



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

COUNTRY REPORT
2021-2023 | **ASIA**



Malaysia

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

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is focused on adding value to member states' efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG4. It's supporting the governments and institutions of the Commonwealth 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 (Brunei Darussalam and Maldives) 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 member state in the Commonwealth. These are:

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

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia has a population of almost 34 million people ([World Bank, 2022](#)). Open and distance learning (ODL) is popular in Malaysia, with half of working adults involved. Malaysia has hosted several important COL meetings and events, including the Eighth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in November 2016.

COL's work in Malaysia is primarily in the areas of higher education and technology-enabled learning and benefits from programmes under the aegis of the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA). Learners from Malaysia are also benefitting from COL's free, open online courses and other available resources.

PARTNERS

COL's partners in Malaysia include:

- Ministry of Higher Education
- Asia e University (AeU)
- HELP University (HU)
- Open University Malaysia (OUM)
- Quest International University (QIU)
- Universiti Malaysia Sabah
- Wawasan Open University (WOU)

KEY CONTACTS

FOCAL POINT

YBhg Datin Noorazah binti Omar
Undersecretary of International
Relations Division
Ministry of Higher Education

REGIONAL CENTRE

The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) is located in New Delhi, India and was established to promote cooperation and collaboration in the creation and use of multiple media resources for Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and skills development in the Commonwealth countries of Asia. Its activities revolve around COL's Strategic Plan 2021-27, but at the same time, CEMCA retains its regional focus, considering the challenges and requirements of Asian Commonwealth countries.

CEMCA's Advisory Council meets annually and functions as an advisory body on CEMCA's affairs and is responsible for broad policy formulation in the programme areas. The Council meets once a year and membership is rotated among the members in Commonwealth Asia.

During the 2021-2027 plan, CEMCA will:

1. Build the capacity of institutions to transition to online and blended learning;
2. Support gender-responsive skills development for livelihoods; and
3. Develop innovations in a range of technologies from Community Radio to AI-based solutions for reaching the last mile.

COL ACTIVITIES BETWEEN JULY 2021 - MAY 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

- Upskilling of loaders and pickers working in Malaysian logistics companies was conducted to improve their earnings/productivity.
- 'Sustainable Farming Techniques' workshop conducted for bamboo cultivators in Malaysia.
- National inclusive OER policy has been adopted by the Ministry of Higher Education.
- COL's benchmarking toolkit for TEL was implemented in six universities in Malaysia to assess existing capacities and develop roadmaps for further action in the next three years.

BUILDING NATIONAL RESILIENCE

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

With COL's support, a national inclusive OER policy has been adopted by the Ministry of Higher Education.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education to promote digital education skills among students and teachers, the Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) programme was implemented in Malaysia. COL's C-DELTA platform received the Brandon Hall Gold Excellence in Learning Award 2021.

Jointly organised with Wawasan Open University, the Fourth Pan-Commonwealth Training Programme on Women and Leadership was held in Penang in August 2022, including an online workshop earlier in the year. The two-and-a-half day meeting titled 'Women Leaders: Shaping the future for a sustainable world' aimed to enhance participants' knowledge of transformational leadership, technology and climate change and provide networking and mentoring opportunities; 26 women working in government from 16 countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific participated.

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 aims to deliver high-quality learning and professional development opportunities – with our Commonwealth Partner Institutions – that complement existing MBA/MPA programmes. Wawasan Open University is a partner institution. In mid-2022, nine courses 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.

CEMCA organised a month-long online workshop on 'Design Thinking and Innovation in Teaching and Training' to assist higher education and vocational training institutions in the capacity building of their faculty members/trainers. This workshop was conducted in November 2021. The workshop was attended by 114 participants from five countries (Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Maldives, and Sri Lanka) who were educators from technical and engineering streams, business schools, and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) network.

With COL's support, Quest International University organised a workshop in late 2021 on the HTML5 Package tool to create, share and reuse content and applications for online learning. 24 teachers participated.

COL's benchmarking toolkit for TEL was implemented in six universities in Malaysia, and all developed a strategy document on TEL implementation. [May 2022]

In collaboration with the Asia Pacific University of Technology and Innovation, 13 courses were developed in manufacturing, building and civil engineering as OER. [Aug 2022]

CEMCA organised training on 'Virtual Reality (VR) content development using 360-degree VR Educator Platform'. 50 (22 males and 28 females) faculty members of HELP University, Malaysia, attended this programme in August 2021. The objective of the training was to build the capacity of teachers to create 360-degree virtual reality content for better teaching/learning. An online training programme on Gamification in Higher Education was conducted for 28 faculty members in November 2021. Participants learnt how to design gamification activities for the courses they teach.

CEMCA supported International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation (INBAR) in the development of technical video content for bamboo scrimber, laminated composites and value-added products for Bamboo Entrepreneurs of Malaysia. Six videos are in Malay and five videos are in English language. [Oct 2022]

IMPROVING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

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

CEMCA extended support to 21CC Education to conduct upskilling of 100 blue-collared workers (mainly loaders and pickers), primarily migrants from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Thailand, working in Malaysian logistics companies. Five logistic companies in Malaysia, namely Raya Airways, Dexlo, SnT, lorry.com and the PKT Logistics Group onboarded their 144 employees (75M/69F) to undergo this upskilling training program. CEMCA, in association with INBAR, organised an online training programme on bamboo scrimber and laminated composites for 276 entrepreneurs, service providers, researchers, facilitators, and policymakers from Malaysia and Brunei who represented Bamboo and allied product sectors in May 2022.

During 2021-2022, 91 students graduated from the 2-year CEMBA/MPA programme at Wawasan Open University and 94 new students enrolled in the programme.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

“Soaring Above the Pandemic: Innovative & Creative Practices” keynote address was delivered by COL President & CEO at the **1st International Conference on Society & Technology 2021**, organised by the Universiti Malaysia Sabah in September 2021.

COL organised the **Fourth Roundtable of Vice-Chancellors and Heads of ODL institutions** with Asia e University (AeU) in July 2022, which focused on “Quality Higher Education for Sustainable Development. Thirty academic leaders from 15 countries attended the two-day event held in Penang. Professor Ansary Ahmed, Vice Chancellor of AeU offered remarks at the inaugural session and Professor Datuk Dr Asma Ismail, President the Academy of Sciences Malaysia, chaired a panel on ‘innovations during Covid-19’. Professor Dr Lily Chan, Wawasan Open University Penang (WOU) and Associate Prof Dr Ahmad Izanee Awang, Open University Malaysia both participated.

COL’s Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning is held triennially and is co-hosted with different partners in different regions of the Commonwealth. 19 delegates from Malaysia 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. Both the **Open University Malaysia and Wawasan Open University were forum sponsors**. Three of these registered delegates were sponsored by COL where several were also invited to participate in COL pre-conference meetings. Participants included: Nurbiha A Shukor, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia; Nor Hafizah Adnan, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia/National University of Malaysia; Noraini Ahmad, Ministry of Higher Education; Ahmad Izanee Bin Awang, OUM; Mohd Razif Bin Masri, OUM; Mohd Tajudin Bin Md Ninggal, OUM; Zahir Bin Osman, OUM; Muhammad Afiq Bin Redzuan, OUM; Safiah Binti Md Yusof, OUM; Abtar Kaur Darshan Singh, Asia Pacific University of Technology and Innovation; Soon Fong, Universiti Malaysia Sabah; Jonathan Kovilpillai, Asia Pacific University of Technology & Innovation; Szarmilaa Dewie Krishnan, ELTC, Ministry of Education; Yvonne Low, Asia Pacific University; Helmi Norman, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia/National University of Malaysia; Santhi Raghavan, OUM; Thirumeni T Subramaniam, OUM; Aisyamariam Uzza, Asia Pacific University of Technology and Innovation; Chooi May Yeong, OUM

CEMCA held their **22nd Advisory Council Meeting** in New Delhi on 26 December 2022 with members from Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Maldives and Sri Lanka in attendance. A major concern expressed was that even though distance learning had been embraced globally during the pandemic, the negative perceptions relating to the quality of this mode of delivery continue to persist. CEMCA Director mentioned that despite the challenges confronted during the pandemic, CEMCA reached out to a significant number of learners. Ongoing activities included supporting higher education institutions to implement Open Educational Resources (OER) policies and help enhance pedagogical skills among teachers/trainers of Technical and Vocational Education institutions in Commonwealth Asia. Council members noted CEMCA’s contribution to ODL in the region and outlined the priorities

for the future. Ms Noor Jismin binti Mohd Yusoff, Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia, highlighted her nation's Higher Education Digitalisation Plan and sought COL's support in promoting digital competencies.

The **Regional Focal Points Meeting for Asia** was held in New Delhi, India, on 27-28 December 2022. Representing COL's Focal Point, both Ms Noor Jismin binti Mohd Yusoff and Dr Mohd Azmir Mohd Nizah from the Ministry of Higher Education participated in the two-day meeting.

PUBLICATIONS OF RELEVANCE

Commonwealth Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) Annual Report: 2021-2022

<http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5301>

Report of the Benchmarking of TEL at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

<http://hdl.handle.net/11599/4472>

Report of the Benchmarking of TEL at Universiti Putra Malaysia <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/4474>

Report of the Benchmarking of TEL at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

<http://hdl.handle.net/11599/4476>

Blended Learning Policy: Templates for Higher Education Institutions in Commonwealth Asia

(CEMCA) <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5319>

Handbook on Online Education in Commonwealth Asia (CEMCA) <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5259>

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) Achievement Report: July - November

2022 <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5345>

Report on the Regional Focal Points Meeting – Asia <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5228>



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