



Photo for the Month

This housing unit, under construction through COPE-Christian Aid, is part of the Taysan, Legazpi City resettlement site for families displaced by last year's typhoon and mudflows. At background are housing units for Gawad Kalinga beneficiaries.

Quotes for the Month

"Necessity is the mother of invention, but it has often struck me that the most needy are often the least empowered to invent."

"I look at things on a global basis. Technology isn't the only solution, but it can certainly be part of the solution..."

"Policymakers sometimes forget that having the right tool can make all the difference."

"I believe very strongly that solutions to problems in the developing world are best created in collaboration with the people who will be using them."

- **Amy B. Smith**, mechanical engineer, inventor and advocate of appropriate technology, and founder of the D-Lab program at MIT which introduces students to technological, social and economic problems of the Third World and develops low-tech devices for use in developing countries.

As **catalysts for change** --- that's how we at TAO view the role of young design professionals in responding to the problems and inequities in society today. In another round of university lecture to promote this YP advocacy (see page 2), what confronted us was students' general naiveté in poverty issues, including a prevailing negative stereotype of urban poor people. Clearly these students are not lacking in talent and creativity, and the university has a competent faculty and facilities to nurture design excellence. Wanting are opportunities to use their abilities and energy towards more socially-relevant projects in their academic training, projects that can explore the capability of design to positively transform lives of the poor and traditionally underserved.

At the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), there are laboratory classes that focus on providing technological solutions for Third World problems such as finding ways of better access to cheap and safe water. There are international organizations like Architecture for Humanity, Engineers Without Borders, and Architects for Peace that promote design solutions for humanitarian causes. In Asia, design professional groups who work with the poor for shelter security and housing rights include CASE (Community Architects for Shelter and Environment) in Japan and Thailand and STT (Sahmakum Teang Tnaut) in Cambodia.

Here, most students in private exclusive colleges need to be challenged to look beyond the walls of their classrooms and learn from poor people. In fact, more foreign volunteers than local students ask for venues at TAO to immerse in poor communities and gain real-life experiences. Yet we remain hopeful that service-oriented and socially-relevant programs take root and grow in the academe and even in the local professional organizations of architects and engineers. For this, we need the leadership of college heads and for mentors to step up and give direction to young people who dare to ask, "How can we help change society?"

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- **IN PICS: YP Lecture at UST**

Useful links to the organizations mentioned here: MIT's D-lab program - <http://web.mit.edu/d-lab/> ; Architecture for Humanity - <http://www.architectureforhumanity.org/> ; Engineers Without Borders - <http://www.ewb-international.org/> ; Architects for Peace - <http://www.architectsforpeace.org/> ; Sahmakum Teang Tnaut - <http://www.teangtnaut.org/> ; Community Architects for Shelter and Environment - <http://www.casestudio.info/2006/index.html>

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



Fr. Jorge addresses a question posed by a UST architecture student during the open forum. (More pictures on page 4)

YP Lecture on Social Housing held at UST College of Architecture

The University of Santo Tomas (UST) College of Architecture and the student organization Community Achievers (ComAch) – Architecture were the co-sponsors of the second leg of TAO's YP Lecture Series this year. Fr. Jorge Anzorena and Architect Beryl Baybay of TAO-Pilipinas were the guest lecturers for the program held last September 11, 2007 at the AVR of Beato Angelico Building in UST. About a hundred students led by the class of Architect Rizalito Mercado attended the lecture.



TAO-Pilipinas resource persons with UST-CA faculty members and ComAch-Architecture student members.

Architect John Joseph Fernandez, Dean of the College of Architecture, gave the opening remarks of the program. YP Coordinator Geraldine Matabang also introduced the Young Professionals advocacy to the students and presented some of the previous years' YP activities.

Fr. Jorge Anzorena, who was back in the Philippines for his annual visit, gave a lecture on "*Planning for the Many.*" His presentation highlighted how planning today places much of the world's resources in the hands of the elite few and further widens the gap between the few rich and the poor who comprise the majority. Fr. Jorge stressed the need for sustainable planning for the majority and that this could be realized in a number of ways like promoting people's participation, keeping governments accountable, land reform, slum upgrading, mutual help and credit and savings programs. For architects, he urged that systems for housing can be designed so that people can be enabled to build their own houses.

Architect Beryl Baybay, TAO's Program Coordinator for Education and Training, presented "*Bringing Technical Professionals to the Marginalized Sectors.*" She outlined some of the participatory planning approaches that TAO-Pilipinas employs in its technical assistance work in poor communities. Architect Baybay also encouraged introducing participatory planning in the curriculum or academic training of architecture students.

An open forum followed the lecture presentations and the UST students fielded questions on different aspects of social housing such as funding, relocation projects, and sustainable communities. Some of the underlying social prejudices against urban poor communities were also discussed in the forum, as well as the various ways that architecture students can contribute to providing decent shelter for the poor.

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YP Roundtable Discussion at Legazpi City

In preparation for holding the next YP Workshop in Legazpi City, TAO-Pilipinas and COPE Foundation in Bicol conducted a roundtable discussion on "**Local Design Professionals in the Recovery Efforts of Albay Province**" last September 7, 2007 at the St. Raphael Pastoral Center in Legazpi City. Representatives from the Albay Mabuhay Task Force, Provincial Planning and Development Office, as well as from the planning offices of Legazpi City and Daraga attended the forum.



Forum participants from TAO, COPE and Albay LGU's planning offices

Ms. Emily Kare and Ms. Jeresha San Jose of Albay Mabuhay Task Force presented an overview of the current post-disaster situation in the province and reported that about 6,000 housing units still have to be funded and constructed to resettle all families affected by typhoon Reming last November 2006. TAO YP Coordinator Geraldine Matabang introduced the Young Professionals program activities and discussed possibilities of conducting the next YP Workshop in Legazpi City and reviving the YP-Bicol group. Architect Gertrudes Samson presented the assistance given by technical people in the post-disaster reconstruction of Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Ms. Salve Cadag of COPE Foundation gave a presentation of their organization's shelter assistance program for families relocated to the Taysan and Anislag resettlement sites.

The primary issues in the resettlement of affected families that surfaced in the discussion were the need for funds and land acquisition. Although Albay province has already developed six resettlements sites, there is still a need for 50 hectares of land for resettlement housing. Aside from the housing backlog, other issues discussed were those of basic services provision in the resettlement sites, disaster-resilient design of the housing units, monitoring of construction standards employed in the resettlement sites, and the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in land use planning.

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YP Reflections



Michelle G. Galarion is a senior student of BS Civil Engineering at University of Sto. Tomas. Prior to joining the summer internship program, Michelle was also one of the participants of the 2006 YP Workshop in Infanta, Quezon. As an intern, she worked on two TAO projects – the documentation of the SAPSPA housing project in Tondo and the subdivision development planning of SANAGMANA site in Tanza, Navotas. Michelle considers her internship experience as an eye-opener, realizing that *“there are a lot more things to learn and see beyond the four walls of the classroom...”*

As a civil engineering student, I found it difficult to have self-help housing. Before, I thought that civil engineers are only primarily needed for large infrastructure, high-rise buildings and highly modernized construction. I thought that for simple houses with small floor areas, civil engineers are not needed that much since there are already the construction foreman and laborers who can build the house. But when we visited the houses in Tondo, I recognized more the importance of having civil engineers involved in any structure to be built. In Tondo, it is important to consider the stability of buildings which is the main expertise of a civil engineer. Houses in Tondo face the problem of structural stability because of the soil conditions which cause the land to gradually subside. They cannot just put up concrete floors and heavy structures because of the problem of land subsidence, so it is important that house construction is also supervised by engineers.

I also appreciated that there are organizations like SAPSPA which continuously help the people in the community in their many needs, through SAPSPA’s housing loan program. Through the years, there are already a number of batches who have benefited from it. The P70,000 housing loan that were availed by the beneficiary-families helped a lot in reconstructing houses already submerged or in starting their dream houses. The beneficiaries also played a big role in the self-help house building process. They had to find additional money to pay for laborers and expenditures (other than the construction materials covered by the loan). They worked with a positive attitude, were so very eager to complete their house, and they really worked hard to earn enough money for its construction. I think they are a wonderful people that the community should be proud of.

Other technical professionals should reach out their hands to poor people. I know some people think that professionals are only for the service of the rich but they should realize that sometimes they really need to come to the ones who are oppressed and the ones who cannot afford to give them the professional fee. They should not wait for the poor to come to them; they should extend a helping hand. We must reach out because that’s the spirit of living in a decent society.



Jasmine M. Soriano is a senior student of BS Architecture at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. Jasmine helped develop the 3D scaled model of TAO’s design prototype for Disaster Resilient Housing. She was also part of the project team that handled the documentation of the SAPSPA housing project in Tondo. Jasmine says that the internship taught her to be *“more sensitive to the social issues and problems that the urban poor communities face”* as an architect.

As I worked on the monitoring and evaluation of five beneficiaries of the SAPSPA housing loan, I saw how the program works for the people and how it actually is a three-way collaboration among the beneficiaries, the people’s organization and the technical assistance groups. These members compose the body, heart and head of the program.

There have been about one hundred twenty-three beneficiaries of the program and we interviewed five of the present batch with on-going house construction. Each of the families we interviewed had different number of family members, lifestyles and life plans but they had a common denominator...the need for decent shelter. So how do they work as the body of the program? The families who benefited from the housing-material loan have been given the full responsibility to execute the building of their houses...the “self-building” way. Either with immediate relatives or friends, the physical construction of the houses was done by them. Monetary supplement for the building permit and construction workers came also from self-funding. Through this duty, they are taught to work for their own betterment and in a way, “reap their harvest”.

The SAPSPA organization, also known as the “Pabahay”, is the heart of the program. The community in Magsaysay Village has been troubled for decades by land subsidence and limited resources to construct and repair houses, so SAPSPA serves as the intermediary between the people and groups that could help the community in its housing problems. SAPSPA works on the evaluation of housing loan applicants, repayment schemes, bookkeeping, as well as sustaining the Pabahay office and other administrative tasks.

Lastly, the technical groups taking part in the program serve as the head in bringing this project to life. With professional skills and knowledge, they help the community achieve their long-term endeavors by giving assistance in house designs and making sure that plans conform to building laws. They help in monitoring the construction process and building materials used and in checking that the actual construction is in compliance to the building plans approved by building officials.

Man lives holistically with his body, heart and head and it’s the same principle at work in this self-help, self-build housing project. If any of the three actors in the program do not work efficiently, sustainability would be hard to attain. Programs for urban poor communities need long-term planning and development but must also look into the people’s way of life and involve them in the planning. The housing project in Magsaysay Village entails hard work and may not bring profit, but it brings shelter to people’s lives so they may live decently.



IN PICS: YP Lecture at UST

YP Lecture Series
University of Sto. Tomas
España, Manila
11 September 2007



TAO staff and Fr. Jorge arrive at UST in a jeep.



BS Architecture students of UST field questions during discussions from the floor.



Forum speakers included (from right) UST-CA Dean John Joseph Fernandez, YP Coordinator Ge Matabang, Fr. Jorge Anzorena of SELAVIP, Architects Beryl Baybay and Ger Samson of TAO-Pilipinas.



ComAch Architecture faculty adviser Archt. Rizalito Mercado (extreme right) with guests and members of the student organization that co-sponsored the event.



Representatives from DAMPA, Inc. (left) and Panirahanan, Inc. (right)



Michael Marcos and Jenna De Guzman of ComAch present Fr. Jorge with a plaque of appreciation

Announcements

The **TAO Photo Exhibit** which ran at Blacksoup Project Artspace last July 2007 can now be viewed on-line at <http://www.tao-pilipinas.org/resources/photo-gallery/?px=%2F>. This continues to be a fund-raiser to support TAO-Pilipinas projects. You can buy an 8"x10" print of any of the 67 featured photographs in the on-line exhibit for Php2,000 each (exclusive of postal delivery charges). Please call 926-9504 or email info@tao-pilipinas.org to arrange payment and delivery.



Fr. Jorge's SELAVIP Newsletter (Journal of Low-Income Housing in Asia and the World) is now available online. Visit <http://anzorenaselavip.net/>

