



Office of the President of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

I-SCHOOLS CONGRESS
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Keynote Address
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AMENITIES.

“Education is a core value of Philippine society and family life,” a point made by Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in a recent speech. In her Ten-Point Agenda and Medium Term Philippine Development Plan, the President encourages the education sector to exploit potentials of ICT in improving the quality of education in the country through the provision of ICT learning resources in formal and non-formal learning settings.

In 2004, the Commission on Information and Communications Technology, or CICT, was created with the following mandate: to conceptualize and implement ICT-based learning solutions and validation strategies that help students and ICT professionals raise their level of skills for greater competitiveness in the global workforce. All these initiatives affirm the Philippine Government’s adherence to the principle that knowledge is indeed a vital element for human existence and national progress especially in this information age.

In response to its mandate of building knowledge through ICT, the CICT’s Human Capital Development Group, or HCDG, conceptualizes, coordinates and facilitates programs and projects that help develop Filipino ICT expertise.

Recognizing the efforts of the Department of Education in addressing the lack of qualified teachers and inadequate classrooms or instructional materials, the HCDG collaborates with the DepEd to implement the iSchools Project. The Project seeks to enhance classroom instruction and learning in public high schools through establishment of access to relevant digital content and applications; conduct of training activities for capacity building; and facilitation of coordinative activities that would establish linkage among iSchool recipients.

The CICT designed the iSchools to be both a computerization project and a capacity-building program. The Project utilizes available ICT tools such as computers, Internet connections and digital educational references to enable the students and teachers to have a hands-on experience of how the World Wide Web and other ICT-based resources can transform the way learning occurs inside the classroom. This strategy will give way to the more significant component of the program which is capacity-building.

Capacity-building in the iSchools Projects is primarily done through the Community Mobilization and Educators' Training components. Community mobilization is a key requirement for project sustainability. The CICT assists the recipient school communities, local government units and DepEd ICT Coordinators to attain an adequate level of preparedness for their obligations and to ensure smooth flow of project implementation. Hence, we conduct cluster meetings with concerned stakeholders to orient them about the project objectives and their responsibilities as counterparts. The stakeholders also undergo a series of sustainability planning workshops wherein they deliberate on issues and map out plans for sustaining the technical, financial and operational requirements of the project. During the actual project implementation, we continue to seek the participation of our recipient schools in monitoring and evaluation. We engage them in developing new content and applications that can address their specific needs and improve project delivery.

Educators' Training, on the other hand, equips school administrators and personnel with essential ICT skills that increase their competencies in adopting ICT in education. Five specific training programs are provided: Computer and Internet Literacy Course plus ICT for Basic Education, Laboratory Management, Sustainability Planning, Web Development and Library Management. These training programs are designed to make the teachers "facilitators of knowledge exchange" due to their exposure to the wealth of information on the Internet. The teachers do not only serve as sources of knowledge, but they also motivate students to use ICT for personal skills development and future growth opportunities. We envision this strategy to be a possible solution to the shortage of highly-skilled manpower in the ICT and ICT-enabled industries.

Nevertheless, the success of the iSchools Project would not be possible if not for the support of our partners. The Project works through a synergy of efforts among the recipient school community, local government units, state universities and colleges, the DepEd and the CICT. Each of these stakeholders has their own set of responsibilities to fulfill. At this point, I would like to thank our school principals and administrators, DepEd Superintendents and ICT Coordinators, representatives from LGUs and other stakeholders who are here today, for their unwavering commitment to capitalize on ICT in uplifting the quality of our education. It is your unyielding determination and keen participation that brought the iSchools Project to where it is now—360 recipient schools to date and targeting to penetrate the country's 5,000 public high schools by 2010.

I would also like to convey our heartfelt gratitude to our partner SUCs for their untiring efforts in nurturing the Project. Our partner SUCs handle some of the most critical tasks in the project such as social evaluation, educators' training and project monitoring. The CICT commends you for doing a fantastic job.

As the lead ICT agency of the government, we stand firm in our resolve to harness the power of ICT in transforming the way Filipinos learn and live. We stay committed to President Arroyo's goal of bringing the benefits of ICT closer to the people.

Thank you very much for coming and I wish everyone a fruitful iSchools Congress.