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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
PAN-COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES

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 (MDG 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.

**Intergrating 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.
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. Ephrddie 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.
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).