



In-Depth Study Proposal Coversheet

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Title of Study: The socio-economic impact of public access venues on families left behind by overseas Filipino workers
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Hosting Institution: Name, address and contact details for institution that will host research budget National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City 1101 PHILIPPINES (63-2) 9285411

Abstract (summarize the proposed study in no more than 150 words)

Public access venues provide an arena for people to get connected with family and friends. This sense of connectedness is important not only for strengthening social cohesion, but also for the opportunities they provide in terms of seeking new employment, especially outside the immediate

community, whether this be overseas or in another part of the country.

By the end of 2008, there were already more than 8 million Filipinos working overseas, representing more than 9% of the population. Given this, the proposed study will look at how public access venues are used by families left behind by overseas Filipino workers. It will look at the impact of these technologies in their economic well-being, their social networks, and eventually their decision to either migrate, or to stay and make a better life in the community/country.

In particular the proposed study will investigate the use of PAVs among communities with a high proportion of households with direct family members working overseas. In the process of conducting this, the research will:

1. Document e-government programs and interventions organizations aimed at strengthening supporting both migrant laborers and their families (e.g. skills development; psycho-social support; pre-departure training, online services, etc), especially those that can be strategically interphased with PAV-use;
2. Document how public access venues are used by households left behind by 'migrant' workers (remittance receiving). In particular, look at how they use PAVs to access e-government services specifically designed for them, as well as their use of PAV services to keep in touch with their families.
3. Investigate the impact of their use of public access venues on:
 - a. Users' households' regular routines, social relationships
 - b. Users' future life prospects (goals, aspirations, career; to migrate or not)
 - c. The operations of the internet cafes (e.g. revenue stream, operating hours, kind of services offered)

B. What are the specific research questions for this study?

The primary question this research investigates is how public access venues are used to connect families that have been separated due to increasing labor migration in the developing world.

1. What are ICT-related government and non-governmental programs and interventions (e.g. skills development; psycho-social support; pre-departure training, online services, etc) among government and non-governmental organizations aimed at strengthening supporting both migrant laborers and their families?
 - a. Pre-departure support (finding jobs, verification of work, passport and visa processing)
 - b. Support during family separation (remittances; security, etc)
 - c. Re-integration services
2. How effective are PAVs at providing access to e-services for migrant laborers and their families (see Research Question No. 1)? What interpersonal communication services does it provide (ie skype, chat, video-camera) does it provide to make this possible?
3. What is the comparative impact on dispersed families of using different combinations of communication and information access services? How do they impact on:
 - a. Their regular routines, functionings, and social relationships (including family; work; school)
 - b. Their future life prospects (goals, aspirations, career; to migrate or not)
 - c. Other self-determined objectives

C. What are the hypotheses?

1. Public access venues (PAVs) are important to the provision of interpersonal communication to dispersed families.
2. Use of PAVs among families with overseas workers:
 - a. Help strengthen family cohesion/connectedness;
 - b. Impacts on livelihoods
 - i. PAV use encourages migration (which is not necessarily limited to the immediate family but may also leak to other members of the community) and

- job placements overseas. This helps strengthen the migration chain, and increases the remittance to households and communities;
- ii. PAVs provides access to vital government and travel information needed by overseas workers

D. What is the theoretical justification/rationale for this study?

ICTs and Employment Opportunities

When Friedman (2005) described the world as ‘flat’, he saw the Internet as bringing forth the third phase of globalization. He saw a world where global access to the internet levels the economic playing field and provides those it connects with equal opportunities especially in the context of finding employment. Much of his discussion, however, revolved around knowledge-based work, or work that can be facilitated directly through the internet. But prior to the explosion of business process outsourcing, and knowledge process outsourcing, there was already the idea that employment opportunities can be leveled, from the mere knowledge of employment opportunities all over the world. Rubery & Grimshaw (2002) discussed among the scenarios that ICT facilitate is the creation of new and flexible ‘boundary-less’ careers, and expanded work opportunities.

That said, Niles & Hanson (2003) contend that even in this new era of accessibility, all things taken equal, that social and physical considerations still play a role on whether people can actually benefit from these opportunities. Heeks (2001) adds that beyond the information chain facilitated by the internet and public access venues, there would be other social and economic factors that help enable the benefits to see fruition. For instance, networked organizations recruit on the basis of reputations and recommendations, and these are reinforced through social networks, which serve as a control mechanism for employers and a means of access to the market for workers (Rubery & Grimshaw 2002).

ICTs and Migrant Labor in the Philippines

The Philippines is a country with a long history of providing migrant labor around the world (Paragas 2006). During the American period, many workers migrated to the US to work in plantations, such as the pineapple plantations in Hawaii. In the 70s, Filipino workers migrated to the Middle East with the opportunities opened up by the oil industries there. More recent migrations have seen the rise in the demand for Filipino teachers and nurses. Over the decades, thousands have also migrated as domestic helpers, seafarers and entertainers.

Literature on migration, especially among developing countries document strong linkages among some communities (the labor source and the employment destination). In the Philippines, these ‘migrant chain’ phenomena have been documented by Paragas (2006) and Aguilar (2009). These phenomena may be facilitated by the previously mentioned role that social networks play in recommending potential recruits to their employers (Rubery & Grimshaw 2002).

While the traditional way for posting job vacancies has been through the classified advertisement section of national newspapers, in recent years, the internet has also become a medium for job postings. More and more organizations post career opportunities online. There are online recruitment and volunteers sites, such as jobstreet.com. In the Philippines, one of the national governments' labor agencies provide a database of work opportunities, and similar services have also been done by some local governments (Alampay and Tiglao 2004). This is meant to match jobseekers with job vacancies. Whether it has hastened the process of finding job opportunities, especially those in other countries, can be explored. Part of the exploration has to be with respect to how people use the internet, especially for finding and disseminating work opportunities to their respective social networks.

Crucial to this, of course would be access to the internet. However, estimates of how large the user base vary. The National Telecommunication Commission reported that in 2008, there were already 3 million subscribers in a country with a population of about 97 million. On the other hand, an industry provider estimates that in this past year, subscribers grew by 77% to 2.5 million in 2009 from 1.4 million the previous year, as a result of the increasing availability of affordable prepaid broadband packages, as well as lower PC and USB internet stick prices (Globe 2010). As to access itself, the NTC estimates that Internet penetration has increased from 2.07 in 2000, to 14.2 in 2007. A Nielsen study on the other hand estimates that 28% already have access (FMA 2010). Even assuming the lower end of the estimates of internet penetration are true, it still implies that majority access the internet not at home, but in public access venues, be it in schools, libraries, or internet cafes.

Impact of Migration on the Family and the role of ICTs

With over 8.2 million Filipinos, or 9% of the population, working overseas, new household configurations have been created whereby either parent or both are separated from their children.

It was such problems that the governments' primary agency involved with the welfare of overseas workers, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) together with Microsoft conceived of a connectivity program called "Tulay" (Bridge). The intention of the program was to enhance the connections between OFWs and their families by giving non-digital-literate OFWs and OFW dependents (children, parents, extended family members) basic IT/ICT training (e.g., Word Processing, Internet use, etc.) to facilitate long-distance communication among the OFWs and members of their families and help the OFWs in their eventual reintegration into the Philippine economy. How successful the program has been in terms of achieving better connections among these families have not been independently evaluated.

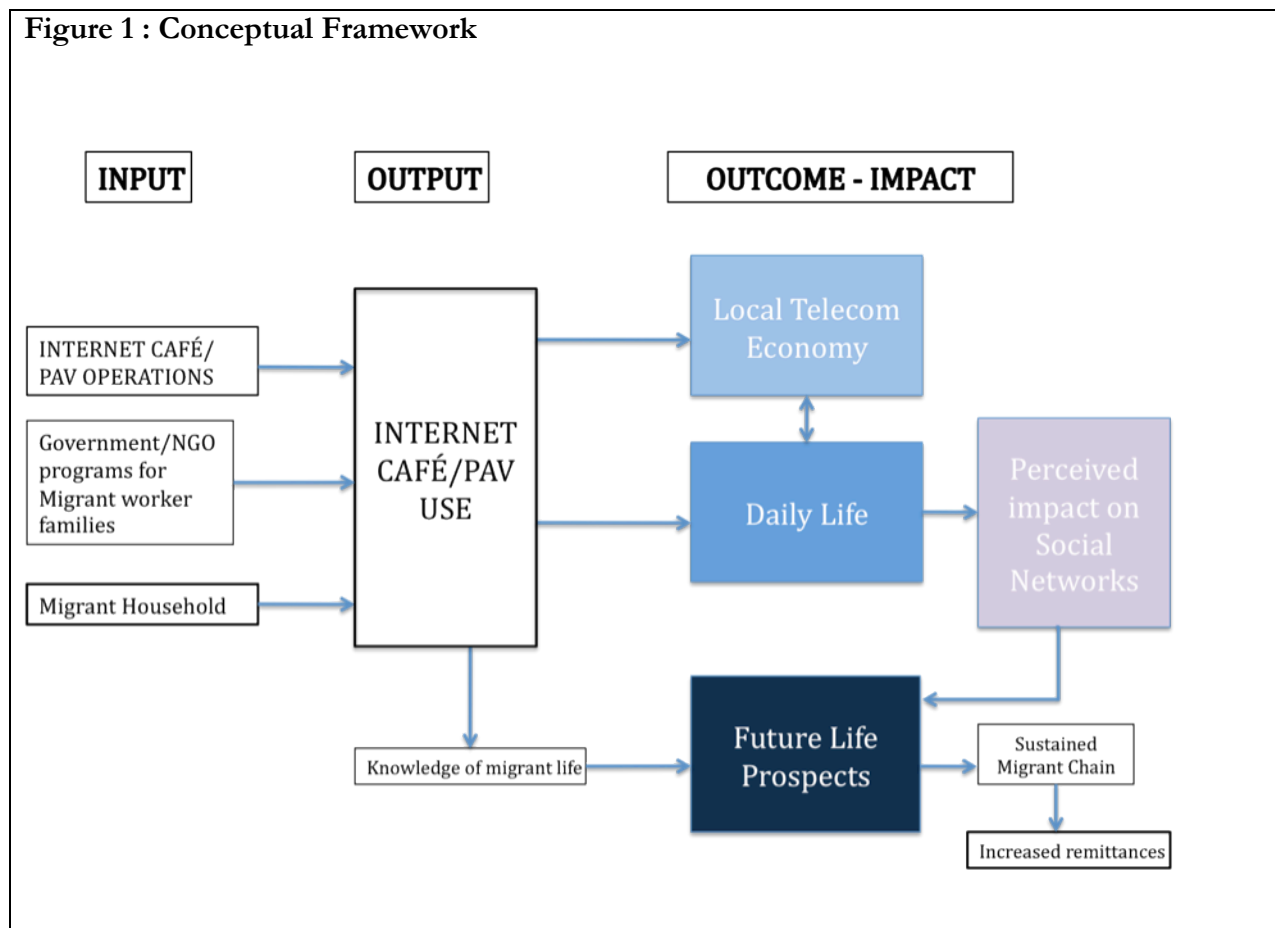
Furthermore, prevailing research results on the impact of ICTs on keeping households together has been mixed. Some say that communication technologies such as the mobile phone and the internet have been instrumental in easing the separation in many instances (Porio 2007). Some, however, contend that its use can also heighten the feelings of anxiety because of increased awareness of how normatively different the situation becomes (Miller 2007).

Another important reason for keeping migrants in touch with relatives they leave behind involves the need to coordinate financial arrangements and transactions. LirneAsia's survey of the Bottom of the Pyramid have found that on average 9% of Filipinos at the BOP have migrant relatives working

abroad, and 15% have migrant relatives who migrated internally, with a majority of them receiving financial support through remittances, monthly (Alampay & Bala 2009). On average they remit \$90/month (Alampay & Bala 2009). Communication is essential in coordinating this, and could involve use of mobile phones, and the Internet. Some documented cases of better off migrants, for instance, invest in broadband internet service and web cameras to be simultaneously present and actively participate in household decision-making, even when they are not physically present in the country (Porio 2007). Often with phone communication, the communication is initiated by the migrant, and a regular schedule or pattern is done to facilitate coordination (Aguilar 2009). All in all, it is estimated that 10% of the income of Filipino overseas workers are spent on communication (Thomas & Lim 2009).

In summary, the literature on ICTs and development has shown that ICTs are reshaping global employment opportunities. This is not limited to the knowledge and information based work that can be transmitted through the network, as it also provides a more highly mobile workforce the ability to seek employment opportunities in other regions of the world. This proposal investigates governance mechanisms to take advantage of these opportunities, particularly through PAVs and online resources to deliver these services. In turn, the impact of PAVs in keeping families intact, while speeding up this process of labor migration will also be explored (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 : Conceptual Framework



E. Which public access stakeholders (e.g., governments, donor agencies, users) could benefit from the findings and other outputs of the study (e.g. research reports, survey instruments, software)?

Please note research outputs that would be particularly relevant to the library community.

Internet café operators and non-governmental organizations working with migrant workers (i.e. Microsoft's corporation social responsibility projects like TULAY) can better understand the applications and services that families of overseas Filipino workers need, and incorporate these in projects that they already have in place. The study can also impact on policy advocacies in countries where Filipino migrant workers are employed, especially with regard to their freedom to access information technologies to communicate with the families they have left behind.

Migrant worker organizations in the Philippines like Center for Migrant Advocacy, Kanlungan, Atikha and Scalabrini Foundation, and community organizations can benefit from knowing how communication technologies impact the lives of families left behind and make interventions to strengthen the positive effects and minimize the negative effects.

Government institutions dealing with overseas workers (POEA, OWWA) can measure the effectiveness of some interventions and services already in place, especially those that deal with the safety and security of workers that are already deployed. Findings on migration and future plans (whether to stay, or follow/migrate) would be important inputs in other migrant worker programs,

especially with respect to educating other workers about the impact on their families and strategies that they could take to keep the family ‘together’ during their separation.

Finally, lessons from this research would also be applicable to other developing countries where migration is a significant option for poor populations.

F. Does this study overlap with or complement other in-depth studies in the Global Impact Study? How?

The proposed research complements studies on mobile versus PAV use through the qualitative case studies of how communication in PAVs is coordinated or negotiated among family members. This would be crucial in coordinating remittances, when coordinating when to synchronously be on the internet to skype; etc.

The research will also touch on information ecologies in the selected communities being investigated, and complement studies on non-instrumental use of PAVs.

Section III: Methodology

A. In which countries will this study take place?

<p>Country: Philippines</p>	<p>Local research partner (if applicable): National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) of the University of the Philippines through one of its three research centers.</p>
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B. Methods

What methods will be employed? What types of primary data will be collected? What types of secondary data (if any) will be incorporated into the study?

Mixed methodologies will be used for the proposed study (Community Surveys, Case Interviews and diaries, Interviews w/ PAV managers, use of the Global Impact Study national survey data).

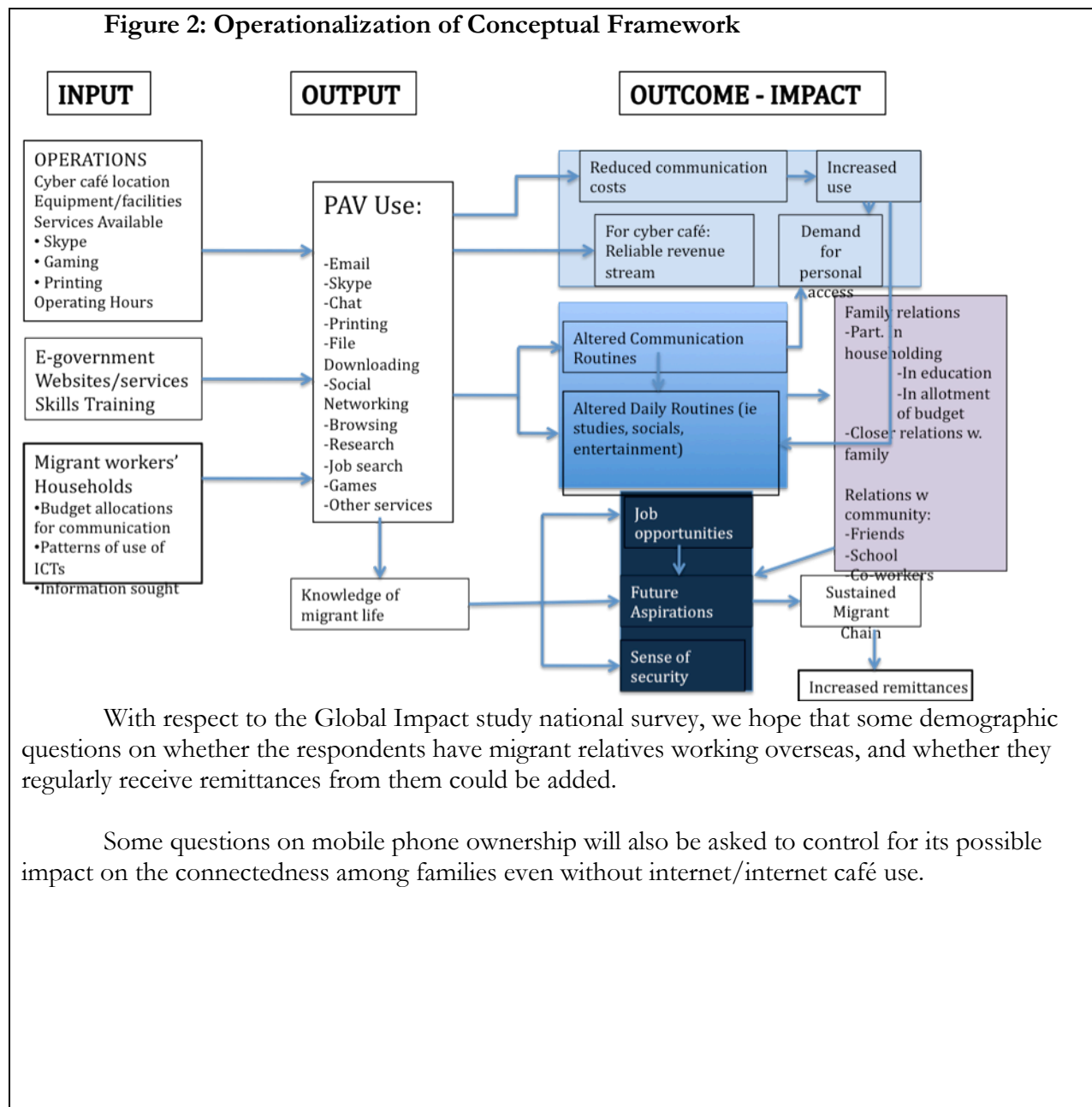
In order to determine the impact of PAV-use, comparisons between PAV users, non-PAV Internet users, and non-internet users will be done through surveys. The surveys will compare the level of achievement among self-determined objectives (based on Proenza's (2010) questionnaire) of each sub-group (see Attached Survey Questionnaires). In-depth case interviews complemented by diaries among some households that looks deeper into how the use of PAVs/Internet cafes impact on the lives of families that migrants have left behind. It will be measured economically in terms of how it helps them find work and increase remittances to an extended household/community; and socially, with respect to participation in household life (education/allotment or resources, disciplining, celebration, etc.), and participation in community life (w/ friends, etc.).

Finding a community where a strong migrant chain has been established or at least have a high proportion of families with relatives working abroad is important to the study. The identification of the community in which the study will be conducted will be done in consultation with both government and non-governmental organizations that are directly working with migrant workers and their families. Formal interviews with them will be conducted to get information about the programs and services they offer. Particular programs of interest would be ICT connected services for assuring the safety and security of workers prior to their deployment, interventions that are meant to deal with family support for those left behind, and reintegration programs for those who are returning for good.

The surveys will also be used as supplementary information to identify households with whom more in-depth investigations can be made on how families left behind by migrants use PAVs. This will provide a better understanding of the lives of their migrant relatives and how it affects their routines, and future prospects, and whether this new knowledge actually helps hasten the chain that leads to increased migration in the community, or whether it discourages them to pursue a similar path.

Changes in routines may have impact on schedules and can affect them socially, economically, culturally and politically. It may have an effect in school/work performance, in their other relationships, in their daily schedules.

On the other hand, knowledge of migrant life will be analyzed in terms of the following concerns: social/security issues, economic issues, cultural, and political. Some of these concerns may come directly from communications with their migrant relatives, and may come from them directly accessing information from the Internet through government and non-governmental intermediaries. How they access these, where they get it, and how this affects their future decisions will also be considered (See Figure 2).



With respect to the Global Impact study national survey, we hope that some demographic questions on whether the respondents have migrant relatives working overseas, and whether they regularly receive remittances from them could be added.

Some questions on mobile phone ownership will also be asked to control for its possible impact on the connectedness among families even without internet/internet café use.

C. Sampling strategy and sample size

What types of public access venues and user/non-user populations will be included? What sampling methods will be used?

As mentioned previously, finding a community where a strong migrant chain is important to the study because comparable samples of households with migrant relatives are needed in the design. The identification of the community in which the study will be conducted will be done in consultation with both government and non-governmental organizations that are directly working with migrant workers and their families.

With respect to sample size, there will be a random sample of 300 respondents. There will be no pre-selection of who PAV users, non-PAV internet users and non-Internet users are. This will be conducted in one or two communities, depending on consultations with NGOs/Government agencies regarding feasible sites. Surveys will be administered in the home of the respondents. Respondents can be either the spouse that was left behind and/or a child left behind who is in high school (14 years of age or older). Relatively older (of age) respondents are considered since they are more likely to have the means to use PAVs, and utilize e-government services. It will not include the parents of migrant workers since the dynamics between parents and spouses and/or children left behind would be different compared to an adult child leaving and keeping in touch with a parent they left behind. Likewise, by including an investigation on a youth sub-sample in the Philippines, the investigation can also measure their future prospects as far as careers and migration is concerned.

D. Impact measurement

- i) How will the study assess “impact”? What type(s) and/or level(s) of impact will be measured? What indicators will be used?
- ii) The Global Impact Study highlights six areas of impact: employment and income; education; civic engagement; democracy and governmental transparency; culture and language preservation; health). Which of these will the study address and in what ways? If other areas of impact will be examined, please specify which areas.

The primary impact of PAV use will be on:

- 1) The social impact on PAV use with respect to families (being more connected, strengthening householding/participation, perceived closeness)
- 2) The impact on education/work
- 3) Its impact on future prospects (e.g. employment opportunities/security leading to sustained migrant chains and increase in remittances for the household and the community in general).

These will be operationalized in the survey by asking the following: (see draft survey instrument attached)

FAMILY CONNECTEDNESS:

How well does your father/mother/spouse working overseas know:

- 1) your close friends
- 2) how you are doing in school
- 3) the household budget
- 4) when you need money

How well do you know about the life of your relatives/parents/spouse working overseas:

- 1) their close friends overseas
- 2) how they are doing at work

- 3) their expenses overseas
- 4) their security and safety overseas

INVOLVEMENT/CONTROL

Do you give/ask for advice from your parent/relative/spouse on

1. employment/job/career CHOICE; choice of course
2. schoolwork
3. relationships/friends

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Is finding a job in another country an important personal objective?

Indirect impact may be in terms of other members of the community becoming aware of the job opportunities abroad, and increased revenues for the internet café as a result of demand from migrant families.

E. Cost-benefit analysis

Specify how the study will incorporate cost-benefit analyses – for example, what level of cost information will be collected, from whom (e.g., public access venues, users), what perspectives on costs and benefits will you focus on (e.g., venue management, user, policymaker)?

Note: There will also be project-wide guidance on this topic with a view to have both global standards as well as project-specific flexibility. You may be required to incorporate some common elements in your research design.

For the user:

Costs: Added communication costs for public internet use

Benefit: Reduction in mobile phone (voice/SMS) expenses for both the migrant and the family members they communicate with; increased participation in household activities; increased access to employment opportunities; closer family ties

For the venue management:

Costs: longer operating hours (to facilitate long distance communication across time zones) can lead to higher operating costs

Benefit: Increased revenue from services (eg. Skype), increased consumption of various services among remittance receiving households

For government/NGOs:

Costs: provision and creation of more online services for migrants and their families

Benefits: services for migrants and their families can be offered online; reduction in volume of queries to government and NGO offices

F. Gender analysis

Specify how the study will incorporate gender analysis

There are many gender issues associated with migration. Foremost is how the separation of husband

from wife and vice versa leads to changes in household dynamics. As such, an important component of the research will focus on an analysis of how the use of ICTs, PAVs especially, are used to negotiate changes in global householding activities and in turn, how it also impacts on power relations within the household and communities as well.

Consultations will be done with the PhilCECnet, which implemented a Gender Framework for studying community e-centers and determine how to apply the framework they used in the context of migration and telecenter use.

G. Capacity building

How will local research capacity-building be built into the study?

Graduate research assistants will be tapped in the gathering of data in local communities.

The research will also partner with NGOs and non-profit organizations working with families of migrant families. This collaboration will be helpful in building capacities of both partners in understanding the phenomena of migration and the role of ICT's in stemming its negative effects.

Section IV: Research Outputs

A. What specific outputs will this study produce (e.g., research reports, publications, questionnaire instruments/tools, software)? *List with descriptions and anticipated delivery dates.*

The research will require the development of community survey questionnaires that are particularly relevant to the use of PAVS for finding employment opportunities in other locations, as well as its use in nurturing social networks.

Two separate papers for the surveys (June 2011) and cases studies (Sept 2011), and an integrative research report (30 December 2011).

Interim results of the community surveys may be presented in a meeting at the ITID 2010 conference in London.