Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia

- Community of Practice (CoP) for Teacher Educators
- Industry Linked Courses
- Technology Enabled Learning
- Virtual Open Schooling
- Open Educational Resources
- Media
In response to needs expressed by the Commonwealth countries of the Asian region for a more effective utilization of educational media resources for Distance Education, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) established Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) in the year 1994. CEMCA, under a host country agreement signed between COL and Government of India (GoI) in 1998, has it’s headquarter in New Delhi.

CEMCA serves as the regional unit of the Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver, Canada. CEMCA promotes the meaningful, relevant and appropriate use of media and technology to serve the educational and training needs of Commonwealth member states of Asia.

Over the years, CEMCA has widened its scope to embrace emerging educational technologies to cover formal, non-formal and informal learning at all levels. CEMCA works to devise appropriate learning solutions that maintain a balance between the aspirations of its diverse stakeholders and available resources.

Promoting appropriate and low-cost technology options underpin all of CEMCA’s strategies.

**Objectives:** The strategic objective of CEMCA is to promote co-operation and collaboration in the use of electronic media resources for distance education. The specific objectives are to:

- Serve as a regional electronic media resource centre
- Facilitate an effective exchange of information on educational media resources between educational and media organisations in the region
- Promote greater use of electronic media in the delivery of distance education programmes
- Promote linkages between CEMCA and other organisations to enhance the availability of educational media resources region-wide
- Facilitate access to training in the development and use of electronic media resources for distance education
- Serve as an information centre on open and distance learning, and educational technology
With a focus on media-enabled learning for development, CEMCA is working actively in two major sectors – Education and Skills.

The Education sector helps member countries improve the scope, scale and quality of teaching and learning at all levels through the use of new educational and communication technologies to extend and improve their educational systems.

The Skill sector assists communities improve and enhance their skills by using appropriate technologies, share knowledge and develop new economic opportunities.

During Six Year Plan (2015-2021), CEMCA will:

- Design and develop systems and models to adopt technology to enhance learning, teaching and training for formal and non-formal sectors
- Develop materials and guidelines to assist policy makers for policies on community media as tool of lifelong learning
- Support the articulation of policies that promote the development, adoption and use of Open Educational Resources (OER)
- Collaborate with institutions and industries to establish flexible delivery mechanisms for enhancing individual’s employability and adaptability to changing market needs and technologies
- Support teacher training institutions to integrate Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in education using Community of Practice (CoP) model and offer distance learning programmes for professional development of teachers
- Develop and support appropriate strategies and mechanisms for Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD)
- Support institutions through mechanisms and policies that promote pedagogical innovations through next generation digital learning environments
- Support research on emerging technologies, including MOOCs, mobile applications, augmented reality etc. for effective use by ODL practitioners and learners
- Support research for Technology Enabled Learning (TEL) and TVSD assisting in sustainability and mainstreaming of innovations
Programme Initiative: Education

Education is one of the CEMCA’s two programme sectors. CEMCA believes that an empowered citizen builds an empowered nation. Acquisition of relevant knowledge is the gateway to such empowerment. To focus on the priorities of governments, institutions and organisations, education sector has three initiatives: Open Schooling, Teacher Education and Higher Education.

Open Schooling

More and more governments are now recognizing the need to promote open schooling to meet the increasing demands of secondary and senior secondary education in their countries. It is a viable solution to lack of qualified teachers and insufficient number of schools. Open schooling enables mainstreaming of learners through accessible, flexible and quality assured curriculum. It enables ‘out of the school learners’ disengaged from formal system of education to earn qualifications to better their chances for quality life. For us open schooling refers to:

- The physical separation of the school-level learner from the teacher, and
- The use of unconventional teaching methodologies and information and communication technologies (ICTs) to bridge the separation and provide the quality education and training

CEMCA’s open schooling activities include, but not limited to:

- Capacity building for learning material (online and offline) and system development
- Development and use of Open Educational Resources
- Promoting quality assurance of ODL and OER
- Use of ICTs for improving teaching and learning

CEMCA has assisted and collaborated with premier institutions like:

- National Institute of Open Schooling, India
- JSS Karnataka State Open School, India
- Gujarat State Open School, India
- Assam State Open School, India
- National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka
Teacher Education

The Goal 4 under Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) focuses on quality education. It reads, “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.

Availability of qualified trained teachers is essential to attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which expresses the commitment of governments to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. Using ODL, teacher training institutions can expand their access and increase supply of teachers in both primary and secondary schools. Considering the importance of teacher education in Commonwealth Asian countries, CEMCA has envisaged activities in the area of teacher education for the Six Year Plan (2015-2021).

CEMCA’s focus in the area of teacher education includes, but not limited to:

- Capacity building for teacher educators to integrate ICTs in teaching and learning
- Promoting blended learning for teacher education
- Promoting Open Source technologies for teaching and learning
- Facilitating continuous professional development of teachers using ICTs
- Developing relevant regional need-based programmes
- Developing teacher education course materials using Open Educational Resources

In the recent past, CEMCA has collaborated with following institutions (indicative only):

- Central University of Himachal Pradesh, India
- Department of State Educational Research and Training, Karnataka, India
- State Council for Educational Research and Training, Uttar Pradesh, India
- Allahabad University, Uttar Pradesh, India
- Regional Institute of Education, NCERT, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India
**Higher Education**

Equitable access to quality higher education in a country is widely recognized as essential for economic growth, research and innovation. Recognizing this, Asian countries are not only engaged in developing appropriate policies, but also investing in improving access to ICTs. CEMCA as a leader in the use of ICTs in higher education has been experimenting with use of audio, video, multimedia and online technologies to increase access to quality learning materials.

**CEMCA’s activities in higher education include, but not limited to:**

- Quality assurance of multi-media learning materials
- Promoting Open Source technologies for teaching and learning
- Capacity building for creation and use of OER
- Development of courses in multiple media for use in distance education
- Strengthening Open Universities and dual-mode distance education institutions to use modern digital technologies

CEMCA has assisted the following higher education institutions towards creating learning resources, capacity building and strengthening systems etc. (indicative only):

- Indira Gandhi National Open University, India
- Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University, India
- Uttarakhand Open University, India
- Odisha State Open University, India
- K K Handiqui State Open University, India
- Netaji Subhas Open University, India
- Tamil Nadu Open University, India
- Consortium for Educational Communication, UGC, India
- Wawasan Open University, Malaysia
- Bangladesh Open University, Bangladesh
- Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka
- Allama Iqbal Open University, Pakistan
Programme Initiative: Skills

Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD) and Technology Enabled Learning (TEL) are two initiatives under Skills, one of CEMCA’s two programme sectors in the Six Year Plan 2015-2021.

A major challenge the governments are facing is to improve the skills and providing learning opportunities to millions of people. With the use of appropriate technologies, ODL can scale quality learning in a cost-effective manner to help disadvantaged and resource-poor communities increase their productivity. Considering the priorities of the stakeholders in Commonwealth Asia, this sector’s focus is on TVSD and TEL.

Technical and Vocational Skills Development

According to a DFID Briefing paper¹, TVSD is a priority of the governments in Asian region. It identifies that the TVSD provides pre-employment orientation to ‘employable skills’; vocational and technical education is very widespread in all OECD countries. TVSD is high as a sustainable growth agenda for Asian countries. Various governments are now focusing on National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) with the intention to link informal/non-formal education and training systems on the one hand and the more formal education and training system on the other. NQFs act as a sort of scaffolding where education and training are transacted for progression leading to developing relevant skills needed for industry operations or as life skills. There are certain skills challenges faced by Asian countries, like: outdated system and lack of sufficient facilities and equipment or qualified instructors (OECD report) with growing economies the gap is widening between skill supply and demand, and coming forward of private industry leadership towards nation building. As ‘Learning for Sustainable

¹ http://www.unevoc.net/fileadmin/user_upload/docs/technical-vocationalDFID.pdf
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36 organisations (existing and new)
with significantly increased equitable access
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Development’ is the motto of COL, and the governments bringing clarity to skills policies, Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach provides a strong impetus for our approach to TVSD where we not only develop skills, we prepare people for appropriate opportunities also.

**CEMCA’s activities in TVSD include, but not limited to:**

- Promoting flexible curriculum for skills development
- Capacity building for use of ICTs for teaching and learning
- Regional consultations on flexible and blended learning courses for TVSD
- Development of skills based courses using OER

In the recent past, CEMCA has:

- Developed a course titled Certificate in Community Radio Technology (CCRT) in association with Broadcast Engineering Consultant India Ltd (BECIL), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India
- Released the CCRT course as MOOC by the Uttarakhand Open University, India
- Released an Android mobile app titled ‘Community Radio Quiz’, downloadable from Google Play store
- Assisted Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, Guwahati, Assam; Tamil Nadu Open University, Chennai and Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata, India to align the vocational courses to National Skills Qualification Framework
- Assisted Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, Pakistan to develop flexible curricula for Skills Development
- Organised a National Consultation on OER for Skills Development where a set of recommendations for using the OER in skills development came out
- Assisted Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University to develop a course on Road Transport for auto drivers
Technology Enabled Learning (TEL)

With advancements in technology, telecommunications and hardware, ICT applications are a great drivers of change in education and for sustainable development. An amalgamation of physical and virtual learning environments has created new avenues for learning and development. This has enabled an orientation to creativity and a focus on innovation. TEL provides an enhanced scope for adopting new modes of online learning like MOOCs, mobile learning, creation of OER and repositories. It has a great potential for creating applications for teacher education so that teachers develop, adopt and use 21st Century skills.

Technology-enabled Learning aims to focus on increasing access to quality teaching and learning by supporting policy formulation and innovation in the application of ICT in education, and the development of ICT skills. COL believes that for technology to have a transformative effect in teaching and learning, it is necessary to focus on Policy-Technology-Capacity as a triangle and to base practice on research evidence. We promote a range of technologies for teaching and learning: online learning, mobile, and low-cost technologies such as audio and video, radio and TV.

In order to accelerate skills development and innovation in the areas of ICT to help Commonwealth Asian governments improve the

**CEMCA’s activities in TEL include, but not limited to:**

- Provide learning opportunities to marginalised communities for sustainable development
- Development and implementation of ICT applications
- Strengthen research on Technology-enabled learning for evidence-based advocacy and decision-making
- Work with government, industry and academic institutions to develop relevant and innovative courses
- Help institutions to use Technology-enabled learning for programme delivery
- Promote the use of open technologies, and OER for skills development
livelihoods of their citizens, CEMCA will engage with governments, industry and academic institutions to develop relevant courses and facilitate the development of 21st century skills amongst learners at all levels.

Awards and Scholarships

To encourage individuals and institutions, CEMCA has constituted several national and international awards, scholarships, internships, attachments and fellowships. The awards and scholarship schemes are extended to educational institutions in the region in the Six Year Plan (2015-2021).

Awards

CEMCA Awards for the best female student in Information and Communication Technologies or Electronic Media and Mass Communication studies have been presented at Open University of Malaysia (OUM), Malaysia; Tamil Nadu Open University (TNOU), India; Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU), India; Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), India; Krishna University, India. Besides, CEMCA also distributed cash awards in the form of scholarships to meritorious students of Class X and XII of the National Institute of Open Schooling, India.

Internships: This scheme is targeted at young and early career scholars in India to receive quality work experience in application of educational technologies and understand issues related to international development agenda in Asian perspective. Internships are available for a maximum of six months.

Attachments/Fellowships: This scheme is aimed at supporting mid-career teachers in ODL institutions to undertake research on a topic within the scope of CEMCA’s fields of competence. Attachments may range for a period of 2-8 weeks at CEMCA, while research fellowships are available for short-term action research that can be completed from researcher’s own organization.

Partnerships and Collaborations

Building partnerships is a core strategy for undertaking activities at CEMCA. To work as partner and collaborator for activities and projects, CEMCA has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with national and international organizations. Some of the key partners in CEMCA activities are: UNESCO, Delhi; National Council for Science and Technology Communications (NCSTC), Government of India; International Development Research
Centre, Canada; Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU), India; Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU), India; and National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), India; Sri Lanka Democratic Journalists’ Forum (SDJF), Sri Lanka; Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC), Bangladesh; Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Pakistan; Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), Sri Lanka; and Uttarakhand Open University (UOU), India etc.

**Publications**

CEMCA brings out newsletter, monographs and toolkits for sharing of best practices with its stakeholders. We publish three issues of CEMCA Newsletter (January, May and September) which contains articles on ICT and ODL trends, activities of CEMCA in the region and SMART Tips etc. The monographs and toolkits are outputs of specific activities undertaken by CEMCA and are products of rigour and quality that are usually validated by expert peer review. CEMCA also brings out multimedia CDs to enhance learning with the help of media.

Some of the popular publications are:

- CEMCA Newsletter
- Ed Tech Notes
- Quality Assurance Guidelines for Open Educational Resources: TIPS Framework Version 2.0
- ICT Leadership in Higher Education - Selected Readings
- Case Studies on OER-based e-Learning
- Community Radio Continuous Improvement Toolkit (CR-CIT)
- Ethical Practice Guidelines for Community Radio Stations
- eLearning in Commonwealth Asia 2013
- Brave new women of Asia
- Perspectives on distance Education - Educational Media in Asia
- Innovation in Community Radio

Some of the Videos and Multimedia produced by CEMCA include:

- Educational Multimedia (A multimedia learning CD)
- A series of Video on “Civil Paths to Peace”
- Multimedia Resource Kit for Children with Special Needs (with National Trust)
Where We Work

We work in the following countries:
1. Bangladesh
2. Brunei Darussalam
3. India
4. Malaysia
5. Maldives
6. Pakistan
7. Singapore, and
8. Sri Lanka

Governance

The Advisory Council of CEMCA functions as an advisory body of COL on CEMCA’s affairs and is responsible for broad policy formulation in its programme areas. Besides, the Advisory Council monitors and evaluates CEMCA’s progress and suggests ways and means to improve the performance.

The Advisory Council meeting takes place once a year keeping in view the exigencies of business and the need to rotate amongst the members in the region. Chaired by the President and CEO of the Commonwealth of Learning, the Advisory Council has a representative of the Government of India; six experts on ODL; one expert on communication technology; the Vice President, COL, as Deputy Chairperson; Director, CEMCA as ex-officio member and Head (Administration & Finance), CEMCA as Secretary.
Commonwealth of Learning

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning/distance education knowledge, resources and technologies. COL is helping developing nations improve access to quality education and training.

Headquartered in Vancouver, Canada, COL is the world’s only intergovernmental organisation dedicated solely to promoting and delivering distance education and open learning, and is the only official Commonwealth agency located outside Britain.

Fully operational since 1989, COL is financially supported by Commonwealth governments on a voluntary basis. It responds to Commonwealth needs through in-country and regional programmes and initiatives.

The Commonwealth of Learning helps governments and institutions to expand the scope, scale and quality of learning by using new approaches. COL promotes policies and systems to make innovation sustainable and works with international partners to build models, create materials, enhance organisational capacity and nurture networks that facilitate learning in support of sustainable development goals.
Learning for Sustainable Development
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