COL in the Commonwealth
2009–2012 Country Reports
FOR: TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Learning for Development
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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 (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](http://www.col.org/connections))

• Blog: timely news and comment from COL ([www.col.org/blog](http://www.col.org/blog))

• Publications: research, books, toolkits and other publications commissioned by COL ([www.col.org/publications](http://www.col.org/publications))

• Country information: This online database provides access to information related to ODL from all Commonwealth countries ([www.col.org/CountryInfo](http://www.col.org/CountryInfo))

• Videos: reports from events and insight into COL’s work ([www.col.org/videos](http://www.col.org/videos))

• Course materials, gender microsite, quality assurance microsite, speeches and other resources ([www.col.org/resources](http://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](http://www.col.org/GovInfo))
REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

BACKGROUND

The Commonwealth Caribbean consists of 12 small states, of which 10 are island nations. Belize and Guyana, located in Central and South America respectively, are the exceptions. While Jamaica has a population of 2.7 million and Trinidad & Tobago has 1.4 million, the other countries all have a population of less than one million.

The Caribbean nations are distinct in many ways, yet they share a number of common challenges. There is a huge unmet need for tertiary qualifications and teacher training, particularly related to the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching and learning. Support is required for the expansion of open schooling. New approaches are needed to help expand access to technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

COL works closely with all Commonwealth Caribbean nations through dozens of initiatives that help expand access to quality education and training using distance education and appropriate technologies.

In the Caribbean, COL works to support Learning for Development through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), ICT in Education initiatives, promoting the use of open educational resources (OER) and higher education.

Here are some recent regional activities; specific activities in each country are outlined in the individual Country Reports that follow.

EDUCATION

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

All 12 Commonwealth Caribbean nations are members of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). A number of Caribbean educators have attended VUSSC training and materials workshops. These intensive workshops are building capacity in ICT and content development using open and distance learning (ODL). Participants collaborate to develop content for tertiary-level courses and degree programmes.

Teacher Education

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, with support from COL, organised a two-day regional consultation meeting on Professional and Academic Standards in Antigua & Barbuda in March 2011. The consultation document, “Regional Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession: Draft Framework of Generic Teaching Performance Standards and Academic Standards”, was submitted to COL in May 2011.

In collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, COL held the 2nd meeting of the CARICOM Consultation on Teaching Standards in Trinidad & Tobago in September 2011.
LIVELIHOODS AND HEALTH

Integrating eLearning

Educators across the Caribbean are rapidly developing their skills and knowledge of ICT, with the support of COL.

In October 2010, COL, the Commonwealth Secretariat and Microsoft signed a collaboration agreement to support the implementation of ICT in Education in the Caribbean. Microsoft has agreed to offer to Caribbean countries (including Trinidad & Tobago) participating in the “Partners in Learning” programme discounted software licences on Microsoft products. Learners will be able to access free e-mail addresses through Microsoft’s Live@edu, a suite of online hosted services designed for and offered to educational institutions at no cost to the institution. The Focal Points attended the initiative launch in March 2011 at the COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Caribbean) in Trinidad & Tobago.

An ICT in Education Survey took place in the Caribbean. The final survey report consisting of eight country reports and a final summary report with regional trends was published.

COL organised an ICT in Education Leadership Forum on “Teachers’ Creativity and Innovation: a Key to Success in the Caribbean” in January 2012. Participants explored how the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (CFT) has enhanced ICT integration into teaching and learning.

COL facilitated an eGovernment and eBusiness Strategy Development Workshop for the Caribbean in Antigua and Barbuda in March 2011. The workshop was organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat, in partnership with the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD). Representatives from Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, the CARICAD and the Caribbean Association of National Telecommunications Operators attended the workshop.

COL and UNESCO, with financial support from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, conducted a project “Fostering Governmental Support for Open Educational Resources Internationally” to raise awareness of OER beyond the communities of practice that had already developed around them. A Regional Forum for the Caribbean OER was held in Barbados in conjunction with the ICT in Education Leadership Forum in January 2012. This resulted in a 2012 World OER Congress at which the Paris Declaration on OER was adopted by the international community.

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.

REGIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE

COL was one of the sponsors of the Regional Higher Education Conference which was held in St. Lucia from 22-24 March 2010. Over 50 delegates from the region had the opportunity to deliberate on the higher education provision in the Eastern Caribbean States.
REGIONAL PRESENCE

COL maintains strong relationships with many stakeholders in the Caribbean, including member governments, partner institutions, donors and individuals. COL’s Honorary Advisors, a network of eminent ODL professionals, includes a representative from the Caribbean. The region is also represented by a UNESCO-COL Chair and 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 (Caribbean) was organised by COL and co-hosted by the Trinidad & Tobago Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education on 28-30 March 2011. 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 issues identified at the Caribbean Focal Points Meeting were:

- Qualifications frameworks,
- Regional policies,
- Collaboration among government ministries, and
- Boys’ underperformance.

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.
BACKGROUND

Trinidad & Tobago is a small state of the Commonwealth, with a largely rural population of about 1.4 million. Literacy rates are high, as are enrolment rates for primary and secondary education. An active and consistent COL partner, Trinidad & Tobago contributes annually to COL’s budget.

Professor Clement Sankat of UWI is the Regional Representative for the Caribbean on COL’s Board of Governors. He is also Chair of the Board’s Audit Committee.

Ms. Lystra Sampson-Ovid, the former Programme Director of the Distance Education Unit at the Ministry of Education, was the Focal Point for COL from 2006-2012.

SUMMARY

Trinidad & Tobago has seized a number of opportunities to support “Learning for Development” by being actively involved in COL programmes such as the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), “OER for Open Schools” and other open schooling initiatives, Child-Friendly Schools and the Commonwealth Certificate for Teacher ICT Integration (CCTI).

Trinidad & Tobago was well represented at COL’s Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning and participates regularly in regional activities and training.

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.

Trinidad & Tobago 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 but focusing on stevedoring was held in Apia, Samoa in November/December 2009. The workshop helped to build the capacity of workshop participants in ICT and content development using open and distance learning (ODL) as well as developing self-instructional materials for the transport and logistics-stevedoring course. Kevin Harris of Trinidad & Tobago attended the workshop.

The VUSSC Team Leaders Meeting in preparation for the Male workshop was held in Singapore in collaboration with the National Institute of Education at the Nanyang University of Singapore. The team leaders included Dr. Laura Roberts-Nkrumah of Trinidad & Tobago.

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. Dr. Laura Roberts-Nkrumah of the Department of Food Production, Faculty of Science and Agriculture, UWI 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. Sherwyn Millette of the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts attended the workshop.

Dr. Balchan D. Rampaul of Trinidad & Tobago attended the 10th VUSSC training and materials development workshop in Educational Leadership in Singapore from 17 November-2 December 2011.

Vishal N. Ramnarine of the Cipriani College of Labour and Cooperative Studies and Lyстра Sampson-Ovid of the Ministry of Education enrolled in the VUSSC Managing and Facilitating Online Instruction course. Junior McIntyre of the Cipriani College of Labour and Cooperative Studies and Paul Reginald of the Ministry of Education participated in 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 and includes Karen Rosemin of Trinidad & Tobago representing the Caribbean. She attended the meetings in Vancouver in August 2009.

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 Bradshaw of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad & Tobago 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. Karen Rosemin and Lystra Sampson-Ovid attended the meeting and training.

The TQF Procedures and Guideline document was officially launched on 28 April 2010 in Cape Town, South Africa and 3 May 2010 in Windhoek, Namibia. The TQF can be downloaded from the VUSSC website. Michael Bradshaw of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad & Tobago is a member of the TQF Management Committee. He attended the meetings in Vancouver, August 2009.
Open Schooling

As part of COL’s initiative to establish and strengthen open schools, COL assisted in the establishment of the Commonwealth Open School Association (COMOSA). The inaugural meeting of COMOSA was held in Delhi in November 2009. Lystra Sampson-Ovid of the Ministry of Education was one of 22 partners who signed the Constitution.

COMOSA held its first Annual General Meeting in Delhi on November 21, 2010. The COMOSA website at http://comosa.org/wordpress/ was launched. COMOSA’s activities for the next three years include research, gender and vocational and technical education. Lystra Sampson-Ovid of the Ministry of Education attended the AGM.

Trinidad & Tobago was one of six countries that took part in the “OER for Open Schools” programme. Activities included:

- Attended the Steering Committee Meeting in Gaborone, Botswana in September 2009.
- Establishing Country Management Committees. Dr. Olabisi Kuboni was appointed the Trinidad & Tobago Country Consultant.
- Participating in intensive training workshops on developing print and online open educational resources. “Master Teachers” trained in these workshops developed course materials for five secondary-level subjects.
- Use of Basecamp for regular communication among team members collaborating on materials development after the workshop would be conducted via Basecamp.
- Anisworth Ovid of the University of Trinidad & Tobago and Steve Headley of the National Open School, Trinidad & Tobago attended a 10-day Moodle Workshop in Namibia in October 2010.
- Completion of print and electronic open educational resources (OER) for five subjects at the secondary level.
- Training continues to “cascade” from Master Teachers to other educators in Trinidad & Tobago through in-country workshops.

The COL workshop on Copyright and OER was held in Delhi in November 2009. Lystra Sampson-Ovid of the Ministry of Education, Trinidad & Tobago and ODL practitioners from over 20 countries attended the workshop.

Lystra Sampson-Ovid attended a workshop on Integrating, Vocational and General or Academic Education in Botswana in July 2011.

The National Open School of Trinidad & Tobago (NOSTT) is participating in three COMOSA research studies:

- Online learning success variations/factors,
- Integrating vocational and academic education, and
- Gender audit on open schooling.

COL sponsored a Gender-Sensitive ICT Strategy Workshop for Open Schooling in Maputo, Mozambique in July 2011. One of the purposes of the workshop was to promote understanding and discussion around the role of gender and ICT in Open Schools. Henry Paul of the Ministry of Education attended the workshop.

COL organised a Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop for NOSTT in September 2011 in Port of Spain and a workshop to align the NOSTT Strategic Plan with the new Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education. Representatives from NOSTT, the Distance Education Unit, Planning Division, Monitoring and Evaluation, the University of the West Indies Open Campus, the Distance Learning Unit and COL Focal Point Lystra Sampson-Ovid attended both workshops.
COL organised the 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 “OER for Open Schools” Steering Committee meeting was held in Seychelles on 1 March 2012. All member countries have committed to implement the OER policy. Members have also agreed to write a book on the experience for 2012/2013.

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. Lystra Sampson-Ovid attended the COMOSA AGM, eMM workshop, OER and Copyright Policy workshop, Steering Committee meeting and launch.

**Teacher Education**

Trinidad & Tobago was one of ten countries selected to participate in the UNICEF-COL Child-Friendly School (CFS) project. The CFS Project Point Person in Trinidad & Tobago was Milen Kidane, Chief Protection Specialist, UNICEF, Trinidad & Tobago. The University of the Southern Caribbean (USC) was the main partner institution. A consultative meeting was held in February 2011 and an Action Plan for the implementation of the CFS project in Trinidad & Tobago was developed. However, Trinidad & Tobago is no longer participating in CFS.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, with support from COL, organised a two-day regional consultation meeting on Professional and Academic Standards in Antigua & Barbuda in March 2011. Dr. Jennifer Yamin-Ali of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus attended the meeting. The consultation document, “Regional Standards of Practice for The Teaching Profession: Draft Framework of Generic Teaching Performance Standards and Academic Standards”, was submitted to COL in May 2011.

In collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, COL held the 2nd Meeting of the CARICOM Consultation on Teaching Standards in Trinidad & Tobago in September 2011. John Roopchan and Sherma Hyatali of the Ministry of Education; June Gorge of the University of West Indies; and Curtis Floyd and Ronald Brunton of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad & Tobago attended the meeting.

**Higher Education**

COL sponsored Steve Warner of Trinidad & Tobago to take the Master of Instructional Design and Technology online programme offered by the Open University Malaysia.

COL was one of the sponsors of the Regional Higher Education Conference held in St. Lucia in March 2010. Over 50 delegates from the region had the opportunity to deliberate the higher education provision in the Eastern Caribbean States. COL supported Dr. Zameer Mohamed of the University of Trinidad & Tobago to the conference.

**LIVELIHOODS & HEALTH**

**Skills Development**

A request for assistance in capacity building for OLD was made by the Metal Industry Company (MIC). This led to an ongoing collaboration with the Distance Learning Secretariat in the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education. As a result, COL organised a workshop to develop capacity in writing
print-based materials for self-study according to sound Instructional Design (ID) principles, using the COL Template, in Trinidad & Tobago in May/June 2010. Cipriani Davis, Anthony Corbin, Reynold John, Kenneth Samlal, Samuel Bacchus, Donna Bachoo, Dean Smart, Anthony Sam and Mark Sandy of MIC attended the workshop.

Learning for Farming

Following the Focal Point’s recommendation, COL met Dr. Laura Roberts-Nkrumah of UWI in June 2011 and finalised the contents for the recertification programme for the extension officers. A meeting with banks, marketing agencies, mobile companies and university personnel was held to discuss the scope of L3F in Trinidad & Tobago in agriculture and fishery. COL was asked to develop a framework for L3F in Trinidad & Tobago.

Healthy Communities


Integrated eLearning

In collaboration with SchoolNet SA, COL introduced the Commonwealth Certificate for Teacher ICT Integration (CCTI), an Advanced Certificate in Education for teachers and school leaders wishing to focus on information and communication technology (ICT) integration into school management, teaching and learning.

A COL consultant, Gerald Roos visited Trinidad & Tobago in September 2010 and introduced CCTI to Ministry of Education management and the ICT in Education Team. He also developed a policy and roll-out plans for the use of ICT in Education and a short-term plan for the Laptop for Schools Initiative, initiated by the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education in Trinidad & Tobago has adopted the CCTI to train their teachers and subject advisors in the integration of ICT into teaching and learning.

A series of OER capacity building workshops took place as part of the UNESCO-COL initiative, “Taking OER beyond the OER Community: Policy and Capacity”. Michael Bradshaw of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad & Tobago attended the workshop in Namibia in May 2010. The fourth workshop took place on 23 November 2010 in Kochi, India, coinciding with PCF6. Lystra Sampson-Ovid, Ministry of Education, attended the workshop and participated in PCF6.

In October 2010, COL, the Commonwealth Secretariat and Microsoft signed a collaboration agreement to support the implementation of ICT in education in the Caribbean. Microsoft has agreed to offer to Caribbean countries (including Trinidad & Tobago) participating in the “Partners in Learning” programme discounted software licences on Microsoft products. Learners will be able to access free e-mail addresses through Microsoft’s Live@edu, a suite of online hosted services designed for and offered to educational institutions at no cost to the institution. Karen Rosemin and Lystra Sampson-Ovid attended the initiative launch in March 2011 at the COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Caribbean) in Trinidad & Tobago.

An ICT in Education Survey was conducted in the Caribbean. The Minister of Education nominated Henry Paul, ICT Systems Coordinator, Ministry of Education to develop the country report for Trinidad & Tobago. The final survey report consisting of eight country reports (including Trinidad & Tobago) and a final summary report with regional trends was published.
COL facilitated an eGovernment and eBusiness Strategy Development Workshop for the Caribbean in Antigua & Barbuda in March 2011. The workshop was organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat, in partnership with the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD). Representatives from Antigua & Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, the CARICAD and the Caribbean Association of National Telecommunications Operators attended the workshop.

COL and UNESCO, with financial support from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, conducted a project “Fostering Governmental Support for Open Educational Resources Internationally” to raise awareness of OER beyond the communities of practice that had already developed around them. A Regional Forum for the Caribbean OER was held in Barbados in conjunction with the ICT in Education Leadership Forum in January 2012. This resulted in a 2012 World OER Congress at which the Paris Declaration on OER was adopted by the international community.

COL organised an ICT in Education Leadership Forum on “Teachers’ Creativity and Innovation: a Key to Success in the Caribbean” in January 2012. Participants explored how the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (CFT) has enhanced ICT integration into teaching and learning.

Kathleen Thomas, Angela Sinaswee-Gervais and Gaynelle Holdip of the Ministry of Education and Karen Rosemin attended both Forums.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Professor Sankat, Jennifer Sampson of the University of Trinidad & Tobago, Margaret Richardson, Permanent Secretary Tertiary, Karen Rosemin, Trinidad & Tobago’s Focal Point for COL, The Hon. Burchell Whiteman, Chair of the Board of COL, then COL’s President Sir John Daniel and approximately 100 representatives of UWI, the Trinidad & Tobago Government and Trinidad & Tobago institutions attended a COL Stakeholders Meeting at UWI in November 2009. The aim of the meeting was to stimulate a discussion of COL’s work in Trinidad & Tobago.

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 Karen Rosemin of MSTTE and COL Focal Point; Lystra Sampson-Ovid of the Ministry of Education and COL Focal Point; Laura Roberts-Nkrumah of the Ministry of Education; Anil Ramnanan of UWI and Steve Warner of Waterloo S.S. to the Forum.

Karen Rosemin and Lystra Sampson-Ovid, Focal Points for Trinidad & Tobago, attended the COL Regional Focal Points Meeting (Caribbean), organised by COL and co-hosted by MSTTE, in Trinidad & Tobago in March 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.

Sir John Daniel delivered a lecture on “The Future of Universities: New Dynamics of Development” at the Distinguished Lecture Series, organised by the University of West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, on 29 March 2011.
The Honourable Fazal Karim, Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, Trinidad & Tobago attended the AAOU Conference in Penang, Malaysia in September 2011, with arrangements facilitated by COL.

**eLearning for International Organisations**

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

- Two learners participated in the World Health Organization Effective Writing course in 2009,
- One learner participated in the World Health Organization Effective Writing course in 2010,
- Three learners participated in the International Labour Organization Effective Writing course in 2010,
- One learner participated in the World Bank Effective Writing course in 2011,
- One learner participated in the International Development Bank Effective Writing course in 2011, and
- One learner participated in the International Labour Organization Effective Writing 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 Trinidad & Tobago for 2012-2015 are:

- Open Schooling: expanding and formalising the Open School model and supporting its adoption in other Caribbean states,
- Teacher education: promoting the Commonwealth Certificate for Teacher ICT integration amongst teacher training institutions and supporting its adoption in the Ministry of Education,
- VUSSC,
- Skills development,
- Healthy communities,
- Learning for Farmers, and
- Quality assurance.
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).