COL in the Commonwealth

2012–2015
Sierra Leone
Acknowledgements

All COL Education Specialists and their Programme Assistants as well as CEMCA colleagues have contributed to the development of the country reports which make up the volume COL in the Commonwealth: 2012-2015 Country Reports. This country report is an excerpt from the volume. The following people are thanked in particular for their role in the design and publication of these reports.

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Foreword

COL in the Commonwealth: 2012-2015 Country Reports summarises COL's activities over the last three years (2012-2015) and captures what we have achieved in each Member State and across the Commonwealth.

This volume is the result of a collaborative process that began in 2011 with extensive partner consultations. Following these consultations, a Country Action Plan was developed to guide COL's work in each country. The reports contained in this volume describe the implementation of these plans and highlight COL's achievements during this three year plan.

The reports cover all Member States of the Commonwealth, showing not only what COL has done in developing countries but also how its work aligns with the international development priorities of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The reports are grouped under four regions: Africa and the Mediterranean, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Each regional section contains a brief regional report as well as the reports for each country within that region. The Pan-Commonwealth section describes COL's Initiatives, under the two sectors: ‘Education’ and ‘Livelihoods and Health’. The reports for this triennium categorise COL activities according to our five core strategies: partnerships, capacity, materials, models and policy, in order to better present how our work contributes to outcomes. ‘COL in Action’ highlights real life examples to illustrate how COL's work impacts on people, groups and institutions in developing countries.

Most of the initiatives that COL pursued during this triennium are showing demonstrable results in expanding and improving opportunities for education and training, building healthier communities, helping rural communities achieve greater prosperity, and contributing to skills development. As the external Impact Evaluation report states: ‘COL has had a major impact on individuals including farmers…faculty members, institutional leaders in formal and non-formal learning, selected policy makers and educational administrators’ (S. Murgatroyd with J. Tully, 2015). The external Outcome Evaluation concludes that ‘all the Initiatives moved successfully forward, on time and within budget’ (N. Kemp and G. Farrell, 2015). Both evaluations confirm that COL is highly respected and well regarded in the field.

The production of COL in the Commonwealth: 2012-2015 Country Reports was made possible through collective effort and collaboration. Partners on the ground have diligently provided updates to COL. COL staff have tracked and assessed results obtained from partners through a thorough monitoring and evaluation process. COL's advanced knowledge management systems have enabled us to capture information from numerous sources and synthesise this into the reports that make up this volume. I must particularly commend Alexis Carr for her diligent work in filtering the masses of raw data and converting them into a coherent and meaningful narrative.

Professor Asha S. Kanwar
President and Chief Executive Officer
Commonwealth of Learning
There has been a proliferation of open and distance learning (ODL) programmes in Sierra Leone in recent years, particularly in the area of teacher development, resulting in an urgent need for the Ministry of Education to develop appropriate policies and guidelines to ensure Quality Assurance.

**National MDG Targets Addressed by COL**
- Make available the benefits of new technologies, especially for information and communications
- Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water

**COL’s Work on Sierra Leone’s MDG Targets**
- Capacity-building, materials development and policy support for sharing OER and promoting ODL are underway
- CLPs on water and sanitation are improving people’s knowledge of accessing and maintaining safe drinking water

**Review and finalise draft national policy on Open and Distance Education (ODE)**
- Develop a national qualifications framework
- Create a national coordinating unit or centre for ODE
- Train personnel on the use of ICT in ODE programs
- Produce audio and DVD/VCDs on existing modules
- Train teachers in life skills/livelihood skills and reproductive health, including the support for study tours to share best practices.

**Outcomes Achieved by COL**
- Three Community Learning Programmes (CLPs) on water and sanitation and teenage pregnancy initiated, with approximately 3,000 users
- Two CLPs initiated in response to the Ebola outbreak

**Agreed Priorities**
- Mrs Musu Gorvie, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

**Areas of COL’s Work in Sierra Leone:**
- Open Schooling
- Teacher Education
- Higher Education
- Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)
- Healthy Communities
In the lead-up to the 2014 Regional Focal Points Meeting, COL identified relevant national priorities for Sierra Leone from the Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan including:

► Prioritising of the technical and vocational education sector
► Development of a national strategy and framework for integrating ICTs into the education system

HIGHLIGHTS

COL has identified five core strategies to achieve outcomes and impact: partnerships, capacity, materials, models and policy. In practice, most COL activities incorporate more than one of these strategies and, in some cases, all five. However, for ease of reference, activities have been classified in only one of the five categories.

PARTNERSHIPS
COL partners with government agencies, public institutions, civil society and other organisations to improve and extend teaching and learning services to people in the developing Commonwealth.

► Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
► Freetown Teachers’ College

CAPACITY
Capacity development pervades all COL activities and COL focuses primarily on human resource development.

► Open Resources for English Language Teaching (ORELT)
► Monitoring and Evaluation for VUSSC
► eFacilitation and Moodle Design
► Community Learning Programme Developer’s Certificate
► OER policy development
► Integration of ICT into teaching, learning and research
► Course material development
► Sponsorship to the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (OPNZ)

MATERIALS
Materials refer to learning and teaching resources including course materials, toolkits and frameworks. Materials are produced through collaboration with partners, or by partners themselves with COL support.

► 11 new VUSSC courses made available
► Healthy Communities model

MODELS
A model is a coherent set of structures and processes that has been shown to work in more than one context to achieve specific results. Models can range from broad approaches to more specific instruments.

LOOKING FORWARD: 2015–2021

In the lead-up to the 2014 Regional Focal Points Meeting, COL identified relevant national priorities for Sierra Leone from the Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan including:
PARTNERSHIPS

VUSSC (Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth)

Sierra Leone is a member of VUSSC.

Support to Freetown Teachers’ College for the Establishment of Open Schooling

Freetown Teacher’s College has requested support from COL for the establishment of open schooling.

COL Education Specialist-Open Schooling visited Sierra Leone to discuss the possibility of Open Schooling with stakeholders including: Mr Mani Kamara, Permanent Secretary; Mr Nabi Kamara, Director Higher Education; Mrs Musu Gorvie, Deputy Director, Higher Education; and Mrs Martyna Foday, Coordinator, Distance Education Unit, Freetown Teachers’ College.

Advocacy for Non-Formal ODL with UNICEF, HASDA and BBC Media Action

In November 2013, COL met with Ms Lynn Morris, Senior Project Manager, BBC Media Action, in Freetown and identified the organisation as a potential partner for Health and Social Development Association (HASDA) of Sierra Leone. COL also met with Mr Frederick Bobor James, Programme Communication Specialist, and Mr Salieu Jalloh, Communication for Development (C4D) Officer, of UNICEF Sierra Leone in Freetown. As a result of the meeting, a promising partnership between HASDA and UNICEF was outlined. In November 2013, COL visited Sierra Leone to do an informal assessment of the work done by HASDA of Sierra Leone, the COL Healthy Communities country partner, and meet with stakeholders and potential partners.

PARTNERSHIPS: MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

7th Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF7)

COL sponsored the following people to attend the forum: Abdulai Maxim Conjoh of the Milton Margai College of Education and Technology, Martyna Nyagua Cecilia Foday of Freetown Teachers’ College, Haja Fatmata Jawara of Yegezie International Open College of Technology, Emmanuel Konjoh of HASDA, Paul K. Ngaujah of Njala University, and Sahr Pimbi Sorrie of Freetown Teachers’ College.

VUSSC Interlocutors Meeting

The VUSSC Interlocutors Meeting coincided with the Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF). PCF7 was held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 2 to 6 December 2013. At this meeting, Interlocutors participated in a half-day impact evaluation workshop with COL’s impact evaluators, Dr Stephen Murgatroyd and Ms Janet Tully. Highlights of the Interlocutors Meeting included a discussion of the post-MDGs (Millennium Development Goals), current VUSSC resources, and the importance of gender in the VUSSC initiative. At the close of the meeting, the following countries expressed interest in offering VUSSC courses: Barbados, Vanuatu, Namibia, St. Lucia, Antigua & Barbuda, Maldives, Grenada and Dominica.

Healthy Communities Partners Meeting

COL convened a meeting of its Healthy Communities initiative partners in Abuja in December 2013, on the sidelines of the 7th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning. The meeting, held from 1 to 2 December, focused on conducting a mid-term review of the initiative and planning for the balance of the three-year plan. Mr Emmanuel Konjoh of HASDA, Sierra Leone, participated in the meeting.

CAPACITY

Open Resources for English Language Teaching (ORELT) Workshop

COL facilitated a four-day Training of Teachers workshop on Open Resources for English Language Teaching (ORELT) in Banjul, The Gambia, from 30 July to 2 August 2012. The aim of the workshop was to sensitise the participants on the objectives of the ORELT project, the nature of its modules and the website, and to train junior secondary school teachers and teacher educators on how to use the modules in the classroom. Bridget Turay of Annie Walsh Memorial Secondary School, Mariama S. Musa of Njala University-Bo Campus, Kenneth Osho and Dr Momodu Turay of Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, and Fatmata Bundu of the Government Rokel Secondary School participated in the workshop.

Monitoring and Evaluation for VUSSC

As part of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) strategy for VUSSC, COL organised an M&E Workshop in Lesotho from 10 to 14 December 2012. The objectives of the workshop were to:

► enhance the capacity of Interlocutors and implementers in M&E;
► provide a framework to institutionalise M&E; and
► collect data on VUSSC activities.

eFacilitation and Moodle Design Training

Mr Emmanuel Konjoh from HASDA of Sierra Leone was
trained in e-facilitation and Moodle design skills between April and July 2013, resulting in a preliminary draft e-workshop entitled “Programme Production for Community Learning Programmes.”

**Community Learning Programme (CLP) Developer’s Certificate**

Regional distance training and mentoring courses have been developed and delivered through a partnership between COL and its Healthy Communities partners. Two editions of the 5-week “Communication for Development (C4D): Why. How. Now.” e-course were run in 2013/2014. In October to November 2013, one participant from Sierra Leone was trained.

**Capacity-Building Workshop on OER Policy Development**

A capacity-building workshop on OER policy development was held in Abuja, Nigeria from 29 July to 2 August 2013 for 35 policy-makers from ministries of education and heads of tertiary institutions in Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone (eight member states of the Economic Community of West African States [ECOWAS]). Each country delegation agreed to:

- organise wide consultations on OER policy development within their respective Ministry of Education and institutions;
- and
- on the basis of the consultations, prepare and submit a concept note to COL, ECOWAS and UNESCO on the activities they would undertake to develop institutional and national OER policies. The concept note would clearly indicate how COL, UNESCO and ECOWAS would support their policy development initiatives.

Mrs Musu Gorvie of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Mr Sahr Pimbi Sorrie of Freetown Teachers’ College attended the workshop.

**Integrating ICT into Teaching, Learning and Research**

From 27 November to 1 December 2013, a workshop in Integrating ICT into Teaching, Learning and Research was held in Abuja, Nigeria. A total of three teacher educators from Sierra Leone participated.

Under the aegis of the Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning (RETRIDOL), COL supported a regional workshop on research methods and tools in ODL at the University of Ghana in April 2012. Thirty-two academics from single- and dual-mode higher education institutions in West Africa developed capacity in research methods and tools. Two academics from Sierra Leone were trained at the workshop.

**Course Material Development Workshop**

Under the aegis of RETRIDOL, COL supported a regional workshop on course material development in ODL. Forty-five academics from 11 institutions in five countries in the region were trained in course material development in ODL. One academic from Sierra Leone participated and built capacity in course material development.

**Sponsorship to the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (OPNZ)**

To support women in higher education, COL sponsored 20 women faculty from higher education institutions in Africa and Asia by providing scholarships to undertake a one-year online certificate course in Designing and Facilitating eLearning (Level 5) from the OPNZ. This qualification is made up of three 20-credit courses and is delivered online through the Online Campus. The following person from Sierra Leone is participating in the programme: Ms Agnes J.S. Pessima, Fourah Bay College.

As of June 2014, another nine women in higher education from eight different countries, including Sierra Leone, were sponsored to complete in the Open OPNZ programme in designing and facilitating online learning/eLearning.

**MATERIALS**

**New VUSSC Courses**

During 2013–2014, 11 VUSSC courses were completed including: Master’s in Educational Leadership, Bachelor’s in Business and Entrepreneurship, Diploma in Agriculture, Linux for IT Managers, Facilitating Online Instruction, and Sustainable Tourism. Courses are available to all VUSSC member states on the VUSSC website. Approximately 49,000 people have been reached or trained, including senior officials, educators and over 1,300 learners enrolled in VUSSC-developed courses and programmes.

**VUSSC Postgraduate Diploma in Education**

Senior officials of the small states identified a need to develop a teacher education programme, especially at the postgraduate level, to help address the acute shortage of teachers in most of the small states and the lack of training programmes in most teacher training institutions. COL therefore facilitated a workshop, in collaboration with the National University of Samoa, to develop a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). It ran from 17 June to 3 July 2013 in Samoa, with 28 participants from 14 countries. Much of the course was developed using OER.
MODELS

Healthy Communities

Thirty-two individuals (21 men and 11 women) from 14 organisations (community networks and associations, public and community offices and non-governmental organisations, working health and development bodies, and community, public and private media) have been engaged in Community Learning Programme (CLP) planning and design though a series of regional and local training/mentoring workshops, led by HASDA (Freetown). A training session involving key stakeholders from three districts was organised in May 2013, led by Mr Charles Simbi of the Centre for Development Communication (Malawi). As a result of the training, three CLPs have been designed and delivered.

Through Health and Social Development Association (HASDA), COL’s Healthy Communities Initiative has CLPs in three districts: Bo, Kailahun and Moyamba on issues of water and sanitation and teenage pregnancy. HASDA reports a total of 3,000 identified users and estimated listenership of 10,000.

In response to the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone, HASDA began development of two CLPs on related issues for delivery in 2015 with technical and financial assistance from COL.
LEARNING FOR DEVELOPMENT

COL is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.

VISION: To be the foremost global agency that promotes learning for development

MISSION: To help governments and institutions to expand the scale, efficiency and quality of learning by using open, distance and technology-based approaches

CORE STRATEGIES: Partnerships, capacity, materials, models and policies

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