



KINGDOM OF TONGA

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BACKGROUND

The Kingdom of Tonga is a small island state of the Commonwealth countries and has been a steady contributor to COL's budget since its establishment. The country has made good progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) goals. Education remains the key priority in the Kingdom of Tonga.

SUMMARY

The major focus of COL's assistance to the Kingdom of Tonga in 2009-2012 has been on ongoing capacity development and capacity building workshops for educators, particularly with work in open educational resources. Tonga continues to implement the various activities to benefit through regional and international activities and programmes as well as utilise wisely the tools and resources that COL makes available for the implementation of its educational programmes especially in open and distance learning (ODL).

Tonga also actively participated in the workshop on the development of open educational resources (OERs) in New Zealand in 2007 as well as on the regional workshop on ODL for agriculture and rural development in 2007 and in 2009-2012. The COL current three year plan for 2009-2012 *Learning for Development* is noted by Tonga. COL currently works collaboratively with Tonga to progress the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the Commonwealth priorities within two identified sectors of work: Education; Livelihoods and Health and, as mentioned above, also progress to achieve the EFA goals. Tonga does help to develop better policies and systems for open, distance, technology, mediated learning, and quality models and materials that can be adapted and replicated throughout the commonwealth.

Tonga hosted two learning for content workshops in August 2008 to train local teachers and educators in collaborative online skills using high technology. Moreover, Tonga has been an active contributor to the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) with participants at the first two course development workshops. Tonga was also represented at VUSSC international planning meetings in 2008: Singapore in March and London in July.

COL supported a representative of Tonga to participate in PCF5 in London in July 2008. It also participated in the first meeting of COL Pacific Focal Points in November 2008, a key input mechanism for COL's Three Year Plan for 2009-2012.

EDUCATION

Higher Education

COL has provided scholarships to our students for many years and Tonga is very fortunate to be given such opportunities and we wish that it continues to provide this great opportunity for our students in Higher education.

E Learning for education sector development

Delegates from Tonga attended the regional OERs workshop organised by COL and the Ministry of Education, NZ and held in Wellington in August 2007 and the UNESCO-COL Guidelines for open Educational Resources (OER) in Higher Education is fully supported by Tonga. Ms Pelepetua Kasa Kilioni was the delegate from Tonga who attended the Pacific/Asia Regional TQF meeting in Singapore in June 9-11, 2009 which really assisted the development of work at the Examination Unit in relation to the establishment of the TNQAB. Tonga continues to support this.

LEARNING FOR LIVELIHOODS

Learning and skills for livelihoods. The basic trade courses on TVET developed by COL should be made available especially when the Training Programmes of TIST will return back to the Ministry of Education in July 2012.

The Innovating Concepts in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) hosted by COL on the 7th to the 13th October 2009 in Singapore under the Small Island Developing States Technical Cooperation Programme (SIDSTEC). Ms. Liuaki Fusitu' attended the training and was upskilled and exposed to TVET concepts and experience that can be adapted to the Tongan situation – and to assist with the Development of TVET Policy and programmes as an alternative pathway to formal Higher Education Programmes. Dr. Tevita Vea'ila and Ms. Fololina Ikani will attend the ICT workshop in Thailand in November 2011.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC).

Tonga is and has been an active member of VUSSC for many years. During 2006-2009 and 2009-2012 many activities have included capacity building and the usage of OERs. Quality assurance and cross-accreditation of learning programs have been a focus area during these years. Participants from Tonga attended the sessions from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Works and Ministry of Training, Employment Youth and sports.

Tonga is also participating in the development of the Transnational Qualifications Framework. Tonga has submitted information on its national qualifications framework and as a result Tonga established its TNQAB ie Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board. Tonga also acknowledged that two of its senior managers at the Tonga Institute of Higher Education and Tonga Institute of Education for training both primary and secondary teachers are looking forward to attending the Educational Leadership programmes in Singapore.

LOOKING FORWARD

In the next triennium, Tonga's participation in COL's work in the Pacific will definitely demonstrate its benefits from COL for Tonga and the region.

Tonga will continue to benefit from its participation in the activities of the VUSSC as that initiative gathers further momentum. Tonga has already begun to build capacity in developing OERs and will be encouraged to expand its contribution in 2012-2015

TONGA COUNTRY REPORT

KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Lack of local specialists in TVET Technical , vocational and educational training specialists)
- Lack of written manuals (ie content work on TVET and ICT)
- Need to have supportive international network of users in TVET and ICT to be made available on ODL

STATUS OF ODE IN TONGA

POLICIES

- There is a need to include in the Review of policies and regulation and Educational Act of MEWAC, a policy document for Open and Distance Education for Tonga.
- Tonga has been representing at the various Pan Commonwealth Forums in various countries
- Tonga has already developed its ICT national policy

TEACHER EDUCATION

- Tonga has an ongoing professional development on educational leadership for teachers and there is a great need to include the development of an ICT teacher competency in the Tonga Institute of Education and Higher Education.
- The COL, MEWAC and Commonwealth Secretariat should work together with the World Bank consultants to develop the ICT manuals to be used by teacher educators as well as teachers in Tonga. Ongoing support is very much needed to carry out capacity building workshops for teachers in Tonga on ICT
- A project is very much needed to reactivate the ODL programmes for the teachers in the outer islands to do their BEd and upskillings through ODL

INFRASTRUCTURE

- UNESCO has assisted the Ministry with the provision of 20 computers to be used by TIHE and TIOE. A good quality building is needed to house these as well as establish a multimedia unit to be used by students who are doing higher education course programmes.
- Reactivate the ODL programmes that were offered to the teachers in the outer islands to complete the Diploma certificate and even continue to do their BEd programmes by ODL.

CONTENT

- Ongoing workshops should be conducted by a COL consultant team for Educational senior managers from the schools in the use of ICT in the delivery of its content. ICT manuals should be written and made available to all schools especially to the secondary schools
- Workshops are to be held locally by experts from NCERD , COL experts to train teachers to develop online materials for teaching of teaching materials.

TOP PRIORITIES FOR 2012-2015

1. Development of core modules for ICT teacher education to be delivered to untrained graduate teachers in the outer islands and in the main district areas, using online resources.
2. Training of teachers to develop supportive online materials at various higher education levels.
3. Provision of ongoing capacity building workshops to upskill teachers to use ICT in the teaching and learning processes.
4. Creating a new physical infrastructure in Tonga Institute of Higher Educaiton that can provide ongoing technical support to train teachers to use ICT and the delivery of TVET curriculum programmes ie creative technology in the primary level and design technology at the post-secondary level.