

YOUR NAME

**THE GDLN IN A
COMPETITIVE WORLD**

::

**THE ISSUES
AND
OPPORTUNITIES**

Singapore

28-29th March, 2007

Facilitation:

Nigel Seys-Phillips

<nigel@fulcrum.com.sg>

The GDLN in a Competitive World – The Issues and Opportunities

Singapore 28-29th March 2007

List of attendees:

Colin Lonergan
Ian Binch
Lim May-Ann
Maree Tait
Nigel Seys-Phillips
Peter Stephens
Phillip Karp
Dr. Pimrumpai Premsmi
Ravi Corea
Ryan Ang
Ryu Fukui
Tina Taheri
Zhu Zhengxuan
Dr. Zhang Jiaqiang

The GDLN in a Competitive World – The Issues and Opportunities

Singapore 28-29th March 2007

Topics Raised:

- 1) Is there a real demand for GDLN? What is its vision and how should we position it?
- 2) Role of GDLN in Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination
- 3) What are the blockages to the GDLN?
- 4) Are youth groups within the GDLN radar?
- 5) Partnerships, Public Relations and Marketing
- 6) What will the World Bank think of the GDLN in 5 years? In 10 years?
- 7) Management issues of GDLN – quality, productivity, process and planning?
- 8) Are we going to earn enough money?
- 9) Country-specific and regional programs: balancing the needs, demands and strategies
(Role for EAP association in country-specific programs; Branding; Links between country and regional programs)
- 10) Should we “re-badge” GDLN Asia Pacific?
- 11) Management
 - a. Quality
 - b. Productivity
 - c. Process and structure
 - d. Planning

SESSION OUTCOME 1

Singapore, 28-29th March 2007

TOPIC:

Is there a real demand for GDLN? What is its vision and how should we position it?

SESSION INITIATOR: Ian Binch, Maree Tait

CO-WORKERS:

Philip Karp, Ravi Corea, Zhang Jiaqiang, Ryu Fukui, Colin Lonergan, Zhu Zhengxuan, Lao Xin, Lim May-Ann

DISCUSSION NOTES/ KEY UNDERSTANDINGS/ KEY IDEAS/ OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS/ ACTION ITEMS:

Needs vs. Demand Issues

- What are the basic services we are offering?
- Is there a demand for them?
- Is technology so new that we need to create new demand?

Collective Vision for GDLN Asia Pacific

- Should the whole network be corporatised or abandoned?
- Should the business/ strategic plan be collective or individualized?

Discussion on Value Proposition

- Packaging of services and value preferably into one (they are individually still in demand)
- The initial proposition of providing “Connectivity” - is it still relevant now, esp with onset of technological advancements?
- What issues on Leasing/training/content should we consider?
- Possibility of brokering for a disparate set of suppliers, combining and providing for more than one country at a time
- Development is all about knowledge and how to disseminate it, and may be best created in a collective process

Assessing Strength and Sources of Demand – is it actually there?

- A blended format bringing in live elements (e.g. micro-financing course has grown exponentially) can create and multiply demand sources

- Possibility of expansion to other networks (e.g. China Development Bank joining; Pacific; Philippines); new technology development
- Potential value from duty country point of view is get high quality programs and creating a “Diaspora”

Issue of DLCs having difficulty in sustaining themselves

- E.g. In China, DLCs in the Western provinces/ poorer areas (e.g. Ningxia) have the purpose to reduce the digital gap and engage areas with rest of world and other parts of China. Also partnerships with WBI, JICA and other agencies are important.
- Funding basically comes from the central government and future sustainability comes in the form of training of government officials. Without funding independent DLCs may not survive.
- TDLC supports growth of China DLCs
- There are also different objectives and ways of operations among DLCs. Issue of profitability vs Development is pertinent.
- What is the final measure of success?
- How do we convert demand into profit?

Technology: creating something and selling it

- GDLN is in the ICT business and not doing it. Why?
- There has to be demonstration of what value the network is offering (“business plan”)
- GDLN Asia Pacific has a framework but it is not a “bankable” document

Do we have an issue of insufficient capacity to execute?

- TDLC is the only business that has the core business of GDLN
- E.g. Hanoi Centre has the issue of not being able to use Trust Fund allocation to pay the rent and salaries of TDC staff.
- Do we have a large no. of institutions solely dedicated to this function?
- Should the World Bank gradually reduce its involvement from being an “owner” to a “stakeholder”?
- Is there a need to engage with new technologies to expand our outreach
- Who will do the marketing and management of the business plan?

SESSION OUTCOME 2

Singapore, 28-29th March 2007

TOPIC:

Role of GDLN in Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination

SESSION INITIATOR: Dr. Pimrumpai Premssmit

CO-WORKERS:

Peter Stephens, Nigel Seys-Phillips

DISCUSSION NOTES/ KEY UNDERSTANDINGS/ KEY IDEAS/ OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS/ ACTION ITEMS:

- Knowledge is a product which needs to be marketed like any other product.
- With a strong background in science, medicine and political science, proper management and marketing of knowledge is an opportunity to raise Chulalongkom's visibility (e.g. a lot of expertise in managing Avian flu is not disseminated to the right audience).
- Explore creating a "knowledge portal", where knowledge can be stored and accessed more easily
- Need a strong knowledge officer to gather, disseminate, organize and market knowledge (but staffing is an issue in terms of capacity for marketing). The officer must be relevant and have access to people, ideas and the power to convene audiences.
- Should also identify audiences who can and will pay for relevant knowledge.
- Create and strengthen academic knowledge network within and beyond GDLN, based on universities. Possibility to use DLC as a conference point and have experts offsite and participants from remote studios
- Draw on communities of practice and identify new ones
- Hook into other networks (e.g Public Health) to broaden reach
- Seek external commercial funding for countries to use GDLN – knowing outcomes in specific disciplines

SESSION OUTCOME 3

Singapore, 28-29th March 2007

TOPIC:

What are the blockages to the GDLN?

SESSION INITIATOR: Maree Tait

CO-WORKERS:

Dr. Pimrumpai Premssmit, Lim May-Ann, Ian Binch, Nigel Seys-Phillips, Ravi Corea, Phillip Karp, Colin Lonergran, Zhang Jiaqiang, Zhu Zhengxuan, Ryan Ang

DISCUSSION NOTES/ KEY UNDERSTANDINGS/ KEY IDEAS/ OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS/ ACTION ITEMS:

- What is stopping the GDLN from tapping into the US\$200-300 million training budget in the region. Are difficulties a result of how donor funds are structured?
- Issue between sector-wide topics vs specific programs in discussion sessions – should we adopt a mixed model?
- DLCs and their own marketing – technocrats, academics and engineers are not good marketers.
- Sourcing for funding should be in the hands of a regional IC or a regional team of people deployed to each office – but who is going to find them? Should funding be sourced according to topic and not concept? Explore possibility of doing regional training sessions.
- “ASEAN Legendary Leadership Dialogue” proposal as a prototype for GDLN seminar – but it will bring in operational issues such as costs, the type of audience to attract, delegation of responsibilities etc
- GDLN started off as infrastructure, but people are not interested in economists’ speeches; then learning started to come into the picture. There is a need to find out: what does our market want, and who are they anyway? A feasible branding strategy should appeal to the emotive needs of the audience, like how Project Red appeals to the collective desire to address the HIV/AIDS problem in Africa.
- Perhaps the GDLN should start to market to “mass consumers” rather than focusing solely on organizing specific events.
- A possible pitch for GDLN Asia Pacific is can it disseminate the successful developmental models in the region to the rest of the world?
- Need to customize value propositions for different audience groups (e.g. donors, students, companies, other stakeholders). Many aid agencies (e.g. AusAid) are re-inventing themselves to stay relevant in host countries. GDLN should do the same. Eg. It can organize training sessions around thematic topics, such as mining from Australian companies in Laos
- Private sector companies can also play a lead role in supporting GDLN outreach programmes (e.g. Gates Foundation, Standard Chartered).

SESSION OUTCOME 4

Singapore, 28-29th March 2007

TOPIC:

Are youth groups within the GDLN radar?

SESSION INITIATOR: Maree Tait

CO-WORKERS:

Lim May-Ann, Ian Binch, Nigel Seys-Phillips, Ravi Corea, Tina Taheri, Ryu Fukui

DISCUSSION NOTES/ KEY UNDERSTANDINGS/ KEY IDEAS/ OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS/ ACTION ITEMS:

- There are many ways to engage disaffected youths
- In Singapore such youth-related agencies include the Singapore National Youth Council, the Halogen Foundation and One Degree Asia.
- Young people are well versed in using technology and using GDLN should not be a problem. What we need to do is to get funding and get young leaders to develop and fund these activities.
- The GDLN regional youth dialogue is 3 years old
- Kids' Initiative – needs NGO support
- Some youth participate in 24 hour video conference and ideas generated are fed into international seminars and programs
- Some proactive youth groups include Young Engineers Without Borders (led by Danny Almagor); Peppercorn Foundation; ASEAN Youth Secretariat; Young Australian of the Year Award. The youths involved are usually energetic and committed, work overseas and are tapped into the private sector

SESSION OUTCOME 5

Singapore, 28-29th March 2007

TOPIC:

Partnerships, Public Relations and Marketing

SESSION INITIATOR: Phillip Karp

CO-WORKERS:

Ryu Fukui, Colin Lonergan, Zhang Jiaqiang, Zhu Zhengxuan, Dr. Pimrumpai Premsmi

DISCUSSION NOTES/ KEY UNDERSTANDINGS/ KEY IDEAS/ OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS/ ACTION ITEMS:

- Partnerships with regional organizations is vital
- We should consider positioning GDLN in the area of technical cooperation and as a forum for cooperation (e.g. partnership with APEC are not so successful but partnership with ASEAN is very successful)
- We should strive for a knowledge-based relationship between WB and Chulalongkorn University
- The interest is on the cooperation with the private sector; we should focus on business opportunities
- The main factor for cooperation is institutional support
- Mr. Zhang gave a brief introduction to the China Development Distance Learning Net (CDDLN) (www.cddl.gov.cn). There are two possible structures for China DLCs – association and working groups. For EAP he thinks WB should take the lead. Funding is not a big problem for China DLCs because they are located in universities. China DLCs just received funding of US\$30 million from NDRC. China DLCs have approached GTZ (Germany) for capacity building.

SESSION OUTCOME 6

Singapore, 28-29th March 2007

TOPIC:

What will the World Bank think of the GDLN in 5 years? In 10 years?

SESSION INITIATOR: Maree Tait

CO-WORKERS:

Ryu Fukui, Colin Lonergan, Zhang Jiaqiang, Zhu Zhengxuan, Dr. Pimrumpai Premsmi,
Ravi Corea, Ian Binch, Phillip Karp

DISCUSSION NOTES/ KEY UNDERSTANDINGS/ KEY IDEAS/ OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS/ ACTION ITEMS:

What would be the impact if we remove the WB – has it invested enough money to stay in the GDLN?

- a) A thriving network which is financially sustainable with the WB as a major partner
- b) Would not exist – the technology will have become ubiquitous and not relevant

Radio is used in Latin America

Brazil uses special newspaper supplements and a video conferencing structure where 14.000 people are signed up.

What is emerging is a strong partnership – with the GDLN and the WB together.
The ASEAN partnership is being moved within the WB.

The TDLC wants to retain the credit for being a part of the WB but wants to be free of the bureaucracy > sees the WB as being the strongest partner of the GDLN.

Hanoi sees the model of an independent entity with WB as “Chairman of the Board of Governance” with other donors having the ability to participate as members of the Board.

Maybe question is the wrong way round – “What do you think the GDLN will be like.....”
The better the GDLN is, the better the WB will engage.

China wants the WB to still take the lead – respecting history and the assistance it gives to ensure institutional support (but not asking for any financial support). Credibility without giving funds.

The GDLN clearly offers value to the WB by the work it does, and the acceptance it has received in certain communities.

Historical perspective –

WB introduced the GDLN to help with the digital divide – but this is now almost reversed in some cases although internet access can still be highly variable

How do we keep up with technology?

How do we invest in the new technology?

(There needs to be a technology stream to the strategy programme)

The risk of disintermediation –

- a) technology and access
- b) but what is the value proposition.....content or training or capacity development > not the technology
- c) GDLN is a content supplier – technology is just the tool

What do we call our business?

What is the 'brand architecture'?

What is the name?

What would be the impact of changing the name –

On selling again internally to the WB

On new partners / donors

On existing partners / donors?

SESSION OUTCOME 7

Singapore, 28-29th March 2007

TOPIC:

Management issues of GDLN – quality, productivity, process and planning

SESSION INITIATOR: Ravi Corea

CO-WORKERS:

Ryu Fukui, Colin Lonergan, Zhang Jiaqiang, Zhu Zhengxuan, Dr. Pimrumpai Premssmit, Ian Binch, Phillip Karp, Maree Tait, Peter Stephens, Nigel Seys-Phillips

DISCUSSION NOTES/ KEY UNDERSTANDINGS/ KEY IDEAS/ OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS/ ACTION ITEMS:

- Technology is “mature” and “ubiquitous”, but we still cannot get reliable video-conferencing connections among our centres.
- The issue seems to be that today it is not managed properly – there is a certain complacency and lack of service culture. People do not conduct the 30-min prior tests before actual VCs as generally agreed.
- There used to be a mechanism in the early days where a weekly meeting will be held between ISCG and GDLN services in Washington that reviewed the past weeks’ events and the issues that existed. The process was successful but now it is not happening. Can we do it again for the region?
- The motivation among DLC staff is not service-oriented, mainly because it is not the core business of the host institutions.
- The GDLN is currently similar to a franchise which has little uniformity among its franchisees. A franchise has a manual which provides product description, process, performance criteria, and training so all staff will have uniform skills.
- The accreditation and de-accreditation of franchisees, coupled with the franchisees’ profit opportunities are parts of the mechanism.
- However, the ultimate sanction is not to be “evicted” from the GDLN but not to be included in programs.
- Because it is such a diverse group, the key is to make sure that all centres understand that a good service culture is in their own interests. This takes advocacy. A vital component of all actions is to ensure that all staff believe in the same concepts.
- A regular management VC would be an excellent opportunity to do this (monthly if feasible).
- The key benefit of a franchise is the full package of process, product, intellectual property and overall “profit” (or meeting of institutional aims)

- The absence of a profit motive in most DLCs makes it difficult to implement all the parallels of a franchise.
- The motivation and professional pride of DLC managers is key. If they lack that motivation, we the GDLN must address it.
- There is clearly a need to motivate the host institution and thereby the individuals that manage the DLC. Advocacy is therefore required at all levels.
- In China, where the host institution gives strong support to the DLC and considers it important to their core business, the DLCs perform well. Public recognition of good DLCs proves to be a strong motivator in China (incentives rather than sanctions).
- While we can improve management in GDLN Asia Pacific, the TDLC have a bit of business with other networks (e.g. JICA Net) and other regions. We need to address this as well.
- Is it necessary to look at productivity (cost of program) in the interests of sustainability? (e.g. we need to negotiate with every DLC for each new program)
- Therefore we need to develop the service culture and network responsiveness as a matter of priority.
- GDLN Asia Pacific should focus strongly on this, since it was founded largely for that reason.

SESSION OUTCOME 8

Singapore, 28-29th March 2007

TOPIC:

Are we going to earn enough money?

SESSION INITIATOR: Ryu Fukui

CO-WORKERS:

Colin Lonergan, Zhang Jiaqiang, Zhu Zhengxuan, Dr. Pimrumpai Premssmit, Ravi Corea, Ian Binch, Phillip Karp, Maree Tait, Peter Stephens, Nigel Seys-Phillips

DISCUSSION NOTES/ KEY UNDERSTANDINGS/ KEY IDEAS/ OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS/ ACTION ITEMS:

- Do we know how to earn enough money – if operating as a video-conference centre billing on an hourly rate is not self-sustaining?
- We also need to earn enough money for the Association as well as the individual DLCs.
- Sustainable – what does that actually mean?
- We are discussing the management and the systems now but this needs to be matched by our business developing at the same speed.
- If we continue the way we are doing are we on the right track? Do we have a future?
- For the GDLN product, we can increase the e-learning element which is valuable and we can increase the pricing on traditional products to make more money.
- Does each centre know how to make money?
- As an Association do we have the confidence in our ability to earn with the right products and are we clear about them (from a Regional and Country specific perspective)?
- Should Revenue models be created by virtue of each TDC's own initiative, or from a regional perspective?
- Should the Association be better called a Foundation (which is the legal advice for tax- free status in Thailand) as it supports the activities of the DLC's in the region?
- Can we arrange methods of co-financing, similar to UNICEF?
- TDLC currently at 70% capacity utilization with 80% of programmes paid for
- It is moving to higher prices – the “drug dealer” approach starting low with full service attached which is later charged for.

- 3 units are self-sustaining:

- ANU – largely through AUSAID
 - Vietnam – trust fund money for virtual learning
 - Sri Lanka – high-speed internet access for IT training
- TDLC has excellent client list – take that list and engage each one, targeting with suitable programmes.
 - But building up the volume requires delivery of that volume and effective productivity.
 - A value proposition – content that crosses geographical boundaries that is of value to the clients.
 - We are in the ‘development’ area – but ‘development’ has transferred to ‘business’ which is now funding ‘development’.
 - Who are our actual clients? How many think tanks are we dealing with?
 - How do we get each individual unit to look at its local situation and become self-sustaining? It comes down to having dedicated, entrepreneurial human resources who can work within the local market and source opportunities, wherever they may come from (Mongolian examples given).
 - How will revenue pass to the Association – a levy on agreed / regional / all programmes?
 - Finance – we need to look first at fund mobilization and then the level of activity, and we should build the 10% into the actual cost we charge for the programme.
 - China has prioritized 6 areas for content development – as the Association helps to deliver that content then it should be rewarded...and there will follow a major market in China.
 - Specific example – they have been designated as responsible for training as they have the capability so their revenue comes from the students who are trained. The opposite way around to other programmes.
 - Funding opportunity – offer the Association to an external donor to fund packaged as a way to help resolve regional issues through better communication.
 - We must all learn how to market our programmes ourselves.
 - The TDLC wants to use its funds to support development of the right programmes.

Vision

The premier network exchanging ideas, know-how and experience across Asia and the Pacific

Associated Terms

What we do

Connecting
Communicating
Capacity Building
Convening
Knowledge transfer
Knowledge for development

Who we are

Stable and Dynamic Network
Leading tool in development arena
Technology
Expertise, Ideas and Know How
Best/ Leading
Contents

How we do it

Connecting those who have/ have not
Change
Access
Sustainable
Sourcing
Excellence
Partnership
Impact
Serve
Preeminent
Mainstream
Inclusive
Creation
Distribution
Sharing

Follow-Up Actions

- Priority for Thailand HQ
- Regional Meeting Plan/ Events
- Strategic Plan by Tokyo meeting
- People (incl. hiring of Business Development Manager)
- 4 Weekly Performance Reviews (by GDLN of Service Levels)
- Communicating Results of this meeting to all by e-mailing complete document
- “Franchise” Manual
- Foundation vs. Association to be resolved

Strategic Plan

