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IDRC GRANT / SUBVENTION DU CRDI : - PHILANTHROPY-FUNDED AWARDS FOR EMERGING RESEARCHERS



ATENEIO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Philippine Culture

**The David and Ruth Hopper and Ramesh and Pilar Bhatia
Canada Fellowship in the Philippines
at the Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University
IDRC Project # 108621-005**

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Executive Summary

The Hopper-Bhatia Canada Field Research Fellowship Program at the Institute of Philippine Culture at Ateneo de Manila University (IPC-AdMU) was designed to provide financial assistance and skills enhancement opportunities to MA and MS thesis and PhD dissertation graduate students with field research components of the Ateneo de Manila University (AdMU). It was designed to provide graduate students immense exposure to the rigors of field research, hone specific research skills through enhancement workshops, and provide research subsidies. More broadly, it sought to aid its grantees in making contributions to their specific fields of study. In the selection of successful applicants, research proposals that resonate with research priorities of both the IDRC and IPC-AdMU were given more consideration. Such priorities pertain to research that focus on providing new insight into societal issues that require both a keen understanding of the local context and its connection to the global environment. Similar themes include (but are not limited to) health, technology, governance and sustainability, local communities, social capital, globalization, and social change.

The fellowship provided support in *Field Work and Thesis Production* and through a *Skills Enhancement Program*. It offered a maximum amount of CAD \$2,100.00 in Philippine pesos (PhP) for the costs for travel, housing allowances, and other fieldwork-related expenses of prospective fellows which can be further supplemented by other allowable realignments in funding as discussed with the fellowship coordinator and approved by the IPC. The fellowship also offered publication and conference support as fellows were expected to produce an open-source article and share their findings through any of the various means of knowledge dissemination at the end of the fellowship duration. The Skills Enhancement Program, on the other hand, aimed to enhance field research capabilities of fellows towards advancing new theoretical trajectories, developing their capacity in participatory methodologies and engaging publics in policy and praxis through the conduct of various seminars, workshops, brown bag sessions, and lectures.

Throughout its implementation, the Hopper-Bhatia Fellowship Program supported a total of nine (9) fellows namely: John Vincent Balora Toribio & Justine Nicole V. Torres (Y1 Fellows); Alec Gabrielle S. Fernandez & Josephine P. Perez (Y2 Fellows); Shane Marie Visaga & Carl Russel R. Reyes (Year 3 Fellows); Wilfred Luis Langit Clamor & Alvin Dela Cruz Cabalaquinto (Y4 Fellows); and Oliver Michael Narreto (Y5 Fellow). Out of the nine (9) fellows accepted, four (4) were females. Another female applicant was slated to become part of the fifth cohort of fellows for the Fellowship Program but has declined the offer due to her successful application to another scholarship grant that prohibited receipt of other sources of funding.

A total of eight (8) workshops had been conducted through varying modalities for the Skills Enhancement Program. Of which, four (4) adopted an online and hybrid format due to pandemic restrictions at the time of their conduct. These workshops consisted of four (4) participatory research workshops, two (2) gender analysis workshops, and two (2) research ethics workshops. Workshops conducted generally generated robust attendance with the online sessions during the pandemic garnering around 50-60 participants. Participants included graduate students, faculty, and even staff of the Ateneo de Manila University and other educational institutions as well as other professional researchers in the country.

Project Implementation and Management

Application and Selection

The first cohort of fellows have been selected after following an application process which included the submission of the following documents:

1. Approved thesis or dissertation proposal;
2. Certification of proposal defense from applicant's home department;
3. AISIS printout of grades;
4. Accomplished Hopper-Bhatia Canada Field Research Fellowship Program Application Form;
5. Updated curriculum vitae;
6. Proposed fellowship budget and timeline (including fieldwork schedules, activities and fellow-designed workshop, forum, or brown bag session);
7. Letter of recommendation from thesis or dissertation supervisor that comments on the research project (including the stage of the research), theoretical and methodological approach(es), as well as the anticipated date of completion.

Several changes were made to the application and selection process for the succeeding intake of fellows to respond to challenges identified during the previous intake. These changes concerned the following aspects of the Fellowship Program: (1) application requirements; (2) nature of intake of fellows; (3) widening of scope for eligible applicants; and (4) criteria for selection of fellows. Changes in the application requirements were done to widen the scope of graduate students eligible to apply. It specifically targeted the inclusion of both graduate students of natural sciences as well as PhD scholars in its pool of eligible applicants. The Fellowship Program also transitioned from having one intake of two fellows to two intakes with one fellow to be awarded during the first semester and another fellow awarded during the second semester. This was done in consideration of the varying timelines in thesis writing across different academic programs at the University. The Fellowship Program also extended the scope for eligible applicants and targeted graduate students from the natural sciences as well as PhD students. Finally, the Fellowship Program adopted the Research Quality + framework developed by the IDRC in consideration of the funder's feedback and to ensure that the prospective fellows are indeed aligned with the interest of both IDRC and IPC.

The Pandemic and Adapting to Fully Online Implementation

The Fellowship Program's activities moved completely online beginning March 2020 in observance of safety guidelines mandated by the University and following the restrictions imposed on face-to-face interactions by the Philippine government. These restrictions had implications not only on the conduct of Fellowship activities but also in the research of graduate students at the University. Graduate students were prohibited from conducting face-to-face research.

While the Fellowship Program maintained the usual intake of fellows of twice in an academic year, given the above limitations and regulations, the Fellowship Program made another set of changes to adapt to the pandemic context. Such changes included: (1) widening of selection criteria; (2) inclusion of additional application requirement; (3)

transition of operations in activities to online means; and (4) strengthening of partnerships within the University.

The Fellowship Program widened its selection criteria and allowed graduate students making use of online data-gathering to apply during both intakes in its third (3rd) implementation year. In doing so, applications became open to graduate students who were made to adapt their methodologies from field visits to online work. It also became open to students who were doing archival research from the start. This widened selection criteria was greatly appreciated by prospective applicants. In its third (3rd) implementation year, the Fellowship Program required applicants to provide a short document (one to two pages in length) containing plans to ensure the safety of research participants and/or respondents as well as a discussion of alternative plans to access local knowledge. The latter specifically focused on answering the question of how knowledge could continue to be co-produced and shared with partner communities or sectors given the current limitations brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the deliberation process for the first intake for AY 2020-2021, evaluators noted how several applications received still did not reflect the context of a pandemic research landscape. The evaluation rubric at that time also did not reflect the need for proper physical distancing and how limitations brought about by this would impact key activities necessary for engaging communities. The addition of the requirement sought to have applicants categorically outline their plans to ensure their safety as well as to ensure that continued co-production of knowledge with their research partners commences despite the limitations. This additional requirement was then formally added to the list of requirements for the second intake of fellows. The accepted applicant for the first intake was asked to submit this document belatedly upon the awarding of the Fellowship.

Operations of the Fellowship Program, specifically the application for prospective fellows and the conduct of the workshops for the Skills Enhancement Program transitioned to online modalities given the restrictions in place. Though this shift was done out of compliance, it did reap unexpected benefits. Online workshops of the Skills Enhancement Program gained a wider audience. The online shift also prompted the Fellowship Program to strengthen its ties to other entities within the University. For instance, it established a working relationship with the University Office of Management Information Systems (OMIS) in order to directly send official correspondences to graduate students. While the Fellowship maintained the practice of writing program directors and department chairs, the added advantage of email blasts directed to students enabled them to inquire themselves and initiate the application process. The Fellowship Program also maintained its partnership with the Office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs (OADGP) for the dissemination of the call for applications, and its other activities. It also reached out to the Committee on Graduate Students Concerns (CGSC) under the OADGP for additional support in information dissemination.

Project Outputs and Dissemination

Field Work and Thesis Production Support for Fellows

The Hopper-Bhatia Canada Field Research Fellowship Program supported a total of nine (9) fellows in their respective field work and thesis production namely: John Vincent Balora Toribio & Justine Nicole V. Torres (Y1 Fellows); Alecz Gabrielle S. Fernandez & Josephine P. Perez (Y2 Fellows); Shane Marie Visaga & Carl Russel R. Reyes (Year 3

Fellows); Wilfred Luis Langit Clamor & Alvin Dela Cruz Cabalaquinto (Year 4 Fellows); and Oliver Michael Narreto (Y5 Fellow). Out of the nine (9) fellows accepted, four (4) were females. Another female applicant was slated to become part of the fifth cohort of fellows for the program but has declined the offer due to her successful application to another scholarship grant that prohibited receipt of other sources of funding. Four (4) fellows were pursuing their doctorate degrees (PhDs). Most have been pursuing their master's degree in the social sciences at the time of application. Only two (2) fellows were from the natural sciences. One (1) of which was pursuing a doctorate degree (PhD). All fellows were able to produce their theses and complete their respective degrees.

The first cohort of fellows (Y1 Fellows) included John Vincent Balora Toribio and Justine Nicole V. Torres. Mr Toribio's work focused on the depictions of violence by Philippine primetime news television shows. It sought to describe the Philippine televised news media landscape with respect to said depictions and to understand whether habitual exposure to these, usually in the form of crime stories, contribute to the desensitization of audiences. His findings were presented during the "Understanding the End-to-End Process of Communication Research" seminar hosted by the Mariano Marcos State University, which was attended by more than 100 communication language and faculty members and students from the Mariano Marcos State University. Ms. Torres, on the other hand, focused on the interspecies relations between humans and crocodiles in the province of Palawan. It examined encounters between the two species including intermediaries such as those at the Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Centers with specific attention as to how encounters involving crocodiles and said intermediaries shaped the crafting and interpretation of wildlife regulations. Findings of her work were presented at the Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center (PWRCC) during the annual Ugnayang Pang-AghamTao (UGAT) or the Anthropological Association of the Philippines' conference held last November 2019.

The second cohort (Y2 Fellows) included Alec Gabrielle Fernandez and Josephine Perez. The work of Ms. Fernandez investigated how flooding is influenced by the increased impervious areas in Cagayan de Oro city through the use of geographic information systems (GIS) and modeling. It sought to contribute to disaster risk and mitigation and inform local land use policies. Dr. Perez examined the role of Filipino women leaders in peace processes by understanding their positioning at the peace table through a discursive approach. Her work sought to contribute to the theoretical understanding of the peace negotiations and contribute to a better understanding of women's roles in Track 1 peace processes.

The fellows for the third cohort (Y3 Fellows) were Mr Carl Russel Reyes and Ms Shane Marie Visaga. Mr Reyes's work was on cemetery dwelling and the actions, strategies, and assertions of cemetery dwellers in defending the gains from informality through quiet and bold forms of encroachment. He was able to present findings at the 3rd Annual Graduate Research Festival organized by the University's Office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs. Ms Visaga's work, on the other hand, focused on meteorology and aerosol interactions. It aimed to investigate the potential influence of cirrus clouds on the planetary boundary layer (PBL) height and aerosol loading within the PBL in Metro Manila from January to December 2019. It also explored the role of incoming solar radiation on how cirrus cloud optical depth can affect the PBLH and air quality. Findings of the study are hoped to contribute to better understanding of cloud and boundary layer processes for extreme air quality and weather events in urban areas in the Philippines. Despite coming from a different field, her work engaged communities outside the usual scope of its research methodology.

Fellows of the fourth cohort (Y4 Fellows) were Mr Alvin Cabalaquinto and Dr Wilfred Luis Clamor. Mr Cabalaquinto's work focused on the dynamics between pañuelo activists (described as women's movements in the early twentieth century Philippines) and motherhood during the American colonial period. It examined how discourses on motherhood shaped these activists and how they in turn defined motherhood. He presented his work at the 12th European Association for Southeast Asian Studies (EuroSEAS) in 2022¹ and has organised and presented in a panel at the 8th Association for Asian Studies in Asia (AAS-in-Asia) in 2023.² Dr Clamor's study aimed to understand digital capital and how it mediated social inequalities experienced by university students in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic. His work titled "Digital capital and belonging in universities: quantifying social inequalities in the Philippines" published in April 2023 in Volume 8 (2023) of the *Frontiers in Education* journal.³ He has presented on this in the the 8th ueKamaynilaan National Research Conference (March 2023) as well as in the Institute of Philippine Culture's knowledge dissemination initiative *Baka Naman Pwede?*, a radio program offering analysis of contemporary issues through a multidisciplinary social sciences approach. It was also published in the *Frontiers in Education* journal last April 2023.⁴

The lone fellow for the fifth cohort (Y5 Fellow) was Dr Narreto. His work was on corn production and smallholder farmers in the province of Bukidnon. It specifically aimed to evaluate the technical efficiency and climate change adaptation strategies employed by local smallholder farmers to increase productivity. He has participated in the Mindanao Regional Scientific Meeting (MRSM) 2024 organised by the National Academy of Science and Technology - Philippines (NAST PHL) and the regional offices of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and has won 2nd Place in its Scientific Poster Presentation contest.

Skills Enhancement Program and Reach

The Skills Enhancement Program of the Fellowship Program aimed to enhance field research capabilities of fellows towards advancing new theoretical trajectories, developing their capacity in participatory methodologies and engaging publics in policy and praxis through the conduct of various seminars, workshops, brown bag sessions, and lectures. The program has three main activities namely the Research Ethics Workshop; the Participatory Methodology Workshop; and the Gender Analysis Workshop.

A total of eight (8) workshops had been conducted through varying modalities for the Skills Enhancement Program. These workshops consisted of four (4) participatory methodology workshops, two (2) gender analysis workshops, and two (2) research ethics workshops. Due to pandemic restrictions, three (3) workshops were conducted fully online with one (1) adopting a hybrid format. Of these , two (2) were participatory methodology workshops with one (1) gender analysis workshop and another one (1) research ethics workshops.

¹ <https://euroseas2022.org/panels/power-print-and-photography-forging-a-women-s-history-of-the-philippines>

² <https://asianstudies.confex.com/asianstudies/asia2023/meetingapp.cgi/Session/3434>

³ Clamor WL and Saloma C (2023). Digital capital and belonging in universities: quantifying social inequalities in the Philippines. *Front. Educ.* 8:1137121. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2023.1137121.

⁴ Ibid.

Generally, these workshops generated robust attendance and exhibited the capacity of the program to reach a variety of audiences. Online workshops were mainly conducted via IPC's Zoom account given the pandemic restrictions during the program's third (3rd) year of implementation. Segments of workshops (i.e., lecture and Q&A) were broadcasted via Facebook Live on the IPC Facebook page. On average, sessions had 50-60 participants. These participants included graduate students, faculty, and even staff of the University and other educational institutions. It even had other academics and professional researchers from varying fields as participants. As such, online workshops for the Skills Enhancement program facilitated interdisciplinary discussions and network-building among academics and professionals in the country working on impact-oriented research. Online platforms were also used to widen the reach of knowledge generated from the work of the fellows given the changes in the context of research during the pandemic. The robust attendance for its online activities during the pandemic, however, did not directly translate in the onsite attendance for the program's lone hybrid event in 2022. For this event, only one onsite participant was in attendance. This may be attributed to the continued observance of a majority of health safety protocols for onsite events at that period.

Overall Assessment and Recommendations

The Hopper-Bhatia Canada Field Research Fellowship Program supported a total of nine (9) fellows and conducted a total of eight (8) workshops. All fellows were able to conduct their fieldwork, produce their theses, and complete their respective degrees by the end of the program. Workshops, in different modalities, were conducted even in spite of the restrictions during the pandemic. Online workshops during the pandemic may arguably be considered the most successful especially in terms of reach as these have garnered the most participants. In spite of the technical challenges posed by the conduct of online activities, such activities allowed organisers and participants to circumvent a number of logistical concerns otherwise present for onsite or face-to-face events. Venues with their set capacities and availability, for instance, were no longer an issue for organisers. Similarly, participants no longer had to consider travel time and transportation costs for their attendance. During the pandemic, especially during its early days, most people have been free to participate given the halt to onsite work. These factors may have led to more participants from various institutions for the online workshops. The robust attendance for its online activities during the pandemic, however, did not directly translate in the onsite attendance for the lone hybrid event conducted in 2022. For the hybrid event, only one onsite participant was in attendance. This may be attributed to the continued observance of a majority of health safety protocols for onsite events at that period.

Workshops conducted under the Skills Enhancement Program, regardless of their modality, not only provided additional training for Fellows but also served as strategic activities for promoting the Program. Ensuring the reach for more internal stakeholders particularly prospective Fellows is crucial in order to generate higher volumes of applicants. Although it is difficult to ascertain the actual reach of the program for internal stakeholders via attendance to the workshops alone, the conduct of the workshops may have indeed contributed to the promotion of the program in general. For instance, the fifth and final call for the Fellowship Program was met with a low volume of applicants in

spite of implementing the usual practices for promoting the call.⁵ Other than the November 2022 hybrid event on Participatory Research, other workshops for the Skills Enhancement Program that year were not conducted. After a four (4) month application period (November 2022 - February 2023), however, a total of two (2) submissions were received.

The ongoing transitions within the University in terms of operations and the modality for classes may have resulted in the inability to conduct workshops that could have served as means to promote the Program and its call for applications. In the fifth and final year of implementation, one hurdle noted in conducting the workshops was the uncertainty of the Y5 Fellow's availability to participate in the activities. Difficulties particularly in the scope of modalities available for joint activities for these workshops and in the communication and coordination process were experienced as the Y5 Fellow was remotely-based. As restrictions were gradually being lifted at that time, there was a stronger insistence for conducting onsite and/or hybrid activities. Plans for online activities, though successful during the pandemic, were then held back. Moreover, communication and coordination with the remotely-based Fellow were especially difficult amidst the backdrop of ongoing transitions from the pandemic context. This entailed protracted periods of coordination given the longer response times. Aside from scheduling, onsite attendance of the Fellow would have necessitated additional funds for flights and accommodations that may best be reserved for expenses more directly related to the Fellow's work or to the other activities of the Fellowship program. Nevertheless, this must not deter future runs of similar programs in accepting remotely-based Fellows. It is hoped that the experience of the Fellowship Program in this regard will be noted and integrated in the planning of activities.

Another proposed thing to consider for future runs is the conduct of a research colloquium for Fellows of the program. The envisioned event would serve as an opportune activity for Fellows to share their experiences as a form of promotion and for developing and/or strengthening the network of Fellows and other researchers in the country. As a means to promote the activities of the Program, this may also serve to contribute to addressing issues regarding the low volume of applicants by ensuring a more visible presence within the University.

⁵ The call for applications for the fifth cohort of fellows extended for four (4) months, from November 2022 until February 2023. Promotional materials were disseminated via the University's internal mailing list and its website. These materials were also shared in the media accounts of the OADGP, the CGSC, and the IPC. The Fellowship Program also continued its efforts in reaching out to graduate students directly through email blasts with the assistance of OMIS. Hardcopies of letters to University department heads and program directors were also delivered to department secretaries for dissemination.