

***Transforming Philippine Cities:
An Integrative Foresight Course with City Leaders***

Introduction and Objectives:

“Are we prepared for the changes to come, or sleepwalking into a tsunami?”

This two-day futures course aims to introduce futures thinking and strategic foresight to city planners, administrators, disaster risk management officers, civil society leaders, researchers and academics. Building on the Resilient Cities, Brighter Futures action learning workshop and the city futures for city leaders futures course held in Penang last year (reports attached in this document), this project intends to deepen the effort to capacitate and engage city leaders and actors in the exploration and creation alternative city futures for Philippine cities in a climate change, ASEAN and knowledge creation driven century.

Some powerful questions such as will Philippine cities transcend beyond the narrative of trauma and disasters? Is there an alternative future for Philippine cities or would it learn from the past to innovate, act and create the preferred story? Are current strategies enough to transform our cities or do we need to question our assumptions now of continued economic growth and rethink our ways of knowing the city and change the way we imagine our cities and leadership from the big man rule – autocratic, corrupt and isolated to the fresh food market – pluralistic, democratic and participatory? will guide discussions in the exploration of alternative and preferred city Philippine futures.

Specifically, the objectives of this course are:

1. Introduce futures thinking and strategic foresight as an emerging concept, tool and technique in city futures, strategic planning, public policy, decision-making and development;
2. Engage participants in the exploration and construction of alternative and preferred city futures for Philippine cities area using strategic foresight tools and methods particularly the futures landscape, emerging issues analysis, the futures triangle, causal layered analysis, scenarios and backcasting;
3. Engage participants in powerful conversations about our futures such as “What is the landscape of change and what strategies are needed to create our preferred futures?” And “What issues should we be preparing for in the immediate (5 years) and long-term future (20 years)?”
4. The focus is to enable participants and cities to design their own strategic pathways and enhance their foresight capacities for adaptive response and strategic renewal in a climate change era.

Participants:

The organizer will invite 30 leaders of cities in the Philippines 75% of whom will be women occupying key positions in local development councils and their NGO partners. They will have to have the recommendation of of their local chief executives for support to their re-entry plans for their cities.

Format:

This project subscribes to the World Futures Studies Federation Learning Lab and the Philippine national government agenda of increasing the resilience capacity of Philippine cities in a climate change, ASEAN integration and data driven era. This project reflects on the need to increase the foresight awareness and capacity through the emerging field of futures thinking and strategic foresight. It will be held on May 22-23, 2015 in the city of Vigan, Philippines recently acknowledged as one of the seven wonder cities of the world.

A 2-hour conference panel will be facilitated by the WFSF in the morning and immediately a face-face and digital online course and workshop will be facilitated by the speakers and facilitators.

In partnership with the Philippine Center for Foresight Education and Innovation Research, the Center for Engaged Foresight and other possible partners, a seminar on futures thinking and strategic foresight will be delivered to familiarize participants regarding foresight in relation to strategic thinking, planning, policy formulation and strategy development.

Management of the Project:

The WFSF through the UNESCO Participation Programme will provide the initial funding at US \$3,500 to cover the professional fee, travel and accommodation of speakers/facilitators, food and snacks, resource materials, study grant, workshop materials, reporting/presentation and publication for the project. The Philippine Center for Foresight Education and Innovation Research (PhilForesight) at Northwestern University and the Center for Engaged Foresight (CEF) will serve as secretariat and will provide the local counterpart such as the facilitation of finding additional sources and support such as transport and communication logistics, volunteer and training of facilitators, partnership with a city government, national government agency and a university, invitation and promotion of the event. The online component will be pursued in partnership with a local IT/internet provider like SMART Philippines or a local internet/smart phone provider for example.

Output:

A research cum report on the Future of Cities in the Philippines published by the WFSF and the Philippine Center for Foresight Education and Innovation Research at Northwestern University Philippines a futures or city futures journal for dissemination in the major cities and top research institutes in the Philippines and the Asia-Pacific. The output of the project will be presented in an international conference on city futures provided funding is available.

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