



BOARD OF GOVERNORS
President's Quarterly Progress Report:
January–March 2012

1. Board Matters

The 22nd Audit Committee meeting was held via teleconference on February 8, 2012 to review financial statements from July 1 – December 31, 2011, critical success factors and risk management.

The 33rd Executive Committee meeting was held in London, UK on February 24, 2012 to approve the penultimate draft of the Three-Year Plan 2012-2015, note the Management's response to the External Evaluation and consider the future structure of the Board Committees.

Preparations are underway for the upcoming meetings of the Board of Governors which will be held in Vancouver from June 7-8 – these are the Audit and Performance Sub-Committee Meetings on June 7, followed by the Board Meeting on June 8.

On February 10, 2012, the Chair announced the Board's appointment of Professor Asha Kanwar as President of COL from June 1, 2012.

2. General

This will be my last Quarterly Report to the Board. These reports were introduced when the Governance Manual was approved in June 2004. I trust that Members of the Board have found them useful. Within COL they have provided a useful incentive for my colleagues and me to summarise our work regularly in a simple fashion that complements the more systematic assessments of our monitoring and evaluation processes. Since they are also posted on the COL website, these reports also allow a wider public to follow COL's work in more detail than is possible simply by reading our excellent newsletter *Connections*.

I express my personal thanks to the Board, and particularly to our Chair, the Honourable Burchell Whiteman for the efficient manner in which they conducted the search for my successor. When I told the Chair in June 2011 that I would not seek an extension of my contract, I hoped that this would enable the Board to appoint a new president to take over immediately at the end of my contract on May 31, 2012 without the need for any 'inter-regnum'. I am grateful to the Board for ensuring that there will be a smooth transition and delighted with their choice of Asha Kanwar, who has already done

so much to build COL's reputation and strengthen its network of stakeholders during her work with COL.

I have greatly enjoyed my tenure as President of COL since 2004. The job brought together in a most satisfying and balanced way the three principal themes of my career: open and distance learning, institutional leadership and international development. I thank my colleagues in Vancouver, New Delhi and around the world for enabling me to carry out my work in a most stimulating and productive environment. I am deeply grateful to all members of the Board of Governors and particularly the two Chairs under whom I have served, Lewis Perinbam, O.C. and the Honourable Burchell Whiteman, O.J., for their constant encouragement and support.

2.1 President's Activities

This has been an exceptionally busy quarter for me. The requirement that I direct personally the project *Fostering Governmental Support for Open Educational Resources (OER) Internationally*, for which COL was offered funds from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, has meant an extensive travel schedule and close liaison with colleagues at UNESCO.

The project is going well. Our survey of the world's governments about their OER policies has already generated responses from over 80 jurisdictions and more are coming in daily. We have now held three of the six regional policy forums that are part of the project: for the Anglophone Caribbean in Barbados in January; for Africa in Pretoria in February; and for Latin America in Rio de Janeiro in March. Still to come in April are the forums for Europe (Cambridge, UK) and Asia/Pacific (Bangkok), while the forum for the Arab States will be held in Oman in May.

I will continue to direct the project until its culmination at the World OER Congress in June, although not, of course, in my capacity as President of COL after May 31.

By reinforcing COL's status as a global leader in OER, this project will leave an important legacy. It is fair to say that UNESCO would have experienced considerable difficulty in carrying out the project had it not been for the partnership with COL.

3. Programme

During this quarter, COL developed two joint work plans with UNESCO, Paris and ComSec, London to harmonise our work, avoid duplication of effort and enhance our impact. There was a keen interest to work with COL among UNESCO colleagues from the Education and Communication and Information sectors at Headquarters and field offices. Areas of collaboration identified were: open schooling; teacher education; higher education; technical and vocational education; community media; mobile telephony; and OERs. There is also an interest in collaboration on the two conferences being organised by UNESCO and COL in 2013 – the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in

February and the Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF7) in November 2013.

The Work Plan with ComSec involves the Social Transformations Programme Division (STPD) and the Commonwealth Connects programme and covers teacher education, higher education, VUSSC, maternal and child health, integrating ICT in education and the Directory of OER (DOER). Both documents will be formally signed by officials from the partner institutions in June 2012 to cover the period to June 2015, and annual reviews will be carried out to ensure that progress is on course.

3.1 Education Sector

Activities in this sector include capacity-building and materials development across all regions of the Commonwealth. A strong focus was on strengthening partnerships through regional and Pan-Commonwealth networks such as Commonwealth Open School Association (COMOSA) and VUSSC.

3.1.1 Open Schooling

COL's OER curriculum materials for Open Schools (OER4OS) were formally launched in Seychelles in February followed by the COMOSA Annual General Meeting, which was attended by 28 institutions from across the Commonwealth. In preparation for this event, two online workshops on OER and Copyright were held resulting in an OER and copyright policy which was adopted by the members of COMOSA. In addition, an eLearning maturity workshop also took place to strengthen the capacity of open school practitioners.

Namibia launched and adopted the OER for both the open and conventional schools and is the first in the six-country partnership to have done so under the OER4OS project. A study "Narrowing the Skills Gap through Vocational and Technical Training" was concluded in Namibia and will lay the foundation for skills development at the secondary level over the next Three-Year Plan.

A workshop to develop a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) framework was held in India as there is now a greater focus on integrating the technical vocational and academic streams in the secondary school curriculum.

An implementation plan for an Open School for Pakistan was finalised. The Minister of Education formally launched the Centre of Distance Learning and Open Schooling in Ghana and an Open School was established.

3.1.2 Teacher Education

A number of activities that are aimed at promoting the use of new technology in order to enhance programme quality and delivery in a number of countries were carried out. A consultative meeting for designing and implementing the ICT capacity building

programme for teacher educators in The Gambia, Nigeria and Rwanda was held in Abuja in February/March 2012 at which 13 teacher training institutions participated. In a similar vein, the Child Friendly School eLearning packages in Tamil and Sinhala languages have been completed in Sri Lanka. An Instructional Design workshop for the development of modules for the B.Ed. programme was conducted at the University of The Gambia. The development of the Open Resources for English Language Teaching (ORELT) website for junior secondary school teachers has been completed. A partners consultative meeting on teacher education was also held in collaboration with UNESCO, Paris.

3.1.3 Higher Education

The preparatory phase of the OER Master's level course on Business Ethics for the Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration/Master of Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programme was completed, as was the online training programme for Leadership in Higher Education Institutions.

The implementation of the COL-Review and Improvement Model (COL-RIM) at the Seychelles Institute of Management and the Symbiosis Centre for Distance Learning concluded in March. The report on the research study on the career progression of the Masters in Instructional Design and Technology (MIDT) graduates was completed and demonstrated that the programme had a positive impact upon their professional lives.

The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) has signalled its commitment to the Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning (RETRIDOL) by appointing its first full-time Director. Several activities have already been organised including two workshops, the publication of the West African Journal of Flexible and Open Learning (WAJOFEL) and the completion of a research study on 'Learner Management at NOUN'.

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

A meeting of VUSSC member states that are offering or plan to offer VUSSC courses and implement the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) was held in the Seychelles on March 2, 2012. The National University of Samoa, Caribbean Tourism Organisation, National University of Lesotho and Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning are now using VUSSC-developed courses and programmes. The gathering of VUSSC member states in the Seychelles received the highest support from the Seychelles government with the Vice President of the country addressing the delegates. This was highly appropriate since the Vice President, the Honourable Danny Faure, was Minister of Education in 2000, when he mooted the idea of VUSSC at the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) in Halifax, Canada. The University of Seychelles hosted a workshop on Environmental Science at which participants including a Nobel laureate (University Vice Chancellor, Dr. Rolph Payet, joint winner for peace), developed the programme structure and completed the draft of year one of the degree.

3.2 Livelihoods & Health Sector

The main emphasis during this quarter was on policy advocacy and strengthening existing models. Multi-stakeholder partnerships helped to identify a clear roadmap for implementing the policies and replicating and scaling up the models.

3.2.1 Skills Development

Extensive ODL capacity building has progressed in all Commonwealth regions. In India, Community Development worker training materials are being developed. In Vanuatu, tutors and managers have developed learner support systems for a distance programme in Community Development. In Jamaica, a consortium of partners has started adapting existing materials in vocational literacy and vocational subjects for three disadvantaged communities in Kingston. Online training has continued with courses for TVET teachers and for policy makers and managers. An Informal Vocational Education and Skills Training workshop has resulted in blueprints and learner profiles for 20 new courses for the informal sector.

3.2.2 Learning for Farmers

The World Bank, in its publication *ICT in Agriculture Sourcebook*, has declared the COL's Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) initiative as an innovative approach in agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) and the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), Uganda, plan to integrate COL's L3F as an extension strategy in the World Bank-supported project in the country. Similarly, the Ministry of Cooperatives, Government of Kenya, consulted COL in using the L3F approach in the cooperative sector of Kenya to strengthen the agricultural cooperatives. The Non-Governmental Organisations involved in L3F in Kenya have reported that there are indications that L3F is enhancing the nutritional status and ensuring household food security among the communities affected with HIV/AIDS. A three-member team from Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA), Ministry of Agriculture, Jamaica, visited India and studied the relationship between the banking sector and L3F.

3.2.3 Healthy Communities

Strong south-south collaboration was evident among COL's partners during the reporting period. This has been possible as a result of better standardisation and documentation of the community learning programmes. Various aspects of ODL programme development and delivery were explored through one-week intensive design/training workshops held in Cameroon, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi and Sierra Leone. The groundwork has been laid for more national programmes in Lesotho, Mozambique and Nigeria; and pilot projects are currently underway in Belize, Cameroon, Jamaica, Lesotho, Nigeria and Sierra Leone in the use of Moodle for distance mentoring.

3.2.4 Integrating eLearning

ICT in Education planning meetings and capacity building workshops were held in Dominica, Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines which resulted in the development of ICT in Education implementation plans to build teachers' capacity. Mentor training for the implementation of the Commonwealth Certificate for Teachers' ICT Integration (CCTI) were held in Antigua & Barbuda, The Bahamas, Grenada and Trinidad & Tobago; and an ICT in Education Leadership Forum was held in Barbados.

Regional Policy Forums for the project *Fostering Governmental Support for Open Educational Resources Internationally* were held in the Caribbean, Africa and Latin America. One objective of this joint UNESCO-COL activity is to conduct a worldwide survey of governments to determine whether they have policies to encourage OER and open licensing of educational materials produced with public funds or whether they plan to develop such policies. It aims at creating a comprehensive inventory of government policies and intentions concerning OER and open access. Eighty four jurisdictions have responded to a questionnaire that was sent out to all countries.

3.3 eLearning in International Organisations (eLIO)

Two eLearning cohorts were completed and two new ones started covering 331 learners. In addition, eLIO negotiated three new contracts through submission of proposals addressing the different capacity enhancement needs of the International Labour Organization, the Debt Management Section of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Youth Programme. The contracts cover Writing Effectively for ILO, Embracing Commonwealth Values eLearning live pilot and Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management eLearning.

3.4 CEMCA

CEMCA moved into more spacious premises on February 1, 2012. CEMCA supported the development of a Certificate Course in Road Transportation for the Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, which was launched in Mumbai in March. This course, apart from print and multimedia elements, has a special radio component.

CEMCA has been proactive in raising additional contributions from various sources, with the ambition of matching the programme budget allocated by COL, which is \$350,000 this year. I am happy to report that CEMCA's total additional contributions raised in 2011-2012 have touched \$450,000 with the recent sanction of a grant of \$90,000 for organising Community Radio awareness programmes at remote places like Andaman & Nicobar islands, Arunachal Pradesh (near the Chinese border) and Sikkim (near Nepal). CEMCA organised two Community Radio Sammelans in February wherein representatives from more than 125 community radio stations participated. The 'Compendium of Community Radio Stations 2012' compiled by CEMCA was released on this occasion. This event featured a session on 'Global Experiences in Community Radio'

for which CEMCA brought experts from Australia, South Africa, UK and USA to share their experiences. This was made possible by a travel grant from the Ford Foundation. CEMCA's efforts to strengthen Community Radio extended to Bangladesh in March.

3.5 Vice President's Activities

Professor Asha Kanwar attended the COL/UNESCO Joint Work Plan Meeting and the Partners Consultative Meeting on Teacher Education in Paris, France in February. The Vice President also organised a meeting with colleagues from the Social Transformations Programme Division (STPD), ComSec to agree on a joint Work Plan for 2012-2015.

She was invited to deliver a plenary address on Changing Trends in Quality Assurance at the Asia-Pacific Quality Network Conference in Siem Reap, Cambodia. In March, she delivered opening remarks at the Workshop on Applications of Mobile Telephony for Development held in Pune, India.

3.6 Professional Development

The National Institution of Open Schooling (NIOS) hosted an international conference on the theme "Integration of Academic Courses with Vocational Education in Secondary Schools" which was held in New Delhi in February at which COL supported five delegates from Bangladesh, Malawi, Namibia, Tanzania and Zambia.

4. Stakeholder Relations

4.1 Member Governments Support

So far this fiscal year, contributions have been received from 35 countries. During this quarter, we received funds from Maldives, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Seychelles.

4.2 Focal Points

We welcomed the following new country Focal Points and thanked the outgoing ones for their contributions:

- Australia – Ms. Robyne Leven, Senior Policy Officer, UN and Commonwealth Section, International Programs and Partnerships Division, Australian Agency for International Development.
- Papua New Guinea – Mr. Charles Mabilia, Assistant Director, Institutional Development Branch, Office of Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Science Research & Technology.
- New Zealand – Ms. Miriam Freeman-Plume, Development Officer – Multilateral & Regional, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- Nigeria – Dr. Ndefo Joy Chinwe, Assistant Director, Bilateral Agreements, Commonwealth and African Affairs, Federal Ministry of Education.

- India – Shri Anant Kumar Singh, Joint Secretary (CU&L), Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development.

4.3 Congratulatory Letters

Twenty congratulatory letters were sent to newly appointed Heads of Government, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Ministers of Education, Commonwealth High Commissioners in Canada and Heads of Institutions.

5. Finances

5.1 Revenue

COL has received voluntary contributions of \$7.2 million from 35 member governments to-date towards the budget for 2011-2012 (at March 31, 2011 – \$7.8 million from 37 countries). Of these 35, the following four contributed during this third quarter: Maldives – \$5,000; New Zealand – \$661,905; Papua New Guinea – \$15,199; and Seychelles – \$15,271.

The funds received to-date represent 90% of the level forecasted from member governments for 2011-2012 (\$8 million). In 2010-2011, a total of \$7.9 million was contributed by member governments.

In addition to member government funding, COL is forecasting additional contributions from grants of \$1.2 million and from fee-for-service activities of over \$0.5million.

COL has entered into new funding agreements this quarter with the following organisations:

- Inter-American Development Bank for an online writing course (USD30,000).
- ILO for the Writing Effectively Course (USD50,000).
- Institute of International Education for staff travel costs to participate in the 2012 Hewlett Grantees Meeting (USD6,000).
- Foundation Open Society Institute, Switzerland to organise the Arab States Regional Policy Forum in Oman in May 2012 (USD30,000).
- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India with CEMCA for raising further Community Radio Awareness (\$90,000)

These sources, together with amounts recognised in previous quarters from grants and fee-for-service activities and contracted work in progress, will contribute toward achieving the target set for additional contributions. COL, with CEMCA, continues to source new revenue streams to support its programme work on an on-going basis.

5.2 Cash Flow

COL estimates its cash position at the end of March 2012 to be around \$8 million before current liabilities of approximately \$2.5 million.

In addition, COL continues to maintain a cash reserve of \$3.3 million to provide a source of funds for unexpected expenses and shortfalls in funding and a term deposit of \$150,000 as banking security.

5.3 Expenditures

An estimated \$6.8 million was spent at the end of the third quarter to meet programme and organisational management activities, staff costs and office costs. Another \$1.4 million is committed for work in progress. These levels are similar to the same period last year. The annual budget of \$11.39 million for 2011-2012 is inclusive of additional contribution activities and capital expenditures.

6. Human Resources

6.1 Staff Changes

6.1.1 Arrivals

Dr. Nutan Bharati joined CEMCA on February 1, 2012 as Programme Officer – Education.

6.1.2 Recruitment

Professor Asha Kanwar, Vice President of COL, will take up the post of President and Chief Executive Officer of COL on June 1, 2012, when Sir John Daniel's term ends. Recruitment for the Vice President post is underway.

Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, currently with UNESCO, will join CEMCA on July 1, 2012 as Director when Dr. Sreedher retires.

7. Information Technology & Knowledge Management

7.1 KM Technology – Programme Support

The KM team worked with COL Education Specialists and the Vice President's Office to develop a series of online prototypes for the development of the electronic Logframe. A number of innovations were deployed to save development costs significantly. The technology used is based on a widely used platform, Microsoft SharePoint 2010. The core features of the new arrangement are a much-improved search facility and a user-friendly interface. This will help to reduce significantly the time spent in preparing reports for Ministries and funding organisations. The new system has

imported all the records of the current triennium (about 2000) and the new system will be launched on July 1, 2012.

7.2 KM Technology – Administration support

The KM team supported the design, development and implementation of a Human Resources Information System (HRIS) for COL which was also built on the Microsoft SharePoint 2010 using a number of cost-saving innovations. The HRIS is fully managed by the HR Administration and is improving efficiencies of time and effort in maintaining human resource management records.

7.3 IT Systems

Two major network upgrades were completed, bringing COL's network fully on par with any standard corporate network in terms of reliability, availability and security. COL has a number of services available to the public including Learning Management Systems. Public access to these will be more effective and secure.

7.4 Other

The KM team worked with the L3F initiative to organise a workshop on 'Mobiles for Development (M4D)', in association with the National Institute of Bank Management (NIBM) in Pune. A delegation from RADA, Jamaica, joined in. Participants included field-based micro-credit organisations, technology developers (Indian Institute of Technology), policy advisors in telecom and banking and organisations implementing M4D projects. This workshop (i) demonstrated key open source technologies in M4D; and (ii) identified the opportunity for scaling up L3F with NIBM.

COL's directory of OER in post-secondary education is now accessible directly at <http://doer.col.org> and provides access to information on over 1300 full courses. A number of organisations in the Commonwealth have found the meta-data in this service highly useful in identifying relevant courses. Visitors to this site have increased significantly in this quarter and an analysis of access logs is in progress.

8. Seventh Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF7)

Planning for PCF7 continues with the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) – the lead institutional partner representing the Federal Ministry of Education.

Professor Mba O. Okoronkwo (Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic at NOUN) is Chair of the Local Organising Committee. The Forum will be held in Abuja in November 2013.

9. Visitors to COL

Two of the visitors to COL during this quarter were:

- Ms. Elaine Ogilvie-Ricketts of ComSec, with Odette Murekaetete of CaribInvest West Indies Ltd.
- His Excellency Mr. Chris Cooter, Canadian High Commissioner to Nigeria. Mr. Cooter pledged his support to assist COL with PCF7.

10. Publications/Resources

The following is a list of recent publications and resources:

Connections/EdTech News, February 2012, Vol. 17, No. 1
(www.col.org/connections).

Quality Assurance Toolkit for Open and Distance Non-formal Education by Colin Latchem (www.col.org/QAToolkit_NF).

Evaluation of the Commonwealth of Learning 2009-2012 Plan by Dr. Patrick Spaven (www.col.org/resources/publications/Pages/detail.aspx?PID=390).

Ten “longitudinal” studies on COL programmes (www.col.org/ProgEvals_09-12).

Course materials for 17 subjects launched as part of the Open Educational Resources (OER) for Open Schooling project, funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, with participation by Botswana, India, Lesotho, Namibia, Seychelles and Trinidad & Tobago (www.col.org/resources/crsMaterials/osoer).

These resources are available at www.col.org/publications and www.col.org/coursematerial

See also:

www.col.org/speeches

www.col.org/blog

www.col.org/videos

All currencies are in Canadian dollars unless otherwise indicated.

*Sir John Daniel
President & Chief Executive Officer
March 31, 2012*