

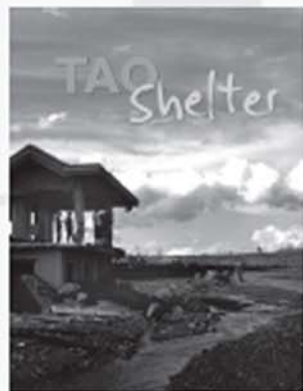
Extreme weather events seem to be striking various parts of the world more frequently. In 2007, monsoon rainfall reached record highs in South Asia; heat waves swept through Southeastern Europe, and significant snowfall occurred in South Africa after more than two decades. It's easy to point to a popular culprit: climate change. But the World Meteorological Organization says that it's not possible to link any particular weather or climate event definitively to global warming. Some of these events may be part of the cycle of the natural climate system. But even if we can't be sure whether the frequency of extreme weather events is increasing, we can still say that we are feeling the effects more strongly.



The increase of populations in settlements located in vulnerable areas raises the potential damage to human lives and property whenever these hazards strike. We need to prepare ourselves. Traditional and contemporary architecture around the world provide inspiration on how to build homes for harsh conditions (*Extreme Homes*, p2). We must learn from past experiences. For example, architects in Albay reflect on how inappropriate building design, shoddy construction, and disregard for natural waterways led to widespread damage during Typhoon Reming (*The Albayano Architects' Response*, p4). We can apply simple disaster-resistant construction techniques (*You can't shake or blow my house down!*, p8). Efforts to build better are underway; organizations who are building homes in Bicol for the victims of Typhoon Reming in 2006 have tried various ways to make the new houses more typhoon-proof (*Rebuilding after the storm*, p10). Winners of the Millennium Schools Design Competition (*Designing disaster resilient schools*, p12) also show us innovative ways of how we can build sustainable public structures.

Building better is just one aspect of being prepared, but it's a good place to start.

Amillah S. Rodul



ABOUT THE COVER

Only the skeleton of a house stands in Barangay Busay, Daraga, Albay, after being buried most of the community due to the strong rains brought by Typhoon Reming in November 2006.

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TAO Pilipinas is a women-led, non-stock, non-profit, non-government organization of professionals in the field of architecture, planning, engineering and community development offering technical assistance in the planning and development of settlements to the urban and rural poor.

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ABOUT TAO SHELTER

TAO Shelter is a magazine that aims to promote the vision of sustainable human settlements that are inclusive, people-centered, environment-friendly and promotes equitable distribution of and access to resources. It is a venue to share technical knowledge, experiences, good practices and perspectives on issues confronting the planning and development of human settlements. It is published twice a year by TAO Pilipinas, Inc.

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2008

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