

# BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE



**Clarence M. Batan, PhD**, is a Filipino sociologist whose academic training, research works, teaching experience, and community-based advocacies reflect wide-ranging yet focused interests. Such interests are on (a) disadvantaged children and youth (Filipinos and Global South counterparts) specifically along the realms of education-employment nexus; (b) the demands and challenges of teaching Sociology as a social science, profession, and as way of life; and (c) the translation of social research into creative forms for discussion, and policy/program development. Clarence who is better known as “Yayet” among his family and colleagues, is a Professor of Sociology at the Faculty of Arts and Letters, a former director of the Research Center on Culture, Education, and Social Issues (RCCESI), now known as the Research Center for Social Sciences and Education (RCSSSED) at the University of Santo Tomas (UST) (Manila,

Philippines). In his earlier years as a student of sociology, Clarence was first exposed to the grounded and problematic realities of growing-up and transitional issues of Filipino children and youth through his trainings at University of Santo Tomas (AB Sociology, 1995) and the University of the Philippines (MA Sociology, 1999). These found interests of Clarence are reflected in his almost 25 years of ethnographic research within the fishing barangays of Talim Island and Binangonan, Rizal which since 2005 has expanded to include selected barangays in Manila, and two distinct locales in the province of Laguna namely, Calamba City and Bay. Utilizing the life histories of children and youth as research oars to navigate and understand the vast lake of their social lives, Clarence’s dissertation on “istambays” at Dalhousie University (PhD Sociology, 2010) in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, and his further research trainings at Brown University (Research Fellow, 2012 & Visiting Fellow for International Studies, 2013) in Providence, Rhode Island, USA, generated a novel concerned with the conceptual and methodological approach to understanding the phenomenon of “waithood” among Filipinos, not simply as an individualized trouble but also as a shared issue intertwined along education-employment structural nexus. This istambay research under the project name *The Social Investigation in the Lives of Istambays in the Philippines (SILIP)*, was funded in 2013 by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), University of Santo Tomas (UST), and Philippine Higher Education Research Network (PHERNET) or CHED UST PHERNET program envisioned to continuously contribute and challenge the policy debates and discourse on youth transitional issues, specifically on issues of human capital development and employment.

Other than Clarence's specialization on sociology of children and youth is his passion in teaching social sciences, particularly *Introduction to Sociology* and *Social Research Methods*. Over these past six years at UST, Clarence has introduced new pedagogical techniques in studying and understanding the sociology of Philippine social life through grounded empirical research, creative portfolios, and cultural competence training workshops. On the other hand, as a facilitator of social research courses, he has introduced innovations to the Department of Sociology in UST through effective techniques in managing undergraduate theses through workshops, research intervention programs, research softwares use, written examination through a reader-approach system, and thesis presentation through research colloquium format to. As a result, these approaches of Clarence have proven to encourage both the faculty and students to present papers in national and/or international conferences, establish professional networks, and find opportunities to publish their respective shared works.

On top of this local institutional UST commitments, Clarence's professional contributions for Sociology as a discipline is also well established. His long years of active engagement with professional and governmental organizations locally and abroad is notable. Locally, he has served the Philippine Sociological Society in several positions, the most recent as President (2017-2018) and Vice-President (2014-2016). At present, he is also serving as consultant to the Bureau of Secondary Education, Department of Education assisting in the development of teaching and learning modules for Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies) under the K to 12 Program. More significantly, Clarence has served as a member (2011-2013, 2015-2017) and Chairperson (2013-2014) of the Technical Committee for Sociology of the Commission of Higher Education (CHED) assisting the development and implementation of Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSGs) and assessment of the Centers of Excellence and Development in Sociology around the country. Internationally, Clarence is widely-recognized in his field as evidenced by his active engagement as the current Vice President for Asia of the Research Committee 34 – Sociology of Youth of the International Sociological Association, and the Canadian Sociological Association.

More fascinating about Clarence's sociological works is the sense of creativity he employs in drawing connections between social research insights and the research participants with practical implications as to how these studies may be use as points for discussions leading to program developments and policy discourse. His first book, *TALIM: Mga Kwento ng Sampung Kabataan* (UST Social Research Center, 2000), which will be reprinted by the UST Publishing House, alongside its English translation (by Carlomar Daoana), *TALIM: Stories and Sociology of Ten Young People*, and his second book, *Batong-bahay: Naratibo ng Kahirapan at Tagumpay ng Isang Karaniwang Pamilyang Pilipino* (Stone house: A Filipino Family's Narrative of Poverty and Success) (UST Publishing House, 2010) have been utilized as learning materials in the communities of Talim (and elsewhere) and various schools and institutions. Presented in creative non-fiction form, these research case studies of sociology of Filipino youth (TALIM) and the sociology of Filipino families (Batong Bahay) are enjoyed and read by research participants, community members, and students that encourage critical thinking about Philippine social issues and realities.

Clarence's most recent works include, *Researching Student Affairs and Services (SAS)* (2015), co-authored with Abenir & Songco, published by the UST Publishing House; a book chapter, *The Filipino Istambays (On Standbys) and Transition Crises: Locating Spaces of Social Sufferings and Hope* (2016) as part of edited book entitled, *Youth and Inequality on Education: Global Actions in Youth Work* (M. Heathfield & D. Fusco, Eds.) published by Routledge; and a journal article co-authored with Lomahan, entitled, *Ang Hanapbuhay sa Pelikula: Contesting Representations of Work in Filipino Films, 1970s to 2010s*, published in the *Philippine Sociological Review* (Vol. 64, Special Issue, 73-102). Since the last quarter of 2016, Dr. Batan leads the research project, *The National Catechetical Study*, commissioned by the Catholic Bishops' Conference in the Philippines (CBCP) – Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE) to understand the state and condition of catechetical ministry in the country.

Clarence combines this academic creativity by years of advocacy initiatives in his ethnographic areas of research. He calls this as *community research reciprocity projects*. A core program he implements is *TALIM*, which stands for *Teaching, Advocacies, Leadership, Initiative and Mentoring (TALIM) Program*, or in Filipino, *Turo, Adbokasya, Liderato, Inisyatibo, at Mapanutong (TALIM) Programa*, which focuses on three-pronged goals of research, education and social transformation. It aims at (a) generating informed knowledge about Talim Island through scientific social research; (b) developing education-related projects for the benefit of Talim fishers, particularly, children, youth, women, and elderly; and (c) implementing action research projects towards meaningful social transformation for, by and of the people of Talim. Example projects implemented under TALIM program in the last seven years, from 2009-2016 were:

- (a) In 2009, *Ondoy-Relief Project* for the flood-victims;
- (b) *TALIM-BaBE* (Building and Bridging Education) Project, in 2010 and 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2017, which provided school-supplies for school children. The beneficiaries of these projects are residents of Brgy. Kasile, Talim Island;
- (c) *TALIM SUSTANSAYA Project*, which promotes nourishment of the mind through proper nutrition and sense of happiness to under-nourished Talim children which were implemented in Bombong Elementary School from November 2012 to February 2013 benefiting 50 children, and in Kasile Barrio School (also part of Bombong Elementary School) from August to December 2013 with 40 children as beneficiaries
- (d) The *TALIM Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) Review Project* is an intervention venture with 32 Talim Island residents to prepare them for taking LET scheduled on September 2013. This three-day LET review was conducted from August 2-4, 2013 at the Binangonan Development Cooperative (BIDECO), Binangonan, Rizal. The review was conducted by teacher volunteers from Our Lady of Perpetual Succor College Department, and volunteer students from the University of Santo Tomas. This project was financially supported by the United Church of Canada – Elmsdale Pastoral Charge, Nova Scotia, Canada. From this review, two participants passed LET last November 2013. Another set of seven reviewers were sent to the University of Santo Tomas under the scholarship of GUGOL Learning and Research Services from March – July 2014, and June – August, 2016.

This narrative of Clarence's works as a researcher, educator, and community advocate interweave what may be seen as an anatomy of an emerging Filipino social scientist that is conceptually grounded, methodologically rigorous, critically relevant, and creatively engaged in knowledge-making endeavor on and about our contemporary Philippine society.