



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



**GULL Think Tank**  
Hosted by Dr Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt  
and facilitated by Dr Bob Dick, Brisbane, Australia  
22 April 2010

# How might GULL empower marginalized communities in Australia? Where should GULL get started and how might endorsements be secured?

These and other issues were explored in a vibrant ‘Think Tank’ discussion and over dinner at the home of GULL Elder and internationally acclaimed scholar, Dr Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt, with a sumptuous meal prepared by Margaret Fletcher and Judith Kearney. My sincere thanks to Ortrun for hosting the ‘Think Tank’ and for sharing her home with me over several days. Thanks also to Margaret, Judith and to Dr Bob Dick for facilitating the meeting and assisting with the report. Great teamwork! Richard Teare

(Right) Think Tank participants enjoying dinner on the patio at Ortrun’s home near Brisbane, Australia.



# Participants:

Samoan Community Leaders & Representatives 'Voice of Samoan People'

Professor, School of Human Services & Social Work, Griffith University

General Practitioner, Brisbane South Division of General Practice

Social Research Consultant, Department of Education, Employment and

Workplace Relations, Commonwealth Government

Senior Project Manager, Aboriginal Education, Department of Education,

Employment and Workplace Relations, Commonwealth Government

Education & Training Specialist working with Papua New Guinean churches

in the PNG highlands

Professor, Faculty of Education, Griffith University

Private Consultant working with the Queensland Government

Crisis Worker, ACCES\*, Queensland Government

Community Development Officer, ACCES\*, Queensland Government

Social Enterprise Coordinator, ACCES\*, Queensland Government

\*(ACCES) Assisting Collaborative Community Employment Support

## Closing statements, comments and reflections:

Vaaao Alofipo, Samoan Community Leader/Representative, 'Voice of Samoan People'

*I like the philosophy of building up people – especially starting from one or two and multiplying the effort. It has universal appeal – no matter where you come from – you still have an opportunity to benefit. I will commit to this process and to multiplying it in the Samoan community.*

Lamalu Tautaliaaso, Samoan Community Leader/Representative 'Voice of Samoan People'

*I'm a Samoan Elder from Logan and our community has hoped and prayed for the help that GULL offers. It can provide an opportunity for our people to further their education and as a vehicle to fully realize their knowledge and past experience. Our community is now subject to the Australian Government 2001 legislation that now limits the extent of financial help available to pursue academic options.*

Faimalotoa Pale, Samoan Community Leader and President, 'Voice of Samoan People'

*It has been a very beneficial evening and it is wonderful to hear various ideas and the possibilities for assisting the needy. I think that GULL is going to give people hope, a greater sense of their worth and in so doing, help restore or boost their human dignity. Nobody wants to be 'Nobody' – everyone wants to be 'Somebody' and I can see that the philosophy of GULL is to raise self esteem and help each person to appreciate their God-given gifts within and beyond the context of their own culture. In so doing, it will assist many people to realize the potential that they have within them to help themselves, their families and the wider community. In turn, this will help people to feel better about themselves, create a stronger sense of solidarity and hope for the future. So I think GULL is a gift.*

## Reflections (continued)

Telemete Tito Samoan Community Leader/Representative ‘Voice of Samoan People’  
*GULL opens the doors to people who are very good at doing certain things but without the recognition that comes with educational certification. I see that GULL is giving an opportunity to this large category of people.*

Jenny Summerville, Social Research Consultant, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Commonwealth Government *I’m excited by the potential for GULL in Australia. There are pockets of action learning across the country and within these, people who would understand its credibility, but I think that the opportunity to use a system that is officially recognized (in the form of a named, systemized approach with its own status) is really important and very exciting.*

Syd Gould, Education & Training Specialist working with Papua New Guinean churches in the PNG highlands *I have worked in education and training for many years in Papua New Guinea. I am particularly excited about the concepts used by GULL. My main concern is about how GULL might be integrated with the expectations of people with regard to attaining and receiving certification.*

Catalina Nam, Crisis Worker, ACCES *What I have heard this evening is that the process GULL uses can help me to better understand myself and others and in so doing, it will enable us to recognize their various contributions and build their confidence.*

## Reflections (continued)

David Murphy, Senior Project Manager, Aboriginal Education, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Commonwealth Government

*I'm interested in initiatives like GULL that offer a different approach and the potential to achieve relevant results (or outcomes) for those who feel disconnected and those who feel that the existing educational provision does not meet their needs. It is time to start talking about and exploring alternatives and any form of education that focuses on the person is something that I am particularly interested in.*

Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt. host

*I agree with David's perspective and I'm delighted that we came up with so many ideas – I am wondering though about how we might draw from the pool of ideas and make use of this opportunity. The other question for me, is about the mechanism for securing endorsement for GULL in Australia by either the State or the Federal Government.*

Ron Passfield, Private Consultant working with the Queensland Government

*I've got considerable hope for and expectation of GULL. I admire the mission and I have seen action learning work very effectively all around the world. The mechanism itself can generate many positive outcomes. I see that my contribution is to use internet marketing to promote the concept and the outcomes and to generate some funding – hopefully out of the US – once charity status has been secured there.*

## Reflections (continued)

Feli Lacorte-Gayat, Community Development Officer, ACCES, *For me, GULL is a revolutionary idea. I don't know what the wider implications might be in terms of its role and positioning in the wider educational system, but as far as I am concerned in working with refugees and migrants, GULL is potentially very helpful. The reality for them in their home countries is that educational opportunity is only for the rich. The opportunity to address this imbalance is where I see GULL's role as most of our clients refuse to attend the traditional, structured learning that is offered here in Australia. In so doing, GULL could enable them to re-connect with their prior learning and to discover what they can offer now. This will give them hope that they can realize at least some of their dreams for the future.*

Claudette McAuley, Social Enterprise Coordinator, ACCES, *I can see that recognition for prior learning (especially as it relates to non-formal education) would be very helpful in matching experience and skills with a certified profile that would be acceptable to a TAFE. I see that as a pathway and a potential solution to creating a bridge between someone who doesn't have a piece of paper (a certificate) and someone who does ...*

Bob Dick, Facilitator

*I'm enthusiastic about action learning because I've seen how well it works and I hope that people here are willing to help GULL take off in Australia because I think it's got a contribution to make.*



## Reflections (continued)

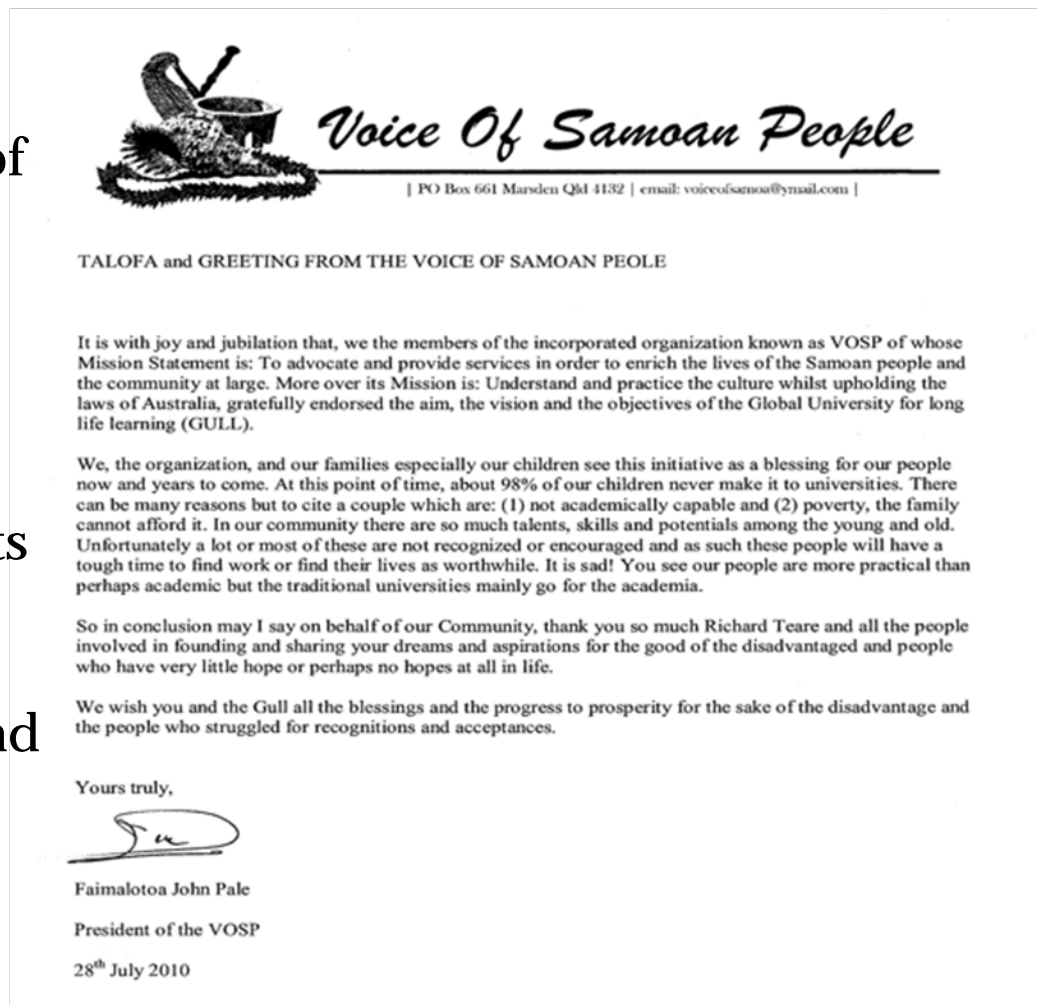
Margaret Fletcher, Senior Lecturer, Griffith University (works in Fiji, South Africa and with the Samoan project) *I have been reflecting on the question, 'What will I do after I leave formal work?' and I can see that GULL has so much to offer to the many who don't have formal opportunities to learn. Working with GULL would give me an opportunity to give back to Australia or somewhere else - what I have been privileged to receive. I am not looking at what GULL can do for Australia or for me, I am thinking about what I might be able to do for GULL and hope that I can find a way of using my skills. I feel that there is still much that I could contribute and I look forward to that opportunity – even someone like me who others might view as highly educated, can still learn from GULL!*

Judith Kearney, Convenor, Action Learning Community Partnership, Griffith University *Sometimes I find myself thinking: 'How did I get to this point in my life and career?' A formative stage for me was working at Logan Campus and realizing that as teachers, we didn't represent or reflect the profile of the Logan community and so for many years I have wondered about how the community might be better represented in educational terms by members of the Samoan community. That has led to an exciting partnership with the wonderful Samoan leaders who are here this evening, with the objective of enhancing educational opportunities - especially for the young. I think that GULL has got a real part to play in this process – They have so much potential to offer as community educators, but they can't readily identify a career development pathway and I think that GULL could be a real enabler for a group such as this, with so much to offer the wider community.*



# Outcomes: Endorsement and pilot

The Think Tank meeting has encouraged the 'Voice of Samoan People' who represent the Samoan community in Australia and elsewhere in the Pacific to endorse and pilot GULL. The pilot participants are community leaders and the group is facilitated by Dr Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt and her colleagues.





# Global University for Lifelong Learning

*Enabling **YOU** to make a difference in **OUR** world ...*



GULL is a non-profit public benefit corporation incorporated in California, USA. GULL is recognized by the Government of Papua New Guinea & endorsed by other Governments, Leaders & Institutions.

Web: [www.gullonline.org](http://www.gullonline.org)