

Introduction

The Global Institute For Tomorrow (GIFT) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to engaging business leaders and policy makers on the challenges of globalisation. Our work encompasses advisory projects, research and leadership development, through which we bring technical and commercial expertise to contemporary business and social challenges.

GIFT's Global Young Leaders Programme (YLP) is a unique leadership development programme. It is the first of its kind in Asia. The programme incorporates cross-sectoral and action learning, sustainable benefits and the experience of working on real world issues within a multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary team setting. By taking part in an Asian field project, YLP participants will learn through the eyes of others, expand their world view, witness how decisions made in one part of the world have impacts elsewhere, and importantly use their skills to help with a specific development issue. Our hand-picked projects are directly linked to globalisation issues and have a real bearing on business and public-sector policies. Through this experience, young leaders will be much better equipped to understand future markets and customers and the complexities of doing business in Asia.

Since 2006, GIFT has organised four YLP projects in China and India, with executives from companies such as Hewlett-Packard, Shell, Cathay Pacific Airways, the Hong Kong Mass Transit Railway Corporation, Gammon Construction, J.P. Morgan, UBS, CLSA, and the Cheung Kong Group taking part.

The Cambodia Rural Agricultural Enterprise YLP project involving up to twenty Young Leaders will be held from 3-15 March, 2008, taking place in Hong Kong, then in Cambodia in the capital Phnom Penh and in a rural province. Young Leaders will be tasked with developing a business plan for a Natural-Agri-Product initiative. This initiative aims to establish an agro supply chain which produces and markets organic products such as rice and palm sugar to urban and rural consumers in Cambodia and the Mekong region. In the process, Young Leaders will explore how smallholder Cambodian farmers can improve their outlook by working with networks of local entrepreneurs and marketing cooperatives to strengthen their collective marketing capabilities.

The Cambodia YLP Project

The Cambodia YLP aims to contribute to developing sustainable agro supply chains in rural Cambodia through producing a business plan for the Natural Agri-Product social enterprise initiative. The primary focus will be to examine how investment can be attracted to the enterprise and what opportunities for economic transformation can be leveraged in the surrounding communities, thereby creating a model of sustained prosperity.

The YLP comprises three modules:

Module 1: Pre-Site Learning

This rigorous one-week workshop, to be held in Hong Kong, is intended to prepare the Young Leaders for the tasks they will face on their field project. It will look at the impacts and challenges of globalisation in Asia, and will include sessions on civil society, corporate social responsibility, diversity, business ethics and the role of government. In connection with the Cambodia field project, the course will also address the challenges of rural poverty in developing countries, pro-poor supply chain development, sustainable food production and the investments needed. Young Leaders will be briefed by practitioners, business advisors, academics and community development experts.

Module 2: Site Visit

Young Leaders will spend seven days on site working with GIFT's NGO partner, the Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC), which has been working in Cambodia since 1997 implementing rural development projects.

While on site, Young Leaders will work with CEDAC to develop a business plan for their Natural Agri-Product Marketing (NAP) initiative. The overall goal of NAP is to ensure smallholder farmers in Cambodia get higher prices for their organic¹ products and use a portion of the additional income for community development or collective purposes in rural communities.

A. Background of CEDAC and the NAP

The Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC) was set up in August 1997 as a Cambodian NGO, to develop sustainable agriculture and rural development in Cambodia. CEDAC initially focused on agriculture research and training. In 2002, CEDAC expanded its field operations in farmer training and extension programs. As of June 2007, activities have expanded into 1,827 villages in 15 provinces of Cambodia, benefiting 65,000 farming families (325,000 individuals). CEDAC's strategic plan for 2006-2010 aims at supporting 300,000 farming families or 1.5 million people (around 17 % of Cambodia's farming population) to enhance their lives through sustainable farming methods based on improved social and cooperative business practices.

A key area of work of CEDAC, the NAP involves the following activities:

¹ Organic products are defined as that produced from "agricultural systems rely[ing] on ecosystem management rather than external agricultural inputs. It is a system that excludes the use of synthetic inputs, such as synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, veterinary drugs, genetically modified seeds and breeds, preservatives, additives and irradiation." Source: IFOAM, <http://www.ifoam.org/sub/faq.html>

- Marketing of organic agricultural products in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, and in other urban areas in the Mekong region;
- Assisting rice farmers to organise themselves in village-based producer groups, inter-village clusters and district networks;
- Training producer groups to enhance their leadership and management skills and improve their knowledge about organic farming methods, as well as marketing. In addition they learn how to put in place internal quality control systems for organic production;
- Raising consumers' awareness on natural agricultural products, fair trade and community development; and
- Organising field visits for interested consumers, business executives, and potential investors, building consumer networks and recruiting student volunteers.

Currently, about 2400 rural families from Takeo, Kampot, Kampong Speu, Kampong Cham and Kampong Thom provinces are involved in 400 agricultural producer groups, which have in turn formed a network comprising 30 marketing cooperatives. The members follow CEDAC's strict Basic Organic Standard. During the 2006 harvest season they sold around 600 tons of rice (paddy) to NAP. Apart from rice, the cooperatives have been marketing other products such as chicken and palm sugar, and there are plans to establish agro-processing facilities. The farmers receive a price that is at least 15 percent higher than what they would normally receive for their products. In addition, each village-based producer group receives a share of the net income from NAP for collective use, community development or other social or environmental purposes.

NAP is currently operating a shop in Phnom Penh. In the future, as product supply increases, distribution and sale of NAP rice in Phnom Penh and other urban areas will be expanded leading to the opening of more shops. As of 2007, NAP rice has reached annual sales of USD100,000.

B. The NAP Business Plan

Young Leaders will work closely with CEDAC representatives, local community members and entrepreneurs during their seven day field trip, and will produce a short and action-directed business plan to address major facets of the NAP initiative. During this time they will meet key players including community leaders, review and analyse data and brainstorm solutions. Preparatory work will be done by GIFT and CEDAC to compile background information and data which will facilitate the Young Leaders' work.

The business plan will state what would be needed to expand the NAP project using the NAP agri-marketing social enterprise as the basis for the business model. It will identify priorities and key issues so that an integrated strategy can be prepared for the NAP enterprise that includes the roles of entrepreneurs and producer cooperatives from a number of provinces in Cambodia. It will also look at the potential to attract investors to finance the NAP business. A key element will be to develop ideas to create economic opportunities for the rural communities involved in this project, on the basis of the organic food supply chain to be set up.

As part of the process, the Young Leaders will, in addition to working with CEDAC, research the markets for organic products in Phnom Penh and elsewhere. Within the scope of the business plan will be cost estimates, technology options, environmental impacts and governance structures needed to develop the organic agricultural supply chain.

The NAP business plan will:

- Address the ecological and conservation challenges of sustainable development in rural agricultural economies in Cambodia;
- Include socio-economic considerations for community development and take account of the root causes of development challenges;
- Identify clear accountabilities, the deliverables and exactly what is required for change;
- Include an overall project plan outlining commercially viable solutions such as market access, input supply, technology and product development, strong governance, management training, policy reform, and access to finance; and
- Ascertain the project potential for investors to generate financial returns.

YLP facilitators will advise the Young Leaders on the plan’s business logic, practicability and deliverables.

C. Contributing to CEDAC’s Organizational Development

Since its establishment in 1997, CEDAC as an organisation has for the most part depended on funding from international donor organizations to support its operations. Given the changing country context where the role of international donors is becoming uncertain, CEDAC has identified a strong need to adopt a business-oriented approach and eventually operate as a self-sustaining social enterprise. The NAP is a key initiative for CEDAC to move in this direction, so that it will become a hub for a nation-wide network of self-sustaining rural social enterprises and entrepreneurs.

By developing the NAP business plan, Young Leaders will thus contribute to CEDAC’s organisational development towards a social enterprise model, which has significant implications for sustainable rural development in Cambodia.

Module 3: Implementation

The YLP business plan will become the vehicle for developing a sustainable project to be implemented by GIFT in concert with CEDAC. This will present opportunities to bring positive change to local communities through a sustainable agribusiness venture. Seed support from the Young Leaders’ organisations could be an option, as are additional investments from other sources to finance implementation of the NAP venture.

Module 3 projects from previous GIFT YLP projects include an ongoing initiative to certify organic non-timber forest products such as pine nuts, walnuts, mushrooms and medicinal plants in Yunnan

province, China, for export markets. Farmers' marketing co-operatives are leveraged to help participating farmers standardise how they produce, harvest and market their crops in response to buyer and certification requirements.

Another project underway is the Hebei Biogas and Organic Production Initiative in China, where an agricultural enterprise aims to generate electricity from biogas chambers, produce bio-fertiliser using the sludge as raw materials, and eventually supply certified organic pork and produce to burgeoning national markets.

Both of these projects have a strong potential to deliver financial returns and improved livelihood prospects for investors and farmers respectively, in a way that is sensitive to ecological and cultural needs of local communities.

Benefits of Participation

The benefits of the YLP are multi-dimensional and can be summed up as follows:

Participants

- An understanding of Asian globalisation challenges across sectors
- Hands-on experience to understand future customers and future markets
- Increased knowledge of local Asian business-development challenges
- Valuable cross-cultural leadership skills
- An opportunity to deliver real benefit to local communities through partnership and business plans
- Professional facilitation during training sessions
- Membership of the GIFT alumni with access to business, community and government leaders across Asia



Companies

- A tailored programme that can be used to groom managers for the future in the real sense
- Multicultural experience to provide long-term solutions
- Cross-functional development
- Key knowledge of Asian perspectives of business and the impact these have on local communities
- Accelerated career development
- An understanding of the corporate value chain and how corporate responsibility can be put to practical use in an Asian community
- Filling a gap in leadership development treatment that goes beyond classrooms



NGOs

- Workable solutions in a business plan for the project
- Shared learning and the experience of working with young business leaders
- Links with the corporation that will foster long-term relationships in the future
- Training in tackling development issues through business-related approaches
- Help in realising the common goal of building bridges between business, civil society and government

Communities

- Sustainable solutions to pressing needs that are amenable to business problem-solving approaches
- Opportunities to develop business-led solutions in the long term, so that the community can better itself without relying on subsidy or aid
- Lasting value and self-sufficiency as well as economic independence

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Whom is the YLP for?

The YLP is designed for anyone with leadership potential, is interested in globalisation and development issues, and wants to work for positive solutions, regardless of his or her nationality, industry or subject discipline. Normally, participants are from 28 to 45 years of age.

The course is ideal for individuals who:

- Are poised for rapid career progression
- Have demonstrated leadership ability and need international exposure
- Have worked in demanding management positions in a global organisation
- Are at the stage in their careers where a posting to an overseas location under unusual circumstances is likely
- Have worked in a multi-disciplinary and multicultural team
- Are proficient in English and have a working knowledge of one or more other languages
- Have a growing understanding of the role of business in society in a globalised world
- Have an interest in how leadership in Asia will need to evolve to meet the challenge of the next 25 years
- Desire to complement formal business training such as an MBA with experiential immersion learning
- Are flexible and adaptable, with a curiosity for the different

Participants include individuals from multinationals, SMEs, consulting firms, NGOs, donor and government agencies from around the world. An MBA is not a pre-requisite to take part in the YLP.

2. Where will the modules take place? How do I travel to the site?

Module 1 is a teaching component that participants take in Hong Kong. Module 2 will take place in Cambodia, in the capital Phnom Penh and in a rural province.

Domestic travel arrangements between Hong Kong, Phnom Penh and provincial rural areas will be covered by GIFT. Participants have to organise their own travel between their home countries and Hong Kong.

3. How much does it cost?

The fee for the YLP will vary depending on location, number of participants, the nature of partnering organisations, and duration in the field. A fixed fee will be established for the entire course and project work. This includes all training costs (all training materials, tuition, classroom rental, guest lecturers, project management and direction, accommodation and food costs, domestic travel, study tour and work with an YLP facilitator).

The fee will not cover travel to/fro Hong Kong from participants' home country and insurance.

What they say about the YLP

The YLP has a growing network of alumni from both multinational corporations and locally based companies of strong reputation. Here are assessments of the YLP by some of the alumni:

“The YLP taught us to think differently and to look at things in a more diverse way. I understood the true meaning of leadership by going through this programme.”

– Alex Chiang, Gammon Construction Limited
Haitang project, August 2006

“[The YLP] is indeed life-changing, it is very hard work and it is highly engaging at the most socially responsible level of life quality.”

– Jonathan Pyke, Innovation Environment Limited
Pingzhang project, June 2007

“I learnt a lot ... [especially] identifying potential for improving livelihoods, and finalising them in a plan”

– Lokanadham TV, Hewlett-Packard
Pingzhang project, June 2007

“[Through the YLP], one major element [I learned about leadership] is that it is not about oneself but about a group of people [working together to] achieve a target.”

– Lily Lai, Cathay Pacific Airways
Hebei project, October 2007

“I really think the programme is unique and very helpful from many perspectives. What impressed me most is GIFT’s creative model that benefits so many parties and the entire society.”

– Xu Rui, Beijing Li-Ning Sports Goods Company
Hebei project, October 2007

Teaching Staff and Guest Speakers

Mr Chandran Nair



Founder and chief executive of the Global Institute For Tomorrow. Previously, Asia-Pacific chairman of Asia's leading international environmental firm with a worldwide reputation, he is also an advisor to leading multinational corporations and governments, and a visiting scholar to the HKUST-School of Business programme, teaching "Leadership in Asia for the Future". Mr. Nair is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA).

Dr Thomas Tang



Academic tutor for Henley Management College and the University of Hong Kong. Also academic advisor to Lingnan University, City University, and Chinese University of Hong Kong. A senior advisor to the Business Environment Council, an affiliate of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. Specialist subjects cover CSR, environment, climate change, government policy, civil society and sustainable communities.

Guest speakers will be invited to address the Young Leaders. Typically they are prominent members of the business community and civil society and senior public-sector representatives.

How to Apply

To take part in the Cambodia YLP or learn more about the YLP in general or GIFT, please contact:

Bindiya Rupani:
Business Development Manager

Tel: (852) 3571-8204

E-mail: brupani@global-inst.org

Visit the GIFT website at:

<http://www.globalinstitutefortomorrow.org/>