

Delivering on a Partnership : Scaling-up Healthcare Programs to Latin America via Advanced Networks

Ed Jobanson - California Orthopedic Research Network

As reported in a previous issue of “Guararé” (Issue No. 8, December 2005), in July of 2005 David Gray, Coordinator of GDLN Americas and Florencio Utreras, the Executive Director of RedCLARA the organization charged with promoting cooperation within Latin America on Advanced Networks signed a Letter of Understanding. The aim of the agreement was to actively seek synergies between the work of the GDLN and RedCLARA and so advance utilization of the emerging technical capacity for development purposes. It was little surprise that Health emerged as the first sector to take advantage of the partnership and in November of 2005, Internet2, RedCLARA, CLARA and GDLN formed the e-Healthcare Task Force. (see <http://www.redclara.net>, <http://www.internet2.edu>)

The work of the task force has centered on mobilizing centers of excellence within the US and LAC to utilize the capacity of Internet 2 / CLARA to share knowledge and build relationships. Such is the pace of change within the medical community, that this type of relationship is essential to share advances and to construct consortia of like-minded individuals and institutions who can come together around various initiatives.

The first program of the series was delivered on March 22, 2006 in a session entitled “Delivering Healthcare Programs to Latin America and the Caribbean Region via Internet2, CLARA and GDLN,” that was presented at the First Mile Spring Conference in San Diego. Participating United States institutions included UCSD, Stanford University, UCLA, USC, OHSU (Oregon), IUPUI (Indiana), the National Library of Medicine and the World Bank offices in Washington, DC.

On June 23, 2006 a second program was offered to the GDLN partner in Costa Rica (UNED) from the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda on the subject of disaster preparedness.

On August 9th, 2006 a third program entitled “Forum on MRI Applications to Orthopaedic Surgery” was delivered. Participating institutions included Stanford University, UCLA, IUPUI (Indiana), National Library of Medicine, Johns Hopkins Medical Institute, University of Toronto, REUNA’s Office in Santiago, the University of Buenos Aires, ENSTINET in Cairo and the World Bank offices in Washington, DC.

On August 24, 2006 the fourth program of the series was a session entitled “Forum on Infusing Information Technology into Orthopaedic Surgery,” at SICOT/SIROT’s Fourth Annual International Conference in Buenos Aires. Participating institutions included Stanford University, UCLA, IUPUI (Indiana),



National Library of Medicine, Johns Hopkins Medical Institute, Columbia University, University of Toronto, REUNA’s Office in Santiago, Hilton Hotel in Buenos Aires through RETINA’s Office in Buenos Aires and the World Bank offices in Washington, DC. This event marked the launch Orthopaedic Research and Education Network of the Americas

On August 31, 2006 the fifth program of the series was a session, entitled “Central American Network of Disaster Health Information (CANDHI) International Technical Collaboration meeting.” Participating sites included World Bank offices in Washington, DC, Guatemala City, Managua in Nicaragua, UNED in Costa Rica, Tegucigalpa in Honduras, Universidad Tecnológica de Honduras, San Pedro Sula in Honduras, El Salvador, Panama and the National Library of Medicine.



These programs, which unashamedly set out to test new ideas and bring in new participants for demonstration effect, have led to considerable excitement. The opportunities now available to the medical community both in the US and LAC are significant and can range from joint research, sharing of the diverse digital

libraries and other resources, notably imaging, 3-D simulation and surgical procedures, through live surgical demonstrations and consultations. The costs of these events, which are centered around high-resolution videoconferencing, is negligible.

The team is currently evaluating the first series and identifying ways to focus forthcoming events. A Program Advisory Committee has been formed to accept proposals – which can come from any Internet 2 or CLARA member. This committee will

assist each member with implementing its proposed program in terms of scope, definition of the appropriate audience and bandwidth at selected Latin American GDLN Centers. All of these programs will be carried over the Internet2 Commons – which “bridges” the participants together. Other GDLN Centers in Latin America can participate via a web-cast.

A number of programs are already identified for the coming months. These include:

- IUPUI (Indiana) Operation Walk.
- OHSU - Cardiology and MRI to connect with Mexico City and others
- Stanford’s SUMMIT/Columbia University - Santiago, Chile among others
- Stanford’s SUMMIT - Digital Anatomy - Lima among others
- Columbia University – Shoulder Surgery – to Buenos Aires, Cairo and Chicago

The program is likely to expand to reach South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa Region in the coming months.



How effective is Development Policy Lending?

Mariana del Hierro - LC SKM

Alexandra Klopfer - Communications Officer, WBI

One size doesn’t fit all. That’s why since 2004, the World Bank and borrowing governments in developing countries are taking a new approach to loans supporting policy and reform programs. Beyond negotiations between the Bank and national governments, development policy lending draws on feedback from governments, civil society, academia and the private sector. The idea, says Stefan Koeberle, director of the World Bank’s operations services department for Latin America and the Caribbean, is to ensure that loans are customized to local contexts. But is it working? On May 25, 2006, connecting via videoconference from their local GDLN Centers, government representatives of five Latin American countries met with World Bank counterparts in Washington to answer this question. The conference was part of the consultations undertaken for the retrospective of development policy lending, which is managed by Jan Walliser from the Bank’s Operations Policy and Country Services Vice Presidency.

The news from the region is good: governments and local organizations, along with the general population, value development policy lending as a useful instrument to support their policy programs. Participants in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru noted their strong ownership of the programs, reflecting their increased responsibility in defining programs and priorities. They cited a number of ex-

amples where development policy lending has shown positive results. New priorities in infrastructure regulation, defined by stakeholder groups in El Salvador, resulted in more effective public policies. Participants in Nicaragua found that public and private sector investments are now channeled in more resourceful ways. This was also consistent with prior discussions among stakeholders in these countries, who had been convened by their local GDLN Centers to prepare for the consultations.



These and other findings have been incorporated in the development policy lending stocktaking that will feed discussions around the mid-term International Development Association replenishments this fall. Says Mr. Walliser: “We recognize that we are engaged in complicated, long-term policies that need space and flexibility.” The process seems to be paying off nicely.

Fiscal Decentralization: Nicaragua Learns from the Americas

Ileana Orozco - GDLN Nicaragua Center Director

The path towards fiscal decentralization is a long and at times difficult one for any country. It requires changing old habits and old political practices, typically involving few participants, to new innovative practices that involve the participation of many stakeholders. Nicaragua is using GDLN to aid its journey down this path.

Committed since the early 90’s to decentralize under the “Reinforced Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy” (ERCERP), the Ministry of Public Funds and Public Credit (MHCP) of Nicaragua, is aiming to ensure that this leads to strengthened local delivery, efficiency and effectiveness of public services.

To promote the exchange of experiences and knowledge concerning fiscal decentralization in Latin America and later apply the knowledge gained to the reality of Nicaragua, the Distance Learning Center based in Managua and the World Bank, along with MHCP developed a series of global dialogues

