

PH Partners with Hasso Plattner Institute dschool to Launch Design Thinking Academy, Elevating PH Innovation Landscape

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The DTI-Design Center of the Philippines is proud to announce its groundbreaking collaboration with Hasso Plattner Institute (HPI) School of Design Thinking, European center for Design Thinking education, marking a significant leap in Philippine innovation. The ceremonial signing of a declaration of support, complemented by an insightful roundtable discussion, was held last 15 November 2023 at Menarco Tower, Bonifacio Global City.

The Design Thinking Academy stems from a collaboration between the Design Center, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and HPI – d-school. Founded in 2007, the HPI – d-school is a sister institution of Stanford d.school.

Additionally, more than 3,000 professionals are trained in Design Thinking every year at the HPI. The Design Thinking approach has become highly attractive to large corporations throughout the last years. More than half of Germany's largest companies are using Design Thinking as part of



Signing of Declaration of Support. From L-R: DTI-CIG Competitiveness Bureau Dir. Lilian G. Salonga, HPI-School of Design Thinking Co-Founder and Director Prof. Ulrich Weinberg, Design Center Exec Dir. Rhea Matute



In action photo of HPI-School of Design Thinking Co-Founder and Director Prof. Ulrich Weinberg

their digital transformation and cultural change processes. The Potsdam School of Design Thinking became a model for educational institutions in Beijing, Kuala Lumpur, Stockholm, Cape Town, and Santiago de Chile.

At the helm of this initiative stands Prof Ulrich "Uli" Weinberg, ranked among Germany's top 100 innovators and the Head of the Design Thinking School at Hasso Plattner Institute. Prof Weinberg co-founded the Global Design Thinking Alliance, a testament to his dedication to fostering innovation on a global scale. Presently, the Global Design Thinking Alliance boasts 32 member institutions across 22 countries and 5 continents.

Senator Sonny Angara, a driving force in pushing innovation within the creative sector, recognizes the profound impact of the Design Thinking Academy. "This collaboration signifies a pivotal moment for Philippine innovation or Filipinovation. It propels the Philippines towards becoming a stronghold of creative, design and innovation talent within the ASEAN region and this contributes to



Roundtable Discussion mid-shot. From L-R: Design Center Design Services Division Chief Carla Leonor (moderator), Design Center Exec Dir. Rhea Matute, Menarco Corp. Founder and CEO Carmen Jimenez-Ong



establishing a strong reputation for our country - Tatak Pinoy," Senator Angara expresses.

The Design Thinking Academy, complemented by a Design Policy Lab, aims to cultivate innovation-driven governance. It aligns with national-level policies such as RA No. 11904 – the Philippine Creative Industries Development Act and its flagship program, the Malikhaing Pinoy (Creative Philippines). These initiatives provide a robust framework reinforcing the Design Thinking Academy's role in advancing the Philippine creative industries agenda.

Executive Director Rhea Matute of Design Center emphasizes the profound impact of the Design Thinking Academy + Policy Lab, citing its alignment with the recommendations of the Design Counts report. "This initiative strengthens the Philippine design innovation ecosystem,

empowering our target beneficiaries to thrive despite the ever-growing volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguous world that we live in," Matute affirms.

The establishment of the Design Thinking Academy propels the Philippines closer to joining the Global Design Thinking Alliance, solidifying its position as a frontrunner in fostering innovation within the region. Engaging a diverse group of over 40 beneficiaries, the academy brought together representatives from 13 Regional Inclusive Innovation Centers (RIICs) across 10 regions, collaborating with government policymakers, and uniting industry leaders from 12 regions nationwide for an intensive session of Design Thinking Bootcamp.

Prof Ulrich "Uli" Weinberg eloquently sums up the essence of Design Thinking, stating, "Design Thinking is a mindset and an approach for developing innovative and life-centered solutions to complex problems in collaborative teams. It creates an agile learning and working culture to thrive, change, and be sustainable in periods of digital transformation. Design Thinking offers the chance of finding simple solutions for complex problems. In contrast, the uniform thinking of many top-class experts often means potentiating similar options."

The Design Thinking Academy marks a key chapter in Philippine innovation, steering the nation toward a future where Design Thinking becomes a national competency, propelling design as a key driver of competitiveness and innovation, and laying the groundwork for sustained growth.

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