

TAO-Pilipinas, Inc.

## Young Professionals Program

www.ypws.tao-pilipinas.org



### In this issue:

YP Summer Interns \* CBSWM Workshop in Sitio Bakal \* Roundtable Discussion on DRR Advocacy \* TAO Staff Devt on Heritage Conservation \* YP Reflections \* 10 Things You Need to Know About Being a Community Architect



APRIL-MAY 2011

# e-newsletter

Summer is officially over. The rainy season will once again test the resilience of communities living along rivers and waterways and we'll get to see if all the talk and training on DRR these past months will prove useful. TAO is likewise set to work on projects with several flood-prone communities in Metro Manila and Rizal. Interested architecture and engineering student-volunteer groups who would want to work with us on these projects may contact us so we could integrate volunteer placement. Send an email to [armatabang@gmail.com](mailto:armatabang@gmail.com) and indicate the number of volunteers in your group and their availability for community field work.

## TAO takes in 3 YP summer interns

THREE INDIVIDUALS WERE accepted into the YP summer internship program for April-May 2011. Architect Loverina Cruz and UST architecture students Franz Miko Verzon and Myryl Veloso were assigned into the HSE (Human Settlements and Environment) program to work on the ACCA community projects. They were sent as a team along with foreign intern

Pls. turn to page 2

## CBSWM workshop conducted for Sitio Bakal community

TAO-PILIPINAS CONDUCTED AN orientation workshop on Community-Based Solid Waste Management for residents of Sitio Bakal in Barangay Bagong Silangan, Quezon City on May 7 and 8, 2011. The activity was organized in coordination with Bagong Silangan Youth Federation (BSYF) and as part

Pls. turn to page 3

# 10

2011: A DECADE OF TAO

*"If Metro Manila is to develop as a flood-free mega-city, its 17 component cities need to look beyond the confines of their respective jurisdictions and accept the fact that they are parts and parcels of a single floodplain, a vast urbanized drainage basin which does not respect political boundaries... Flooding in Metro Manila cannot be solved by infrastructure alone; coordinated urban planning and management is essential."* - Nathaniel von Einsiedel, PhD., architect and environmental planner

## TAO takes in 3 summer interns

(From page 1)

Koen van Gotha from Belgium to develop house repair and improvement schemes for 9 households in the TAO-assisted community at Tangos, Navotas. After conducting site visits at Tangos and ocular inspection of target houses, the team produced design schemes and cost estimates which will be used as the basis for the house repair loan assistance and incremental improvement of the houses.

The summer interns presented their internship outputs in a culminating activity on May 25, 2011 as part of the final requirements of the internship program. The activity was also an opportunity for the interns to present their individual reflection on the internship work. Some of these insights are featured in reflection essays in another section (see pages 6-7) of this e-newsletter issue. (*Ge Matabang*)

~o~o~o~o~



*Loverina and Koen inspect and measure parts of the house that need repair.*

## Roundtable discussion series held for PHILSSA DRR advocacy

THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM OF TAO-PILIPINAS ASSISTED PHILSSA (PARTNERSHIP OF Philippine Support Service Agencies, Inc.) in the conduct of a roundtable discussion series on disaster risk reduction (DRR) issues. The three-part RTD was held in the Institute of Social Order conference rooms at Ateneo de Manila University on April 6, 26 and 27. The activity series was aimed at information gathering to guide the actions of urban poor communities in Metro Manila, Laguna and Rizal that were affected by recent flood-related disasters and now facing threats of demolition and relocation due to planned flood control-related infrastructure projects. Participants in the discussion were 30 members of PHILSSA's BULKK-DRRAG or the Bagong Ugnayan para sa Kahandaan sa Kalamidad – Disaster Risk Reduction Advocacy Group.



The first RTD, held on April 6, focused on the definition of danger zones and different perspectives of the definition -- from the scientific/academic, legal/regulatory, and people's organizations --- were presented. Some of the guest resource persons were Dr. Mahar Lagmay of UP NIGS; Engr. Emiterio Hernandez of LLDA; EnP. Nora L. Diaz of HLURB; and Mr. Jose Morales of BULKK-DRRAG.

The second RTD was held on April 26 with the discussion centered on flood-control projects in Metro Manila, Rizal and Laguna that are implemented by national and regional government agencies. Arch/EnP. Nathaniel von

Einsidel gave a presentation on flooding and flood mitigation in Metro Manila, and followed by presentations by Engr. Lydia Aguilar of DPWH and Engr. Eric Capistrano of MMDA.

**Pls. turn to page 3**



*Above: workshop participants play the “web of life” game; Below: one of the focus groups present their community vision drawing.*

## **CBSWM Workshop for Sitio Bakal** (From page 1)

of the Starbucks SEF and Give2Asia Foundation project grant. There were initially 24 workshop participants but only about 12 people completed the two-day program and received their certificates.

Employing a PO-to-PO training approach, TAO-Pilipinas tapped community leaders with CBSWM experience as workshop facilitators, along with youth leaders of BSYF who have previously undergone the same CBSWM workshop with TAO. Margie Brucelo from Masagana, Navotas community and Josie Satajo from SHACC, Pasay community were the main facilitators and BSYF leaders Federick Marcelo, Leo Balueta, Sheryl Arevalo and Anselmo Mateo were co-facilitators. They applied TAO-Pilipinas’ participatory training modules to orient Sitio Bakal residents on CBSWM.

The workshop participants were oriented on the current environmental situation in Metro Manila, the effects of garbage on global warming, environmental principles, RA 9003 (Environmental Solid Waste Management Act), and proper ways of segregation and composting. After the lectures and demonstrations, they were tasked to come up with action plans to improve the waste management situation in their community. Emphasis was placed on being aware of the provisions of RA 9003 on waste segregation and disposal and focus group discussions also tackled the issue of open burning of garbage which they still practice.

The participants took inspiration from the successful CBSWM projects of communities in Navotas, Pasay and Quezon City to jumpstart their own CBSWM initiatives. At the end of the workshop, it was agreed that TAO, in cooperation with BSYF, will monitor these planned efforts by the community. *(Argean Guiaya, Ge Matabang)*

~0~0~0~0~

## **Round table discussion series...**

(From page 2)

The third RTD on April 27 still focused on flood-control projects but as implemented by the various local government units in Metro Manila, Rizal and Laguna. The invited speakers were divided into two sessions with the first group consisting of presentations by Engr. Sarah Jane Salvio of Rizal Province; Engr. Minwena Gamilla of Pasig City; Engr. Ramino Tiamzon of Quezon City; Engr. Jerry Comaling of Makati City; EnP. Valentin Guidote of Laguna Province; and Engr.

Ronaldo San Juan of Taytay, Rizal. The second group presentations were those of Engr. Rodrigo Lim of Valenzuela City; Engr. Ruth Senaida of Malabon City; and Engr. Francisco Garcia of Rodriguez, Rizal.

Open forum discussions followed each of the presentations in the RTD series. At the program closing, Klaid Sabangan of PHILSSA gave a synthesis of the various issues raised, emphasizing the points for action for their DRR advocacy work. *(Ge Matabang)*

~0~0~0~0~

## TAO staff development focus on heritage

FOR ITS STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROJECT THIS YEAR, TAO-PILIPINAS EMBARKED ON UPDATING IT'S architects' and staff's knowledge on heritage conservation issues. Some of the organization's previous engagements on heritage issues include an NCCA-funded research project (San Juan City Pride of Place) in 2010 and the coordination of the Manila coursework for Lund University's Conservation and Management of Historic Buildings Course in 2009. Two activities were organized by TAO-Pilipinas this May, coinciding with "National Heritage Month," --- a seminar-lecture on the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009 and a study tour of the Heritage Town of Taal, Batangas.

Architect Rene Luis Mata, faculty of UP College of Architecture and member of ICOMOS Philippines, was invited as resource person for the seminar held on May 5, 2011 at the TAO office. He lectured about the salient provisions of RA 10066 (Heritage Act) and the documentation of heritage sites and structures. He also emphasized the identification of both *tangible* and *intangible* cultural properties for heritage conservation.

On May 19-21, 2011 the TAO staff conducted a study tour of Taal, Batangas, a town declared by the National Historical Institute (NHI) in 1987 as a "Heritage Village" where some of the rich heritage of the 18th century Spanish colonial era has been preserved. The group stayed for three days at Casa Punzalan, an old ancestral house that was converted to an inn, while touring the important historical landmarks in the area. Among the places explored were Taal Plaza, Basilica of St. Martin de Tours, Our Lady of Caysasay Church, Gliceria Marella Villavicencio Ancestral House, Eulalio Villavicencio "Gift House", Marcela Agoncillo Shrine and Gregorio Agoncillo White House. Other places of interest visited were Taal Market, Villa Tortuga, and Galleria Taal.

Mr. Bennet Amoroso from Heritage Tours and Travels served as the resource person/guide for the study tour. Apart from guiding the group to structures declared by NHI as National Historical Landmarks, he also took the group to the 1572 original location of Old Taal in San Nicolas, Ruins of the Old Basilica, the Wawa ng Pangil mouth of Pansipit river in Taal Lake, and to a recently-excavated old crypt ruins that entombed Augustinian friars.

A visit to the municipal tourism office of Taal also provided the group with information about the Taal Heritage Conservation/Preservation and Restoration Building Code. All in all, the seminar and study tour provided the TAO staff with first-hand insight on both government and private sector efforts in heritage conservation. (*Ge Matabang*)

~0~0~0~0~



Above: Arch. Mata discusses the heritage law with TAO staff and interns; below: a view of the Taal Plaza from the bell tower of St. Martin de Tours Basilica.

### YP Notebook

#### A trip to the past

By Argean Guiaya

Lately, I travel a lot to have a glimpse of the beauty of the Philippines and to meet new people. Just last week, I've experienced again a new town, Taal, Batangas. I'm a lover of history no matter how hard and disastrous it might be. I pick up many stories from my friends of different places with incredible stories. Last May 19-21, 2011, I got to experience how beautiful Taal, Batangas is.

Continued on **page 5**



**From top:** at the ruins of the Old Taal Basilica in San Nicolas; wading through Pansipit River, with Taal Volcano at the background; taking a breather at the volada of the Villavicencio Ancestral House; exploring an 18<sup>th</sup> century crypt for friars.

## YP Notebook (con't from page 4)

I didn't know much about this town except for it is always associated with Taal Volcano. So before going there, I researched over the internet and asked my mom and dad what to see in Taal, Batangas. And based from the initial research that I've made, the town is actually being compared to Vigan, Ilocos Sur because of the ancestral houses. So I told myself that this town must not disappoint me and it should be really comparable to Vigan.

We took a 4-hour bus ride from Quezon City to Taal, Batangas. The weather was warmer than expected. We had no idea where our stop was so we asked the driver to drop us off at the Basilica of St. Martin de Tours because it is near Casa Punzalan, where we will be staying for the next three days.

It was a short walk to the Basilica to the hotel. When we roamed around the town, I was amazed and dumbstruck. It felt like travelling back to the Spanish period. Scattered around the town were dozens of old houses and other heritage structures built during the Spanish Colonial period. It's like a living museum town.

It was fulfilling to witness the efforts of the people of Taal to preserve their town and also rewarding to see that their efforts are materializing because their town is now being recognized as one of the must-see places in the Philippines.

I didn't notice that our 3-day stay in this beautiful place have passed already. And as we left the place, I was speechless, even as I write this I could not believe that I had not visited the place before. It was like rediscovering the lives of the almost forgotten Filipino heroes of the Philippine Revolution. The streets, the houses, the walls, the different structures, the people, everything was perfect. Everything was a feast for a history lover.

As I browse through the photos during the Heritage Tour, I noticed something about the pictures - warm, alive, and vibrant. The colors filled me. Moved me. I would come back one of these days and experience it more. I feel like I will never get tired of the place. I would always feel attached to it somehow.

~o~o~o~o~

## YP REFLECTIONS



**Koen van Gotha** is a 25 year old Interior Design graduate from Gent, Belgium. He started his 5-month internship at TAO-Pilipinas last February as part of the Postgraduate North-South Program of Katho University.

I graduated as an Interior Designer in Belgium (2010) and started a Postgraduate about global development in the same year. The main focus point of this post-graduate is a 5 month internship in a developing country of choice. I chose TAO- Pilipinas for my internship because this NGO of professional architects endorses sustainability, eco-friendly design and use of alternative materials. Things I was eager to learn more about. Their target is helping the urban poor with technical assistance on housing, which is a lot more useful than the targets of my fellow students in college and I felt this was something I really needed to do.

Although I knew there would be quite a few differences between the things I've learned in Belgium and the things TAO-Pilipinas is already familiar with, it struck me nonetheless. Different drawing techniques, switching from metric system to English system, architectural terms in a language different than my own made it sometimes quite hard to contribute efficiently.

The biggest problem was the consideration for the limited budget of the urban poor. Especially since affordability wasn't something to keep into account during my education as a student. Creating affordable solutions for their houses proved to be quite challenging and demanding to be resourceful.

In my first month I got a chance to familiarize with the BP220 for socialized housing in the Philippines and with local building techniques and materials such as the Compressed Earth Blocks, Wood Wool Cement Board and others. This was very helpful since I was going to help out with the Resettlement Project for Masagana, a poor community in Tanza, Navotas. Masagana is located in an old fish pond which is flooded since a dike broke in 2007. Their lack of proper sanitation and access to potable water demands urgent assistance. I helped improving the housing schemes for the 80sqm and 100sqm lots and helped with lay outing when we

**Pls. turn to page 7**



**Loverina Cruz** is a 26 year old graduate of BS Architecture from Mapua Institute of Technology. She returned to the Philippines after working for several years in Singapore and applied for the summer internship program of TAO-Pilipinas.

For 4 years, I worked as a submission architect in Singapore, preparing plans and contract documents for government authority submissions. Though my work comprised architectural work, I have deep desires for working with civic organizations dedicated to provide decent housing for the poor. During my stay abroad, I've actively volunteered with Habitat for Humanity Singapore housing projects. Because of that, I came back to the Philippines to pursue further training with NGOs working on housing. Since I don't have local work experience, I chose TAO Pilipinas' internship program to learn the kind of technical assistance NGOs give to urban poor communities.

I worked on a project under the Human Settlements and Environment program and was given a chance to visit communities. Together with HSE Team, we went to Brgy. Tanza and Tangos in Navotas and communities along San Juan and Tullahan rivers in Quezon City. I've passed by areas like these before and thought I wouldn't be surprised to see the actual conditions but it was really different spending a day walking around and interacting with people living in those areas. I was moved to see how these people survive a day despite their living conditions but was also impressed to know that even with such difficulties, they managed to run an organized community willing to work for progress and for the benefit of their families.



**Pls. turn to page 7**

10

2011: A DECADE OF TAO

## THINGS You Need to Know About Being a COMMUNITY ARCHITECT

This year TAO celebrates 10 years of involvement in community development work. To mark this milestone, we're starting this series from contributions by TAO architects. Here is our Executive Director Arlene Lusterio's take on the subject:

- 1 People have DREAMS and ASPIRATIONS. RESPECT the people and their dreams and aspirations. This is the foundation of a true blue DEVELOPMENT.
- 2 The ARCHITECT is the TOOL for the realization of the COMMUNITY's dream. He is not the DREAMER.
- 3 LISTEN. Let the people talk. They have the answers to their problems.
- 4 MAN Power is the strength of the poor. Every drop of a poor man's sweat counts as every centavo to build a house.
- 5 NOTHING is NOTHING. Nothing is free in this world. DON'T give away your services /time /knowledge /skills for nothing, even for the poor, or you will be valued as NOTHING in the end.
- 6 A COMMUNITY is a bunch of people UNITED for the common good. It is NOT the rows of houses where people live.
- 7 The language of the architect is colorful and multi-dimensional. This is the BEST LANGUAGE to communicate with people. No one else can talk this way.
- 8 POVERTY is the shield of the wicked. It is NOT AN OBSTACLE to development. Don't be thwarted.
- 9 TIME IS GOLD. The poor, who live by the day, can't lose a day to live. Put PREMIUM ON PEOPLE'S TIME.
- 10 PARTICIPATION can only be POWERFUL if people are armed with information and knowledge to make decisions.

donations is just one of the ways to help them, but taking part on programs to sustain efforts for sustainability is also one role architects could take.

I was really moved by the commitment of TAO staff to address such needs considering the amount of work needed to be done from planning to complying to government ordinances to launching programs for sustainability and resource management. In a time when architects choose to work as professionals in a global architecture field, these people work at the grassroots level, addressing individual families' needs. I am very thankful for this experience and now that I've seen closely the real state of housing in my own country, I feel more responsible.

~0~0~0~0~

### Reflections by Koen van Gotha

(From page 6)

entered this project for the Holcim Awards, an international competition for sustainable construction. Our proposal for the competition consisted of 10 images with detailed information about the Masagana Resettlement Project. After our submission I was finally able to visit the site and join a meeting with the community leader. Floating on improvised rafts through the flooded village will definitely be a lifetime experience.

I was also able to help out with the Housing Repair program for Tangos community in Navotas together with 3 summer interns from Manila. Observing how the urban poor live in often inhumane conditions proved to be quite shocking but instructive and eye-opening at the same time. Nothing has been more difficult than trying to imagine how these people live their lives, survive in extreme conditions and are still able to greet you with the most sincere smiles I've ever seen. It has definitely put my western worries in a whole new perspective.

Besides the Housing program and the Masagana Resettlement Project, I joined a workshop on SWM (Solid Waste Management), visited several poor communities and went on a Heritage Tour in Taal, Batangas.

I have still 2 more months to go with TAO-Pilipinas and I feel already reluctant in leaving this valuable source of life experience. Their passion and devotion is admirable and inspired me to continue in this line of work.

### Reflections by Loverina Cruz (From page 6)

As an intern, I was able to observe participatory planning activities with a community that will be resettled in Angat, Bulacan. I've also done cost estimates for house repairs in Brgy. Tangos and did research and writing for an article about self-help housing programs in the Philippines. Through these works, I was able to look closely into the situations of the urban poor particularly on land and housing and get a new perspective on my role as an architect. I was overwhelmed to know growing numbers of organizations dedicated to alleviate poor housing conditions.

Since I graduated, I've worked on large-scale buildings with big budget and high-end design. My internship work at TAO was the exact opposite. I came to realize that urban poor are the most unserved people by architects like me because of their lack of ability to pay for professional fees. With a very small amount of budget, which cycles around a monthly savings scheme, we needed to design houses and plan construction taking into consideration safety and livability. It made me look on my own contributions whether I'm doing enough to help them. Getting informed of what the real situation is made me realize that giving