



# Philippines

## PUBLIC ACCESS LANDSCAPE STUDY SUMMARY



### Overview

The ICT infrastructure in the Philippines is strong. However, due to the country's widespread population, inequity barriers and ineffective political environment, it faces an uphill climb with regard to improving public access to ICT. Public libraries are poorly equipped and government-sponsored Community e-Centers have limited services and slow Internet access. However, unlike in many of the other countries surveyed, lower income groups are using public access ICT venues, meaning that the potential exists to reach this country's underserved groups.

PUBLIC ACCESS LANDSCAPE	
Challenges ahead	Slow gains
Needs	Moderate
Needs (rank)	12/25
Readiness	Moderate
Readiness (rank)	12/25

### Findings

While the Philippine government has fostered an enabling policymaking environment for ICT development through various international and national policies, the implementation of these policies is lacking. This lack of implementation is only part of the problem, however. Another is that Philippine society is deeply marginalized. The causes are political, social and economic, and include: (1) weak macroeconomic management; (2) employment issues; (3) high population growth rates; (4) an underperforming agricultural sector and an unfinished land reform agenda; (5) governance issues including corruption and a weak state; and (6) conflict and security issues.

The country's most marginalized (and underserved) populations live on the islands of Mindanao and Visayas. This population (not only on these islands but elsewhere) includes the urban poor, women, children, the elderly, indigenous people, informal workers who have no social services or health insurance, peasant farmers, fishermen, persons with impairments and disabilities, victims of disaster, formal labor and migrant workers, and students and young people. Generally, these people need and seek information on basic needs and social services.

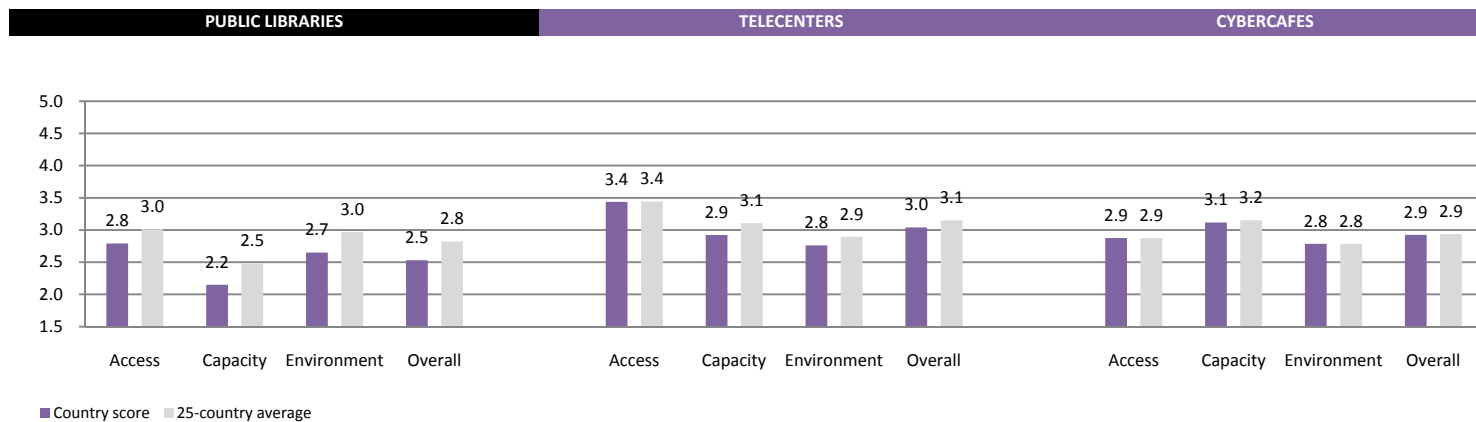
Three venues in the Philippines were identified as the most accessible and prevalent venues available to marginalized and underserved people: public libraries, government funded Community e-Centers (CeCs), and privately owned cybercafes. These venues are all reasonably affordable and accessible. However, in public libraries, reference books are generally limited or obsolete, and there is a near total absence of Internet access.

In CeCs and Internet cafes, users identified limited services, slow Internet access, and limited workspace as the primary barriers to access. Public libraries and Internet cafes are accessed more frequently than CeCs, which is a relatively new government-sponsored information venue. If the identified information barriers are addressed, these public access venues can become information and education hubs for the underserved and marginalized population.

The other key findings from this study include.

- Despite the widely recognized rampant corruption, the government has attempted to

# ACE Scores



Shaded data points are outside standard deviation for 25-country set  
 See the last page for country-specific definitions of these venues  
 See the last page for a definition of the ACE scoring framework

## Venue Distributions

	ALL PUBLIC ACCESS			PUBLIC LIBRARIES			TELECENTERS*			CYBERCAFES			OTHER VENUES		
	Total urban & non-urban	25-country average	25-country median	Total urban & non-urban	25-country average	25-country median	Total urban & non-urban	25-country average	25-country median	Total urban & non-urban	25-country average	25-country median	Total urban & non-urban	25-country average	25-country median
<b>VENUES</b>	8,370	10,017	5,489	1,156	1,111	1,062	741	1,273	366	6,473	8,693	3,225	0	398	46
number with ICT	7,295	9,802	5,122	81	349	96	741	1,149	257	6,473	8,507	3,251	0	146	13
% with ICT	87%	98%	87%	7%	31%	20%	100%	90%	100%	100%	98%	100%	NA	37%	92%
<b>% OF PUBLIC VENUES</b>	100%	100%	100%	14%	11%	20%	9%	12%	11%	77%	73%	67%	0%	4%	1%
<b>POP. PER VENUE ('000)</b>	10	8	5	75	93	37	116	205	68	13	52	9	NA	419	103
with ICT ('000)	12	15	6	1,066	2,093	208	116	242	119	13	62	10	NA	1,354	198

NA=Not applicable

\*See the last page for country-specific definitions of these venues. For this country, telecenters refers to Community e-Centers.

Data points are missing for some measures in some countries, which can result in oddities when comparing rows of data (for instance, the average number of venues with ICT appears to be greater than the average number of venues). For a complete overview of comparative country data, please see the summary paper for this study.

## User Profiles

		PUBLIC LIBRARIES				TELECENTERS				CYBERCAFES			
		Urban	25-country average	Non-urban	25-country average	Urban	25-country average	Non-urban	25-country average	Urban	25-country average	Non-urban	25-country average
<b>INCOME</b>	Low income	ND	28%	40%	35%	ND	26%	ND	24%	ND	26%	ND	24%
	Medium income	ND	54%	50%	46%	ND	56%	ND	45%	ND	56%	ND	45%
	High income	ND	7%	10%	6%	ND	9%	ND	4%	ND	9%	ND	4%
<b>EDUCATION</b>	No formal education	0%	3%	ND	2%	0%	5%	ND	6%	0%	5%	0%	6%
	Only elementary	0%	16%	ND	21%	0%	14%	ND	13%	3%	14%	5%	13%
	Up to high school	50%	50%	ND	36%	44%	37%	ND	32%	37%	37%	66%	32%
	College or university	50%	28%	ND	19%	56%	40%	ND	28%	60%	40%	29%	28%
<b>AGE</b>	14 and under	14%	12%	0%	15%	0%	9%	ND	14%	16%	9%	ND	14%
	15-35	74%	72%	22%	51%	77%	74%	ND	57%	78%	74%	ND	57%
	36-60	10%	12%	0%	23%	19%	12%	ND	8%	6%	12%	ND	8%
	61 and over	2%	2%	0%	2%	3%	0%	ND	1%	0%	0%	ND	1%
<b>GENDER</b>	% female	48%	53%	ND	49%	52%	39%	ND	39%	39%	39%	ND	39%

ND=No data

Percentages may not add up to 100% in all cases

See the last page for country-specific definitions of these venues

Data collected through interviews conducted by research teams. See country reports for details with regard to methodology, locations, timing, and data collection issues.

alleviate poverty. However, this is hindered by: (1) a lack of political stability and a failure to create productive employment; (2) failure to reduce rural land inequities; (3) the decentralization of government leading to under-funded local resources; (4) uneven development; (5) poor health and living conditions; and (6) a lack of opportunities for people with disabilities.

- Underserved communities lack access to information concerning health, livelihood and productivity, employment, education, and government services. Due to insufficient employment to absorb the labor force, many families depend upon income from abroad. Emigration comes at a high cost in terms of loss of knowledge and skills, and can have a high social cost.
- Nearly three-quarters of the country's poor people reside in rural areas, and much of this indigence is related to inadequate land-use policies. Networks and relationships of trust and reciprocity are lacking.
- While the underserved population lacks services, the infrastructure for ICTs is well-developed.
- Mobile network coverage has reached 99 percent of the country.

## Recommendations

This study revealed that many people in the country's lower income groups (about 55 percent) use public access ICT venues despite potential affordability issues, compared to lower usage rates for middle income users (37.5%) and upper income users (7.7%). It is possible that once more people in lower income groups become aware of how ICTs can improve their lives, far more will make use of these venues. Therefore, national and local government agencies should initiate policies and programs to advance the role of ICTs in public libraries and the CeCs, and the potential of government-funded institutions and programs can become avenues to disseminate locally relevant information to the underserved constituency. The government supports the library network, but few libraries are located in rural areas.

Studies to facilitate policy development, capacity development, and ICT development are highly recommended, as are studies that will lead toward:

- Implementing initiatives that focus on public access venues and the underserved, including groups such as the indigenous people residing in mountain areas
- Establishing capacity-building programs designed to work with initiatives that promote public access to information and communication venues as opportunities for change.
- Developing SMS capacity as an empowering tool for underserved sectors of society
- Improving services offered in the country's public access venues
- Developing methods for sustaining CeCs and provide ways to monitor the development of public access venues
- Creating the means to standardize and synchronize policies and initiatives for ensuring the optimum use of the public venues.

## Geography & Economy

The Philippines is the world's twelfth most populous country, with 90 million people spread out over 300,000 sq km and 7,107 islands covering the Philippine Sea (the western Pacific Ocean) between Indonesia and China. Half of the country's population lives on the chain's largest island, Luzon. More than 90 percent are Roman Catholic. English and Filipino are the official languages, but an astonishing 180 other languages are recognized and spoken.

Education is compulsory and taught in English in a school system patterned after the American model. From an educational viewpoint, the literacy rate (92.6 percent) and educational development are roughly equal between genders.

The country is mountainous and covered by tropical rainforests. The economy rests heavily on agriculture, although there is some mining and light industry.

The Philippines was a Spanish colony from the 16th century until the United States gained control following the Spanish American War in the late 1890s. The US granted the Philippines full independence in 1946. Since then, the Philippines has seen extensive political and economic turbulence. The country currently has a presidential unitary form of government with executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

COUNTRY PROFILE	
Total population* (millions)	86.3
Urban population* (millions)	54.7
Literacy (%)	92.6
E-readiness	4.66
Gini coefficient	0.46

\*World Bank 2006 data

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## About this study

CIS's Public Access Landscape Study examined how people around the world access and use information and computers in public settings such as libraries, telecenters, and cybercafes. Understanding public access is particularly important in developing countries where there is often limited private access to information and communication technologies (ICTs).

This study covered a carefully-selected sample of 25 developing countries containing over 250,000 public access settings. Local research teams surveyed over 25,000 people and conducted interviews and focus groups in order to develop a detailed picture of the public access ICT landscape in each country. CIS collected, interpreted, and analyzed these detailed county-level results, and also conducted cross-country comparative analyses to uncover common themes, challenges and opportunities.

The goal of this work is to help strengthen public access to information and ICTs around the world.

This project was conducted in two phases. During the first phase, country-based research teams prepared draft reports describing the information access landscape, presented a national assessment, and compiled a preliminary set of recommendations. In the second phase, teams identified the principal locations where people seek information: public libraries, cybercafés, telecenters, and other locations (such as private and religious libraries).

Local research teams used a combination of research methods to: (1) observe how people access information; (2) conduct surveys in information venues where they interviewed operators and users; and (3) perform secondary research and analysis of existing reports and documents using both local and international sources. Teams combined site visits and interviews to review the physical infrastructure and human resources of a variety of venues, and to determine the information content, service usage patterns, communication, and knowledge development. Additionally, teams examined the effects of environmental factors such as government policies, geography, and ethnic and linguistic differences.

## Definitions

**ACE scoring framework:** Developed by CIS based on a modified bridges.org Real Access framework. The scale goes from zero to five, with 5 being the best possible score. ACE scores are calculated by evaluating dozens of variables having to do with ICT access, capacity and environment in public access ICT venues. "Access" includes variables such as accessibility, suitability, affordability, and the availability of technology; "capacity" includes training, relevant content and services, social appropriation, and collaboration capacity; and "environment" includes socio-cultural factors, popular support, political will, and a country's legal and regulatory framework.

**Challenges ahead** (from table on front page): Estimates based on combinations of ACE scores indicating difficulty in improving country's public access to ICT. From the fewest challenges to most, categories are: quick wins, steady gains, slow gains, and significant.

**CIS:** University of Washington Center for Information & Society (CIS)

**Community e-Centers (CeCs):** Designed to provide digital ICT services to the local government unit where they are located

**Cybercafés:** Mostly small enterprises, owners are now forming nationwide and regional associations to address venue issues

**E-readiness:** The ability to use ICT for economic development, as determined by measures of connectivity and technology infrastructure, business environment, social and cultural environment, legal environment, government policy and vision, and consumer and business adoption. E-readiness is scored on a scale from 1 to 10. In 2008, the global e-readiness score was 6.4, with the highest levels in North America and the lowest in Africa and Asia.

**Gini coefficient:** Measures the inequality of income distribution. A low coefficient indicates more equal income distribution, while a high Gini coefficient indicates more unequal distribution. The global average is around 0.6; the US Gini is around 0.45.

**ICTs:** Information and communication technologies (especially computers and the Internet)

**Needs & Readiness indexes** (from table on front page): The needs index is comprised of three indicators: inequality, ICT usage and ICT cost. The readiness index is also comprised of three indicators: politics, skills and ICT infrastructure. Proxies are used for all indicators. See "Information Needs & Watering Holes" on the CIS Landscape Study website ([www.cis.washington.edu/landscape](http://www.cis.washington.edu/landscape)) for a more detailed discussion of these indexes and proxies.

**NGO:** Non-governmental organization

**Non-urban:** Commonly labeled a rural area, but definitions of rural or periurban vary by country

**Public libraries:** Mandated by law to have one public library for every administrative division, but not given high priority by local governments due to limited budgets

**Front photo:** An Internet café in Golden City. Photo courtesy of Glen McBeth.