Lessons learned from the distance learning centers of the global development learning network: reflections on possible impacts of distance learning for public managers in Latin America

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I. Introduction

The Global Development Learning Network

Organizations in countries from all over the world are joining with the World Bank to establish the Global Development Learning Network (GDLN). The aim of the GDLN is to promote access to learning opportunities and the sharing of knowledge across borders to impact national and local development processes around the world. Through training programs and events offered at distance learning centers (DLCs), the GDLN reaches a large number of government officials and decision makers and leaders of the private sector and civil society with opportunities for professional exchange, skills development, and training.

Opportunities to participate in training with world-renowned experts serving as instructors might otherwise be out-of-reach, or limited to the participation of a few, due to the high cost of overseas travel to attend presential courses, seminars, and other training events outside of one’s country. On the contrary, GDLN events draw together a critical mass of individuals without removing them from their context, and provides them with new tools to address the development challenges they face every day. This critical mass of participants becomes a catalyst for change, challenged by instructors and colleagues from around the world to implement what they have learned.

The GDLN, launched on June 20, 2000, is global in nature. It currently involves the participation of distance learning centers operating in 28 countries in various regions, including: North America, Latin America, Anglophone and Francophone Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East, and institutions providing training content to the Network from all regions of the world. Complementing the global aspect of the Network are the strong regional synergies that have developed among GDLN partners in Latin America and the Caribbean. (See Table in Annex for a complete listing of GDLN distance learning centers and the institutions that host them.) This regional team, consisting of 11 institutional partners representing public sector, private sector, and multilateral organizations, collaborates to design, prepare, deliver, and evaluate events ranging from formal courses and seminars to short virtual roundtable discussions called Global Dialogues. In the past 12 months, more than 3,000 individuals from the public and private sectors and civil society in eight countries have participated in learning events in the Latin American GDLN centers. Approximately 60 percent of those trained to date have been from the public sector, representing over 120 different government agencies.

To support the delivery of distance learning programs, each GDLN distance learning center is equipped with two-way interactive videoconferencing and multimedia computing facilities with high-speed Internet access. (For detail of how a standard DLC appears, see figures in the Annex.) A mix of
technologies and media is used in the delivery of training on the Network, but the mix normally involves a series of videoconference sessions in which participants in several countries interact with each other and with instructors, self-paced learning from on-line materials, and locally facilitated discussions to contextualize the course content and analyze how it might be applied or be relevant to the participants’ local context.

The audience for GDLN learning programs includes decision makers and implementers of development programs and projects in all sectors – rural development, health, education, public administration, urban management, and judicial sector are several examples. Each institution hosting a distance learning center (DLC) has pledged, through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, its commitment to maximizing the use of its DLC to serve the development needs of its country. It does this by identifying the training needs represented in its market, based on national priorities and needs for capacity building to adequately address those priorities. Training programs delivered on the Network, referred to collectively as “GDLN content”, originate from a broad variety of Program Partners – research institutes; universities; international development agencies including the World Bank Institute, United Nations Development Program, and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the DLCs themselves and their host institutions, and private sector firms.

The World Bank plays a facilitating role in the development and administration of the Network and in managing its business transactions. On the side of network development, in many instances, as in the case of the DLCs in Africa, the World Bank provides finance for the establishment of a center through a loan to the national government of the host country. In other cases, and in the majority of Latin American countries, the World Bank partners with an existing institution with experience in distance learning and technology infrastructure which permits a connection with the GDLN. In terms of management of the Network, the World Bank currently oversees the scheduling of courses and other learning events, ensures that all affiliates are aware of these policies and procedures, and develops and makes available administrative tools. One example of an administrative tool administered by the World Bank is the on-line GDLN programming calendar, which is accessible through the Internet to any established Program Partner for proposing new events, and which DLCs use extensively as a planning tool for defining their work programs. In addition, the World Bank manages any international transfers that correspond with business transactions involved with delivery of learning events.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the GDLN is that it can be a tool to provide just-in-time training that responds to the concerns and needs of the partner countries with learning experiences and exchanges that are of immediate value. For example, Chile has had two decades of experience with reform of its public health sector, and the Dominican Republic is currently implementing its own health sector reform, with many components based on the Chilean model. Through the GDLN, health sector experts in Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Peru, and the United States held a virtual roundtable event in which the Chilean model and lessons learned were presented, then the similarities and differences in health sector context of the participating countries were discussed, and participants wrestled with issues of decentralization and institutional roles, dual systems and equity, and corruption and incentives for efficient resource management. This Global Dialogue was prepared specifically for the purpose of sharing lessons learned from the experience of one country and promoting professional exchange around ideas of what insights these lessons might offer to those working to design and implement reforms in other Latin American countries.

A recent event on the topic of natural disaster management and risk mediation had a similar just-in-time approach. After several recent catastrophic natural disasters in Latin America including
hurricanes, floods, and landslides, many countries of the region have adopted preventive measures to be better prepared to manage the outcomes of natural disasters as well as to mediate the damage they cause. Professionals working in all areas of disaster management gathered with members of the World Bank Natural Disaster Unit to share experiences and learn what specific measures each of the other countries is currently implementing to address this theme. The outcome of this Global Dialogue was a mutual expression of interest of all participants to continue with such professional exchanges, supported through the formation of a regional network on disaster management.

Throughout the pilot period and the subsequent development of the GDLN, the role of the World Bank has been to facilitate both the establishment of distance learning centers linked to the Network and the availability of content. The value-added of the DLCs has been their knowledge of local needs and their ability to facilitate the application of learning experiences to the context of the participants in their center.

By pairing the convening power of the World Bank and its experience in administering complex international programs with the strengths of GDLN partner organizations – as training providers, facilitators of local delivery of learning programs, or as pivotal players in assessing and articulating training needs – it is hoped that experiences will be shared across borders, common and disparate solutions explored, and that national and global dialogue around thematic areas be generated to the benefit of development. The GDLN has great potential to add value to the reform and development processes currently being implemented in many countries around the world.

**Factors Critical to the Impact of Distance Learning for Public Managers**

Public managers, as adult learners, have some basic needs that any training program must meet in order for that program to be effective. The Managers and Academic Coordinators of GDLN centers in Latin America have defined the characteristics of a “quality learning experience,” a litmus test around which evaluation tools for GDLN events have been developed.

“A quality learning experience is one (in) which…

- makes an impact
- can be applied on a personal level
- generates interest in continuing to learn about the topic
- creates capacity for putting what has been learned into practice
- builds new knowledge and skills; increases collective qualities
- there is participation – not just in transmitting knowledge but in exchanges and reflection as well
- contributes to satisfying needs
- is tailored to the particular context, is social and opportune, and allows for learning to do and learning to learn
- encourages commitments
- is internalized and incorporated into each person’s abilities
- is student-centered and interactive
- involves both receiving and delivering content
- established learning objectives are achieved
- competencies are increased
- produces an increase in knowledge and skills and is capable of changing attitudes and
behavior.” (World Bank Latin America and the Caribbean Region GDLN Team, 2001)

While these characteristics were enumerated during a collaborative brainstorming session with staff of all DLCs from Latin America and the Caribbean, they closely reflect the qualities of effective adult learning programs described in the literature on andragogy. The literature stresses the importance of, among other points: a safe learning environment and process, a sound relationship between the instructor and learner, attention to the sequence of the presentation of content and reinforcement, learning by doing, respect for the learner as the subject of his/her own learning and for the experiences and knowledge each learner brings to the course, immediacy of learning, engagement of the learner in the content and learning process. (Vella, 1994)

The impact of all adult learning programs depends on these factors, and it follows that adult learning delivered from a distance requires attention to additional details based on these principles. Given the geographically distributed audiences that participate in distance learning courses, which could represent any combination of 28 countries in the case of GDLN, the Network faces some particular additional challenges. These include:

- ensuring the relevance of the content to the learners’ contexts which are diverse, with the degree and nature of the contextual variation depending on the countries involved and the subject matter of the training
- enabling the effective use of media and pedagogical tools used for distance learning which are new to many GDLN Program Partners, and
- stimulating continued learning and professional exchanges among geographically dispersed course participants upon completion of the course or learning event.

Given these challenges, the impact of distance learning offered through the GDLN hinges on the Network’s ability to respond to countries’ expressed training needs, maximize the benefits of the media selected and the corresponding pedagogical tools, and stimulate professional development and exchange after the conclusion of the training. Reflections on these challenges and their impact on the training provided through GDLN for public sector managers are discussed throughout this paper.

II. Factor 1: Responding to Needs

Identifying Training Needs of Public Sector Institutions

One of the key criteria for success of a distance learning event is that it responds to identified training needs. In the GDLN context, the responsibility for identifying and articulating training needs rests with the DLC. To date, the DLCs have approached this process in one of two ways. Some have offered contracts, on a competitive basis, to market research firms to conduct a market study. Others have developed a survey instrument to use in conjunction with interviews conducted by DLC staff. Both surveys and interviews are directed to the full range of the DLC clientele in the public sector and a sample of the

In both of these approaches, institutional priorities of client organizations are defined, and an assessment of the knowledge and skills required to focus on those priorities is conducted. This information is then compared with an assessment of existing knowledge base and capacities of the institution’s staff, and where gaps exist, training needs are specified.
Each of the two abovementioned approaches represents advantages – the prior tending to produce results more quickly that are presented in a standardized format with extensive analysis, and the latter bringing the DLC staff in closer touch with the client organizations they serve and generating significant qualitative data on needs. Both have proved to yield rich information on training needs which can be applied to the development of programming in the DLC.

The DLC in Bolivia, for example, has completed an exhaustive analysis of training needs by beginning with problem identification and by involving the relevant stakeholders in the entire needs identification process. Through individual interviews with managers and operational personnel of government ministries, DLC staff identified institutional objectives of each ministry and the problems and obstacles that they face in reaching those objectives. Once obstacles were well-defined, those which could be addressed or removed through training were prioritized and the DLC developed its program curriculum around these priorities.

One important lesson learned through the GDLN has been that because training needs evolve, a continuous evaluation process of identification of needs and priorities for training must be established, opening a continued dialogue between the DLC and its clients regarding the programming of learning events.

**Balancing Professional Development Needs of Individuals with Institutional Priorities**

Another aspect of responding to training needs that has been learned through the GDLN experience in Latin America and the Caribbean is that a balance must be sought between the needs of individuals to be effective in their professional roles and the imperative of responding to institutional priorities. As best phrased by a DLC Manager from the region, “To identify which training objectives to address, the DLC should consider individual needs, but prioritize organizational needs, as it is the public sector entity in the collective which is the client of the DLC.” There is a growing recognition among GDLN affiliates – DLCs and Program Partners alike – that different program arrangements may be appropriate for the presentation of different types of content and for audiences of varying composition.

For example, high level ministry officials will tend to participate in short, one-time policy dialogue events by videoconference which address a specific problem or an area of particular interest in their countries and which have participation of their official counterparts from other countries more readily than this same group of individuals would engage in learning events that require a commitment of attendance at several videoconference sessions or that employ modes of delivery that are entirely computer based. This reflects both the opportunity cost of time of high level government officials (i.e. a shorter event with specific outcomes can be more cost-effective) and the immediacy of the content presented in a synchronous, real time forum that is often underscored by direct professional exchange with counterparts from other countries on the topic at hand. Several events of this nature have been offered in Latin America and the Caribbean region through the GDLN in the past 12 months, including:

- Addressing the Challenge of HIV/AIDS: A Dialogue on Strategic Policies and Programs in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Territorial and Land Rights of Indigenous Communities
- Globalization: Opportunity or Obstacle for Indigenous Education at the Hemispheric Level?

Those working as technical professionals in government ministries may find their time is more flexible than that of the Ministers themselves. As implementers of policies and programs that reflect national
priorities, technical specialists may have a need to develop more fully a certain knowledge or skill set which is, in pedagogical terms, best addressed over a period of time through multiple instructional sessions. In contrast to the policy dialogue events described above, these courses or seminars may be offered through a mix of distance learning modalities which include computer-based learning. These learning programs generally require significant time dedicated to self-paced study by the participants in addition to any real-time sessions, which could be conducted on-line, via videoconference, or a combination of both. GDLN has also carried this type of learning event. Some examples include:

- Fiscal Policy for Poverty Reduction
- Financial Analysis and Evaluation of Investment Operations
- Investigative Journalism
- Compliance and Enforcement of Environmental Regulations in Latin America

In many instances, work schedules of learners may not be flexible. Where it may be acceptable for one or two employees of a particular organization to be absent from the office to receive job-related professional training, on the other hand it may be impossible for a majority of individuals from the same organization to attend simultaneously a learning event. This is another case in which the use of self-paced asynchronous study as an integral part of the course design could be well applied, allowing the individual training needs of the learners to be met without compromising the work of the institution as a whole, and at the same time training a critical mass of professionals in order to respond to institutional needs for knowledge and skill development. In terms of the real-time components of a distance learning program, to best respond to participant needs, the specific hours of participation in real-time sessions may have to be planned to fall before or after the typical workday schedule of participants.

The emerging lesson elaborated here is that when developing learning events or professional exchanges for public sector managers, the duration and number of sessions, time of day, and mode of delivery for a GDLN program all affect the degree to which that program meets the needs of its identified target audience, and therefore contribute to the potential impact of the program.

**Evolving from a Supply-Driven Model**

In the first years of operation of the GDLN, one of the most significant challenges the Network faces is the evolution from a supply-driven model of content availability to one that is, at least in great part, demand-driven. Currently, at the global level GDLN Program Partners propose courses, seminars, and global dialogues based on their resources and expertise. These proposed learning events may or may not respond to training needs expressed by GDLN clients. In some cases, Program Partners have close relationships with the professional community in a particular field and are very much aware of needs across countries, and in other cases a Program Partner may be integrally involved in a field in one particular country, but is not aware of the global demands for training in that field. Until a content provider proposes and delivers a training event on the Network, after which they can receive feedback in the form of evaluations by course participants and DLC staff, there is no way for institutions to formally gauge demand for a particular event, or its relevance to the needs of the GDLN client base with which DLCs work locally. This characterizes the GDLN as a supply-driven network, at least in its pilot phase and initial months of operation.

There exist risks in a distance learning system based on supply rather than being focused on meeting training needs. Among these are the risk of public investment in training offered that does not meet
institutional needs, but for which there is a demand from individuals. In these cases, the investment a government agency makes in the training of its managers may not represent the best value for the expenditure. This risk ties directly to the issue previously discussed of balancing individual needs and organizational priorities in a DLC’s determination of which learning programs to carry. Supply also tends to create its own demand, but if DLC clients have identified objectives and priorities at the institutional level, investments in training for development can be well targeted.

Raising awareness about distance learning among clients and potential clients of GDLN distance learning centers has proved to be a significant factor in the successful articulation of training needs. A market study conducted in the Dominican Republic revealed a relatively low level of awareness about interactive distance learning in the institutions representing the target market for GDLN. In response to the study results, efforts to cultivate an understanding of distance learning, its potential for training public sector managers, and the specific benefits that the GDLN center in Santo Domingo can offer are now under way. When distance learning and the capabilities of GDLN centers are explained to potential clients, those institutions are better able to understand which of their own training needs might best be met by these means.

It is unlikely that the GDLN will ever become a fully demand-driven Network, there are some indications that initial efforts are yielding results. In particular in Latin America and the Caribbean region, elements of consultation between Program Providers and DLCs with regard to content development are now being cultivated. For example, Program Providers planning to offer content for Latin America and the Caribbean region now announce and discuss proposed learning events with the DLCs in the region in weekly videoconference meetings. During these meetings, new Program Partners are introduced, and DLCs provide feedback on each event proposed, consulting with the content provider on issues of program content, delivery, and logistics.

While this is only an initial step, the DLCs and content providers working in the Latin America region may be ushering in a significant change in the dynamics of articulating training needs and of offering content on the GDLN.

III. Factor 2: Maximizing the Benefits of Distance Learning

Benefits of GDLN for Training Needs of Public Sector Managers

The benefits of GDLN distance learning programs for meeting the training needs of public sector managers can be summarized in three points: efficient resource allocation leading to increased potential for impact, access to high quality learning opportunities, and opportunities for contact with new segments of constituency and counterparts in other countries and regions of the world.

Public sector institutions work within tight budgetary constraints. GDLN distance learning centers offer the opportunity for larger numbers of public sector managers and officials, as well as other agents of national and local development to be trained with the same amount of resources previously dedicated to training a few through overseas study tours, enrollment in university programs or courses offered in other countries, and all the related expenses (tuition and fees, texts and learning materials, travel, lodging, per diem allowance). Maintaining the same level of financial investment, many more public managers can be trained close to home, without removing them from their work environment. This allows for the formation of a critical mass of change agents who are able to apply knowledge and skills gained through distance learning immediately to their professional endeavors, thus creating a greater
likelihood for impact.

The GDLN, through its agreements with world renowned training and research institutions from countless countries, top experts in development fields, and the convening power lent by the facilitating presence of the World Bank, offers unique access to high quality learning opportunities. A public sector institution could otherwise only benefit from the same group of experts and highly regarded training institutions by sending a small number of individuals to attend learning events at their point of origin. The investment in training through GDLN offers high payoffs in the form of high quality content and unique opportunities to interact with instructors and a learner base representing global professional communities.

Perhaps of most interest to public sector managers are the connections with other people offered by GDLN. One manifestation of these professional connections is seen in the opportunities to share a learning experience with counterparts from other countries. Professional exchange across national boundaries and involving many different perspectives and experiences enriches the learning environment as well as the learning experience. This is the norm for GDLN learning events.

Just as important as making connections with counterparts in other countries, the opportunity for public managers to engage with a segment of the population which they may not normally come into contact with is a strong incentive for the use of distance learning. Many new segments of the public sector’s constituency can be reached, and national dialogue and stakeholder consultation generated through the involvement of domestic networks in GDLN events. Several countries in the region make a practice of connecting remote learning centers through the main GDLN center, which is normally located in the capital city. For example, “Protecting the Vulnerable: Design and Implementation of Effective Social Safety Nets,” a 14-session course, was offered in Ecuador in Quito and six additional remote sites. “Reform of the Public Health Sector: Lessons from Twenty Years of Experience in Chile,” a two and one-half hour global dialogue event, was offered in five countries and an additional connection was made through Santiago to the Lagos region of Chile so professionals working in the health sector and in the departmental Ministry of Health were able to participate.

The Importance of Instructional Design

The importance of instructional design in distance learning cannot be over-emphasized. A course with poor quality content, or one with high quality content that is poorly designed and delivered will not achieve the same level of impact that a course with strong instructional design may be expected to achieve. Of the many aspects of instructional design, those which, in the experience of GDLN centers in Latin America, contribute the most to impact of a learning event are: relevance of the content and learning process to the learners and their context, appropriate local facilitation, and quality of learning materials.

The first two – relevance and local facilitation – are in some sense linked. A course delivered to participants in several countries at once must be designed to address, respond to, or in some way engage the local contexts of all participants. One way to ensure pertinence is for the content provider to work with a facilitator in each participating site who is responsible for contextualizing the instruction to local needs through generating discussion and facilitating learning activities that encourage participants to reflect on the local situation and apply lessons to analyze their context, solve a problem, exchange ideas, identify points of diversion from what has been presented, and otherwise utilize the knowledge and skills learned through the course in practical applications. Additionally, a Program Partner may
prepare case studies and other learning tools integral to the delivery of instruction that focus on the context of learners in each one of the participating sites. In both cases, the local facilitator plays a crucial role. The facilitator may be responsible for some administrative aspects of a course, such as recording attendance or conducting a course evaluation, but the primary role of this individual is to support the learning process for participants in the specific DLC with which he or she is working.

Learning materials – print, Internet-based, on CD ROM, or visual materials delivered via videoconference – are the learner’s guide and constant resource for understanding the instruction presented in the course. It is of primary importance that these be of high quality. For GDLN courses delivered via videoconference, this means that extra attention must be focused on the preparation of Power Point slides to be used by course instructors. This is so critical to quality that the GDLN DLCs in Latin America region have agreed on a minimum set of standards for acceptable videoconference presentations, including specifications of font type and size that impact legibility on the videoconference monitor, and amount of content actually on each slide and what proportion should be reserved for talking points. While these appear to be minor details at first glimpse, each one of these points makes a marked difference in the ability of learners to follow along with instruction and refer to materials to raise questions and request clarification.

For courses using web-based resources, it is essential that web sites have no broken or dead-end links and that materials are posted in a timely manner, allowing students to arrive prepared for each course session. The same holds true for print materials.

The language of instruction and interaction among participants and instructor can make a difference as well. When interpretation is used, a level of clarity is taken from the communications between instructor and students, or among students. The complications caused by the use of interpretation can be minimized by employing the work of interpreters with knowledge of the sector being addressed by the content of the training, but whenever possible it is best for training to be in the language of the learners.

Taken together, these elements of instructional design are at the heart of what DLCs define to be a quality learning experience on the GDLN.

### IV. Factor 3: Stimulating Continuous Learning

**Facilitating Connections with Professional Networks**

One way to address the needs of GDLN learners to continue their individual professional development and professional dialogue in their field is for course instructors to facilitate connections with professional networks. This may mean the establishment of new professional networks upon completion of formal training programs, but for the majority of technical areas, regional or international networks of professionals are already well developed, hosting on-line discussions and bulletin boards, sponsoring the publication of research, hosting events to promote dissemination of knowledge and professional dialogue. Connecting with distance learning events through GDLN can strengthen established professional networks, and at the same time existing networks can strengthen and amplify the impact of distance learning programs.

The course, “Protecting the Vulnerable: Design and Implementation of Effective Social Safety Nets,” will be offered for the second time through GDLN to Latin American countries this October, and is a
prime example of how the ongoing exchanges in existing professional networks and GDLN learning can be complementary. In a first offering of the course earlier this year, DLCs in seven countries promoted the course and secured local audiences representing public sector agencies and non-governmental organizations working in social protection policy and programs. In the case of Costa Rica, participants belonged to Red Social, a regional professional network. These participants, along with one of the course instructors who also participates actively in Red Social, shared with colleagues about the learning and exchanges that took place during the course. In the second offering of the course, all Red Social members have been informed about it through both word-of-mouth and targeted promotion of the course, both of which have generated interest. Through the Red Social, course participants have an forum to continue dialog initiated during the course, and the members of Red Social can offer lessons learned from professional exchanges to enrich discussions during the course. The benefits are mutually reinforcing.

Linking Participants with Learning Resources

In a previous section on instructional design, the importance of learning resources for course participants was emphasized. In the same way, resources for continued learning which can be accessed and utilized after the end of a learning event will contribute to the quality of the learning experience. A course designed to incorporate resources for further research on course-related topics, and/or tools for self-paced learning, challenges the learner to continue pursuing knowledge and skill development beyond what was attained during the course. This approach reflects the spirit of development in which the GDLN was formed, allowing the GDLN event to be viewed not as an end in itself, but as a gateway to continued learning and professional development.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Applying Lessons Learned to Future Development of GDLN

The focus of content development on GDLN should be on addressing training needs, and the work of the DLC should be built on the foundation of clear definition of development priorities for its country at the national level and of institutional objectives at the level of the DLC’s client organizations. The impact of GDLN depends a great deal on accurate needs identification at the DLC level, clear articulation of demand, and the provision of high quality content that responds to those needs by content providers with particular expertise and experience in the topics in demand. The World Bank can play a critical role in the facilitation of dialogue around issues of supply and demand, as well as seeking to identify potential Program Partners with specialization in areas for which content is lacking and bring them into affiliation with GDLN. The World Bank has, to date, played only a limited role in brokering content for GDLN to ensure needs – in future, as facilitator and administrator of the Network, the World Bank must take more concrete action to ensure that client training needs are matched with appropriate supply of content.

GDLN Affiliates need to make the most of available distance learning tools to ensure high quality of learning experiences and to improve potential impact. Consideration should be placed, from the perspective of instructional design, on whether the selected media are best employed. Are they appropriate for the program’s target audience and for effectively communicating the content of the course? From the perspective of the DLC, what are most important actions that can be taken locally to ensure the quality of the learning experience for participants? From the Network Administration
perspective, what additional

GDLN programs must actively facilitate continuous learning. GDLN training courses and learning events should be promoted as single points in a continuum of professional development, and content providers should be required to include “continued learning” components in their instructional design.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

It is recommended that GDLN Administration, in collaboration with DLCs, conduct follow-up studies of public sector managers who have participated in GDLN learning events in the past. These studies should track impact of GDLN learning programs over time – three months, six months, one year, and three years after their conclusion. Follow-up studies should include information on whether knowledge and skills gained in GDLN activities were applied in the context of the learner’s professional work, and what the perceived results of this process were. Data collected should be analyzed to determine adjustments and improvements that could contribute to improved impact of learning.

**VI. Bibliography**


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**VII. Author Biography**

The primary author of this report, Juliet Majmudar, is an integral member of the World Bank’s Knowledge Management Unit for Latin America and the Caribbean, and in that capacity has worked since 1998 on the establishment and expansion of the Global Development Learning Network in the region.

After receiving a BA in International Relations and Spanish from Bucknell University, Ms. Majmudar completed graduate studies at American University’s School of International Service in Washington, DC. She holds a Master of Arts in International Development with a concentration in education and technology.

Ms. Majmudar has held several positions with various international development organizations, including: the World Bank, Center for the Global South, Academy for Educational Development, Partners for International Education and Training, and Accion Callejera (Santiago, Dominican Republic). Her current work, in addition to serving as Task Manager for several of the Global Development Learning Network projects under way in Latin America and the Caribbean, involves her
in a variety of knowledge management initiatives which cut across sectors.

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### Annex

**GDLN Distance Learning Center Locations and Host Institutions as of September 2001**

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<th>Region</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Distance Learning Center Host Institution</th>
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**Figures**

Typical Design of a Standard GDLN Distance Learning Center
Prototype Synchronous (Videoconferencing) Classroom of a Standard GDLN Center

Glossary

This Glossary is a list of selected terms, acronyms, and abbreviations used in GDLN documentation.

- **Activity**: A distance learning event (course, seminar, global dialogue, or web-based program) delivered through GDLN
- **Activity Agreement**: A negotiated and signed agreement among GDLN Affiliates that specifies the conditions under which a distance learning activity is to be provided
- **Activity Proposal**: The form used by a Program Partner to propose an activity to GDLN
- **Affiliate**: A distance learning facility or a provider of a distance learning program that has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with GDLN Administration
- **Courses**: Activities which are typically convened over several weeks, depending on the scope, breadth and depth of subject. They may include a series of videoconference sessions, supported by reference materials, working assignments and case studies. Participants conduct research and access specialized learning activities using Internet and multimedia resources.
- **GDLN**: The Global Development Learning Network
- **Distance Learning Center (DLC)**: A facility that delivers and receives distance learning programs through GDLN
- **GDLN Administration**: The unit responsible for managing and administering GDLN which is currently located within the World Bank
- **Global Dialogues**: Short videoconference sessions focusing on specific issues, knowledge exchange and analyses on a wide range of policy issues and development topics
- **MOU**: A Memorandum of Understanding between an Affiliate and GDLN Administration that represents a statement of intent to join GDLN and to abide by its Operating Procedures
- **Originating Site(s)**: Site(s) from which an activity will be provided
• **Program Partner**: An entity that agrees to provide a learning activity (courses, seminars, global dialogues or web-based programs) for distribution via GDLN

• **Seminars**: Activities shorter in duration and less structured and formal than courses. They may include videoconference sessions, supported by reference materials and case studies and may make use of internet and multimedia resources

• **VC**: A video-conference session

• **Web-based Programs**: Synchronous or asynchronous learning activities using the Internet for delivery