



# AFRICA

*Commonwealth of Learning's work by region*



- BOTSWANA
- CAMEROON
- THE GAMBIA
- GHANA
- KENYA
- LESOTHO
- MALAWI
- MAURITIUS
- MOZAMBIQUE
- NAMIBIA
- NIGERIA
- RWANDA
- SEYCHELLES
- SIERRA LEONE
- SOUTH AFRICA
- SWAZILAND
- TANZANIA
- UGANDA
- ZAMBIA

**LEARNING FOR DEVELOPMENT** is the theme of the Commonwealth of Learning's Three-Year Plan for 2009-2012. This plan expresses a vision that reaches beyond formal education to embrace areas of learning that are vital for better livelihoods, greater prosperity and a safer environment. Understanding development as the process of increasing the freedoms that people can enjoy, COL pursues this vision operationally within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the campaign for Education for All and Commonwealth values.

COL's two programme sectors, *Education* and *Livelihoods & Health*, embrace eight initiatives that will help governments pursue the twin goals of expanding access to learning and using public funds cost-effectively.

[www.col.org/3yp](http://www.col.org/3yp)



## Recent COL Initiatives/Activities



COL helps developing nations improve access to quality education and training using distance education and appropriate technologies. While significant progress in achieving the MDGs and Education for All has vastly expanded access to education in Africa, major challenges remain. COL is applying its expertise in open and distance learning (ODL) and information and communication technology (ICT) to help address needs in Africa.





## EDUCATION

**OPEN SCHOOLING:** Open/alternative schooling has proven to be a successful and cost-effective means of increasing access to basic and secondary schooling. To meet the growing demand for secondary schooling resulting from the success of the Universal Primary Education campaign, COL supports open schools through activities including:

- The establishment of the Commonwealth Open Schooling Association (COMOSA), a consortium of open schools, including seven in Southern Africa countries.
- *Open Educational Resources for Open Schools*, a pan-Commonwealth initiative involving five African countries, that is improving capacity in materials development among open school teachers and faculty members, and creating a library of OERs that are freely available to teachers and students.
- Developing multimedia capacity among educators at the Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) who are sharing their knowledge and skills with open schools in other African countries. As a result, open schools in Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia have developed strategies for integrating digital content.
- Supporting improved quality in open schooling through the development of a *Quality Assurance Toolkit for Open Schools*, a process that involved 10 African countries.



- Assisting with planning for new open schools in Cameroon; conducting an institutional assessment for the Zambia College of Distance Education.
- Facilitating workshops that develop capacity in learner support, instructional design and course writing specifically for open schools in Africa.
- Training/capacity building in understanding copyright and working with OERs.

[www.col.org/OpenSchooling](http://www.col.org/OpenSchooling)

**TEACHER EDUCATION:** COL promotes the expansion and improvement of teacher training in Africa through:

- Support of Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA), a consortium of 18 organisations that are collaborating to develop extensive OERs for teacher training.



## Recent COL Initiatives/Activities



- In partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), COL is working with partner institutions and Ministries of Education in 10 countries to introduce the Child-Friendly Schools model to teacher training institutions and teacher resource centres.
- Publishing a *Quality Assurance Toolkit for Teacher Education*.
- Training in distance education tutoring for course facilitators at Nigeria's National Teachers' Institute.

- Providing training for course writers to develop ODL materials for the Higher Teacher Certificate for in-service teachers in Sierra Leone.
- Hosting workshops for head teachers and principals in West Africa to improve their professional skills and effectiveness, in partnership with Memorial University (Canada).

[www.col.org/TeacherEducation](http://www.col.org/TeacherEducation)

**HIGHER EDUCATION:** COL is working to improve access to quality higher education in Africa:

- The COL Review and Improvement Model (COL RIM) for effective institutional quality audits has been introduced to educators from 11 African countries.
- Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (Ghana) has joined the Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration (CEMBA) and Master of Public Administration (CEMPA) programme consortium, which offers working professionals the opportunity to study part-time through ODL.





- The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) offers COL's Graduate Diploma in Legislative Drafting, which builds capacity in planning and writing laws and policies.
- Support for universities in Cameroon and Nigeria to go "dual mode" – expanding their offerings to include courses by ODL.
- A group of Nigerian students is gaining important knowledge about ODL by taking part in Indira Gandhi National Open University's Master of Arts in Distance Education programme through the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme, which is funded by COL.

[www.col.org/HigherEducation](http://www.col.org/HigherEducation)

**VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH:** Eight African countries are members of a collaborative network of 32 small states that are part of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Two African countries – Mauritius and the Seychelles – have hosted VUSSC training workshops, also known as "boot camps".



Initiated by COL and now led by an independent Management Committee, VUSSC is creating OERs for post-secondary, skills-related courses in areas such as disaster management, entrepreneurship, sustainable agriculture and tourism. These non-proprietary, electronically-held course materials are freely available for download, use and adaptation, strengthening the educational capacity and outreach of tertiary education institutions in small states.

[www.col.org/VUSSC](http://www.col.org/VUSSC)

## LIVELIHOODS AND HEALTH

**SKILLS DEVELOPMENT:** COL is supporting the development of a national ODL policy for technical and vocational training (TVET) in Zambia which will provide the guiding framework for institutions to benefit from ODL approaches.

COL is supporting capacity building and policy development through its partnership with the Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA). Colleges, polytechnics and institutes from The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia are engaged in activities to improve access to TVET through increased use of ICT for both teaching and college administration. Capacity building is being done through an online learning and collaborative space. Courses are offered online through the COL Moodle learning management system.



## Recent COL Initiatives/Activities



With COL's support, eight institutions in Kenya are collaboratively developing learning materials for nurse education. This work has built capacity among nurse educators to use ODL methods to reach nurses in rural clinics and help them upgrade their skills and qualifications. The curriculum and materials will be available as open educational resources through the COL website.

[www.col.org/SkillsDevelopment](http://www.col.org/SkillsDevelopment)

**LEARNING FOR FARMING:** COL helps countries harness the potential of ICT to build capacity in the agricultural sector. COL's successful Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3 Farmers) programme, launched in India in 2003, is now established in Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria and Uganda. This powerful partnership of farmers, educational institutions, banks and ICT providers promotes learning for sustained improvement of livelihoods. COL has supported the creation of a collection of Farming OERs that are now freely available through both the COL and OER Africa websites.

[www.col.org/L3Farmers](http://www.col.org/L3Farmers)

**HEALTHY COMMUNITIES:** Working collaboratively with health and development experts, media and technology groups, community networks and public health authorities, COL helps build knowledge and skills to use non-formal ODL to address health issues at the community level. Experts provide knowledge; media provide scale and animation; community networks provide learner support. COL's approach to community learning is low-cost and participatory, and prioritises local ownership and story-based learning.

- COL supported the development of a community learning programme about maternal and child health in Malawi. A weekly radio programme targets an audience of 80,000 women; a network of 200 community groups facilitates learning through discussion and collective action among more than 3,000 women.
- COL has also supported community learning initiatives in Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania, bringing together community radio groups with district health authorities, non-governmental organisations and community networks to develop low-cost learning programmes about HIV/AIDS.





- COL is working with Farm Radio International to create and run online radio scriptwriting courses in conjunction with script competitions on smallholder innovation and promoting healthy communities for radio broadcasters in Africa.

[www.col.org/HealthyCommunities](http://www.col.org/HealthyCommunities)

**INTEGRATING eLEARNING:** COL helps countries and institutions to understand and implement eLearning. Activities in Africa include international workshops held in Namibia and South Africa to promote OERs among educational decision makers and an information session about copyright and OERs for African Vice Chancellors.

[www.col.org/eLearning](http://www.col.org/eLearning)

**eLEARNING FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS:** COL's custom ODL programmes help to build skills and knowledge among staff at international agencies such as the Commonwealth Secretariat, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Labour Organization, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Bank and World Health Organization. Headquarters staff and field-based workers located throughout the world can access COL's eLearning for International Organisations programmes in areas such as communications, data management and debt management.

[www.col.org/COLeLIO](http://www.col.org/COLeLIO)

## REGIONAL PRESENCE

In Africa, COL has facilitated the establishment of:

- the Regional Training and Research Institute for Open and Distance Learning (RETRIDOL), a centre of expertise in ODL for West Africa, at the National Open University of Nigeria, and the Southern African Development Community – Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE), in partnership with the Botswana College of Open and Distance Learning (BOCODOL) and the Botswana Ministry of Education.

These regional agencies are developing an inventory of resources and network of expertise, and conducting regional ODL training workshops.

COL maintains strong relationships with many stakeholders in Africa, including member governments, partner institutions, donors and individuals. Three of COL's Honorary Advisors, a network of eminent ODL professionals, are from Africa. The region is also represented by two COL Chairs 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.

### **PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING:**

COL's Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF) has become one of the world's top international conferences on learning and global development. Each biennial conference is



co-hosted with a partner in a different region of the Commonwealth. Recently, this includes the University of London (PCF5 in London, 2008) and Indira Gandhi National Open University (PCF6 in India, 2010).

The five-day programme is designed to address ODL's role in widening educational access, bridging the digital divide and advancing the social and economic development of communities and nations at large. Thanks to an active sponsorship programme and low registration fees, most participants come from



developing countries, including many from Africa. COL presents its Excellence in Distance Education Awards and confers Honorary Fellowships at each Forum. A number of Africans are among the past award winners and COL Fellows.

[www.col.org/pcf](http://www.col.org/pcf)

#### KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES AND COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA:

COL employs a variety of media to communicate with and provide resources for stakeholders and the wider public. COL's website, newsletters (*Connections/EdTech News* and *EduComm Asia*) and electronic resources are among the world's foremost sources of knowledge on ODL. Most of COL's recent publications are available on a CD-ROM; all are available on the COL website.

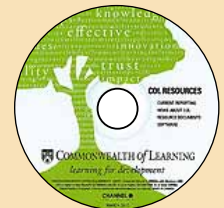
COL's Information Resource Centre maintains an extensive online library of documents about ODL and international development from quality-assessed external sources. More than one million documents are freely available through COL's Knowledge Finder search facilities.

[www.col.org](http://www.col.org)

[www.col.org/connections](http://www.col.org/connections)

[www.col.org/kf](http://www.col.org/kf)

[www.col.org/blog](http://www.col.org/blog)



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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.