

ypp e-newsletter

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Photo for the Month

In this photo taken December 2006, traces of *asupre* (sulphur) from Mayon volcano mix with lahar in Padang, Legaspi City. This photograph is one of the more than 60 featured in **TAO Photo Exhibit** at Blacksoup Project Artspace.

Quotes for the Month

"Life is like a game of tennis. He who serves well seldom loses. And if you ask me how, my answer is for all of us, in every situation, to seek the truth according to our best lights, so we may have the courage to act, and the fortitude to face and surmount the problems and challenges of a nation now in deep crisis."

"What frightens many people...is the dread of insignificance, the notion that we will be born, live and one day none of it will matter. A good many people don't want to live forever—it is like reading a good book or watching a good movie that never ends. Many people understand that the story of our lives must have a beginning, a middle, and an end; but what they desperately want is to live long enough to get it right, to feel that they have done something worthwhile with their lives."

"More important than wealth is meaning. We will find it if we live by what we know to be true and good."

- **Jovito R. Salonga** (born 1920), former Philippine senate president and the 2007 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Government Service

If we are to consider the growing number of requests for TAO-Pilipinas to facilitate exposure and orientation activities for students, one can perhaps assume this to be an indication that service-orientation is not utterly lacking in today's academic training. The opportunity to anchor students' academic or scholarly efforts on real-life conditions, especially of those in the marginalized sectors, is one need that TAO tries to respond to. And so we welcome these requests for students to visit poor communities and talk to people's organizations, in the anticipation that whatever body of knowledge they do produce, the communities may also learn from. Besides, it's a waste of the students' efforts if their theses or researches will just gather dust on library shelves when these could potentially be useful to communities in their development initiatives or lead them to better living conditions.

Almost always, students come out of these visits overwhelmed by realities of the living conditions in urban poor communities but with clearer direction in the work that they plan to do for the semester. And for us who facilitate these visits, we look forward to their realization that a thesis or research study is worth more than just a grade for one semester.

In this month's e-newsletter:

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- **Foreign and local student-researchers visit TAO project sites**
- **YP reflections by Ownery Rose Diala**
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"It's time for us to go to the people rather than ask the people, especially the poor, to come to us."

TAO holds culminating activity for YP interns at PhilDHRRA



TAO's YP Summer Internship for 2007 was concluded with the interns' presentation of their final report and outputs last June 08, 2007 at the PhilDHRRA Partnership Center in Loyola Heights, Quezon City. From April to May, seven YP interns were selected to work on various projects of TAO as part of its Young Professionals Orientation and Training Program supported by SELAVIP (Latin American, African and Asian Social Housing Service). Formal arrangements and coordination were carried out with the interns' universities to fulfill their curriculum requirements for on-the-job training. The internship outputs were presented to a panel composed of representatives from the TAO Board of Directors; TAO-assisted communities and partner NGOs --- Samahang Para sa Angkop na Pabahay ng San Pablo Apostol (SAPSPA) and Dumpsite View Neighborhood Association-Damayang ng Maralitang Pilipinong Api (DVNA-DAMPA); and the University of the Philippines-Geodetic Engineering Department.

Four major reports were presented at the plenary. The synopsis of each are outlined below:

Monitoring and Evaluation of Self-help House Building in Tondo (SAPSPA Experience) by Michelle G. Galarion and Jasmine M. Soriano. The objectives of the project were to: a) generate as-build plans for the houses of 5 SAPSPA beneficiaries and document any modifications between the plan and actual construction; and b) make a documentation of the house-building in 5 SAPSPA houses. The research methodologies used were ocular inspections, interviews with the beneficiary families and literature review on housing the poor. Michelle and Jasmine's report focused on identifying (1) processes for self-help housing and the repayment schemes by beneficiaries; (2) difficulties and challenges experienced by the beneficiaries in planning and building their houses; and (3) contributions of the beneficiary families, people's organization (SAPSPA), and technical professionals in the project.

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Foreign and local student-researchers visit TAO project sites

TAO-Pilipinas guided some foreign and local students in exposure trips to urban poor settlements by organizing a series of field visits to various project sites in Metro Manila where TAO has been providing technical assistance. Ocular visits were made to the SAPSPA self-help housing project in Tondo, Manila and the SANAGMANA resettlement site in Tanza, Navotas by a group composed of graduate students, Hisako Ishizaki and Mayumi Ueda from Japan and Erna Anjarwati from Indonesia, who are taking up International Peace Studies at the Ateneo de Manila University, industrial design graduate Margaret Lee from RMIT in Melbourne, Australia, Jelyne Gealone of CDP and architecture student Carmelita Munson from Oxford Brookes University in UK.



(L) Ger Samson shows to Maggie Lee, Hisako Ishizaki, and Mayumi Ueda the self-build housing units constructed in Tondo; (R) A Navotas resident shows a sample of the community-produced MCR tile to Carmen Munson and Maggie Lee



(L) Charlene Tan of UP-Civil Engg Dept., together with her students, inspect the Habitat for Humanity housing site in Malibay, Pasay City; (R) TFA student volunteer Frances Cortez checks out the plastic septic tanks installed at the Montalban resettlement site.

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YP Reflections



Ownery Rose Diala is a BS Architecture senior student at Mapua Institute of Technology. She joined TAO's summer internship program and was assigned in the technical assistance project for SANAGMANA community in Tanza, Navotas City. She shares with us part of her reflection journal for the YP internship.

.It is really true that life outside school is very different. I learned a lot of new things when I worked with TAO-Pilipinas Inc. as an intern. Designing with the community was a new experience for me and I enjoyed every moment of it. During my internship at TAO, I was assigned to design the chapel in SANAGMANA. And as one of the requirements, I was instructed to facilitate community workshops to know the residents' preferences and ideas. I was excited and at the same time nervous because I had never facilitated a workshop before.

The design process used in the workshop, which is called participatory planning, is far different from the one that is taught in academic training. Participatory planning involves a lot of people - the architects, engineers, and the community members. Many minds are involved to solve a problem. The planning itself would come from the owners of the project --- the community members --- and with an acceptable design outcome, there is a sense of ownership because their ideas are integrated in the design. Whereas the one taught in school has a different approach --- as a designer you would be the one responsible for your own actions and ideas because you alone would think of the solutions to the problem presented by your professor.

Back when I used to work for a private firm, I also designed on my own given the design problem. I was forced to make all the decisions in the design and afterwards, present it to my employer. The advantage of working in that private firm was that the process was easier, quicker, and there was more freedom in designing. I just had to follow what my employers instructed me to do unlike in participatory planning, where I had to act like a leader so I could make community people participate in the discussion and make sure that they would not be intimidated from expressing their ideas and opinions. The main goal was to know all their thoughts since they would be the ones who will eventually use the structure. I refrained from imposing what I personally wanted in the design, but in some cases, there were things that needed to be explained and altered (especially when their ideas were unattainable or impractical) so that we could help them achieve a more viable and efficient design. I also observed some disadvantages in participatory planning. It is a longer process because we were trying to incorporate all their ideas in the design and sometimes there were conflicts with regards to decision making which had to be resolved before coming up with the final design. We also had to conduct lectures and seminars to educate the participants in technical designs since most of them are laymen. Indeed, I had to expand my Tagalog vocabulary just to simplify the technical terms we use. The workshops were a strenuous activity especially if they were done so often. One has to invest time in traveling to the communities and waiting for workshop participants. Nevertheless, even though it was tiring, I considered it as a learning experience.

When I first visited the SANAGMANA community in Navotas, I was amazed by the bamboo bridge they built to cross to the resettlement site. I sensed their commitment to improving their lives and the discipline they have as a community. I facilitated two workshops for the design of the chapel, with Arch. Arlene Lusterio as my mentor. The first workshop was for the youth and children where I brought some drawing materials such as papers, pencils, and boxes of crayons. Some of the participants were a bit hesitant to draw at first, reasoning that they weren't very good in drawing. And so I tried to encourage them and told them that the workshop was not a contest but an exercise to put in paper what we want their chapel to look like. The second workshop included the community members. The participants in that workshop were very much aware of the objectives and purpose of the activity since Mariano De Veyra, president of SANAGMANA and also known as Mang Ano, made a prior announcement of the meeting. At first, I was quite nervous because the community leaders and members were much older than me.

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Ownery, with her co-interns at TAO, crossing the bamboo bridge to the resettlement site...



... and facilitating the workshop discussion



Children's drawings for the community chapel design are posted.



Community leaders discuss the chapel design schemes.



Ownery answers questions by community members about the chapel design.

Culminating activity (from page 2)

Participatory Design Process (SANAGMANA Experience) by Ownery Rose D. C. Diala. The intern's project objective was to make a documentation of the participatory approaches used in designing the SANAGMANA community chapel as well as the outcome of the workshop activities. Workshop facilitation and direct observations, key informant interviews and readings on participatory design processes were the methods used for the project. Ownery's report discussed the (1) difference of participatory design processes from conventional approaches, including its strong and weak points in community development planning; and (2) the technical professionals' process of translating the community's idea of the chapel into a cohesive design.

Land Registration, Surveying and Titling Processes in Metro Manila by Mark Anthony I. Lopez and Aaron Andro V. Ching. This research project was conducted to achieve the following objectives: a) document and verify the established procedures for land registration, surveying & titling processes in Metro Manila; b) translate the procedures into step-by-step guidelines and flowcharts; and c) identify the problems or difficulties that may be encountered by an applicant and how these may be resolved. Methods used include document review of relevant and interviews with informants from government offices, academe and urban poor communities. Aaron and Mark's report included (1) a narrative step-by-step guide and process flowcharts to land registration, surveying and titling for urban poor communities; and (2) a discussion of the issues and challenges in land registration, surveying and titling process.

Research on Alternative Building Materials and Technologies for Social Housing (SABMAT-Phase 2) by Rose Anne R. Evangelista and Paulo Nico S. Noble. The SABMAT Project was a research activity conducted by TAO-Pilipinas in collaboration with PUP-CAFA (Polytechnic University of the Philippines-College of Architecture and Fine Arts) during the second semester of SY 2006-2007. After the results of the first stage of the activity were compiled into a draft output, Rose Anne and Paulo Nico (who were students from the same class) continued with phase two of the research. Anne and Nico's report focused on the analysis of the Phase 1 draft outputs based on a set of criteria for evaluation and a summary of recommendations in the use and construction of various building materials included in the research project.

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Field visits (from page 2)

UP Civil Engineering Department's Engr. Charlene Tan coordinated with TAO to facilitate exposure to informal settlements for her students, Sandy Gaspay, Cherry Mateo, Doreen Candelaria, and James Ong, who are in the stage of drafting proposals for their undergraduate theses. TAO accompanied their group to the SHEC-organized communities along the Maricaban Retarding Pond and the Habitat for Humanity housing site in Malibay, Pasay City.

The group of volunteers from the student organization, UP Task Force Arki, also visited the Montalban resettlement site where families affected by the Pasig River Rehabilitation project are to be relocated. They are presently involved in a project to develop incremental house design improvements to standard relocation housing designs.

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YP reflections (from page 3)

It was really apparent that the design of the chapel was given so much importance by the community members and reflected their devotion to religion. They listened attentively to all the discussions I presented, questioned some designs, and cooperated in the group activities. They drew their ideas of the facade, symbols and spaces they wanted to integrate in the chapel. Some ideas were rather grandiose; one participant even suggested the roofing made of stained glass. From these ideas drawn out from the workshops, we made three schemes and they were asked to vote for a preferred design. In choosing the final design scheme, some were adamant in sticking to the scheme they initially wanted. By then, Arch. Lusterio had helped me out by asking some questions regarding the design of the chapel. We made a list of questions concerning the use of the chapel and building materials to be used for its construction. They responded that the chapel would not only serve as the worship place of the community but also as an evacuation center in times of disaster so that they stressed the placement of a second storey. They agreed that the chapel roofing can be made of MCR tiles that the community can produce and the structure should be on-stilts, much like how the houses are built in SANAGMANA. They also reasoned out that they wanted their chapel to be beautiful to compensate for the simplicity of their houses.

It's the architect's job to translate the community's design of the chapel into a cohesive design by taking into consideration all the comments and ideas they presented during the workshops. After going through this process, they were able to choose a final scheme for the chapel design. When we consulted Mang Ano on the how the chapel will be built, he said that they are raising funds for a phased construction. This also meant that the design should be able to consider incremental construction and the use skilled laborers from the community to lessen expenses.

After two consecutive months of working at TAO-Pilipinas, Inc., ending my internship is not an easy thing to do because in a short span of time I built relationships that somehow changed the way I think and act now and made me recognize another perspective in life. But I know that every end of a journey actually introduces the beginning of a new one. I've come to realize some things that never crossed my mind before, such as my role as an architect in the country's problems of poverty and inadequate housing. Being with the SANAGMANA community for a number of times also made me think that being poor is not actually a hindrance in striving to have a well-organized and disciplined community. I saw their hopes and it inspired me to help them achieve their vision in the best way I can. They remind me of a bamboo shrub --- ever yielding but never breaking --- and the bamboo bridge that symbolize how they stand together to bridge their future.

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IN PICS: TAO Photo Exhibit Launch



The ladies of TAO-Pilipinas celebrating the event – (L-R) Arlene Lusterio, Nethz Salvan, Ger Samson, Yeye Perdigon, Faith Varona, Osang Marcelo, Angging Aban, Beryl Baybay, Pon Rodil



(L) Arlene Lusterio, Mariano DeVeyra of SANAGMANA, Ger Samson and visiting student Carmel Munson of Oxford Brookes University; (R) Ger Samson and Gene Lopez of Habitat for Humanity South Metro



(L) Gen Matabang of Chocolate Clothing, Luanne Gonzales and YP coordinator Ge Matabang; (R) Rene Salazar

TAO Fundraising Photo Exhibit Launch Blacksoup Project Artspace June 22, 2007



(L-R) Bien Molina and Andy Perez of Asian Migrants Centre, siblings Karen, Rex and Faith Varona, and Blacksoup managing director Avic Ilagan



(L) Nap Ibañez of UP Office of the Campus Architect

(L) TAO-Pilipinas' Beryl Baybay and Ge Matabang; (R) Wesley Villarica, Antonio Ressano of ADB, Tei Allison and TAO executive director Arlene Lusterio

Thank you for supporting this fundraising event: Cynthia Alejandro, Manuel Q. Avanceña, Mike Borlaza, Ana Marie Dizon, Luis Lacerna, Luz Malibiran, Jose V. Martel, Irene Martel-Francisco, Ramon Matabang, Bien Molina, Carmel Munson, Benjie Orpilla, Tess Pilapil, Antonio Rassano, Rudy Rodil, Rex Varona, and Jocelyn Vicente-Angeles.

Announcements

CONGRATULATIONS!

to:

Dr. Laura David, president of TAO-Pilipinas Board of Directors, for being this year's Outstanding Young Scientist Awardee for physical oceanography. Read more of this news at <http://www.tao-pilipinas.org/2007/07/15/tao-board-president-receives-outstanding-young-scientist-award/#more-61>



TAO staff **Angel Sales** and **Edra Belga** (6th placer) for passing the Licensure Board Examinations for Architects given this June 2007



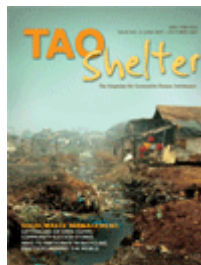
Sahmakum Teang Tnaut of Cambodia for being this year's recipient of the 2007 IYSH Memorial Encouragement Prize from the Japan Housing Association. (Visit STT's website at www.teangtnaut.org)



NOW AVAILABLE:



The YP Files, a CD compilation of YP projects documentation from 2005-2007, can now be downloaded at www.ypws.tao-pilipinas.org. This e-publication includes the 2005 and 2006 YP Lectures, Workshop Reports and AVPs, the 2007 SABMAT project outputs, and the YP E-newsletters.



The third issue of **TAO-Shelter Magazine**, featuring articles on solid waste management, is now available online at <http://www.tao-pilipinas.org/resources/publications/tao-shelter>

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