REPORT OF THE REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS MEETING (ASIA)

PENANG
MALAYSIA

SEPTEMBER 17-19, 2014
REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS (ASIA) AND COL STAFF
SEPTEMBER 2014
1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Regional Focal Points Meeting (Asia) was held at the Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) from September 17-19, 2014 and co-hosted by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), in cooperation with USM. A total of 16 persons including Focal Points from six countries in Asia attended this meeting. See Appendix 1 for the full list of participants. The meeting was facilitated by Professor Asha Kanwar, President and Chief Executive Officer of COL; Vis Naidoo, Vice President; Ms. Frances Ferreira, Education Specialist – Open Schooling; Dr. Jessica Aguti, Education Specialist – Teacher Education and Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, Director – Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) and assisted by CEMCA colleagues, Mr. R. Thyagarajan, Head, Administration and Finance; Dr. Ankuran Dutta, Programme Officer – Livelihoods; and Dr. Manas Panagrahi, Programme Officer – Education.

The theme, objectives and sub-objectives of the meeting were as follows:

THEME:
To explore education and the use of technology and distance learning methods in sustainable development.

OBJECTIVES:
1. Determine the key priorities and needs for education and training in Asia¹; and
2. Identify COL’s role in addressing these key needs in the region.

SUB-OBJECTIVES:
1. Enhance the understanding of COL’s identity and purpose;
2. Understand the rationale of the current COL’s programmes and initiatives;
3. Learn about the role of COL’s Focal Points and ways to improve engagements and partnerships in a country;
4. Increase awareness of gender issues in Asia and what role COL can play in addressing these challenges;
5. Review COL’s draft Logic Model noting the needs of member countries, global development agendas and technology advancements; and
6. Recommend changes to the draft Logic Model for the next Strategic Plan (2015-2021).

To achieve these objectives, the meetings were run following a specific agenda given in Appendix 2.

¹ Asia – Commonwealth Asian countries: Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, India, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Singapore and Sri Lanka.
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2014

2.0 INAUGURATION OF FOCAL POINTS MEETING

The inauguration ceremony of the Regional Focal Points Meeting (Asia) was the first major activity of the morning with speeches by Y.Bhg. Dato’ Professor Dr. Asma binti Ismail, the Director-General, Higher Education, Ministry of Education of Malaysia; Professor Dr. Mustafa Fadzil, representing the Vice Chancellor of USM; and Professor Asha Kanwar President and CEO of COL.

Welcome and introduction by Professor Asha Kanwar

Professor Asha Kanwar welcomed everybody to the ceremony and expressed COL’s gratitude to the Ministry of Education, Malaysia and USM for their generosity and support for the Focal Points meeting. She pointed out that there are 8 members of the Commonwealth in Asia and Malaysia is one of the members that has worked closely with COL. For example, COL has worked with the Open University Malaysia, and with Wawasan Open University. She then announced that the Open University Malaysia has won the bid to host PCF8 in 2016.

Professor Kanwar also expressed COL’s gratitude for all the support that it has continued to receive from the different Ministries of Education because each Focal Points meeting is always organised with the collaboration and support of the Ministry of Education of the host country.

Welcome remarks by the representative of the Vice Chancellor of USM

Professor Dr. Mustafa Fadzil welcomed all the participants to Penang in general and to USM in particular. He also delivered warm wishes from the Vice Chancellor of USM saying that USM was pleased to have been part of the organising committee; and that this involvement gave USM an opportunity to reflect on its own policies and practices in distance education.

Professor Fadzil then gave a brief history of USM, especially of the USM School of Distance Education which has grown and now has an enrolment of about 7,000. The School has also been a pioneer in a number of ODL strategies and methodologies in Malaysia. He closed his remarks by expressing USM’s appreciation to the other organising partners - Ministry of Education, Malaysia and the National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN).
Opening address by the Director-General, Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Malaysia - Dato Professor Dr. Asma binti Ismail

Dato Professor Dr. Asma binti Ismail began her address with a warm welcome to all the participants expressing her country’s pleasure in hosting the Focal Points meeting and officiating at the opening ceremony. She also commended USM for providing leadership particularly in research and collaboration with industry and for hosting the meeting. She highlighted key issues facing Malaysia and the region:

1. *Place and importance of distance education* – Distance education is a growing phenomenon and her Ministry places value in the use of alternative ways of providing education. She related this to Malaysia which is a popular destination for international students. However, according to her, students do not have to come here to Malaysia, distance education should instead be used to reach those international students. In this regard, she challenged the School of Distance Education at USM to also grow its provision so as to achieve a lot more and perhaps win the next COL award.

2. *The growing role and importance of MOOCs* – noting this is a development universities need to closely follow and embrace.

3. *Potential of new technologies* – All institutions need to be conscious of the new technologies and the potentials they offer to make education more accessible and affordable. The challenge is how to keep pace with changes brought about by these rapid changes in technology and methodologies which can help learners ‘feel the classroom without being in the classroom’.

4. *Credit transfers* – There is need to improve student mobility and credit transfers within the region. For this to work, there has to be quality assurance of programmes across the region and across the Commonwealth. She invited COL and the whole meeting to perhaps consider a consortium as a platform for sharing courses, quality assurance across the region, etc.

5. *TVET and skills training* – This needs to be promoted and planned for, particularly to address issues of unemployment among the youth.

In conclusion, she said that brick and mortar can no longer expand; but that neither can we continue using the old ODL strategies because these cannot be sustained. We must think of alternative strategies. She then declared the Focal Points meeting opened.

### 3.0 OVERVIEW OF COL: VALUES, MISSION, STRUCTURE

This session enabled participants to have a greater understanding and appreciation of COL, its mandate and work. Professor Asha Kanwar highlighted the history and mandate of the COL; its activities and the regional centres through which some of this work is being done. She also related these to the needs of the Commonwealth countries.
She talked about the priorities that have been identified in the Africa & Mediterranean region and in the Caribbean states. She said that one of the reasons for the meeting was to discuss the Asia region priorities and get suggestions on how COL can support the different countries.

In relation to post-2015 development goals, she focused on the new goals to end extreme poverty and the emphasis on sustainable development. She further noted that sustainability for COL implied the integration of social, economic and environmental dimensions. COL will focus on access, quality and equity as it seeks to contribute to the global targets and goals. So in the region, it becomes vital to consider:

1. Which technologies to adopt especially with nearly 100% access to mobile phones in a number of countries in the region?
2. Unemployment rates in the region are still high, so how can we make education more relevant to avoid high rates of unemployment among those with tertiary education.

In concluding her remarks, she said that COL adopts a minimum intervention and maximum impact approach while supporting countries depending on their specific needs.

The meeting raised the issue of universities using OER available to develop courses where students pay fees. After discussing this issue, it was agreed that:

- Universities can use these OER but the prerogative to charge fees will lie with the universities; and
- However in the long run and hopefully as the costs of education come down, these universities will not need to charge these fees anymore.

4.0 FUNCTION & PROGRAMMES

COL’s current Three-Year Plan (2012-2015) focuses on learning for development and it is implementing this through its seven programme areas (initiatives):

- Open Schooling
- Teacher Education
- Higher Education
- VUSSC
- TVSD
- Learning for Farmers
- Healthy Communities

There are two cross cutting areas of gender and e-learning.

A summary of key activities was provided for each initiative, emphasising the key role of partnerships in the implementation of the different projects, and the fact that for each project, countries/institutions indicate what their specific problem is and the solution is collaboratively agreed upon.
5.0 ROLE OF FOCAL POINTS

The Focal Points (FPs) are a very critical link between COL and its member countries. This session was therefore on their roles and the challenges they face. The FPs were asked to respond to three questions:

1. What is the role & responsibilities of the FPs?
2. What are the key challenges faced by the FPs in executing the above?
3. How can COL enhance the role of the FPs?

After the group work and the discussion of the different feedback, the following was the agreed position for each of the questions raised.

The role & responsibilities of the Focal Points

The table below gives all the different roles identified and the number of votes each role obtained. Two roles were given the full votes, namely:

- Making COL aware of country needs, then sensitise the ministry staff and others; and
- Assisting with the coordination of COL’s activities in the country helping COL identify country priorities and needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Votes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Making COL aware of country needs, then sensitise the ministry</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>staff and others</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Assisting with the coordination of COL’s activities in the country</td>
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<td>helping COL identify country priorities and needs</td>
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<td>3. Disseminating of COL related information</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Coordinating with other ministries</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Coordinating with other ministries (agriculture, health…)</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Providing advice and guidance to COL</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Coordinating between COL and the country components in terms of</td>
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<td>information and communication</td>
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<td>8. Meeting with visiting COL staff</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>9. Follow up on timely release of contribution</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>10. COL ‘ambassador’ in the country</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Being advocates for ODL &amp; COL</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Keeping the Minister and Ministry informed about COL’s activities</td>
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What are the key challenges faced by the FPs in executing the above?

The participants identified the following challenges in carrying out their work as FPs:

1. Sometimes superior authority does not believe it is the job of the FPs to brief other ministry officials on COL activities;
2. FPs often communicate with the Ministries but receive no responses from the ministries and sometimes the wrong persons are sent for meetings making liaison with ministries ineffective;
3. Getting the much needed support from other ministries – ministries do not see it as their role to attend to COL’s business or work; and
4. Obtaining funds for COL’s work or contributions to COL is not always easy.

**How can COL enhance the role of the FPs?**

The meeting also discussed the different ways that COL can do to enhance the work of the FPs. The following were identified as some of the key things that COL could do:

1. Annual updates are not enough and COL should take the initiative or be more proactive to create greater awareness and provide frequent updates or communication to the FPs and to the Ministries of Education.
2. Improve communication between COL & FPs so as to make it attractive/worthwhile for the FPs to spend time and energy being a FP.
3. When COL staff visit they should make an effort to visit the Ministry of Education officials. That way the Ministry officials will understand the work of COL and see what COL is doing in their specific countries.
4. Lobby to have the COL financial contribution included in the national budgets.
5. Ensure Ministers are aware of COL’s work and the role of the FPs so that the right people are appointed. This should ideally be someone in a position of power and authority in the ministry/country.
6. After every FPs meeting COL should send out letters, thanking the Ministers for sending the FPs to the meeting.

**6.0 PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED IN THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SECTOR IN ASIA**

In the session, Dr. Sanjaya Mishra gave a comprehensive picture on the education scenario in the Commonwealth Asian countries. Using data gathered from the country reports and general country education statistics, Dr. Mishra highlighted challenges in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Some of the challenges he identified were:
1. Low Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in all levels of education in the region is generally low. While the GER in tertiary education is expected to reach 50%, all countries except Malaysia are below 25%;
2. Low enrolment of girls in a number of countries;
3. Failure to ensure trained teachers for all levels with Bangladesh for example having only 58% of teachers trained;
4. Boys are under performing in some countries like India; and
5. Inequitable ICT index ranking that is ranking in terms of infrastructure development and use of ICTs.

The FPs were asked to respond to three questions in groups:

1. What are the challenges facing countries in Commonwealth Asia?
2. What are the priorities in education in Commonwealth Asia?
3. Identify possible COL interventions in Commonwealth Asia.

Challenges facing countries in Commonwealth Asia

The following is a summary of the Group One’s discussion.

1. *Curricula that do not necessarily address the needs of industry with the following specific associated problems* – there is a lack of teachers with proficiency to teach, especially ICT skills. English is also a challenge as it is not the mother tongue of all Commonwealth
Asian countries. Therefore, teaching English and ICT skills is a key requirement. There is also a need to emphasise entrepreneurship so as to train job creators and not job seekers. The issue of credit transfer in the region is still hugely problematic and the need to have a common credit transfer mechanism, particularly in the area of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) was identified.

2. *Universities cannot accept ALL qualified candidates* – Bricks and mortar cannot expand fast enough to absorb all those demanding and requiring higher education. The countries in the region need strategies to ensure Education for All. This need is also extended to TVET. Institutions need to undergo a paradigm shift so as to put more emphasis on skills education.

3. *Leadership for schools* – Many teachers avoid the leadership jobs like being a head teacher or principal because of the huge responsibilities associated with these positions. There is a need, therefore, to make these jobs interesting enough to attract qualified persons.

4. *Education has been affected by the global economic crisis* – this has raised concerns about the quality of education, capacity to provide, especially higher education for all, and many graduates not easily employed. The group suggested the following as strategies to deal with this problem:

   - Use ODL methodologies including on-line learning to help more people attain higher education;
   - Development in infrastructural services including telecommunication service to reach the unreached;
   - Need for a common quality reference frameworks for credit transfer, mobility and harmonisation of programmes in the region; and
   - Countries in the ASEAN region should begin to recognise degrees from its region before moving into the global market.

Group Two noted five important challenges:

1. Providing quality education to the masses;
2. Enhancing Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) to reach the target of 30% in all levels of education;
3. Shortage of trained teachers and how to integrate ICT in teacher education.
4. Lack of policy for ICT in Education; and
5. Skills Development.

**Summary of Priorities in Education and Training in Asia**

After the group presentations, the plenary discussions were held in which the following were identified as the common problems in the region:
1. Skilling, entrepreneurship & training teachers for TVET;
2. Quality in education;
3. ICT & ODL for increased access;
4. Policy development and/or review; and
5. 21st century skills/critical thinking skills in education – a move away from school education for the sake of it towards preparing students for the 21st century.

Possible COL interventions

The following were suggestions on possible COL interventions:

1. Support training/retraining of teachers especially for TVET;
2. Support transformation of curricula;
3. Promotion of OER including supporting institutions customise the OER already developed by COL; and
4. Support policy formulation and/or review.

7.0 LIVELIHOODS

Dr. Jessica Aguti began her presentation by highlighting some of the major Livelihoods and Health challenges in Commonwealth nations and why COL is focusing on Livelihoods and Health. She noted that developing countries still have huge populations below the poverty line (<$2 a day) and as a result, have poor access to healthcare, safe water, food security, good schools, electricity, and all other critical services. COL/CEMCA identified these as critical issues and is addressing some of these through the Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD); Lifelong Learning for Farmers; and Healthy Communities initiatives.

She then described the various challenges in Commonwealth Asian countries based on analysis of the FPs reports:

1. Unemployment;
2. Lack of entrepreneurship;
3. Maternal and child health;
4. Sanitation; and
5. Transition to new agriculture practices.

The FPs then addressed the following questions:

1. What do you and your communities see as the key challenges to Livelihoods and Health?
2. What are the governments’ priorities?
3. Identify five most critical challenges which need to be addressed?
The FPs raised the following in response to these questions.

1. *What communities see as the key challenges to livelihoods and health?*

   a) Environmental degradation.
   b) Changing Life style.
   c) Access to health services.
   d) Changing skills demand.

2. *What are the Government priorities?*

   a) Promoting employment opportunities for youth.
   b) Access to health services for all.
   c) Social safety nets.
   d) Education for All.

3. *Common Priorities*

   After a discussion of the different inputs from the groups, the meeting identified the following as the Livelihoods and Health priorities in Commonwealth Asia.

   a) Employment – some countries have no job opportunities while other countries have job opportunities largely taken up by foreign workers – need right skills (young people to do low paying jobs). Malaysia has 27 million nationals with 4 million foreigners while Brunei Darussalam has a population of 400,000 and a further 100,000 foreign workers.
   b) Access to health and dealing with lifestyle diseases – For example, maternal health is still a challenge in many countries, while some countries like Malaysia & India are battling communicable diseases like dengue fever.
   c) Access to quality education.
   d) Drugs and crime.
   e) Environmental pollution – threats to the small islands states.

To address these challenges, it was proposed that COL focuses on the following:

   a) Use of technologies to provide education – including OER & MOOCs;
   b) Support countries to develop a ‘credit transfers and student mobility’ system; and
   c) Continue to promote technologies and ODL for training in technical and vocational skills.
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

The day started with welcome remarks and a review of the previous day’s work by Mr. Vis Naidoo. In his review, he highlighted the priorities that had been identified and posed three questions for the participants to reflect on as the discussions proceeded:

1. How could these broad areas be addressed within the mandate of COL – using open, distance and technology-mediated methods for learning and teaching?
2. Who are the other players in these different areas?
3. What makes COL unique to address the priorities?

8.0 UNDERSTANDING GENDER AND ODL IN ASIA

Ms. Frances Ferreira asked participants what they understand by the term “gender” and from the answers given and from her presentation, gender was said to be:

1. Biological with female and male sexes;
2. Socially determined roles, responsibilities, behaviour, characteristics of women and men in a given culture;
3. A result of socialisation at home, school, media, etc.; and
4. A result of what is assimilated and learnt which can change over time and can vary within a given culture.

The gender debates are deep because gender is rooted in our culture and upbringing.

She then proceeded to discuss issues of the gender roles, gender equity and gender dimensions in relation to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). While much has been achieved through progress with the MDGs, a lot of work is still needed in the areas of:

1. Gender equality in employment;
2. Ensuring access to Education for All. Ms. Ferreira pointed out that in some Commonwealth countries, girls are more affected than boys, while in other countries boys are more affected than girls;
3. Mortality rates are still high for children born to mothers without basic education; and
4. Where water and food sources are not readily accessible, women and girls often bear the burden of collection and must walk long distances to satisfy household needs.

COL, as an organisation, is leading by example because there are a number of things COL is doing internally to ensure gender mainstreaming:

1. Ensures a gender balance in the recruitment policies;
2. Integrates gender in other COL policies;
3. Looks out for gender-related indicators in performance assessment of senior management/programme staff; and
4. Regularly holds gender-related learning events for staff.

**Gender-related priorities and needs for education and training in Asia**

To identify gender-related priorities in Asia, participants were invited to address two specific questions:

1. What are the key gender-related priorities and needs for education and training?
2. How can COL assist in addressing these key gender-related issues?

The following recommendations were made:

1. **What are the key gender-related priorities and needs for education and training?**
   
   a) Increasing access to education for the girl child; and having a balance in the enrolment of girls in TVET programmes.
   b) Providing education and training opportunities for women in rural areas and in low income families.
   c) Having women in the management/as policy makers/leaders in education.
   d) Provision of appropriate learning materials.
   e) Many civil society organisations working in education – so need networking and build partnerships.
   f) Girls/women friendly infrastructure.
   g) Using & embedding ICT.
   h) Training security personnel to effectively handle gender-related problems like gender violence.
   i) Skills training for girls/women.
   j) Property ownership for girls/women.

2. **How can COL assist in addressing these key gender-related issues?**

   The participants proposed that COL collaborates with governments/institutions/ organisations to:

   a) Providing/supporting ODL/open schooling programmes.
   b) Developing industrial linked courses related to specific country needs.
   c) Enhancing capacity building for female teachers for leadership.
   d) Creating appropriate materials.
   e) Carrying out country specific country studies to identify challenges in the learning materials being used.
   f) Promoting networking among NGOs.
g) Carrying out advocacy so that infrastructure designs take into consideration gender concerns.

h) Embedding ICT in all courses – COL can support in policy generation and advocacy and in materials creation.

i) Training security personnel – collaborate with advocacy groups.

j) Assisting in policy making for property ownership – legislation, sensitisation and advocacy.

9.0 TECHNOLOGY INNOVATIONS AND INTRODUCTION TO APTUS, DOER, MOOC, ONLINE COURSES, PRINT MATERIALS

In this session, Dr. Sanjaya Mishra explained the various services provided by COL and CEMCA, the regional office in New Delhi. He started with the mandate of COL as an intergovernmental organisation promoting technology-enabled learning, and how in the past COL has used appropriate and relevant technologies of the time to serve the stakeholders. He gave the example of the Commonwealth of Learning Media Empowerment project and WikiEducator,

Dr. Mishra demonstrated the technology APTUS popularly known as ‘Classroom without Walls’. APTUS creates a WiFi network with a 25 meter radius enabling users to access learning materials without having to access the Internet. All the participants experimented with their WiFi-enabled devices and accessed the wiki materials, Khan Academy videos etc. available in the APTUS. This generated a lot of curiosity and interest amongst the participants.

He then presented other activities of eLearning at COL; emphasising that this is about using ICT to expand access to learning and to enhance and transform teaching and learning practice. He noted the following:

1. *Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)* which provides services in the small countries of the Commonwealth;

2. *COL dSpace* which is a repository of COL publications and reports, COL Virtual Learning Environment (Courses on Moodle), Search for Open Course Ware and OER and COL4D Facebook;

3. *COL and CEMCA’s initiatives on Open Education Resources* which includes Directory of Open Educational Resources (DOER); access to a wide variety of resources and the Caribbean countries online text books; and

4. *Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)* with COL partnering with different organisations to mount MOOCs such as Mobile for Development and MOOC on MOOC.

After providing a comprehensive analysis on the eLearning activities of COL, he highlighted some of the related activities of CEMCA in the Commonwealth Asian region such as work with Wikis and the YouTube platform. He then encouraged participants to visit and download previously published materials, which are also available online as PDF format.
Summing up his presentation, Dr. Mishra said that COL’s approach is to use technology in learning so as to increase cost effectiveness, access and for ensuring quality. To achieve this, COL has continued to promote ODL, eLearning, OER, and MOOCs with emphasis on the appropriateness of technology.

10.0 TEN YEARS OF OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Professor Asha Kanwar noted “the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is strongly committed to the creation, adaptation and use of Open Educational Resources (OER) because they have the potential to increase access to education while cutting costs and improving quality. They are, therefore, an important element of COL’s mission of Learning for Development”.

Professor Kanwar gave the history and background to OER, discussed the advantages of using OER and traced the OER developments in Asia. She indicated that the growth and development of OER presented a number of lessons and these were:

1. OER has moved beyond higher education to go into secondary education and TVET;
2. There is a convergence of approaches to providing OER – moved from philanthropic efforts which was the common model in the developed world to public funding of OER development and provision which is the dominant model in the developing world;
3. There are now more opportunities to harness the potential of mobile technologies to increase access to OER;
4. OER is resulting in multi-directional exchanges of materials; and
5. Research in OER is still limited and so more research is needed. Evidence that OER work and contribute to learning if we are to convince governments to support and integrate OER.

However, despite the growth of OER and the various lessons being learnt, there are still a number of issues and she highlighted a number of these including:

1. Digital divide – implying that there are many still without access;
2. OER in itself will not address the educational inequities in society. Strategies, systems, policies and practices are needed that will support effective integration;
3. There are a number of challenges that stakeholders still have to meet;
4. Need to reach and involve more stakeholders;
5. There are many different efforts in the field of OER and more networking and collaboration will be required so as complement each other and not duplicate efforts. But the challenge is how this can be done; and
6. Many national governments still need to provide the right environment for OER integration.
In summary, Professor Kanwar said that as we continue to promote OER and work with OER, there is need to critically address these three questions:

1. How can OER reach the digitally deprived and socially excluded?
2. How can OER transform the paradigm of teaching – learning?
3. How can MOOCs & OER be blended to offer more effective ODeL?

11.0 THEORY OF CHANGE

COL is drawing up its next strategic plan and seeks input from various stakeholders. FPs, being COL’s in country contacts, are a key category of stakeholders. The discussions on Theory of Change and the Logic Model were therefore meant to draw the FPs direct contributions to the next COL Logic Model. The first step to this was to discuss the Theory of Change which is the theory that COL has chosen to adopt in the preparation of its next strategic plan.

Dr. Sanjaya Mishra noted that some of questions that the Theory of Change addressed included:

1. What is the problem to be addressed and how it will be done (outputs, activities and inputs)?
2. What is the anticipated social change (outcomes and impact)

Also that Theory of Change shows the casual pathway; mapping out the building blocks and the interrelationships required to bring about a given long-term goal; and the assumptions that must be borne in mind.

To help participants explore this further, Dr. Mishra provided participants with a practical task of identifying a problem and coming up with a Theory of Change around this problem by determining:

1. Problem;
2. Inputs;
3. Activities;
4. Outputs;
5. Outcomes; and

12.0 LOGIC MODEL

This presentation was directly linked to the session on the Theory of Change, so Ms. Frances Ferreira started by defining a logic model and explaining the relationship between Theory of Change and the logic model. She said that a logic model is a road map showing the route traveled to reach a certain destination’ and she quoted Kellogg Foundation (2004) – “A logic model is a systematic and visual way to present and share your understanding of the
relationships among the resources you have to operate your program, the activities you plan, and the changes or results you hope to achieve.”

Logic models are the foundation of planning and the core of any evaluation process. She then explained the process of developing the logic model emphasising the vital role of stakeholders. She therefore challenged FPs to see themselves as vital players in the development of the COL’s Logic Model. She then introduced COL’s proposed goal, long-term outcomes and intermediate outcomes along with indicators and core assumptions.
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2014

Mr. Vis Naidoo once again gave a summary of the previous day’s activities emphasising the link between the day’s sessions and the final session of the meeting.

13.0 REVIEW OF DRAFT LOGIC

In this session, the facilitator focused on inviting the participants to give their comments on the proposed goal, long-term outcomes and intermediate outcomes, indicators and assumptions. To go through these, the participants were divided into groups and asked to consider these one at a time.

Planned Goal: ‘sustainable development through learning’

This goal was discussed and the meeting noted that:

1. Attaining and managing sustainability is critical and learning is critical to support sustainable development; and
2. Sustainable development has three pillars - social inclusion, economic development and environmental sustainability.

After this discussion, the meeting agreed that the goal of ‘sustainable development through learning’ is worth pursuing. COL was challenged to carefully plan for its achievement.

Long-Term and Short-Term Outcomes and Indicators

The draft long-term and short-term outcomes and their indicators were discussed and the meeting agreed that these were relevant and appropriate and should therefore be retained.

Intermediate and Long-Term Outcome Assumptions

The meeting also discussed the assumptions proposed and agreed that these should also be retained. However, COL was advised to also consider that changes within governments (for example change of minister or key official) may de-stabilise system, plans and programmes. This should also therefore be considered when making plans.

Relevance of programmes to country needs

The meeting agreed that all the eight programmes are relevant and should therefore be retained for the implementation of the next strategic plan. However, there were suggestions to broaden the following:

Lifelong learning for farmers

Need to adopt the model for different groups as well:

- In Bangladesh for the 4.5 million garment workers, majority of them are girls;
- In Maldives, there is a need to focus on fishing communities since there is hardly any crop farming but there is scope for aqua farming; and
- In Malaysia, oil palm growing communities and factory workers, the majority may be foreigners.

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

Need to adopt the model for different countries as well not just small states:

- Different institutions can use the resources developed for VUSSC; and
- Develop a framework that countries can adopt for virtual university.

**Open Schooling**

- This model could be used for vocational skills for those who do not complete schooling or who complete, but do not get jobs.

**Communication & dissemination**

This is vital if COL is to successfully implement its plan:

- COL therefore needs to improve its communication and dissemination of information to ensure wider awareness and engagement.

### 14.0 SUMMARY AND CLOSING

Mr. Vis Naidoo provided a summary of the two days’ work highlighting how the FPs’ contributions at this meeting will be incorporated into the strategic planning of COL and then invited the FPs to make comments on the meeting.

- COL has shared what it is doing and what is to be done and this meeting has been very helpful in assisting the Focal Points understand and appreciate COL and their role as Focal Points.
- COL’s support to the different programmes and projects in the different countries in the region has helped countries provide the much needed services to the citizens.

**Closing by Professor Asha Kanwar**

The Regional Focal Points Meeting (Asia) 2014 was closed by Professor Asha Kanwar.

In her closing Professor Kanwar thanked and appreciated each of the FPs for the support they have given to COL within their own countries, for coming to the meeting, and for their active participation. She also thanked the Ministry of Education, Malaysia, USM for its support in
general and IPPTN in particular. This, she said, was a sign of their commitment to COL for which COL was grateful.

She also appreciated each of the COL staff present at the meeting for all the work with COL and for their participation at the meeting. She then proceeded to highlight the key things that the individual participating countries had identified as the things they would love to see COL implement; saying that it would be good to do at least one thing in each of the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Identified need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>OER and capacity development of colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>eLearning, and qualifications frameworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>MOOCs and quality of higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Capacity building in teacher education &amp; ODL in general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Skills &amp; innovations for example OER &amp; MOOCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Teacher education &amp; quality assurance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

She advised that the identified needs clearly indicated that the Asian region was different from Caribbean which focused on crime, agriculture while Africa focused on open universities, ICT in education policy and recognition of prior learning.

She then commented on the COL’s strategic planning processes informing the participants that the next plan would be a six-year plan focusing on sustainable development through learning. Once the plan is drafted, it will be shared with the stakeholders for feedback and refinement before it is submitted to the Ministers of Education. Even then, it will be a dynamic plan that will continually keep abreast of country needs.

She closed her remarks by saying that COL and the Commonwealth nations are bound together by one commitment which is to make a difference to our societies and communities especially those who could not access education.
### Participants List

**FOCAL POINTS/ALTERNATES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name of Focal Point and Contact Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam Khan&lt;br&gt;Secretary&lt;br&gt;Ministry of Information and Communication Technology&lt;br&gt;BANSDOC Bhaban E-14/Y&lt;br&gt;Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar&lt;br&gt;Dhaka 1207&lt;br&gt;Bangladesh&lt;br&gt;Tel: +880 18 4122 5555 (Cell)&lt;br&gt;Email: <a href="mailto:nikhanjs@gmail.com">nikhanjs@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunei Darussalam</td>
<td>Mr. Adinin Md Salleh&lt;br&gt;Acting Executive Secretary, Secretariat of Brunei Darussalam&lt;br&gt;National Accreditation Council&lt;br&gt;Ministry of Education&lt;br&gt;Old Airport Road&lt;br&gt;Berakas BB3510&lt;br&gt;Brunei Darussalam&lt;br&gt;Tel: +673 238 0036 (Office)&lt;br&gt;Email: <a href="mailto:admininsalleh@gmail.com">admininsalleh@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Mr. Anand Kumar Singh&lt;br&gt;Director (ICT)&lt;br&gt;Ministry of Human Resource Development&lt;br&gt;Department of Higher Education&lt;br&gt;New Delhi - 110 001&lt;br&gt;India&lt;br&gt;Tel: +91 11 2338 4276&lt;br&gt;Email: <a href="mailto:anandksingh.edu@nic.in">anandksingh.edu@nic.in</a>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Mr. Anand Kumar Singh is representing</em>&lt;br&gt;Shri Praveen Prakash&lt;br&gt;Joint Secretary (TEL)&lt;br&gt;Department of Higher Education&lt;br&gt;Ministry of Human Resource Development&lt;br&gt;Shastri Bhawan&lt;br&gt;New Delhi 110 115&lt;br&gt;India&lt;br&gt;Tel: +91 11 233 87781&lt;br&gt;Email: <a href="mailto:praveen.parakash@sakshat.ac.in">praveen.parakash@sakshat.ac.in</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Name of Focal Point and Contact Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4. Malaysia | Y.Bhg. Dato’ Professor Dr. Asma binti Ismail  
Director General, Department of Higher Education  
Ministry of Education Malaysia  
Aras 9, No 2, Menara 2, Jalan P5/6, Presint 5  
62200 Putrajaya  
Malaysia  
Tel: +91 11 233 87781  
Email: asma.ismail@mohe.gov.my  
(Dato’ Asma is attending on September 17 and  
Associate Professor Wajidi will represent her on September 18 & 19)  
Associate Professor Dr. Mustafa Fadzil Farid Wajidi  
Dean, School of Distance Education  
Universiti Sains Malaysia  
11800 USM  
Penang, Malaysia |
| 5. Maldives | Ms. Aminath Namza  
Director, Foreign Relations Section  
Ministry of Education  
Velaanaage 9th Floor  
Ameer Ahmed Magu  
Malé 20096  
Maldives  
Tel: +960 778 8458  
Email: aminath.namza@moe.gov.mv |
| 6. Pakistan | Professor Dr. Mansoor Akbar Kundi  
(Did not attend)  
Executive Director  
Higher Education Commission  
Sector H-9, East Service Road  
Islamabad  
Pakistan  
Tel: +92 51 9040 0150  
Email: makundi@hec.gov.pk |
| 7. Singapore | Ms. Cindy Eu  
(Regrets)  
Assistant Director, International Relations, Planning Division  
Ministry of Education  
1 North Buona Vista Drive  
Singapore 138675  
Singapore  
Tel: +65 6879 7193  
Email: Cindy_EU@moe.gov.sg |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name of Focal Point and Contact Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Mr. S.U. Wijerathne Additional Secretary, Planning and Performance Review Ministry of Education “Isurupaya” Sri Jayawardhanapura Kotte Battaramulla Sri Lanka Tel: +94 77 963 322 (Cell) Email: <a href="mailto:addsecppr@gmail.com">addsecppr@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**APPENDIX 1**

**COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING (COL)**

1055 West Hastings Street, Suite 1200  
Vancouver, BC   V6E 2E9  
Canada

Tel:   +1 604 775 8200  
Email:  info@col.org  
Website:   www.col.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9. Professor Asha S. Kanwar  
President & Chief Executive Officer                                  | Tel: +1 604 775 8200  
Email: akanwar@col.org                                                     |
|                                                                     | Personal Assistant to the President:  
Annette Bacchus  
Tel: +1 604 775 8264  
Email: abacchus@col.org                                                   |
| 10. Mr. Vis Naidoo  
Vice President                                                          | Tel: +1 604 775 8200  
Email: vnaidoo@col.org                                                     |
|                                                                     | Executive Assistant  
Jasmine Lee  
Tel: +1 604 775 8230  
Email: jlee@col.org                                                        |
| 11. Ms. Frances Ferreira  
Education Specialist – Open Schooling                                     | Tel: +1 604 775 8225  
Email: fferreira@col.org                                                    |
|                                                                     | Programme Assistant  
Carol Walker  
Tel: +1 604 775 8232  
Email: cwalker@col.org                                                     |
| 12. Dr. Jessica Aguti  
Education Specialist – Teacher Education                                   | Tel: +1 604 775 8231  
Email: jaguti@col.org                                                       |
|                                                                     | Programme Assistant:  
May Li  
Tel: +1 604 775 8257  
Email: mli@col.org                                                         |
| 13. Dr. Sanjaya Mishra  
Director  
Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA)  
13/14 Sarv Priya Vihar  
New Delhi 110 016  
India                                                                   | Tel: +91 11 2653 7146/48  
Email: smishra@col.org                                                      |
|                                                                     | Administrative Assistant  
Monica Sharma  
Tel: +91 11 2653 7146  
Email: msharma@col.org                                                     |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **14. Mr. R. Thyagarajan**  
   Head, Administration & Finance  
   CEMCA | Tel: +91 11 2653 7146  
   Email: rthyagarajan@col.org |
| **15. Dr. Ankuran Dutta**  
   Programme Officer, Livelihoods & Health  
   CEMCA | Tel: +91 11 2653 7146  
   Email: dankuran@col.org |
| **16. Dr. Manas Panagrahi**  
   Programme Officer, Education Assistant  
   CEMCA | Tel: +91 11 2653 7146  
   Email: mpanigrahi@col.org |
**Theme:**

To explore education and the use of technology and distance learning methods in sustainable development.

**Objectives:**

The objectives of the meeting are to:

1. Determine the key priorities and needs for education and training in Asia\(^2\); and
2. Identify COL’s role in addressing these key needs in the region.

**Sub-objectives:**

1. Enhance the understanding of COL’s identity and purpose;
2. Understand the rationale of the current COL’s programmes and initiatives;
3. Learn about the role of COL’s Focal Points and ways to improve engagements and partnerships in country;
4. Increase awareness of gender issues in Asia and what role COL can play in addressing these challenges;
5. Review COL’s draft Logic Model noting the needs of member countries, global development agendas and technology advancements; and
6. Recommend changes to the draft Logic Model for the next Strategic Plan (2015-2021).

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\(^2\) *Asia – Commonwealth Asian countries: Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, India, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Singapore and Sri Lanka.*
## DRAFT AGENDA

**Date:** Wednesday, September 17  
**Time:** 9:00-17:00 hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Facilitator/Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30-9:00</td>
<td>REGISTRATION, TEA/COFFEE</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-10:30</td>
<td>Inauguration of Focal Points Meeting:</td>
<td>Plenary session</td>
<td>Vis Naidoo</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Welcome and objectives of meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Director of Ceremonies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Welcome Remarks by Prof. Dr. Zainal Ariffin Ishak,</td>
<td></td>
<td>Asha Kanwar</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Director of Engineering Campus, Universiti Sains Malaysia</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Participant introductions</td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opening Address by Y.Bhg. Dato’ Professor Dr. Asma binti Ismail,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Director-General, Higher Education, Ministry of Education Malaysia</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Focal Points Photo with Dato’ Professor Dr. Asma,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professor Dr. Zainal and COL staff.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-11:15</td>
<td>Adoption of Agenda</td>
<td>Plenary discussion</td>
<td>Vis Naidoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants expectations</td>
<td>Plenary presentation and</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overview of COL: Value, Mission, Structure</td>
<td>discussion</td>
<td>Asha Kanwar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15-11:45</td>
<td>TEA/COFFEE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Session</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Facilitator/Presenter</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:45-12:30</td>
<td>Function &amp; Programmes (focus on learning for sustainable development and how this is translated in current TYP)</td>
<td>Plenary presentation and discussion</td>
<td>Vis Naidoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-13:30</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:30-14:30</td>
<td>Role of Focal Points</td>
<td>Plenary presentation and discussion</td>
<td>Frances Ferreira</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 14:30-15:30     | Analysis of priorities identified in the Education and Training Sector in Asia | Short presentation – key issues to focus on and noting trends in the regions (15 min). Group discussions (responses to key questions – 45 min). Plenary report-back (30 min). | Sanjaya Mishra
                                          |                                                                                  | Rapporteur – Ankuran Dutta |
| 15:30-15:45     | TEA/COFFEE                                                             |                                                                      |                               |
| 15:45-16:45     | Priorities in Livelihoods and Health Sector in Asia                   | Plenary presentation and discussion (based on input and analysis of Focal Points reports) | Jessica Aguti
                                          |                                                                                  | Rapporteur – Manas Ranjan Panigrahi |
| 16:45-17:00     | Wrap-up of day, house-keeping                                         |                                                                      | Vis Naidoo                    |
| 18:00           | WELCOMING DINNER – FOYER AT USM HOSTED BY UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA    |                                                                      |                               |
### DRAFT AGENDA

**Date:** Thursday, September 18  
**Time:** 9:00-17:00 hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Facilitator/Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30-9:00</td>
<td>TEA/COFFEE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 9:00-10:00   | **Welcome to Day 2.**  
Recap of the day  
Completion of priority grid for education and training & livelihoods. | Plenary discussion                   | Vis Naidoo                        |
| 10:00-11:30  | Understanding Gender in Asia. Ideas for Gender Programming.             | Plenary presentation (20 min)  
Group discussion (40 min)  
Plenary report back (30 min) | Frances Ferreira  
All  
*Rapporteur – R. Thyagarajan* |
| 11:30-12:30  | Technology innovations and introduction to APTUS (as an example of innovation), DOER, MOOC, online courses, print materials. | Plenary presentation/discussion (current developments and trends. COL’s approach to technology and information on COL’s work) | Sanjaya Mishra  
*Rapporteur – Ankuran Dutta* |
| 12:30-13:30  | LUNCH                                                                   |                                     |                                   |
| 13:30-14:30  | Focus on OER: Global development, best practice and value to country    | Presentation (20 min)  
Plenary discussion (40 min) | Asha Kanwar  
*Rapporteur – Frances Ferreira* |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Facilitator/Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14:30-15:30</td>
<td>Theory of change</td>
<td>Presentation and plenary discussion.</td>
<td>Sanjaya Mishra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:30-16:00</td>
<td>TEA/COFFEE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00-17:00</td>
<td>Presentation of COL’s draft Logic Model (2015-2021)</td>
<td>Presentation (10 min). Group discussions (30 min). Plenary presentations and discussion (20 min)</td>
<td>Frances Ferreira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rapporteur – Jessica Aguti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:30</td>
<td>COL HOSTED DINNER, CAFÉ, GROUND FLOOR, VISTANA PENANG HOTEL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## DRAFT AGENDA

**Date:**  Friday, September 19  
**Time:** 9:00-16:00 hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Facilitator/Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30-9:00</td>
<td>TEA/COFFEE</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-11:30</td>
<td>Review of draft Logic Model (2015-2021). Review the goal, core strategies, and outcomes.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 11:30-12:30| Is the proposed goal, strategies and outcomes aligned to enable COL to address the needs of countries and the region? Are there additional outcomes (both long term and intermediate outcomes) that COL should focus on? Should COL have any cross-cutting areas that support its work and achieve the outcomes? | Plenary presentation (15 min) – current Logic Model  
Group work (45 min)  
Report back and discussion (30 min) | Vis Naidoo  
All  
*Rapporteur – Jessica Aguti (Supported by R. Thyagarajan, Ankuran Dutta and Manas Ranjan Panigrahi)* |
| 11:30-12:30| Summary  
Reflections of the meeting by all participants  
Closing remarks | Plenary discussion | Vis Naidoo  
All  
Asha Kanwar |
| 12:30-13:30| LUNCH |                                                                                             |                       |
| 13:30-16:00| PENANG HERITAGE TOUR |                                                                                             |                       |