



Photo for the Month

A working prototype of the house-on-stilts designed by TAO for a resettlement site in perennially-flooded Navotas. In the photo, workers install MCR roof tiles which the community members themselves produced for their self-help, incrementally-built houses.

Quotes for the Month

"As a design professional, we are led to believe that we are on top... ahead of others. But then being exposed to community work, I am reminded of the many other disciplines that we have to work with. It leads me also to many discoveries about myself as an architect and to our social responsibilities. I realized that it is not enough for architects to just design buildings or have different projects... its important for our designs to be able to support the functions of a community to be a basic unit if society..." - **Brian**

Regalado, licensed architect, during the reflections sharing sessions of the 2006 YP Workshop

"The house is the most basic property that a family can own and without shelter, a family experiences hardship. They can have many other problems in life but having a house to live in is a family's priority... and this tells about our role as architects. Our vocation should not just be about designing homes for rock stars or wealthy businessmen... our profession must also respond to the needs of poor people." - **Jed Yabut**, architecture student at UP-Diliman, during the reflections sharing sessions of the 2006 YP Workshop

Seven interns worked with us at TAO from April to May. In the sweltering heat of summer, our small office served as a laboratory for these architecture and engineering students trying to complete the required number of hours of on-the-job training before they graduate. The internship process had been a practical way to expose would-be professionals in the kind of work that we do and clearly it's not for those just working to fill-up the compulsory 200 office hours with clerical work and then receive a certificate. So we sent them to Tondo to help in the self-build house construction work of a beneficiary family; had them facilitate community workshops for the design of a chapel and a materials recovery facility in a resettlement site in Tanza; assigned them to interview a people's organization in Payatas on their first-hand experiences with the land acquisition process; and showed them the plight of the urban poor whose homes sit atop mounds of garbage in the piers along Manila Bay. (More of the YP internship activities on page 3)

The interns' journal entries help us keep track of their reflections on these kinds of learning experience and we gain as much from their insights and perspective as young people. We are encouraged by new-found realizations on their roles as students and we glimpse that burgeoning sense of social responsibility in how they see themselves as future professionals. In the end of such a process, we can only hope that the internship at TAO not only fulfilled every intern's objective of "*practicing what I've learned in the classroom*" but more importantly, inculcated that there's more to learn outside the classrooms and from the initiatives of poor communities... and that those two summer months with TAO have somehow motivated them to become catalysts in making technical professional services accessible to the poor.

In this month's e-newsletter:

- **TAO holds YP Lecture Series on Social Housing at Mapua ARIDBE**
- **Updates on the YP Summer Internship activities**

"It's time for us to go to the people rather than ask the people, especially the poor, to come to us."



The YP lecture audience at Mapua's Seminar Room



Dr. Lisa Pilapil address a question during the open forum



From left: Sophia Truong, Lina Olofsson, Arch. Joan Mac Donald, Engr. Jonas Maronilla, Arch. Arlene Lusterio, and Dean Gloria Teodoro

TAO holds YP Lecture on Social Housing at Mapua ARIDBE

The School of Architecture, Industrial Design and the Built Environment of Mapua Institute of Technology co-sponsored TAO's YP Lecture Series held on May 8, 2007 at the MIT, Intramuros, Manila. The YP Lecture Series is organized by TAO to provide opportunities for the discussion of issues in social housing, shelter security and sustainable development especially for students in the fields of architecture and engineering. The major topics presented in the YP lecture included the experiences of SELAVIP (Latin American, African and Asian Social Housing Service) in sheltering the poor, and the implementation of DEWATS (Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems) in urban poor communities.

Architect Joan Mac Donald, current president of SELAVIP and former Vice Minister of Housing and Urban Development in Chile introduced the efforts of their foundation in providing poor people with modest shelters especially during the period when security of tenure is still being processed. She also recounted how the poor in Latin American countries like Chile and Argentina have mobilized themselves to gain shelter security and the various ways they cope with housing policies that prevent them from attaining land ownership. Arch. Mac Donald urged the students to be more socially-committed in their professional practice and advocate pro-poor housing policies.

Engineer Jonas Maronilla of the Basic Needs Services Philippines, Inc. presented the initiatives of their organization in providing proper treatment of wastewater discharge through pilot projects in different LGUs. Engr. Maronilla explained the different DEWATS methods (like anaerobic baffles and filters, planted gravel filters and indicator ponds) wherein affordable wastewater treatment systems can be designed and implemented even in urban poor communities.

Lina Olofsson and Sophia Truong, students from Lund University, Sweden who have undertaken study visits in TAO-assisted poor communities in Navotas as part of their thesis on "Sustainable Housing in the Philippines," also presented the findings of their research in the YP Lecture. Their study highlighted the self-help initiatives of the people's organization SANAGMANA in their struggle for shelter security and in the construction of disaster-resilient houses.

Some feedback on the YP Lectures:

Thank you for coming to Mapua to conduct a lecture series, it has made my students more interested and aware of housing issues... Arch. Maconald's SELAVIP experience in sheltering the poor was unconventional and controversial, nevertheless, worth trying in the Philippines, but with some modifications that would be applicable in Philippine context. – Arch. Albert S. Zambrano, Mapua ARIDBE Faculty

I always thought that setting up a wastewater treatment plant was expensive. I was very happy to hear that BORDAS was willing to help those who cannot afford to have it. It was surprising for me that Engr. Jonas presented a low-cost type of wastewater treatment that is applicable here in the Philippines. Environmental engineering is one of the branches of civil engineering that's why I was interested in his lecture. – Michelle Galarion, UST civil engineering student

I really liked the YP Lecture that was held in Mapua, especially the lecture of Architect Mac Donald... I saw the other facet of Latin America that is not usually seen in the books or in the news. The lecture is interesting especially when she talked about land invasion (that sounds to me that the urban poor are at war)... She talked about land acquisition and town/city planning... those two topics are included in our course of study though the topics in our school is concentrated more on the moneyed people and not on the urban poor. Thus her lecture gave an insight on the urban poor that none of subjects in my course can give. – Aaron Ching, UP geodetic engineering student



Updates on the YP Summer Internship Activities

The internship activities for summer 2007 at TAO-Pilipinas highlighted the participation of its interns in four major TAO projects and advocacies --- technical assistance to the self-help housing projects of SAPSPA, Tondo; participatory community workshops for the designs of the chapel and materials recovery facility at SANAGMANA, Navotas; research on the *Land Research and Titling Process in Metro Manila*; and data gathering and analysis for the *Sourcebook of Alternative Building Materials and Technologies for Social Housing (SABMAT)*.

The interns visited the SHEC (St. Hannibal Empowerment Center) communities in Pasay and the housing units built by Habitat for Humanity that used concrete interlocking blocks as an alternative building material. At SAPSPA (Samahan para sa Angkop na Pabahay sa San Pablo Apostol) Tondo, they were mobilized as a volunteer team that helped in the construction works of one housing unit. They were also tasked to do the monitoring and evaluation of five completed housing units that availed of the SAPSPA housing loans.

For the SANAGMANA (Samahan ng Nagkakaisang Maralita ng Navotas) subdivision project, the interns facilitated a series of kids' and adults' drawing workshops for the design of the community chapel and materials recovery facility (MRF). They also took part in the ocular survey and site evaluation of informal settlements in Pier 18, where a community can be found living within the compounds of the garbage transfer station in Manila.

Journal writing and reporting are also part of the interns' activities. The culminating activity for the summer internship will be the presentation of the interns' final project reports on Self-help Housing, Participatory Design Process, Land Research and Titling, and the SABMAT project.

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IN PICS: YP Summer Internship

