WHAT WE DID

Sites:
The campaign cum research study (action research) was piloted in 3 schools (Bayanihan and Maria Aurora National High Schools) in Maria Aurora, Aurora and Apolinario S. Bernardo Memorial National High School in Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat. BANHS is remote while MANHS is relatively near the town proper. ASBMNHS is located in the outskirts of Tacurong City. Both MANHS and ASBMHS enjoy relatively higher ICT presence than the BANHS site.

Campaign period:
May 2012-March 2013 (BANHS and MANHS), July 2012-February 2013 (ASBMNHS).

Each of the three pilot schools nominated a class to participate in the campaign. They were all introduced to various sources of rice farming information through fun-based activities such as a quiz bee, and a study tour. They were also asked to maintain a rice garden guided by information from the PhilRice Text Center and the OpAPA-initiated Pinoy Rice Knowledge Bank Website (online and offline), and if need be, experts dispatch.
WHAT WE FOUND

The infomediary strategy works best if the following preconditions are met:

• Readiness to integrate – ideally, an extant academic structure such as the Tech-Voc curriculum is in place at the intended site. The integration of a rice production module to the syllabus of the students will then be relatively easier.

• Good faculty support – as it is anywhere, staff and faculty support will be a strong determinant of success in implementing an activity that is heavily dependent on the performance of individual teachers.

• Workable ICT infrastructure in the area – the better ICT quality is and the more students use it, the more familiar and comfortable with ICT they become. Sharing with their families then becomes a logical offshoot of this. Also, if the school does not have access to ICT but the community does, no matter how minimally, will be helpful for the success of the campaign.

• Supportive local leaders / champions – in some areas, especially those with minorities, the support of the local community leaders becomes especially important.

• Geography – the campaign is especially effective in places where, 1. rice farming is the primary source of income; and 2. remote areas with very poor access to ICTs. The need for alternative sources of information, after all, is directly proportional to the prevalence of information poverty in an area.