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The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is proud of its strong country focus. While COL works in two programme sectors Education and Livelihoods and Health which cover 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 three years (2009-2012) and captures what we have done in each country.

Following wide consultations with partners, a Country Action Plan was developed at the beginning of the 2009-2012 triennium 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. Earlier versions of these reports were presented to the foreign ministers at the CHOGM 2011 held in Perth in October 2011.

Education 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 2009-2012.

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 2009-2012 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.

Professor Asha S. Kanwar
President and Chief Executive Officer
Commonwealth of Learning
BACKGROUND

As a Commonwealth inter-governmental organisation, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has the mandate to operate 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 is 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 goals, within the context of its own mission and mandate.

COL’s vision of “Access to Learning is the Key to Development” informs its work as it helps Member States accelerate progress towards achieving development goals. 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 mainstreaming, 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 are presented as Country Reports, which document COL’s work in each country, to the Commonwealth Education Ministers, when they meet at the triennial CCEMs.

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

Open Schooling

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 were officially launched in March 2012 and are 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.

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 Schools Association (COMOSA), which involves partners from every region of the Commonwealth. Twenty-two partners 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.

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.

Forty-one people from 23 COMOSA member countries the COMOSA attended annual general meeting (AGM) in Seychelles in February 2012. Prior to the AGM, an eLearning Maturity Model (eMM) workshop was held for COMOSA members. Participants learned about organisational eLearning capacity and how to use the eMM tool. COL organised an OER and Copyright Policy workshop for Open Schools in Seychelles on 1-2 March 2012. Participants drafted a “COMOSA OER and Copyright Policy” at the workshop. The COMOSA Steering Committee meeting was also held in Seychelles on 1 March 2012 and a launch of the OER for Open School materials was held on 2 March 2012. All member countries have committed to implement the OER policy.

Teacher Education

The UNICEF-COL Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) initiative mainstreamed “child first” concepts, principles and models into the pre-service and in-service teacher education curricula in eight Commonwealth countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland and Zambia). COL worked with partner teacher training institutions to develop CFS learning materials and to provide capacity building workshops.

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.

Higher Education

COL provides leadership in quality in ODL. COL’s quality microsite (www.col.org/qualityMS) 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, teacher education and non-formal 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’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.

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 in Vanuatu and Athabasca University in Canada. Indira Gandhi National Open University, India and the University of Derby, UK have been licensed to offer the programme.

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 VUSSC can be adapted into recognised courses that students can take for credit through educational institutions in small states. The TQF was formally launched in South Africa and 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

Learning for Farmers

COL’s Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) 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 information and communication technology (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.

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.

The Flexible Skills Development Online Community Learning Network is a forum for TVET practitioners to discuss the implementation of flexible and blended approaches to TVET delivery. Using social networking software, managers, educators and policy makers can interact and collaborate both regionally and with international experts. Members from Ghana, Kenya, Jamaica, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Zambia are part of the network.

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 helped community learning programmes adjust and continue to grow.

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

In September 2011, COL hosted a meeting of Healthy Communities partners from 14 Commonwealth countries in Cape Town, South Africa. In addition to sharing best practices and mapping out future plans for COL’s Healthy Communities initiative, the partners made important connections that are already leading to greater “south-south” co-operation. The week-long Cape Town meeting focused on the use of media for non-formal learning about community health and development, particularly in resource-poor settings.

Integrating eLearning

“Taking OER beyond the OER Community: Policy and Capacity” was 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.

COL and UNESCO, with financial support from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, conducted “Fostering Governmental Support for Open Educational Resources Internationally” to raise awareness of OER beyond the communities of practice that had already developed around them. The project involved a survey of governments worldwide and six Regional Policy Forums. This resulted in a 2012 World OER Congress in June 2012 at which the Paris Declaration on OER was adopted by the international community. The Paris Declaration is a commitment to making educational resources developed with public funds freely available for re-use and re-purposing under open licences.

The Commonwealth Computer Navigators Certificate (CCNC) is an 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 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.

COL’s gender microsite (www.col.org/genderMS) provides a single convenient online access point to gender resources in ODL.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

eLearning 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 50 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. COL, the Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria and the National Open University of Nigeria will co-host the Seventh Pan Commonwealth Forum (PCF7) in Abuja, Nigeria in November 2013.

Pan-Commonwealth Partnerships

COL’s work is supported by networks of Focal Points, Chairs and 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)
• 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)
PACIFIC

Kiribati | Nauru | Papua New Guinea | Samoa | Solomon Islands | Tonga | Tuvalu | Vanuatu
REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

BACKGROUND

As a region comprising 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. COL’s regional activities include the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth, expanding open schooling, teacher training, the post-graduate Legislative Drafting degree programme, flexible skills development and community learning.

EDUCATION

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

Eight Commonwealth Pacific nations are members of VUSSC, a collaborative network of 33 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 participants in ICT and content development using ODL as well as developing content for the course. Numerous educators from the Pacific have attended VUSSC training workshops.

Open Schooling

COL commissioned a desk study report, “Open Schooling as a Strategy for Second-Chance Education in the Pacific”, which 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.

COL is supporting the establishment of new open schools in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tonga.

COL hosted the Pacific Regional Open Schooling Forum in Tonga in November 2011.

COL organised the Commonwealth Open Schools Association (COMOSA) Annual General Meeting in Seychelles in February 2012. Forty-one people from 23 COMOSA member countries, including several
from Pacific countries, attended the meeting. The eLearning Maturity Model (eMM) workshop for the COMOSA members was held on 29 February 2012.

COL organised an OER and Copyright Policy workshop for Open Schools in Seychelles on 1-2 March 2012. The face-to-face workshop was preceded by two online workshops. A draft “COMOSA OER and Copyright Policy” was prepared at the end of the workshop.

The launch of the “OER for Open Schools” materials was held on 2 March 2012. As a celebration of the achievement of countries, representatives gave presentations on specific topics at the launch.

Representatives from USP attended the COMOSA AGM, eMM workshop, OER and Copyright Policy workshop and launch.

**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. In 2010, COL provided 15 Legislative Drafting scholarships to learners in the Pacific.

**LIVELIHOODS & HEALTH**

**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.

A materials development workshop for vocational literacy was held 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 community radio workshop for 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 of community radio in Asia-Pacific and its potential contributions to local development, education, governance, knowledge and skills 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.

GENDER

Gender equality is a cross-cutting corporate goal for COL. The advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment are central to COL’s agenda of Learning for Development. COL is working to ensure it is a model organisation that mainstreams gender in all its processes and at all levels.

COL’s Gender micro-site provides Commonwealth countries with a one-stop, comprehensive platform to access print and electronic resources on gender and ODL with a special emphasis on ICT. COL supported the development of gender-sensitive vocational literacy learning materials and highlighted female participation in vocational literacy training in the Pacific.

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) organised by COL and co-hosted by the Wellington Institute of Technology, the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was held from 1-3 November 2011 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. The key priorities identified at the Pacific Focal Points Meeting were:

- Flexible approaches to TVET,
- Expanding community learning programmes,
- Capacity building in the development and use of OER,
- Introducing COL’s Lifelong Learning for Farmers programme,
- Supporting mLearning, and
- Launching the Commonwealth Certificate for Teacher ICT Integration (CCTI) in the Pacific.
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

BACKGROUND

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

Ms. Maria Teretia Kaiboia, the former Acting Director of Education at the Ministry of Education, was the Focal Point for COL from 2008-2010.

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 (TQF) that would enable the transfer of credits and qualifications.

Kiribati is one of the 32 small states of the Commonwealth, 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 a desk review and prepared a country report on “Second Chance Education in Kiribati”.

COL ACTIVITIES 2009-2012
The desk report was submitted to the National Departments, Ministries of Education and Education Committees of the participating countries, including Kiribati.

The USP Campus in Kiribati established an open school in August 2011. Tebwaatoki Tabetia of the Ministry of Education and Teereao Teingiia of the Kiribati USP Campus attended the Pacific Regional Open Schooling Forum in November 2011.

COL organised the Commonwealth Open Schools Association (COMOSA) Annual General Meeting in Seychelles in February 2012. Forty-one people from 23 COMOSA member countries attended the meeting. The eLearning Maturity Model (eMM) workshop for the COMOSA members was held on 29 February 2012. COL organised an OER and Copyright Policy workshop for Open Schools in Seychelles on 1-2 March 2012. The face-to-face workshop was preceded by two online workshops. A draft “COMOSA OER and Copyright Policy” was prepared at the end of the workshop.

The launch of the “OER for Open Schools” materials was held on 2 March 2012. As a celebration of the achievement of countries, representatives gave a presentation on a specific topic at the launch.

Tereeao Teingiia of the University of the South Pacific attended the COMOSA AGM, eMM workshop, OER and Copyright Policy workshop and the launch.

**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 28 February 2013. In 2010, COL supported 15 students. Birimaka Tekanene of Kiribati completed the programme.

**LIVELIHOODS & HEALTH**

**Integrating eLearning**

COL, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and Microsoft, organised the ICT in Education Leadership Forum in the Pacific from May 1-2, 2012 in Sydney, Australia. Some of the items discussed included: how explored how ICT has been integrated into teaching and learning in the Pacific; reviewed the issues, challenges and initiatives related to ICT competencies for teachers in the Pacific; teacher development approaches that make capacity building possible; and where and how policies and practices in education need to respond to harness the potential of ICT in teacher development. The Honourable Minister of Education, Maera Tauanei, Toaiti Taranta of the Ministry of Education and M. Tauanei of the Kiribati Teachers College attended the Forum.

**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) was 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, was 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.
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 contributed regularly to COL’s budget in the triennium 2009-2012.

Mr. Michael Longhurst, the former Director of Education at the Ministry of Education, was the Focal Point for COL from 2006-2010.

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

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 (TQF) that would enable the transfer of credits and qualifications.

Nauru has joined the 32 small states of the Commonwealth that are taking part in 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 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”.

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. The cohorts include 83% male students and 17% female students.

Integrating eLearning

COL, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and Microsoft, organised the ICT in Education Leadership Forum in the Pacific from May 1-2, 2012 in Sydney, Australia. Some of the items discussed included: how explored how ICT has been integrated into teaching and learning in the Pacific; reviewed the issues, challenges and initiatives related to ICT competencies for teachers in the Pacific; teacher development approaches that make capacity building possible; and where and how policies and practices in education need to respond to harness the potential of ICT in teacher development. Purecella Engar of the Nauru Department of Education and Kylie Notte of Nauru College attended the Forum.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Pacific) was 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, attended the meeting.

LOOKING FORWARD

COL develops Action Plans for each country, based on national priorities and its own mission and mandate. This is done through a consultative process. One such opportunity is the triennial Focal Points meeting at which the COL Focal Point is requested to consult with in-country partners and identify the key priorities that COL can support over a three-year period. 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 Points:  Mr. Ouka Lavaki, Ministry of Education
                    Mr. Charles Mabia, Ministry of Higher Education

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 and natural resource management. 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 been contributing to COL’s budget.

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

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

SUMMARY

Papua New Guinea is active in several key COL programmes, including the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), the Commonwealth Open Schools Association (COMOSA), Lifelong Learning for Farmers, healthy communities 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 (TQF) that would enable the transfer of credits and qualifications.

Papua New Guinea is one of the 32 small states of the Commonwealth 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 TQF Management Committee Meeting and TQF General Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in July 2010. Dr. Pongie Kichawen of UNPG attended the meetings and helped in developing the qualifications framework.

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 Schools 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. Professor 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 Divine 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. Ephreddie 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 (CEMBA/MPA) materials in its Masters programme. Bernard Esonu of UPNG attended the CEMBA/MPA workshop on case-based teaching in Malaysia from 29 November- 1 December 2011.

The CEMBA/MPA Academic Board and the CEMBA/MPA Executive Governing Board both met in August 2010 in Penang, Malaysia. Professor Albert Mellam of UNPG is a member of the Academic Board and Professor Ross A. Hynes is as a member of Executive Governing Board for 2010-2012.
LIVELHOODS & HEALTH

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 developed a 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.

During 2012, COL had meetings with the University of Natural Resources & Environment and the PNG Microfinance Expansion Project to strengthen L3F in PNG.

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 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. Jay Banda of the Department of Education and Dr. Willy Ako 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 technical and vocational education and training (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 attended the workshop.

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.

COL facilitated a second community learning programme design workshop in Bougainville in November 2011. Representatives from Hak’o’ Women’s Collective (Youth), New Dawn FM, the Health Division, the Ministry of Community Development, the Bougainville InterChurch Council – Women’s Forum and the Ministry of Education collaborated to design 20 weeks of programming, including use of mobiles, learner support and a management structure.

COL supported the participation of Aloysius Laukai from New Dawn FM as a trainer-facilitator in a 10-day training of trainers workshop run in April 2012 by the Regional Media Centre of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and UNESCO.

Integrating eLearning

COL, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and Microsoft, organised the ICT in Education Leadership Forum in the Pacific from May 1-2, 2012 in Sydney, Australia. Some of the items discussed included: integrating ICT into teaching and learning in the Pacific; review of the issues, challenges and initiatives related to ICT competencies for teachers in the Pacific; teacher development approaches that make capacity building possible; policies and practices in education to harness the potential of ICT in teacher development. Thomas Podarua and Walipe Winge of the PNG Department of Education attended the Forum.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Then COL President Sir John Daniel made a video presentation on “Celebrating Open Schooling” and Sir John and COL Vice President (now 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) was 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, attended 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 PNG took the World Bank Effective Writing course in 2009,
- Two learners from the Central Bank/Ministry of Finance took the eLearning course on Commonwealth Secretariat-Debt Record Management System (CSDRMS) in 2010, and
- Three learners took the World Health Organization Effective Writing course in 2011.

Gibson Gotacha from the Ministry of Finance was engaged as a COL e-tutor providing one-on-one tutoring via Moodle for CSDRMS eLearning.

LOOKING FORWARD

COL develops Action Plans for each country, based on national priorities and its own mission and mandate. This is done through a consultative process. One such opportunity is the triennial Focal Points meeting at which the COL Focal Point is requested to consult with in-country partners and identify the key priorities that COL can support over a three-year period. The areas identified by PNG for 2012-2015 are:

- Developing institutional capacity through training and start an attachment/study visit,
- Developing a policy framework for teacher training through ODL,
- Developing in-country capacity for ICT-enhanced learning,
- Promoting the OER movement and in-country collaboration for content development, and
- Supporting the establishment of the PNG Open University.
BACKGROUND

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

Ruby Vaa of the University of the South Pacific, Alafua Campus, was an Honorary COL Advisor from 2009-2012.

SUMMARY

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 (TQF) that would enable the transfer of credits and qualifications.

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

The team leaders meeting, in preparation for the Apia workshop (see below), was held in Vancouver, Canada in October 2009. Five team leaders attended the meeting. They included Leulua’itumua Fatu Tiperio Lafoa’i of Samoa. 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 from 23 November-11 December 2009. The workshop helped to build the capacity of workshop participants in ICT and content development as well as developing self-instructional materials 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 (see below) 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. 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. Lineta Tamikaiyaroi of University of Samoa attended the workshop.

The 9th VUSSC training in materials development workshop for the development of a Bachelor’s Degree in Business and Entrepreneurship was held in Lesotho in March 2011. Sui Tinai and Sasae 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.

A VUSSC Team Leaders Meeting was held in Singapore in November 2011 to prepare and train the team leaders for the 10th VUSSC training and materials development workshop in Educational Leadership. The workshop was also held in Singapore from 17 November-2 December 2011. Lina Schuster (Team Leader from Samoa) attended the meeting and workshop. Dr. Rasela Tufue-Dolgoy participated in the workshop.

Ms. Anita Latai of the National University of Samoa attended the materials development and training workshop at the University of Seychelles in March 2012. Dr. Emma Kruse-Vaai participated in the VUSSC Management Committee meeting prior to the workshop.

Dr. Emma Kruse-Vaai of the University of Samoa enrolled in the VUSSC Managing and Facilitating Online Instruction course. Jacob Phillips and Kapeni Matatia Jr. of the National University of Samoa signed up for the VUSSC LINUX 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.

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 Alafua Campus, 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.

Marie Toalepaialii of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture and Ruby Vaa of the USP Alafua Campus attended the Pacific Regional Open Schooling Forum in Tonga in November 2011.

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. COL supported 15 students in 2010; three Samoans completed the programme.

LIVELIHOODS & HEALTH

Skills Development

COL supported 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.

In August 2011, COL facilitated a workshop in planning for distance education for the Oloamanu Centre for Professional Development at the University of Samoa. Tavuaga Vaai, Iosefa Leiatua, G.T.T. Afamasaga and Dr. Selipa Selipa attended the workshop.

**Integrating eLearning**

COL, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and Microsoft, organised the ICT in Education Leadership Forum in the Pacific from 1-2 May 2012 in Sydney, Australia. Some of the items discussed included: how ICT has been integrated into teaching and learning in the Pacific; the issues, challenges and initiatives related to ICT competencies for teachers in the Pacific; teacher development approaches that make capacity building possible; and where and how policies and practices in education need to respond in order to harness the potential of ICT in teacher development. The Honourable Magele Mauiliu Magele, Minister for Education, Sports and Culture and Rosemarie Esera of the Ministry attended the Forum.

**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) was 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, attended 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 Samoa Central Bank/Ministry of Finance took the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Reporting Management System (CSDRMS) eLearning course in 2010.

**LOOKING FORWARD**

COL develops Action Plans for each country, based on national priorities and its own mission and mandate. This is done through a consultative process. One such opportunity is the triennial Focal Points meeting at which the COL Focal Point is requested to consult with in-country partners and identify the key priorities that COL can support over a three-year period. The areas identified by Samoa for 2012-2015 are:

- Developing a policy for distance and flexible learning for Samoa, and
- Continuing to support infrastructure such as School Net for all schools,
- Developing 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,
- Training teachers at various levels to use and develop supportive online materials,
- Creating 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, and
- Nonformal ODL capacity development for media and development (livelihoods and health) partners.
SOLOMON ISLANDS

COL Focal Point: Mr. Bernard Rapasia, Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development

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 takes part in COL initiatives in teacher education, open schooling, higher education, skills development and community health. One of COL’s leading community learning programme initiatives 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 (TQF) that would enable the transfer of credits and qualifications.

Solomon Islands is one of the 32 small states of the Commonwealth 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. 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. May Tana Pitakere of the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE), School of Natural Resources, 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.

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.

Hilma Mollomb of the SICHE and Irene Anigafutu of the USP Solomon Islands Campus attended the Pacific Regional Open Schooling Forum in November 2011. They are running the pilot.

COL organised the Commonwealth Open Schools Association (COMOSA) Annual General Meeting in Seychelles in February 2012. Forty-one people from 23 COMOSA member countries attended the meeting. The eLearning Maturity Model (eMM) workshop for the COMOSA members was held on 29 February 2012.

COL organised an OER and Copyright Policy workshop for Open Schools in Seychelles on 1-2 March 2012. The face-to-face workshop was preceded by two online workshops. A draft “COMOSA OER and Copyright Policy” was prepared at the end of the workshop. The launch of the “OER for Open Schools” materials was held on 2 March 2012. As a celebration of the achievement of countries, representatives gave a presentation on a specific topic at the launch. Irene Anigafutu of USP attended the COMOSA AGM, eMM workshop, OER and Copyright Policy workshop and launch.

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 open and distance learning (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

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. In 2009, COL supported the programme by providing 12 scholarships. Six scholars from Solomon Islands sponsored by COL completed the
programme. COL supported 15 students in 2010; five students from Solomon Islands 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. Cabinet approved policy and strategic framework in October 2011.

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. Benedict Kausua of TVET Division of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development and Sherilyn Faabasua of the Literary Association of Solomon Islands 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. Benedict Kausua attended the workshop, and TVET Division 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 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. Benedict Kausua attended the workshop. The Solomon Islands TVET Division plans to roll out the vocational literacy course during 2012.

**Healthy Communities**

David Leeming, 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 *trainers 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.

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. COL sponsored Anthony Matelaomao of People First Network to attend the workshop and conference.

Eight representatives of the health promotion department of the Isabel Provincial Government, Isabel Provincial 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.

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.

Jennifer Wate from the Solomon Islands Development Trust attended the Healthy Community partners workshop in Cape Town in September 2011. The workshop brought together 14 partners from around the Commonwealth to further develop the models and approaches that guide COL’s work with non-formal learning using media/mobiles, share experiences of community learning and train each other in the use of useful tools and approaches, and refine strategies and plans for Healthy Communities initiatives in the next Three-Year Plan.

COL provided support to the Isabel Provincial Government to conduct training and organisational development for stations in the Isabel community media network between March 2011 and June 2012:

- A network planning meeting took place in May 2011, followed by mentoring visits to local community meetings.
- A five-day training workshop was executed by the Regional Media Centre of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in January 2012 with a focus on content development and production skills. Twenty people participated from seven community media groups, the provincial health services, the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, the Isabel Investment Corporation, and Save the Children.
- The January 2012 workshop resulted in new knowledge and skills among a consortium of different partners as well as content design for 26 weeks of programming.

**Integrating eLearning**

COL, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and Microsoft, organised the ICT in Education Leadership Forum in the Pacific from 1-2 May 2012 in Sydney, Australia. Some of the items discussed included: how ICT has been integrated into teaching and learning in the Pacific; the issues, challenges and
initiatives related to ICT competencies for teachers in the Pacific; teacher development approaches that make capacity building possible; and where and how policies and practices in education need to respond in order to harness the potential of ICT in teacher development. Matthew Timothy Ngele of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, Mike Haukaria of Solomon Islands Education Management Information System and Mark Tehe of the School of Education attended the Forum.

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 Human Resource Development and Elvis Zhivago Kekegolo of the same Ministry.

The COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Pacific) was 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, was 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 Solomon Islands Central Bank/Ministry of Finance took the Commonwealth Secretariat-Debt Record Management System (CSDRMS) eLearning course in 2010.

LOOKING FORWARD

Solomon Islands will continue to benefit from participation in COL’s activities and capacity building in the region in 2012-2015.
TONGA

COL Focal Point: Mrs. Peaua Heimuli, Tonga Institute of Higher Education

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.

Mrs. Siatukimoana Vaea, the former Principal of the Tonga Institute of Higher Education, was the Focal Point for COL from 2009-2010.

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 (TQF) that would enable the transfer of credits and qualifications.

Tonga is one of the 32 small states of the Commonwealth, 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 self-instructional materials 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 and hosted by the Centre for Open Learning, Maldives. The participants developed 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.

Siofilisi Hingano and Liuaki Fusitu’a of Tonga attended the 10th VUSSC training and materials development meeting in Educational Leadership in Singapore from 17 November-2 December 2011.

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 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.

An open school was established in Tonga in August 2011. The Pacific Regional Open Schooling Forum was held in Tonga in November 2011. Representatives from the Ministry of Education, Women’s Affairs and Culture, Tonga, Tupou High School, Tailulu College, LDS High School, St. Andrews High School, Apifo’ou College, Lavengamalie High School, Seven Day Adventist High School and USP Tonga Campus attended the Forum.

COL organised the Commonwealth Open Schools Association (COMOSA) Annual General Meeting in Seychelles in February 2012. Forty-one people from 23 COMOSA member countries attended the meeting. The eLearning Maturity Model (eMM) workshop for the COMOSA members was held on 29 February 2012.

COL organised an OER and Copyright Policy workshop for Open Schools in Seychelles on 1-2 March 2012. The face-to-face workshop was preceded by two online workshops. A draft “COMOSA OER and Copyright Policy” was prepared at the end of the workshop. The launch of the “OER for Open Schools” materials was held on 2 March 2012. As a celebration of the achievement of countries, representatives gave a presentation on a specific topic at the launch.

Dr. ‘Ana Hau’alo’fa’ia Koloto of USP attended the COMOSA AGM and eMM workshop, OER and Copyright Policy workshop and launch.

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. COL supported 15 students in 2010; one student from Tonga 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.

**Healthy Communities**

COL supported the Regional Media Centre (RMC) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in running an introductory workshop for a community broadcasting facility in Niuatoputapu in May 2010. A programme schedule was established, and representatives of a variety of local groups were trained in broadcasting skills. RMC conducted a follow up visit in April 2011, in which numerous gaps in capacity and problems with operation of the station were identified.

**Integrating eLearning**

COL, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and Microsoft, organised the ICT in Education Leadership Forum in the Pacific from May 1-2, 2012 in Sydney, Australia. Some of the items discussed included: explored how ICT has been integrated into teaching and learning in the Pacific; reviewed the issues, challenges and initiatives related to ICT competencies for teachers in the Pacific; teacher development approaches that make capacity building possible; and where and how policies and practices in education need to respond to harness the potential of ICT in teacher development. Claude Tupou of the Ministry of Education, Women’s Affairs and Culture and Kuyaju Fysuty’A of the Tonga Institute of Higher Education attended the Forum.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES**

The COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Pacific) was 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, attended 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 took the Commonwealth Secretariat-Debt Record Management System (CSDRMS) eLearning course in 2010, and
- Three learners took the World Health Organization Writing Effectively course in 2011.
LOOKING FORWARD

COL develops Action Plans for each country, based on national priorities and its own mission and mandate. This is done through a consultative process. One such opportunity is the triennial Focal Points meeting at which the COL Focal Point is requested to consult with in-country partners and identify the key priorities that COL can support over a three-year period. The areas identified by Tonga for 2012-2015 are:

- Developing core modules for online ICT teacher education for untrained graduate teachers in the outer islands and in the main district areas,
- Training 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, and
- Creating 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 technical and vocational education and training (TVET) curriculum.
TUVALU

COL Focal Point: Ms. Katalina P. Taloka, Ministry of Education, Youth & Sports

BACKGROUND

A Polynesian island nation with a population of 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 (TQF) that would enable the transfer of credits and qualifications.

Tuvalu is one of the 32 small states of the Commonwealth 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 as well as developing self-instructional materials 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 developed a diploma programme on Sustainable Agriculture for Small States for learners. 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. Sosea Tusialofofa of the Institute of Technology, National University of Samoa attended the workshop.
Maseiga I. Osema of Tuvalu attended the 10th VUSSC training and materials development meeting in ‘Master in Education: Educational Leadership’ in Singapore from 17 November-2 December 2011.

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, Youth & Sports 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 University of the South Pacific (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 Tuvalu.

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 2010, COL supported 15 students with scholarships; two students from Tuvalu 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. 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. Lapana Ene, Vocational Supervisor, Education Department, Ministry of Education Youth and Sports attended the workshop.

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.
Integrating eLearning

COL, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and Microsoft, organised the ICT in Education Leadership Forum in the Pacific from May 1-2, 2012 in Sydney, Australia. Some of the items discussed included: how explored how ICT has been integrated into teaching and learning in the Pacific; reviewed the issues, challenges and initiatives related to ICT competencies for teachers in the Pacific; teacher development approaches that make capacity building possible; and where and how policies and practices in education need to respond to harness the potential of ICT in teacher development. Emma Lauti and Valisi Tovia of the Ministry of Education, Youth & Sports attended the Forum.

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 Taloka of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and COL Focal Point.

The COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Pacific) was 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, attended the meeting.

LOOKING FORWARD

COL develops Action Plans for each country, based on national priorities and its own mission and mandate. This is done through a consultative process. One such opportunity is the triennial Focal Points meeting at which the COL Focal Point is requested to consult with in-country partners and identify the key priorities that COL can support over a three-year period. The areas identified by Tuvalu for 2012-2015 are:

- Development of core modules for ICT Teacher Education to be delivered at all levels of schooling,
- Capacity building and development of teachers to use ICT in the teaching and learning process,
- Development of modules in selected TVET learning programmes to be taught (delivered) through flexi mode (face-to-face and distance learning),
- Training teachers to develop support online materials at various levels,
- Empower and support the Education Department (Supervisory Unit) to provide pedagogical as well as technical support to teachers using ICT in delivery of curriculum, and
- Non-formal ODL capacity development for media and development (livelihoods and health) partners.
VANUATU

COL Focal Point:  Mr. John Niroa, Ministry of Education

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.

Daniel Lamoureaux of the Ministry of Education was the Focal Point for COL from 2006-2010.

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 (TQF) that would enable the transfer of credits and qualifications.

Vanuatu is one of the 32 small states of the Commonwealth, 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.

John Niroa of the Ministry of Education, Vanuatu and Joanne Bell of the University of the South Pacific (USP) Emalus Campus attended the Pacific Regional Open Schooling Forum in Tonga in November 2011.

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. The agreement for the second cohort of students was signed in March 2011.

LIVELIHOODS & HEALTH

Skills Development

COL held a material development workshop for vocational literacy in Samoa from 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.

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.

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. Berton Jones of Vanuatu Rural Development Training Centres Association attended the workshop.

COL facilitated a distance education planning workshop for the Certificate in Community Development at the Community Education & Training Centre in Fiji/SPC in November 2011. Berton Jones of the Vanuatu Rural Development Training Centres Association (VRDTCA) attended the workshop. The programme started piloting in March 2012 and are in the process of developing the materials.

COL funded a Distance Flexible Learning (DFL) planning workshop in Port Vila in January 2012 to prepare for the DFL trial in Vanuatu. Representatives from VRDTCA, the Community Education Training Centre (CETC) and several rural training centres 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 David Lambukly of Vanuatu National Training Council.

The COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Pacific) was 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. John Niroa, Vanuatu’s Focal Point for COL, attended the meeting.

LOOKING FORWARD

COL develops Action Plans for each country, based on national priorities and its own mission and mandate. This is done through a consultative process. One such opportunity is the triennial Focal Points meeting at which the COL Focal Point is requested to consult with in-country partners and identify the key priorities that COL can support over a three-year period. Vanuatu’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
NEW ZEALAND

COL Focal Point:  Ms. Miriam Freeman-Plume, New Zealand Aid Programme

BACKGROUND

New Zealand is a major contributor to COL’s budget and is represented on COL’s Board of Governors by Dr. Linda Sissons CNZM, Chief Executive Officer of the Wellington Institute of Technology (WELTEC). New Zealand provides support and expertise to COL’s initiatives in the Pacific region, as well as contributing to pan-Commonwealth activities.

Dr. Caroline Seelig of The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (TOPNZ) and Jenny Williams are Honorary COL Advisors and Dr. Wayne Mackintosh of Otago Polytechnic is a COL Chair. Ms. Myra Harrison, the former Senior Education Sector Adviser, Development Strategy of New Zealand Aid Programme and Ms. Elena Procuta, Development Officer at Foreign Affairs and Trade were Focal Points for COL from 2007-2011 and 2011-2012 respectively.

SUMMARY

COL’s vision of “Access to Learning is the Key to Development” informs its work as it helps member states accelerate progress towards achieving development goals. 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 mainstreaming, quality assurance and skills development respectively.

In 2009-2012, COL’s work is aligned with the goals of the New Zealand Aid Programme in its area of focus, the Pacific. New Zealand’s aid priorities are reflected in COL’s two programme sectors, Education and Livelihoods & Health.

New Zealand continues to be a valued partner for COL in the Pacific region. New Zealand has hosted several regional meetings, and New Zealand consultants are contributing expertise to COL projects in the region.
NEW ZEALAND AID PROGRAMME MANDATE AND PRIORITIES

The New Zealand Aid Programme is the New Zealand government’s international aid and development agency. Its mandate is to “support sustainable development in developing countries in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more secure, equitable and prosperous world”.

New Zealand’s aid efforts concentrate on activities that contribute to poverty reduction through sustainable economic development; create safe, secure and inclusive societies; fulfil basic needs; and focus on sustainability.

New Zealand’s development assistance aims to help countries achieve and maintain the internationally agreed poverty reduction objectives set out in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). COL shares this focus and contributes to the achievement of the MDGs in most of its programme areas.

Nga Hoe Tuputupu-mai-tawhiti – the paddles that bring growth from afar – is the Maori name for the New Zealand Aid Programme. It is an approach shared by COL in its focus on learning for development.

The New Aid Programme priorities include:

- The emphasis on outcome-based approach in schooling, instead of inputs, measuring
  i) attendance at schools especially for those with disabilities,
  ii) retention rates,
  iii) success rates,
  iv) professional development of teachers and the impact of training, and
  v) gender equality.
- In the post-school sector, the focus will be on assisting Pacific nations with economic development by increasing the numbers of scholarships offered. Training in practical, vocational and applied skills will be a priority.
- Collaboration will become increasingly important. There would be more collaboration with private and microfinance entities in agriculture for coffee, tapioca and vanilla plantations. Institutions such as TOPNZ, WELTEC, Manukau Institute of Technology and Unitec Institute of Technology would work together to provide resources in the Pacific.

COUNTRIES AND REGIONS OF FOCUS

The Pacific is the New Zealand Aid Programme’s core geographic focus. More than half of New Zealand’s total aid goes to this region. The New Zealand Aid Programme also supports development in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. Global development efforts are supported through funding from the New Zealand Aid Programme to international agencies.

New Zealand provides assistance to all Pacific Commonwealth countries, as does COL. Its largest bilateral programmes in the Pacific are in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu – countries where COL is also active. Increasingly, funding is allocated towards activities focused on economic growth. New Zealand’s aid also focuses on outcomes central to development in the Pacific including fostering sustainable economic growth and improved livelihoods, investing in people through health and education, strengthening governance, helping communities be better prepared for natural disasters and creating healthy communities.

COL has contributed to development efforts in all Pacific Commonwealth nations in this triennium through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), as well as initiatives in the areas of healthy communities, teacher education, open schooling and learning for farming.
EVENTS

New Zealand was an active participant in the Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Form on Open Learning (PCF6) in Kochi, India in November 2010. Several delegates from New Zealand attended PCF6. The Honourable Steven Maharey of Massey University was a keynote speaker at the Forum. He delivered the paper on Access and Success: Distance Learning at Massey University and its Impact on New Zealand Society”. Dr. Caroline Seelig of TOPNZ was the keynote speaker on Skills Development.

The COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Pacific) was held in Auckland, New Zealand from 1-3 November 2011. This meeting was jointly organised by COL, the Wellington Institute of Technology and TOPNZ. 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. COL Focal Points from seven Pacific nations attended the meeting.

COL GOVERNANCE

As a major contributor to COL’s budget, New Zealand has a seat on the Board of Governors. It is currently held by Dr. Linda Sissons CNZM, Chief Executive Officer of the Wellington Institute of Technology. Dr. Sissons is also a member of the Board’s Executive and Performance committees.

ASSISTANCE AND EXPERTISE

Since 2009, COL has hired 12 consultants from New Zealand to provide expertise and resources to projects in the Pacific region and across the Commonwealth.

New Zealand is playing an important leadership role with open educational resources (OER) through the OER Foundation, headquartered at Otago Polytechnic in Dunedin, New Zealand. This non-profit organisation is working to help education institutions harness the potential of OER – learning materials that educators can freely modify, adapt and reuse. The founding Director of the OER Foundation, Dr. Wayne Mackintosh, is a former COL Education Specialist. Dr. Mackintosh launched the Learning4Content global wiki skills initiative during his time at COL. COL continued to support the WikiEducator, now located at the OER Foundation, Otago Polytechnic during 2009-2012.

COL signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with TOPNZ in July 2010 to identify possible avenues for collaboration and to establish the basis of collaboration where it is mutually beneficial. Both organisations agree to jointly explore and coordinate activities of mutual interest that will promote the development and application of conventional as well as non-conventional methods of learning and training, particularly through the use of open, distance, flexible and technology-mediated learning leading. Under the MOU, COL is supporting learners in Africa to do a certificate course in elearning. 23 learners were nominated and 13 registered for the course.

An international roundtable to showcase COL’s Quality Assurance toolkits was held in Colombo in August 2010, facilitated by Caroline Donovan of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. About 30 representatives from Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Mauritius, Bangladesh, Australia and other non-Commonwealth countries, attended the roundtable.

COL commissioned TOPNZ to conduct a study on the digital literacy of health workers in the Pacific. The report was submitted in July 2011.
In partnership with COL, TOPNZ facilitated the Pacific Regional Vocational Literacy and Numeracy Course Evaluation Workshop in Wellington, New Zealand in June 2011. 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.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2012-2015, COL anticipates further strengthening its partnership with New Zealand and collaborating to achieve key education and development goals in the Pacific region. New Zealand’s support for COL through sponsorship and expertise is integral to COL’s success in the region. COL will continue to explore opportunities to support the New Zealand Aid Programme’s key priority areas.
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).