Upland high school students as information providers

JAIME A. MANALO IV
Senior Science Research Specialist
Development Communication Division
Philippine Rice Research Institute
Email: jamanalo4@email.philrice.gov.ph
Infomediaries

• Oftentimes refer to people who help others access computers in public access computing centers (formal infomediaries)
• Scarce work on characterizing, digging deeper on the role(s) of infomediaries in bridging digital divide in rural communities
• Scholars are more on looking at the role(s) of formal infomediaries, not much of the informal infomediaries (parent-child information mediation)
Methodology

• Data gathered were drawn from the action research (Read, surf, and text for your parents campaign) implemented for 10 months, May 2012 to March 2013

• 2 focus group discussions (parents and students), individual interviews (19), and key informant interviews (4) were conducted
Methodology

- Field notes provided good inputs for this study
- Content analysis of the text messages sent by the students to the Text Centre
## Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Champion</td>
<td>Does things that are not expected of them; radiates what was learnt to more than two persons; shows leadership in exercising infomediary functions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiator</td>
<td>Volunteers to search for information; shares information in the household</td>
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<td>Farming ally</td>
<td>Responds to queries</td>
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Varietal information topped the list of frequently asked questions in the PFTC. The students enjoyed the Info On Demand service of the Text Center. In IOD, one has just to key in some keywords (names of pests, diseases) and an automated response will be received by the texter.
Concentrate on the demand, not on the technology (WorldBank, 2011).

ICT is just a tool to address the key issue.

But it would be best if ICT infrastructure is present in the area.

I just gave the materials you gave me to my parents. They liked it!” (Clyde, 16).

“Farmers in our area have problems on rats. It was fortunate since during that time we were preparing for the quiz bee. I just read something about it ... uhm... I told them they need to observe the usual times rat come out, establish a pattern... and that’s the time they can kill the rats...” (Arianne, 15).
Conclusions

• Need to engage more the parents
• Need to improve the ICT infrastructure in the area to optimize information searching
• Scholars must turn their attention to the informal, not just formal infomediaries
• There is wisdom in mobilizing the students to serve as infomediaries, thereby addressing the information poverty in the uplands