



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

ADDRESS BY Dr. Richard Teare, President, Global University for Lifelong Learning
on the occasion of its launch on Friday, 05th October, 2007, State Function Room, National Parliament House

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Over a period of more than 20 years, I have tried many different approaches to engaging people in learning - from conventional settings as a university professor teaching in lecture halls, to the many and varied challenges of working with busy managers and other practitioners in their respective workplaces around the world. What I have noticed is that practitioners are always:

- Busy - the world is fast and business realities create pressure;
- Running hard at work without necessarily knowing where they are going - nor what they know or ready;
- Reluctant to admit what they don't know and to work on those things that might help them to work more effectively.

Most busy people are good at doing. They are used to doing things quickly, and they can fix what needs fixing and deliver results. But: they are not so good at standing back, reflecting, analyzing and asking questions like: Why do we do it this way?

A good starting point is to pose the question: 'What does being a professional mean to you?' and, after several minutes of reflection, I know that a group of people can come up with a long list of skills and behaviours - all of which they have to demonstrate at work - things like: good time keeping, a smart appearance, excellent customer and interpersonal skills, courage, leadership, curiosity and many more.

GULL wants to play a pivotal role in peoples' lives and to enable learners - everywhere - to participate in personal and professional development - regardless of their background, prior attainments and financial circumstances. Above all, we want to help people to feel more confident about themselves so that they are able to take action that will truly make a difference in their own lives.

If we are to accomplish this task and, enable each and every learner to decide what he or she needs to learn for themselves - then we need to draw on a process that is inclusive, collaborative, engaging, enjoyable, socially beneficial and outcomes-directed. Without outcomes (or solutions) as our focal point, then learners will not be able to make a difference nor will others see the changes that have occurred or capture the sense of accomplishment that a learning journey can - and should - create.

Consider for a moment this question: How do young children learn about the world? They are innocent, curious, interested and keen to learn and as parents we respond to the endless questions with patience and a determination to help them make sense of all that they are experiencing. But what happens when we stop asking questions? As adults we may feel weary and unable to grow in the same way.

GULL's mission is to re-ignite enthusiasm for learning and with that, personal growth and development that will enable our learners to grow as people and as professionals at work, in the community and in many other settings.

So, how will GULL encourage lifelong learning?

One key and fundamental learning approach for GULL is based on the philosophy of action learning. It is a process that honours the individual and engages the learner's colleagues and community. Nothing is more powerful than people working together to better themselves, solve problems and create stronger societies for their families and future generations.

Continued/

Typically, action learning occurs when people learn from each other, create their own resources, identify their own problems and form their own solutions. GULL's qualification framework is designed for this purpose. It does not compete with or replicate the frameworks provided by academic awarding bodies.

The world over, this process works - in any culture, language and tradition. Learning is special; it is personal and unique to each participant. The point of commitment and engagement - heart and mind - comes when learners realize that they don't necessarily need a teacher or textbooks to learn important things that can help them in many ways. It is re-kindling the desire, the enthusiasm and the curiosity for learning that is important. After this, people achieve remarkable things.

GULL will strive at all times to foster and encourage those who may have little hope, low self-esteem and are lacking in self confidence. We want our learners to realize that they are 'experts' in life and in all that they do - even if they don't feel this way - and to help them to envision their future - for better things, with hope, solutions, enthusiasm for life and for learning.

GULL aims to encourage personal and professional development. How does this differ from the conventional academic process?

GULL awards professional certificates, diplomas and degrees and its learning process is entirely linked to outputs (in the form of practical solutions to workplace or community challenges) using an active, dynamic, facilitated approach that is customized by the learner. The process starts by recognizing that the learner knows what he or she needs to learn and can direct their own learning process. In contrast, academic awards generally recognize attainments that are set, monitored and examined by academics, linked to substantial formal input.

Third, how does the GULL system work?

GULL provides a systemized approach so as to assure the consistency of attainments at different levels of certification, each linked to the level and the scope of the challenge that the learner is addressing. We believe that systemized lifelong learning coupled with professional certification is the key to sustaining workplace or community action as it provides both the incentive and the framework needed to secure the participant's active engagement long enough to ensure that breakthroughs are made and solutions are found.

GULL's local representatives provide learner support and administer its international quality assurance system. The output focus requires each and every learner to track, collate and present the evidence of their learning and its application. To assure the consistency of outcomes, all work at professional Bachelor, Master and Doctor level is subject to verification by independent professional assessors.

There are fifteen (15) outcomes directed steps or levels with three pathways for: (1) younger people (5 levels to professional Bachelor); (2) the more experienced (5 levels to professional Master) and (3) senior leaders (5 levels to professional Doctor).

There are two open access pathways to professional certification with (no prior qualifications required): Bachelor (B) level is for those in the age range 18-25; Master (M) level is those with more life and work experience and who are at least 26 years of age at the time of entry. The Bachelor and Master level pathways share the same approach, outcome requirements and minimum durations for each level. To progress from Entry level (L1) to Professional degree level (L5) it is necessary to capture you're learning in the form of a series of outputs - each of which should have a practical application.

We believe that learning really should be a LIFELONG journey - not just for the young in age, but the young at heart! The Doctor (D) level pathway is for those with: (i) a Master level degree qualification, (ii) a senior managerial, professional or community role and who are (iii) at least 30 years of age at the time of entry. This pathway can be integrated with on-going professional development and any form of outcomes centred activity that will sustain a progressive, in-depth study.

Finally, what are the benefits?

The evidence of learning is realistic, practical, relevant and valuable to the learner and his or her employer and community.

Continued/

Concluding remarks

Winston Jacob has championed the cause of lifelong learning here in Papua New Guinea for many years, and without his passion and commitment, there would be little tangible evidence that the processes I have been describing are truly life-changing. I should also like to thank Benson Ateng, Country Manager for Papua New Guinea, East Asia and the Pacific Region at the World Bank for his encouragement and support.

The support of Sir Paulias - our unpaid, Founding Chancellor and champion of lifelong learning is without precedent and his desire to see PNG and its people achieve its full potential, distinguishes him as an inspirational leader. Sir Paulias is a passionate lifelong learner - his day begins at 2am (with email correspondence) and he questions, encourages and supports a great many people. He also reflects on his daily learning through his writing (to-date more than 50 books). There is no one - anywhere - who is better equipped to be an advocate of lifelong learning than he, and without his vision and commitment, we would not be here today.

Last but not least, thank you to the people and Nation of Papua New Guinea for your willingness to take the lead and help others throughout the world.

God bless Papua New Guinea.