



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING



COL in the Commonwealth

2018–2020 HIGHLIGHTS

MAURITIUS

LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

TARGETS 2021



Improved sustainable livelihoods
300,000 PEOPLE



470
ORGANISATIONS
Improved organisational
capacity to leverage ODL

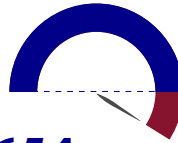


1.4 million
PEOPLE
Increased and equitable
access to, and use of, quality
learning opportunities

ACHIEVED BY 2020



257,484 people



654 organisations

Target
EXCEEDED



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.



MAURITIUS

COL works with partners in Mauritius to expand access to quality education and lifelong learning for all. Mr Armoogum Parsuramen, Founder-President, Global Rainbow Foundation, Mauritius, represents Africa on COL's Board of Governors.

COL's current work in Mauritius is primarily in the areas of open and innovative schooling, technology-enabled learning, and higher education, including through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). It benefits from programmes under the aegis of the Southern African Development Community Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE). Learners from Mauritius also have benefited from open online courses and other COL resources.

The following are the highlights from 2018 to 2020.



Programmes

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Higher Education initiative works with ministries and higher education institutions (HEIs) to increase equitable access to tertiary education and to address the needs of industry and national development through the use of policies, systems, models and gender-responsive learning resources.

COL has an ongoing collaboration with the Open University of Mauritius (OUM) to improve the employability of its information and communication technologies (ICT) graduates. In the framework of this initiative, COL organised a workshop for key representatives of OUM, the Human Resource Development Council, the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation, and local IT companies to develop a competency-based curriculum responsive to industry needs for ICT programmes in the country.

COL and OUM collaborated to develop a MOOC on *Introduction to Sustainable Development in Business*. The two offerings of COL's MOOC were organised in May–June and November–December 2019 and attracted 712 participants from Mauritius.

COL has provided assistance in the development of a Quality Assurance Policy Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and data collection tools. As well, an academic workload model was developed and approved, and an employability mapping tool for ICT programmes was piloted. The curriculum for a Master of Science in Applied Computing has been revised in light of the employability mapping tool.

A high-level roundtable for vice chancellors and heads of open and distance learning (ODL) was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in May 2018. There were 31 vice chancellors and representatives from 19 countries in attendance, including one from Mauritius. The meeting was co-hosted by Asia eUniversity.

COL launched a new regional community of practice for quality assurance in ODL, involving HEIs and national quality assurance agencies from seven southern African countries, including Mauritius. Following its launch at a meeting in South Africa in April 2018, a task force was formed to draft quality assurance guidelines and pilot them. Subsequently, the pilot studies of quality guidelines at seven institutions, including OUM, were completed. In December 2019, members of the community of practice reconvened in Johannesburg, South Africa for a two-day workshop to finalise and validate the employability toolkit and indicators to be used by national qualification agencies in the quality assessment of HEIs.

The Open University of Mauritius offers COL's Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration and Master of Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programmes and is a member of the CEMBA/CEMPA consortium. The 29th Academic Board meeting and 13th Executive Governing Board meeting of the CEMBA/MPA programmes were held in Penang, Malaysia in May 2018. The meetings were hosted by Wawasan Open University and attended by board members from Mauritius.

Under the aegis of CEMBA/CEMPA, an OER-based course on *Business for Sustainable Development* was piloted at OUM.

As well, at the request of the Tertiary Education Commission, a four-day meeting was conducted at the University of Mauritius in November 2018 to develop an academic workload model.

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH (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.

As part of a tripartite Commonwealth initiative with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the University of the West Indies Open Campus, VUSSC has repurposed and made available online certificate, diploma and undergraduate degree programmes in Youth Work Development to universities that are members of the Commonwealth Higher Education Consortium for Youth Work. The University of Mauritius is a member of the Consortium. COL's Education Specialist: VUSSC facilitated sessions on institutional readiness and the Transnational Qualification Framework at a technical workshop hosted by the partners in London, UK in June 2018.

Under the Commonwealth Higher Education Consortium for Youth Work, a workshop was hosted by OUM in May 2019 to strengthen aspiring and practising Youth Work lecturers' capacity to customise the content of the Youth Work programme and deliver the modules online. Following the workshop, the University of Mauritius and OUM started offering the degree programme in August 2019.

COL has signed a Contribution Agreement with the Global Rainbow Foundation to support the project Technology-Enabled Learning for Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and Practitioners who Support Them. UK-based Diversity and Ability Ltd, who were retained as the consultants for this project, designed and carried out a disability situation analysis and individual needs assessment in Mauritius.

OPEN AND INNOVATIVE SCHOOLING (OIS)

OIS increases access to secondary education, especially for out-of-school youths. COL's approach focuses on training teachers in eLearning and the use of OER, improving the management of open schools, and supporting the use of appropriate technologies in teaching and learning.

COL signed an agreement with the University of Mauritius to present a course on *Developing and Teaching Online* for representatives of education ministries in Belize, Mozambique, Vanuatu and Zambia. The purpose of this project is to strengthen the

eLearning capacity in ministries for the effective implementation of open schooling. Several cohorts have already completed the training.

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, institution and country levels.

In October 2018, COL's Education Specialist: eLearning visited Mauritius and made presentations at several institutions. At the Mauritius Institute of Education, he introduced COL's Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) programme. COL has supported the University of Mauritius to develop four advanced ICT skills courses on *Digital Marketing, Cloud Computing, Computer Security* and *Big Data Analytics*. At the University of Mauritius, he discussed strategies to facilitate the launch of four advanced ICT skills courses developed with COL's support. At the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, he discussed the draft OER policy. COL submitted a draft OER policy to the Honourable (Mrs) Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, in November 2018.

Implementation of C-DELTA commenced with a workshop at the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development in April 2019. In July 2019, the National Institute of Education in Mauritius started rolling out C-DELTA in primary and secondary schools. Some 200 ICT officers have been trained in C-DELTA to support teachers.

Ms Sandhya Gunness from the University of Mauritius, Mr Kaviraj Goodoory from the Mauritius Institute of Education and Mr Annasamy Kuppan from the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) participated in the *C-DELTA Training of Trainers Workshop* hosted by COL in New Delhi, India in December 2018. The MITD is now in the process of integrating C-DELTA as part of its curriculum.

In partnership with Athabasca University, Canada, COL has been organising a MOOC on *Introduction to Technology-Enabled Learning*. In 2018–2019, a total of 73 participants from Mauritius joined the course's third and fourth offerings.



Events and Special Activities

REGIONAL MEETING OF COL FOCAL POINTS

The Africa and Mediterranean regional meeting of COL's Focal Points took place on 24–25 September 2018 in Gaborone, Botswana 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. Mr Megavarnen Varaden, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, represented Mauritius at the meeting.

COL PRESIDENT VISITS MAURITIUS, RECEIVES HONORARY DOCTORATE

In February 2019, COL President and CEO, Professor Asha Kanwar, visited Mauritius to receive a Doctor Honoris Causa from OUM. During the visit, she also met with the Honourable (Mrs) Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research.

SADC-CDE GENDER SENSITISATION WORKSHOP

Hosted by Botswana Open University, SADC-CDE promotes training and development in ODL and increases the provision of quality distance education in southern Africa. In February 2019, SADC-CDE and the Botswanan NGO Gender Links organised a gender sensitisation workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa. Participants included academics and administrators from ten institutions in Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles and South Africa.

QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR TEACHER TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Thirty-seven stakeholders from various universities and teacher education institutions in seven African countries, including Mauritius, came together for a *Train-the-Trainers Workshop on Quality Assurance for Teacher Training and Professional Development* organised by the African Council for Distance Education at the Open University of Tanzania in





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



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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