



# **JAMAICA**

Focal Point: Dr. Phylicia Marshall

## **1. Status of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in Jamaica**

COL, in collaboration with the University of the West Indies, facilitated a Round Table from June 19-22, 2012 at the UWI campus in Barbados. At this workshop, twelve participants from countries across the Caribbean, including Jamaica worked on a draft Regional ODL Policy Framework for the Caribbean. This framework was circulated to the non-represented stakeholders in the Caribbean, including CARICOM for their comments. The draft Regional ODL Policy Framework was presented in the Ministerial meeting organised by CARICOM from May 20-22, 2013 in Jamaica and was endorsed by the Ministers.

This framework played an instrumental part in guiding the University Council of Jamaica in the drafting of its Guidelines for offering ODL in Jamaica and was launched at its 9th Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education Week, which included a lecture, awards function, a workshop and a student forum, under the theme “*Developments in Tertiary Education: the Quality Imperative*”, March 10-14. The highlight of the week’s programme was the Dennis Irvine Lecture, held biennially in honour of the late Dr. Dennis Irvine, educator and a former Chairman of the UCJ. In keeping with the growing interest in ODL in Jamaica, the 2014 lecture was entitled “Developments in Tertiary Education: Online and Distance Education”, and was delivered by Professor Asha Kanwar, President and Chief Executive Officer of COL. She was also present at the launch of the Guidelines for ODL in Jamaica by the UCJ.

Twenty-seven teacher educators were trained in the conversion of print-based courses to online courses. The colleges have since started the development of online courses based on the training received.

At the University of Technology (UTech) 44 persons, inclusive of lecturers and administrators, participated in two workshops conducted by a consultant from COL. The objective was to strengthen the capacity of lecturers to plan for, develop and engage in teaching and learning using the online environment as a support in the following ways – web-assisted, blended and online. This workshop has yielded positive results for the Faculty of Education as the number of online modules has since increased. Currently, the Faculty has the highest percentage of online presence and faculty involvement across the University.

## **2. Mid-term report of what COL has done in Jamaica**

In August 2013 (27 and 28), Mrs. Frances Ferreira, met with officials and senior officers in Jamaica to make a presentation on COL’s work regarding Open Schooling. She explored possible ways through which COL could support the Ministry of Education in addressing the challenges faced to provide quality education to boys and girls and develop a possible

strategy of how COL can contribute to initiatives underway and directed by the Ministry of Education, using open schooling approaches, to enhance the quality of the learning outcomes of boys. The visit was based on the results of a study entitled “Potential use of open learning for secondary education in Jamaica” which was conducted by COL in 2001.

COL, in collaboration with the Jamaica Board of Teacher Education, trained 20 teacher educators on the integration of OER into the teacher education curriculum. This workshop took place from April 8-12, 2013 and was part of the process of disseminating instructional design and OER knowledge and skills for the development of online materials.

Since 2007, the University College of the Caribbean (UCC) has been offering the Executive MBA/MPA programmes created by COL. The programmes were updated in 2013, with 12 courses revised and 10 courses rewritten and a new elective on Business Ethics was introduced. The majority of the students continue to be women.

### **Sponsorship to Conference and Other Forums**

COL continued to sponsor individuals to several conferences and forums. These include:

- Four persons from UTech were invited to attend and participate in the Regional Workshop on Open Education Resources (OERs) in November 2012.
- Associate VP – Dr. Bartley-Bryan was sponsored to attend:
  - a) Asia Pacific Quality Network Conference in India in March 2011.
  - b) The Seventh Pan-Commonwealth Forum in Nigeria in December 2013.
- Head of the Education Division in the Faculty of Education, Mrs. Anita Thomas, was sponsored to attend the JBTE Regional Workshop on OERs in April 2013.
- Dr. Phylcia Marshall attended a Cost & Financing workshop in Barbados in August 2013.

### **TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

COL is partnering with University of Technology (UTech) to develop a CommUniversity through the Center for ODL programme to provide vocational literacy and skills training for young people in three marginalised communities – Highlight View, Kintyre and Tavern in Kingston. This programme has a number of stakeholders including Papine Development Area Council, Social Development Commission, Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning, HEART Trust and the Ministry of Education TVET Unit.

COL provides ongoing support to this initiative by sourcing materials to assist with the development of content, facilitating connections with key organizations such as UNESCO and by identifying and deploying consultants to conduct workshops for instructional design. COL provides financial support for the development and implementation of the project.

INVEST – Innovation in Vocational Education and Skills Training for TVET managers, teachers and policymakers. The network currently has 720 members engaged in informal learning and collaboration, 20 of which are from UTech, Jamaica. Over the years, COL and

UTech have collaborated on the development of a Diploma in Technical and Vocational Education by distance. This was successfully delivered by UTech in different Caribbean countries. The materials have now been developed by the Faculty of Education and Liberal Studies for eLearning delivery at Associate Degree level. This is being offered through the UTech Moodle platform. COL and UTech are now collaborating to make the Diploma materials available as an open education resource under a Creative Commons license.

HEART, in collaboration with COL, conducted a five-day Flexible Learning workshop February 3-7, 2014 in which 23 officers from all Training departments and Resources development units benefited. The Workshop was facilitated by consultant Sandy Hirtz, (COL) and two (2) co-facilitators from HEART Trust/NTA. This workshop sought to help the staff to acquire knowledge in:

- Instructional Design Principles for Distance/Online Learning.
- Elements of a successful Online course/Distance Programmes.
- Effective facilitation for Distance Learning Courses (methods of delivery, including learner support).
- Repurposing content for Distance/Online Learning.
- Designing effective Learning Objectives and Activities to meet learning outcomes.
- Evaluating courses for better results.

Subsequently, a two-day seminar and awareness session also took place from February 24-25, 2014 with Dr. Alison Mead-Richardson who met with the Executive Director, Senior Directors, Managers and Officers from varying departments to provide information on the on-going partnership, solicit feedback on other possible initiatives as well as to follow-up on the workshop held earlier in the month.

## **LIFELONG LEARNING**

Growers Cooperative Association (CPCGA) and the University of West Indies developed a plan of action for 2013-2014. The Honourable Roger Clarke, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, met the representatives of COL and RADA and assured his support of L3F in Jamaica. In Jamaica, three farmers groups and 20 extension officers participated in three workshops to create an action plan for 2013-2014 based on the experiences of 2012-2013. Thirty extension officers and 20 representatives of Christiana Potato Growers Association and Producer and Marketing Organizations (PMOs) were trained in different aspects of L3F. A strategy has been evolved in consultation with RADA to focus on the cooperative association and PMOs. A plan of action for 2013-2014 based on the experiences of 2012-2013 has evolved.

The Extension Officer Re-certification programme has been strengthened through the development by RADA ICT Unit of CD-ROM's on the extension officer recertification module Measurements and Calculations. These were distributed to 50 extension officers for completion. They will assist ease of access to training and reduce associated travel costs.

A study was conducted by the University of West Indies in identifying strategies for strengthening the Christiana Potato Growers Association as a social enterprise covering nearly 4000 farmers. Similarly, studies were conducted to strengthen two PMOs as self-sustaining institutions integrating microfinance and gender. Both the studies have given roadmaps for using various technologies and distance learning in building the capacities of the farmers.

### **Overseas visit**

In collaboration with COL, a team comprising the former RADA CEO, ICT Manager and Senior Director, Division of Technology, Training & Technical Information visited India from February 28 to March 8, 2012. A report was presented to local project stakeholders (farm group leaders, CPGCA leadership, L3F project RADA extension staff) on April 4. Stakeholders support social capital strengthening, group and credit systems. Observations on the trip bolstered understanding of and enhanced support for L3F by the visiting team.

### **LIVELIHOOD AND HEALTH**

A baseline study concerning non-formal ODL programmes was conducted by Transformative Communication Partners Caribbean between September and December of 2012, including research into availability, quality and usage of health and development related programming in Jamaica and the Eastern Caribbean. A detailed baseline research concerning the outcomes of community learning programme in Jeffrey Town, Saint Mary (Jamaica), started in June 2013 looking at learning and social and behaviour change. The final report is being awaited.

The Caribbean Institute of Media and Communication (CARIMAC) and Transformative Communication Partners Caribbean collaborated with COL to develop and deliver a nine-month blended training and mentoring programme in the Caribbean region between January and September of 2013. Twenty representatives of 13 organisations (community networks and associations, public and community offices and non-governmental organisations working in health and development, community, public and private media) were trained and mentored to plan, design and deliver community learning programmes (CLP) on topics including domestic violence, youth sexuality, young women's employment and coping with drought. The programme included two face-to-face workshops, held in May and June 2013, covering learning design and programme production, respectively. Five CLPs are slotted for delivery between September and December 2013 in Jamaica.

Mr. Ian Pringle from COL met with persons from CARIMAC to discuss the co-facilitation of the Healthy Communities (HC) (C4D) initiative and to discuss the renewal of the MOU and plans for the delivery of the new certificate course.

3. **Education and Training Priorities that COL can support in its next Three-Year Plan 2015-2018.**
  1. COL can provide assistance in:
    - a) The development of short courses to be offered through COL's Moodle portal to enhance the capacity and skills of teachers' college staff to improve the content at the Bachelors level. While most college lecturers hold a Masters and even Doctoral degrees these are often not in the subject areas being taught.
    - b) Developing an institutional change management model and business planning framework.
    - c) Providing advanced training of faculty members in distance learning especially in the areas of OERs, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), learner support systems and service level agreements.
  2. Developing the capacity and skills of managers to competently use ICT in the evaluation of the impact of projects/initiatives done in collaboration with COL.
  3. Training assistance for persons to write projects to get funding for projects they are undertaking and to effectively manage these funds.

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Trinidad & Tobago  
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