

Dear Senior Fellows and Friends,

On May 2nd, twenty-two people gathered at Vie de France for dinner and a Skype call with Don Jacobson in New Delhi. He made a special effort to join us; on the other side of the world, the time was 4 a.m.! Don, whose tour as Consular Section Chief at the U.S. Embassy there is coming to a close, joined us to reflect on what he's learned. He and his family are preparing to move to Brazil this summer, where his responsibility will expand to encompass consular operations in several cities. To see the sorts of customer interactions his teams will be optimizing, watch the overview at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Kc_IHW5Qjc. Don catalyzes significant process improvements by accelerating leadership development among the Foreign Service Officers and Foreign Service Nationals he leads, and that was the focus of our conversation.

One of Don's insights continues to resonate with several participants: he completely reprioritized his time to begin holding frequent one-on-one meetings with the first line supervisors. That decision grew out of an ethical lapse that caused him to fire several Foreign Service Nationals, including supervisors. During the meetings, Don works with each person on his or her performance challenges, keeping notes and relentlessly following up. Although this sounds almost too simple, Don said it has had profound results and has permanently changed how he manages. Initially, he didn't think he had the time, but eventually he realized that he couldn't afford not to make the time.

Our Skype video and audio connections were very clear, although the projector didn't work despite successful dry runs. That disappointing fact may necessitate a technology refresh before we try another such call. The group was entirely gracious, and the Mac owners in the room exercised great restraint! In any event, we had a purposeful conversation with a leader who also has used his discretionary energy to [inspire](#) executives and prospective leaders to continue their development. Near the end of his life, Peter Drucker said, "We now accept the fact that learning is a lifelong process of keeping abreast of change. And the most pressing task is to teach people how to learn." Don got the memo.

Thanks go out to several who paved the way for the call:

- Friends [Elena Rapisardi and Barbara Beach](#), who enabled the 2010 international conversation. This week, Elena was invited to present at the Paris CrisisCamp on emergency preparedness collaboration she has been fostering at the local level in Tuscany. We'll have an update later in the year.
- Dave Pachter ([Library of Congress](#) guru, gardener, and gourmet chef), who with his wife Amanda Putnam ([Patent & Trademark Office](#) librarian) enabled the first test of my mobile hotspot with his recent retirement gift, a Nook color e-reader.
- Lora Allen ([Department of Homeland Security](#)), who put dinner preparations on hold while we tested the connection speed between her kitchen and the restaurant during a dry run.

Participant affiliations were as follows:

ARPA* Consultant (*Advanced Research Program Analysis)
Consultant, IT Workforce Issues

Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency
DC Public Schools, IMPACT Operations
Department of Education
Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security, retired
Department of Labor
Department of State
Department of Transportation
e.I.solutions
Environmental Protection Agency
Foreign Language & Instructional Design Consultant
Kahler Communications, Inc.
National Science Foundation
The Educe Group
The Mind to Lead
The Public Manager
U.S. Navy

A generous spirit of learning and collegiality was fostered and enjoyed by all. Please consider joining us in the future.

Kitty Wooley
U.S. Department of Education

P.S. I promised Steve Ressler, an early participant in this network and the founder of Young Government Leaders, that I would mention the Next Generation of Government Summit, July 28-29. Look and learn at <http://www.nextgengovt.com/>. Like Skype's astonishing capability, this is a game-changing development that ought to be on your radar. Is there someone in your shop who should be there?