

Study visit - Manila, Philippine (9-13 March)

- report -

Objectives vs. Outcomes / learnings

Review Philippines National Network of eCentres <i>PhilCecNet</i> activities and visit its stakeholders

During my five-day study visit, as result of a very efficient administration of available time proposed by my counterparts (PhilCecNet), I had the chance to create a clear image about activities of PhilCecNet, as well as meet its stakeholders (government, NGO, business, members' representatives within the network).

Visit counterparts from PhilCeCNet:

- Maria Teresa M. Camba
- Cheryl Ortega
- Lilian Botor

List of meetings and themes of discussion:

- Courtesy call with Anthony Ray Roxas-Chua III, CICT chair (Commission for Information and Communication Technology). Short presentation of Telecentre-Europe and objectives of my visit.
- Courtesy call with Angelo Timoteo M. Diaz de Rivera, CICT commissioner for eGovernment and NCC General Director (National Computer Center). Presentation of Telecentre-Europe and objectives of my visit; short discussion about CICT involvement within PhilCecNet.
- Meeting with Angelo Juan O. Ramos, PhilCecNet chair. Discussion on network management, organizational structure, services for members.
- Meeting with Lorenzo Emanuel I. Guillermo, Academy Chair and eTESDA Program Director. Presentation of eTESDA initiative, discussion on academy services.
- Visit to PCCARD FITS program. Presentation and open discussion, visit to one center.
- Visit to eSkwela program. Presentation and open discussion, visit to one center.
- Meeting with Yvonne Garcia-Flores, Intel. Discussion on Intel's involvement in PhilCeCNet and presentation of Telecentre-Europe.

Learn about the network's strategic and operational plans

This is a summary of interesting strategic and operational aspects of PhilCeCNet, info gathered through the 5-day study visit.

The Philippine Community eCenter Network *PhilCeCNet* has recently acquired legal entity, becoming a nongovernmental organization.

PhilCeCNet was born attributable to a need identified by telecentre operators to connect and associate for greater power and visibility. The process that followed was conducted by a coordination body formed within the CICT. PhilCeCNet was and is seen as the multi-sectoral partner of a pre-existent program called Community eCenter.

At the beginning, a task force worked to identify stakeholders of such an initiative, a national network of eCenters. 9 stakeholder clusters were brought forward by this work:

1. National Government Agencies
2. Private sector
3. NGO sector
4. Academic sector
5. Media
6. LGUs
7. Funding Agencies
8. CeC managers
9. CeC users

PhilCeCNet has established an Executive Council that comprises a representative from each 9-stakeholder clusters. A network secretariat supports administratively the council in day-to-day operations of the network.

Having the coordination structure in place, the network went through a consultative process for building a strategy - roadmap. The process involved all members through questionnaires and workshops, and the bottom-up approach inspired all members and stakeholders a sense of ownership of the strategy and network.

The network gathers all pre-existent telecentre initiatives across the country. E.g. eTESDA centers targeting unemployed, eSkwela centers targeting out-of-school youth and adults, FITS centers targeting farmers. These are already established, having the infrastructure and PhilCeCNet offer them content development. To harmonize services that eCenters can provide, a staff exchange scheme was organized and implemented.

Most of the telecentres are supported by Local Government Units (LGUs), offering the sustainability needed, but also involving a series of challenges coming from political interests and motivation of operators, employees of the LGUs.

PhilCeCNet is mainly supported by the CICT, but receives support also from the private sector for specific activities.

The most important operational document is the PhilCeCNet Charter. This was created before acquiring the legal entity.

Membership in PhilCeCNet is structured on 3 categories of members:

1. Telecentres
2. Telecentres' users
3. Individuals and organizations providing assistance and services to telecentres

2 types of membership are applied to the upper-mentioned:

1. Regular membership (individual or organizations)
2. Honorary membership (conferred membership in recognition of involvement and support to telecentres/members)

One could apply online for membership, by filling and sending an application form (online application available). If successful, will be recognized as member by PhilCeCNet, and will receive a membership certificate. All members are included in a network directory.

The Executive Council is planning to launch soon a membership annual fee system.

Benefits for members are generally referring to opportunities to link with other groups (knowledge sharing), voting rights, preferential privileges in participation to PhilCeCNet activities (including network meetings), and discounts for courses that will be organized by the Academy. Other than that, the network advocates stakeholder support and generates resources for member telecentres.

Most of the communication within the network takes place through the web portal www.philcecnet.ph. Recently, a ning community has been added to increase interaction between members.

Identify aspects that can be replicated, adapted to Telecentre Europe and propose practical ways to adapt and/or implement solutions for Telecentre-Europe strategic and operational issues/challenges

There are a series of characteristics both strategic and operational, that Telecentre-Europe can learn from and use in the network's development.

Aspect	Resource doc/s	Potential actions for TE
Organizational structure - The coordination body involves representatives of stakeholders. This seems to be a strength of the network, due to active involvement of representatives from the Executive Council. It is also a guarantee for sustainability. Stakeholders feel a sense of ownership that keeps them motivated.	PhilCeCNet charter	Telecentre-Europe's steering committee to identify stakeholders of the network. Think and create a coordination body that has well defined role and rules. Try to involve representatives of stakeholders in this structure. As we want to acquire the legal entity, an important resource could be the PhilCeCNet charter.
Roadmap / strategy PhilCeCNet had a bottom-up consultative process to build their roadmap. This process involved members and	PhilCeCNet Roadmap, Other documents produced during the consultations	It is probably a good time to think of a TE strategy for the next years. The process for building such a document could be launched at our

stakeholders at all levels.		next big reunion with members. Bottom-up process seems the best approach, and resources from PhilCeCNet as well as their suggestions could help us better organize everything.
Membership PhilCeCNet has already implemented a membership scheme that works very well, considering that they are a network of over 700 eCenters.	Membership Guidelines, Membership application form, Membership invite document	TE needs to create and to implement a membership scheme. Resource document mentioned could be very helpful in order to put this together. I think we need to see what kind of membership structure is appropriate for us.
Services for end-users I've learned about a series of innovative services that centers offer to communities. Some of them could be adapted and replicated by telecentres from Europe.	www.philcecnet.ph – section CeC initiatives e.g. eSkwela, eTESDA, FITS	We can promote these services to telecentres from Europe using our ning site, and we can encourage them to search and ask for more info. In the actual context, eTESDA services for unemployed people look like a very valuable resource.
Services for members I would mention here that is interesting to track Academy's initiatives and services for members of PhilCeCNet. (A curriculum was already created and a series of courses will be launched; all courses target telecentres operators)	www.philcecnet.ph – Resources section - Academy	Potential service that TE could offer for members – deliver courses for telecentre operators. To track developments.

One of the study visit outcomes refers to a first agreement between TE and PhilCeCNet to develop a future closer relationship with initial ideas and focus on:

- Online communication and collaboration (banner exchange, articles featured on philcecnet.ph and telecentre-europe.org)
- Research grant opportunities for Asian-European cooperation projects (e.g. EU funds)
- Facilitate knowledge sharing between telecentres from Philippine and Europe
- Learn from each-other and share resources (e.g. PhilCeCNet charter)

Share experiences with the Telecentre-Europe community

Announcements of the study visit were featured on www.philcecnet.ph,
www.telecentre.org and www.telecentre-europe.org .

5 blogs were posted for the 5-day visit on www.telecentre-europe.org and
www.telecentre.org .

A final article, including learnings and outcomes will be posted on www.philcecnet.ph,
www.telecentre.org and www.telecentre-europe.org .