COL in the Commonwealth
2009–2011 Country Reports
FOR: AUSTRALIA

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FOREWORD

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is proud of its strong country focus. While COL strives to achieve synergy in its programme across the whole Commonwealth, it also considers itself accountable for its work in each Member State. COL in the Commonwealth reviews COL’s work over the last two years (2009-2011) country by country.

At the beginning of the 2009-2012 triennium a Country Action Plan was developed to guide COL’s activities in each country and ensure that they were consistent with the national priorities of the government. These reports describe the implementation of these plans. Final versions of these reports will be presented to the 18th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (18CCEM) at the end of the triennium in 2012.

Ministers were enthusiastic about the previous issue of COL in the Commonwealth that was submitted to 17CCEM in Kuala Lumpur in 2009. At the request of Ministers these reports cover all Member States of the Commonwealth, showing not only what COL has done in the developing countries but also how its work relates to the international development priorities of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The reviews are grouped under four regions: Africa (and the Mediterranean), Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The reports for each group of countries begin with a short account of the regional activities which COL has promoted in 2009-2011.

Member States also 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 2009-2011 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 Karen Speirs, 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) operates in all 54 member states, with a particular emphasis on 47 developing countries across Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

COL’s Three-Year Plan was developed after consulting widely in the Commonwealth. It focuses specifically on the expressed needs of Member States and the imperative of progressing the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All, within the context of its own mission and mandate.

COL’s vision of “Access to Learning is the Key to Development” encapsulates both strategy and outcome. For example, COL harnesses the potential of open and distance learning (ODL) to bring lifelong learning for farmers (L3F) in an effort to mitigate the challenge of poverty and food security (MDG 1). As more countries achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE), they seek to provide access to secondary education. Since existing institutions are unable to cater to this massive surge, COL initiated the Open Educational Resources for Open Schools project as a response (MDG 2). COL uses community media to promote mother and child health goals (MDGS 4 and 5) in countries such as India, Kenya and Malawi. COL also focuses on four Education for All goals – access to primary education, gender equality, quality education, and learning and life skills for young people and adults – through teacher training, gender mainstreaing, quality assurance and skills development respectively.

The approach has been to work within the framework of the COL Logic Model 2009-12 but to also be flexible and responsive enough to cater to new and specific needs as they occur.

COL develops Country Action Plans for Member States based on discussions with country Focal Points and partners. These dynamic documents are updated regularly and incorporate requests from countries over the course of the triennium. They will be presented as Country Reports, which document COL’s work in each country, to the Commonwealth Education Ministers, when they meet in Mauritius in 2012.

A number of COL activities span the Commonwealth. This section outlines these pan-Commonwealth initiatives.

EDUCATION

“OER FOR OPEN SCHOOLS”

COL’s “OER for Open Schools” initiative involved working with partners at open schools in six countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Seychelles, Trinidad & Tobago and Zambia) to create open educational resources (OER) for 20 secondary level courses. The OER will be freely available for download, adaptation
and use, resulting in a substantial contribution to open schooling globally. COL provided extensive training to “Master Teachers” in each country, helping them build their skills in developing OER in both print and eLearning versions. “OER for Open Schools” was funded in part by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

COMMONWEALTH OPEN SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

COL supports the expansion of ODL to meet the growing need for primary and secondary education, as well as lifelong learning. As part of COL’s initiative to establish and strengthen open schools, COL assisted in the establishment of the Commonwealth Open School Association (COMOSA), which involves partners from every region of the Commonwealth who have signed the COMOSA constitution.

The COMOSA website was launched at the first Annual General Meeting in Delhi in November 2010, and COMOSA’s activities for the next three years were identified as Research, Gender and Vocational and Technical Education. A COMOSA workshop on “Research in Open Schooling” was held in Delhi, India in November 2010, and a Research Agenda with ten areas was adopted.

OPEN SCHOOLING

Representatives from more than 20 countries took part in a COL workshop on copyright and open educational resources (OER) in Delhi in November 2009.

The Quality Assurance Toolkit for Open Schools was launched during the Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF6) in Kochi, India in November 2010. The Toolkit will be used in all the countries affiliated with COMOSA to develop their institutional Quality Assurance frameworks. Copies of the Toolkits were made available to the delegates at PCF6.

CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

The UNICEF-COL Child-Friendly Schools initiative is mainstreaming “child first” concepts, principles and models into the pre-service and in-service teacher education curricula in eight Commonwealth countries. COL is working with partner teacher training institutions to develop Child-Friendly Schools learning materials and to provide capacity building workshops.

BUILDING CAPACITY IN MULTIGRADE TEACHING

A Consultative Meeting, the first phase of the Capacity Building Programme on Multigrade Teaching for Teachers in Selected Commonwealth Countries (Belize, Maldives, Namibia, Samoa and Solomon Islands), was held in Honiara, Solomon Islands in June 2010. The capacity building initiative aims to strengthen the current work of the Commonwealth Secretariat and COL on multigrade teaching through the design and implementation of a programme to support teachers, using ODL strategies.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

COL provides leadership in quality in ODL. COL’s quality microsite (www.col.org/quality) provides a single convenient online access point to quality assurance resources in ODL. This includes access to COL’s Quality Assurance Toolkits for open schools, higher education and teacher education.

The COL Review and Improvement Model (COL RIM) provides higher education institutions with a “do-it-yourself” approach to institutional quality audits. COL developed COL RIM as a cost-effective approach that focuses on self-assessment and helps institutions improve internal quality assurance, planning and systematic institutional improvement. The COL RIM package, consisting of a conceptual framework and handbook, is freely available from COL.

COL ACTIVITIES 2009-2011
COMMONWEALTH EXECUTIVE MBA/MPA

COL’s Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration and Master of Public Administration programme is designed for part-time study by busy working professionals, in response to the growing demands for post-graduate level education in business and public administration. The CEMBA/MPA programme is offered at partner institutions in Bangladesh, Ghana, Guyana, Jamaica, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka.

LEGISLATIVE DRAFTING PROGRAMME

COL’s Graduate Diploma in Legislative Drafting builds professional skills through ODL. The programme is currently offered by three partner institutions: the National Open University of Nigeria, the University of the South Pacific and Athabasca University in Canada.

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH (VUSSC)

VUSSC is a network of 32 small states of the Commonwealth dedicated to expanding access to tertiary education. VUSSC hosted international training and materials development workshops that develop capacity and initiate the development of new courses that are available as OER. Educators and learners can freely access, adapt and re-use VUSSC learning materials.

Originally led by COL, VUSSC is now governed by a Management Committee with representation from all regions of the Commonwealth.

VUSSC members collaborated to develop the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF), a system of accreditation for VUSSC courses that facilitates the movement of courses and learners among states. Through the TQF, VUSSC aims to ensure all open educational resources (OER) created for VUSSSC can be adapted into recognised courses that students can take for credit through educational institutions in small states. The TQF was formally launched in Namibia in May 2010.

VUSSC’s learning portal, launched in 2011, includes an online Learning Management System for learners and educators to access and contribute to VUSSC courses, as well as free online materials and tips for learning online.

LIVELIHOODS AND HEALTH

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS

COL’s Lifelong Learning for Farmers programme helps rural communities engage in appropriate technology-based open and distance education to improve their livelihoods. While governments face challenges in funding adequate agricultural extension, globalisation is creating increasing competition for poor rural farmers.

Lifelong Learning for Farmers addresses these issues by enabling vulnerable rural women and their families to embrace learning. The programme brings together four key partners: farmers, learning institutions, mobile phone and ICT companies and banks. As farmers gain relevant knowledge from learning institutions via mobile phones and ICT kiosks, banks provide loans to them with greater assurance.

Introduced in southern India in 2004, Lifelong Learning for Farmers has been adapted and introduced in Jamaica, Kenya, Mauritius, Sri Lanka and Uganda.
FLEXIBLE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

COL is helping technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions in Africa expand flexible and blended delivery approaches. By increasing access to quality skills development for young people and adults, COL’s Flexible Skills Development (FSD) programme aims to alleviate poverty. This programme actively targets course development for people working in the informal economy. Through online training, workshops and an online Community Learning Network, COL is helping 11 key TVET institutions in six countries in strengthening capacity to develop new curriculum content to realise the benefits of educational media and technology.

COL is also working with TVET training institutions in the Pacific to develop training courses in basic trades to help meet the skills needs of small island states. COL has worked with partners in the region to develop courses in Small Business, Small Engine Maintenance, Tourism as a Business, Working with Timber and Working with Concrete, as well as Literacy for Basic Trades, which assists students with varying levels of literacy.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

COL’s Healthy Communities initiative brings together groups working at the local level – media, health agencies, NGOs and community groups – to address health and development challenges through participatory learning programmes. While programmes vary according to local needs, COL’s approach remains consistent:

- Bring together local partners: most often community groups identify health information needs, health agencies provide content and community radio stations broadcast the learning programmes.
- Build capacity: this usually involves radio production skills, which expands the pool of community members who are actively engaged in the programme.
- Provide ongoing support: as programmes mature and partners change, COL will help community learning programmes adjust and continue to grow.

Recent initiatives span the Commonwealth, responding to local health needs.

“TAKING OER BEYOND THE OER COMMUNITY”

“Taking OER beyond the OER Community: Policy and Capacity” is a COL/UNESCO joint initiative that promoted the wider use of OER by expanding understanding of OER by educational decision makers and quality assurance experts. The programme involved capacity building workshops in all regions of the Commonwealth, online discussion forums and new OER publications.

COMMONWEALTH COMPUTER NAVIGATORS CERTIFICATE

The Commonwealth Computer Navigators Certificate (CCNC) is an information and communication technology (ICT) literacy course based on the International Computer Driver’s Licence (ICDL) using Open Office on either a Linux or Windows Platform. The high quality training materials are available from COL free of cost.

GENDER

Gender equality is a cross-cutting theme that underpins in all COL’s initiatives. The advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment are central to COL’s agenda of learning for development.
COL looks beyond the arithmetical target of gender parity (equal numbers of males and females in school) to the more challenging goal of gender equality (equality of outcomes). COL’s gender work includes providing gender resources, capacity building in ICT for women and gender research.

E-LEARNING FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

COL customises eLearning solutions to meet the capacity enhancement needs of international organisations around the world. COL develops and delivers effective training solutions in partnership with the UN and other international agencies. This contract work is performed on a fee-for-service basis with full cost recovery. Course subject matter ranges from effective communication and report writing to operational data management and debt management.

PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING

COL’s biennial Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF) is one of the world’s leading conferences on learning and global development. It brings together people representing educational institutions, governments and development agencies to explore issues related to ODL and development. More than 600 delegates from 70 countries attended PCF6 in Kerala, India in 2010. COL’s Excellence in Distance Education Awards, honouring individual and institutions contributions to ODL, are presented at PCF.

PAN-COMMONWEALTH PARTNERSHIPS

COL’s work is supported by networks of advisors across the Commonwealth:

- Focal Points: individuals nominated by the Minister of Education in each country to act as COL’s primary contact.
- Honorary Advisors: eminent ODL professionals from across the Commonwealth are a valuable resource for consultations about COL’s future plans and for Member States seeking advice on ODL.
- UNESCO-COL Chairs: distinguished serving academics who serve in an honorary capacity, complementing the political and administrative role of the Focal Points and Honorary Advisors.

COL KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES

COL’s extensive resources, freely available through its website, include:

- Connections newsletter: providing news, commentary and insight about COL’s work and the broader field of ODL and development (www.col.org/connections)
- Blog: timely news and comment from COL (www.col.org/blog)
- Publications: research, books, toolkits and other publications commissioned by COL (www.col.org/publications)
- Knowledge Finder: an index of documents about ODL and international development from quality-assessed external sources (www.col.org/kf)
- Country information: This online database provides access to information related to ODL from all Commonwealth countries (www.col.org/CountryInfo)
- Videos: reports from events and insight into COL’s work (www.col.org/videos)
- Course materials, gender microsite, quality assurance microsite, speeches and other resources (www.col.org/resources)

- Governance and financial information: including Board minutes, financial statements and the President’s quarterly reports to the Board (www.col.org/GovInfo)
Kiribati | Nauru | Papua New Guinea | Samoa | Solomon Islands | Tonga | Tuvalu | Vanuatu
REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

BACKGROUND

As a region comprised largely of small island states, the Commonwealth Pacific faces distinct challenges. Most countries have limited resources to support a large education and training infrastructure. The University of the South Pacific (USP) reaches a wide range of learners through open and distance learning (ODL), but there remains a pressing need to increase economic productivity and literacy levels throughout the Pacific region. COL is working with partners in the region to apply its expertise in ODL and information and communication technology (ICT) to help address education and development needs in the Pacific.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Eight Commonwealth Pacific nations are members of VUSSC, a collaborative network of 32 small states committed to the development of free content resources for use in an educational context. Samoa has hosted two VUSSC international training and materials development workshops in 2007 and 2009. The 2009 workshop on Transport and Logistics focusing on Stevedoring was held in Apia, Samoa from 23 November-11 December 2009. The workshop helped to build the capacity of workshop participants in ICT and content development using ODL as well as developing content for the transport and logistics-stevedoring course. Numerous educators from the Pacific have attended VUSSC training workshops.

Open Schooling

COL commissioned a desk report on Open Schooling as a Strategy for Second-chance Education in the Pacific. The desk study report, “Open Schooling as a Strategy for Second-Chance Education in the Pacific”, explores the nature and scale of school dropouts and out-of-school youth and adults in Pacific Island countries. It provides 11 individual country reports along with a combined overview of education issues and patterns. The desk report was submitted to the National Departments, Ministries of Education and Education Committees of the participating countries. This is a three-phase regional Pacific project (2010-2013) on the current reality of education in the Pacific.

Teacher Education

A Consultative Meeting, the first phase of the Capacity Building Programme on Multigrade Teaching for Teachers in Selected Commonwealth Countries (Belize, Maldives, Namibia, Samoa and Solomon Islands), was held in Solomon Islands from 28-30 June 2010. The capacity building initiative aims to strengthen the current work of the Commonwealth Secretariat and COL on multigrade teaching through the design and implementation of a programme to support teachers, using ODL strategies.
Higher Education

USP, Vanuatu has signed a licence agreement with COL to offer the post graduate programme in Legislative Drafting to students in the Pacific Islands of the Commonwealth. COL has granted USP an extension of the licence agreement for the use of the materials until February 2013. In 2009, COL supported the programme by providing 12 scholarships.

Skills Development

COL facilitated the establishment of the Pacific Association for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (PATVET) and the creation of Basic Skills courses that are being shared throughout the Pacific islands.

COL held a material development workshop for vocational literacy in Samoa in June-July 2010. The participants were trained in writing for ODL and contributed to the development of a Student Workbook and Tutor Guide to be used in conjunction with the Basic Trades for Small Island Nations courses in Working with Concrete and Working with Timber.

COL facilitated a course planning workshop to assist countries in planning the pilot delivery of the vocational literacy materials in Port Vila, Vanuatu from 3-5 October 2010. The workshop was hosted by Vanuatu National Training Council.

Following the implementation of the pilot in four countries, COL organised the Pacific Regional Vocational Literacy and Numeracy Course Evaluation Workshop in Wellington, New Zealand from 13-17 June. The participants evaluated pilot delivery of the Literacy and Numeracy for Basic Trades course, collaborated to review and revise the literacy and numeracy modules, and considered next steps and action plans.

Healthy Communities

COL and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) conducted a workshop for community radio and education and development organisations on the sidelines of the AMARC Asia-Pacific Conference in February 2010 in Bangalore, India. Participants shared, discussed and applied innovative approaches to developing educational content and programmes. They also learned new awareness of community radio in Asia-Pacific and its potential contributions to local development, education, governance, knowledge and skills in using community media as part of disaster management, climate change mitigation, food security and advocacy for gender equity.

The Bangalore Declaration was created at the conference and passed by the AMARC Asia-Pacific general assembly. It is a collective statement of participants’ beliefs and commitments, including the use of community radio as a tool for non-formal education and food security.

REGIONAL PRESENCE

COL maintains strong relationships with many stakeholders in the Pacific, including member governments, partner institutions, donors and individuals. COL’s Honorary Advisors, a network of eminent ODL professionals, includes four representatives from the Pacific. The region is also represented by a network of individuals, selected by member Governments, who liaise directly with COL as Focal Points. COL creates specific country action plans and country reports to ensure the region’s needs are addressed.
REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS MEETING

The COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Pacific) will be held from 1-3 November in Auckland, New Zealand. The meeting is held once every three years. Focal Points share information about the status of ODL in their countries, receive the mid-term report of what COL has done in each country, and identify education and training priorities that COL can support in the next Three-Year Plan, 2012-2015.

REGIONAL BROCHURES

COL has regional brochures that 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.
KIRIBATI

COL Focal Point:  Ms. Karabi Bate, Ministry of Education (Current)
Mrs. Maria Teretia Kaiboia (2008-2010)
Mr. Tebania Tebakabo (2007-2008)

BACKGROUND

Kiribati is a small state of the Commonwealth with a population of about 100,000 spread over an island and atolls covering an immense expansion of ocean. Kiribati is a contributor to COL’s budget.

SUMMARY

COL’s work with Kiribati is primarily through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Kiribati was represented at COL’s Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF6) in Kochi, India in November 2010.

EDUCATION

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

The main objectives of VUSSC are to:
- develop a collaborative network of Commonwealth small states,
- develop capacity in the use of information and communication technology (ICT),
- create and share learning materials at the post-secondary level, and
- establish a transnational qualifications framework that would enable the transfer of credits and qualifications.

Kiribati is one of 32 small states of the Commonwealth who are actively participating in the VUSSC initiative.

VUSSC has launched its own website (www.vussc.org), which includes online courses in subjects such as disaster management, entrepreneurship, life skills and tourism. Developed by educators from small states of the Commonwealth, the courses are freely available to anyone for adaptation and use.

Open Schooling

COL commissioned a desk report on Open Schooling as a Strategy for Second-chance Education in the Pacific. This is a three-phase regional Pacific project (2010-2013) on the current reality of education in the
Pacific. Tereeao Teingin, of the University of the South Pacific (USP) Campus Kiribati conducted desk review and prepared a country report on “Second Chance Education in Kiribati”.

The desk report was submitted to the National Departments, Ministries of Education and Education Committees of the participating countries, including Kiribati.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Sixth Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF6), jointly organised by IGNOU, India and the Commonwealth of Learning, was held in Kochi, India from 24-28 November 2010. The theme of the Forum was “Access and Success in Learning: Global Development Perspectives” with four sub-themes, namely: Social Justice, Community Development, Skills Development and Formal Education. COL organised 18 pre-conference meetings and workshops prior to the Forum.

Over 600 delegates from more than 50 countries attended PCF6. COL sponsored over 250 delegates to the Forum including Karabi Bate of the Ministry of Education and Interim COL Focal Point.

The COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Pacific) will be held in Auckland, New Zealand from 1-3 November 2011. The meeting is held once every three years and provides an opportunity for the Focal Points to share information about the status of open and distance learning (ODL) in their countries, receive the mid-term report of what COL has done in each country and identify education and training priorities that COL can support in the next Three-Year Plan, 2012-2015. Karabi Bate, Kiribati’s Focal Point for COL, has been invited to the Meeting.

LOOKING FORWARD

Kiribati will continue to benefit from COL’s activities in the Pacific region in 2012-2015. Kiribati’s involvement in VUSSC could contribute to human resource development in the country.
NAURU

COL Focal Point: Dr. Maria Gaiyabu, Ministry of Education (Current)
Mr. Michael J. Longhurst (2006-2010)

BACKGROUND

Nauru is a small state of the Commonwealth and the world’s smallest independent republic with a population of 9,300 and covering just 21 sq. km. Literacy rates are high, and the University of the South Pacific (USP) has a campus on the island. Nauru has contributed to COL’s budget since 2008/2009.

SUMMARY

Nauru is benefiting from COL’s work in the region, providing materials and capacity building support for assuring quality in education and teacher education programmes. COL is contributing to vocational literacy in Nauru.

EDUCATION

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The main objectives of VUSSC are to:
- develop a collaborative network of Commonwealth small states,
- develop capacity in the use of information and communication technology (ICT),
- create and share learning materials at the post-secondary level, and
- establish a transnational qualifications framework that would enable the transfer of credits and qualifications.

Nauru has just joined the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), which would increase access to tertiary education while building capacity among educators.

Open Schooling

COL commissioned a report on “Open Schooling as a Strategy for Second-chance Education in the Pacific”. This is a three-phase regional Pacific project (2010-2013) on the current reality of education in the Pacific. Professor Salanieta Bakalevu of School of Education, USP, Nauru was the project coordinator.

The desk report was submitted to the National Departments, Ministries of Education and Education Committees of the participating countries, including Nauru.
LIVELIHOODS & HEALTH

Skills Development

COL held a material development workshop for vocational literacy in Samoa in June 2010. Participants were trained in writing for ODL and contributed to the development of a Student Workbook and Tutor Guide to be used in conjunction with the Basic Trades for Small Island Nations courses in “Working with Concrete” and “Working with Timber”.

Cecilia Giouba of Nauru Secondary School and Maria Weibeya of the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Nauru attended the workshop.

Nauru submitted a proposal for the delivery of an ODL course in vocational literacy and trade training. COL supported the Department of Education to deliver the Vocational Literacy and Working with Concrete Basic Trade Training in 14 districts. Of 218 learners ages 16-35 who started on the programme, 171 students (78%) completed the Literacy course and 167 students (77%) completed the Concrete course.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Pacific) is being held in Auckland, New Zealand from 1-3 November 2011. Held every three years, this meeting provides an opportunity for the Focal Points to share information about the status of ODL in their countries, receive the mid-term report of what COL has done in each country, and identify education and training priorities that COL can support in the next Three-Year Plan, 2012-2015.

Dr. Maria Gaiyabu, Nauru’s Focal Point for COL, is attending the meeting.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2012-2015, Nauru will continue to benefit from COL’s activities in the region in both Education and Livelihoods & Health.
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

COL Focal Point: Mr. Ouka Lavaki, Ministry of Education (Current)
Dr. Willy Ako (2010-2011 [deceased])

Hon. COL Advisor: Professor Dr. Abdul Mannan, University of Papua New Guinea

BACKGROUND

The largest of the Pacific Island countries, Papua New Guinea has a population of about 6.7 million but is still considered a small state of the Commonwealth. Papua New Guinea faces numerous development challenges, many of them related to health. COL’s work in Papua New Guinea is the most extensive in the Pacific region; the country participates fully in regional and pan-Commonwealth initiatives. Papua New Guinea has contributed to COL’s budget.

The Honourable Dame Dr. Carol Kidu of Papua New Guinea is the Regional Representative for the Pacific on COL’s Board of Governors.

SUMMARY

Professor Dr. Abdul Mannan of the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) is an Honorary COL Advisor.

Papua New Guinea is active in several key COL programmes, including the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), the Commonwealth Open School Association (COMOSA), Lifelong Learning for Farmers, healthy communities and skills development focusing on vocational literacy.

EDUCATION

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

The main objectives of VUSSC are to:

- develop a collaborative network of Commonwealth small states,
- develop capacity in the use of information and communication technology (ICT),
- create and share learning materials at the post-secondary level, and
- establish a transnational qualifications framework that would enable the transfer of credits and qualifications.
Papua New Guinea is one of 32 small states of the Commonwealth who are actively participating in the VUSSC initiative.

(VUSSC has launched its own website (www.vussc.org), which includes online courses in subjects such as disaster management, entrepreneurship, life skills and tourism. Developed by educators from small states of the Commonwealth, the courses are freely available to anyone for adaptation and use.

COL and the Open University Malaysia sponsored the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) Management Committee Meeting and TQF General Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in July 2010. Dr. Pongie Kichawen of UNPG attended the meeting.

The VUSSC Interlocutors Meeting was held in November 2010 in Kochi, India. The participants presented their respective countries’ progress to-date, challenges and next steps. A Monitoring and Evaluation training was conducted during the two-day meeting. Dr. Kichawen attended the meeting.

Open Schooling

As part of COL’s initiative to establish and strengthen open schools, COL assisted in the establishment of the Commonwealth Open School Association (COMOSA). The inaugural meeting of COMOSA was held in Delhi in November 2009. Dr. Abdul Mannan of UPNG Open College was one of 22 partners who signed the COMOSA Constitution.

The Quality Assurance Toolkit for Open Schools was launched during the Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF6) in Kochi, India in November 2010. The Toolkit will be used in all the countries with COMOSA to develop their institutional Quality Assurance frameworks.

The UPNG Open College is participating in the Gender Audit on Open Schooling.

The COL workshop on Copyright and open educational resources (OER) was held in Delhi in November 2009. Dr. Mannan of the UPNG Open College and open and distance learning (ODL) practitioners from more than 20 countries attended the workshop.

Teacher Education

A Curriculum Development Workshop was held in Papua New Guinea in July 2009. Representatives from the Office of Higher Education, the University of Goroka, the PNG Education Institute, the Devine Word University, the University of Technology and UPNG attended the workshop.

Higher Education

The University of the South Pacific (USP), Vanuatu has signed a licence agreement with COL to offer the post-graduate programme in Legislative Drafting. COL has granted USP an extension of the licence agreement for the use of the materials until February 2013. Ephereddie Ephraim Jubille, Marleen Toliman Akop and Simon Alberic of Papua New Guinea have successfully completed the legislative programme.

UNPG has signed a licence agreement with COL to use the Commonwealth Executive MBA/MBA materials in its Master programme.

The Academic Board (AB) and the Executive Governing Board (EGB) both met in August 2010 in Penang, Malaysia. Professor Albert Mellam and Professor Ross A. Hynes of UPNG attended the AB and EGB meetings respectively; both will continue in these roles for 2010-2012.
LIVELHOODS & HEALTH

Skills Development

COL held a material development workshop for vocational literacy in Samoa from 21 June - 2 July 2010. The participants were trained in writing for ODL and contributed to the development of a Student Workbook and Tutor Guide to be used in conjunction with the Basic Trades for Small Island Nations courses in Working with Concrete and Working with Timber.

Dr. Willy Ako and Stephanie Ehari of the PNG Office of Higher Education attended the workshop.

COL facilitated a course planning workshop to assist countries in planning the pilot delivery of the vocational literacy materials. This was held in Port Vila, Vanuatu in October 2010 and was hosted by Vanuatu National Training Council. Dr. Willy Ako and Jay Banda attended the workshop, and the Department of Technical Education in the Ministry of Higher Education piloted the course. Mr. Banda has requested support for the development of Flexible ODL policy in TVET.

Following the implementation of the pilot in four countries, COL organised the Pacific Regional Vocational Literacy and Numeracy Course Evaluation Workshop in Wellington, New Zealand in June 2011. The participants evaluated the pilot delivery of the Literacy and Numeracy for Basic Trades course, collaborated to review and revise the literacy and numeracy modules and considered next steps and action plans. Mr. Banda of the Department of Education, PNG, attended the workshop.

Learning for Farming

Through a series of workshops and meetings, COL brought together a group of institutions for strengthening the Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) initiative. The Ministry of Community Development, PNG Microfinance Ltd, PNG Women in Agriculture, NARI and Fresh Produce Development Association have agreed to participate in the programme.

PNG Microfinance has started working with the women groups and farmers. A team from PNG visited India. Based on their experiences, they are working on the roadmap for L3F in PNG. Meetings between COL and AUSAID were held, and AUSAID has shown interest in the L3F initiative.

A framework for L3F was developed and discussed among various partners. COL has facilitated the National Agricultural Research Institute to initiate L3F among PNG Women in Agriculture (PNGWiA) and farmers of Central Province.

Healthy Communities

COL and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) conducted a workshop for community radio and education and development organisations on the sidelines of the AMARC Asia-Pacific Conference in February 2010 in Bangalore, India. Participants shared, discussed and applied innovative approaches to developing educational content and programmes. They also learned new awareness of community radio in Asia-Pacific and its potential contributions to local development, education, governance, knowledge and skills in using community media as part of disaster management, climate change mitigation, food security and advocacy for gender equity.

The Bangalore Declaration was passed by the AMARC Asia-Pacific general assembly. It is a collective statement of participants’ beliefs and commitments, including the use of community radio as a tool for non-formal education and food security. COL sponsored Aloysius Laukai of New Dawn FM, PNG to the workshop and conference.
COL has supported the development of a community learning programme in Bougainville concerning women’s health and development. Working with the Regional Media Centre of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, COL conducted a programme design workshop with 20 representatives of media, health, development and education groups from the public, private and civil society sectors, including the Ministry of Community Affairs and Women, the Bougainville Interchurch Council, the Buka Hospital, Buka Municipality and New Dawn FM. The workshop resulted in the design of *Bugenvil Mere Tede*, a community learning programme that combines educational media content and face-to-face interactions. *Bugenvil Mere Tede* has been broadcast weekly since October 2010, with face-to-face learner support and mobilisation provided by the women’s network of the Bougainville Interchurch Council. A five-day follow-up mentoring visit was conducted by the Regional Media Centre in April 2011.

In support of the work done by New Dawn FM and partners in the *Bugenvil Mere Tede* programme, COL supported a workshop on Integrating Mobile Telephones into Community Learning Programmes. Thirteen representatives of health, development, policy and media groups participated in the three-day training, which covered mobile telephones as a distinct form of communication, examples of how mobiles are being used to support learning and development, a review of ICT applications that use mobiles and brainstorming about ways that mobiles can be used. Following the workshop, New Dawn FM launched a mobile news service, with an initial focus on local elections. Over 800 SMS requests for information were received on the first night.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES**

COL President Sir John Daniel made a video presentation on “Celebrating Open Schooling” and Sir John and COL Vice President Professor Asha Kanwar made a video presentation on “Open Education Resources: Next Steps” for the PNGADE Conference held at the Divine World University in Madang, PNG in June 2011.

The Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF6), jointly organised by IGNOU, India and the Commonwealth of Learning, was held in Kochi, India from 24-28 November 2010. The theme of the Forum was “Access and Success in Learning: Global Development Perspectives” with four sub-themes, namely: Social Justice, Community Development, Skills Development and Formal Education. COL organised 18 pre-conference meetings and workshops.

Over 600 delegates from more than 50 countries attended PCF6. COL sponsored over 250 delegates to the Forum including Kipli Joan Minol of UPNG and Dr. Pongie Kichawen of UPNG.

The COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Pacific) will be held in Auckland, New Zealand from 1-3 November 2011. The meeting is held once every three years and provides an opportunity for the Focal Points to share information about the status of ODL in their countries, receive the mid-term report of what COL has done in each country and identify education and training priorities that COL can support in the next Three-Year Plan, 2012-2015. Ouka Lavaki, PNG’s Focal Point for COL, has been invited to the meeting.

**eLearning for International Organisations**

COL customises eLearning solutions to meet the capacity enhancement needs of international organisations around the world.

- One learner from the World Bank signed up for the August-December 2009 course on Report Writing.
- Two learners from PNG signed up for the March-May 2010 pilot eLearning course on Commonwealth Secretariat-Debt Record Management System (CSDRMS).
Gibson Gotacha from the Ministry of Finance is engaged as a COL e-tutor providing one-on-one tutoring via Moodle for CSDRMS eLearning.

LOOKING FORWARD

Papua New Guinea has identified key priority areas that COL can support in its next Three-Year Plan, 2012-2015:

- Develop institutional capacity through training and start an attachment/study visit.
- Develop a policy framework for teacher training through ODL.
- Develop in-country capacity for ICT-enhanced learning.
- Promote the OER movement and in-country collaboration for content development.
- Support the establishment of the PNG Open University.
SAMOA

COL Focal Point:  Mrs. G.T.T. Afamasaga, National University of Samoa (Current)
Hon. COL Advisor  Ms. Ruby Vaa, University of the South Pacific

BACKGROUND

A small state of the Commonwealth with a population of about 180,000, Samoa benefits from COL’s activities in the region including the Pacific Association of Technical and Vocational Education (PATVET).

SUMMARY

Ruby Vaa of the University of the South Pacific (USP), Alafua Campus is a Honorary COL Advisor. COL works with partners in Samoa on several key initiatives; in particular, the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), teacher education and skills development.

EDUCATION

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

The main objectives of VUSSC are to:
- develop a collaborative network of Commonwealth small states,
- develop capacity in the use of information and communication technology (ICT),
- create and share learning materials at the post-secondary level, and
- establish a transnational qualifications framework that would enable the transfer of credits and qualifications.

Samoa is one of 32 small states of the Commonwealth who are actively participating in the VUSSC initiative.

The team leaders meeting, in preparation for the Apia workshop, was held in Vancouver, Canada in October 2009. Five team leaders attended the meeting. In planning for the workshop the team leaders drafted and agreed on a framework for the workshop. They included Leulua’itumua Fatu Tiperio Lafoa’i of Samoa.

The 7th VUSSC training and materials development workshop on Transport and Logistics focusing on Stevedoring was held in Apia, Samoa from 23 November-11 December 2009. The workshop helped to build the capacity of workshop participants in ICT and content development using open and distance
learning (ODL) as well as developing content for the transport and logistics-stevedoring course. Leulua’itumua Fatu Lafoa’i (Team Leader nomination), Sonny Brown, Tauvaga Vaai, David Asi, Sakaria Leatuaoa, Siaosi Wongkee and Samuel Phineas of the School of Maritime Training, Institute of Technology National University of Samoa attended the workshop.

The VUSSC Team Leaders Meeting in preparation for the Male workshop was held in Singapore in collaboration with the National Institute of Education at the Nanyang University of Singapore. The team leaders included Lineta Tamikaiyaroi of Samoa.

The 8th VUSSC training and materials development workshop was held in Male, Maldives in March 2010, hosted by the Centre for Open Learning, Maldives. The participants attended the workshop to develop a diploma programme on Sustainable Agriculture for Small States for learners who want to start their own business and those who want to pursue a career in agriculture extension services. Lineta Tamikaiyaroi of University of Samoa attended the workshop.

The 9th VUSSC International Training in Materials Development Workshop for the development of a Bachelor Degree in Business Entrepreneurship was held in Lesotho in March 2011. Sui Tinai and Sasaes Walter of the National University of Samoa attended the workshop.

Ms. Tinai also attended the 9th VUSSC Team Leaders Meeting in Singapore in February 2011, to prepare and train the team leaders for the workshop in Lesotho.

Dr. Emma Kruse-Vaai of the University of Samoa has enrolled in the VUSSC Managing and Facilitating online training course. Jacob Phillips and Kapeni Matatia Jr. of the National University of Samoa have signed up for the VUSSC LINUX Course.

VUSSC has launched its own website (www.vussc.org), which includes online courses in subjects such as disaster management, entrepreneurship, life skills and tourism. Developed by educators from small states of the Commonwealth, the courses are freely available to anyone for adaptation and use.

A Management Committee is now directing VUSSC’s activities, supported by COL’s Education Specialist for VUSSC, John Lesperance. The committee includes representatives from small states in all regions of the Commonwealth. Dr. Emma Kruse-Vaai of Samoa is the Chairperson of the Management Committee.

COL and the Open University Malaysia sponsored the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) Management Committee Meeting and TQF General Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in July 2010. Sinapi Moli of the Samoa Qualifications Authority and Dr. Emma Kruse-Vaai of the National University of Samoa attended the meeting.

The 2nd VUSSC Management Committee Meeting and the VUSSC Interlocutors Meeting were held in November 2010 in Kochi, India. The participants presented their respective countries’ progress to-date, challenges and next steps. A Monitoring and Evaluation training was conducted during the two-day meeting. Dr. Kruse-Vaai attended both meetings.

Open Schooling

COL commissioned a desk report on Open Schooling as a Strategy for Second-chance Education in the Pacific. This is a three-phase regional Pacific project (2010-2013) on the current reality of education in the Pacific. Ruby Vaa, USP Campus Samoa conducted a desk review and prepared a country report on Second Chance Education in Samoa.

The desk report was submitted to the National Departments, Ministries of Education and Education Committees of the participating countries, including Samoa.
Teacher Education

A Curriculum Development workshop was held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea in July 2009. Hobert Sasa, Lina Visinia and Iosefa Leiataua of the National University of Samoa attended the workshop.

A Consultative Meeting, the first phase of the Capacity Building Programme on Multigrade Teaching for Teachers in Selected Commonwealth Countries (Belize, Maldives, Namibia, Samoa and Solomon Islands), was held in the Solomon Islands in June 2010. The capacity building initiative aims to strengthen the current work of the Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth of Learning on multigrade teaching through the design and implementation of a programme to support teachers, using ODL strategies.

Tuvaetasi Epenesa Esera, National University of Samoa, Faamau Finauga, Primary Curriculum Officer and Taaloga Faasalaina, Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture attended the meeting.

Higher Education

USP, Vanuatu has signed a licence agreement with COL to offer the post graduate programme in Legislative Drafting to students in the Pacific Islands of the Commonwealth. COL has granted USP an extension of the licence agreement for the use of the materials until February 2013.

In 2009, COL supported the programme by providing 12 scholarships. Four Samoan scholars sponsored by COL have successfully completed the programme.

LIVELIHOODS & HEALTH

Skills Development

COL held a materials development workshop for vocational literacy in Samoa from 21 June - 2 July, 2010. The participants were trained in writing for ODL and contributed to the development of a Student Workbook and Tutor Guide to be used in conjunction with the Basic Trades for Small Island Nations courses in Working with Concrete and Working with Timber. Four participants from the Institute of Technology, National University of Samoa (NUS) and one from Oloamanu Centre, NUS attended the workshop.

COL facilitated a course planning workshop to assist countries in planning the pilot delivery of the vocational literacy materials. This was held in Port Vila, Vanuatu in October 2010 and was hosted by Vanuatu National Training Council. G.T.T. Afamasaga attended the workshop. The National University of Samoa piloted the course.

Following the implementation of the pilot in four countries, COL organised the Pacific Regional Vocational Literacy and Numeracy Course Evaluation Workshop in Wellington, New Zealand in June 2011. The participants evaluated the pilot delivery of the Literacy and Numeracy for Basic Trades course, collaborated to review and revise the literacy and numeracy modules, and considered next steps and action plans. G.T.T. Afamasaga attended the workshop.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF6), jointly organised by IGNOU, India and the Commonwealth of Learning, was held in Kochi, India from 24-28 November 2010. The theme of the Forum was “Access and Success in Learning: Global Development Perspectives” with four sub-themes, namely: Social Justice, Community Development, Skills Development and Formal Education. COL organised 18 pre-conference meetings and workshops.
Over 600 delegates from more than 50 countries attended PCF6. COL sponsored over 250 delegates to the Forum including Dr. Emma Kruse-Vaai of the National University of Samoa.

The COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Pacific) will be held in Auckland, New Zealand from 1-3 November 2011. The meeting is held once every three years and provides an opportunity for the Focal Points to share information about the status of ODL in their countries, receive the mid-term report of what COL has done in each country and identify education and training priorities that COL can support in the next Three-Year Plan, 2012-2015. G.T.T. Afamasage, Samoa’s Focal Point for COL, is attending the meeting.

eLearning for International Organisations

COL customises eLearning solutions to meet the capacity enhancement needs of international organisations around the world.

- One learner from Samoa signed up for the March-May 2010 eLearning pilot course on the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Reporting Management System (CSDRMS)
- Two learners from the Central Bank/Ministry of Finance signed up for the July-September 2011 eLearning course on CSDRMS.

LOOKING FORWARD

Samoa has identified key priority areas that COL can support in its next Three-Year Plan, 2012-2015:

- Develop a policy for distance and flexible learning for Samoa.
- Continue to support infrastructure such as School Net for all schools.
- Develop core modules and training for developing the capacity and skills of National University of Samoa staff and teachers to develop learning materials for students in blended modalities for distance and flexible learning.
- Train teachers at various levels to use and develop supportive online materials.
- Create a support unit within the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture – Curriculum, Materials Assessment Division – that can provide pedagogical and technical support to teachers using ICT in the delivery of curriculum.
SOLOMON ISLANDS

COL Focal Point: Mr. Bernard Rapasia, Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development (Current)

BACKGROUND

Solomon Islands is a small state of the Commonwealth consisting of nearly 1,000 islands with a population of about half a million people. It faces significant development and educational challenges and is a major focus of NZ Aid Programme support. The University of the South Pacific (USP) has a campus on the Solomon Islands. Solomon Islands has contributed to COL’s budget.

SUMMARY

Solomon Islands participates in the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) and hosted a VUSSC workshop in 2010. Solomon Islands also participates in COL initiatives in teacher education, open schooling, higher education and skills development. One of COL’s leading community learning programmes is based in Isabel Province, Solomon Islands.

EDUCATION

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

The main objectives of VUSSC are to:

- develop a collaborative network of Commonwealth small states,
- develop capacity in the use of information and communication technology (ICT),
- create and share learning materials at the post-secondary level, and
- establish a transnational qualifications framework that would enable the transfer of credits and qualifications.

Solomon Islands is one of 32 small states of the Commonwealth who are actively participating in the VUSSC initiative.

The 8th VUSSC training and materials development workshop was held in Male, Maldives in March 2010, hosted by the Centre for Open Learning, Maldives. The participants attended the workshop to develop a diploma programme on Sustainable Agriculture for Small States for learners who want to start their own business and those who want to pursue a career in agriculture extension services. May Tana Pitakere of the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education, School of Natural Resources attended the workshop.
Christina Bakolo of UNESCO National Commission at the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development signed up for the VUSSC Managing and Facilitating online training course.

VUSSC has launched its own website (www.vussc.org), which includes online courses in subjects such as disaster management, entrepreneurship, life skills and tourism. Developed by educators from small states of the Commonwealth, the courses are freely available to anyone for adaptation and use.

The VUSSC Interlocutors Meeting was held in November 2010 in Kochi, India. The participants presented their respective countries’ progress to-date, challenges and next steps. A Monitoring and Evaluation training was conducted during the two-day meeting. Christina Bakolo attended the meeting.

**Open Schooling**

COL commissioned a desk report on Open Schooling as a Strategy for Second-chance Education in the Pacific. This is a three-phase regional pacific project (2010-2013) on the current reality of education in the Pacific. Stanley Houma conducted desk review and prepared a country report on “Second Chance Education in Solomon Islands”.

The desk report was submitted to the National Departments, Ministries of Education and Education Committees of the participating countries, including Solomon Islands.

**Teacher Education**

A Curriculum Development Meeting was held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea in July 2009. Timothy Omani and James Porakari of the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education attended the workshop.

A Consultative Meeting, the first phase of the Capacity Building Programme on Multigrade Teaching for Teachers in Selected Commonwealth Countries (Belize, Maldives, Namibia, Samoa and Solomon Islands), was held in Honiara, Solomon Islands in June 2010. The capacity building initiative aims to strengthen the current work of the Commonwealth Secretariat and COL on multigrade teaching through the design and implementation of a programme to support teachers, using ODL strategies.

Mark Tehe of the Teacher Training Division, Mylyn Kuve of the Ministry of Education, Janine Simi of HOE/SICHE, Hilma Mollomb of SICHE and Elvis Kekegolo of the Teacher Education Office attended the meeting.

**Higher Education**

USP, Vanuatu has signed a licence agreement with COL to offer the post-graduate programme in Legislative Drafting. COL has granted USP an extension of the licence agreement for the use of the materials until February 2013.

In 2009, COL supported the programme by providing 12 scholarships. Six scholars from Solomon Islands sponsored by COL completed the programme.

**LIVELIHOODS & HEALTH**

**Skills Development**

COL has been sub-contracted by Linpico Sarl of France to do a Distance Learning Policy Study in the Solomon Islands. Linpico has a service contract with the European Commission, which is supporting the Education Sector in the Solomon Islands.
The consultancy was held from 15 November-5 December 2009. COL and the consultant, Greville Rumble, drafted a national Distance and Flexible Learning (DFL) policy and strategic framework for the Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development to support their intention to introduce DFL throughout the education and training system.

Healthy Communities

David Leeming of People First Network, Solomon Islands attended the International training-of-trainers workshop in Vancouver, Canada in September-October 2009. Key national and regional partners from different Commonwealth regions advanced the three-year plan for COL’s Healthy Communities initiative (also linking it to UNESCO’s work in this area in the upcoming programme biennium (2010-2011). Partners’ knowledge and skills in developing non-formal ODL programming were increased through a trainees train themselves approach. Various approaches were reviewed and analysed, e.g. participatory content creation (India), use of drama (Jamaica, Malawi) and community ODL programmes (Jamaica, Tanzania). Strategies and tools were reviewed and plans made concerning the International Peer Group, Community Media Space on wikieducator, PCF6.

COL and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) conducted a workshop for community radio and education and development organisations on the sidelines of the AMARC Asia-Pacific Conference in February 2010 in Bangalore, India. Participants shared, discussed and applied innovative approaches to developing educational content and programmes. They also learned new awareness of community radio in Asia Pacific and its potential contributions to local development, education, governance, knowledge and skills in using community media as part of disaster management, climate change mitigation, food security and advocacy for gender equity.

The Bangalore Declaration was created at the conference and passed by the AMARC Asia Pacific general assembly. It is a collective statement of participants’ beliefs and commitments, including the use of community radio as a tool for non-formal education and food security. COL sponsored Anthony Matelaomao of People First Network to the workshop and conference.

Eight representatives of the health promotion department of the Isabel Provincial Government, Isabel Province Health Services, Solomon Islands Health Promotion Department, Susubona FM Radio Committee and Tataba FM radio station participated in a three-day workshop in developing community learning programmes, organised by COL and the Regional Media Centre of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community held in Honiara in August 2010. The workshop resulted in an outline plan for a second round of health education programmes to be carried out in Isabel in 2011-12.

COL provided support to the Isabel Provincial Government (IPG) in March 2011 to strengthen provincial community media groups and the Isabel Learning Network through a series of activities. In May 2011, 24 individuals participated in a three-day forum. Representatives of media, health and community groups from eight communities in Isabel worked with representatives of IPG to develop a memorandum of understanding between the media groups and IPG, a sustainability plan for the network, as well as individual action plans for each of the media groups. Building on the outline developed in 2010, the forum resulted in a detailed plan for a new round of health learning programmes to be executed in 2011-12. IPG conducted follow up consultation and capacity building visits to each of the eight communities involved in the network.

A programme development process was run in Isabel between September 2009 and June 2010. Local assessment for the development of community learning programmes was carried in Isabel Province in September 2009. A programme design workshop was held in October in Buala in which 20 representatives of local community media groups, the provincial government and health services, SICHE and also the Health Promotion Division participated in the workshop where they shared reports and programme designs. Four new health related learning programmes were designed by groups combining local health, media and education representatives. Three community learning programmes were delivered in Buala, Tataba and Susubona communities in Isabel Province on environmental health, youth reproductive health and diabetes.
respectively. Follow-up workshops were carried out in four communities (Buala, Kia, Tataba, and Susubona) between May 2009 and November 2010. An interactive website was established to further content and information sharing and exchange; the website builds on the success of a group email list – Isabel Learning Network – established in 2009, which has some 85 members from Isabel, other provinces in the Solomon Islands, regionally and internationally.

A one-day policy feedback meeting was held in Honiara in August 2010, organised by the Solomon Islands Development Trust in which the experiences of the Isabel Learning Network were presented and discussed. Policymakers from the ministries of health, education and rural development were engaged in discussions about moving community media and educational programming forward in Isabel and more widely in the Solomon Islands.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF6), jointly organised by IGNOU, India and the Commonwealth of Learning, was held in Kochi, India from 24-28 November 2010. The theme of the Forum was “Access and Success in Learning: Global Development Perspectives” with four sub-themes, namely: Social Justice, Community Development, Skills Development and Formal Education. COL organised 18 pre-conference meetings and workshops.

Over 600 delegates from more than 50 countries attended PCF6. COL sponsored over 250 delegates to the Forum including Christina Bakolo of the National Commission for UNESCO, Ministry of Education and HR Development and Elvis Zhivago Kekegolo of the Ministry of Education and HR Development.

The COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Pacific) will be held in Auckland, New Zealand from 1-3 November 2011. The meeting is held once every three years and provides an opportunity for the Focal Points to share information about the status of ODL in their countries, receive the mid-term report of what COL has done in each country and identify education and training priorities that COL can support in the next Three-Year Plan, 2012-2015. Bernard Rapasia, Solomon Islands’ Focal Point for COL, has been invited to the meeting.

eLearning for International Organisations

COL customises eLearning solutions to meet the capacity enhancement needs of international organisations around the world.

Three learners from the Central Bank/Ministry of Finance signed up for the July-September 2011 course on the Commonwealth Secretariat-Debt Record Management System (CSDRMS).

LOOKING FORWARD

Solomon Islands will continue to benefit from participation in COL’s activities and capacity building in the region.
TONGA

COL Focal Point:  Mrs. Peaua Heimuli, Tonga Institute of Higher Education (Current)
Mrs. Siatukimoana Vaea (2009-2010)
Mrs. S.T. Takapautolo (2006-2009)

BACKGROUND

The Kingdom of Tonga is a small state of the Commonwealth comprised of 176 islands with a population of just over 100,000. Tonga has made good progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and recognises the potential of open and distance learning (ODL) to support development and education. Tonga contributes to COL’s budget.

SUMMARY

Tonga participates in several COL activities including the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), regional capacity building initiatives and skills development programmes.

EDUCATION

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

The main objectives of VUSSC are to:
- develop a collaborative network of Commonwealth small states,
- develop capacity in the use of information and communication technology (ICT),
- create and share learning materials at the post-secondary level, and
- establish a transnational qualifications framework that would enable the transfer of credits and qualifications.

Tonga is one of 32 small states of the Commonwealth who are actively participating in the VUSSC initiative.

The team leaders meeting, in preparation for the Apia workshop was held in Vancouver, Canada in October 2009. Five team leaders including Sateki Manu of Tonga attended the meeting. In planning for the workshop the team leaders drafted and agreed on a framework for the workshop.

The 7th VUSSC training and materials development workshop on Transport and Logistics focusing on Stevedoring was held in Apia, Samoa in November-December 2009. The workshop helped to build the capacity of workshop participants in ICT and content development using ODL as well as developing content for the transport and logistics-stevedoring course. Sateki Manu (Team Leader Nomination) and Vilimi Vakautapola Vi of the Tonga Maritime Polytechnical Institute, Ministry of Training, Youth & Sports attended the workshop.
The 8th VUSSC training and materials development workshop was held in Male, Maldives in March 2010 hosted by the Centre for Open Learning, Maldives. The participants attended the workshop to develop a diploma programme on Sustainable Agriculture for Small States. The programme is aimed at learners who want to start their own business and those who want to pursue a career in agriculture extension services. Isikeli Ngalu of the Ministry of Education, Women’s Affairs and Culture attended the workshop.

VUSSC has launched its own website (www.vussc.org), which includes online courses in subjects such as disaster management, entrepreneurship, life skills and tourism. Developed by educators from small states of the Commonwealth, the courses are freely available to anyone for adaptation and use.

COL and the Open University Malaysia sponsored the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) Management Committee Meeting and TQF General Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in July 2010. Dr. ‘Uhila moe Langi Fasi of the Tonga National Qualification and Accreditation Board attended the meeting.

Open Schooling

COL commissioned a desk report on Open Schooling as a Strategy for Second-chance Education in the Pacific. This is a three-phase regional pacific project (2010-2013) on the current reality of education in the Pacific. Sela Kakala Havea and Elizabeth Love, University of the South Pacific (USP) Campus Tonga conducted desk review and prepared a country report on Second Chance Education in Tonga.

The desk report was submitted to the National Departments, Ministries of Education and Education Committees of the participating countries, including Tonga.

Higher Education

USP, Vanuatu has signed a licence agreement with COL to offer the post-graduate programme in Legislative Drafting to students in the Pacific Islands of the Commonwealth. COL has granted USP an extension of the licence agreement for the use of the materials until February 2013.

In 2009, COL supported the programme by providing 12 scholarships. COL-sponsored scholar, Annis Fapuiaiki Finau of Tonga, has successfully completed the programme.

LIVELIHOODS & HEALTH

Skills Development

COL held a material development workshop for vocational literacy in Samoa in June/July 2010. The participants were trained in writing for ODL and contributed to the development of a Student Workbook and Tutor Guide to be used in conjunction with the Basic Trades for Small Island Nations courses in Working with Concrete and Working with Timber.

Nonga Soakai and Sinama Fa’anunu of the Tonga Institute of Science and Technology attended the workshop.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Pacific) will be held in Auckland, New Zealand from 1-3 November 2011. The meeting is held once every three years and provides an opportunity for the Focal Points to share information about the status of ODL in their countries, receive the mid-term report of what COL has done in each country and identify education and training priorities that COL can support in the next Three-Year Plan, 2012-2015. Peaua Heimuli, Tonga’s Focal Point for COL, is attending the meeting.
**eLearning for International Organisations**

COL customises eLearning solutions to meet the capacity enhancement needs of international organisations around the world.

Two learners from the Central Bank/Ministry of Finance signed up for the July-September 2011 course on the Commonwealth Secretariat-Debt Record Management System.

**LOOKING FORWARD**

Tonga has identified key priority areas that COL can support in its next Three-Year Plan, 2012-2015:

- Develop core modules for online ICT teacher education for untrained graduate teachers in the outer islands and in the main district areas.
- Train teachers to develop supportive online materials at various higher education levels.
- Ongoing capacity building workshops to help teachers develop skills in using ICT in teaching and learning.
- Create a new physical infrastructure in the Tonga Institute of Higher Education that can provide ongoing technical support to train teachers to use ICT and deliver TVET curriculum.
TUVALU

COL Focal Point: Ms. Katalina P. Taloka, Ministry of Education & Sports (Current)
Mr. Solofa Uto (2006)
Mr. Tapugao Falefou (2006)

BACKGROUND

A Polynesian island nation with a population of just 10,400, Tuvalu is the fourth smallest country in the world. The literacy rate is high so Tuvalu’s educational focus is on developing vocational skills. Tuvalu is a regular contributor to COL’s budget.

SUMMARY

Tuvalu is involved in several COL activities, including the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) and skills development.

EDUCATION

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

The main objectives of VUSSC are to:

- develop a collaborative network of Commonwealth small states,
- develop capacity in the use of information and communication technology (ICT),
- create and share learning materials at the post-secondary level, and
- establish a transnational qualifications framework that would enable the transfer of credits and qualifications.

Tuvalu is one of 32 small states of the Commonwealth who are actively participating in the VUSSC initiative.

The 7th VUSSC training and materials development workshop on Transport and Logistics focusing on Stevedoring was held in Apia, Samoa in November-December 2009. The workshop helped to build the capacity of workshop participants in ICT and content development using open and distance learning (ODL) as well as developing content for the transport and logistics-stevedoring course. Maxime M.V. James of the Department of Marine Services and Merchant Shipping attended the workshop.

The 8th VUSSC training and materials development workshop was held in Male, Maldives in March 2010, hosted by the Centre for Open Learning, Maldives. The participants attended the workshop to develop a
diploma programme on Sustainable Agriculture for Small States for learners who want to start their own business and those who want to pursue a career in agriculture extension services. Sosea Tusialofa of the Institute of Technology, National University of Samoa attended the workshop.

VUSSC has launched its own website (www.vussc.org), which includes online courses in subjects such as disaster management, entrepreneurship, life skills and tourism. Developed by educators from small states of the Commonwealth, the courses are freely available to anyone for adaptation and use.

COL and the Open University Malaysia sponsored the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) Management Committee Meeting and TQF General Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in July 2010. Michael Noa of the Ministry of Education attended the meeting.

The VUSSC Interlocutors Meeting was held in November 2010 in Kochi, India. The participants presented their respective countries’ progress to-date, challenges and next steps. A Monitoring and Evaluation training was conducted during the two-day meeting. Katalina Taloka attended the meeting.

Open Schooling

COL commissioned a desk report on Open Schooling as a Strategy for Second-chance Education in the Pacific. This is a three-phase regional pacific project (2010-2013) on the current reality of education in the Pacific. David Manuella of USP Campus, Tuvalu, conducted desk review and prepared a country report on “Second Chance Education in Tuvalu”.

The desk report was submitted to the National Departments, Ministries of Education and Education Committees of the participating countries, including Samoa.

LIVELIHOODS & HEALTH

Skills Development

COL held a material development workshop for vocational literacy in Samoa in June-July 2010. The participants were trained in writing for ODL and contributed to the development of a Student Workbook and Tutor Guide to be used in conjunction with the Basic Trades for Small Island Nations courses in Working with Concrete and Working with Timber. Lapana Ene and Fanioga Falasa of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports attended the workshop.

COL facilitated a course planning workshop to assist countries in planning the pilot delivery of the vocational literacy materials. This was held in Port Vila, Vanuatu in October 2010 and was hosted by Vanuatu National Training Council. Mr. Lapana Ene, Vocational Supervisor, Education Department, Ministry of Education Youth and Sports, attended the workshop and the Ministry piloted the course.

Following the implementation of the pilot in four countries, COL organised the Pacific Regional Vocational Literacy and Numeracy Course Evaluation Workshop in Wellington, New Zealand in June 2011. The participants evaluated the pilot delivery of the Literacy and Numeracy for Basic Trades course, collaborated to review and revise the literacy and numeracy modules and considered next steps and action plans. Maseiga Osema of the Ministry of Education, Youth & Sports attended the workshop.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF6), jointly organised by IGNOU, India and the Commonwealth of Learning, was held in Kochi, India from 24-28 November 2010. The theme of the Forum was “Access and Success in Learning: Global Development Perspectives” with four sub-themes,
namely: Social Justice, Community Development, Skills Development and Formal Education. COL organised 18 pre-conference meetings and workshops.

Over 600 delegates from more than 50 countries attended PCF6. COL sponsored over 250 delegates to the Forum including Katalina P. Taloka of the Ministry of Education and Sports and COL Focal Point.

The COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Pacific) will be held in Auckland, New Zealand from 1-3 November 2011. The meeting is held once every three years and provides an opportunity for the Focal Points to share information about the status of ODL in their countries, receive the mid-term report of what COL has done in each country and identify education and training priorities that COL can support in the next Three-Year Plan, 2012-2015. Katalina Taloka, Tuvalu’s Focal Point for COL, is attending the meeting.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2012-2015, Tuvalu will continue to benefit from COL’s activities in the region in both Education and Livelihoods & Health.
BACKGROUND

A chain of islands in the South Pacific with a population of about 240,000, Vanuatu is a small state of the Commonwealth. Vanuatu is a strong supporter of COL’s activities in the region.

SUMMARY

Vanuatu is involved in several COL activities, including the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) and skills development initiatives.

EDUCATION

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

The main objectives of VUSSC are to:

- develop a collaborative network of Commonwealth small states,
- develop capacity in the use of information and communication technology (ICT),
- create and share learning materials at the post-secondary level, and
- establish a transnational qualifications framework that would enable the transfer of credits and qualifications.

Vanuatu is one of 32 small states of the Commonwealth who are actively participating in the VUSSC initiative.

The VUSSC Interlocutors Meeting was held in November 2010 in Kochi, India. David Lambukly of the Vanuatu National Training Council attended the Meeting.

VUSSC has launched its own website (www.vussc.org), which includes online courses in subjects such as disaster management, entrepreneurship, life skills and tourism. Developed by educators from small states of the Commonwealth, the courses are freely available to anyone for adaptation and use.

Open Schooling

COL commissioned a desk report on Open Schooling as a Strategy for Second-chance Education in the Pacific. This is a three-phase regional Pacific project (2010-2013) on the current reality of education in the
Pacific. Elvie Tamata (VITE) and Carol Aru, Emalus Campus, Vanuatu conducted desk review and prepared a country report on “Second Chance Education in Vanuatu”.

The desk report was submitted to the National Departments, Ministries of Education and Education Committees of the participating countries, including Vanuatu.

**Higher Education**

The University of the South Pacific (USP) Vanuatu has signed a licence agreement with COL to offer the post-graduate programme in Legislative Drafting to students in the Pacific Islands of the Commonwealth. COL has granted USP an extension of the licence agreement for the use of the materials until February 2013.

**LIVELIHOODS & HEALTH**

**Skills Development**

COL held a material development workshop for vocational literacy in Samoa from in June-July 2010. The participants were trained in writing for open and distance learning (ODL) and contributed to the development of a Student Workbook and Tutor Guide to be used in conjunction with the Basic Trades for Small Island Nations courses in Working with Concrete and Working with Timber. David Lambukly of the Vanuatu National Training Council attended the workshop.

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**OTHER ACTIVITIES**

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LOOKING FORWARD

Vanuata’s top priority for the next triennium, 2012-2015, is to gain awareness of COL’s activities and increase access to capacity building opportunities provided by COL.
PARTNER COUNTRIES

Australia | Canada | New Zealand | United Kingdom
AUSTRALIA

COL Focal Point: Ms. Claire Watt, Australia Agency for International Development (Current)
Mr. Leslie O'Donoghue (2009-2011)
Mr. Peter O'Connor (2009-2010)

BACKGROUND

Australia was a regular contributor and a major donor to COL until 2004. Since then, AusAID has supported COL’s Pan-Commonwealth Forums on Open Learning (PCF) in London, UK and Kochi, India by providing funding support for participants from the Pacific.

The Australian government provides resources and financial support to projects around the globe through the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). Australia’s aid programme focuses on the Asia Pacific region, with selective assistance to Africa and the Caribbean – many of the same developing Commonwealth countries with whom COL works.

SUMMARY

Representatives from Australian institutions took part in several COL initiatives in open schooling, healthy communities and integrating eLearning.

Australia’s support to COL during 2009-2012 also includes sponsorship, planning and participation in PCF6 in 2010, as well as the expertise provided by consultants hired by COL for a number of projects.

Claire Watt of AusAID is the COL Focal Point for Australia.

AusAID MANDATE AND PRIORITIES

The objective of AusAID is to assist developing countries reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development, in line with Australia's national interest. Australia is a member of the United Nations; the Millennium Development Goals underpin Australia’s aid programme. Australia is an active member of the Commonwealth and particularly values its role in advocating for the needs of small island states. CHOGM being held in Perth this year. Most of AusAID’s support to Commonwealth programmes goes to the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation, the Commonwealth Youth Programme and the Commonwealth Foundation.
COUNTRIES AND REGIONS OF FOCUS

AusAID focuses primarily on the Asia Pacific region, home to two-thirds of the world’s poor. COL and AusAID both work in all eight developing Commonwealth countries in the Pacific, as well as Commonwealth countries in Asia, including Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Australia also provides assistance to Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean. Aid to Africa has increased significantly in recent years and now represents approximately five per cent of the AusAID programme.

EVENTS

Australia was a sponsor of PCF6 in Kochi, India in 2010 and the funding provided supported Pacific participants. Thirteen Australians attended or presented at PCF6, including a number of pre-conference workshops.

Open Schooling

As part of COL’s initiative to establish and strengthen open schools, COL assisted in the establishment of the Commonwealth Open School Association (COMOSA). Jeane Schocroft of Open Access College, Australia was among 30 partners who signed the COMOSA Constitution.

A COL workshop on Copyright and open educational resources (OER) was held in Delhi in November 2009. Jeane Schocroft of Open Access College and open and distance learning practitioners from more than 20 countries attended the workshop.

Open Access College is participating in the COMOSA research study on Online Learning Success Variations/Factors.

An international roundtable to showcase COL’s Quality Assurance toolkits was held in Colombo in August 2010. About 30 representatives from Australia, Bangladesh, Mauritius, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and non-Commonwealth countries attended the roundtable, including Dr. Antony Stella of the Australian Universities Quality Agency.

Higher Education

COL President Sir John Daniel gave keynote addresses at the Australian Higher Education Conference in Sydney in March 2011 and the Box Hill Institute Leadership Forum Breakfast in April 2011. The Sydney speech was reported on the front page of The Australian newspaper, which resulted in AusAID contacting Sir John Daniel for an interview and the necessary documents to feed into its Rapid Review of Commonwealth’s Contribution to Development Effectiveness.

The DEHub Innovation in Distance Education Project, a collaboration among five universities (four Australian institutions and Massey University, New Zealand) based at the University of New England, invited COL Vice President Professor Asha Kanwar to speak at its launch in February 2010. Subsequently, the University of New England sent a delegation to COL’s Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in India in November 2010, leading to the establishment of partnerships with the University of Delhi, Indira Gandhi National Open University and the National Institute of Open Schooling.
Healthy Communities

COL is collaborating with Swinburne University and Queensland University of Technology in the development of community open and distance learning (ODL) programmes in the Pacific.

COL and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) conducted a workshop for community radio and education and development organisations on the sidelines of the AMARC Asia-Pacific Conference in Bangalore, India in February 2010. Participants shared, discussed and applied innovative approaches to developing educational content and programmes for community radio in Asia Pacific. COL sponsored Shane Elson of AMARC Asia to the workshop and conference.

COL has engaged Jeremy Watkins of Swinburne University to do a research on Mobiles for Media, applied research on the role of mobile telephones and other devices in community-based media and education.

COL commissioned Professor Julie Fisher of Monash University, with a group of four PhD students to develop a Facebook game application. They are conducting a research on the potential of using this game for informal learning in the Pacific.

A series of open educational resources (OER) capacity building workshops took place as part of the UNESCO-COL initiative, “Taking OER beyond the OER Community: Policy and Capacity”. Dr. Antony Stella, Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)/APQN) was a keynote speaker at two workshops (April 2010 in Cape Town, South Africa and May 2010 in Windhoek, Namibia). Dr. Stella is also a member of the COL-UNESCO Expert Group for the UNESCO-COL Guidelines on OER in Higher Education.

eLearning for International Organisations

COL customises eLearning solutions to meet the capacity enhancement needs of international organisations around the world.

- One learner from the World Bank signed up for the November 2009-February 2010 course on Writing Emails, Memos and Letters.
- Two learners from the World Bank signed up for the August-December 2010 course on Report Writing Distance Learning.
- Two learners from the World Bank signed up for the March-June 2011 course on Report Writing.
- One learner from the World Bank signed up for the May-August 2011 course on Writing Emails, Memos and Letters.

ASSISTANCE AND EXPERTISE

Since 2009, COL has hired 15 Australian consultants to provide expertise and resources to projects in the region and across the Commonwealth. COL has also commissioned research from Australian academics and has benefited from the participation of Dr. Stella in the UNESCO-COL OER initiative.
LOOKING FORWARD

COL looks forward to increased support from Australia for activities in the Asia and Pacific regions in 2012-2015. Recognising that the two organisations share objectives and mandates, COL hopes to build a more substantial relationship with AusAID. The support COL seeks from Australia is both financial and intellectual. COL is confident that increased collaboration with individuals and institutions in Australia will strength open and distance learning efforts in Australia, the region and across the Commonwealth.
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:
Access to learning is the key to development

Mission:
To help governments and institutions expand the scope, scale and quality of learning by using new approaches and technologies, especially those subsumed under the general term of open and distance learning (ODL).