

## Commonwealth of Learning – Partners Meetings 2015



The *Commonwealth Certificate for Teacher ICT integration* or the CCTI has been developed by SchoolNet SA and funded by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) to improve teaching and learning in the classroom using a range of information and communication technologies appropriately. The CCTI is designed as a distance education course. It is an open educational resource (OER) that COL is making available to teacher training institutions throughout the Commonwealth and beyond. It is aligned to the UNESCO Competence Framework. An integral component is the focus on school leadership in the ICT implementation process in a school.

While COL has been supporting institutions and countries to adopt the CCTI, it has continuously been updated in partnership with SchoolNet South Africa. COL now intends to scale up adoption of the CCTI through a new model for more institutions and countries through local partnerships with educational institutions and ministries of Education. Hence two partners' meetings were convened for both Africa and the Caribbean respectively, in Johannesburg at the end of May and in Trinidad at the end of June 2015. The specific objectives of these Partners' Meetings were to assist ministries and institutions in nine African and twelve Caribbean countries to understand the nature of the CCTI and to decide whether to adopt it.



Delegates from the following Caribbean countries attended the Partners' Meeting in Trinidad: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, The Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Vincent and the Grenadines, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago. Delegates were welcomed by Dr Jessica Aguti from the Commonwealth of Learning and Dr. Morella Joseph who was well-known in the Caricom region as the Programme Manager and Human Resource Development for the Caricom Secretariat

Dr. Morella Joseph emphasised that countries were responsible for the implementation of policy and that it was not sufficient just to develop standards and draft guidelines and ratify policies; there needed to be action resulting in positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The presentation on the CCTI for Caribbean countries was made by Janet Thomson from SchoolNet South Africa and is available here:

<https://goo.gl/eAGCCK>. The video from Joan Talibawo in Uganda that is not visible in the uploaded presentation is available on the SchoolNet YouTube channel [here](#).

Janet's presentation covered a brief overview of the history of the CCTI qualification. Doristeen Etinoff was requested to contribute her personal account of studying the previous version of the CCTI in Antigua and Barbuda. Doristeen made a most detailed and positive presentation of her country's experience of



the CCTI. St Vincent and the Grenadines also voiced their support of the CCTI. Delegates were informed that a teacher from St Vincent and the Grenadines and a teacher from Antigua and Barbuda had both been so outstanding during their CCTI courses that they had been selected to become reviewers for the recently revised version of the CCTI course. Most delegates were articulate and knowledgeable in this field. They were eager and willing to contribute and engage in discussions throughout this presentation. Their debates made each of the topics relevant and practical. It took a while to explain why computer skills training was considered to be a complete waste of funding for

teachers but eventually everyone agreed that the integration, or the infusion, of ICT, as they call it in the Caribbean, is only going to happen when it is the main focus of teacher training; that ICT skills should be acquired as a secondary consideration, while in pursuit of the effective use of learning technologies in the classroom. Delegates were given time to review the CCTI content and report back. Recommendations were recorded on video and uploaded to YouTube [here](#).

Break away sessions were organised for delegates to draw up their plans for the adoption or the adaption of the CCTI in their respective countries. In addition, their presentations were to include a brief outline of existing ICT initiatives in the country and a mention of any serious challenges that they anticipated.

### Caribbean Country representatives making their presentations



Dominica



Antigua and Barbuda



Trinidad and Tobago



Jamaica



St Lucia



St Kitts and Nevis



Grenada



St Vincent and the Grenadines



Barbados



Belize



Guyana



The Bahamas

Overall the presentations were of a high caliber; required topics were well covered and each country made a statement with respect to their planned uptake of the CCTI. Speakers were erudite and succinct. The presentations from countries were verbal presentations that were recorded on video. All videos, both the country presentations as well as the evaluations of modules, are available from this YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCryyWjWVA-Jz3KSVt3Jv2dw>

All delegates present at the Caribbean workshop appeared to be interested in and positive about the adoption of the CCTI in their countries. COL has already pledged to assist countries to motivate and inform their respective ministries and therefore delegates left the meeting feeling optimistic about possibilities.





A video of one of the teachers from Uganda was shown. As part of the assignment, each student is required to upload a compulsory video to YouTube explaining what they had learnt during their first CCTI course. The selected video by Julius Mukama gave a good summary of the content of [‘Course 1. Professional Development with Technology’](#).

Country representatives discussed the role of the tutors which was outlined as being one of support and nurturing. Course participants are able to share their ideas, activities and assignments with their peers and their tutor for feedback before final submission for assessment. Students control the discussions and interaction rather than the tutor; there is a bottom-up rather than a top-down dynamic. Lewis Chulu from Zambia remarked that they had underestimated the role of their teachers. They had provided technology and had been surprised that teachers did not use it. Access had been the easy part – appropriate use in the classroom was the difficult part and the very part that the CCTI was now here to assist with. Dele Yaya from Nigeria concurred with Lewis and stated that concerns about access were more prevalent in Nigeria than those about the pedagogy. Shafika urged delegates to return to their countries and persist with advocacy around the appropriate use of technology.



Dr Sanjaya Mishra outlined the role that countries should play in relation to the role of COL and that of



SchoolNet. Sanjaya emphasised that the crucial key to success was the quality of tutors and this might be something on which countries would need to seek help from SchoolNet. It would be possible to conduct training of tutors either face to face or online. Countries should ensure that they fully understand the instructional design and this might be something that they might wish to study further with the help of SchoolNet. Countries would be able to request technical help from COL and hosting and management services

from SchoolNet. A question from the delegates was around accreditation and the level at which the CCTI ‘certificate’ is pitched considering that each country has a different qualifications framework. The response was that the CCTI was considered to be a specialisation qualification at a post graduate diploma level but pre-Masters level.

The histories of ICT in Education for each one of the countries present, including South Africa, were described as being littered with well-crafted policies that had not been implemented. However, Reverend. Grace Lubaale of Uganda summarised the workshop proceedings as being fruitful and providing promise when he gave a vote of thanks to SchoolNet and to the Commonwealth of Learning. He gained the respect of all delegates by concluding with a tribute to each of the countries present by recalling the familiar epithets for which they are known, such as Namibia, ‘The Icon of Africa’; Uganda, ‘The pearl of Africa’ and Mauritius, ‘The future of Africa’ – and ensuring that the meeting closed on a high note.

