclone Gita

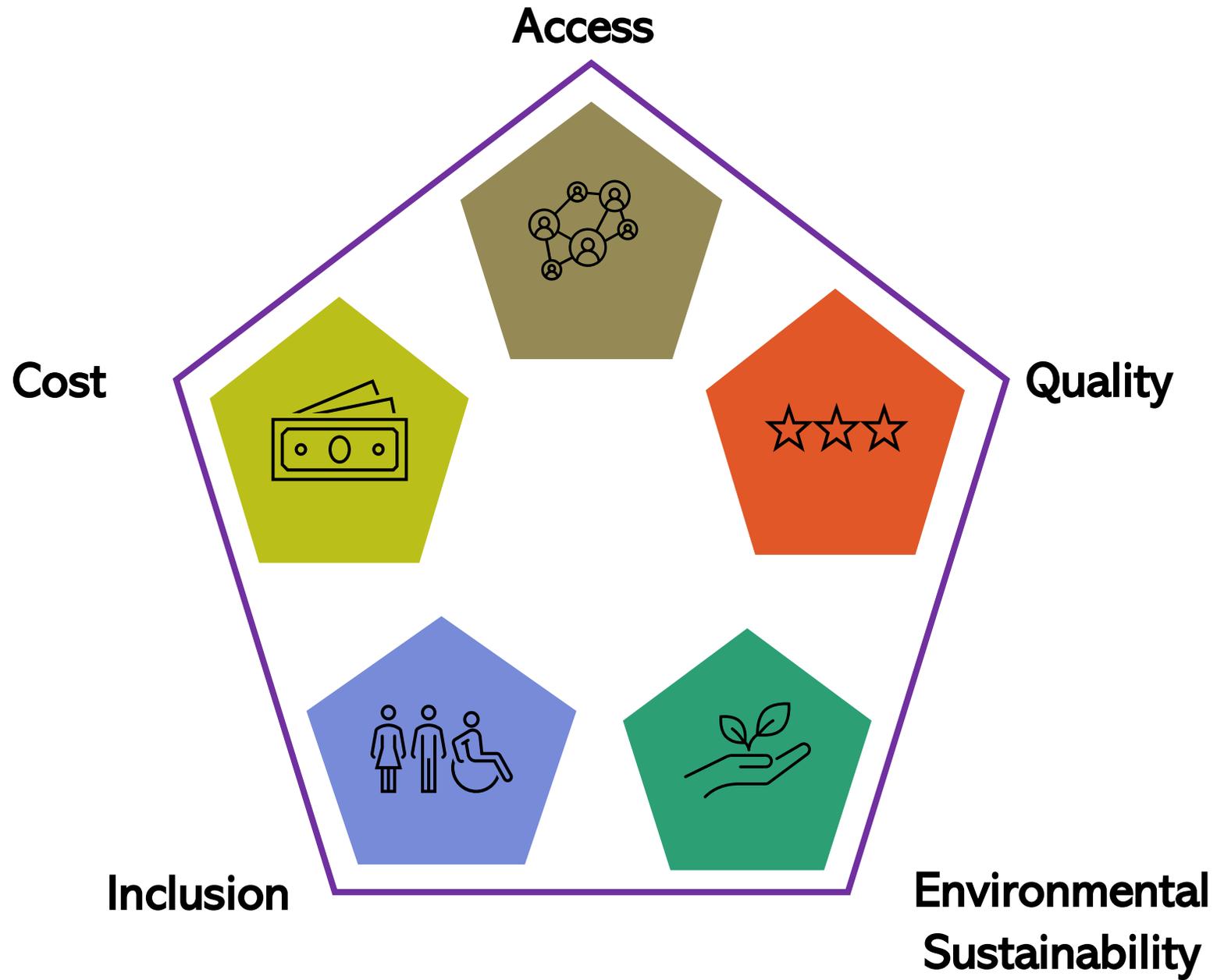


# Open Educational Resources (OER)





# Who's Afraid of ODL?



# Intergovernmental Agencies

## Partnerships for ODL



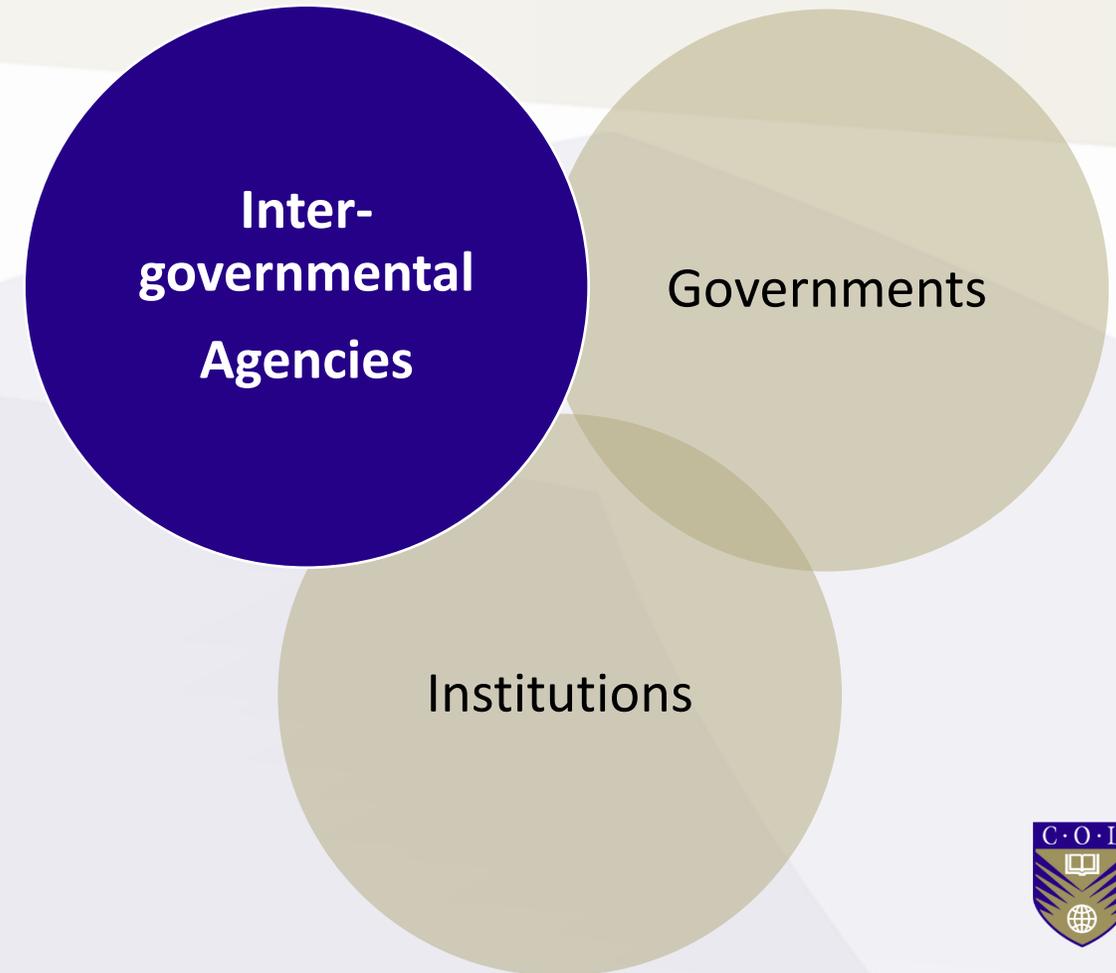
**COMMONWEALTH  
of LEARNING**

ABOUT OBJECTIVES ACTIVITIES JOIN

### International Partnership of Distance and Online Learning for COVID-19

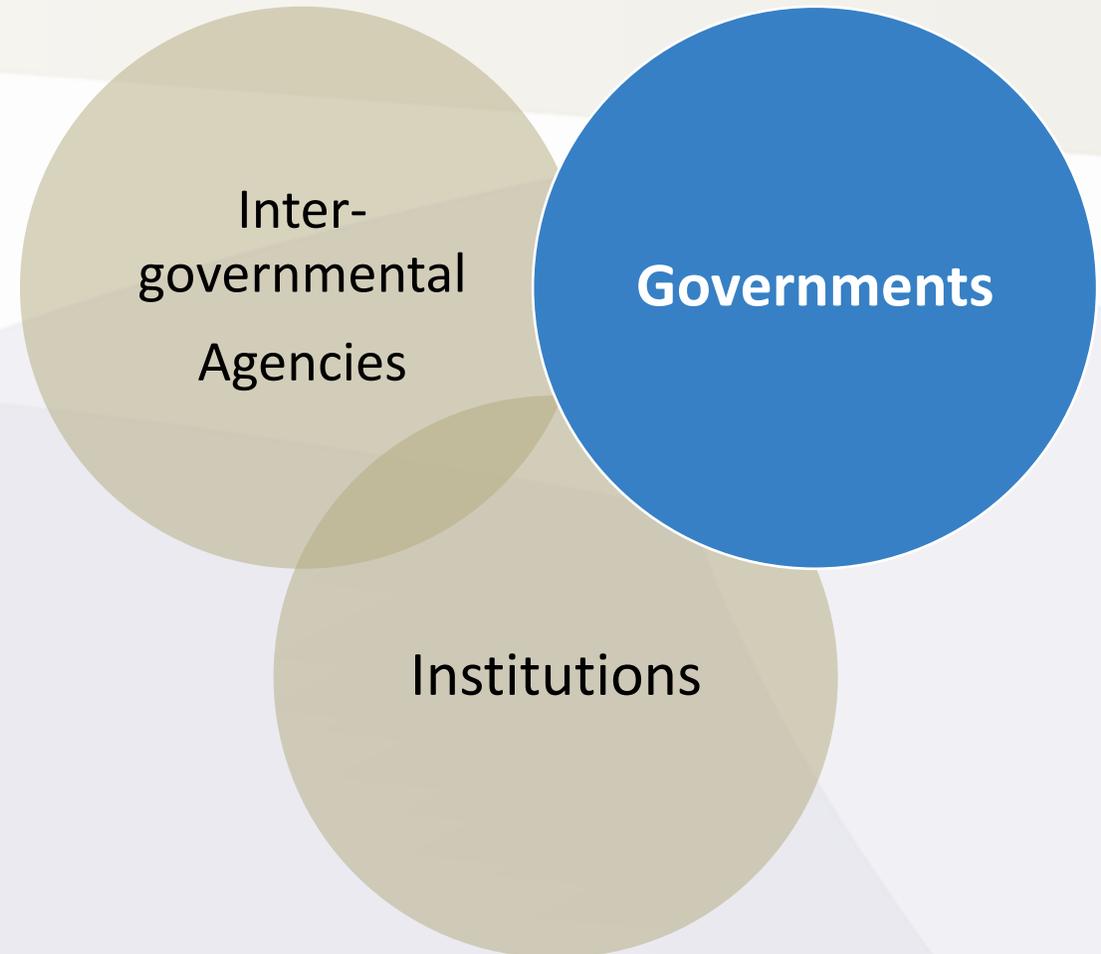
The unprecedented developments due to COVID-19 have led to the closure of educational institutions around the world. UNESCO estimates that over 90% of the world's student population is unable to attend classes and is required to stay at home. Particularly vulnerable are those learners in developing countries who may not have access to electricity, devices or connectivity to follow online lessons which are being provided in many developed countries and urban contexts.

[PARTNERS](#)



# Governments

## ODL Policies



# Educational Institutions

Build staff  
capacity



Inter-  
governmental  
Agencies

Governments

Institutions

# Taking the road less travelled...

"...Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference."

By Robert Frost



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