



The GULL Story Part 3: Affiliation

By Richard Teare

Global University for Lifelong Learning
Enabling YOU to make a difference in OUR world

The Global University for Lifelong Learning (GULL) is a non-profit public benefit corporation registered in California, USA. GULL is recognized in perpetuity by the Government of Papua New Guinea & endorsed by other Governments, Leaders & Institutions.

Overview

The series of HSBC banking adverts at London's Heathrow airport have caught my eye on more than one occasion. One of these cites the typical cost of one year of college in three world locations. These are: US\$44,350 in Boston, Massachusetts, USA; US\$30,750 in Oxford, England and US\$1,250 in Beijing, China. Aside from the difference between the high and lower end costs, the other thought that comes to mind is that these sums of money are totally beyond the means of the world's majority. GULL is founded on the belief that learning is our birth right - not just for the privileged minority - but for everyone. Our mission then is to expand human capital development through innovative means and GULL's network of affiliated organizations play a pivotal role in this endeavour. This article is the third in a series about the Global University for Lifelong Learning. The first article explains GULL's mission and mandate, the second outlines GULL's pathways to professional qualifications and the purpose here is to profile the role of GULL's officers and representatives and to outline the steps involved in affiliating and getting started with GULL.

How does GULL operate?

Launched in October, 2007, GULL has a mandate to award professional certificates, diplomas and degrees, but it does not emulate the traditional academic university model. GULL has two just executive officers (Chairman, President) and a growing number of honorary officers who support and serve our work around the globe. GULL's non-profit status in the State of California, USA and our minimal funding base precludes payment of fees and expenses to GULL's national and regional team members. At the 'Officers' section of the GULL website you can view details of our Co Chancellors and Pro Chancellors; National and Regional Presidents and Vice Presidents (who lead GULL's work in their respective regions or nations and organizations); Ambassadors (GULL's active supporters) and Elders (GULL's passive supporters). GULL has no council or faculty, lectureships or professoriate nor does it have a campus and its two central companies (GULL Inc. in the USA (the university) and GULL Ltd. (global support from the UK)) operate on a cost recovery basis. GULL exists to serve others and if the contributions received ever exceed the central operating costs; the surplus will be used to fund GULL's work among the poorest.

At the outset, we took a decision to design and operate GULL's central services and support as cost effectively as we could. The key functions are: (1) sustaining GULL's mission and its implementation; (2) continually developing GULL's mandate (via its statement of recognition and multiple endorsements); (3) encouraging and supporting GULL affiliated organizations and (4) maintaining the central website (to explain GULL's mission, mandate and operations). We have no plans to use or develop a centralized database of learner records. Instead, records are maintained by GULL's officers and affiliated organizations (as appropriate). We think that localized record-keeping is more appropriate and helpful to our learners. We are also mindful of the costs and complexity of operating a centralized database and that this approach is more likely to increase administrative demands in the endless quest for completeness. We do not want central support requirements to assume more importance than our learners.

GULL aims to build and sustain a large population of learners around the world. We are especially committed to providing opportunities for the poorest and the low paid and for those without the necessary qualifications and financial resources to develop themselves via conventional forms of education and training. For outreach, we use two approaches: (1) We recruit GULL system users via our regionalized and online affiliation process and (2) We offer the GULL system to established international agencies who are already working with the poorest.

The role of GULL's leadership team

The GULL system is designed with organizational applications in mind and its simplicity and flexibility provide numerous innovative ways of reaching out to communities of people. GULL's leadership team focuses on the following activities:

(1) Organizational applications: GULL works with a wide array of organizations and wherever possible we encourage GULL affiliated organizations to utilize their own brand or organizational name and to operate a corporate school, academy (or similar entity), that they manage themselves. See for example the 'Sandals Resorts International' case study from the workplace in the 'Case Studies' section at the GULL website.



GULL provides a customizable lifelong learning system that organizations can use to create a corporate school or academy that mirrors their own realities and challenges.

Pictured left: The corporate business school (CBS) launch in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 28 April 2008, hosted by the Minister of Human Resources and the Deputy Minister of Youth & Sports. Fourteen organizations committed to establishing their own CBS with GULL at this event.

(2) Government endorsements and support: Launch events (like the CBS Malaysia launch event held in April 2008 – pictured above) provide opportunities for the expression of political support and for the endorsement of GULL’s mission and work. Appendix 1 contains an example endorsement in the form of a speech made by the Malaysian Minister of Human Resources at this event. Our goal where possible, is to secure Government level endorsement prior to starting in a new national location. This is for two reasons. First, so that GULL’s statement of recognition can be ‘localized’ via a formal letter of encouragement, support and endorsement from an appropriate Government Minister and/or other public figures. In all cases, we seek an official letter of endorsement that can be included in the ‘Endorsements’ section at the GULL website. Second, one or more official endorsements at Government Ministry level, ensures that GULL is not caught-up in officialdom. As GULL is not an academic institution we do not feature in the standard reference lists for educational providers and there are no circumstances in which we will seek (or accept) accreditation by national or international bodies. This is because compliance with academic/accrediting body requirements is likely to exclude the very communities of people we are seeking to serve. GULL’s mandate is all that is required: GULL offers a recognized professional system with professional awards and our request is that national Governments endorse our mission and work on behalf of their nation.

(3) Strategic development projects: In developing new opportunities, especially with political support, it is possible to extend GULL’s influence. In part, this is because of the inclusive nature of GULL’s work and the fact that there are few (if any) better ways to harness large scale involvement in economic transformation.



Pictured left: Discussing applications of the GULL system in Australia: The Australian High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea, his assistant and Dr Winston Jacob (GULL’s National President, India).



Pictured right: Winston briefs the President of Vanuatu.

(4) GULL’s champions: Wherever we work GULL’s regional and national leaders aim to secure community, political and industry support for new and on-going initiatives. We recognize those who are actively assisting GULL with the title ‘Ambassador’ and our passive supporters are designated as ‘Elders’ Additionally, we seek nominations for GULL’s Pro Chancellor panel from those who are serving (or have served) in national and international leadership roles.

(5) On-going support and impact tracking: GULL uses a self-review format to help its system users to track their own progress and identify variances for corrective action over an annual cycle concluding each year with an annual report and review meeting. To facilitate this, GULL provides a simple tracking system with reporting formats that are easy to follow and use. We also welcome and value alternative approaches so that the entire process – from the moment of affiliation through to on-going impact tracking facilitates customization and ownership aligned with the key principles outlined below in GULL’s code of practice.

Affiliating with GULL

Any organization can affiliate with GULL and begin cascading the GULL system - providing that the representative agrees to abide by GULL’s code of practice on behalf of the organization either by completing the online form in the ‘Affiliate’ section of the website OR in written correspondence with the appropriate GULL officer (President, Regional President or National President). The GULL affiliation form should only be completed by the lead organizational representative and for large/multinational organizations, this individual is asked to undertake the necessary internal briefing so as prevent duplicate GULL affiliation form submissions.

Our objective is to enable your organization to recognize the individual and collective efforts of those who are causing change and progressive transformation in communities or in the workplace. A change process usually requires sustained effort – sometimes over a period of many years and to secure lasting progress, it is often necessary to build momentum by harnessing the creativity and energy of large numbers of people. Here, work and community-based action learning has a significant role to play, especially if it is coupled with externally recognized professional certification.

If you lead or represent an organization and you would like to use the GULL system, you can affiliate directly with GULL from the ‘Affiliate’ section at the website. It is an automated process based on an affiliation form which includes GULL’s code of practice. Simply follow the sequence of steps detailed in this section and then complete and submit the online GULL affiliation form. GULL only works through affiliated organizations and so GULL system users must complete the affiliation process prior to starting in order to be eligible to receive GULL certification.

GULL's Code of Practice

The Global University for Lifelong Learning (GULL) aims to build and sustain network relationships founded upon shared values. To guide entrepreneurship and innovation and to assure the integrity of its work in every location, GULL's officers, affiliated organizations and their representatives must commit to and adhere by GULL's code of practice (CoP). The purpose of the GULL CoP is to protect the integrity of GULL in all community and workplace locations. By completing the GULL affiliation form you and your organization are committing to:

1. **The vision** - GULL's statement of recognition in perpetuity is the basis of its mandate and its core mission is to enable participation by the low paid, disadvantaged groups and in economic terms, the poorest - as soon as the basis for cost recovery has been secured in any given location. Note that GULL does not seek to emulate or compete with academia. Furthermore, GULL does not claim to 'educate' - it provides a system for facilitating, recognizing and certifying practical, professional, holistic learning at work and in the community - on a lifelong basis.
2. **Accuracy** - Openness, transparency, honesty and integrity so as to represent GULL in the best possible way at all times and to uphold its status, source of recognition and endorsements. In all matters, the key reference source is the GULL website at www.gullonline.org. The 'Recognition' section contains the original statement of recognition and the array of endorsements offered by Governments, Leaders and Institutions.
3. **Affordable funding** - Securing on-going contributions to meet GULL's central operating costs and to funding mutually agreed travel and other expenses (as appropriate) and/or the payment of fees, linked to each certificate produced payable prior to issue. Please note: GULL's two central companies (GULL Inc. in the USA (the university awarding body is American) and GULL Ltd. (global support from the UK)) operate on a cost recovery basis.
4. **Positioning** - The integrity of GULL's professional award system, its elements and use of the correct terminology to describe its action learning process and awards. These are 'professional' (*not academic*) and 'recognized' (*not accredited*). Note also that GULL pathways and awards are *not* designed to articulate with or provide access to academic institutions and there are no circumstances in which GULL or its representatives will enter into any form of correspondence on this matter.
5. **Professionalism** - Compliance with key operating principles of the GULL system as follows: (1) Participant entry levels to professional Bachelor, Master and Doctor pathways that are aligned with the appropriate level of seniority, maturity and experience so as to secure the expected outcomes - Master and Doctor level outcomes must be 'strategic' in nature; (2) Acceptance that certificates cannot be awarded until GULL participants have gathered sufficient, verifiable evidence of learning and application to merit any given award.
6. **Impact tracking** - GULL's officers and affiliated organizations (as appropriate) are responsible for tracking the impact of the GULL system on a longitudinal basis. GULL global support provides (via the website) a simple, recommended approach to tracking and quality assurance but other approaches are also valued and welcomed. Additionally, GULL affiliated organizations are asked to prepare an annual report in which the evidence of tracking is documented together with whatever corrective action is deemed necessary to ensure that any variances are fully addressed.
7. **Clarity** - GULL's officers and affiliated organizations are asked to seek prior approval (from GULL global support) for all specialist pathways offered (e.g. Bachelor of Professional Studies (Community Development)) and make any necessary arrangements to handle questions and requests from their own GULL participants. Please explain in start-up sessions that GULL does not operate a global registry and so 'transcripts' cannot be provided. Additionally, please explain that GULL global support does not have the resources to enter into any form of correspondence on behalf of individual GULL participants. All reference requests must be handled locally by the appropriate GULL representative(s).
8. **Representation** - Accuracy in the portrayal and replication of the GULL logo and GULL's official system documentation (available from the website) and in providing advance proofs of all brochures, websites, promotional and printed materials for approval prior to release.
9. **Relationships** - Consultation and agreement with all third party organizations prior to using other logos and names of organizations on printed materials (including certificates) in conjunction with the GULL logo and name. Additionally, acceptance that GULL's executive team has the right to refuse permission to use third party logos, names of organizations and other details (as appropriate) if it is not deemed to be in GULL's best interests.
10. **Support** - GULL's officers are responsible for ensuring that appropriate guidance, on-going support and other assistance (as appropriate) is provided to GULL affiliated organizations and their representatives, administrators and facilitators.

Getting started with GULL

There are many ways of using the GULL system and so we have designed an easy to use 'Getting started' package that enables you to link the expected outcomes of your training and other kinds of development activity to GULL's professional certification system. This approach ensures that you are able to build on what is already familiar to you and your organization.

The getting started steps are:

(1) Establish a Professional Master (M) and/or Doctor (D) cascade leadership group. This group will lead by undertaking their own M or D level pathway in order to progress their own personal and professional development and, at the same time, cascade the GULL system to others via the creation and implementation of an outcomes map.

(2) Prepare and implement a GULL cascade plan by integrating GULL's Professional Bachelor degree pathway with your own training, short courses and other activity (all these are 'inputs') and the intended applications and evidence of learning provided by each and every participant (termed 'outputs'). This linkage is referred to as an 'outcomes map'.

GULL's starting point provides a means of 'cascading' the GULL system from those in leadership roles (who serve as cascade leaders) to every level of participation. The objective is to enable cascade leaders to begin their own professional Master or Doctor degree journey and at the same time, cascade the GULL system to others. In so doing, cascade leaders assume a key role and make a strategic contribution by ensuring the widest possible participation. As leaders can only establish the parameters for change, the involvement of many others (via GULL's cascade process) is mandatory – it is not possible to undertake GULL's Master or Doctoral pathways solely for personal development.

The 'Getting started' section of the website provides all the resources needed to cascade the GULL system. To use these resources effectively though it is important that cascade leaders familiarize themselves with the resources, discuss and then document the organization's GULL cascade plan and agree on how the leadership group will brief and support the action learning group(s) specified in their GULL cascade plan. We know that self-directed action learning can be operationalized on a large scale and that by engaging entire organizations and communities in the process, significant outcomes will arise. These include growth in individual self-esteem and confidence and wider impacts as groups of action learners learn together, pass on their action learning expertise to others and in turn, help to sustain the cascading process so that all who wish to participate will have the opportunity to do so.

Impact tracking

The GULL learning process is based on two parallel strands of action and reflection. It begins when learners develop an outline plan for their own learning as a basis for attaining personal and organizational learning outcomes. As they progress and at the end of the formal journey, participants must reflect on what they have accomplished for themselves and for the other stakeholders involved in the process. In all cases, the outcomes should have a hard edge – in the form of practical, implementable and trackable contributions to real work/community issues. In this way learners, sponsors and others can discern a difference from their investment in action learning by monitoring or tracking the individual and collective impact of action learning.

Impact tracking not only meets the GULL requirement by enabling user organizations to identify what is going well and where corrective action might be necessary, it provides a body of evidence that links the cost of training and other inputs with the return on investment (ROI) in training and individual and organizational effort. In so doing, it is possible to track ROI over time and predict the longer term impact as GULL cascades through the organization. GULL provides a simple, recommended approach to assist with impact tracking over an annual cycle.

How can my organization get involved?

Thank you for reading this article. Do please think about what you can offer and how you might inspire others in your organization to get involved. Together, we can bring hope and opportunity to the many people around the world who do not have access to lifelong learning. GULL works with organizations that share our vision for universal access to learning in the workplace and in the community. If you would like to affiliate with GULL's network movement, please review the 'Affiliate' section at the GULL website - www.gullonline.org There are no membership fees or other barriers to participation - we'd like to work with you to harness all the skills and abilities that your organization can offer in order to help others to learn, grow and develop. Please note though that GULL does not have the resources to support individual learners and it is for this reason we can only correspond with organizations via their nominated representative(s).

Richard Teare
President, GULL

GULL website address: www.gullonline.org



Dr Richard Teare is President, Global University for Lifelong Learning. Richard has been committed to work and community-based learning since the mid-1990s and he has helped to create learning and development applications for a wide variety of organizations in different parts of the world. Prior to this, he held professorships at four UK universities (Bournemouth, Surrey, Oxford Brookes, Derby). In 1988 he founded and then edited for 20 years, the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. He is now the Managing Editor of *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*. Emerald Group publishes both these journals. His academic publications include 20 co-authored and edited text books on aspects of service management, marketing and organizational learning. In 2007, he co-founded the Global University for Lifelong Learning with Edward Mooney, GULL's Chairman.

Appendix 1: Endorsement speech by the Malaysian Minister of Human Resources

Launch event, GULL corporate business school initiative, Malaysia on Monday 28 April 2008.



Y. B. Datuk Dr S. Subramaniam
Minister of Human Resources

I should like to thank the organizers for inviting me to officiate today at the launch of this National level corporate school programme. This concept reflects what the Government is seeking to do and so we are thinking and planning in the same way in relation to addressing the modern challenges that we face. As Malaysia forges ahead to become a developed and industrialized country, there is a need to develop human capital for the many industries in this country. As part of our on-going strategy, the Ministry of Human Resources is keen to encourage organizations to develop their own human capital and employability. As organizations develop, the workplace itself becomes the best institution for learning. To accomplish this, a shift is needed from academic inputs to people training, focused on workplace learning and development. We must focus on the continuous process of developing people in their workplace to enable them to perform productively and effectively in a rapidly changing world.

I see a key role here for action learning as it combines learning with outcomes and applications. As action learning encompasses both self-management and organizational development, I anticipate that many organizations will benefit from participating in this initiative. The Government is keen to find ways of supporting industry in the development of people and it is a positive and natural step for organizations to develop their own brand learning initiative in order that they might remain competitive. This will enable them to incorporate new knowledge, develop skills and learn from work and life experience. Companies should adopt this concept, internalize it to meet their own needs and by utilizing GULL's corporate business school programme, build their own brand for integrated learning. It is also critical that employees recognize this opportunity and can identify what they need to learn in order to ensure sustained personal and organizational success.

I think that the CBS concept is a very good one and by combining working and learning, employees can become more focused and committed to their job requirements, as compared to the traditional method of sending employees out to training and educational providers as and when needed. The traditional way is a short term approach and not very productive - we know this because it has been the dominant approach to human resource development for many years. The ability to link a corporate business school to the Global University's professional awards system to certify the outcome-driven curriculum and recognize the achievements of the employee is attractive: In essence, it provides recognition with performance-related qualifications. This is a good thing because everyone likes to receive recognition for the work they are doing. It is motivating for the employer and employees too as they can now attain recognized qualifications by participating in their own CBS programme.

The CBS initiative provides a platform for organizations to develop their own training, based on individual demands and it enables employees to focus on what they need to learn, yet applied in their daily work environment. The real benefit is that the outcomes can be certified and employees do not have to leave their workplace to earn professional qualifications. This is a very important development for Malaysia, and it has the full support of the Ministry of Human Resources. We feel that it will greatly enhance competitiveness and it will better equip companies to face current and future challenges. Companies should view the setting-up of a corporate school as a capital investment that will yield continuing benefits and returns over the years ahead. As long as corporations realize this and use this approach, they will continue to invest in training and upgrading and I'm sure that the Nation will benefit from the development of a whole new group of highly professional, qualified and skilled workers. In this regard, I am pleased to announce that the Human Resources Development Fund invites applications for technical and vocational programmes and the CBS initiative qualifies for this purpose. The funds available will enable employers to pay for study fees and allowances so that they can further train and develop their employees.

To conclude, I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate you for being innovative and for coming forward to start-up your own corporate business schools so that you can develop your own human resources and brands for learning. It is certainly an innovative step forward and it will assist you in establishing long term in-house people development programmes.

It will help to meet your current and future human capital base requirements and at the same time, it will increase employability, reduce unemployment, increase productivity and help to ensure that our workforce is globally competitive. I wish you all the best with this new venture and I hope that this will become the working culture for all Malaysians in the near future.

Notes:

Datuk Dr Subramaniam became Minister of Human Resources in March, 2008. He has endorsed GULL and GULL Asia's CBS initiative with the same enthusiasm as his predecessor, Dr Fong Chan Onn the former Minister of Human Resources. On 30 January, 2008, Datuk Seri Dr. Fong Chan Onn, wrote:

"I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate GULL for introducing the concept of an in-house corporate school. I am confident that by establishing their own corporate schools, our national industries will benefit from teams of knowledge workers who are culturally competitive ... it will also assist the nation in its efforts to achieve Developed Nation status by 2020. I urge management in all industries to establish their own corporate school as part of their initiative to upgrade their organizational productivity and competitiveness."