



**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**  
THINKING OF THE WORLD

**VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

**EVALUATION – INTERIM REPORT**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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**by**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Great minds with vision are behind this great global community project!!  
Congratulations for this brain wave<sup>1</sup>.*

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is a growing network committed to the collaborative development of free content resources for education. Specifically, VUSSC countries<sup>2</sup> have chosen to focus on the development of postsecondary, skills-related courses in areas such as tourism, entrepreneurship, use of information and communications technologies (ICTs), life skills, disaster management and fisheries. The VUSSC course materials are non-proprietary and readily adaptable to the specific context of each country. They can be used in the offering of credit-bearing qualifications as well as strengthening educational capacity and access in member countries.

It is important to emphasize that the VUSSC is not a tertiary institution. Rather, it is a collective mechanism for developing, adapting, and sharing courses and learning materials. It is also a forum for institutions to build capacity and expertise in online collaboration, eLearning and ICTs generally.

VUSSC was first conceived by Commonwealth Education Ministers when they met in Halifax, Canada in December 2000. The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is facilitating the VUSSC initiative, with funding support from the Government of Singapore, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC).

There are currently 29 countries (28 from the Commonwealth) participating in VUSSC, through interlocuter planning meetings, training and course development workshops, and an international gathering of senior officials for the development of a Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF).

- |                      |                      |                                    |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Antigua & Barbuda | 11. Guyana           | 21. Seychelles                     |
| 2. The Bahamas       | 12. Jamaica          | 22. St Kitts & Nevis               |
| 3. Barbados          | 13. Lesotho          | 23. St Lucia                       |
| 4. Belize            | 14. Maldives         | 24. St Vincent & the<br>Grenadines |
| 5. Botswana          | 15. Malta            | 25. Swaziland                      |
| 6. Cyprus            | 16. Mauritius        | 26. Tonga                          |
| 7. The Comoros       | 17. Namibia          | 27. Trinidad and Tobago            |
| 8. Dominica          | 18. Papua New Guinea | 28. Tuvalu                         |
| 9. The Gambia        | 19. Samoa            | 29. Vanuatu                        |
| 10. Grenada          | 20. Sierra Leone     |                                    |

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<sup>1</sup> Trinidad and Tobago Bootcamp participant comment in online feedback survey.

<sup>2</sup> A “small state” is usually defined as having a population of fewer than 1.5 million. Of the 52 Commonwealth countries, 32 are small states.

The total number of individuals involved in the VUSSC initiative (direct participation in Bootcamps and/or meetings) as of April 2008 is 190. Women comprise 55% (105) of this total and 85 men 45% (85).

## **VUSSC ACTIVITIES AND INTENDED OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES**

VUSSC is a collaborative network building on the support of Education Ministers across the Small States of the Commonwealth. The timeline below shows the many years of planning and commitment that have gone into developing the VUSSC initiative.

- 2000** 14<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers in Halifax, Canada passed a resolution requesting the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) to develop a proposal for a virtual university for small states (VUSSC) of the Commonwealth (*Halifax Declaration*)
- 2002** Proposal for VUSSC developed by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) distributed to Commonwealth Ministers of Education
- 2003** Ministers of Education Meeting in the Seychelles (March 2003) reviewed and accepted proposal; COL invited to manage continued development of VUSSC initiative
- 2003** 15<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers in Edinburgh, Scotland endorsed the proposal and business plan for VUSSC
- 2005** Orientation and Planning Meeting on “Virtual University, Flexible Learning” held in Singapore (September 2005); articulated the *The Singapore Statement*
- 2006** Singapore Meeting (April 2006) ; “Second Strategy Meeting of Interlocutors and Institutional Managers”; articulated *Letter of Intent*
- 2006** Mauritius Bootcamp (1<sup>st</sup> International Training & Materials Development Workshop – ITMW #1) focusing on Toursim and Entrepreneurship (August 2006)
- 2006** Meeting of Interlocutors in Jamiaca (November 2006)
- 2007** Singapore Bootcamp (ITMW #2) focusing on Training Educators to Develop Open and Distance Learning Materials (March 2007)
- 2007** Trinidad and Tobago Bootcamp (ITMW #3) focusing on Life Skills (June 2007)
- 2007** Beginning the process of copying everything already put together in the wiki, into the COL ODL Instructional Design template, trying to create a version that can be easily implemented in a DE or as support materials in a classroom situation (August 2008)
- 2007** Samoa Bootcamp (ITMW #4) focusing on Disaster Management (November 2007)
- 2008** Seychelles Bootcamp (ITMW #5) focusing on Fisheries (March 2008)
- 2008** Singapore Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) Meeting (February - March 2008)
- 2008** Singapore Meeting Senior Officials Recommendations to Minister – Establishment of a TQF for the VUSSC (February 28, 2008)
- 2008** Finalisation of TQF Concept Document (April 2008)

In addition to the three planning meetings (two in Singapore and one in Jamaica) involving interlocutors and institutional managers, VUSSC has also been active in offering international training and materials development workshops called “Bootcamps”. The Bootcamps are immersion training workshops (also called “International Training & Materials Development Workshops” - ITMW) of almost three weeks duration where professional educators work

together in teams to begin the creation of course materials and to learn a range of ICTs that can be applied and taught to others in their home countries. Four team leaders are chosen to represent each of the four regions of the Commonwealth and they attend an orientation workshop several months prior to the Bootcamp. The subject matters (themes) for each workshop were all identified as priorities by the Ministers of Education when they were canvassed in 2005.

The first Bootcamp was held in Mauritius in 2006 and since then, four more have been offered - in Singapore, Trinidad and Tobago, Samoa and recently in the Seychelles. One hundred participants have attended the Bootcamps to date.

**VUSSC Bootcamps (International Training and Materials Development Workshops)**

Location	Dates	Themes
Mauritius	7-12 August 2006	1. Tourism, Hospitality & Entrepreneurship
Singapore	12-30 March 2007	2. Training Educators to Develop Open and Distance Learning Materials
Trinidad & Tobago	4-20 June 2007	3. Life Skills
Samoa	12-28 November 2007	4. Disaster Management
Seychelles	3-19 March 2008	5. Fisheries

The Bootcamps are designed to achieve a set of progressive outcomes.

1. Learn to work collaboratively in online environments and to use a range of technologies in education
2. Create a set of "finished" materials in the COL Instructional Design Template (using an online project management space called “Basecamp”)
3. Publish these on COL's website for anyone to use
4. Accredit these course materials with at least one institution
5. Offer the workshop to learners in member countries.

Another component of the VUSSC initiative has been the development of a concept document for a Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF). Senior officials from 20 small Commonwealth countries met from 25-29 February 2008 in Singapore, to discuss the proposed Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) for the VUSSC based on the draft concept document developed by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) as commissioned by COL.

The long-term objective for the VUSSC initiative, based on the original proposal to the Ministers of Education, is to help institutions in small states enhance their capacity to serve learners. The performance indicators associated with the overall VUSSC initiative are:

- A cadre of professionals with skills to produce ODL materials has been developed
- Practitioners are more competent to apply ODL for occupational skills development and improved livelihoods
- One institution in each region has increased its capacity to develop and deliver ODL for occupational skills training and/or improved livelihoods
- Contextually relevant sets of new ODL/ICT-based learning materials for occupational skills development have been created and taken up by at least two institutions in developing Commonwealth Small States

- The process to create a Transnational Qualifications Framework has been started and documents have been drafted, collaboratively revised and disseminated, and
- Policy-makers (Interlocutors) are made more aware of the benefits and the feasibility of ODL for occupational skills development and improved livelihoods.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

The purposes of monitoring and evaluation of the VUSSC initiative are:

- To improve each successive activity
- To report to existing funders
- To encourage new or repeat funders
- To report to Ministers
- To report to the COL Board
- To write and publish results of accomplishments and lessons learned

The monitoring and evaluation methodology is based on the principle of triangulating both method and source. Research methods have included: onsite observation at meetings and Bootcamps, interviews, onsite exit surveys for participants, follow-up surveys, review of materials under development, review of interactions on WikiEducator and BaseCamp, anecdotal evidence tracking (email correspondence), and review of speeches and presentations related to the VUSSC.

Data sources for the evaluation include:

- WikiEducator content and discussion pages for each Bootcamp
- Basecamp pages for the last three Bootcamps and the TQF
- COL news releases related to the VUSSC
- Feedback survey administered at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Strategy Meeting of Interlocutors and Institutional Managers, held in Singapore
- *The Singapore Statement*
- *The Singapore Letter of Intent*
- *Report on the Mauritius Bootcamp*, by Sandhya Nowbuth
- *Report on the Singapore Bootcamp*, by Fiona Spence
- *Report on the Singapore Bootcamp*, by Jenny Williams
- *Report on the Samoa Bootcamp*, by Jenny Williams (audio-taped interviews)
- *Report on the Seychelles Bootcamp*, by Jenny Williams (transcribed interviews)
- Singapore Bootcamp Onsite Feedback Survey
- Singapore Bootcamp Participant Follow-up Survey, online survey administered by email
- Trinidad and Tobago Bootcamp onsite ethnographic observation and interviews (Cathie Dunlop)
- Trinidad and Tobago Bootcamp Participant Exit Survey, administered online
- Samoa Bootcamp Participant Exit Survey, administered online
- Samoa Bootcamp Participant Follow-up Survey, online survey administered by email
- Seychelles Bootcamp Participant Exit Survey, administered online
- TQF Meeting in Singapore, onsite ethnographic observation (Cathie Dunlop).

## **Limitations**

The VUSSC is a wide-ranging initiative with events (meetings and workshops) held all over the world. Therefore, it has not always been possible to have evaluation researchers present at every event for onsite observations and interviewing. In some cases, a field researcher (Jenny Williams) was available to attend Bootcamp events, which helped to enhance the richness and validity of the data. The follow-up surveys have been helpful in gathering plans and, in some cases, achievements of the participating institutions, but tracking of progress after the face-to-face gatherings continues to be challenging for two reasons: not all participants are systematic in their follow-up report submissions and more time is needed for in-country activities to be implemented. As a result, the outcomes described in this interim report will be a smaller sample than the actuality. The next evaluation report will build more on interviews and will present detailed case studies of outcomes achieved in various contexts.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

### **Pre-Bootcamp Preparation**

- When asked about their reaction when they first discovered they would be coming to the Bootcamp, participants remembered feeling mostly excited, happy, and curious.
- Some participants had not previously heard of the term “bootcamp” being used for immersion training or felt a bit unsure of their background knowledge about VUSSC and COL.
- Most participants (72% - Trinidad and Tobago Bootcamp, 69% - Samoa Bootcamp, 65% - Seychelles Bootcamp) had a chance to do all or some of the WikiEducator Tutorials before coming to the Bootcamp. The timing of the pre-Bootcamp preparation coincided with the end of semester for some of the participants and that made it more challenging to get through the tutorials before attending the Bootcamp.
- Before coming to the Bootcamp, participants had varying levels of confidence with using a computer. On a 5-point scale where “5” is “very confident” and “1” is “not at all confident”, the group average confidence ratings ranged from 3.47 (Seychelles Bootcamp) to 3.81 (Samoa Bootcamp). More than one-third of the Trinidad and Tobago participants (38%), almost half (44%) of the Samoa Bootcamp participants and more than half (59%) of the Seychelles Bootcamp participants rated their own confidence level with using a computer as either a “2” or a “3”.
- 67% of the Trinidad and Tobago Bootcamp participants, 88% of the Samoa Bootcamp participants, and 71% of the Seychelles Bootcamp participants knew people in their home country that had attended a previous Bootcamp.

### **The Bootcamp Experience**

- The immersion training format of the Bootcamp creates a powerful context for learning and collaboration.
- Additional strengths of the Bootcamp model include: the high level of motivation around working toward a shared goal, and a sense of inclusion and shared ownership around the materials being developed.

- Referring specifically to the Singapore Bootcamp, one expert observer reported on the exceptionally high level of group cohesiveness. A participant also commented on the cohesion and how it helped to enrich the Bootcamp experience.
- The WikiEducator collaborative authoring tool allowed for transparency and flexibility in drafting, editing, reviewing and revising materials.
- Participants in the Mauritius Bootcamp provided feedback in their “Personal Reflection” pages posted on WikiEducator. The feedback is very positive and enthusiastic. Excerpts from their reflections are elsewhere in this report.
- Participants in the Singapore Bootcamp gave very positive feedback in the onsite survey. Particularly high ratings were given in the following categories (agreement statements):
- Participants in the Singapore Bootcamp also commented on the high quality of training provided by the host organization and COL.
- Participants in the Trinidad and Tobago Bootcamp, the Samoa Bootcamp and the Seychelles Bootcamp were generally very satisfied with the travel arrangements, the training facilities and the Wiki training during the Bootcamp (note: these questions were only asked for these three bootcamps).
- The participants provided suggestions for improving the Bootcamp experience. These include: ensuring access to the Internet at the hotel for continued work on course materials after training hours, allowing more time for practice and feedback (less presentations), and focusing on using templates earlier in the workshop.
- The Trinidad and Tobago Bootcamp participants rated the effectiveness of the Bootcamp in achieving the following goals.

Trinidad and Tobago Bootcamp	Not at all effective ←→ Very effective					AVG	#
	1	2	3	4	5		
Build capacity in ODL instructional design	0% (0)	0% (0)	21% (4)	63% (12)	16% (3)	3.95	19
Build capacity in use of collaborative authoring tools	0% (0)	0% (0)	21% (4)	47% (9)	32% (6)	4.11	19
Increase confidence in computer use	0% (0)	5% (1)	11% (2)	53% (10)	32% (6)	4.11	19
Create an ongoing community of practice	0% (0)	0% (0)	21% (4)	16% (3)	63% (12)	4.42	19
Produce collaborative courseware in Life Skills	0% (0)	0% (0)	16% (3)	32% (6)	53% (10)	4.37	19
Increase the likelihood of additional courses being offered at home	0% (0)	0% (0)	11% (2)	47% (9)	42% (8)	4.32	19

- The Samoa Bootcamp participants rated the effectiveness of the Bootcamp in achieving the following goals.

Samoa Bootcamp	Not at all effective ←→ Very effective					AVG	#
	1	2	3	4	5		

Samoa Bootcamp	Not at all effective ←→ Very effective					AVG	#
	1	2	3	4	5		
Increase the likelihood of additional courses being offered at home	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	47% (7)	53% (8)	4.53	15
Build capacity in use of collaborative authoring tools	0% (0)	0% (0)	13% (2)	33% (5)	53% (8)	4.40	15
Create an ongoing community of practice	0% (0)	0% (0)	7% (1)	53% (8)	40% (6)	4.33	15
Other	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	71% (5)	29% (2)	4.29	7
Increase confidence in computer use	0% (0)	0% (0)	7% (1)	67% (10)	27% (4)	4.20	15
Build capacity in ODL instructional design	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (5)	33% (5)	33% (5)	4.00	15
Produce collaborative courseware	0% (0)	7% (1)	21% (3)	43% (6)	29% (4)	3.93	14

- The Seychelles Bootcamp participants rated the effectiveness of the Bootcamp in achieving the following goals.

Seychelles Bootcamp	Not at all effective ←→ Very effective					AVG	#
	1	2	3	4	5		
Other goals*	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	50% (1)	50% (1)	4.50	2
Produce collaborative courseware in Fisheries	0% (0)	0% (0)	24% (4)	47% (8)	29% (5)	4.06	17
Increase confidence in computer use	6% (1)	6% (1)	18% (3)	41% (7)	29% (5)	3.82	17
Increase the likelihood of additional courses being offered at home	0% (0)	6% (1)	35% (6)	35% (6)	24% (4)	3.76	17
Create an ongoing community of practice	0% (0)	6% (1)	47% (8)	24% (4)	24% (4)	3.65	17
Build capacity in use of collaborative authoring tools	0% (0)	18% (3)	29% (5)	35% (6)	18% (3)	3.53	17
Build capacity in ODL instructional design	12% (2)	18% (3)	41% (7)	24% (4)	6% (1)	2.94	17

\* “Other goals” suggested by participants included learning about copyright issues, expanding understanding about ODL, building awareness of appropriate language for distance education, learning about authoring tools, and applying Bloom’s Taxonomy to instructional design,

- Participants commented on the effectiveness of the Bootcamp and what they like best about the experience. Illustrative quotes are below.
  - *Well worth the time, energy, and other resources expended. Time well spent!*
  - *My confidence level regarding my computer and WikiEducator has risen and I will be diligent in further collaboration.*

- *Helped me individually in my confidence to develop materials. A 360 degree turnaround in my confidence in the use of WikiEducator, not like the level I was before arriving here. Now I can work together with my colleague who attended the second Bootcamp in materials development. A first class hands-on training on Life Skills issues.*
- *It definitely built on capacity. Amazing links with like-minded people who can help in other spheres.*
- *The opportunity to learn and be part of something quite innovative that promotes quality learning for everyone. This is the epitome of collaborative work.*
- *An overall productive workshop, my expectations have been realized, for someone from and working in a resource poor institution, this form of interactive and shared learning goes a long way in delivering quality and relevant courses for online and face-to-face students. The “other” part of this workshop which I think is very successful is the fellowship with other participants and learning their cultures and appreciating it.*
- *In the process of documenting information to enrich prospective learners, I also enhanced my own knowledge base, especially in areas that are outside of my direct job experience. I also formed a bond with other disaster management professionals and educators across the Commonwealth and developed even higher levels of respect for cultural diversity.*
- *COL did all that was necessary for me to have had a great workshop.*
- Participants commented on what parts of the program were the most beneficial and what skills and new understandings had been acquired. Illustrative quotes are below.
  - *All parts of the program were beneficial. I found some of the new skills were totally new to me. Even if it was not that new, I found myself helping others and that benefits both me and my college. We learned from each other and that helped me recall and retain the Wiki skills.*
  - *The group work and peer review because I was able to learn from others and the feedback contributed to improvement and quality.*
  - *Skills and knowledge acquired will enable me to perform efficiently and effectively in my organization. Institutional visits and excursions were very helpful and enabled me to gain more insight and reflect on our organizations - not only entertaining but also educational.*
  - *Leadership skills...learning to be patient and provide support for people who are on your team and give them opportunities to utilize their strengths and talents and help them to get involved and own the process.*
  - *I'm more positive and mature. I can work with people on a collaborative nature, whereas before, I was more of a individual oriented worker.*
  - *I have a more global perspective and appreciation for the things that I have in common with people from other countries, the ways we are different and our potential for helping move each other forward.*
- Participants described a variety of skills and new understandings that they had acquired during the Bootcamp. The new skills include: using WikiEducator, SurveyMonkey, and

PowerPoint. New understanding was also achieved around working with others in a team environment.

- Participants generally felt confident about teaching their new skills to others when they returned to their countries. Some participants also anticipated getting assistance from other members in the group if they encountered any difficulty.
- One participant in the Singapore Bootcamp provided some inspiring comments about a changed perspective in the responses to the follow-up survey:
  - *I have been able to see new possibilities and change my paradigm about open content. I don't think before being a participant of this I would really have considered just putting content online for anyone to use and change. Now, having done the workshop my perspective has changed. Now I see that **I can move from providing training for a few persons in my country or becoming a teacher of many, across nations.** I have gained new skills, a new perspective, a vision of what is possible and how limitations of size, money and distance can be overcome if people are willing to work together and share resources. I am very glad that I was able to do all of this in Singapore too because I can relate to their size and I see that they have been able to accomplish.*

### **Post-Bootcamp Plans and Outcomes**

- Participants articulated plans to complete their course material units, assist other groups in completing theirs, conduct short workshops for colleagues in their home institution, set up a steering committee for integration in the curriculum, train colleagues who will be attending future Bootcamps, include the work of the Bootcamp into one's own work plan, present a report to the Ministry, and begin the process of exploring how to get the course accredited.
- Some challenges that the participants are likely to face after the Bootcamp revolve around the following issues:
  - *Resources* - lack of technical, financial and human resources and support in some member states
  - *Communication* - need for ongoing coordination and collaboration among interlocutors, implementers and course writers
  - *Support* - importance of policy makers giving concrete backing to the initiative
  - *Teamwork* - recruiting additional individuals to contribute to content development and course writing
- Participants in the identified specific challenges that they anticipated facing.
  - *Fluctuating electrical power. Limited IT hardware/software to schools. Professional development for educators/teachers.*
  - *To get all faculty to agree on this approach for collaboration and to set aside a period of time to collaborate on a face-to-face basis. Even if it is online, the times must be synchronized.*
  - *A lean budget of the Ministry related to training may be a major drawback.*
  - *The continuation of the project will depend very much on the how COL can convince the governments to take the objectives seriously. How much money is the government*

*prepared to spend on training. The support to train others. Participants being released from some of the present job responsibilities in order to take on the additional work loads.*

- *The turf protection that agencies exhibit that prevents collaboration and cooperation for seamless information exchange and networking.*
- After the Bootcamp (approximately three months), most participants (86% of those who responded to the follow-up survey) are still in touch with other participants.
- Specific outcomes achieved have included:
  - Building and participating in a community of practice
  - Dissemination through sessions with the Ministry and local institutions
  - Conducting workshops on elearning with colleagues
  - Improving existing course materials
  - Incorporating the new materials into training activities
  - Applying the skills learned to create new courses
  - Beginning the process of accrediting the newly developed courses (Mauritius)

## **CONCLUSIONS**

### **Process and Approach**

- The Bootcamps have been well-organized, professional events.
- The VUSSC model of learning and collaborating has been successful on many levels.
- The right people seem to be chosen to attend the Bootcamps; all have been selected for their specialist skills and ability to design and develop educational content.
- Participants have generally been very satisfied with the Bootcamp experience and with the opportunity to learn new skills and become part of a larger, culturally diverse network.
- The VUSSC Bootcamps are unique for several reasons: the host country is empowered (genuine autonomy), the participants come from across the Commonwealth rather than regionally, in-country interlocutors play a key role in selecting, mentoring and monitoring participants, and useable learning material is produced by people from diverse backgrounds in less than three weeks.<sup>3</sup>
- The Bootcamps have become progressively more efficient in the following ways:
  - IT training has become more focused on participants' needs (responsive design)
  - Methods for capturing course materials have been improved (COL's Instructional Design Template)
  - Each workshop has produced larger amounts of material (productivity)
  - Ongoing collaborative course development activities have increased after the workshops (networked community of practice)
- The intensive Bootcamp experience is an effective format for group work, collaboration, and situated learning, whereby new skills can be practiced while developing course materials.

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<sup>3</sup> These points are drawn from Jenny Williams' (COL Pacific Project Manager) "VUSSC Bootcamp Evolution – Singapore, Samoa, and Seychelles."

- The Bootcamp is also effective in mixing people of different cultures and enhancing appreciation of other ways of living and working together.
- The emphasis on WikiEducator seemed to confuse some participants as at times it appeared to be the main goal of the workshop, as opposed to developing distance education materials. The enthusiasm for the Wiki movement has since been balanced with the provision of additional technologies such as BaseCamp (an online, collaborative project management tool) and the COL Instructional Design Template. Using a range of technologies - and not being dependent on just one - is a positive learning from this past year.

### **Key Outcomes**

VUSSC has been successful in achieving a range of outcomes, especially at the level of the individual participant. Some of these outcomes are also already being manifested as larger-scale benefits to member countries and more benefits will accrue over time. The following quote captures the “heroic” progress made by VUSSC and shows how the investment has been worthwhile:

- *VUSSC is performing heroically in getting people with some technical skills to ramp up their personal skills and commit to moving things in their countries. The materials being produced are probably less important than learning how to do it – and the experience of working together.*<sup>4</sup>

### **Benefits to Participants**

- Enhanced computer skills and confidence levels
- Capacity building in ODL and ICTs
- Involvement in the Wiki community
- Enhanced teamwork and collaborative skills
- Increased appreciation for diverse cultural contexts
- Exposure to a range of technologies including the COL Design Template and BaseCamp
- Expanded global network of professional educators
- Empowered practitioners - able to adapt curriculum freely
- Participation in an ongoing collaborative learning community

### **Benefits to Member Countries**

- Content developed for various courses to be adapted and accessed in local context
- Expanded pool of local capacity through ongoing training from Bootcamp participants
- Local educators become more competent in the use of ICTs in education
- Empowering students through additional open and distance course offerings
- Increasing access to education through free content - helping to achieve MDGs

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Continue to work with member governments to find additional ways to support VUSSC and strengthen commitment. Ideally, activities related to VUSSC will eventually be

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<sup>4</sup> Excerpt from **The Singapore Bootcamp Report** by Jenny Williams.

included in the job descriptions of Bootcamp graduates (1 day/week) and in the Annual Plans of participating institutions.

2. Continue funding additional Bootcamps in order to build the critical mass needed in each member country to continue to develop open content courses and eventually integrate them with accredited programs.
3. Increase the lead time between selection and participation so there is even more time to prepare for the Bootcamp experience. Consider including some material on cross-cultural communication in the preparation package and incorporating some group activities early in the Bootcamp (such as Barnaga).
4. Provide additional laptops to Bootcamp participants to be used after hours in the hotel, where possible. Also, ensure that the hotel has adequate Internet connectivity so that all participants have a chance to work on the materials outside of the training facilities after hours.
5. Include more time during the Bootcamps for learning about instructional design and “user-friendly” writing for ODL contexts.
6. Include more time during the Bootcamps to discuss follow-up activities including the process of getting courses accredited and strategies for addressing any challenges.
7. Plan touchstone events for Bootcamp graduates whereby everyone will be connecting and communicating during some pre-determined time windows. Celebrate milestones achieved with newsletter style emails to all Bootcamp graduates and interlocutors.
8. Clarify with Interlocutors the key role they play in mentoring participants and monitoring in-country activities after the Bootcamps.
9. Continue to implement the next phase of activities around the Transnational Qualifications Framework in order to build on the momentum and growing clarity and commitment achieved in Singapore.
10. Continue to track the progress of VUSSC through an ongoing evaluation process. Relevant evaluation findings can be shared in the email newsletter as a way to further the transfer of best practices and help keep the commitment and enthusiasm strong.