



BOARD OF GOVERNORS
President's Quarterly Progress Report:
July - September, 2012

1. Board Matters

The Board met for its annual meeting in Vancouver on June 8. Minutes of the meeting have been circulated. One of the highlights of this meeting was the approval of the new Three-Year Plan 2012-2015. Since the Board received comprehensive updates on COL's work in the 2011-2012 year at this meeting, a Quarterly Report for the period April through June 2012 was not prepared. This report therefore focuses on the first quarter of COL's 2012-2013 financial year, from July to September, 2012.

The Chair of our Board of Governors, the Honourable Burchell Whiteman led the COL delegation at the 18th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (18 CCEM) held in Mauritius during 28-31 August, 2012. I am very grateful to the Chair for undertaking the long journey to support COL and its new President at this important forum.

In September, Deloitte began COL's annual financial statement audit for the year ended June 30, 2012. The audited statements will be presented at the next meeting of the Audit Committee scheduled for November 29, 2012.

2. General

This has been a very busy time for COL for two reasons: one, the change in leadership and two, the start of the new Three-Year Plan 'Learning for Development', 2012-2015 (TYP).

Sir John Daniel demitted office on May 31, 2012 after being at the helm for eight years. He brought international visibility to COL, established COL's leadership in the global Open Education Resources (OER) movement and laid a great deal of emphasis on developing systems and professionalising the organisation. Today, COL has a strong reputation for its outcomes-based approach, flexibility and responsiveness and country focus. We will continue to build on this legacy and take COL to the next level.

A recent Project Completion Report (2009-2012) of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) recognises that COL is 'an organisation fulfilling its mission, meeting its targets and performing well' (August 2012). It also signals the need

for COL to enhance its development impact, scale up activities and to continue to demonstrate value for money. This is valuable feedback as we begin to implement our new TYP.

2.1 President's Activities

One of the most important events for COL is the triennial Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers. This year the 18th CCEM held in Mauritius in August was attended by delegations from 40 Member States, of which 34 were led by Ministers. The theme of the conference was 'Education in the Commonwealth: bridging the gap as we accelerate towards achieving internationally agreed goals'. What did COL achieve?

1. The ratification of the new TYP by Ministers and senior officials.
2. Presentation of its work in each country as a compendium 'COL in the Commonwealth: 2009-2012 Country Reports'.
3. The inclusion of Open Education Resources (OER) and a complimentary paragraph on COL in the CCEM Communiqué.
4. A high visibility through the distribution of low-cost Android tablets with conference documents of COL and COMSEC made available to ministers and country delegations on this device. These were funded entirely by the generous support of UNICEF-Child Friendly Schools and The William & Flora Hewlett Foundation.
5. A reputation for thought-leadership by organising a ministerial Round Table on 'Innovations and Technology' at which we promoted the approach that technology should be driven by educational needs rather than the other way round.

I made presentations at four major sessions and chaired a fifth during this Conference. At the Ministers session, several countries congratulated COL for its work. These were Mauritius, St. Kitts & Nevis, Seychelles, India, Botswana, Cyprus, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Nigeria and the UK. You will be pleased to note that India announced that it had raised its annual contribution to COL by an additional 25% and Botswana communicated its decision to double its annual contribution from this financial year.

While in Mauritius, I also signed an MOU with the newly established Open University of Mauritius and the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) for further collaboration.

COL played a major role in organising the World OER Congress in Paris in June 2012 with UNESCO and with funding support from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. This led to the 2012 Paris OER Declaration, which I have already shared with you. I was invited to make presentations at both the inaugural and valedictory sessions of the Congress.

At the invitation of the Results for Development Institute, I participated in a consultative meeting on 'Skills for Employability in Africa and Asia' in Bellagio, Italy in July. I was also invited to give a keynote at the OER Asia Forum organised by the Wawasan Open University in Malaysia. In addition, I have addressed conferences in India at the International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), where I had occasion to meet the Nigerian agriculture minister and to brief him about COL's work and the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU). I was the keynote speaker at an 'International Conference on ICT Culture in Education' in Delhi. During this quarter, Kota Open University, India, conferred a DLitt (*honoris causa*) on me during their silver jubilee convocation.

Since I did not have a Vice President during this period, I tried to maintain a balance between managing COL, directing the programme and promoting stakeholder engagement. Performance reviews for all members of staff were completed by July. COL's Human Resource Framework and Compensation Plan continues to be both effective and efficient. Four new staff positions were filled at headquarters and the process was carried out smoothly. Team COL is now complete.

3. Programme

Education Specialists (ES) have developed a strategic plan and a monitoring & evaluation (M&E) strategy for their respective initiatives. These will be shared with identified partners, who will support the M&E process in the field.

In addition, a gender expert was invited to spend two weeks at COL to work with each ES to develop gender-related Performance Indicators and a Checklist for mainstreaming gender equality in COL partner organisations.

You will note that a great deal of foundational work for the programme has been accomplished in this first quarter of the triennium.

3.1 Education Sector

The Education sector focussed on a number of activities, notably capacity building in open and distance learning (ODL) and the use of open educational resources (OER) at post-primary and tertiary levels. The specific activities implemented in each of the four initiatives are outlined below.

3.1.1 Open Schooling

A number of activities aimed at building the capacity of teachers and institutions to adapt and use OER were organised. These include: the training of rural school teachers on how to develop multi-media lessons in mathematics and English in Namibia; the development of a set of training materials for youth empowerment to train youth in Botswana; and the training of teachers and teacher educators in Zambia to convert print-

based materials into Moodle formats. As part of its efforts to broaden access to education for boys and girls in the slum areas of Nairobi, COL provided support to the Network for Non-Formal Educational Institutions (NNFEI) to adapt existing OER and develop learning materials in 10 subjects for Grades 2, 3 and 4. An instructional design workshop for school teachers and academic staff of the Centre for Distance Learning and Open Schooling (CENDLOS) was organised in Ghana and plans for the establishment of an Open School in Pakistan were jointly developed and finalised with Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU).

3.1.2 Teacher Education

Consistent with COL's commitment to the promotion of the development and use of OER to enhance access and quality, the Teacher Education initiative has focussed on building the capacity of teacher education institutions to adapt and use COL's Open Resources for English Language Teaching (ORELT). A master trainer's workshop was organised in August for The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. A follow-up training workshop for teachers of English language in The Gambia was held in September. The Interim Report on the COL-UNICEF Child Friendly Schools (CFS) project to June 30, 2012 was submitted to UNICEF. The key highlights of the report are: targets set for capacity building have been surpassed (1,140 trained against the set target of 750), CFS has been integrated into the national plans of the project countries and three replicable models for mainstreaming the CFS concept, principles and approaches have been generated.

3.1.3 Higher Education

The Higher Education initiative focussed on providing support to partner institutions in content development, quality assurance and policy development. Ten out of twelve courses under development with Wawasan Open University (WOU) have been completed. The COL Review and Improvement Model (COL-RIM) is being implemented at the National University of Lesotho and plans for COL-RIM implementation at Allama Iqbal Open University and two state open universities in India were finalised. An important landmark in the promotion of ODL in the West African region was the submission of the draft policy on ODL, to the Ministry of Education in Ghana with COL support.

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

The VUSSC is now shifting its focus to the delivery of courses without losing sight of the fact that capacity building and content development are still very important to bridge the digital divide and encourage the use and sharing of OER. At the 18CCEM, Ministers of Education again emphasised the need to strengthen the VUSSC. The Minister of Tourism and Culture officially launched the VUSSC eLearning Sustainable Tourism course at the Seychelles Tourism Academy in September. The Seychelles Tourism Academy is offering the course as a core component of its curriculum to promote sustainable tourism.

3.2 Livelihoods & Health Sector

The focus in this sector was on advocacy, policy and capacity development. Most of the activities during this quarter took place in Africa and are presented as follows:

3.2.1 Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD)

TVSD began the new TYP with a strong focus on Sub-Saharan Africa. Innovation in Vocational Education and Skills Training (INVEST) was introduced in Kenya with eLearning training. The INVEST online community increased its total membership to 570 with gender and equity proving to be a popular discussion topic. A new WITED (Women in TVET) Chapter was established to promote women and girls in TVET. Policy makers and TVET institutional managers participated in an INVEST readiness workshop in Rwanda. Support was provided to help the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology to develop a concept note for an open TVET system. Capacities of 148 TVET teachers, staff members, managers and policy makers were enhanced through workshops, institutional visits and online training in various aspects of TVSD in Africa. Courses offered by Kenya Technical Teachers College, such as non-formal micro-business management have attracted 50 participants from the informal sector. New organisational structures to support ODL have been put in place in Auchi Polytechnic in Nigeria and Koforidua Polytechnic in Ghana with COL's assistance.

3.2.2 Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F)

Various stakeholders and partners in India, Jamaica, Kenya, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka and Uganda discussed the strategic plan and the M&E plan for L3F. Based on feedback received, the plan was modified and activities launched in these countries. A survey report released in August 2012 indicated that in Kenya and Uganda, the household consumption of vegetables, milk, poultry products and meat as well as the total family income increased substantially among the participants of the L3F initiative during the last two years as compared to two control groups from the same region with similar socio-economic backgrounds. The mobile phone-based learning is continuing to reach more than 50,000 learners in their local languages. Capacities of 114 staff of 10 organisations in India, Jamaica and Mauritius were strengthened in various aspects of L3F.

3.2.3 Healthy Communities

The Healthy Communities initiative, which is rooted in strong participatory processes, consulted its partners to finalise its strategic plan and its M&E plan. Such a consultation process is vital for internalising and sustaining activities undertaken by partner organisations. Local and national baseline studies have been initiated in India, Jamaica, St. Lucia and regionally in the Eastern Caribbean. Two hundred and fifty broadcasters from 13 African countries are currently undergoing programme design skills training which will result in more than 75 new programme designs. To strengthen advocacy strategies, a one-day workshop on Communication for Development was

conducted for policy-makers and community leaders in Isabel Province of the Solomon Islands which resulted in an advocacy approach for non-formal ODL.

3.3 Cross-cutting Themes

3.3.1 eLearning

Ms. Trudi van Wyk completed her tenure at COL and returned to South Africa at the end of August. During this quarter, a capacity building workshop was conducted at the School of Public Health, Makerere University, Uganda, to initiate the development of a regional Masters in Public Health (MPH) programme. Agreements are in place with SchoolNet South Africa (SNSA) to offer two core modules of the Commonwealth Certificate for Teacher's ICT Integration for the Lesotho College of Education and for the Antigua State College. A publication on 'The Business Case for OER' has been finalised. Meanwhile, Dr. Mark Bullen joined COL as the Education Specialist, eLearning on October 1, 2012, and will take this initiative forward.

3.4 eLearning in International Organisations (eLIO)

The World Bank, the World Health Organization and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees have renewed the course delivery contracts (total at USD348,704) with COL eLIO to support 440 learners in effective writing in 2012-2013. The World Bank further provided eLIO with USD32,000 to update the 'Writing E-mails, Memos and Letters distance learning programme' which has been used for the past five years. During this quarter, eLIO piloted the [Embracing Commonwealth Values for Youth Development](#) course on social media, and revised the [World Bank Report Writing](#) course. In addition, two new proposals were submitted to the Pan-American Health Organization and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

3.5 CEMCA

Dr. Sanjaya Mishra joined CEMCA as its new Director on July 1, 2012. During this quarter, CEMCA has taken steps to align its activities with COL's programme, and has developed its own logic model based on five identified priorities: open schooling, teacher education, higher education, technical and vocational skill development and healthy communities. While eLearning and gender will remain cross-cutting thematic areas of work, CEMCA has planned activities in the areas of community radio and open educational resources (OER) in the current TYP. A project on a Virtual Open School (VOS) has been initiated with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) in India to promote the use of ICT for increasing access to and improving the quality of secondary education.

3.6 Vice President's Activities

I have been combining my new duties as President with my old responsibilities as Vice President during this quarter. I am pleased to report that the new Vice President,

Mr. Vis Naidoo, joined COL on October 1, 2012, and will be taking on the programme management hereafter.

3.7 Professional Development

Mr. Ishan Sudeera Abeywardena, Senior Lecturer, Wawasan Open University, Malaysia worked on an 'OER Scout' project for a month at COL.

Ms. Helen Lentell, Research Fellow at the University of Leicester, UK was on a one-week Executive Secondment at COL in July. During her visit, she conducted interviews of key Canadian distance learning leaders, which included Dr. Dominique Abrioux, Ms. Joan Collinge, Dr. Margaret Haughey, Ms. Erin Keough and Dr. Ross Paul. The videos form part of COL's video library and will be available at www.col.org/videos, among other places.

For two weeks in September, Ms. Sherrill Whittington, a gender expert based in Australia was on Executive Secondment to COL. She worked with Education Specialists to identify a gender agenda for their respective initiatives.

COL sponsored Professor Nazir Ahmed Sangi, Vice Chancellor of AIOU, Pakistan and Dr. Kavita Laghate, Director, Jannalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies, University of Mumbai, India, to attend the OER-Asia Symposium hosted by WOU, Malaysia in September.

COL provided funding to CEMCA to support participants to the *International Conference on ICT Culture in Education*, held in Delhi, India in September.

4. Stakeholder Relations

4.1 Member Governments Support

Contributions of \$8.2 million were received from 42 countries for the financial year 2011-2012. This included Australia which returned as a funding partner during the year. COL also received contributions from Cameroon and Sri Lanka after the year end but earmarked for 2011-2012 which will be recorded in 2012-2013. Had these amounts been received earlier, the count would have been 44 countries, the same as in 2010-2011, which is the record number of countries contributing in any one year since COL was established.

Invoices and requests for 2012-2013 contributions were sent out by August 17, 2012 to all Commonwealth Member States.

So far this fiscal year, contributions were received from 19 countries: Barbados, Belize, Cameroon, Canada, Cyprus, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Lesotho, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, St. Kitts & Nevis, Samoa, Sri Lanka and Tonga.

4.2 Focal Points

We welcomed the following new country Focal Points:

- Australia – Ms. Beata Gasanova, Senior Policy Officer, UN & Commonwealth Section, Australian Agency for International Development.
- Malawi – Mr. Henry Gwede, Officer-in-Charge, Malawi College of Distance Education.
- Mauritius – Mrs. J. Jaunbocus, Principal Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research & Technology.
- Rwanda – Dr. Evode Mukama, Head of Department, ICT in Education and ODL, Rwanda Education Board.
- South Africa – Ms. Mapaseka Letho, Deputy Director: Information Systems Coordination, Department of Higher Education & Training
- Tanzania – Dr. Fidelice M.S. Mafumiko, Acting Director, Institute of Adult Education.
- Trinidad & Tobago – Ms. Shereen Khan, Curriculum Coordinator, Ministry of Education.

4.3 Congratulatory Letters

Fifteen 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

In the first quarter, COL has received just over \$4.0 million (at September 30, 2011 – \$3.9 million) from member governments as voluntary contributions towards the budget for 2012-2013. Nineteen countries have paid up as follows:

Barbados – \$44,023; Belize – \$29,763; Cameroon – \$26,120;
Canada – \$2.6 million; Cyprus – \$15,137; Guyana – \$15,412; India – \$899,576;
Jamaica – \$44,024; Lesotho – \$69,425; Malaysia – \$50,000; Malta – \$ 14,675;
Mauritius – \$60,000; Mozambique – \$50,500; Namibia – \$19,852 (first instalment); Nauru – \$4,892; St. Kitts & Nevis – \$29,349; Samoa – \$58,698;
Sri Lanka – \$29,763; and Tonga – \$19,842.

These funds represent close to 45% of the level forecasted from member governments for 2012-2013. With increases in funding levels already confirmed from Botswana, India and Namibia, and Nigeria's commitment to make up a shortfall from 2010-2011, COL expects to exceed the 2011-2012 level of \$8.2 million in 2012-2013.

COL recently signed a three-year funding agreement with the Government of Canada for the plan period 2012-2015.

In addition to member government funding, COL is forecasting additional contributions from grants of \$1 million and from fee-for-service activities of \$530,000.

Towards meeting these additional contribution targets, COL has entered into new agreements with international organisations for approximately \$350,000 in the first quarter for eLearning. COL will also be recognising up to \$325,000 in additional contributions received but deferred at June 30, 2012 for agreements in progress including \$183,000 from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation for OER and VUSSC activities to complete two other grant agreements signed in previous financial years. CEMCA also received funding of \$115,000 from the Ford Foundation in the first quarter.

Together these sources will enable COL to meet its targets while it continues to source new revenue streams and submit further funding proposals to various funding bodies in support of its programme work.

5.2 Cash Flow

COL held \$6.7 million in cash and cash equivalents at the start of the first quarter. This level is slightly higher than projected due to 1) higher than forecasted contributions due mainly to Australia's contribution, as well as extra additional contributions; and 2) 96% of core budgets (versus 98% forecasted) were utilised. This level of cash and cash equivalents supports the draw-down of unrestricted assets held in the form of cash for operations that was approved in the budget for 2012-2013 should it be required. It also enables COL to meet operational costs and maintain a positive cash flow until outstanding contributions are received throughout the year to replenish the cash and cash equivalents.

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

5.3 Expenditures

An estimated \$1.5 million was spent in the first quarter to meet programme and organisational management activities, staff costs and office costs. This level is similar to the first quarter of last year and does not include contractual commitments entered into during the quarter of about \$0.5 million. The annual budget approved for 2012-2013 at a level of \$11.13 million is inclusive of additional contribution activities and capital expenditures.

6. Human Resources

6.1 Staff Changes

6.1.1 Arrivals

Dr. Sanjaya Mishra joined CEMCA on July 1, 2012 as Director succeeding Dr. R. Sreedher who retired on June 30, 2012.

Mr. Ricky Cheng joined COL on July 9, 2012 as Knowledge Services Manager, succeeding Ms. Amy Monaghan, Information Resource Centre Manager, who departed from COL on June 29, 2012.

Ms. Michelle Gruda joined COL on July 16, 2012 as Knowledge Management Assistant, succeeding Mr. Yang Tan who left COL on June 1, 2012.

6.1.2 Recruitment

Ms. Kathryn Romanow, Receptionist and Secretary, retired from COL on September 25, 2012 after 17 years of service. The post of Receptionist at COL is currently under recruitment.

7. Knowledge Management & Information Technology

7.1 KM Technology – Programme Support

The online Logframes for planning and reporting have been revised and are in use. With highly targeted searches online provided by this system, it is easier to develop reports for a variety of audiences and purposes. These have been developed in-house on MS SharePoint 2010 using available features and functionalities and will continue to be used over the next triennium.

7.2 KM Technology – Administration support

The KM team contributed significantly to the preparation of the Tablets distributed at the 18th CCEM. The objective was to demonstrate how low-cost, affordable Tablet PC's (that use Android operating systems) could be customised to suit specific institutional or contextual needs. The KM Team sourced the low-cost Tablets from China. The customisation of the Tablet was an elaborate process and involved a number of steps. The booting sequence had to be modified to accommodate the conference-specific message. Scripts were written to remove the factory-added software applications to provide Open Source or freely available alternatives (such as a "bookshelf"- an e-book reader - and a video player). A wall paper for the CCEM along with partner logos of COL, COMSEC, Hewlett and UNICEF, was specifically designed for the Tablet.

Volunteers from COL Staff customised and prepared 200 Tablets in record time for CCEM.

7.3 Other

The KM team commissioned and published two reports: 1) on the use of Semantic Web technologies in ODL; and 2) a digest of Open Source software available to re-mix and re-use OER. Another report on the possible use of technologies of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) to provide component sub-systems for ODL has been commissioned.

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 the Chair of the Local Organising Committee. The Conference theme is “Open Learning for Development: Towards Empowerment and Transformation”. PCF7 will be held from December 2-6, 2013 in Abuja. An in-house PCF7 Planning Committee meets every month.

9. Visitors to COL

The following are among the recent visitors to COL:

- Professor Rajesh Chandra, Vice-Chancellor, The University of the South Pacific, Fiji.
- Jenny Lewis, Executive Director, Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management, Australia.
- Professor T.V. Prabhakar, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, India.
- Professor Kabini Sanga, Associate Professor, Te Kura Maori, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.
- Delegations from the Shanghai Open University and the East China Normal University.

10. Publications/Resources

The following are recent publications and resources of note:

- Publications (www.col.org/publications):

- *Learning with Community Media: Stories from the Commonwealth and Latin America*; Ian Pringle, Ekta Mittal and Monica Valdes (Eds.).
- *Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning: Open Educational Resources and Change in Higher Education: Reflections from Practice*; Jenny Glennie, Ken Harley, Neil Butcher and Trudi van Wyk (Eds.) (www.col.org/perspectives).
- *Exploring the Business Case for Open Educational Resources*, by Neil Butcher and Sarah Hoosen.
- *Survey on Governments' Open Educational Resources (OER) Policies*, by Sarah Hoosen; co-published with UNESCO.
- *Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Professional Development Strategy for Teachers in Guyana: A Case Study*, by Andrew Moore.
- *Three-Year Plan 2012-2015: Learning for Development*.
- *COL in the Commonwealth: 2009–2012 Country Reports*.
- *Connections/EdTech News*, July 2012, Vol. 17, No. 2 (www.col.org/connections).
- COL's resource CD-ROM, updated August 2012.

- Four New brochures at (www.col.org/resources/publications/Pages/listing.aspx?CID=8).
- Four Consultants reports at (www.col.org/consultancies).
- Five new Videos at (www.col.org/videos).
- Speeches and presentations at www.col.org/speeches.
- COL blog at www.col.org/blog.

All currencies are in Canadian dollars unless otherwise indicated.

*Professor Asha S. Kanwar
President & Chief Executive Officer
October 15, 2012*