



## The GULL Story Part 3: Representation

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 not-for-profit foundation registered in California, USA. GULL is recognized 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 significance 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 the essence of being human and that access to the body of knowledge is our birthright - not just for the privileged minority - but for everyone. Our mission then is to expand human capital development through innovative means - dependent not on technology, but on the human spirit. GULL's network of representatives 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 network of representatives.

Key words: Lifelong learning, action learning, professional attainment, representation

### How does GULL operate?

Launched in October, 2007, GULL has a legitimate mandate to award professional certificates, diplomas and degrees, but does not emulate the traditional academic university model. GULL operates with just two executive officers (Chairman, President) and with the support of a team of honorary officers (Co-Chancellors, Pro Chancellor panel, Elder panel) but it has no council or faculty, lectureships or professoriate. GULL has no campus either 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 exceed the central operating costs, the surplus is used to fund GULL's work among the poorest.

GULL is a network movement and the role of its leadership is to facilitate, not to control. Anything and everything that GULL accomplishes is attributable to the spirit, professionalism and drive of its representatives. They are the key to taking GULL's mission and lifelong learning offer to the world. For this reason, GULL's central services and support are purpose designed to serve our representatives and to help them in turn to serve and support GULL system users and learners.

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) securing and continually developing GULL's mandate (via its statement of recognition and multiple endorsements); (3) locating and supporting representatives; (4) maintaining central websites (to explain GULL's mission, mandate, operations and quality assurance); (5) overseeing quality assurance and (6) the issuing of all certificates (when the respective pathway requirements are met). We have no plans to use or develop a centralized database of learner records. Instead, records are maintained by representatives and the collection and reconciliation of data is cross-checked via GULL's quality assurance system. 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 funding and outreach, we use two approaches:

1. Application for public funds (e.g. the World Bank) led by sponsors (e.g. the Government of Papua New Guinea). GULL Limited can, if required, play a role in the stewardship of funds received. We propose to do this by linking the release of funds to incremental quality assurance reporting by the local GULL representative(s).
2. Locating and supporting GULL representatives who are willing and able to promote GULL in their region and/or locality.

As funding from sources (1) and (2) permit, we shall offer the GULL system for use at low cost (or no cost) to established international agencies who are already working with the poorest. In essence then, those who can pay affordable fees (at (2)) help to ensure that the poorest can participate (via (3)).

## How can I become a GULL representative?

GULL's mission is a mega challenge and anyone who wants to assist or participate in its implementation is welcome to do so! There are no membership fees or other barriers to participation as we should like to harness all the skills and abilities that are offered in order to help others to learn, grow and develop. For organizational reasons, it is essential though that GULL is able to identify individuals with the skills and resources to make things happen quickly. These are GULL's lead representatives and their names, photographs and email addresses are displayed at the website as they are GULL's authorized leaders in regional or national settings. GULL's regional leaders welcome participation by others. Local representatives can for example represent their own business or other organizational applications or they can support the regional team by serving as the GULL representative for geographical or sector specific applications.

What kind of person profile is GULL seeking? The 'Contact Us' link from the GULL Homepage provides the following guidelines on the skills and values that GULL looks for its representatives:

What will I need to demonstrate to qualify as a GULL country or regional representative?

It is essential that you can communicate in English (written, oral) and that you are willing to commit to GULL's mission - as reflected by the 'Statement of Recognition' (see the 'Recognition' tab at the website). You should be a skilled and effective leader with a proven track record of making things happen quickly. There are no formal qualifications or requirements other than enthusiasm, enterprise, honesty, integrity and a genuine concern for the poor and marginalized in your country or region. It will be your responsibility to secure business and political support and national and/or international funding to support GULL's work in your country or region. Once appointed, GULL's central leadership team will serve and assist you in any way we can.

What are the benefits of securing a GULL country or regional leadership role?

You will be joining a team that has a big vision - we want to bring hope, opportunity, confidence and self-esteem to the many who have little or no access to personal and professional development. We cannot quantify these benefits, except to say that you will play a pivotal role in making a difference in our world.

As GULL's central services operate on a cost recovery only basis, country and regional representatives are encouraged to secure commercial applications at affordable fee levels in order to assist with funding our work among the poorest. In balancing these applications, we expect all country and regional representatives to generate the funds to cover their own salaries and expenses and reasonable surpluses to reflect their effort, energy and enterprise on behalf of GULL. As a country or regional representative, GULL is 'Enabling YOU to make a difference in OUR world'. If you have already achieved your business and/or professional goals in life, why not use your skills to help others?

## The GULL code of practice

As noted, GULL is seeking to work with entrepreneurial people who can move quickly and find ways of presenting GULL's mission to a variety of communities: Companies, associations, voluntary and charitable bodies, local and national Government and to other organizations. In support of this effort, GULL's objective is to build secure, trusting relationships throughout the network, based on a shared vision and set of values. To provide a guiding framework for entrepreneurship and innovation in lifelong learning, we ask only that representatives adhere to GULL's code of practice so as to assure the integrity of its work in every location. GULL representatives and their teams are asked to commit to and abide by GULL's code of practice, encompassing:

1. GULL's statement of recognition and in particular, to enabling and encouraging the poorest to participate as soon as operational surpluses have been secured.
2. Openness, transparency, honesty and integrity so as to represent GULL in the best possible way at all times and to uphold the statement of recognition by the Government of Papua New Guinea and the endorsements from other Governments, Leaders and Institutions.
3. A commitment to contribute to the funding of GULL's central services via mutually agreed travel and other expenses (as appropriate) and fees, linked to each certificate produced, payable prior to issue.
4. The provision of accurate information about GULL at all times. In particular, its status, source of recognition and endorsements. In all matters, the key reference source is the GULL website at [www.gullonline.org](http://www.gullonline.org)
5. The integrity of GULL's professional award system, its elements and use of the correct terminology to describe its lifelong action learning process and awards. These are 'professional' (*not academic*) and 'recognized' (*not accredited*).
6. Accuracy in the portrayal and replication of the GULL logo and GULL's official system documentation (available on request).
7. A commitment to provide advance proofs of all brochures, websites, promotional and printed materials for approval prior to release.
8. 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.
9. A commitment to ensuring that training, support and other assistance is provided to GULL user organizations and their representatives, administrators and facilitators (as appropriate).
10. Compliance with all aspects of GULL's central quality assurance system and to taking whatever corrective action is deemed necessary to ensure that variances are fully addressed and GULL's reputation for professional excellence is maintained.

## What does a GULL representative do?

GULL aims to serve its representatives - never to control or lay claim to the business developed by them. Nor does GULL try to tie-in its representatives - we want them to feel that they have a vital role to play in their own unique way. Furthermore, the GULL representative is on all occasions, the interface between GULL and its system users, liaising directly with decision-makers and agreeing with them the fees that are charged.

Although GULL's representatives may work with individuals if they choose to do so, the GULL system is primarily designed with organizational applications in mind. Its simplicity and flexibility provide numerous innovative ways of reaching out to communities of people. Here are some possibilities:

(1) **Commercial and corporate applications:** The GULL system is well suited to companies and other organizational settings (e.g. community groups, associations, voluntary and charitable bodies, the public service). Here, the GULL representative not only provides the GULL system but also on-going support (as needed). To make best use of the system, the user organization is encouraged to utilize their own brand or organizational name and to operate a corporate school, academy (or similar entity), which they manage themselves. For details of this approach and an overview of all the pathway options to professional Bachelor, Master and Doctor, please see the second article in the series: 'GULL story 2 Pathways.pdf'.



GULL provides a customizable lifelong learning system that organizations can use to create an own brand corporate school or academy.

**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) **Corporate school demonstrators:** Some of GULL's representatives own or operate businesses (e.g. colleges, professional development and training companies, hotels) that could host the GULL system and in so doing, serve as a corporate business school (CBS) demonstrator. Here, the GULL representative is able to utilize the GULL system on a cost recovery basis to create their own CBS. This yields a number of benefits. The representative's own employer and/or employees can utilize the GULL system at low fee rates. Second, the CBS demonstrator can generate revenue for the host organization, as places can be offered to other businesses in the locality at commercial rates. Third, the CBS demonstrator provides a working example of what other organizations might do if they utilize the GULL system in their own organization.



GULL representatives are encouraged to establish their own CBS demonstrator: **Pictured above:** Learners at the Wexford Hotel CBS, Montego Bay, Jamaica.

(3) **Sponsorship via public funding and/or corporate social responsibility (CSR) funding:** Most large companies (especially in developed nations) have a CSR policy and could help to fund a corporate school for less well resourced communities elsewhere. There are numerous possibilities: For example, the sponsor organization can select the area or country and the target population and GULL can facilitate the application. Single or continuing CSR investment will enable GULL to fund local facilitation and support and enable the learners to participate on a subsidized or cost free basis. This kind of initiative would also suit multinational corporations with operations in developing countries - here the CSR funding would assist the local employees to develop personal, professional and technical skills at work in a way that might not be possible otherwise.

(4) **Government endorsements and support:** Launch events (like the CBS Malaysia launch event held in April 2008 - pictured above) offer key 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 global recognition - granted in perpetuity by the Government of Papua New Guinea - can be 'localized' via a formal letter of encouragement, support and endorsement from an appropriate Government Minister or Deputy Minister. 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 official 'red tape'. 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 will 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.

(5) **Strategic development projects:** In developing new opportunities, especially with senior political endorsement, it is possible to expand GULL's influence across an entire geographical region. 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 human involvement in economic transformation. GULL's representative for the Pacific region is Dr. Winston Jacob. Based in Papua New Guinea, Winston is working closely with the Government of Papua New Guinea and the World Bank's representative in PNG on the preparation of a funding bid. The objective is to utilize World Bank funding to enable the entire public service to participate in an action learning cascade, interlinking with citizens throughout the country. This will operate via a new framework: The PNG National Forum for Human Capital Development. In addition to this project, Winston is supporting GULL's Founding Chancellor, Sir Paulias Matane in discussions that will take GULL to other locations in the Pacific region. These include plans to use the GULL system to assist with the development of Australia's indigenous people (agreed in principle at a meeting between Sir Paulias and Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd) and the launch of GULL's work in the Republic of Vanuatu.



**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 regional representative for the Pacific.

**Pictured right:** Briefing the President of Vanuatu. Winston is also National Chairman of the Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society.



(6) **GULL's Champions:** Most GULL representatives have contact with senior business leaders who might be willing to support and/or champion GULL in their own organization. GULL encourages its representatives to nominate senior executives who are committed to GULL's mission, to serve as members of GULL's Elder panel. Additionally, GULL invites nominations for its Pro Chancellor panel from GULL champions who are serving (or have served) in the role of Head of State or in senior political or public servant positions. GULL makes an honorary professional doctor award to these key, committed supporters in recognition of their lifelong learning and their honorary service to the university.

GULL also encourages its active, established representatives to model lifelong learning by sustaining their own development to professional Master or Doctor (as appropriate) at no personal cost. It is one way in which we can thank our representatives for advancing GULL's mission.

## How do GULL representatives support the quality assurance process?

GULL uses a quarterly self review format to help its system users to track their own progress and identify their own variances for corrective action, over an annual cycle concluding each year with an annual report and review meeting. To facilitate this, GULL has developed its own web-based quality assurance (QA) tracking system with reporting formats that are easy to follow and use. GULL system users sign in @ <http://gulladmin.org> (using their own unique password) and log-in all their own reports.

GULL representatives are responsible for ensuring that their own system users comply with the QA reporting procedures. In the case of a region, this might include applications in a variety of settings and even different countries in their region. To keep track of the issues arising, the GULL representative reviews each quarterly report logged at the QA website by their user(s) and then compiles and logs a quarterly summary report (QSR) that cites all the key QA issues that require action by all their user(s).

Operationally, the GULL representative liaises with the system user representative and their designated administrator. The administrator is responsible for gathering quarterly group reports from the facilitators of each action learning group. The quarterly reporting procedures are as follows.

**QGroup report Facilitators** The facilitator is responsible for compiling and submitting (to the administrator) a quarterly group report (QGroup) (one per group). The QGroup lists the learners in the group and records what is working well / not so well along with learner progress, updates and any corrective action needed. The QGroup submission dates are: 01: March, June, September and December.

**QAdmin report Administrator** The administrator is responsible for compiling and submitting to GULL global support, a consolidated quarterly admin report (QAdmin) that deals with all aspects of group progress within the administrator's remit. QAdmin reports are submitted to GULL global support @ <http://gulladmin.org> on 15: March, June, September and December. QAdmin reporting is mandatory.

### Notes:

The individual QGroup reports must be reviewed by the user representative and the administrator at quarterly review meetings. The review meetings are internal discussions to consider 'what is going well' and 'what needs attention'. Minutes of these meetings are documented using the QAdmin report format.

**AnnualR report Representative** The AnnualR report is submitted by the user representative four weeks after the fourth quarter QAdmin report. AnnualR reporting is mandatory.

The AnnualR is a key strategic document, linking and interpreting the QAdmin reports. It provides:

- (1) A strategic overview - with a concise summary of the extent to which objectives have been achieved.
- (2) Commentary on the QAdmin reports - highlighting variances, issues and action taken or proposed.
- (3) An operational overview - outlining challenges (e.g. delivery gaps, system or procedural problems).
- (4) Plans for the coming year - outlining suggestions for supporting priorities.
- (5) Action - needed to implement plans for the coming year.

After the AnnualR report has been logged at the GULL global support website, the GULL representative reviews the report and liaises with the user representative and administrator to arrange an annual review meeting. The GULL representative takes notes and writes the minutes of this meeting, circulates them to the user representative and administrator for comment, adjustment and finally confirmation and thereafter logs these minutes @ <http://gulladmin.org> as the annual user report (AUR).

To ensure that incremental QA tracking is as easy as possible, the quarterly reports submitted by administrators (QAdmin) and GULL representatives (QSR) and the annual reports submitted by user representatives (AnnualR) and GULL representatives (AUR) are always logged in the specified format at the GULL global support website. Viewing access is restricted by password protection to these parties and GULL global support (for QAdmin, AnnualR) and to the GULL representative and GULL global support (for QSR and AUR). All quarterly reports are removed from the QA system on completion of the annual cycle. The annual reports are retained for two years so that comparisons can be made with the previous year as necessary.

## How can I get involved?

GULL's motto is: **Enabling YOU to making a difference in OUR world**. If you are interested in using or representing the GULL system, then do please contact me. There are many ways of working with GULL. These include: In your own business (for your employees), in-company or any other kind of organizational setting (for in-house applications such as 'corporate university' or 'academy' initiatives) or by linking the training and/or consulting services you offer to GULL certification. Additionally, if you have the resources needed, you can represent GULL at a country or regional level and in so doing, help many organizations and potentially many thousands of people to participate. If any of these suggestions appeal to you, do please email me on [richard@gullonline.org](mailto:richard@gullonline.org) or get in touch by following the 'Contact Us' link at the web site: [www.gullonline.org](http://www.gullonline.org).

Thank you for reading this article. Do please think about what you can offer and how you might inspire others to get involved. Together I believe that we can bring hope and opportunity to the vast numbers of people around the world who are trapped by their situation and circumstances. I look forward to hearing from you.

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### About the author:

Dr. Richard Teare is President, Global University for Lifelong Learning. Richard has been passionately committed to work and community-based learning since the mid-1990s and during the past ten years, 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 at the formal launch of the GULL corporate business school initiative in 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 ongoing 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."*