

EXCERPTS FROM:

COL in the Commonwealth

2006–2009 Country Reports

FOR: GHANA

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impact open and distance learning
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COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

Learning for Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	5
PAN-COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES.....	7
AFRICA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN	13
GHANA	31

FOREWORD

COL in the Commonwealth is a companion text to *Learning for Development*, the Commonwealth of Learning's Three-Year Plan for 2009-2012. This compendium reviews COL's work over the last three years (2006-2009) country by country. Together these two documents are the springboard for the *Country Action Plans* that will guide COL's future activities in each country over the 2009-2012 triennium and ensure that they are consistent with the national priorities of governments.

Ministers were enthusiastic about the previous issue of *COL in the Commonwealth* that was presented to 16CCEM in Cape Town in 2006. That report covered only developing countries whereas this one, at the request of Ministers, covers all members of the Commonwealth, showing also what COL has done in relation to the international development priorities of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. These country reviews are grouped under four regions: Africa (and the Mediterranean), Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

COL tries to create synergy within regions and across the Commonwealth by bringing countries and institutions together in common endeavours. For this reason each grouping of countries begins with a short account of the regional activities which COL has promoted in 2006-2009.

Member States also greatly value COL's Pan-Commonwealth work, which benefits from the unifying characteristics of the Commonwealth such as a common language, similar constitutional and legal frameworks, and a shared commitment to the values of peace, democracy, equality and good government. Some of the Pan-Commonwealth activities and facilities that underpin COL's work in the regions and countries are listed in the next section.

The production of *COL in the Commonwealth 2006-2009* has been an intense collective effort. COL's advanced knowledge management systems have enabled us to exploit fully the information contained in the numerous event reports prepared by staff as they work and travel. I express particular gratitude to Jasmine Lee, for diligently updating the country profiles that provided the raw material for these reviews, and to Judith Mosley, who brought this volume together in an impressively efficient and expeditious manner.



Sir John Daniel
President and Chief Executive Officer
Commonwealth of Learning

PAN-COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES



BACKGROUND

As a Commonwealth inter-governmental organisation, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has the mandate to operate in all 53 member states. Its work focuses particularly on 46 developing countries across Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. COL also seeks to align its activities with the education and training priorities and the countries of particular concern for major donor agencies such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID).

COL has developed Action Plans in consultation with Focal Points and country partners in the 46 member states, with activities specific to the individual needs of each country. However, several activities have a regional or pan-Commonwealth nature. This section looks at pan-Commonwealth activities.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION

COL provides material and capacity building support for assuring quality in higher education and teacher education in the Commonwealth. A toolkit called the *Quality Assurance for Teacher Education and Development Toolkit* includes *Quality Indicators for Teacher Education* and *Best Practices in Teacher Education*, was launched in December 2007 to be used by Ministries of Education and teacher education institutions.

COL is also developing a quality assurance toolkit for open schools. As a first step towards this, staff members from 14 countries across all Commonwealth regions have been trained in the Quality Assurance of Open Schools. A Quality Assurance Toolkit for Higher Education is nearing completion.

OPEN SCHOOLS

COL encourages the application of open and distance learning (ODL) to increase access to primary and secondary schooling. In support of this, two publications, *Perspective Series on Open Schools – Open Schools for the 21st*

Century and Handbook for Managers of Open Schools have been completed with contributions from chapter authors across the Commonwealth. Both publications will be distributed as a resource to policymakers. Other resources which have been developed include the *Evaluation Study on Open Schools* and the *Cost and Financing of Open Schools* as well as a *Learner Support Guide for Open Schools*.

In addressing the need for quality educational resources, COL has initiated the development of Open Educational Resources for Open Schools (OER4OS) in 20 subjects involving six countries. The open educational resources (OERs) will be available to all Commonwealth countries.

ELEARNING FOR EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

COL has two major and related pan-Commonwealth initiatives in this area: WikiEducator and Learning4Content (L4C).

COL's WikiEducator (www.col.org/WikiEducator) provides an online service to support online educational communities. Use of WikiEducator has grown rapidly during the past year with the number of registered users passing the 9,020 mark and number of hits per day now exceeding 247,653. A wiki is a website on which any user can edit and update pages. The best known is the Wikipedia, the biggest encyclopaedia ever produced. Wikis are a part of the emerging "Web 2.0" environment that includes user-contributed works such as YouTube and MySpace.

COL's WikiEducator creates online communities whose members participate from remote locations to create educational content collaboratively and to plan conferences and other events. It is one of the tools used by the Virtual University of Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). WikiEducator is reaching 79 % of countries around the world and COL is now supporting the installation of a French language version.

The L4C initiative aims to build capacity among educators in using WikiEducator to develop free content for education. Training is free and educators "pay" for their training by donating time to develop one free content lesson of their choice. L4C workshops have already been held in 28 Commonwealth countries and at least one face-to-face workshop will be held in each member state. In addition, 26 online workshops have been held and others are scheduled. Commonwealth teachers and educators are thus becoming WikiEducators themselves, developing and donating one free content resource back to the WikiEducator community.

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation approved a grant of USD 100,000 to COL over one year as core support for this initiative.

THE VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH (VUSSC)

VUSSC is a collaborative network of small states that create and share materials for livelihood-related post-secondary programmes. Activities during this planning period have included capacity building and the creation, customisation and reuse of OERs. Quality assurance and cross-accreditation of learning programmes has also been an area of focus.

The VUSSC is a creation of the participating countries and their existing tertiary institutions. It is a collective mechanism for people to develop expertise in online collaboration, eLearning and information and communication technologies (ICTs). It also provides an opportunity for them to produce, adapt and deploy courses and learning materials on selected subjects identified by country Interlocutors and stakeholders.

The model that has emerged is a three-week training and course development workshop at which subject specialists from a subset of the participating states strengthen their information technology (IT) skills and begin to develop course material collaboratively online. Six workshops were held during this planning period:

1. Entrepreneurship and Tourism, hosted in Mauritius in August 2006.
2. Professional Development of Educators, in Singapore in March 2007.
3. Life Skills, hosted in Trinidad & Tobago in June 2007.
4. Disaster Management, in November 2007 in Samoa.
5. The Fishing Industry, in Seychelles in March 2008.
6. The Construction Industry, in The Bahamas in November 2008.

Orientations for the selected team leaders in preparation for the workshops took place in Vancouver six weeks before each workshop.

Senior officials from VUSSC countries met in Singapore in February 2008 to consider, refine and agree mechanisms of a transnational qualifications framework (TQF), the first of its kind. This will allow the 30 participating small states to transfer course materials, qualifications and qualified learners between countries. The South African Qualifications Authority, an organisation of the South African Government with more than twelve years experience in establishing frameworks in South and Southern Africa, helped to prepare a concept document and facilitate the proceedings.

The Ministry Interlocutors for VUSSC met in London in July 2008 to discuss the implementation of the TQF, the establishment of a management committee, the logo and branding of VUSSC, monitoring and evaluation, and copyright issues.

TRANSNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

COL designs, develops and delivers distance and technology mediated learning programmes for international organisations with a global workforce. During this planning period, COL has developed and delivered a number of new programmes including: Writing Effectively for the International Labour Organization (ILO); World Bank Writing E-mails, Memos and Letters and World Bank Report Writing; and an Operational Data Management Learning Programme for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). These eLearning courses are designed to enhance the skill of staff working in field offices and in headquarters.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

COL promotes gender equality in all its programmes. Specific gender-related issues are identified during the work-planning process with country stakeholders and addressed through appropriate research, training and materials development.

COL and the Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec) are working together to develop ODL training materials aimed at promoting good governance and gender equality in the public sector. The work is based on two workshops hosted by ComSec which concluded that there was limited capacity among the majority of policy makers, senior managers and professionals to mainstream gender equality in their daily work. A critical decision was to explore the role of ICTs and ODL in delivering training on a larger scale and to support research on flexible learning opportunities. A status report on what learning materials for gender mainstreaming are currently available to the public service concluded that while there are some materials available online, the current model for accessing the materials is not adequate.

A two-day meeting was convened in July 2008 to deliberate how best COL and ComSec could develop the required content using ODL tools. Invited participants included members of administrative staff colleges and other institutions involved in training public servants such as National Women's Machineries, Commonwealth partner agencies and resource people. The focus for piloting this initiative is Africa in the first instance.

COL-PROTEIN PROGRAMME

The COL Poverty Reduction Outcomes through Education Innovations and Networks (COL-PROTEIN) programme supports innovative uses of ODL to alleviate poverty in rural areas. In particular, COL-PROTEIN supports initiatives that adapt ODL, ICTs and media to build capacities for community development, for example, in areas such as food security, environmental protection, women's empowerment, micro-enterprise and good governance. Several projects across the regions have already been recipients of a COL-PROTEIN Award.

PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUMS

More than 500 people from 64 countries and various international organisations gathered in Ocho Rios, Jamaica for COL's Fourth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF4) from 30 October to 3 November 2006. In his closing remarks, Sir John Daniel pointed to three key areas of progress since the Third Pan-Commonwealth Forum in Dunedin, New Zealand in 2004:

1. Better research
2. More participation from developing countries
3. Integration of technology.

COL was grateful to the local hosts of the Forum for ensuring the success of the event, in particular the University of the West Indies' Distance Education Centre, in co-operation with the Caribbean Association for Distance and Open Learning, the Jamaican Association for Distance and Open Learning, the Trinidad & Tobago Distance Learning Association and the Office of Continuing Education and Distance Learning at the University of Technology, Jamaica.

The Fifth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF5) took place in London, UK, in July 2008, with the theme "Access to Learning for Development". It was hosted by COL in collaboration with the University of London, as part of the University's celebration to mark the 150th anniversary of the establishment of its External Degrees Programme. PCF5 brought together practitioners, researchers, planners and policy makers in the fields of ODL and development to explore the contribution of ODL to international development goals. Over 700 participants from over 70 countries, the majority from the developing Commonwealth, took advantage of opportunities to share experience and expertise, and to contribute to future policy and provision.

COL NEWS SERVICE & NEWSLETTER

COL customises services provided by Google and Yahoo to provide a news service on ODL and specialised topics. The general news service is available from COL's homepage while the specialised services are available on the appropriate topic pages on the website. The news service is updated approximately every hour.

COL publishes a newsletter, *Connections*, and a companion publication, *EdTech News*, three times per year, designed to provide regular news and information to COL's stakeholders. The publications are distributed in print and electronically directly to 10,000 government officials, ODL and educational technology leaders and practitioners throughout the Commonwealth and beyond. The newsletter offers updates on COL and partner activities; ODL developments, resources and events; and educational technology reviews – all with a “development” focus. It also features an “In Focus” section which highlights a different COL programme in each issue, and periodic editorials as well as “Fair Comment” columns from external sources. It can be found on COL's website at www.col.org/connections.

COPYRIGHT FOR EDUCATORS AND ADMINISTRATORS

COL has worked extensively in the area of copyright in education. The focus of COL's attention is on providing information on how learning resources may be made available at low or no cost by applying the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (TRIPS). In early 2009 COL published a book on copyright for educators and administrators titled *Introducing Copyright* which is available on the COL website at no cost.



Africa and the Mediterranean

**Botswana | Cameroon | Cyprus (Mediterranean) | The Gambia | Ghana | Kenya |
Lesotho | Malawi | Malta (Mediterranean) | Mauritius | Mozambique | Namibia |
Nigeria | Seychelles | Sierra Leone | South Africa | Swaziland | Tanzania | Uganda |
Zambia**



REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

BACKGROUND

The African continent is home to 18 Commonwealth member states in various stages of development. It can be divided into the Southern, Eastern and Western African sub-regions and COL is active in all of them.

Distance education is not new to Africa. Correspondence education took root in Africa in the early part of the 20th century through colleges such as Wolsey Hall and Rapid Results. The University of South Africa (UNISA) was the world's first dedicated distance education university, established in 1951. It provided a model for the British Open University.

There are now four open universities in Africa and a further six are planned over the next three years. Distance education is also being used for increasing the number of trained teachers, for enhancing access to secondary schooling and for skills training.

Two further Commonwealth member states included in this region are in the Mediterranean: Cyprus and Malta.

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

COL is a partner of the Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) consortium. In June 2007, The BBC World Service Trust, in partnership with the UK Open University and 13 education institutions across Africa, launched the Teachers in Africa Radio Season. The project aims to help train thousands more teachers, so millions more children can receive a quality basic education. The materials developed by TESSA are easily accessed via the internet or provided in print format by teacher training institutions. Colleges and universities across Africa are able to download materials to equip primary school teachers with teaching skills in the key areas of literacy, numeracy, science, life skills, social studies and the arts.

In July 2007, COL and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) signed a Work Plan Agreement. Within the Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA), UNESCO and COL are working to link teacher policy to national development goals, increasing access and improving the quality of teacher education through open and distance learning (ODL) and strengthening the delivery of quality teacher education through effective multi-stakeholder partnerships with civil society, the private sector and academia.

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY – CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION (SADC-CDE)

COL provides funding support for the activities of SADC-CDE, located at the Botswana College of Open and Distance Learning. SADC-CDE activities are designed to build and strengthen regional capacity in ODL as well as the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

The Centre collaborated with the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA) to publish the *DEASA – SADC-CDE International Journal of Open and Distance Learning*, launched in September 2007. It is a refereed journal that publishes articles drawn from across the SADC sub-region.

COL undertook an evaluation of SADC-CDE in June 2008 and the report of the evaluation was tabled to the Advisory Council.

FREE/LIBRE AND OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE FOR EDUCATION INITIATIVE

The Free/Libre and Open Source Software for Education (FLOSS4Edu) initiative is promoting the development of free content in education using open source software tools among educators. Conceived in East Africa, several chapters have now been established including an East African Chapter and a West African Chapter. Now that a French language installation of WikiEducator is in development, a Francophone Chapter of FLOSS4Edu is being planned. The aim is to establish regional chapters throughout the Commonwealth.

During this planning period, two workshops, in Nairobi in November 2006, and in Ghana in July 2007, took place with participants from a number of African countries.

REGIONAL TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) SUMMIT

COL and UNESCO's UNEVOC Centre for TVET co-organised the first African UNESCO-UNEVOC TVET Summit on the theme of "Access to and Inclusion in TVET in Africa Through New ICT-based Solutions". UNEVOC is UNESCO's International Project on Technical and Vocational Education. Held in Nairobi in May 2007, the Summit attracted participants from across the region and was part of the 2nd International Conference on ICTs for Development, Education and Training. The sessions considered TVET as central to the effort to foster sustainable development and attain the first Millennium Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger in Africa. COL, the Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa and UNEVOC agreed to collaborate further to assist African countries through the sharing of knowledge and expertise in TVET and to organise a second TVET Africa Summit in 2008.

COL co-funded the second African UNESCO-UNEVOC TVET Summit in Accra, Ghana in May 2008. The Summit promoted good practice projects in the use of ICTs in TVET across Africa. COL sponsored two of the three winners. COL also sponsored the keynote speaker for the Summit.

ICTs IN EDUCATION IN AFRICA SURVEY

A survey on ICTs in Education in Africa, funded by the Information for Development Program (InfoDev) was carried out. A team of eight researchers were contracted by COL to produce reports for each African country and the final report was delivered at the end of June 2007. It covered all countries in continental Africa according to the following education sectors: Schools (primary and secondary), higher education, TVET, and non-formal education (adult literacy, health, agriculture, etc.). The study explored answers to several basic questions including how ICTs are currently being used in the education sector in Africa; what strategies and policies are related to this use; what the common challenges and constraints faced by African countries are in this area; what is actually happening on the ground; and to what extent donors are involved.

NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD) E-SCHOOL INITIATIVE

NEPAD asked COL and InfoDev to monitor and evaluate the NEPAD e-Schools initiative that was launched in a number of countries across Africa during the previous planning period. The completed report is available on COL's website.

REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS MEETING

The first Regional Meeting of COL's Focal Points for Africa and the Mediterranean was held in Lilongwe, Malawi, in May 2008. These meetings are planned to take place every three years. During the meeting, each participant reviewed, on behalf of their country, the progress that had been made at the mid-term of COL's current Three-Year Plan 2006-2009. They provided feedback on COL's planning process and concrete inputs for developing the next Three-Year Plan 2009-2012. The meeting was also a valuable opportunity for inter-country networking that will facilitate future collaboration.

The role of the COL Focal Points was discussed and a number of key aspects of this valuable role were agreed. The Focal Points will be a one-stop window in each country for COL, will coordinate with other ministries and stakeholders and will disseminate COL-related information to relevant constituencies. The Focal Points will also meet visiting COL staff and arrange appointments with ministry officials and others as necessary. In particular, they will keep their Minister briefed and will ensure timely payment of contributions to COL. Finally, the Focal Points will be advocates for ODL and for COL in their countries and will provide advice and guidance to COL from time to time.

COL created an online "BaseCamp" for the African and Mediterranean Focal Points to encourage online dialogue and the exchange of ideas and information.

REGIONAL BROCHURES

COL has regional brochures which summarise its activities in each of the four regions of the Commonwealth. These can be found on COL's website at: www.col.org/regional.



GHANA

COL Focal Point: Professor Jophus Anamuah-Mensah, EDUIT Consortium (current)

BACKGROUND

Ghana has had a long-standing interest in open learning and has supported COL and been involved in its work for many years, including at the executive level. Ghana is a contributor to COL's budget.

SUMMARY

Ghana has continued its full involvement in COL activities and its significant contribution to COL's work in the region. A Ghanaian has been appointed as Regional Representative for Africa on COL's Board of Governors, and another is the Education Specialist, Learning for Livelihoods at COL. Mrs. Esi Sutherland-Addy served on COL's Board of Governors and was recognised as a COL Fellow at the Fifth Pan-Commonwealth Forum held in London in July 2008.

The focus of COL's work in Ghana continues to be in two sectors: Education and Learning for Livelihoods. COL is currently working with the Ministry to establish the National Open University of Ghana. COL continues to collaborate with institutions in Ghana to support the activities of the West Africa Consortium for Teacher Education Development (WACTED) and Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA).

In Learning for Livelihoods, the initiatives relate to technical and vocational training as well as skills development for agriculture. COL is supporting Ghana in its efforts to introduce ODL in the training of community health nurses and in the professional development of the Police Service.

EDUCATION

Quality assurance

The Joint COL-UNESCO-UBEC Quality Assurance Forum in Teacher Education for West Africa was held in Abuja, Nigeria, in February 2008 and was attended by two delegates from Ghana, from the National Accreditation Board and the University of Cape Coast. The pan-Commonwealth *Quality Assurance for Teacher Education and*

Development Toolkit was distributed at the Forum. The toolkit was discussed along with quality assurance efforts made to date in Ghana.

Teacher development

The University of Education, Winneba (UEW) is offering a Bachelor of Education course in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) using ODL with assistance from COL. The first intake of students is currently in their second year. In 2008, 56 new admissions were made. All learners remain in their teaching post while receiving continuing professional training.

Regional collaboration in teacher education through WACTED has continued. COL supported a workshop in Ghana in February 2007, held in collaboration with TESSA. Teacher educators from Ghana were among 20 delegates who attended from seven countries. The programme introduced new teacher education institutions to TESSA and WACTED and provided a session on quality assurance in teacher education.

COL and UNESCO signed a Work Plan Agreement in July 2007 as part of a plan to work jointly with the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and the Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa for policy support and capacity building for teacher development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Ghana will be one of six countries (five Commonwealth) included in the initial implementation of a six-month course for teacher education policymakers and administrators, currently in development.

Open/alternative schooling

COL is assisting with the development of plans for an open school focusing on TVET under the President's Special Initiative on Distance Education (PSI-DL) and linked to UEW. Following a meeting of COL and PSI-DL, the Ministry of Education and PSI-DL are clarifying the different roles and responsibilities, considering formal agreements with the vocational schools and developing a plan for the smooth implementation of the programmes. UEW has prepared a draft to incorporate the project into the University's operations. Based on the recommendations of the draft, the Government of Ghana is placing PSI-DL under the proposed National Open University.

Ghana was one of 11 participating countries from across the Commonwealth to attend a workshop on "How can ICTs enhance the capacity of Women in Leadership?" in Vancouver in November 2008. A participant from PSI-DL attended the workshop which featured presentations, discussions and site visits to educational institutions. The workshop's recommendations and findings informed the development of self-instructional materials that can be used to help women in leadership positions in open schools to embrace the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Other COL support for open schools have included staff members from 17 countries including Ghana receiving training in learner support.

Higher Education

From 26 April to 4 May 2007, the President & CEO of COL chaired the first of two visits to the University of Ghana (UoG) by an international visitation panel, charged with reviewing its operations. The panel reviewed:

- (a) The academic programmes at UoG to determine their currency, quality and relevance to the mission of creating world-class human resources and capabilities to meet national development needs.

- (b) The infrastructure and resources currently in place and advised on additional resources required to enable the University to adequately discharge its mandate to internationally-accepted standards.
- (c) The University's administrative and governance structures, its systems and procedures and advised on their appropriateness and adequacy in relation to the twin goals of effectiveness and efficiency.

The President & CEO of COL also chaired the second of the two visits in August 2007. A final report, prepared by the President, was presented to the University Council and the Academic Board of the University in December 2007.

COL organised a workshop for the Planning Committee of the National Open University of Ghana in Accra in December 2008. It was on ICTs and related issues impacting ODL and on applying creative commons licenses for open educational resources (OERs). The ten participants included the COL Focal Point for Ghana and were from UEW, Zenith College, Micap Institute of Technology, University of Cape Coast (UCC), COL and the National Council for Teacher Education, India.

The Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration/Masters in Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programmes have been expanded to Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). Six hundred and fifty-one students are enrolled in the programme.

ELearning for education sector development

An educational practitioner from Ghana participated in a two-day workshop in Nairobi in November 2006. The workshop was organised by COL and the Free/Libre and Open Source Software for Education (FLOSS4Edu) initiative to discuss the role of free and open educational resources (OERs) in the East African Region. The workshop also focussed on identifying innovative and creative ways for partnerships to build OERs as a direct input in the provision of lifelong learning and alternative education for all. The workshop discussed establishing a content development group to spearhead the development of free educational resources in Africa and several content production and dissemination technologies were demonstrated.

In February 2007, UEW hosted a workshop on quality assurance in ODL organised by The National Open University of Nigeria in collaboration with COL. It was attended by 23 academics including eight participants, from UoG, University of Cape Town, KNUST, PSI-DL, UEW and UEW Kumasi Campus. The workshop introduced important issues in quality assurance and ODL. The participants shared best practices and reviewed case studies. They also discussed issues such as international standards, quality assurance indicators and quality assurance in ODL course development, delivery and learner support systems.

UNESCO Paris funded a first workshop on "Open Education Resources Training for Livelihoods: Training Workshop for the Commonwealth and la Francophonie". The workshop, jointly organised by COL and UNESCO, was held at UEW, Ghana in July 2007. Those from Ghana were among the 23 participants who attended the workshop where they acquired skills in wiki editing, content development, instructional design, the use of COL's ODL template and the adaptation of English and Mathematics content materials donated by the College of the Rockies, Canada.

As part of the FLOSS4Edu initiative, educators from 11 West African countries took part in a training workshop on OERs in Ghana in August 2007. Delegates were introduced to additional skills in content development methodologies in WikiEducator to apply the knowledge in the development of content materials for vocational education. The lessons learned are being applied to the development of content for ODL delivery for community health nursing, building and construction.

Between January and September 2008, several face-to-face wiki workshops took place in Ghana through the initiative of UEW, One Village Foundation in Ghana, the FLOSS4Edu initiative and the major pan-Commonwealth programme, Learning4Content (L4C). As part of L4C, more than 15 delegates from Ghana also participated in online workshops.

COL undertook a review of ICTs at the University of Development Studies (UDS). The consultants travelled to three UDS campuses to examine issues such as using computers in desert conditions, how to make limited ICTs available to learners and how to expand bandwidth in the face of high costs. Their recommendations were aimed at helping UDS make effective use of funding from development agencies, which will lead to better delivery of ODL.

LEARNING FOR LIVELIHOODS

Learning and skills for livelihoods

COL and the Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA) co-sponsored a policy awareness seminar on integrating ICTs and eLearning into TVET in Freetown, Sierra Leone in May 2007. A representative from Ghana was among those from 120 TVET institutions across 17 African countries. The delegates gained valuable information about the potential of using ODL to improve livelihoods.

A representative from the National Police Training School, Accra, attended the 1st African UNESCO-UNEVOC TVET Summit on the theme of “Access to and Inclusion in TVET in Africa Through New ICT-based Solutions”. Held in Nairobi in May 2007, the summit was co-organised by COL and the UNEVOC Centre for TVET.

Ghana hosted a second TVET Africa Summit in Accra in May 2008. It promoted good practice projects in the use of ICTs in TVET across Africa.

Ghana is one of four countries taking the lead on a COL initiative to encourage TVET institutions to develop ODL policy. Participants from Ho Polytechnic, Ghana and two other African Polytechnics attended a COL-CAPA conference entitled, “Promoting Innovation in TVET through Public-Private Partnership” to edit a first draft of the ODL policy in TVET, at Makerere University, Kampala in May 2008.

As part of COL’s initiative for recognition of prior learning (RPL) in TVET, two workshops took place in Mauritius in 2007 and 2008. The second workshop, in June 2008 was attended by two delegates from Ghana, from the Community Health Nurses Training School (CHNTS) and Ghana Education Services. A further workshop in Lusaka in July 2008 was attended by a delegate from Koforidua Polytechnic. Ghana has started work towards the implementation of RPL in TVET.

COL organised a conference on Livelihood Initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa, in Accra in November 2008. Thirty one delegates from Ghana attended from educational institutions and the Community Health Nurses Training School. The theme was “Think Globally; Act Locally”. Participants from Ghana took part in a session on RPL resulting in a strategic plan for 2009-2012. They were also in a working group on ODL course materials development for community health nursing, drawing up a plan of action for 2009-2012 and they contributed to the roundtable session on short and long term training and upgrading of TVET teachers using ODL. The conference participants created the West African TVET (WATVET), a regional TVET association.

COL is training tutors from University of Education, Winneba (UEW) technical institutions, CHNTS and the Police Service in the use of OERs to facilitate conversion of technical and vocational core courses. The first draft of the Semester One course has been completed for editing and formatting on the COL instructional design template.

Rural and peri-urban community development

Winneba Open Digital Village, Ghana, was the recipient of a COL-PROTEIN Award. Winneba Open Digital Village is an all-volunteer NGO that works to increase access to ICTs in under-served communities to address the digital divide and increase economic opportunity. This project focussed on capacity building and community development using ICTs. By providing educational, governmental and health care institutions with increased access to ICTs, this project enhanced education, health care, economic development and livelihoods.

National/international community development

COL-sponsored participants from Ghana attended the 4th Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) General Assembly and African Agricultural Science Week, held at Sandton, Johannesburg, South Africa in June 2007. The main theme of the Assembly was “Innovation to transform agriculture for improved livelihoods and development in Africa”. More than 670 delegates representing stakeholders in agriculture in the public and private sectors and the donor community attended the Assembly, including 30 COL-sponsored participants from eleven Commonwealth countries.

COL and FARA organised side events prior to the General Assembly. One provided an opportunity to promote ODL/ICTs: “Technology-Mediated Open and Distance Education (Tech-MODE) for agriculture education and livelihoods in Africa”. COL facilitated the development of country case studies on Tech-MODE from eight countries including Ghana.

The report, *Technology-Mediated Open and Distance Education (Tech-MODE) for Agricultural Education and Improved Livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa – Synthesis of Eight Country Studies* and the country paper, *Technology-Mediated Open and Distance Education (Tech-MODE) in Agricultural Education and Training for Improved Livelihoods – A Ghana Case Study* were distributed in September 2008.

Transnational programmes

Two staff members from UNHCR were trained in the online Operational Data Management Learning Programme (ODMLP) in 2008 through a tutor-mediated eLearning COL course.

COL is assisting in the design and implementation of teacher training for community and public health nursing by dual-mode delivery. An action plan for implementation has been drawn up by the COL consultant in collaboration with the CHNTS and UEW.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Good governance

COL and the Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec) are working together to develop ODL training materials aimed at promoting good governance and gender equality in the public sector. A two-day meeting was convened in July 2008 to deliberate how best COL and ComSec could develop the appropriate content using ODL tools. The focus for the initiative in the first instance is Africa. One delegate from Ghana, Director, Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs, attended the meeting.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Pan-Commonwealth Forum

COL's Fourth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, held in Ocho Rios, Jamaica from 30 October to 3 November 2006 was attended by eight delegates from Ghana including the COL Focal Point, from PSI-DL, Earthculture and UoG and three others sponsored by COL, from UoG, UEW and CSIR-Crops Research Institute.

The Fifth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, held in London in July 2008, was attended by 15 delegates from Ghana, including the COL Focal Point and four other delegates from KNUST, the Ministry of Education and FARA along with nine COL-sponsored delegates from the World University Service of Canada, PSI-DL, Ghana Education Service, KNUST, Ghana Health Service and UEW. At this Forum, Mrs. Esi Sutherland Addy of UoG was named Honorary Fellow of COL.

Regional Focal Points meeting

The Regional Focal Points meeting for Africa and the Mediterranean, held in Lilongwe, Malawi, in May 2008 was attended by a representative of the COL Focal Point for Ghana.

Appointments

Professor Akilagpa Sawyerr was appointed Regional Representative for Africa on COL's Board of Governors in July 2008.

COL President's visit

On a visit to Ghana in November 2006, the President & CEO gave two public lectures on the role of ODL in Ghana's development. The first lecture was on "The Role of Open and Distance Learning in Breaking Barriers to National Development", by Sir John Daniel with Joshua Mallet. The second lecture was on "Educating Teachers; Advancing Democracy" and was delivered by Sir John when he received the degree of Doctor of Science honoris causa at the UEW.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2009-2012, Ghana's extensive participation in COL activities, with a focus on Education and Learning for Livelihoods initiatives will continue with many activities already underway including progress towards establishing an open school for TVET and a National Open University in Ghana. Ghana's extensive participation in teacher training activities in the last three years will see benefits in the next triennium and Ghana's contribution to the development of OERs will be appreciated by users across the Commonwealth.

COL looks forward to Ghana's continuing prominent role and contribution to COL activities in the region and beyond.