

Second Technical Progress Report

14 November 2003

Project Title:
"Evaluating the Impact of Universal Access Models, Strategies and Policies in ICTs on Poor communities in the Philippines."

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Research Institutions

National College of Public Administration and Governance,
University of the Philippines

and the

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Synthesis

Aggregated national statistics on information and communication technologies (ICTs) do not clearly show who benefits from information communication technologies (ICTs) and how they benefit from it. Furthermore, they don't give a good picture of who remains disadvantaged and why they are disadvantaged. The impact of universal access policies and strategies to access ICTs is best seen from the ground, and this is the primary objective of this research.

The research applied Amartya Sen's "capabilities approach" to the access and use of ICTs. An issue raised by the Capabilities Approach is that while access to a basic good, in this case information and communication technologies (ICTs), is a prerequisite to its usage, individual differences, capabilities and choice also play a role on the use, value and application of these goods. As such, the research investigated the extent to which people have access to ICTs, the characteristics of people who make use of it, and how and for what ends they are utilized. Based on household surveys conducted in urban and rural barangays in Puerto Princesa City, it analyzed access beyond the traditional method of considering teledensities and number of Internet service providers (ISPs), and instead focused on key demographic traits in a community and how these influenced their capabilities, functioning and freedoms with respect to ICT use.

Field surveys were conducted in two areas, Carmona, Cavite and Puerto Princesa City, Palawan. The two sites were very different (in terms of modern infrastructure, size, topography, kind of economy, etc.), and their differences highlighted many issues that have to be considered in developing future policies with regard to the use and access to ICTs in the Philippines. However, while they were different, some of the findings that pertain to demographic issues with respect to access, such as income, gender, educational attainment, urban-rural differences, and age were somewhat consistent (please refer to attached paper which will be presented in a national conference in July).

Results from the survey, expert interviews and focus group discussion reveal the importance of considering the role of alternative information systems in the communities. Examples of these alternative systems include the use of community radio, church bells, roving teams in emergencies, sending letters through friends, two-way radios, AM radio (for announcements and messages).

Another revealing finding are the different levels of access (access ladder) and the increasing importance of ICTs given the increased mobility of people, either to look for jobs or to study. The impact of new ICTs, such as cellular phones, was also evident in the resulting glut of landline telephones. There was also very low access and knowledge about computers, emailing and the Internet. What was noteworthy, was the significant relationship educational attainment had with the use and perceived need for this kinds of services, especially for their work.

Ownership of an ICT does not guarantee that a everyone in the household knows how to operate it, and this is true, as well, with personal computers (PC). However, the ownership of a PC does make a person more likely to know how to use a computer compared to those who did not have a PC in the house. But, most people surveyed who knew how to use a computer didn't possess a computer of their own. This suggests that a majority have access to computers through schools, the office, or public internet cafes or computer rental shops.

Awareness of computer programs and what it could do is crucial before people actually attempt to use them. However, only a slight majority of those who know of email and the Internet actually possess an email account or have tried using the Internet. As mentioned previously, one significant factor in moving from knowledge of an application, like email and the Internet, to actually trying them out is the level of education. Furthermore, of the respondents which say they have email accounts, a majority (64%) said their account is provided by their office or school and the remainder say they have an Internet-based account (e.g. yahoo, hotmail). This indicates

the important role organizations (e.g. schools, workplaces, community organizations) can play in connecting the digitally excluded.

It is important, therefore, for policy-makers to look into the different ways by which people manage their limitations to access. At the same time, they must consider its implications on how people send and retrieve information that are crucial for governance and development. In this case, the role of indigenous and alternative models of communication and its integration with more modern ICTs like the Internet and cellular technologies may yet prove useful in preventing information and knowledge-gaps from widening. Likewise, the role of social intermediaries, be it through institutions like schools and NGOs, or informally through friends and family, for bridging the information divide also needs to be stressed.

The final phase of the project involved the creation of a guidebook that deals with ways for bridging the information divide. The handbook was written by Erwin Alampay, Richard Heeks and Peter Soliva. Data and cases that were included in the guidebook were obtained as a result of expert interviews conducted during the project. Likewise, analysis based from the surveys conducted were also included in the recommended strategies for bridging the divide.

One thousand copies of this handbook was produced. Some copies of the handbook were already distributed to key informants who participated in the project, the local government units who participated in the study, policymakers in the industry and people from the academe. Copies have already been provided to AMIC, APDIP, APNIC and IDRC. The bulk of the copies will be sent by post to 3rd-6th class municipalities, which are the communities that are most marginalized in this information age.

Approximately Php39000 will be allotted for the distribution and dissemination of the handbook. This amount will be taken from the remaining unspent budget allocated for the handbook production and dissemination, and savings from other items that remain unspent (Refer to Final Financial Report).

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I. Project Objectives:

General Objective: to assess the relevance and the impact of public policy and private strategy on access to ICTs within poor communities.

Specific Objectives:

1. to map current government policies and private sector provider strategies of relevance to the provision of universal service to ICTs in the Philippines
2. to map the gap between policy/strategy as stated and policy/strategy as implemented in the provision of ICTs in two areas of the Philippines
3. to map the access to and impact of ICT-based information on livelihoods of two poor communities, and of sub-groups within those communities
4. to map the gap between policy/strategy as stated and the livelihoods and needs of two poor communities, as reflected in current access to and use of information and ICTs within those communities.
5. on the basis of field observation, to develop the notion of ‘universal access’ beyond the current technical focus of physical and financial access, to incorporate other social, economic and cultural resources that affect access to and use of information; and to develop the notion of ‘universal access’ beyond the current homogenized assumptions, to incorporate differentiated intra-community and intra-household models (e.g. along lines of social group, gender and age).

II. Project Implementation

The first technical report, primarily dealt with the initial phase of the research. This involved developing the instrument, pilot testing, and preparation and entry into the survey sites.

The second phase of the research, which is detailed here, involves primarily the completion of the field survey, the conduct of expert interviews, and the dissemination of the research findings based on the surveys conducted.

The last phase of the project involved the production of a guidebook on bridging the information divide in the Philippines (copies of the guidebook has been provided to AMIC, APDIP, APNIC and ICRC already).

1. Completion of survey

There were two survey areas: Carmona in Cavite, and Puerto Princesa City in Palawan. While the total number of respondents targeted was for 500 respondents, or 250 for each area, the number of respondents in Puerto Princesa ended up being more, 270 respondents, all in all. The number of respondents in Carmona on the other hand was 246.

Although the Puerto Princesa survey was started later, it was actually completed ahead of the Carmona survey. The surveys were all submitted by mid-November, and the final encoding and cleaning of the data into SPSS was finished by January 4, 2003.

2. Research Dissemination

There was on only one planned dissemination venue based on the original proposal, but over the course of the project, we would have actually been able to present the findings in five (5) major conferences and meetings.

1. NCPAG International Conference (October 21-23, 2002), Manila Hotel- the interim findings based on partial results that came from the survey was presented through a poster presentation.
2. UNESCAP Experts group meeting (January 28-30, 2003), Bangkok, Thailand – the initial findings based on the completed survey data was presented in the meeting, which aimed to outline some strategies for using ICTs in rural poverty reduction.
3. PAN-Asia All Partner's meeting in Vientiane, Laos (March 2-8, 2003) – demographic variables that could potentially affect access to ICTs were presented in the conference. In particular, it highlighted empirical results that clearly outlines the challenges that remain with respect to bridging the digital divides within Philippines society.
4. National Academy for Science and Technology (NAST) Conference – July 9-10, 2003 - The paper explores the application of Sen's Capability Approach with respect to Universal Access to ICTs, and this is the first time that the research uses non-parametric measure on the survey data in order to determine, whether the trends and variables as presented before actually have any significant statistical results.
5. Center for Regulation and Competition (CRC) International Conference, October 13-15, 2003 - The paper revisited all the relevant policies in the Philippines that was connected to Universal Access. It then discussed the impact of Universal access policies and strategies on the poor based on the survey conducted in Puerto Princesa.

The last major component of the dissemination plan was the creation of a guidebook that will be distributed to local government units, non-governmental organizations (NGO), and people's organizations. The guidebook contains short chapters on the importance information and information systems in development, and ways for tapping local resources and expertise in order to help bridge the information divide. It provides cases, links and resources that could readers could analyze, further explore and utilize. A pdf file of the same guidebook is already posted in the APDIP website, and will be posted in the NCPAG website.

3. Expert Interviews

Expert Interviews were conducted with officers and officials from various government agencies, the private sector, and NGOs directly involved in applying ICTs for development.

The following were the experts interviewed:

	Name	Affiliation
1.	Atty. Ramon Isberto	Vice-President for Media Affairs, SMART Telecoms
2.	Carlota Salamat	RF Design Engineer, ASTI

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| 3. Edwin Soriano | Digital Philippines |
| 4. Emmanuel Lallana | Executive Director, Digital Philippines, e-ASEAN |
| 5. Engr. Denis Villorente | Deputy Director, Advanced Science and Technology Institute (ASTI) |
| 6. Jack Ignacio | Public Access Department, SMART Telecoms |
| 7. Janet Torral | Executive Director, Digital Filipino |
| 8. Merlita Opeña | Department of Science and Technology (DOST) |
| 9. Nova Clotario | Media Department, SMART Telecoms |
| 10. Romeo Recide | Director, Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS), Department of Agriculture |
| 11. Virgilio Pena | Undersecretary for ICTs, Department of Transportation and Communications; ITTECC |
| 12. Engr. Ed Cabarrios | National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) |
| 13. Dr. Jay Sabido IX | former head of the National Computer Center, and Director of ASTI |
| 14. Engr. Rainier Angeles | Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) |
| 15. Ms. Amy Rubio | Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) |
| 16. Engr. Edgardo Bongato | Telecommunications Office (TELOF) |
| 17. Engr. Noel Borres | Telecommunications Office (TELOF) |
| 18. Engr. Nestor Ancheta | Telecommunications Office (TELOF) |

III. New Research Findings: (Please refer to attached research paper entitled “Revisiting Philippine Universal Access Policies to ICTs Using the Capabilities Approach”)

IV. Administrative Matters

Changes in Methodology - A huge part of the current savings in the expenditure, has to do with the fact that one area selected (Carmona, Cavite) did not entail plane travels because it was accesible by land. As such, of the seven round-trip tickets in the original proposal, only four (4) was used.

The remaining task left for the project is the dissemination of the guidebook. An online version is already available at the APDIP website, and it will soon be posted at the NCPAG website as well. Copies have been distributed to all the partners, key informants and some policy makers. Some copies have also been distributed in conferences and to interested researchers. The bulk of the actual guidebook will be mailed to 3rd-6th class municipalitlies. Hopefully, it can serve as an input into their local municipal development plans. However, the amount originally budgetted for mailing the guidebook was underestimated. Because of the actual weight of the guidebook, the cost of postage is significant, and comes to Php 42.00 for local addresses outside of Metro Manila. There is still a little over Php 8,700.00 budgetted for this, however, mailing all the guidebooks is estimated to cost approximately 36,000. It is hoped that PAN-Asia will grant that the amount saved for the other items can be re-allocated to the dissemination of the guidebook instead. Even with this, the project will remain within its overall budget.

(please refer to final financial report)

Prepared By:

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Project Leader