3rd Annual Quality Congress Middle East

Best Practices of the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) and its Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF)
Best Practice? Good Practice? or What Worked?
Conceived in 2000

- at the triennial Conference of Commonwealth Ministers of Education

- investigation - 2000 - 2003

- presented to Ministers of Education in 2003
The concept

- a network rather than an institution
- help countries collaborate
- strengthen the capacity of national education institutions
The concept

- Creative Commons copyright licenses
  [www.creativecommons.org](http://www.creativecommons.org)

- Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF)
The TQF

• co-branded with VUSSC if:
  • it is by an approved national institution,
  • the course is approved within the institution,
  • the course is approved by the national qualification authority, and
  • the regional qualification authority
• it is then posted on the VUSSC website
The Commonwealth of Learning (COL)

- established 20 years ago
- by the Heads of Government of Commonwealth countries (53 countries)
- to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies
Technologies

• 20 years ago:
  • radio, television, audio recorders

• now:
  • radio, television, audio recorders and

• computers and the Internet
Year 2000

- The dotcom bubble
- Heads of Government at the United Nations - Millennium Declaration
- World Economic Forum - six targets for Education for All
VUSSC not to become a competitor

VUSSC to be supportive and build human skills

a supportive, capacity-building model was conceived

This worked!
32 small states
“the virtual university will be as much concerned with adding value to conventional on-campus instruction as it is with serving learners at a distance.”
Capacity Building
“providing accreditation systems to develop quality standards and ensure that they are met.”
Limited funding

Creativity
Funding Support

- Commonwealth of Learning
- The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
- The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation
Training Workshops

- held in 6 host countries
- 130+ participants
- 26 countries
Training Workshops

• 2006 - Mauritius: Tourism and Entrepreneurship

• 2007 - Singapore: Professional Development for Education

• 2007 - Trinidad: Life Skills

• 2007 - Samoa: Disaster Management

• 2008 - The Seychelles: Fisheries

• 2008 - The Bahamas: Construction
Capacity Building or Course Materials?

• Create and distribute course material - the easy option with no capacity building

• Training builds technical competence and the ability to impact on institutions and systems

This worked!
Copyright

- Creative Commons
- www.creativecommons.org
- CC-BY-SA
- CC-BY-SA-NC

This worked!
Transnational Qualifications Framework

- assisted by the South African Qualifications Authority
- to aid comparability between regions and help give credibility to courses offered by national institutions in small states.
- aimed at helping to build systemic capacity in Commonwealth small states
- may be of interest to non-Commonwealth countries
Transnational Qualifications Framework

• non-regulatory

• will not replace sectoral, national or regional qualifications frameworks or authorities

• based on the principles of simplicity, incrementalism and local involvement

• aimed at supporting the transfer of credits achieved in different countries.
Transnational Qualifications Framework

- is a translation instrument
- according to set criteria
- for specified levels of learning achieved
- to improve credit transfer, and
- to promote common accreditation mechanisms
# Transnational Qualifications Framework

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Qualifications Titles</th>
<th>Minimum Credits</th>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>240</td>
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<td>8</td>
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Management Committee

Advisory Committee

Country Interlocutors

TQF Management Committee

Country Teams

This worked!
Ministerial request, transnational needs

VUSSC
Conduit coordinated by COL
Optional
Course material developed using ODL mode

No/very limited recognition (non-formal)

National recognition

National, regional and transnational recognition

PROVIDERS
Offer a range of courses

Courses

VUSSC
Conduit coordinated by COL
Optional
Course material developed using ODL mode

No/very limited recognition (non-formal)

National recognition

National, regional and transnational recognition

NATIONAL QA REQUIREMENTS
(NQF or MOE)
Compulsory

REGIONAL QA REQUIREMENTS
(RQF, where applicable)
Optional

TRANSNATIONAL QA REQUIREMENTS
Optional

Source: J. Keevy, SAQA
Welcome to VUSSC Home Page

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

On behalf of Commonwealth Ministers of Education, COL is co-ordinating the development of a Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Thirty countries are now actively engaged in making the VUSSC a reality. VUSSC countries have chosen to focus on creating postsecondary, skills-related courses in areas such as tourism, entrepreneurship, professional development, disaster management and a range of technical and vocational subjects. These non-proprietary, electronically-held course materials, which can readily be adapted to the specific context of each country, are used in the offering of credit-bearing qualifications in the countries' post-secondary institutions, strengthening their educational capacity and outreach. Small states thus become active contributors to global development and leaders in educational reform through the innovative use of information and communications technologies (ICTs). The VUSSC is throwing a wide bridge across the digital divide.
From receiving to offering

- Workshops
- eLearning
- Accreditation processes
- TQF
The VUSSC Transnational Qualifications Framework

A 30-country international online course development initiative like the VUSSC poses challenges of qualifications frameworks and qualifications recognition. Nothing like this has been done before. Courses developed under the aegis of the VUSSC are intended to be adapted and offered in many countries. But since the VUSSC is not an accrediting or awarding body, the institutions that offer the courses must accredit them locally.

The aim of a TQF should be to ensure that all the open educational resources that are being created collaboratively can be adapted into recognised courses that students can take for credit through the tertiary institutions of the small states. If the TQF can act as a translation point for modules/units and qualifications between countries, the small states of the Commonwealth will have achieved much of what many larger countries dream of having.

An additional benefit of a TQF may be to discourage bogus providers, which are particularly active in trying to sell fake qualifications in the small states.

Documents:

To view the whole document, please click on the name of the document.

Concept document, May 2008
Implementation / Discussion Document, October 2008
People-Centred

Action Learning

Practical

Monitoring & Evaluation

This really worked!
And yes, this seems to be the way forward!
Thank You!

www.col.org/vussc

www.col.org/speeches