TACLOBAN CITY:
GAPS, FAILURES, GLITCHES

Gaps, failures, glitches were found in various aspects: inadequate human capability, technological inadequacy, inappropriate methods, lack of transparency, poor communication, among others. The more fundamental issue was in the inordinate confidence placed on the technology rather than on the human dimensions, as if a sophisticated technology is enough to ensure free, credible and transparent elections. There was no sufficient appreciation of the importance of ensuring the effective participation and capacitation of frontliners and voters, who after all are, in elections, the most important actors.

TACLOBAN CITY - This capital of Leyte province, Eastern Visayas, is in the northeastern portion of the province. Based on a 2004 DENR study, it has a total land area of 201.72 square kilometres that embraces small islands scattered near the city's boundaries[1]. The 2007 National Census recorded the city's population at 217,199, with a 2.73 percent annual growth rate. Tacloban, the primary city in Region 8, is the first in the region to be classified as a highly urbanized city[2]. The city is divided into 138 barangays[3]. The residents predominantly speak Waray.

The city is proud of its high literacy rate at 97.3 percent and is home to 35 pre-schools, 57 elementary schools, 23 high schools, and 19 tertiary schools, as recorded in 2008[4]. Aside from schools, being the region's capital, Tacloban also has the region's biggest airport, biggest number of shopping malls; it has a port and harbour and an eco-zone that is operated by the city government.

Politics

Dubbed the Holy Trinity of Tacloban, the Romualdez family has been dominating city politics for more than a decade now[5]. In last May's elections, three Romualdezes ran for various elective positions. Alfred Romualdez ran for mayor; his father, former mayor Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez, ran as his son's vice-mayor; and Alfred Romualdez's wife, former actress Cristina Romualdez, vied for re-election as city councillor. Surprisingly, the three of them ran under three different political parties. Bejo under PDP Laban, Alfred was supported by Lakas-Kampi-CMD, and Cristina with the Nacionalista Party. Husband and wife Alfred and Cristina won in the May elections, while Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Alfred's cousin, was re-elected as representative of Leyte's 1st district[6]. Carlos Jericho Petilla, a long-time political nemesis of the Romualdez clan, won as governor of Leyte province.

On the partylist race, a popular regional partylist stood for re-election last May. An Waray garnered 44,043 votes out of 80,169 voters who actually voted in Tacloban City alone. Their nationwide votes that totalled 711,631 were enough to get them two seats in the House of Representatives. A woman poll watcher observed that the partylist was able to capitalize on its popularity in the region. Although An Waray appeals to regionalistic and ethno-linguistic ties, she said that being in Congress entitled An Waray to the same pork barrel as other partylists. Their advantage over the others is that they can concentrate this same amount of pork barrel to projects in a single region. Delivery of services ensured them of the region's votes and, in the process, their victory in the elections. Other similar region-based organizations, such as Ako Bikol, also won in the last elections.

Case Study Objectives

The specific objectives of the case study are:

1. To validate election day incident reports submitted to the Project 3030 monitoring site;
2. To form a holistic picture of the experience of the province of the first ever automated elections;
3. For the case study to serve as reference in the drafting of recommendations for the improvement of the next elections.

Methodology

The data gathering methods included key information interviews (KII), focus group discussions (FGD), and examination of election-related documents. Among those interviewed were a Board of Election Inspector (BEI) chairman, a Board of Canvassers (BOC) member, two high-ranking Comelec officials in the area, poll watchers and voters. Two focus group discussions were also held, one with voters and the other with poll watchers. Research also gathered pertinent documents, including precinct-level election returns, Tacloban City's certificate of canvass, technicians' manuals, inventories, delivery schedules, and other election-related documents.

Table 1. Data Collection Methods and Data Sources

Methods	Data Sources
Focus Group Discussions (FGD)	Selected voters Selected poll watchers
Key Informant Interviews (KII)	Regional Comelec personnel A City Comelec personnel A BEI member A BOC member DOST official Selected poll watchers and voters
Examination of records, documents	Election returns, Certificate of Canvass, PCOS technician's manual, CCS operator's manual, poll watchers' checklists, Comelec resolutions, RA 9369, Terms of Reference/Request for Proposals for the 2010 elections, local news articles, photos

All data from interviews, focus group discussions, and election-related documents were processed and analyzed to establish a holistic picture of the experience of Tacloban City of the first automated national and local elections in the country.

CASE STUDY RESULTS

The Automation of Elections in Tacloban City

Table 2. Tacloban City Project of Precincts

Total No. of Barangays	138
Total No. of Established Precincts	761
Total No. of Registered Voters	101,001
Total No. of Clustered Precincts	188
Total No. of Voting Centers	37

Source: Project of Precincts for the 2010 National and Local Elections, Commission on Elections

The automation of elections re-clustered the former precincts nationwide, including those in the city. In Tacloban, the elections took place in 188 clustered precincts, lower than the 761 established precincts in the previous elections. These were located in 37 voting centers or schools in 138 barangays. A total of 188 PCOS machines, 12 contingency PCOS machines, and one CCS laptop were allotted for Tacloban City. There were 101,001 voters registered for the 2010 elections, while 80,169 actually voted, resulting in a voter turnout of 79 percent[7].

PRE-ELECTION PREPARATIONS

The succeeding part of this case study report deals with the different aspects of preparations that Smartmatic and Comelec undertook for the first ever automation of the national and local elections. Among them were the site survey, a voter education campaign, training of poll workers, deliveries and storage of machines and election paraphernalia, and the Final Testing and Sealing of PCOS machines three to seven days before election day, a requisite under the Terms of Reference[8] for the automated election system (AES) bidding.

Site Survey

A site survey aims to pinpoint which areas in the country had weak signal or connectivity and needed the allocation of Broadband Global Area Network (BGAN) or Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) for the transmission of election results as a substitute to the standard modems. The conduct of the site survey was the job of Smartmatic. A ranking Comelec official in the region said that Smartmatic carried out its site survey in Region 8 from October of 2009 to January 2010. This was corroborated by a city Comelec official who said that they coordinated with Smartmatic but did not personally accompany its surveyors in the field. The local Comelec was not furnished a copy of the site survey results.

The regional Comelec official, on hindsight however, believes that there was something amiss with the survey. This was evident, he said, in the shortage of BGANs and transmission facilities distributed by Smartmatic for use on election day. *"If they really followed the actual areas with no signal, the number of BGANs they provided wouldn't be that small."* (*"Kung sinunod talaga nila yung aktwal na walang signal, hindi lang yun yung number ng BGAN na pinadala nila"*).

He added that even the modems were lacking. Contrary to his expectation that there will be one modem for every precinct, he learned on election day that precincts had to share modems. *"We were thinking – because that was the information given to us – that every clustered precinct will have a PCOS modem if there is a signal. If there is no signal, there's a BGAN...it was only then that we found out that it (the distribution of modems) was per voting center."* (*"We were thinking - because that was the information given to us - that every clustered precinct will have a PCOS modem kung may signal. Kung wala, may BGAN...nalaman nalang naming per voting center lang pala"*). Transmission equipment shortage, he said, resulted in transmission delays.

Voter Education

The regional Comelec personnel recounted that their voter education campaign, which was initially carried out without a PCOS machine, started in October last year. The campaign covered colleges and universities, government offices, city jails, and public fora of various organizations such as the Rotary Club. A PCOS roadshow went underway in January 2010. For the city of Tacloban, the education campaign was able to reach all 138 barangays on the lead-up to the elections by holding three 30-minute to 1-hour sessions each day. The regional Comelec also initiated a *barangayan*, a voter education program in collaboration with the local government units who shouldered the technical needs of the campaign, such as sound systems, and mobilization of participants. These sessions used multimedia presentations and focused on the new voting process and the correct way of shading the ovals in the ballots.

According to a regional Comelec personnel, the late release of the budget was a major drawback in their education campaign in the region. This adversely affected the campaign logistics, forcing some of them to bear some of the costs. Another challenge, added the city election official, was conducting voter education among indigenous peoples because many of them are un-schooled. There is a notable population of Manobos in the region, and even within Tacloban City. They resolved this, she said, by giving the Manobo tribe a special voter education which was more protracted in April or a month before the election.

Political parties and individual politicians also had their own education campaigns. Voters who participated in the study's focus group discussion disclosed that they were able to attend one in April this year. The whole-day seminar discussed the parts of the PCOS machine, how to properly fill out the ballots, and the new voting procedures. The FGD participants, however, regretted the fact that these campaigns failed to take the opportunity to discuss such topics as how to prevent fraud and the different technical problems that may be encountered while voting.

Many of them said that the Sex Bomb video, "*May Bilog na Hugis Itlog,*" a collaborative project of Comelec, PPCRV, and TV network GMA7, was helpful in informing them about the proper way of shading the ballots. However, they criticized the Comelec for mailing sample ballots to the voters to be used as practice material for shading and for familiarizing the voters with the new ballot design. Our FGD participants said that the sample ballots were misleading and did not serve their purpose because they did not have the same features as the official ballots. For instance, the ovals of the actual ballots were much smaller than those in the sample ballots.

That the education campaign was effective in preparing the voters for the new system cannot be said to be universally true, however, based on the experience of one polling center. A BEI said, "*Many voters didn't vote. There were others – you know I also live here – whom I heard were scared of voting because they didn't know how to vote under the new process. Maybe they weren't taught or others just didn't attend (the voter education).* ("*Maraming hindi bumoto, yung iba – kasi dito din ako nakatira – narining ko natatakot silang bumoto kasi hindi daw nila alam yung proseso. Hindi yata na-educate. Yung iba lang talaga hindi talaga pumupunta (sa voters' education*").*

Training of BEI and BOC

The BEI training attended by the BEI chairman who was interviewed for the case study was a few days delayed based on Comelec calendar. It was held in Casa Anson in Tacloban City, for three consecutive days. It used the live-in seminar format with sessions starting from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., from March 19 to March 21. Topics in the training included the General Instructions for BEIs and the use and parts of the PCOS machines.

The BEI key informant found the training to be relatively "easy". In fact, all members of her batch passed the DOST certification[9]. Nonetheless, she believes that the training content was insufficient to prepare her for what's in store on election day. She said, "*During the training, we couldn't yet determine   everything that could possibly happen (on election day). For example, they said problems with the CF card will be the responsibility of Smartmatic, and our main function during the elections was only to monitor the machine.*" ("*During training, di pa madetermine kung anong posibleng mangyari. Halimbawa hindi gumana yung memory card, sabi nila Smartamtic yung sasalo, so yung aming main function during elections was to monitor the machine*"). But on election day, many BEIs had to perform troubleshooting that was not taught to them. This was corroborated by a regional

Comelec official, who said that the trainings didn't cover transmission and PCOS installation. He thinks that a transmission simulation should have been included in the training design.

Some trainers may not have been fully transparent in the lessons as they ought to be. According to one of our BEI respondents, in one session, she questioned the trainers' instructions not to digitally sign the election returns. The BEI said, *"We were the ones who asked, 'Ma'am, why are we being instructed to choose the NO button for the digital signature?' They said it was already disabled. I don't know why. They didn't tell us. They told us it was not needed anymore."* (*"Kami yung nagtanong, 'Bakit, ma'am, yung digital signature i-no-no namen?' Kasi daw dinisable na daw yun. Hindi ko alam kung bakit. Hindi sinabi kung bakit. Hindi na daw kelangan"*). The lack of the BEI's digital signature in the election returns has become a major election issue. A digital signature serves as a protection of the election results from manipulation and tampering. (See Lito Averia's report on digital signature)

On the part of the Board of Canvassers (BOCs), their training was also done in three days, but the venue was in Ormoc City, which is still within Leyte province. The BOC training was more comprehensive compared to that of the BEIs as it tackled both the precinct and canvassing proceedings. The topics specifically included the general procedures in canvassing and how to operate the consolidation canvassing system (CCS) laptop. However, our respondents identified some gaps in the training. For example, the BOC we interviewed said that they were not trained on the specifics of transmission. There was no actual simulation of the election proceedings in the canvassing level, as expected by a Comelec official respondent, especially on transmission, since the biggest problem encountered on election day was the transmission of results.

Deliveries and Storage

The logistics firm, Argo International Forwarders, was assigned for the Visayas and Mindanao PCOS machine deliveries. The Argo regional warehouse was located within the city itself, in the Citi Hardware compound. The warehouse was tightly guarded and even PPCRV poll watchers were present during the storage to ensure the safety of the machines, according to our regional Comelec respondent. However, poll watchers who were not affiliated with PPCRV had no participation in securing the machines. One poll watcher respondent said: "*I only saw the trucks leaving Citi Hardware*" ("*Nakikita ko lang yung mga papalabas na mga truck sa Citi Hardware*") when asked if he monitored the storage and delivery of the machines.

The local Comelec coordinated with Argo's provincial coordinator in the deployment of machines and paraphernalia to the precincts. The Comelec, on the other hand, had no participation in the delivery of the contingency PCOS machines. This was the sole task of Smartmatic. All 188 PCOS machines were distributed to the precincts from May 4 until May 6.

The ballots, meanwhile, were stored in the City Treasurer's Office. These were delivered by Air21[10] on the first week of May. A city election official said, although the local police and PPCRV were notified of the arrival and location of the ballots, they were absent throughout the period of storage. So far, the ballot inventory conducted on May 9 showed no signs of irregularities, such as spoiled ballots or seal tampering of ballot packages.

On the other hand, our respondent from the regional Comelec said that some election paraphernalia arrived only on the morning of May 10 from Comelec national, when the original schedule was set a week prior to make time for an inventory. He also said that there were delays in the delivery of the CF cards. According to him, the delays put a lot of unnecessary stress and pressure on Comelec field personnel. "*The election officers could have conducted some other things...preparatory activities, but they got stuck waiting for the arrival of the supplies,*" ("*The election officers could have conducted some other things...preparatory activities, but parang natali doon sa paghihintay sa supply),*" he added.

Final Testing and Sealing (FTS)

The CF cards were discovered to have been wrongly configured on the first day of the Final Testing and Sealing (FTS) of PCOS machines on May 3 in the National Capital Region (NCR) and select areas in Luzon. This led to the recall and reconfiguration of all CF cards. Fortunately for Tacloban City, all the PCOS machines were still in storage at that time, so they didn't have much difficulty with the CF cards retrieval.

The Final Testing and Sealing of the PCOS machines in Tacloban City was held on May 7, with many reconfigured CF cards still undelivered to the precincts. According to one BEI, they were about to start the FTS at 9 a.m., but there was no main CF card available. They tried using the backup CF card[11], but this didn't work. So the BEIs were forced to wait until 1 p.m. for the arrival of City Election Officer, Atty. Rosemarie Ann Polistico, who brought with her the reconfigured main CF card. The FTS in the precinct took only an hour to finish. It turned out that the delivery of the reconfigured CF cards to the precincts for the conduct of FTS was done on the eleventh hour by Atty. Polistico because they only reached her office on the very same day.

In one voting center, the BEIs went home without performing FTS in the absence of the reconfigured CF cards. The FTS was postponed to May 8. At the end of the day, seven CF cards were found to be still defective (See Table 3). Three of these were eventually fixed, while one PCOS machine, in Sagkahan National High School, had to be replaced.

The poll watchers interviewed were unable to monitor the FTS. They said that they were not informed of its schedule.

Table 3: City Election Officer's Report on PCOS Testing Conducted on May 7, 2010 in Tacloban City

POLLING CENTER	BRGY./PRECINCT NO.	PROBLEM ENCOUNTERED	NO. OF PCOS AFFECTED	ACTION TAKEN
1. Bagacay Elem. School	93 (0443A, 0444A, 0444B, 0445A, 0445B)	Defective CF card	1	Coordinator instructed to wait for new CF card
2. Bayanihan Elem. School	71 (0279A, 0280A, 0281A, 0282A, 0282B)	Defective CF card	1	Coordinator instructed to wait for new CF card
3. Caibaan Elem. School	95 (0459A, 0460A, 0461A, 0462A, 0463A, 0464A)	Defective CF card	1	Coordinator instructed to wait for new CF card
4. Anibong Elem. School	66-A (0252A, 0253A, 0254A, 0255A)	Defective CF card	1	Coordinator instructed to wait for new CF card
5. San Jose Elem. School	88 (0399A, 0400A, 0401A, 0401B, 0402A, 0402B, 0403A)	Defective CF card	1	Coordinator instructed to wait for new CF card
6. Dr. A. P. Banez Elem.	76 (0306A, 0306B, 0307A, 0307B, 0308A)	Defective CF card	1	Coordinator instructed to wait for new CF card
7. V&G Mem. Elem.	109-A (0567A, 0567B, 0568A, 0569A, 0570A, 0571A)	Defective CF card	1	Coordinator instructed to wait for new CF card
8. Sagkahan Nat'l High School	63 (0229A, 0230A, 0231A, 0232A)	Defective PCOS machine	1	Contingency PCOS aready available at COMELEC office awaiting for BEIs to report for the testing and sealing

Source: Tacloban City Commission on Elections office (See Annex B)

Below is a narration of events involving the reconfiguration of the CF cards conducted in the provincial Comelec office.

CF Card Reconfiguration

When all 76,347 CF cards nationwide were ordered retrieved for reconfiguration following the May 3 CF card incident, Smartmatic assured the public that their 240 employees in their main warehouse in Cabuyao, Laguna were capable of reconfiguring all the CF cards in time for the May 10 elections. Smartmatic Asia-Pacific President Cesar Flores also said that 80 machines were designated for the reconfiguration in their Laguna warehouse, which can process up to 40 cards per hour on a round-the-clock operation[12]. They also vowed that there will be tight security during the reconfiguration process in the warehouse after several candidates aired apprehension that the problem created by the May 3 incident may be used by some quarters to perpetrate fraud. Smartmatic's assurances somehow placated fears of some that the May 3 incident will also be used as a pretext for the postponement or suspension of the elections.

However, it was only after the elections, during the House of Representatives Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms (CSER) hearing, when it was divulged that the CF card reconfiguration was not limited inside Smartmatic's main warehouse, but that it also took place in provincial Comelec and Department of Science and Technology (DOST) offices with the assistance of the provincial DOST. In a Project 3030 interview, a Leyte DOST official said that the basis for authorizing the agency to assist in the reconfiguration of CF cards was a Comelec memo authored by Comelec Executive Director Jose Tolentino, Jr. and addressed to Comelec's regional and provincial offices. A portion of the memo dated May 9, 2010 read, "*Please be advised that replacement of defective CF cards will be done at the offices of the DOST provincial directors. Twenty (20) blank CF cards and two card burners will be deployed to your respective offices.*"

The Leyte DOST official said they only found out that they also had a role to play in the CF card reconfiguration at around 2 p.m. of May 9 after Atty. Jose Nick Mendros, the Comelec regional director, called them up. On the same day, Executive Director Tolentino's memo was faxed to their office, and Advanced Science and Technology Institute (ASTI)[13] phoned them to communicate specific instructions. A package was later delivered to the provincial DOST office via LBC. This contained a CD with a computer program or tool for downloading of files from the ASTI server[14] or FTP; a card reader; and 20 blank CF cards. The DOST official said that they carried out the reconfiguration of CF cards in the Comelec provincial office because of weak connectivity inside the DOST compound. He trained a Comelec IT personnel to do the reconfiguration.

The following were the reconfiguration steps undertaken that we reconstructed based on the guidelines in the replacement of defective CF cards attached to Executive Director Tolentino's memo and on the interview conducted with the provincial DOST official.

1. On election day, the Smartmatic technicians called Smartmatic's National Support Center to report defective CF cards in their precincts. Heider Garcia of Smartmatic was informed after it had been verified that the technical problem indeed entailed CF card replacement.

2. A list of CF cards that needed reprogramming was sent to the following people: Dir. Jeannie Flororita, Dr. Ester Villaflor-Roxas, Eden Bolo of Comelec, Dir. Dennis Villorente of ASTI-DOST, and Ruliene Pinate of Smartmatic.

3. Meanwhile, the technician was given a digital ticket on the particular incident report. According to the DOST official, prioritization was on a first-come-first-serve basis.

4. Hecher Cordova of Smartmatic sent the list of precincts that needed the generation of CF cards (reprogramming) to a Cabuyao warehouse staff, who posted the contents on the ASTI server/FTP site.

5. Eden Bolo informed the provincial Comelec supervisor, while Dir. Villorente informed the DOST provincial director (through phone call or text) of the generation of CF card.

6. The provincial Comelec supervisor provided blank replacement CF cards to the DOST provincial director.

7. The DOST provincial director, together with the Comelec IT personnel, downloaded the configuration file/package from the ASTI server and reconfigured the blank CF cards using the new file/package.

8. These reconfigured CF cards were turned over to the provincial Comelec supervisor, who gave it to the election officer, who in turn delivered it to the BEI chairman. The BEI chairman meanwhile turned over the defective CF card to the election officer.

The DOST official said that they reconfigured a total of 50 CF cards from May 9 until May 11. Forty five of these CF cards were from a list given to them on May 9, a day prior to the election. The DOST official during our interview said that these the CF cards found to be defective during the FTS of PCOS machines in the province. And since only 20 blank CF cards were available, he assumed that the extra blank cards given to them were reformatted CF cards.

Our respondent added that the reconfiguration process itself should be very quick which could be finished in only one to two minutes as there was a strong signal in the area. However, what took them so long to finish was the fact that they had to wait for the files to be made available on ASTI's server. Waiting time was as long as four hours. He admitted to leaving the Comelec IT personnel to work alone from time to time, especially at night.

The decentralization of the reconfiguration of the CF cards contradicts the previous statements made by Smartmatic that the process will be centralized to ensure security and data integrity. The last-minute memo (it was released a day before election day) also reflects the lack of foresight on the part of Comelec. This should have been thought of much earlier so that the local offices will be better prepared. The DOST official interviewed said that they were tapped to help out too late in the game.

ELECTION DAY EXPERIENCE

Queuing and Precinct Re-clustering

Poll watchers described the May election voters in the city as early birds. A big volume of them arrived before 7 a.m., which resulted in long lines even before the opening of polls. One voter-respondent observed that the largest volume were at the first three hours of voting. He attributed this to what he perceived as excitement of the Filipinos to experience voting in an automated system for the first time.

One BEI recounted that in her precinct "*the line did not end until the waiting shed by the highway (around 50-75 meters from the precinct)" (Umabot nga yung pila hanggang dun sa waiting shed sa highway").* In one instance, according to a poll watcher, voters were made to wait for three straight hours for a PCOS machine to be repaired. She said the patience of the voters was tested in the precinct, but no one left the line or skipped voting despite the long wait. This was unlike the case in another precinct, where some voters went home unable to withstand the three-hour delay. However, he added that there were those who also went back after a few hours.

One poll watcher we interviewed was particularly concerned with the senior citizens who had to endure the long queuing. She said, *"I sympathize with the senior citizens on the line because it was very hot. You know how the weather is lately." ("Kawawa yung mga matatandang nakapila ng mahaba eh mainit na mainit. Alam mo naman yung panahon ngayon").* A voter we interviewed narrated that he went to the polling center at 10 in the morning but was only able to vote at four o'clock in the afternoon. The long wait made him miss out on lunch. He thinks that there were too many voters assigned in his polling center. He estimated the number of voters at 2,000 with only two PCOS machines. The long wait was made even worse by PCOS problems.

The re-clustering was too big, according to a city election official, while a regional Comelec official recommended that the number of voters should be minimized to 500 voters per precinct and that the technology provider should add more voting machines. Both Comelec officials acknowledged that there were voters who eventually went home because of the long wait. But they also mentioned that re-clustering has a positive side. The reduction in the number of precincts made it easier for the voters to look for their new precinct assignments in comparison to the past manual elections.

Filling Out the Ballots

Although poll watchers in our focus group discussion said they found it easier to monitor the voting in the May elections as opposed to previous manual elections, they think that voting per se was a different story. For example, poll watchers saw senior citizens under strain in filling out the ballots. They said that the ovals on the ballots were too small for the elderly. *"Their hands were shaking." ("Nanginginig mga kamay").* One BEI said that some voters had a tendency to overshade the ovals in the ballots, which she said was the most likely reason why they were rejected by the PCOS machine. Another reason for ballot rejection observed by poll watchers was ballot spoilage caused by the voters' unclean hands.

One peasant voter estimated, based on his own personal observation, that almost 60 percent of peasant voters had trouble filling out their ballots. The precinct environment also affected voting. One voter observed: *"My husband wasn't able to vote for the senatorial position. He didn't know where the names of the senators were because he couldn't see because it was already dark." ("Asawa ko nga hindi nakaboto sa mga senador, hindi niya alam...kung san yung senador kasi hindi na makita kasi gabi na din").* Thankfully, poll watchers said, there were BEIs who had the perseverance to assist them. However, one voter complained of BEIs who would constantly reprimand the voters for committing simple mistakes. The root of the problem is not a lack of a voter education, reflected an interviewee. He thinks that the problem may be that the voters didn't fully understand what was being taught to them because many of them were un-schooled. Such is the biggest challenge of a voter education, which is made more challenging in an automated system of voting.

Ballot Secrecy Folders

All stakeholders attest to the fact that the ballot secrecy folders used on election day were ordinary folders without Comelec seals. The regional Comelec personnel said that the folders were short. Nevertheless, the voters we interviewed said that the folders were enough to secure the secrecy of their votes.

UV lamps

UV lamps were practically unused on election day because the BEIs didn't really understand their importance or how they worked. One voter was asked if he knew whether the UV lamps were used, and he recounted "*The BEI said that it was an emergency light in case of a blackout." ("Sabi ng BEI emergency light daw yun. Baka magbrownout").* The city election official related a case in one precinct where the BEIs instead of using the UV lamps to check if the ballots contained ultraviolet security markings, used them to check if the ballots were dry. UV lamps were bought for Php 350 each as substitute to the disabled UV mark scanner in the PCOS machine. The disablement of the scanner stemmed from Smartmatic's use of wrong UV ink in the printing of official ballots.

PCOS Problems

Most of the incident reports on election day in the city involved technical problems with the PCOS machines. This is evident in the number of PCOS machines that had to be replaced. Twelve out of the 13 contingency PCOS were put to use during the elections.

Likewise, many technical problems were blamed on the backup CF cards. In one precinct outside the city proper, a BEI recounted that the PCOS machine didn't work when they put the main and backup CF cards in the card slots. The LCD screen showed practically nothing and the machine won't print an initialization report. The BEI said that they tried troubleshooting by switching the main and backup CF cards in the slots, but the machine still didn't work. The machines only started operating after they removed the backup CF card. Although the problem was resolved, this measure meant that the precinct couldn't save the election results because the backup CF card was of no use.

This case was repeated in other parts of the city, said a city election official, who made the rounds in various precincts during the elections. For example, in five clustered precincts in Rizal Elementary School, the interviewee narrated how she did troubleshooting by switching the main and backup CF cards; and the

machines started working properly. In another case, the PCOS machine only started working after she took out the backup CF card. She concluded that the backup CF cards were most probably defective. She thinks this is the reason why there were minimal technical problems during the FTS because the backup CF cards were not yet in the PCOS machine. They were placed in the CF card slot only after testing had been completed and before the resealing of the PCOS machines.

In another precinct, said a male voter, the PCOS machine didn't work from the start of polls until 10 a.m. There were about 700 registered voters in his precinct. The situation was further aggravated by the unavailability of a Smartmatic technician. He said the BEIs were eventually able to fix the problem by themselves. Another precinct, narrated by the city election official, had 30 invalidated ballots. She could not figure out the cause of the high rate of ballot rejection. This PCOS problem may have disenfranchised a significant number of voters.

There were also other instances of PCOS machine bog down. Poll watchers assumed that it was because of the heat. A voter complained, *"The machine kept on breaking down and voting was always interrupted."* *("Nagkasira-sira yung machine namin. Hindi tuloy-tuloy yung pagboto")*. There was also a reported PCOS breakdown as the precinct was about to close the voting. *"Maybe the PCOS eventually gave out" ("Baka hindi na kinaya, bumigay na"),* a poll watcher surmised.

Another poll watcher recounted that in one precinct in her voting center, the voters had to resort to "manual" voting because the PCOS problem still couldn't be fixed by 10 a.m. What she meant by "manual" was after shading the ballots, instead of feeding the ballots in the PCOS machine for the votes to be counted, the voters were made to feed them in the broken PCOS machine placed on top of the ballot box. The ballots were later fed in the machine after it was fixed.

One BEI said that the Smartmatic technician assigned in her voting center was able to solve the technical problems, although there were some respondents who were not satisfied with the performance of technicians in other precincts. A BEI suggested that BEIs should have also been taught the technical aspects of the automated election system. She said, *"The technicians should not be the only ones given an orientation about the CF cards, transmission, troubleshooting. The (BEI) chairman should also be aware of these things. Like the time when I was under a lot of pressure and the technicians were also not taught on what to do, for example, if something's missing. They also did not know. They had to call (their supervisors) because it was not discussed during their training. ("Dapat kasi hindi lang yung technician yung ioorient nila about sa CF card, ganyan, yung anong nangyayari dun sa transmission, troubleshooting. Dapat aware din yung chairman. Kagaya nung ako na yung nangangatog, tapos yung technician hindi din sila inorient din kung paano halimbawa walang ganito. Hindi nila alam. Tumatawag pa kasi hindi din daw diniscuss during training").* A similar view comes from a city Comelec official who said that because some technicians were at a loss on what to do, she was forced to execute some of the troubleshooting herself. She said there were technicians she had talked to who didn't even know where the CF cards were located in the PCOS machine.

Other respondents likewise criticized the lack of technicians on election day. Only one technician was assigned per polling center. Some polling centers had as many as 11 precincts. The regional Comelec official explained that the hiring of the technicians was subcontracted by Smartmatic to a manpower agency with contracts requiring them to serve only until 5 p.m. of May 10. As a result, the regional Comelec official said, there were areas in the region where the technicians were nowhere to be found by 5 p.m. of May 10. He also received complaints that some technicians were not paid on time – on in other areas underpaid.

Transmission Problems

The city canvassing proceedings officially convened in the city's Legislative Building at 12 p.m. Since the arrival of electronically-transmitted election returns didn't start until around 7 or 8 p.m., some BOC members took advantage of the downtime to conduct field monitoring and information dissemination until around 5:30 p.m.

The city Comelec official confirmed that there were many problems in the transmission of precinct-level election returns to the City Board of Canvassing (CBOC). In fact, she estimated that at least 10 CF cards had to

be hand-delivered to the canvassing center because of failure of transmission. Likewise, a BOC member said that many PCOS machines also had to be brought to the canvassing center. This was where the feeding of ballots in the PCOS machines was held. This was verified by the city election official in the case of at least one barangay. She said that signal problems in Sta. Elena compelled them to bring the PCOS machines to the canvassing center after voting, where they continued the election procedures.

On the ground, incidents of delays in transmission were relayed by other respondents. Said one BEI, *"We were able to transmit at around 8 p.m. because we had to wait for the BGAN, which was being used in the neighbouring barangay." ("Nakapagtransmit kami mga 8pm na kasi hinintay pa naming yung bgan. Ginagamit pa ng kabilang barangay").* The transmission was smooth once they got a hold of the BGAN. In another precinct, the poll watcher said that they transmitted in the wee hours of the morning of May 11 because of the slow election process. Another had to wait until 12 a.m. before they were able to electronically transmit their results to the city canvassing center because they still had to wait for the ballots from prisoners.

The city election official however said that despite the transmission hitches, the rate of arrival of precinct-level results was relatively high. She said that a lot of the results were received by the CBOC by 8 p.m. of May 10. And at around 12 a.m. of May 11, only 20 out of the 188 precincts have yet to transmit their results. The regional Comelec official speculated that transmission problems could be due to unreliable modems.

Delivery of Wrong (FTS) Results

There were two precincts with hand-delivered CF cards that contained FTS results instead of election day results that brought delays in the canvassing proceedings.

In cases where there was failure of transmission of election returns from the precincts, the results contained in the CF cards were hand delivered and manually uploaded in the CCS laptop. The uploading and consolidation of these results with other electronically transmitted results, based on Sec. 27 of Comelec Resolution No. 8809 or *General Instructions on the Consolidation, Canvass and Transmission of Votes*, is made through the following procedures:

"In case the Board receives from the Reception and Custody Group (RCG)[15] an envelope labelled with 'NOT TRANSMITTED', the Board shall open the said envelope, retrieve the memory card and give the same to the CCS Operator. The CCS Operator shall:

1. Attach the memory card reader to the laptop.
2. Insert the main memory card in the main memory card reader.
3. Click on "ADMINISTRATION" in the "HOME PAGE" screen. Administration options will be displayed.
4. Click on "LOAD PCOS RESULTS". The CCS will display input box dialogue box for "EML FILE INPUT".
5. Request any member of the Board to insert his USB token in the USB slot of the laptop, type the username and security key password in the space provided. Thereafter, click "OK" button.
6. Remove the USB token from the USB slot.
7. Request another member of the Board to insert his USB token in the USB slot of the laptop, type the username and security key password in the space provided. Thereafter, click "OK" button. The CCS will display input box for "EML FILE".
8. Click on "BROWSE" button. The CCS will display the "FILE UPLOAD" dialogue box.
9. Click on the directory for card reader (MEDIA) at the left pane of the dialogue box.
10. Click "RESTRANS" file from the list of files at the right pane of the dialogue box and click on "OPEN" button.
11. Click "ACCEPT" button.

12. Wait until the processing is finished. HOMEPAGE will be displayed with a message "THE ELECTION RETURN WAS SUCCESSFULLY PROCESSED".

13. Remove the main memory card from the memory card reader and return it to its original envelope and change its label to "TRANSMITTED"

14. All memory cards that have already been processed shall be submitted to the Election Officer for safekeeping.

15. Repeat steps 2 to 13 until all main memory cards contained in envelopes labeled "NOT TRANSMITTED" are processed.

16. Remove the main memory card reader from the laptop.

Although the city Comelec official said that they strictly followed these instructions, the instructions themselves reveal flaws in the CCS program. For instance, the CCS laptop automatically uploads results without distinguishing whether these were from election day voting or from Final Testing and Sealing. And once uploaded, these results cannot be overwritten or edited in the CCS program.

Despite the erroneous results from the two precincts, the CBOC proceeded with the city proclamation, except of the 10th place councillor, on May 11. The following day, they finally decided to manually deduct the erroneous (FTS) results. They prepared a tabulation of the correct election day results, which they inserted as the last page of the official Certificate of Canvass and Statement of Votes print-outs.

The result for the winning 10th councillor was affected by the tallies from the two affected precincts forcing him to slide down to 11th place. The losing candidate at the time of the field research was then considering filing an electoral protest on this basis. The city election official, meanwhile, is firm that all canvassing procedures were done aboveboard.

Vote Buying

"*Vote buying was worse in this automated elections.*" (*"Ngayong automation mas malala yung vote buying),* said one voter. In fact, vote buying was so rampant in Leyte province that it is practiced openly. *"They used to arrest those who give out money in the past. Now, it (vote buying) is done openly"* (*"Noon hinuhuli pag nagbibigay ng pera, ngayon harap-harapan").* The voters point to one political dynasty as the one who started this overt practice.

They said that a day before election day, "*They bring the people to their safe house. They were fetched in batches using their (candidates') transportation.*" (*"Dinadala yung mga tao sa kanilang safehouse. Bulto-bultong tao hinahakot ng sasakyan"). "There were others who don't give the money to the barangay officials anymore. They (the people) only have to wait for those who will give them (the money) house to house.*" (*"Yung iba hindi na nila binibigay sa barangay officials. Meron nalang talaga silang inaantay...na magbibigay sa mga tao. Bahay-bahay na"),* added another voter. She admitted to selling her votes this election for Php 20. She said candidates usually attach sample ballots on the "*badil*" so that the voters will not forget who to vote for on May 10.

Money used to buy votes was locally called "*badil*." The vote buying rates in Leyte province in the last elections fetched from Php 20 to as high as Php 2,000. Rates for councillors were Php 20 to Php 50, for mayoralty position was Php 100 to Php 2,000, and governors and congressmen between Php 500 and Php 2,000.

A peasant voter lamented how vote buying further made the elections an uneven playing field. He asked, "*How about the marginalized candidates who don't have money to give to the voters? Those who win are the wealthy people, who only get richer.*" (*"Paano yung mga marginalized candidates, walang mabibigay sa mga boboto. And nananalo dyan yung mga mayayaman, lalo lang yumayaman")*

Vote buying can also influence a voter's decision on whether to vote or not. One poll watcher said that some voters just wait for the arrival of payment from the vote buyers. They don't vote if the buyers don't turn up.

POST ELECTION

Random Manual Audit

The random manual audit headed by the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) aimed to validate the accuracy of the ballot counts of the PCOS machines. The RMA Team (RMAT) was composed of teachers and PPCRV volunteers and covered 1,046 precincts nationwide.

On June 7, a memo was sent to Atty. Polistico, the city election officer, by Atty. Nick Mendros, regional election director, ordering the retrieval of ballot boxes of Precinct Nos. 184A/B, 186A and 187A of Brgy. 60. Attached to this memo was another one from Comelec Executive Director Jose Tolentino, Jr. dated June 1, 2010. It said that the ballots from these precincts "*shall be used by the Technical Working Group of the Random Manual Audit Team in determining the root cause behind the large variances from these areas.*" These ballot boxes were brought to Manila.

Although the local Comelec officials interviewed don't know the exact findings of the RMAT on the variances in the three precincts in Brgy. 60, the overall RMAT report released last July 20, 2010, concluded that the AES was accurate. The RMAT said that the variances in different precincts in the country were due to clerical errors. The report said, "*In most cases of large variances (nationwide), errors were due to human factors such as the inability of the RMA Team to distinguish "over votes" and "ambiguous markings". There were also instances when the transposition errors were due to miscopying the numbers from the audit returns (ARs) to the Minutes/Reports, miscopying the Taras (tallies), as well as when numbers are mixed up or zeroes are dropped.*"

General Observations

The BEI interviewed preferred the automated election system used in the last elections to the manual system of voting. "*We had to work harder (in manual elections) because even if we finished by 3 p.m., we still had to count (the votes) afterwards. In an automated election, the counting is automatic.*" (Mas matrabaho (yung manual) kasi kahit tapos na kayo at 3 o'clock, magco-count pa kayo. Sa automated automatic na siyang kina-count"). In terms of convenience on the part of the BEIs, she said, the automated system is better, although she doesn't think that the same can be said for voting. In her words, "*Voting was not good while counting was good because it was fast.*" Majority of the voters interviewed, however, wish for the election system to go back to manual to cut on costs. One voter said, "*If we compare manual and automated election, government spends more for the machines.*" ("*Kung tingnan natin yung manual at automated election, mas malaki kasi yung pera na nagagastos ng gobyerno sa mga machine*").

One high-ranking Comelec official said that he was in favor of the use of the PCOS technology for this election because "*we're not yet ready for a more sophisticated technology.*" He recommended that the following improvements should be taken for the next elections: ensure the expertise of the technicians, provide backup transmission facilities and equipment, and refinement on the configuration and issuance of CF cards.

In relation to the CF cards, the DOST official suggested that an earlier testing of the automated machines should have been set to make time for modifications. There should also be an established contingency plan or "redundancy"[16] for the whole automated election implementation. The regional Comelec official, meanwhile, laments the fact that they had to work on a very limited budget. He suggested that budget for the 2013 elections be augmented and released much earlier for the bidding to be scheduled much earlier. The lack of preparation for the May elections, he added, can be attributed to Comelec's reliance on budget availability, which is contingent on the country's legislators. He said that if only the budget was available much earlier, bidding for the 2010 elections could have been held as early as 2008.

Despite the problems and glitches encountered during the elections, both Comelec officials believe that the May 10 election was clean and that the results are "credible". The regional Comelec official also boasts of the fact that the last election was the most peaceful in the history of Region 8. However, both respondents wish that electoral fraud in the form of vote buying be minimized on the 2013 elections. There is a need to

amend the law on vote buying to give it more teeth, said the regional Comelec official. He thinks that vote buying should have stricter penalties and should also cover pre-Election day activities. There should also be stringent regulation rules on the amount of money that candidates can spend on election day. Voters were unanimous on wishing for a clean 2013 elections. They hope that in the next elections, there will be "*No more cheating, no more vote buying. It is the voters who will vote for their chosen candidates.*" ("*Walang dayaan, walang vote buying. And tao mismo ang boboto sa kandidato niya*").

Discussion

The stakeholders' narratives point to several aspects of the automated election system (AES) that either needs to be replaced or improved. First, there was an apparent lack of coordination between the Comelec and Smartmatic, at least in the local level. A prime example was a failure in information sharing (or possible lack of transparency on the part of Smartmatic) on very basic information such as the number of equipment (e.g. modems, BGANs) needed on the field and the number of equipment that will be provided by the technology provider, Smartmatic. There were also gaps in the management of the elections at the national level. Based on the experience of Tacloban City, the effects of these gaps at the national level management such as delayed deliveries of election paraphernalia and wrong configuration of CF cards were borne by the local levels the most.

Second, the stakeholders (voters, poll workers, and poll watchers) had been relegated in the sidelines of the whole automated system and their rights and needs were not given the same degree of importance as the election managers gave to the technology. For instance, the voter queuing and voter-unfriendly ballot design made it very difficult for the voters to exercise their right to suffrage. The Comelec's voter education, as gleaned from the respondents' accounts, was also not as productive and effective as it should be in bringing the knowledge across, especially to the unschooled sectors of society. There is a critical need to improve the voter education design to make it more effective, comprehensive, participative, and empowering to the stakeholders.

The same is true with the training of poll workers, who are in the frontlines on election day. Other training methods should be explored in order to fully capacitate them so that they can effectively fulfill their election tasks. A possible method would be to hold earlier and additional seminars with a few months' to a few days' intervals until the lead-up to election day to ensure information retention. Another, as suggested by some respondents, is to conduct election day simulations. The role of the poll watchers in the elections should also be given equal importance. They should be allowed to have increased participation, especially during the preparatory stages to have more transparency in the process.

Lastly, one of the most critical prerequisites for a credible election is for safeguards and contingency measures to be put in place ahead of time to ensure its proper operation and security. The lack of BEI's digital signatures on the election results and the May 3 CF card incident show that these were not done. This would have made the May 10, 2010 elections one step closer to being a true reflection of the will of the people.

Overall Conclusion

The experiences on the ground with the May 2010 elections, as illustrated in the Tacloban City and other case studies, provide clear and compelling evidence that there were many problems with the system and the process, starting with the national Comelec and Smartmatic down to frontline operations. Much of the accountability for these lies on the door of Comelec and its implementation partner, Smartmatic.

Gaps, failures, glitches were found in various aspects: inadequate human capability, technological inadequacy, inappropriate methods, lack of transparency, poor communication, among others. The more fundamental issue was in the inordinate confidence placed on the technology rather than on the human dimensions, as if a sophisticated technology is enough to ensure free, credible and transparent elections. There was no sufficient appreciation of the importance of ensuring the effective participation and capacitation of frontliners and voters, who after all are, in elections, the most important actors.

The case study findings clearly show the need for a thorough, comprehensive, and independent review and audit of the first automated elections in the country, that will gather information from all levels (national to the frontline to the voters) and in all dimensions. The findings of these review and audit should be made public and prompt action for reforms by those who are accountable undertaken. *EU-CenPEG Project 3030*

First release: October 5, 2010

End Notes

1   www.tacloban.gov.ph/about/, accessed September 10, 2010

2   en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tacloban_City, accessed September 10, 2010

3   en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tacloban_City, accessed September 10, 2010

4   www.tacloban.gov.ph/about/, accessed September 10, 2010

5   How Politics is Killing Tacloban, Bong Austero,
     www.manilastandardtoday.com/insideOpinion.htm?f=2010/january/18/bongaustero.isx&d=2010/january/18,
     posted January 18, 2010, accessed September 10, 2010

6   The 1st district of Leyte province includes Tacloban City

7   Voter turnout = no. of actually voted/no. of registered voters x 100

8   Terms of Reference/Request for Proposal III. GENERAL POLICIES, RULES AND GUIDELINES, Item No. 2 Final
     Testing and Sealing, Commission on Elections

9   The DOST certification passing rate for the whole Leyte province was 94 percent.

10 Air21 also delivered the reconfigured CF cards.

11 The main CF cards served as the precinct identifier of the PCOS machine. A PCOS machine cannot read the ballots
     for a particular precinct without the precinct-specific main CF card. The backup CF card was where the precinct's
     election results were saved before the closing of polls.

12 New PCOS Test Results 'Perfect', Kristine L. Alave,
     newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/nation/view/20100507-268517/New-PCOS-test-results-perfect, posted
     May 7, 2010, accessed September 10, 2010

13 ASTI, an institute under the DOST, also assisted COMELEC in the implementation of the 2010 elections. ASTI, for
     instance, headed the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) that certified the automated election system.

14 The ASTI server, according to the interviewee, was secure because specific credentials are needed to gain access to
     the server.

15 Based on COMELEC Resolution No. 8809, the Board of Canvassers may create a Reception and Custody Group
     (RCG) for the safekeeping of the main memory card and of the hardcopies of ERs. The RCG is composed of two
     members.

16 From http://searchstorage.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid5_gci213987,00.html, "Redundant" describes
     computer or network system components, such as fans, hard disk drives, servers, operating systems, switches,
     and telecommunication links that are installed to back up primary resources in case they fail. A well-known
     example of a redundant system is the redundant array of independent disks (redundant array of independent
     disks)

ANNEX A: MAP OF LEYTE PROVINCE

Source: Google Map

ANNEX B: REPORT ON PCOS TESTING CONDUCTED ON MAY 7, 2010 IN TACLOBAN CITY

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Office of the Election Officer
TACLOBAN CITY

REPORT ON PCOS TESTING CONDUCTED ON MAY 7, 2010 IN TACLOBAN CITY

POLLING CENTER	BRGY./PRECINCT NO.	PROBLEM ENCOUNTERED	NO. OF PCOS AFFECTED	REMARKS	ACTION TAKEN
BAGACAY ELEM. SCHOOL	93(0443A,0444A, 0444B,0445A, 0445B)	DEFECTIVE CF CARD	1	REPORTED TO SMARTMATIC COORDINATOR 05/07/10	COORDINATOR INSTRUCTED TO WAIT FOR NEW CF CARD
BAYANIHAN ELEM. SCHOOL	71 (0279A, 0280A, 0281A,0282A 0282B)	DEFECTIVE CF CARD	1	REPORTED TO SMARTMATIC COORDINATOR 05/07/10	COORDINATOR INSTRUCTED TO WAIT FOR NEW CF CARD
CAIBAAN ELEM. SCHOOL	95 (0459A, 0460A, 0461A,0462A, 0453A,0464A)	DEFECTIVE CF CARD	1	REPORTED TO SMARTMATIC COORDINATOR 05/07/10	COORDINATOR INSTRUCTED TO WAIT FOR NEW CF CARD
ANIBONG ELEM. SCHOOL	66-A (0252A, 0253A, 0254A, 0255A)	DEFECTIVE CF CARD	1	REPORTED TO SMARTMATIC COORDINATOR 05/07/10	COORDINATOR INSTRUCTED TO WAIT FOR NEW CF CARD
SAN JOSE ELEM. SCHOOL	8B (0399A, 0400A, 0401A,0401B, 0402A,0402B, 0403A)	DEFECTIVE CF CARD	1	REPORTED TO SMARTMATIC COORDINATOR 05/07/10	COORDINATOR INSTRUCTED TO WAIT FOR NEW CF CARD
DR. A.P. BAÑEZ ELEM.	76 (0306A,0306B, 0307A,0307B, 0308A)	DEFECTIVE CF CARD	1	REPORTED TO SMARTMATIC COORDINATOR 05/07/10	COORDINATOR INSTRUCTED TO WAIT FOR NEW CF CARD
V&G MEM. ELEM.	109-A (0567A, 0567B,0568A, 0569A,0570A, 0571A)	DEFECTIVE CF CARD	1	REPORTED TO SMARTMATIC COORDINATOR 05/07/10	COORDINATOR INSTRUCTED TO WAIT FOR NEW CF CARD
SAGKAHAN NATL HIGHSCHL.	63 (0229A, 0230A, 0231A,0232A)	DEFECTIVE PCOS MACHINE	1	REPORTED TO SMARTMATIC COORDINATOR 05/07/10	CONTINGENCY PCOS ALREADY AVAILABLE AT THE COMELEC OFFICE AWAITING FOR BEIs TO REPORT FOR THE TESTING AND SEALING

SUBMITTED TO: ATTY. JOSE NICK A. MENDRES
Regional Election Director

cc: Prov. Election Supervisor
Smartmatic Prov. Coordinator

SUBMITTED BY: ATTY. ROSEMARIE ANN REAS-POLISTICO
City Election Officer

ANNEX C: PHOTOS

The road leading to the Citi Hardware warehouse (*right side*) in Tacloban City, Leyte. It was rented by logistics firm Argo International Forwarders and used as the Eastern Visayas regional hub for the May 2010 elections. *(Photo by EU-CenPEG Project 3030)*


Facade of Citi Hardware, Eastern Visayas regional hub, for the May 10, 2010 elections *(Photo by EU-CenPEG Project 3030)*

The regional hub was already empty when this photograph was taken on June 16, 2010, a month after the elections. Argo International Forwarders employees explained that all of the PCOS machines are now in Smartmatic's main warehouse in Cabuyao, Laguna *(Photo by EU-CenPEG Project 3030)*

The only election material left for pick-up was this backup generator. *(Photo by EU-CenPEG Project 3030)*
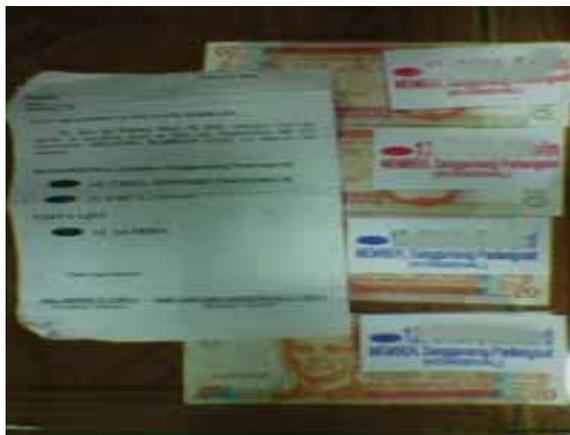
Money bills, called "badil" in Leyte, were used to buy votes ranging from Php 20 to as high as Php 2,000 per voter. Vote buying was rampant in this Eastern Visayas province during the May 10, 2010 elections, with politicians, from councillors to mayors and governors, resorting to cheating in order to win the elections. *(Photo by EU-CenPEG Project 3030)*