

**The Fifth Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning**  
*Theme: Access to Learning for Development*

Submission of PAPER for  
Practical Demonstration/Presentation

By

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Demonstration/Presentation Title:

**Facilitating Global Development Dialogues  
Increasing Access to Learning in Developing Countries**

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2004, UTech was officially awarded an affiliate status of the World Bank's Global Development Learning Network (GDLN), to be part of the global collaboration of multi-channel ICT network of distance learning centers with a mandate to facilitate dialogues on development issues. UTech is also the first centre in the English-speaking Caribbean to be recognized as a GDLN affiliate, and has continued to represent this language grouping within the GDLN.

The University has hosted several cross-border development dialogues by means of interactive videoconferencing on topics including HIV/AIDS, Disability Issues, Prevention and Control of Chronic Disease, Physicians and Elderly Care, Medical Research Ethics, Caribbean Growth and Competitiveness, Anti-Money Laundering and Financial Terrorism. These dialogues have been sponsored by international funding agencies such as the Netherlands Government, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), UNAIDS, UNESCO and the World Bank. Other agencies of endorsement

There has been a wide diversity of stakeholders including policy-makers, government ministers, non-government organizations, private sector representatives, universities, community colleges, the general public and specific interest groups including infected persons. For most dialogues, participants were drawn from African or Latin American countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Brazil, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama; with Anglo-Caribbean counterparts from Barbados, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica and the United States of America. The dialogues reflected non-formal and non-traditional approaches to education and facilitating increased access to learning for marginalized and minority groups.

### Background to The GDLN

The GDLN (<http://www.gdln.org>) is a World Bank initiative that has created world-wide partnership of distance learning centers (GDLN Affiliates) and other public, private and non-governmental organizations committed to development learning and dialogue for lasting poverty reduction. Offering a unique combination of distance learning technologies and methods, the GDLN facilitates timely and cost-effective knowledge sharing, consultation, coordination and training.

Through GDLN, individuals, groups and organizations design and deliver courses, seminars and other activities that address the full range of development issues. GDLN Centres around the world have facilities for interactive videoconferencing, web-based learning, and face-to-face interaction and also offer logistical support and facilitation services. These Centres provide cost-effective, fast and high-impact alternatives to traditional meetings and course, enabling people around the world to connect with each other, without having to travel overseas.

### The Proposed Demonstration

For the PCF5 in 2008, UTech is proposing to facilitate a two-hour collaborative session by inviting representatives of four Commonwealth countries with GDLN centers to participate in the practical demonstration of a development dialogue. The primary aims would be to explore first-hand the advantages of the GDLN for reaching large numbers of stakeholders across geo-physical and cultural distances; and to briefly share experiences/lessons learnt from previous GDLN dialogues held on the major Forum themes.

The ultimate aim is to facilitate a discussion of best practices of both the content and methodology of interactive videoconferencing as a strategy for increasing access to knowledge and skills and influencing attitudes. These best practices would include

- Partnerships among tertiary institutions for global learning
- Innovative approach in networking to maximize economies of scale... for connectivity and knowledge-sharing
- Sharing the richness of content resources already existing

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- Quality Assurance in content design & facilitation skills – methodology & tools...for interactive videoconferencing as a learning tool

The critical requirements for this live demonstration will include access to an appropriate videoconference site at or in close proximity to the University of London. UTech is willing to approach the World Bank for technical and financial assistance in facilitating the global connections with the GDLN Centres within the select Commonwealth countries. It is anticipated that representatives of public and private sector within countries would be invited also to participate locally.

The main cost considerations include venue/facilities for hosting participants, videoconferencing network connections (ISDN or T1), multimedia equipment, event coordinators, on-site facilitators.

TRACK RECORD

The GDLN Centre in Jamaica was launched on September 27, 2004. Over the past four years, there has been at least thirteen development dialogues covering a wide range of topics in Health, Finance & Business, Tourism, Governance

Highlights of select global development dialogues

DATE & SPONSOR	TOPIC & TARGET GROUP	PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES
<b>Sponsored by the World Bank – Washington(WB) or its special partners (OAS, CIHR)</b>		
December 9, 2004 - World Bank (WB)	Anti-money Laundering & Combating the Financing of Terrorism (Overview of the revised FATE – 40 recommendations, new AML/CFT international standards)	Jamaica, Panama, St. Lucia, St. Kitts, Trinidad & Tobago, the WB
April 28, 2005 - World Bank (WB)	Media Launch of Caribbean Report on Growth and Competitiveness: <i>A Time to Choose: Caribbean Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century</i>	Barbados, St. Lucia, Dominican Republic, Jamaica & WB
April 4, 2006 - World Bank (WB)	SubRegional Consultation on Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Chronic Diseases in Latin America and the Caribbean	Belize, Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, WB
November 20, 2006 (OAS)	Tourism Stakeholder Consultation on a Manual-Multi-hazard Plan	Barbados, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, WB
March 6 & 7, 2007 (Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR))	Medical Research Ethics: excellence in the ethics review of ethics	Barbados (UNDP), Trinidad & Tobago (UWIDEC), Jamaica, WB
June 15, 2007 - World Bank (WB)	Collaboration in Distance Education as a Strategy for National & Regional Development: Imperatives, Challenges and Opportunities	Jamaica (UTech & UWI), Canada – (COL), USA – (WB & PAHO), St. Lucia, Grenada???, St. Kitts - (ECIB)
<b>Sponsored by the Netherlands Government, African &amp; Caribbean partners</b>		
November 29, 2004	HIV/AIDS Public Awareness Methods: Proven strategies that influence behaviour change	Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Barbados, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Mexico, & WB
February 15, 2005	Gender and HIV/AIDS	Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, St. Lucia, Jamaica & WB
April 15, 2005	Caring for HIV/AIDS Orphans: challenges and strategies	Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, Barbados, St. Lucia, Jamaica & WB
August 4, 2005	Successes in Fighting Stigma and Discrimination	Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, Barbados, St. Lucia, Jamaica & WB
<b>Sponsored by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)</b>		
October 2004	Training Physicians for Elderly Care	Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Mexico, Jamaica & WB
November 30, 2004	Combating HIV/AIDS: related stigma and discrimination in Latin America	Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Jamaica & WB
December 2, 2005	Mainstreaming Disability Issues into HIV Programmes: A Dialogue with the Caribbean;	Barbados, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica, PAHO, WB

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HIV/AIDS Policy Development; National strategies for HIV/AIDS education.

Topics of interest to Jamaica for future discussion include the following:  
Poverty alleviation, Job creation/employment, Gender Equity, Methods to combat male marginalisation, Development of Education system from early childhood to tertiary education, Parent Education, Life Skills Education, Reduction of Crime and Violence (especially domestic violence), Conflict Resolution, Youth Development.

Lessons Learnt

Content

Methodology

- improving sound feedback
- connectivity issues

Recommendations